

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**

**THE ARMENIAN  
GENOCIDE**

**TESTIMONIES  
OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS**





*Dedicated to the Memory of the  
Innocent Victims of the  
Armenian Genocide*

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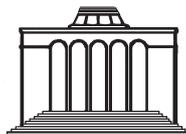
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in memory of their beloved parents, who had miraculously survived the Armenian Genocide.

**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:  
TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS**



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Translated from the Armenian by: *Tigran Tsulikian*  
*Anahit Poghikian-Darbinian*

Turkish editor: *Tigran Ter Voghormiajian*

## **SVAZLIAN VERJINÉ**

### **THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS /**

Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide and Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. Yerevan: “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2011, 848 pages, 53 typographic units + map + DVD.

The present work includes the primary-source popular oral testimonies of historical nature, the memoirs, the narratives, the Armenian- and Turkish-language songs (700 units) written down, audio- and video-recorded by the author from the eye-witness survivors of the Armenian Genocide deported from Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia and resettled in Armenia and in the various countries of the world. The tragic life episodes fallen to the lot of the Western Armenians, as well as their noble and righteous struggle to protect their elementary human rights for living are presented in this academic study on the grounds of historical and ethnographical data. The collection is supplied also with notations of the historical songs, summaries in English, French, German, Turkish, Russian and Armenian languages, documentation on the eyewitness survivors and their testimonies, a glossary, commentaries, thematic, toponymic, ethnonymic indexes and an index of personal names, photographs of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, a map showing the deportation and the Genocide (1915-1923) perpetrated against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

At the end of this volume you will find a digital video disk (DVD), which is the English version of the Armenian documentary film “*The Creed of the Svazlian Extended Family*.” The film represents the nation-devoted and Fatherland-devoted activities of the three consecutive generations of the author’s extended family in the 20th century.

The volume is intended for historians, politicians, diplomats, lawyers, sociologists, psychologists, economists, folklorists and the broad sections of readers interested in ethnography.

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## FOREWORD

*The present study comprises the oral testimonies and songs (700 units) directly recorded from the generation that survived the Armenian Genocide; they have been recorded with great patience and devotion over the course of more than 55 years by Verjinn 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 various indexes, the photographs of the survivors, map of the Armenian Genocide and, most importantly, the Turkish-language songs are accompanied by their English translations, which greatly facilitate their comprehension.*

*The 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.*

**SARGIS HARUTYUNIAN**

Academician 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 (b. 1909, Moussa Dagh)

The present volume was compiled and completed by writing down (also tape-recording and video-recording), word for word, fragment for fragment the original 700 testimonies and the historical study of this volume, during a period of more than 55 years.

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 present it to the world and to the righteous judgment of mankind.

V. S.



## INTRODUCTION

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 1915-1923, 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). In **Armenia**, 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

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

u>a	η>d	է>c	ժ>zh	խ>kh	հ>h	ճ>j	ն>n	չ>ch	n>r	տ>t	ւ>v	օ>o
p>b	ե>e	ը>e	ի>i	ծ>ds	ձ>dz	մ>m	շ>sh	պ>p	ս>s	ր>r	փ>p	ֆ>f
q>g	զ>z	թ>t	լ>l	կ>k	ղ>gh	յ>h, y, -	n>vo, o	ջ>dj	վ>v	ց>ts	ք>k	յա>ia, ya

bewildering memoirs, the impressive stories and the diverse historical songs, which they narrated and sang. [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 (NAS RA) founded at Dsidsernakaberd (Yerevan), in 1995, I have continued the work started, not only by writing down and tape-recording, but also by video-recording (operator: Galoust Haladjian) the memoir-testimonies and songs of historical character (Armenian and Turkish-language) narrated by the eyewitness survivors. [Svazlian 1997a, 1997b, 1999]

Writing down word for word, I have included also the memoirs of the eyewitness survivors kept at the Memoir, Diary, Audio and Video Funds of the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of NAS RA, which the said survivors themselves had committed to paper with a view to bequeathing them to the coming generations.

I have not overlooked and included also the memoirs narrated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, video-recorded on the territory of Armenia in 1989 by a group of scientists under the leadership of the former scientific worker of the Department of History and Culture of the Armenian Diasporan Communities of NAS RA, Doctor of History, Noubar Chalemian and the cooperation of Salbi Ghazarian (USA), Sargis Keshishian (Syria), Vahan Gyurdjian, Aram Grigorian, Ghoukas Hakobian. While performing that work, they had assumed as a basis the questionnaire “The Programme of Oral History” compiled by the Zorian Institute (USA). However, both the above-cited video-tapes and the tape-recording of the memoir narrated by the daughter of the martyr of the Armenian Genocide, the lawyer-writer Grigor Zohrap, Dolores Zohrap-Liebmann (made by N. Chalemian in New York, in 1989) had not been deciphered and put into scientific circulation.

Meanwhile, I have had the opportunity to make recordings, besides Armenia, first, during my personal short-term trips abroad, then also while my participations in international conferences in **New York, San Francisco** (1979), **Athens** (1984), **Los Angeles** (1990), **Istanbul** (1996, 1997). In Istanbul and at the Armenian National St. Prkich (Savior – Arm.) old-age nursing home there I had the opportunity to record more than 40 testimonies and other oral materials. [Svazlian 2000a]

In 1999, when I was invited to make a report at the International Scientific Conference of the Institute of Oriental Languages (INALCO) in **Paris**, organized by Dr. Anahit Donabedian, I was able to acquire over 10 testimonies from the eyewitness survivors. Meeting a few days later, the American-Armenian survivor, Sargis Saryan (b. 1911, Balou) in one of the exhibition-rooms of the Louvres Museum, I wrote down on the spot his memoir-testimony and took a photograph of him just there.

All these, coupled with the other memoirs-testimonies, narratives and songs of historical nature written down, audio- and video-recorded by me in the past and ensuing years (600 units), have been patiently deciphered word for word, studied and included in the voluminous edition “*Hayots Tseghaspanutiun. Akanates veraprogneri vkayutiunner*” (“*The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*”) (in Armenian). [Svazlian 2000]

In the subsequent years, too, I continued the work I had started.

In 2001, following my report at the International Symposium “Armenian Constantinople” organized by Prof. Richard Hovhannissian at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), I had visited the “Ararat” Armenian National old-age nursing home in **Los Angeles**, and wrote down there testimonies of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide and other materials.

In 2002, Doctor Nora Arissian from **Damascus** (Syria) sent to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of NAS RA memoir-interviews video-recorded from Arab-Bedouin eyewitnesses living in the deserts of **Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn and Rakka**, of which I have deciphered 5 in translation and included in this volume.

In the spring of 2005, I was invited to the International Annual Congress of the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences, held in the town of London (Ontario, Canada), where I made a report in French on the theme of “*The testimonies of the eyewitness survivors as a factor in the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide*” in the session of “Translated Memory and the Language of Genocide,” organized by Dr. Sima Aprahamian and Dr. Karin

Doerr, from Montreal Concordia University, and dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Jewish Holocaust and the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In those days I had the opportunity to visit also **Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal**. Not only I made reports in the various local universities, delivered speeches before the foreign ambassadors and the Armenian community circles of those towns, but I had also the chance to write down popular testimonies from eyewitness survivors and to acquire testimonies written down in their hands in the past.

In the autumn of 2005, I was invited to **Beirut** (Lebanon) to deliver reports at the International Conference organized by Dr. Ara Sanjian on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Haygazian University. I gave lectures also in the Armenian borough **Aynjar** (Lebanon) and in **Aleppo**, visited **Kessab** and **Deir-el-Zor** (Syria). There, at the Museum of the Saint Martyrs' Church complex, I saw the relics of our innocent martyrs, as well as my books on the Armenian Genocide in different languages, as vivid testimonies of our victims. [Svazlian 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2005e, 2005f]

In 2006, I was invited to Egypt to deliver my address on the 24th of April to the Armenian communities of **Cairo** and **Alexandria**. I visited also the Karapet agha Apikian Armenian National old-age nursing home of the "Aydsemmik" Women's Association in Cairo and there I wrote down the memoirs of the still-alive eyewitness survivors and got memories written down in their hands in the past.

In 2007, I was invited to **Salzburg** (Austria) to make a report on the theme of "*The Armenian-Turkish cultural relations according to the Armenian popular Turkish-language songs*" at the International Conference entitled "Cultural, Linguistic and Ethnological Interrelations in and around Armenia," organized by Dr. Jasmine Dum-Tragut. In those days, I received also an invitation from **Avignon** (France) to take part in the events dedicated to the Armenian Case (organizer: President of Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of Europe Alexis Govciyan), where I gave a lecture in French language on "*La mémoire des survivants comme irréfutable témoignage historique du Génocide arménien*" ("*Testimonies of the eyewitness survivors as historical irrefutable documents of the Armenian Genocide*"). In those places, too, I have tried to collect some popular materials.

In 2008, following my report at the International Symposium "Moussa Dagh, Kessab, Deurtyol" organized by Prof. Richard Hovhannissian at the University of California, **Los Angeles** (UCLA), I had the possibility of visiting also **Fresno** and to get closely acquainted with that one-time densely Armenian-populated community, to visit the local Armenian National old-age nursing home and also to record there the narratives of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide and of their subsequent generations, as well as other ethnographic materials.

Thus, I have written down in all these places the testimonies and songs of historical character (Armenian and English), communicated by the eyewitness survivors and by the representatives of the following generations, as well as I have acquired the hand-written authentic documentary testimonies the survivors had committed to paper before their death.

So that the number of the popular primary source-testimonies increased in 10 years by 100 units, and the total number of testimonies amounted to 700 units, which are included in the present volume, by a new numeration.

The widespread regional character of the first-hand testimonies written down, audio- and video-recorded from the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the putting for the first time, into academic circulation of Armenian and Turkish-language historical songs provide grounds to conclude that such a research work, by its nature, its qualitative and quantitative characteristics, is unique both in Armenia and the Diaspora.

During the 55 years of my ethnographic activity, I came to the conclusion that the started work has no end, and, if it were possible to continue, that number would grow even more, since that is a never-ending process. Many audio- and video-records are still in Armenia and in various Armenian Diasporan communities, and there are many families, who would like to include the hand-written testimonies in the past, by their relatives, in the present volume, since there is not a single Armenian family, who has not suffered human and material losses as a consequence of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire and has not preserved tragic memories and reminiscences banked up in its historical memory. For that reason, the theme of the Genocide raises its voice and roars in the blood of the Armenian people...

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

The present work is composed of two parts:

### *Part One*

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

- I. The Genre and Typological Peculiarities of the Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors**, where the genre, thematic and the typological peculiarities of the historical popular memoirs, narratives and songs are defined.
- II. The Course of the Armenian Genocide According to the Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors**, where the whole course of the Armenian Genocide is presented on the basis of historical facts and the testimonies, communicated by the eyewitness survivors, as the people remembered and narrated it.

### *Part Two*

#### **HISTORICAL PRIMARY SOURCES (700 units):**

- I. HISTORICAL MEMOIR-TESTIMONIES (315 units)** are classified in the volume according to the historical course of the Armenian Genocide and the birthplace of the eyewitness survivors, which are arranged in order of their birth dates;
- II. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE-TESTIMONIES (70 units)** are arranged according to their thematic contents;
- III. HISTORICAL SONG-TESTIMONIES (315 units)** are presented in separate subsections according to their thematic contents:
  - 1. Songs of Mobilization, Arm-Collection and of the Imprisoned;**
  - 2. Songs of Deportation and Massacre;**
  - 3. Songs of Child-Deprived Mothers, Orphans and Orphanages;**
  - 4. Patriotic and Heroic Battle Songs;**
  - 5. Songs of the occupied Homeland and of the Rightful Claim;**
  - 6. Notations of the Historical Songs.**

The volume is supplied also with:

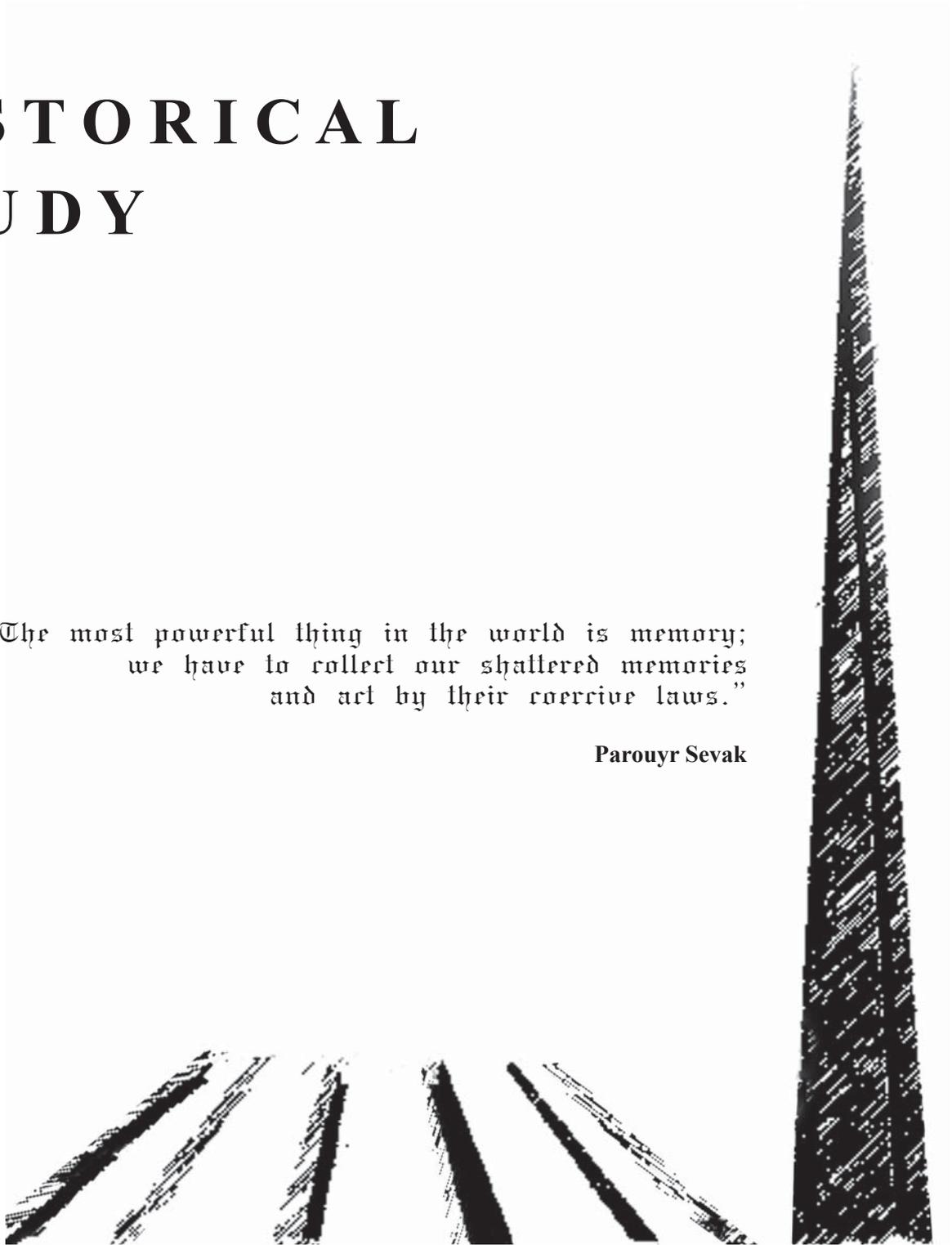
- **Summaries** in English, French, German, Turkish, Russian and Armenian;
- **Abbreviations;**
- **Documentation on the Eyewitness Survivors and their Testimonies**, where, according to the serial and successive numerations of the sections and subsections of the popular materials, information is provided about the nature of the given testimony (handwritten, audio- or video-recorded), the archival fund-number, language, survivor's name, surname, birth-year, birthplace and recording place of the material, year of the recording;
- **Glossary**, where the incomprehensible and foreign words present in the text are explained;
- **Commentaries**, where information about the historical characters and events is given;
- **Indexes:** a. **Thematic Index**, b. **Index of Personal Names**, and c. **Toponymic and Ethnonymic Indexes;**
- **Photographs (288 units)** of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide and of the representatives of the following generations according to their birth-year and birthplace;
- **Map** – representing the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923) realized in the Ottoman Empire;
- **Contents** – according to the headings of the book.

## PART ONE

# HISTORICAL STUDY

"The most powerful thing in the world is memory;  
we have to collect our shattered memories  
and act by their coercive laws."

Parouyr Sevak







## I.

### THE GENRE AND TYPOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF THE HISTORICAL TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS

As a consequence of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923) realized by the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire, the Western Armenians were forcibly expelled from their Historic Native Cradle, Western Armenia, as well as from Cilicia (1921) and from 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 Eastern 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, Shengavit, Noubarashen, Vardashen, Nor (New) Butania, Nor Aresh, Nor Kilikia, Nor Arabkir, Nor Zeytoun, Nor Sebastia, Nor Malatia, Nor Marash), as well as in different **regions of the Republic of Armenia** (Nor Kharbert (Harpoot), Nor Kessaria (Kayseri), Nor Hadjn, Nor Ayntap, Nor Moussa Ler (Dagh), Nor Yedessia (Urfa), Edjmiadsin (now: Vagharshapat), 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 more than 55 years, owing to my consistent quests in the various regions of Armenia, as well as during my short-term personal or scientific trips to the **Diaspora: Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Greece, France, Canada, the U.S.A. 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. The great majority of the **eyewitness survivors** are representatives of the senior generation; the eldest survivor was born in the 19th century, **Maritsa Papazian** (b. 1874, Samsun).

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 and the criminals released from the jails had forcibly expelled the Western Armenians from their Native Cradle, 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 testimonies, transmitted by the eyewitness survivors, provide also the possibility of subjecting the

genre and typological peculiarities of similar materials to a scientific investigation.

Let us refer now to the popular historical testimonies – memoirs, narratives and songs – communicated by the eyewitness survivors.

The **historical memoir-testimony** is the compilation or the narration of any person's reminiscences of those past events, people or encounters, with which he has had a connection. The precise description of the real facts and events in the memoir is combined with the personal impressions of the narrator. The memoirs narrated by the eyewitnesses of the Armenian Genocide represent the impressive description of the period they have lived in, including the very important aspects of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the multifaceted pictures of the public and popular life.

The popular historical 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 Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and also, 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 (Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Meskené, Surudj...), 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 Dagħ and Yedessia (Urfa), and later, in the years 1920-1921, those of Ayntap and Hadjn), the national heroes distinguished in the heroic self-defensive battles (General Andranik Ozanian from Shapin-Garahissar, Armenak Yekarian from Van, the Great Mourad [Hambardzoum Boyadjian], Yessayi Yaghoubian from Moussa Dagħ, Mkrtich Yotnegħbayrian from Yedessia, Adour Levonian from Ayntap, Aram Cholakian from Zeytoun, the national avenger Soghomon Tehlirian), and numerous other well-known and unknown Armenians, who struggled against violence 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 and 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, expectations 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** (b. 1901, Adabazar) has noted in the beginning of his memoir. [Testimony<sup>1</sup> 219]

In earlier times, the Armenians and the Turks had lived on friendly terms with each other. **Arakel Tagoyan** from Derdjan (b. 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.*" [T. 96]

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** (b. 1910), from Ardvin. [T. 81]

The memoir-testimonies 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,

<sup>1</sup> From the present volume: Testimony – henceforth: T.

citations, diverse genres of popular folklore (lamentations and heroic songs, tales, legends, parables, proverbs, sayings, benedictions, maledictions, prayers, oaths, etc.) to confirm the trustworthiness of their narrative, to render their oral speech more reliable and more impressive. In particular, *the eyewitness 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** (b. 1903), from Erzroom, 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...*” [T. 88]

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 on the Internet memoirs and Turkish-language 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, “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999, as well as the Site: <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html>) 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 [the works of] 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 memoir-testimony] *firsthand* (the highlighting is mine – V. S.). ...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 present collection of memoirs and songs I have written down, recorded, studied and published on my own initiative are increasing with every passing day, following their publication in Armenia [Svazlian 2000], and that is an interminable process, inasmuch as every Armenian has his family grief and losses. Besides, there are countless testimonies (in different dialects, in different languages, 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 20th 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** (b. 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...*” [T. 81]

**Verginé Gasparian** (b. 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.). [T. 271]

The eyewitness survivors of those historical events, dolefully reliving their sad past, have transmitted to me 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 (b. 1900), from Harpoot [Kharbert], has bitterly testified: "Now, out of our 7 families, only I have survived." [T. 114]

Verginé Nadjarian (b. 1910), from Malatia, 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 Der-Zor\* Only three of us were left: I, my mother and my brother..." [T. 134] This fact has also been confirmed by Hazarkhan Torossian (b. 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..." [T. 129] Thus, even the numerical calculations they have communicated are true. Hrant Gasparian (b. 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." [T. 13]

*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 me 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 94-year-old Zeytouni of proud bearing, Karapet Tozlian (b. 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." [T. 254] Some eyewitness survivors have, at the last period of their lives, committed to the paper what they had seen and felt, in order to entrust them, as a precept, to the following generations, as Galoust Soghomonian (b. 1905), from Bolou, has terminated his hand-written testimony

\* "Deir-el-Zor" in popular pronunciation has been changed to "Der-Zor."

with the following sentence: “*I wrote this testimony of mine, so that the coming generations could read and know the sufferings we have endured as a result of the Genocide of the Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks.*” [T. 202]

Worthy of remembrance, in this respect, are the words spoken by the survivor, the well-known literary critic **Garnik Stepanian** (b. 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 fifteen 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 has said: ‘If our sons forget so much evil, let the whole world blame the Armenian nation’.*” [T. 95]

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 events 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** (b. 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.*” [T. 97] *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 more than 95 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 narratives.

The **historical narrative-testimony** is small-sized prose creation of descriptive and narrative nature about real events or characters. The teller of the narrative is not himself the subject of the event, but the person familiar or unfamiliar to it, who, impressed by what he has seen or heard, tells it to others.

These historical narratives have been mainly written down from the subsequent generations as testimonies of the fact that *the 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 communicated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, which also form an inseparable part of the people’s historical memory.

The **historical song-testimonies** are creations in verse on a tragic or heroic theme composed by endowed unknown individuals about the great historical events, which have then passed from mouth to mouth. The songs of historical nature are also lyric poems, in which the emotional world, the thoughts and the mood, the expectations and the demands of the composers are expressed in a picturesque manner. These songs have been mainly created by individuals dissatisfied of the prevailing public life, indignant at injustice, persecution and oppression and passing through an internal tragedy.

The words of these historical songs are simple and unornamented; they artistically reproduce the various aspects of the public life of that period in Turkey, namely, the massacres of the Armenians organized by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and also, the mobilization, the arm-collection, the deportation and the massacres organized by the government of Young Turks, as well as other factual, affecting and impressive episodes, bold sentiments of protest and of rightful claim.

The songs of historical nature have often served as a basis for musical creations. They can become also series

of songs, which are joined together by the generality of characters, of the theme and the refrains or by the unity of thoughts, feelings and ideas, as, for example, the song series of the Turkish soldier (“Askerin şarkıları” / “*The Soldier’s Songs*”) [TT. 396-410], the song series of Deir-el-Zor (“Der Zor çölünde” / “*In the desert of Der-Zor*”) [TT. 461-530] or the song series of exile (“Sürgünlük şarkıları” / “*Exile Songs*”) [TT. 531-547] and others. The number of the Turkish-language songs I have discovered and recorded exceeds 175.

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 Moosh, **Shogher Tonoyan** (b. 1901), which she communicated me 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...”* [T. 437]

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 of the Armenians. 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 the Turkish army. And the men have created songs, where they described that the Armenian soldiers, however, were not given arms, but were sent to toil in the ‘*Amelé tabours*’ (Labor battalions – Turk.) 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. For months 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, the latter have described the roads they have passed through, 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, the flaying of live people, the sacrifice of live Armenians instead of a ram or a he-goat at the feet of a mounted Turkish official 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 self-defense, struggles and battles composed mostly by men are also presented (“**Patriotic and heroic battle songs**”). And finally, songs of the appropriated Motherland, regret for the lost native land and of hopes of regaining it are likewise included (“**Songs of the occupied Homeland and of the rightful claim**”).

*With their originality and ideological contents, these historical songs are not only novelties in the fields of Armenian Folklore and Armenian Genocide studies, 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 of different sex-age groups, 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 modifications, *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 survivors 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 Documentation of my book, mentioning the name, surname, date and place of birth of the eyewitness survivor, who communicated the given song (or memoir), as well as the time, place, language and character (handwritten, audio- and video-recordings) of the recorded material and its number in the archival fund (according to Dr. Prof. Isidor Levin's Scientific Method of Documentation of Popular 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 occupied 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 or the emotive 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, whereas, on the contrary, the songs of the occupied Homeland and of the rightful claim are lively, impressive and full of conviction.

Some of the popular historical and epic songs are presented also with their musical notation.

*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 mother 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 Sargis Haykouni, living at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th 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 Sis, Adana, Tarson, Ayntap, Kyotahia, Bursa, Kayseri, Eskishehir and other localities were mainly Turkish-speaking. According to the testimony of **Mikayel Keshishian** (b. 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.*" [T. 241]

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

*“They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,  
Ah, alas!  
They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,  
Ah, alas!” [T. 446]*

The school-mistress had deserved that punishment, since she 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 literary 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 more than 150 localities* (densely populated with Armenians) *of Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia* (Sassoun, Moosh, Taron, Bitlis, Sgherd, Bassen, Shatakh, Van, Moks, Bayazet, Igdir, Alashkert, Kars, Ardvin, Ardahan, Trapizon, Baberd, Sper, Erzroom, Khnous, Yerznka, Derdjan, Kamakh, Shapin-Garahissar, Arabkir, Harpoot, Balou, Malatia, Tigranakert, Merdin, Severeck, Yedessia, Adiyaman, Derendé, Sebastia, Ordou, Divrik, Gyurin, Tokat, Kghi, Amassia, Samsun, Marzvan, Yozghat, Kayseri, Talas, Everek, Tomarza, Nidé, Konia, Stanoz, Afion-Garahissar, Sivrihissar, Kastemouni, Bolou, Eskishehir, Bursa, Partizak, Biledjik, Adabazar, Nikomedia, Aslanbek, Istanbul, Rodosto, Banderma, Kyotahia, Chanak-Kalé, Izmir, Mersin, Tarson, Adana, Hassanbey, Sis, Fendedjak, Hadjn, Zeytoun, Marash, Ayntap, Deurtyol, Beylan, Moussa Dagh, Kessab and others) and subsequently settled not only in the various suburbs of Yerevan and in the different regions of Armenia, but also in the Diaspora (Deir-el-Zor, Rakka, Ras-ul-Ayn, Aleppo, Damascus, Ghamishli, Kessab, Beirut, Aynjar, Alexandrette, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Cairo, Alexandria, Ras Sudr, Addis-Ababa, Istanbul, Constantsa, Athens, Paris, Lyon, Berlin, Radebeul, Rome, Milan, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, New York, Boston, San-Francisco, Los-Angeles, Fresno, Moscow, etc.), who, taken together, give a fuller idea of the past and collective historical memory of the world-dispersed Western Armenians, who has lost its historical cradle, but has future expectations...

I have included also, as an example, a few testimonies [TT. 307-315] and historical songs [TT. 556-557] from Eastern Armenia (Sharoor, Nakhidjevan, Agoulis, Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri), Talin, Mastara, Nalband, Cherakhli, Spitak etc.) to give an idea that the Turkish government carried out the Genocide of Armenians not only in **Western Armenia** (1915-1923), but in the territory of **Eastern Armenia** (1918-1920) as well. The Armenians living there were also subjected to brutal violences, committed by the Turks, under the leadership of Kyazim Karabakir and others, suffering innumerable victims and native territories. But the study of the testimonies of the eyewitness survivors of the Genocide of the Eastern Armenians is a separate subject of investigation.



## II.

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

Guided by its expansionistic policy, Turkey has pursued, practically always, the goal of assimilating and Turkifying the peoples living in the country and having an ancient culture, of appropriating their cultural values and presenting them as their own.

This policy was initially put into practice with regard to the Byzantines when the Turks occupied Constantinople in 1453, under the leadership of Sultan Fatih Mehmet II, and the capital was renamed Istanbul, and many churches, which were cultural centers, were seized by the Turks.

Following the Russian-Turkish War in 1877-1878, the 16th clause of the San Stefano Treaty, promising more or less acceptable guarantees to the Armenians for the realization of Armenian Reforms in the Ottoman Empire, was revised and was replaced at the International Congress held in Berlin (June 13 - July 13, 1878) with the 61st clause, without giving real guarantees to the Armenians for their realization.

As a result of the Berlin Congress resolution, the Armenian Case was transformed from an internal case in the Ottoman Empire into an international one. The Ottoman Empire and its great and small governors were filled with hatred toward the Armenians and the Armenian Case. The condition of the Western Armenians grew increasingly worse up to the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, named “the Cruel Sultan,” who, during the years 1894-1896, organized the mass slaughter of 300,000 innocent Western Armenians.

**Massis Kodjoyan** (b. 1910), from Baberd, has told me about those historical events: “...*My father was born in 1865. He had studied at the Sanassarian College of Erzroom. He was the only literate person in their family. During the massacres of 1895 my grandfather had been at the casino. They had brutally cut his finger and taken off the magnificent ancestral ring. It was then Sultan Hamid’s reign. The Turks had completely plundered all our property. Our family had links with the merchants of Venice, Genoa and Constantinople, who helped us to restore our property and position. But Sultan Hamid had released all the criminals from the prisons and had instructed them to rob, plunder and kill the gâvurs. They had killed my grandpa and uncle then. In two days there was not a family without a murdered member. All the Armenians were mourning over their murdered kinsfolk. The slaughtered Armenians were so numerous that the people buried their dead without a coffin. The church gave coffins for my grandfather and uncle, for they were well-known people and buried them in the church yard. After the massacre of 1895 our house was filled with orphans and widows. Father took all of them under his care. Father, mother and all our kin were hidden in the barn along with the orphans and widows...*” [Testimony\* 84]

After the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid’s reign and the declaration of the 1908 Constitution, the party of the Young Turks, “İttihat ve Terakki” (Union and Progress – Turk.), which formed the government, adopted Sultan Hamid’s massacre 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

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\* From the present volume: Testimony – henceforth: T.

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 (1915-1923), 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 20th century. The representatives of the senior generation even remembered the establishment of the Turkish Constitution in 1908, which had the motto: “*Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet*” (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.). A nationwide exultation prevailed in the country, since equal rights were to be secured by law to all the nations living in the Ottoman Empire.

A survivor from Harpoot [Kharbert], **Sargis Khachatryan** (b. 1903), has told me about this unprecedented event: “*I remember in 1908 when the Sultan’s reign was overthrown, people were singing in the streets*”: [T. 116]

<i>“Kalkın, hey vatandaşlar!</i>	“Get up, compatriots!
<i>Sevinelim yoldaşlar!</i>	Let us rejoice, friends!
<i>İşte size Hürriyet:</i>	Liberty has come to you:
<i>Yaşasın Osmanlılar!”<sup>1</sup></i>	Long live the Ottomans!” <sup>1</sup> [T. 431]

While a survivor from Bitlis, **Hmayak Boyadjian** (b. 1902), has testified in his memoir: “*...When Hurriyet 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.*” [T. 19]

A survivor from Eskişehir, **Hovhannes Gasparian** (b. 1902), has added: “*...In 1908, when the new constitution was proclaimed, the party of the Young Turks was headed by Talaat, Enver, Djemal, Dr. Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir and thousands of young Turks became government members in 1908. They organized a Parliament. Sultan Reshad was the ruler, but he was deprived of any royal rights...*” [T. 206]

An eyewitness survivor born in Sassoun as far back as in the 19th century, **Yeghiazar Karapetian** (b. 1886), remembering the historical events of the past, has noted: “*...The Hurriyet 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...*” [T. 1]

That was the awakening from the obscurity of the Orient. However, the Turkish reactionary forces, dissatisfied with the constitutional orders, began to accuse the Armenians for bringing the “Hürriyet” (the Constitutional orders), which allegedly pursued the object of seizing the power from the Turks and of re-establishing “the Armenian Kingdom.” Taking that circumstance into account the Armenians have woven the following Turkish-language song:

<i>“Padişah oturmuş tahtından bakar,</i>	“The king seated is watching from his throne,
<i>Tahtının altında al kanlar akar,</i>	Red blood is flowing under his throne,
<i>Baltayı vurunca yattı ölüler,</i>	Struck by axes, corpses are falling,
<i>Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.</i>	The Armenians’ condition is lamentable.
<i>Şefketlim oturmuş tahtından bakar,</i>	The kind ruler is watching from his throne,
<i>Gâvurun kanları sel gibi akar,</i>	The gâvurs’ blood is flowing like a torrent,
<i>Hürriyet isteyenler derede kokar,</i>	The freedom-wishers are stinking in the valley,
<i>Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.”</i>	The Armenians’ condition is lamentable.” [T. 433]

<sup>1</sup> In the various Turkish-language original songs I 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 keeping unaltered the information communicated by the survivors, I have remained faithful to their oral speech.

In the environs of Sis, a Mullah even sermonized: “We can not be brothers with the gâvurs; to get united with them is not possible. The Sharia strictly forbids that. We can not cherish snakes in our bosom, whose biting we have no doubt about.” [Keleshian 1949: p. 544]

On the 31st of March, 1909, a session of the Provincial Council took place under the chairmanship of the valy (governor) of Adana, where a decision to exterminate the Armenians was made. Special secret orders to start the massacre were sent to the provinces. On the eve of the massacre the authorities distributed large quantities of arms and ammunition to the Mohammedan population. Hundreds of criminals were released from the prisons.

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, became the target of the hatred of the Ittihat officials.

During the Holy Week of 1909, from the 1st to the 3rd and the 12th to the 14th 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 councilor 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” in Turkish, that “... not only did the number of victims exceed 30,000 Armenians, but it was an evident fact that the massacres had been organized with the knowledge and by order of the local authorities.”<sup>1</sup> [Papikian 1919: p. 28]

The eyewitness of that turmoil historian-novelist, Smbat Byurat, has, under the immediate impressions of those sad events, created the following poem of great popularity as a truthful reproduction of the event, which has been communicated to me by the eyewitness survivor from Zeytoun, **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 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 Roubinians!*

*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 of his mother, the bride of 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,  
Wiped out the Armenians from the face of the earth  
Blood ran down the Armenian streets...” [T. 436]*

The Cilician Armenians in distress have formulated the following malediction under these historical events:

<sup>1</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.

*“May you lose your sight, Satan,  
You came and entered Adana.”*

I have succeeded in writing down from the survivors, rescued from the Adana massacre, and thus sawing from total loss also other Armenian- and Turkish-language popular songs, which artistically reproduce those historic events:

*“In the morning at dawn  
They encircled us on four sides,  
Thousands of bullets  
Scattered like hail.*

*Poor Adana was stained  
Red with blood,  
And the corpses of Armenians  
Were sprawled here and there.*

*They broke doors and windows,  
Striking with axes,  
They didn't leave a resplendent house  
And burned them all down.” [T. 435]*

Or else, were woven other short notes, depicting scenes of the tragic massacre of Adana, which have been transformed into mournful songs:

*“Seven girls fled and went away,  
Ah, alas!  
They shot three of them and caught the other four,  
Ah, alas!  
They burned little Tigranouhi's house,  
Ah, alas!  
A rich girl like her was given to the mullah,  
Ah, alas!” [TT. 442-443]*

Those historico-political events have remained in the memory of the Cilician Armenians as “*Kıyma* (Slaughtered – Turk.) *Adana*,” and they have composed the following popular Turkish-language song, which is saturated with expressive depth and descriptiveness:

*“Hey, çamlar; çamlar; alnı-açık çamlar!  
Her güneş vurunca sakız damlar,  
Sakız damlarsa: yüreğim ağlar:  
Adana ırmağı sel gibi akar,  
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!  
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!*

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

*“Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars!  
The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,  
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!*

*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!” [T. 434]*

An eyewitness survivor from Adana, **Mikayel Keshishian** (b. 1904), has told me with emotion about that fact: “*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! – Turk.). We returned home, but those who were killed were no longer alive." [T. 241]

The following popular song also tells about miserable condition of the victims of the Adana massacre:

"Şimdi Adana'ya gitmeli değil,  
Gidip de o halları görmeli değil,  
Çorekşaptı\* günü koçnak\*\* çekildi,  
Bütün Ermeniler jama\*\*\* döküldü.

Beni öldüren doydu mu ola?  
Liralarımı saydı mı ola?  
Benim burda vurulduğumu  
Anam, babam duydu mu ola?

Adana'nın yolları taşlık,  
Cebimizde kalmadı beş para harçlık,  
Aman, Adanalı, canım Adanalı,  
Cebimizde kalmadı, beş para harçlık."

"We shouldn't go to Adana now,  
We shouldn't go and see that condition,  
On Wednesday\* they rang the bell,\*\*  
And gathered all the Armenians in the church.\*\*\*

I wonder whether my killer was sated,  
Whether he counted my gold coins,  
Whether my mother and father  
Heard that I was shot here.

The roads of Adana are stony,  
We all became stony-broke,  
Alas, citizen of Adana, my dear,  
We all became stony-broke." [T. 552]

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.

A survivor from Moussa Dagh, **Tonik Tonikian** (b. 1898) has also referred to the Adana calamity: "Respect and honor are the highest values in the world. We, the people of Moussa Dagh, love to live our lives with respect and honor.

The massacre of Adana started in 1909. The Turks attacked the Armenians' houses, shops. They plundered, killed, slaughtered, and raped. They did such things! One could not think of them!

We, the Armenians of the seven villages of Moussa Dagh, took precautions; we assigned guards at night. In many places in Cilicia, the Turks attacked, broke-in, and plundered. People escaped with their lives. The Armenians fled and took refuge in churches, but the Turks entered their houses and plundered. They saw that the Armenians had entered their churches, so they attacked the churches and slaughtered them there. First, they slaughtered babies, right before their parents' eyes, and then killed the parents: men and women. They were slaughtering whole families. Blood flowed like water from the thresholds of the houses. I was in our village when we heard all about it. Until now, Arabs and Turks remember these massacres..." [T. 285]

**Hovhannes Abelian** (b. 1903), a survivor from Kessab, has also testified: "In 1909, when the massacres in Adana took place, Shaghban agha gathered a mob of forty thousand people and came to pillage Kessab. They reached Ordu. We started to resist. In the village of Lower Esgyuran a battle waged that lasted four to five hours. At the end, our side said: "It's impossible to resist any further. There is no ammunition: let's escape."

We went to the Kessab seashore. I was six years old. "Father, the killers are coming," I said. And they really came.

\* The Armenian word "çorekşapti/chorekshabti" (Wednesday) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\* The Armenian word "koçnak/kochnak" (bell) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\*\* The Armenian word "jam/zham" (church) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

*They captured my father in the bushes, pulled him out, lay him on the ground. I cried out, “Oh, dad, dad,” fell on him and started crying.*

*The men stopped and said: “We also have children: if we kill you, the wild beasts will devour you. We grant your life for this child, you will find your death from someone else. Go, live.”...” [T. 298]*

In actual fact, that was the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, when the Young Turks, following the decisions of the secret meeting, organized in 1911, in Salonica, by the party “İttihat ve Terakki,” 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, Bak dışarı kim geliyor? Ölüme bana zor geliyor, Uyan, sultan, zalım sultan! Kan ağlıyor bütün cihan! Aman! Aman! Mayrik!”<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>“Snow is penetrating through the window, Look who is coming from outside? Death is hard to bear for me, Wake up, sultan, cruel sultan! The whole world is weeping blood! Alas! Alas! Mayrik!”<sup>1</sup> [T. 432]</i>
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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.*”

The eyewitness survivor from Eskişehir, **Hovhannes Gasparian** (b. 1902), has recalled: “...*The committee of İttihat ve Terakki Party held a secret meeting presided by Talaat attended by Enver, Dr. Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir and others that made a decision to exterminate all the Armenians living in Turkey. And at that meeting, they made the plan of the extermination: not to leave a single Armenian alive – from the newborn child up to the oldest man. The speaker of that committee session was Dr. Nazim. He mentioned in his report, “In order that Turkey may rise, I became your friend, your brother. Only the Turks will live on this land: independent, self-governing. Let all those who are not Turks be annihilated. Not a single Armenian; they all must be exterminated.” In a similar speech, Dr. Behaeddin Shakir proposed the same, “To exterminate all the Armenians from the newborn to the oldest.” That decision had to be signed by Sultan Reshad but, as Talaat doubted whether Reshad would sign it, he got in contact with the German ambassador and asked him to go to the king a few minutes earlier. Talaat pasha took the decision of this secret meeting to be signed in the presence and under the influence of the German ambassador, according to which the Armenian Genocide would start on the 24th of April, 1915...*” [T. 206]

On the 6th 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 “Union 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 15th of April 1915 a secret order signed by the minister of Internal Affairs of the Turkish government, Talaat

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian word “mayrik” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

pasha, the war minister, Enver pasha and the general secretary of Ittihat 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 Ittihat, 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 Ittihat 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* – Turk.) had become the greatest evil for the Christian nations living in the Ottoman Empire, 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* – Turk.) 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, **Sargis Khachatryan** (b. 1903), has narrated, “and drafted the Armenian young men into the Turkish army. They took them and made them work in the ‘Amelé tabour’ and then they killed them all.” [T. 116]

**Sargis Martirosian** (b. 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...” [T. 117]

The song transmitted by a survivor from Tokat, **Annik Marikian** (b. 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 Tokat 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.”* [T. 390]

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!”* [T. 391]

This is what **Hazarkhan Torossian** (b. 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' 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,' 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 – Turk.) 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 14th of July, 1915, all the young men were sent to the slaughter-house..." [T. 87]

A survivor from Yozghat, **Veronica Berberian** (b. 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 – Turk.) 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 – Turk.). 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! – Turk.). 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..." [T. 177]

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.” [T. 177]

**Hakob Holobikian** (b. 1902), from Harpoot, 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 – Turk.), 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 jail. This is my father’s narrative...” [T. 115]

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>1</sup> doğru söyle!  
Sende martin varımıŝ?”

“Hey, gâvur,<sup>1</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 slander,  
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.” [T. 417]

The Armenian youth who had received the call-up papers (*vesica* – Turk.) 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-martini alayım elime,  
Gitmeye 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!” [T. 395]

If, in this song, the Armenian youngster was ready to serve in the Turkish army and to perform his civil duties in

<sup>1</sup> Gâvur (unbeliever) – special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians.

regard to the native land (*vatan* – Turk.) he was living on, he subsequently became aware that the “mobilization” was a pretext to isolate him from his kinsfolk.

“*Odalar yaptırdım bir uçtan uca,  
İçinde yatmadım bir gün, bir gece,  
Konma, bülbül, konma mezar taşına,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!*”

“*Tüfengim çadırda asılı kaldı,  
Ceyizim sandıkta basılı kaldı,  
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, on the grave stone,  
The Armenians suffered so many misfortunes!

My gun remained hanging in the tent,  
My dowry remained folded in the trunk,  
Don’t perch, nightingale, on the grave stone,  
The Armenians suffered so many misfortunes!” [T. 553]

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...*”

“Circassian, spare my sweet life:  
I have a new fiancée; she will be bound in black...” [T. 405]

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

“*...Tuzlu olur İstanbul’un fıstığı,  
Taştan olur Ermeninin yastığı,  
Kör olasın şu meydanın dostluğu.<sup>1</sup>  
Aldılar nazlı yarım, duyan ağlasın,  
Aman! Aman! Mayrik!*”<sup>2</sup>

“...The hazelnut of Istanbul is salty,  
The cushion of the Armenians is stony,  
Cursed be this proclaimed friendship,<sup>1</sup>  
They abducted my beloved, let the hearer cry,  
Alas! Alas! Mayrik!”<sup>2</sup> [T. 432]

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-ekmeğim yiyenler,  
‘Ahbap ölmeden, ben ölürem’ diyenler...*”

“Where are those who have eaten my salt-bread,  
Those who said: ‘Let me die before my friend dies...’”

Meanwhile his faithful Armenian friends

“*...Tığlık<sup>3</sup> Sarkis<sup>4</sup>,  
Taslak<sup>3</sup> Misak<sup>4</sup> vurulmuş...*”

“...Teghlik(ian)<sup>3</sup> Sargis<sup>4</sup> and  
Taslak(ian)<sup>3</sup> Missak<sup>4</sup> were killed...”

The Armenian soldier himself was imprisoned:

“*...Mahpushane 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...” [T. 428]

<sup>1</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.

<sup>2</sup> The Armenian word “mayrik” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>3</sup> Armenian surname.

<sup>4</sup> Armenian name.

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

*“...Varın, söyleyin anama: damda yatmasın;  
Oğlum Toros<sup>1</sup> gelir diye: yola bakmasın,  
Anama deyin: bohçam açmasın;  
Çuha şalvarıma uçkur takmasın,  
Ğayrı ben sılama varamaz oldum,  
İskuhi<sup>1</sup> nişanlım göremez oldum,  
Daracık sokakdan geçemez oldum.”*

*“...Tell my mother not to sleep on the roof,  
Not to gaze at the road expecting her son Toros,<sup>1</sup>  
Tell my mother not to open my bundle of clothes,  
And not to pass a cord to my woolen breeches,  
I am already not able to arrive home,  
Unable to see my fiancée Iskoohi,<sup>1</sup>  
And not able to come out of this narrow path.” [T. 429]*

And the mother of the Armenian soldier cursed the mobilization, 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>2</sup>  
Kör olasın sen, Enver Paşa!  
Ermeni cahil kalmadı,  
Gitti gül, gitti bülbül, ne diyelim!  
İstersen ağla, istersen gül, ne diyelim!”*

*“I tied my horse to the hollow stone,<sup>2</sup>  
May you lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
No more Armenian youths were left,  
The rose and the nightingale went away, what should I say!  
You may cry, you may laugh, what should I say!” [T. 542]*

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,  
Bıyıkları yular gibi...”*

*“Talaat pasha like an ass,  
His moustaches thin like reins...” [T. 547]*

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, 1915, at midnight, hundreds of 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, Rouben Zardarian, Rouben Sevak, Hovhannes Telkatintsi, Melkon Kyourdjian, 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 Yerkat** (b. 1910), has told me 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 lamentations 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.” [T. 224]*

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

<sup>1</sup> Armenian name.

<sup>2</sup> Delikli taş (hollow stone) – a stone ring fitted to the wall near the entrance of Armenian country houses to tie the horse reins.

massacre of the population were noted all over Asia Minor.

A survivor born in 1905 at the village of Kem of the Hayots Dzor (Armenians' Valley – Arm.) of Van, **Sirak Manassian**, has testified about the horrible state of the Western Armenians: *“On the 4th 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 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 center 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 6th 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.” [T. 35]*

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** (b. 1907): “*Self-defense is born when there is violence against the people...*” [T. 40]

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 Ittihat 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...”* [T. 628]

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

From the very beginning of the World War I the Turkish governors organized new and brutal persecutions, the plunder and massacre of the Western Armenian population directing the main blow toward Moosh and Sassoun, which were noted as important centers of the Armenian national liberation movement in the past.

Carrying out the directives of the Turkish government, the local authorities developed and put in action, together with the armed command, the monstrous plan of extermination of the Armenians.

In the spring of 1915, the regular Turkish regiments attacked, together with the Kurdish tribes, the Armenian population of these provinces.

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 30th 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** (b. 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.*” [T. 4]

An eyewitness from the Shenik Village of Sassoun, **Khachik Khachatrian** (b. 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..." [T. 2]*

Another eyewitness survivor from Sassoun, **Yeghiazar Karapetian** (b. 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 – Turk.) 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 (Saint – Arm.) Karapet had been committed to the assistant chieftain, the Young Turk Rashid efendi (sir – Turk.), 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 22nd 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 28th of June was the Sunday of Vardavar (the Transfiguration of Christ – Arm.), the merry holiday of the Armenian nation, which, alas, was converted into the Sunday of Martavar (burning of people – Arm.) for the Armenians of the Taron plain.” [T. 1]*

**Shogher Tonoyan** (b. 1901), from Moosh, has also given an account about the above-cited Vardavar holiday: “... *On the day of Vardavar (the Transfiguration of Christ – Arm.), 1915, the Turkish askyars (policemen – Turk.) 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>1</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 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!’ (Dance, my child, dance! – Turk.). Up to this day that song resounds in my ears...” [T. 9]*

Another eyewitness from Moosh, **Sedrak Harutyunian** (b. 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...” [T. 10]*

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 Ittihat 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]

<sup>1</sup> Lao (my child) – an affectionate expression in the Sassoun dialect used when speaking to a daughter or son.

**Hrant Gasparian** (b. 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...”* [T. 13]

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.”* [T. 627]

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, Baberd, 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 Moosh, **Shogher Tonoyan** (b. 1901):

*“We abandoned the sweet plains and meadows of Moosh,  
Our sacred lodges, houses, roofs and Homeland,  
Chapels and monasteries, books and canons, Bibles  
Were abandoned and remained in the hound’s muzzle...”* [T. 653]

The road of exile was a real tragedy.

**Vardouhi Potikian** (b. 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...”* [T. 54]

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

*“...The Turks came down the Black Mountain of Berkri,  
Corpses were scattered in thousands and thousands,  
May you be ravaged, you, insatiable Berkri River,  
You drank the blood of thousands and thousands!”* [T. 438]

Suffering countless victims, the exhausted and agonizing human flood moved forward, sad and wistful, through clouds of dust. **Varsenik Abrahamian** (b. 1905), a survivor from Van, has woven this lament:

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

*...They ravaged and destroyed  
And left us the pain and the worries,  
Spring was near at hand, spring came,  
Blood fell down instead of rain...*” [T. 438]

When I asked an eyewitness survivor from Van, **Aghassi Kankanian** (b. 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 Igdır 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.*” [T. 33]

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

*“Eh, Surmalou, dear Surmalou!  
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.*

*Alas, alas, Surmalou!  
The snake is seated on your nest, Surmalou!...*” [T. 655]

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

The Berlin-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 Hadjn, 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** (b. 1900), **Hovsep Bshtikian** (b. 1903), **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 1903), **Eva Chulian** (b. 1903), **Sedrak Gaybakian** (b. 1903), **Samvel Ardjikian** (b. 1907) and **Gayané Adourian** (b. 1909). [TT. 252-258]

The Cilicians, who were the worthy inheritors of the last Armenian kingdom (11th-14th 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 II 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 – Arm.) Monastery, built on the top of the Berzenka Mountain. On the 25th 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** (b. 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 – Turk.) in tin containers to burn the monastery, but the eshkies (gunmen – Turk.) fired at them from inside the monastery and killed them...*” [T. 254]

On the 9th 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, Antioch, Iskenderun, Kessab and other Armenian-inhabited localities were deserted:

*“Sürgünlük çıktı, köy boşaldı,  
Benim kıymetli malım Türklere kaldı,  
Çoluk-çocuk yolcu oldu,  
Alan-talanı 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...” [T. 460]

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 Der-Zor<sup>1</sup>, 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** (b. 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...*” [T. 93]

<sup>1</sup> “Deir-el-Zor” in popular pronunciation has been changed to “Der-Zor.”

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, Meskené, Surudj and Deir-el-Zor and elsewhere.

**Martiros Gyoalian** (b. 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...*” [T. 278]

**Moushegh Hakobian** (b. 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...*” [T. 228]

As **Johar (Helen) Aslanian-Mamigonian** (b. 1895, Harpoot, Kessirik), later an inhabitant of USA, testified: “...*We left Harpoot on a Thursday, went to Merdin and from there to Tigranakert, to Ras-ul-Ayn – walking the entire way – most of the time on our bare feet. Whenever I found a piece of cloth or rag I would wrap it around my swollen and bleeding feet. It was only with God’s help that we were able to walk this great distance. How else could we have come this far without food and water? Water was within our grasp at times, but we were not allowed to have any. One can live without food, but thirst is unbearable – you simply cannot live without water...*” [T. 111]

**Davit Davtian** (b. 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, others 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...*” [T. 214]

A survivor from the town of Bursa, **Avetis Norikian** (b. 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 Der-Zor and all of them were massacred...*” [T. 215]

**Smbyl Berberian** (b. 1909), from the town of Afion-Garahissar, was a diligent and active woman of eighty. When I requested her to narrate her past, she refused at first, she was moved to tears and started to hum all by herself. I 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 Der-Zor, later they cut off 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...*” [T. 198]

**Arshakouhi Petrossian** (b. 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>1</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 – Turk.). 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! – 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...' [T. 175] And the sobs choked the poor old woman's throat.

**Samvel Patrian** (b. 1900), from Eskişehir, 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 Eskişehir to Sivrihisar, then to Haymana, Ghershehir and ultimately to Kayseri. What we have seen and suffered on the roads is unspeakable." [T. 205]

"...Only I remained alive in our village," informed the 80-year-old **Eva Choulian** (b. 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 Der-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..." [T. 255]

**Aram Kyosseyan** (b. 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

<sup>1</sup> Gâvur (unbeliever) – special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians.

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...” [T. 123]

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!”* [T. 458]

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 Der-Zor”* (more than 80 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** (b. 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 Bedevins (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...”* [T. 282]

This woman, aged seventy in 1956, who lived in the district of Vardashen, in Yerevan, was the first to communicate me quatrains of the Turkish-language Derzorian series of songs created by the Western 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.

During the past decades many of the eyewitnesses I met began to narrate and to sing with moans and tearful sobs, reliving their tragic past and gradually remembering new episode-quatrains of the harrowing Deir-el-Zor song series.

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

<i>“Zatik-Kiraki’ çadır söktüler, Bütün Ermenileri çöle döktüler, Keçi gibi Ermenileri kestiler, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki,<sup>1</sup> They drove all the Armenians into the desert, They slaughtered the Armenians like goats, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i> [T. 480]
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The eyewitness survivor **Hakob Terzian** (b. 1910), from Nicomedia, has testified about the same fact: *“In 1915, we were taken to a big valley on Easter Sunday. There were many corpses there. All of them were naked. They were arranged one on top of the other in the shape of a cross, as if they were wooden beams arranged on each other. They had stripped them all, slaughtered them, and then heaped them on each other. Then there came an order from the Ottoman government that there were all to be buried to prevent cholera. Thousands of people had gathered near the*

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian words “Zatik-Kiraki” (Easter Sunday) have been used in the Turkish-language song.

*Euphrates. We were in tents. Orders came; the Turks attacked us and began to slaughter the Armenians in order to avoid an international trial for having organized the Genocide. They [Turks] said that they had just “deported” us.*” [T. 233]

And the Derzorian indescribable tortures of the Armenians began:

<i>“Ağaçlardan kuş uçtu, Yandı yürek tutuştu: Yanma, yüreğim, yanma! Bu ayrılık bize düştü, Bu muhacirlik bize düştü, Bu Derzorluk<sup>1</sup> bize düştü.”</i>	<i>“The birds flew away from the trees, My heart is on fire, blazing: Don’t burn, my heart, don’t be afire! This separation was our fate, This emigration was our fate, This derzorluk<sup>1</sup> was our fate.” [T. 461]</i>
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Since the desert of Deir-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, Ne ekmek, ne su ölürüm belki...”</i>	<i>“If I go to Der-Zor, I won’t return may be, Without bread, without water I’ll die may be...” [T. 462]</i>
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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:

<i>“...Der Zor’a varmadan Ermeni muhaciri oturmuş Hüngür-hüngür ağlıyor...”</i>	<i>“...Before getting to Der-Zor, The Armenian exile sat, And cried his heart out...” [T. 462]</i>
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because the condition of the Armenian people was horrible:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde üç ağaç incir, Elimde-kelepçe, boynumda zincir, Zincir kımıldadıkça, yüreğim incir: Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“Three fig-trees in the desert of Der-Zor, Handcuffs on my hands, a chain on my neck, My heart aches every time the chain moves, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 485]</i>
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The deported Armenians passed this death road barefoot and bloodstained, with thirsty lips under the scorching sun:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil, Kurşuna dizdiler elli bin kişi: Meraktan döküldü milletin dişi, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor, Fifty thousand people were shot down, The people’s teeth fell down from affliction, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 482]</i>
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And everything was stained with the blood of the shot people:

<i>“Der Zor çölleri bürüdü duman, Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman! İnsan ve yeşil boyandı kana Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist, Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable, People and grass were stained with blood, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 464]</i>
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The Armenian people were exterminated ruthlessly:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde çürüdüm kaldım, Karğalara tahıl oldum, kaldım,</i>	<i>“I rotted and remained in the desert of Der-Zor, I remained and became a meal for the crows,</i>
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<sup>1</sup> Exile to Deir-el-Zor.

*Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”*

Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.” [T. 503]

Whereas the condition of the living was more disconsolate:

*“Der Zor çölünde yaralı çoktur,  
Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yoktur,  
Allah’dan başka kimsemiz yoktur,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Don’t come, doctor, don’t come, it’s useless,  
We have no one but the Lord Himself,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 504]

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,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!  
Hızor<sup>1</sup> Allahım, hızor,<sup>1</sup> yetiş!  
Ermeni milletini kurtar, geçir!”*

“I climbed and rose to the top of the mountain,  
So many misfortunes fell on the Armenians!  
Almighty<sup>1</sup> God, Almighty,<sup>1</sup> help us!  
Deliver the Armenian people, save us!” [T. 526]

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 kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağlıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 488]

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

*“Der Zor’un içinde naneler biter,  
Ölmüşlerin kokusu dünyaya yeter,  
Bu sürgünlük bize ölümden beter,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor,  
The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,  
This exile is worse than death for us,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 475]

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

*“Der Zor’ın içinde zincirli kuyu,  
Ermeniler içti zehirli suyu...”*

“A well with a chain in Der-Zor,  
The Armenians drank the poisonous water...” [T. 515]

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

*“Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,<sup>2</sup>  
Ermeni muhaciri tifoya düşmüş,  
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 were infected with typhoid,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.” [T. 473]

And in another variant:

*“Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,<sup>2</sup>  
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.” [T. 474]

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian word “hızor-hzor” (almighty) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabic word “mişmiş” (apricot or apricot-tree) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

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 yokdur, ki yüzüne bakayım,  
Ermeniler bu güne ulaşmış,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“He lay, sprawling, 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!” [T. 525]

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!” [T. 471]

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 efratı 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!” [T. 467]

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.” [T. 476]

Or something more horrible had happened: the deportees were compelled 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 Adourian** (b. 1909), from Zeytoun, [T. 258] and **Sirena Alajajian** (b. 1910), from Adabazar, [T. 225] whose faces had been tattooed with blue ink by the Arabs, as well as by many others:

*Der Zor çölünde yoruldum, 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. [T. 499]

It is sufficient to cite here a quotation from the narrative of the well-known specialist in literature, **Garnik Stepanian** (b. 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...*” [T. 95]

An eyewitness survivor from Sebastia, **Andranik Gavoukdjian** (b. 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...”* [T. 158]

**Trvanda Mouradian** (b. 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 confined 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 Mourat (Euphrates) River bridge, cut their throats and threw them into the river.... Two gendarmes drove 500 people to exile...”* [T. 120]

Another survivor from Meds Nor Gyugh of Bursa, **Ashot Ohanian** (b. 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! – Turk.)”* [T. 212]

A 96-year-old survivor from Nicomedia, **Geghetsik Yessayan** (b. 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, Eskişehir, Konia, Ereyli, Bozanti, Kanlı Geçit (Bloody Pass – Turk.), Aleppo, Bab, Meskené, Dipsi, Abou-Arar, Der-Zor.”* [T. 231]

An 80-year-old eyewitness survivor from Sebastia, **Souren Sargsian** (b. 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 Taurus Mountains and surmount a height of 3,900 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.”* [T. 155]

Then, the same eyewitness **Souren Sargsian** 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 – Turk.). ...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 Yedessia 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..." [T. 155]*

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

*"Şu dağın ardında Ermeni kızı var,  
Gidin, bakın çantasında nesi var?'  
'Güzel gözleri var,  
Sırma saçları var'."*

*"There is an Armenian girl behind this mountain,  
Go and see what she's got in her bag?'  
'She has beautiful eyes  
And silky hair'."* [T. 585]

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

*"Sabahtan kalktım kapı kapalı,  
Binbaşı geliyor eli sopalı,  
Uğruna bırakmış kör ve topalı,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!"*

*"I got up in the morning; the door was closed,  
The major came, a club in his hand,  
The blind and the lame spread before him,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"* [T. 486]

**Mkrtich Karapetian**, from Tigranakert (b. 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,<sup>1</sup>  
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,<sup>1</sup>  
No room was left for the Armenians in the valley,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"* [T. 522]

Subsequently, the same survivor, **Mkrtich Karapetian**, continued: *"...Finally we came and reached the northern part of the desert of Der-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..."* [T. 139]

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

<sup>1</sup> Delikli taş (hollow stone) – a stone ring fitted to the wall near the entrance of Armenian country houses to tie the horse reins.

*“Sabahtan kalktım, çantama baktım,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya boynuma taktım,  
Malımı-mülkümü Devlete 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!” [T. 492]

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** (b. 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 Khabur River (river flowing near Deir-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.*” [T. 229]

A 90-year-old survivor, **Grigor Gyozalian** (b. 1903, Moussa Dagh, Kabousié Village), 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. [T. 289]

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>1</sup> yol ver, geçelim çölü,  
Evlatım çışçıplak Arabın köyü,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”*

“Khabur,<sup>1</sup> make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
My child is in the Arab village, bare and naked,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.” [T. 508]

**Karapet Farashian** (b. 1906), from Balou, also related to me what he had seen: “...*A little later, a Turk by the name of Mehmet hoja (teacher – Turk.), 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 – Turk.). 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’...*” [T. 130]

**Mariam Baghdishian** (b. 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 Greek priest. [T. 294]

*“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!” [T. 496]

A heart-rending account was related to me by an eyewitness of these tragic events, **Arshakouhi Petrossian** (b. 1903), from Yozghat: “...*And then they started to take away the girls, they slaughtered the women, they decapitated*

<sup>1</sup> Habur/Khabur – river flowing near Deir-el-Zor.

the children and kicked their heads to and fro like balls. They also took away Filor's mother and slew her. They beheaded 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..." [T. 175]

**Evelina Kanayan** (b. 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..." [T. 59]

The same fact has also been confirmed by **Loris Papikian** (b. 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 prehistoric 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..." [T. 88]

**Hambardzoum Sahakian** (b. 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..." [T. 153]

Testimonies on analogous facts have also been given by the eyewitness survivor **Samvel Patrian** (b. 1900), from Eskişehir: "...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 karnında nesi var?" (What is in this woman's belly? – Turk.)

"Gâvurdur: kız olur." (She is a gâvur: it's a girl. – Turk.)

"Yok, oğlan olur." (No, it's a boy. – Turk.)

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...'. [T. 205]

And in fact, the Turkish policemen had become butchers:

"Aman! Mahmud Paşa, sen gel imana:  
Jandarmalar dönmüş kasapa,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman."

"Ah! Mahmud pasha, have pity on us:  
The gendarmes have become butchers,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor." [T. 521]

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,  
Kireç döküp, ateş verip yaktılar,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,

"They gathered the Armenians in a cave,  
They covered them with lime, set fire and burned them,  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman."  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor." [T. 484]

While the survivors wailed over their losses:

*“Hayatın çeşmesi buz gibi akar,  
Türk bacıları çadırdan bakar,  
Ermeni geliyor elleri bağlı:  
Analar ağlıyor – çocuğum diye,  
Gelinler ağlıyor – kocam diye,  
Kızlar ağlıyor – namusum diye.”*

“Ice-cold water is flowing from the fountain in the yard,  
Turkish women are looking from the tent,  
Armenians are coming with hands bound,  
Mothers are crying over their children,  
Brides are crying over their husbands,  
Girls are crying over their honor.” [T. 580]

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

*“Der Zor çölünde şaşırđım, kaldım,  
Yitirdim anamı, yitirdim babamı,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”*

“I stayed confused in the desert of Der-Zor,  
I lost my mother and father there,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.” [T. 500]

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,  
Kan olmuş sular, bir tas içilmez,  
Anadan, babadan vazgeçilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow, impassable,  
The water is bloody; you can’t drink a single cup,  
It is hard to renounce one’s mother and father,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 516]

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>1</sup>

*“Yeşil kurban olayım geçen günlere, mayrik!  
Kırıldı kanatlarım, kaldım çöllerde  
Anasız, babasız, mayrik!  
Düştüm diyar gurbete, mayrik!  
Ya ben ağlamayım, mayrik,  
Kimler ağlasın, mayrik?”*

“Let me be a tender sacrifice to the past days, mayrik!  
My arms were crumbled, I was left in the desert  
Without mother, without father, mayrik!  
I found myself in alien places, mayrik!  
If I don’t cry, mayrik,  
Who will cry then, mayrik?” [T. 582]

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 90-year-old survivor, an inhabitant of the Armenian national St. Prkich (Savior – Arm.) old-age nursing home in Istanbul, **Sirena Alajajian** (b. 1910), from Adabazar, was four years old when the Turks murdered her father and her mother. The Arab desert inhabitants took care of the parentless child. After four years, following the Armistice in 1918, when the orphan-collectors were gathering the Armenian orphan children in the deserts, they saw an eight-year-old little girl with curly blond hair and blue eyes, her beautiful face tattooed with blue ink, and bearing an Arabic name. Undoubtedly, she was Armenian. Although she had forgotten her Armenian speech, but she had not forgotten to cross herself as a Christian, and that was the proof that she was an Armenian-Christian. Thus, little Sirena was taken to the Armenian orphanage. [T. 225]

Another eyewitness survivor from Nicomedia, **Barouhi Silian** (b. 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*

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian word “*mayrik*” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

*other. The gendarmes caught my sister-in-law, who was pregnant, and made a bet: 'What is inside this gâvur's 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..." [T. 230]*

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** (b. 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'." [T. 156]

The sermons of the Mohammedan sheikh were also in harmony with the governmental order. **Garegin Touroudjikian** (b. 1903), from Harpoot, has noted in his memoir: "'Whoever kills seven gâvurs,' sheikh (Muslims' spiritual leader) Arif said, 'will go to paradise...'" [T. 118]

**Marie Vardanian** (b. 1905), from Malatia, has also testified to the same fact: "...The Mohammedan Turks said: 'Who kills a gâvur, his soul goes to paradise...'" [T. 132]

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 the boy's sister and crucified her,  
Ah, alas!  
They brought her down the cross and threw her into the sea,  
Ah, alas!" [TT. 444-445]*

**Yeghsa Khayadjanian** (b. 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..." [T. 114]

**Rober Galenian** (b. 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 – Turk.),' they circumcised them, they changed their names and forced them to speak Turkish..." [T. 127]

In his testimony, **Hakob Terzian** (b. 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..." [T. 100]

In 1999, I met by chance **Sargis Saryan** (b. 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...” [T. 131]

An 81-year-old survivor, **Harutyun Alboyadjian** (b. 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 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 hiding their Armenian origin. If the gendarmes knew about it, they would beat them with ‘falakhas’ (heavy club used as an implement of torture – Turk.); 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! – Turk.). We were clothed in the Turkish manner, a white robe and a long black, buttonless coat. We had a müdür (head-master – Turk.) and several khojakhans (women-teachers – Turk.). 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...” [T. 247]

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...”* [T. 456],

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

<i>“Giden, giden, Ermeni kızlar! Bir gün ölüm bize düşer, Düşmana avrat olmamaya, Yeprat’ın içinde ölüm bulayım.”</i>	<i>“Armenian girls going, going! One day death will come upon us, Before becoming the enemy’s wife, Let us find our death in the Euphrates.”</i> [T. 592]
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**Moushegh Hakobian** (b. 1890), from Nicomedia, remembered with similar distressing impressions what he had seen with his own eyes 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...” [T. 228]

The memoirs of **Mkrtich Khachatryan** (b. 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...” [T. 99]

The eyewitness survivor, **Garnik Stepanian** (b. 1909), a native of Yerznka, has recalled with emotion other tragic events, too: “...We were near Der-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.” [T. 95]

**Loris Papikian** (b. 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..." [T. 88]

Meanwhile, **Soghomon Yetenekian** (b. 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 Der-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..." [T. 237]

**Aharon Mankrian** (b. 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..." [T. 248]

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

"Der Zor çölleri taşlıdır, geçilmez,  
Yeprat getir<sup>1</sup> suları acıdır, bir tas içilmez!  
Ermeni kantıyla su da içilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!"

"The deserts of Der-Zor are stony, impassable,  
The waters of the Euphrates River are bitter, not potable,  
Water mixed with the blood of Armenians is undrinkable,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!" [T. 514]

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

"Meyvasız ağaçlar meyvaya döndü,  
Muhacir gidenin yarısı dönmedi..."

"The fruitless trees became laden with fruits,  
Half of the deportees did not come back..." [T. 528]

These facts are testified also by the Arab desert inhabitant **al Gihim** (b. 1880, Rakka), an eyewitness of the Armenian Genocide: "I am already 119 years old. I was born in Rakka. I remember well the sufferings of the poor exiled Armenians. They had been violently driven out of their homeland and walked hungry and thirsty to the Syrian Deserts to the bank of the Euphrates River. The Turk butchers had deceived the Armenians, saying that they would soon return to their homes, but had taken them to the bank of the Rakka rampart and slaughtered. Only 7 families were rescued by our Arabs, who had helped them to escape and find shelter in their tents." [T. 302]

The Arab desert inhabitant **Bashir el Saadi** (b. 1901, Rakka) also testified: "In 1915, I was 14 years old. I was a shepherd grazing the animals of our people on the bank of the Euphrates River, near Rakka. I saw groups of people – tired, exhausted, in rags, half-naked, who came to our areas. Later, I learned that the Turkish government had deported them from their homeland and had driven them to the Syrian deserts. Those Armenian exiles had walked under the guard of Turkish gendarmes for days, without knowing where they were going. They left their relatives by the roads. These were unable to walk and many of them had been killed by the Turks. I and my cousins used to go to the desert on our camels and, seeing their miserable state, helped them by milking our camels and giving them the milk to drink instead of water. They were so emaciated and weak that all of a sudden they fell down on the ground and died like sheep." [T. 303]

Recalling the tragic state of the Armenian deportees, the Arab desert woman **Batra** (b. 1906, Deir-el-Zor) has described, at the same time, the suffering Armenian women: "I am 93 years old. I am from the Syrian deserts. In 1915, I was 9 years old and I remember well how the exiled Armenian caravans arrived in Der-Zor one after the other. They had endured much torture. They were hungry, thirsty, in rags, and barefoot. They came and gathered near the Der-Zor

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian word "get" (river) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

bridge. We saw how the Turkish gendarmes and Chechens killed them. The women, who survived, married our Arab sheikhs and heads of the desert villages. They became good mothers of families. Most of them changed their religion, but some of them did not. We admired the beauty of Armenian women. They had marvelous eyes. Besides, they were balanced in nature, obedient and honest. They never begged. The Turks scattered the Armenians all over the Syrian deserts, but the Arabs pitied them and gathered them up.” [T. 306]

While **Hab Ali** (b. 1905, Ras-ul-Ayn) recalled in his testimony how he had saved several Armenians and mentioned that a number of Arab tribes had also humanely succored the suffering Armenian deportees: “*I was ten years old in 1915 and I remember well the unfortunate Armenian deportees. They reached Ras-ul-Ayn tired, exhausted, half-naked and blood-stained. I, myself, took several of them and hid them in a large pit, and they were saved from the Turkish gendarmes pursuing them. A number of Syrian tribes also helped those Armenians. Among these kind Arabs were Shanmar, Bakkara, Oubada, Ajubeh, Harp, al Muhamed, al Hassan, al Udwan, Jabran, Zubeyd and others who hid a great many Armenian women and children in their families and saved them from death. The Turk gendarmes on horseback and the soldiers, escorting the Armenian deportees, forced them to walk without taking a rest. The Chechens, the Kurds and even the Turkish soldiers themselves attacked them with knives and struck them with axes, while the Arabs have never touched or hurt the Armenians.*” [T. 304]

Poor Armenian women got married, out of despair, to the sheikhs or the heads of the Arab villages. This fact is testified by the Arab desert inhabitant **Abdul Ghafour** (b. 1915, Ras-ul-Ayn): “*The Armenians, who had been driven out of their historical native land by the Turks, arrived in Ras-ul-Ayn completely exhausted and disorganized. In order to survive, they became servants in the houses of the Arabs. Their women had beautiful eyes and were very diligent. These women were obliged to marry our desert sheikhs or the heads of the villages. Some of them changed their religion, but some – did not. In time, negative consequences followed. Their state soon became sad and melancholic. Later they tried to search and find their relatives and kept links with them, but being honest women, they preserved their families. A young girl, whose father and mother had been killed by the Turks, had walked the road of exile with her two younger brothers. Due to exhaustion and hunger, her brothers had died on the way, and she, alone, had reached Ras-ul-Ayn. Out of despair, she married the sheikh of the Shamma tribe. She gave birth to me, thus becoming my sisters’ and brothers’ loving and caring mother.*” [T. 305]

Consequently, both in the Syrian deserts and in the territory of Turkey, numerous generations of Armenians exist up to the present day, having lost their mother tongue, changed their names and even apostatized; nevertheless, they still remember the national identity of their ancestors. These facts are testified also by the representatives of the subsequent generations of the eyewitness survivors, **Jirayr Reisian** (b. 1949, Aleppo) [T. 382], **Martiros Ashekian** (b. 1927, Aleppo) [T. 383], as well as **Hakob Moutafian** (b. 1980, Deir-el-Zor) [T. 384] and others.

An eyewitness of these events, **Poghos Soupkoukian – Ashugh** (Minstrel – Arm.) **Develli** (b. 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;  
Why did they order with their evil tongue?  
In the year 1915  
Was the massacre of the Armenians of Cilicia.  
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 into the water with their sisters,  
No one protected the Armenian nation...”* [T. 454]

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** (b. 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...*” [T. 51]

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 18th 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 19th of July, and decided to disregard the disastrous order of deportation.

**Movses Panossian** (b. 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.*” [T. 281]

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** (b. 1891), **Hovhannes Ipredjian** (b. 1896), **Tonik Tonikian** (b. 1898) and many other natives of Moussa Dagh. [TT. 283-285]

Another participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh, **Poghos Soupkoukian – Ashugh** (Minstrel – Arm.) **Develli** (b. 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 Yaghoubian’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!’”* [T. 454]

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 Yaghoubian, Petros Demlakian and the Very Reverend Tigran Andreassian. During this period, four serious battles took place on the heights of Kezeldja, Kuzdjeghaz, Damladjik and Ghaplan Douzakh. 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.” [T. 635]*

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 5th 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, Movses Kerekian jumped into the sea. He reached the ship swimming and, crossing himself, presented the letter to the captain. On the 14th of September, the French steamship “Jeanne d’Arc,” escorted by British battleships, approached Moussa Dagh and, taking on 4,200 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:

*“...Osmanlının askerleri,  
Musadağ’ın yiğitleri,  
Bin-binlerce martinleri,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!*

*“...The Ottoman soldiers,  
The braves of Moussa Dagh,  
The rifles in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!*

*Osmanlının bombaları,  
Musadağ'ın metarışları,  
Bin-binlerce topları,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!*

*Fransızın vapurları,  
Musadağ'ın duaları,  
Gelin, kızlar, çocukları,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!"*

The Ottoman bombs,  
The ramparts of Moussa Dagh,  
The cannons in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!

The French steamships,  
The prayers of the Moussa Dagh people,  
The brides, the girls and the children,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!" [T. 634]

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 – Turk.) of Yedessia (Urfa), an Ittihat 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 Yedessia, the Very Reverend Artavazd Galenterian, was put under arrest. In August, one thousand five hundred young Armenian recruits from Yedessia were slain in the localities of Gutemé and Karakyopru. 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 Yedessia, 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 Yedessia 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 Yedessia was organized, under the command of Mkrtitch Yotneghbayrian and Harutyun Rastkelenian. The whole Armenian population of Yedessia 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 Yedessians (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 Yedessians (Urfans) let the enemy soldiers invade the Armenian quarter and, lying in ambush, annihilated them. Their intrepidity had become proverbial.

*"Urfa büyük, ayrılmaz,  
Dibi gayım, dağılmaz,  
Urfa'nın yiğitleri  
Hiç bir yerde bulunmaz."*

"Urfa is large; it cannot be separated,  
Its ground is firm; it cannot be dispersed,  
The braves of Urfa  
Are alone of their kind." [T. 638]

Meeting an obstinate resistance, a regular army composed of six thousand soldiers under the command of Fakhry pasha was sent to Yedessia, to which were joined twelve thousand brigands. The defenders of Yedessia 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, Mkrtych 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 Yedessia 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!” [Memorial 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 23rd of October, the Turks invaded the Armenian quarter and cruelly slaughtered the devoted heroes of Yedessia and deported the surviving eight hundred families of the neighboring Armenian-inhabited village of Kamurdj to Deir-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 Yedessia, **Khacher** (b. 1893), **Khoren** (b. 1893) and **Nvard** (b. 1903) **Ablapoutians**. [TT. 143-145]

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  
Cennet yüzü görmesin!*”

“...May the person who planned this exile  
Be unworthy of paradise!” [T. 527]

Or:

“...*Şu sürgünlük icat eden  
Cehennem yoluna kurban olsun!*”

“...May the person who planned this exile  
Be sacrificed on the road to hell!” [T. 528]

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,<sup>1</sup>  
Kör olasın sen, Enver Paşa!  
Sen olmayaydın, sen gebereydin,  
Şun<sup>2</sup> -Talaat Paşa!  
Ermenileri dağıttın dağlardan taşta.*”

“I tied my horse to the hollow stone,<sup>1</sup>  
May you lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
You shouldn't have been born, you should perish,  
You, hound-Talaat pasha!  
”You dispersed the Armenians in mountains and deserts.” [T. 543]

Besides the songs, the eyewitness survivors have also referred in their memoirs to the leaders of the Ittihat government, who organized that massive carnage. According to **Yervand Karamian** (b. 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...*” [T. 249]

Criticizing the deportation organized by the government of Young Turks, a survivor from Zeytoun, **Samvel Ardjikian** (b. 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.*” [T. 257]

Referring to the mode of action of the Ittihat government, a survivor from Sebastia, **Khoren Gyulbenkian**

<sup>1</sup> Delikli taş (hollow stone) – a stone ring fitted to the wall near the entrance of Armenian country houses to tie the horse reins.

<sup>2</sup> Armenian word “shoon” (hound) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

(b. 1895), added: “*The government had instigated the Turkish people against the Armenians, saying 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.*” [T. 152]

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** (b. 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...’*” [T. 134]

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 – Turk.), “*Nankör gâvur*” (Ungrateful gâvur – Turk.), “*Gâvura iyilik yaramaz*” (It isn’t worth being good to the gâvur – Turk.), “*Gâvuru ne kadar kesersen, o kadar sık biter*” (The more you slay the gâvur, the thicker he grows – Turk.), or the proverb-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 – Turk.), etc. [T. 92]

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 narratives concerning this fact in 1996 and 1997 from grateful representatives of the Armenian Community in Turkey. [TT. 361-363]

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, Houseinik, 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:

*“Birir-birer saydım dört sene oldu,  
Ermeni askeri Nablus’u aldı,  
Ermeni askeri bin beş yüz kişi,  
İngiliz, Fransız şaştı bu işe.”*

*“One by one I counted four years,  
The Armenian soldiers occupied Nablous,  
They were one thousand five hundred in number,  
The English and the French were amazed.”* [T. 545]

And indeed, the French and the British commanders-in-chief praised the brave Armenian legionaries. On the 12th of October, 1918, General Allenby sent a telegram to the President of the Armenian National Delegation, Poghos Noubar, 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 (1975-1985) of Armenia, John Kirakossian (1929-1985), 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 the 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>Büyükleri kesmeli,</i>	Slaughter the adults!
<i>Güzelleri seçmeli,</i>	Choose the pretty ones!
<i>O birleri sürmeli."</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 "İstiklal" 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 (30th of October, 1914) till the overthrow of the government of Talaat pasha (7th 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 – Turk., 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 ‘Ittihat’ Party [and] the Young Turks were outlawed in Turkey. The European public opinion was strictly anti-Young Turk. The eminent orientalist, 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 commenting, 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 John Kirakossian. [Kirakossian 1983: pp. 163, 170-171, 176, 208]

The Peace Treaty of Sèvres (near Paris), signed on August 10, 1920, between the Turkish government and the Allied States, which had emerged victorious in World War I, could promote the solution of the Armenian Case and provide sufficient territories to the Armenian people for their national re-gathering. The efforts of the U.S. 28th President Woodrow Wilson were also directed to that purpose.

While 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 Deir-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.

However, the Kemalists had recourse to all means to avert the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres and, as a first step, they started a new invasion of the First Republic (1918-1920) of Armenia, that is, with regard to Eastern Armenia with a view to definitively annihilating it as well.

That fact is confirmed by the testimonies of many eyewitness survivors, as well as of the inhabitant of the village of Mastara (Talin Region, Eastern Armenia), **Badal Shahoyan** (b. 1901): “*On May 22, 1918, at 2 P.M. the Turk governor Ahmad efendi enlisted, in the village of Mastara (Talin Region, Eastern Armenia), 1,500 Armenian men, declaring that they would be taken to Kars to work in road construction and that they would come back in 20 days. Out of the 1,500 men, 370 were inhabitants of Mastara, while the others were refugees from the villages of the Kars Region, who had escaped, terror-stricken, from the massacre, ravage and plunder organized by the Turks and had sought refuge in Mastara. In order not to arouse suspicion, the shrewd Turks led us escorted by a few gendarmes, as if to protect us from*

any danger. When we reached the neighboring village where oil was being made, they packed us in four huge barns and locked the doors. Then they threw inside handfuls of straw and kerosene through the windows and set the barns on fire. From among that huge number of men, only 11 people remained alive. This carnage is an eloquent proof of the plan of exterminating the Armenians framed by the brute Turks. The list of the Armenians imprisoned and burnt in the barns was compiled in 1922 and it has been compared, name by name, with that of the census taken by Bishop Daniel, and kept at the Archives of the Mother See of Etchmiadzin. I, Badal Hovakim Shahoyan, a person miraculously saved from that carnage, now an inhabitant of the village of Mastara, have written down this testimony.” [T. 315].<sup>1</sup>

In 1921, the Kemalists, taking advantage of the new international situation, which was created following the warm relations between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey, succeeded in having the Treaty of Sèvres revised.

Ignoring the Treaty of Sèvres and taking priority 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 Kemalist 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** (b. 1898) narrated me 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 – Turk.) 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' – Arm.). 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

<sup>1</sup> The list of the 1,500 men burnt in the barns was written down by Badal Hovakim Shahoyan, who had survived by a miracle. This lengthy list is kept at the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, File No. 24.

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 – Turk.), 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..." [T. 259]

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

<p>"Maraş'a Maraş derler, yaman, yaman! Maraş, bu nasıl Maraş derler? Maraş'ın içinde kilise yanar, Kilise içinde Ermeni yanar!..."</p>	<p>"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!..." [T. 550]</p>
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Thirteen thousand Armenians perished during the massacres of Marash. Subsequently, the surviving eight thousand residents of Marash, together with six thousand Armenians from Yedessia, were forcibly deported to Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad and to the regions of Anatolia found under Greek domination.

On the 1st of April, 1920, the Kemalist 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 Adour Levonian. The latter took stock of the arms and the ammunition of the 750 fighters and organized the manufacture of shells.

**Sandoukht Hekimian** (b. 1908, Ayntap) testified to these historical events: "In 1920, Ali Keledj [Suleyman Asaf Emrullah (1889-1971)] attacked Ayntap with a tremendous army. The leader of the self-defensive committee of Ayntap was Adour Levonian. He 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 Keledj to flee in dismay in one night shouting: 'Gâvurun gözü kan doldu' (The gâvur's eye is filled with blood – Turk.. That is: The Armenians are filled with vengeance). The Armenians of Ayntap had composed a song about Adour Levonian..." [T. 269]

The son of the same eyewitness survivor, **Gevorg Hekimian** (b. 1937, Beirut) has communicated me that song he had heard from his mother:

<p>"Adur Paşa, kalk sen! Çam çırayı, yak sen! Türkler hücum ediyor: Kamavorlar<sup>1</sup> arş<sup>2</sup> edin!"</p>	<p>"Adour pasha, get up! Light your kindlings! The Turks are attacking: Charge with your volunteers!" [T. 641]</p>
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In the meantime, the commander-in-chief of the occupation of Cilicia, Gozan oghlu Doghan bey [Kemal Dogan

<sup>1</sup>The Armenian word "kamavorlar" (volunteers) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>2</sup>The Armenian verb "arş/arshavel" (to charge) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

(1879-1951)], 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.

*“Doğan Bey de geldi, girdi Hacın’a...  
Yazık oldu sana, koca Hacın!...  
Orada kapıştılar bizim malımız...  
Der Zor çölü oldu bize vatan,  
Ayak altına gitti sahipsiz Ermeni!”*

*“Doghan bey came and entered Hadjn...  
How regrettable for you, immense Hadjn!...  
Our possessions were pillaged there...  
The desert of Der-Zor became our homeland,  
The ownerless Armenians were trampled down!” [T. 551]*

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 Sargis Jebejian, General Andranik’s comrade-in-arms. Four military companies and a squadron composed of sixty cavalymen 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 1,200 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** (b. 1903), from Zeytoun: “*One day, a Turkish caravan was passing by. We, the youth, held them up and we saw – guess what? Boxes of bullets. We were delighted. Soon our bullets would have finished. So, already, the Russian government who had become Soviet, had given them to the Turks to massacre us, the Armenians. We filled them into our pockets, our saddle-bags, we carried them on our shoulders, for we would need them while fighting, but, alas, our rifles weren’t Russian. Ours were either German or Greek. So, we shouldered those Russian heavy bullets and carried them for months with us, from place to place, hoping to get or find a Russian rifle and use them while fighting.*” [T. 253]

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.” [Aram Aspet 1961: p. 242] These facts were confirmed also by **Aharon Mankrian** (b. 1903), a survivor from Hadjn, in the memoir he related to me. [T. 248]

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!’” [T. 649]*

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** (b. 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 covered 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...*” [T. 259]

The French government, breaking its obligations as an ally, handed Cilicia over to Turkey by an agreement signed on the 20th 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 Tehlirian 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 Tehlirian, 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,  
Tehlirian caught him up,  
He shot him in the forehead, 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!”* [T. 650]

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** (b. 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...” [T. 95]

A survivor from Afion-Garahissar, **Arpiné Bartikian** (b. 1903), remembered with emotion the ghastly scenes she had witnessed and told me: “...And then the Milli (Nationalistic – Turk.) movement started, Izmir was committed to the flames. They burned the Armenian quarter, Haynots, in the first place and set fire to the St. 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 – Turk.). 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...” [T. 195]

An eyewitness survivor, familiar to us from the deportation episodes of Deir-el-Zor, **Smbyl Berberian** (b. 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...” [T. 198]

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>1</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,  
They burnt you and charred you...” [T. 563]*

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 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’re dispersed in all directions.” [T. 564]*

<sup>1</sup> The town of Afion-Garahissar.

Moreover, by the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923, the Allies reorganized Mustafa Kemal's Ankara government and its rights with regard to Eastern Thrace, Izmir, Cilicia, as well as to all the territories which had been allotted by the Peace Treaty of Sèvres to Armenia. In addition, they reorganized the new frontiers of Turkey, which included also the former region of Eastern Armenia, Kars, Ardahan and Surmalou (Igdir). That was Turkey's victory, while a very small part (1/10) of Historic Armenia continued to exist as First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), Soviet Armenia (1920-1991) and from 1991 – as Republic of Armenia, but the majority of the Armenian people remained dispersed in the various countries of the world.

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!” [T. 663]*

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 mass Repatriation was organized from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, France, Greece, the Balkan states and from distant America...

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 1st 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!” [T. 666]*

The following song having an emphasis on rightful claim has been woven in those days:

*“Drive on, dear caravan,  
Armenia is waiting for us,  
Let the whole world know,  
Kars and Ardahan are ours.*

*... We want them, we want them,  
Kars and Ardahan are ours,  
If they don't give them to us,  
Baghramian will take them with armed forces.*

*...Kars and Ardahan will  
Soon be returned to us,*

*So that we transform  
These waste lands into a paradise.” [T. 672]*

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 I have recorded from the eyewitness survivors and thousands and thousands other evidences, the past of Ottoman Turkey has never been “honorable.”

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 occupied 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 yearn to see my Cilicia,  
Its air is pure, its water – clear,  
I yearn to see my Cilicia,  
Monasteries and fortresses are plenty there.” [T. 658]*

And the rightful claim is more emphasized:

*“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 yearn to see Sassoun and Van;  
Zeytoun, Hadjn and Moussa Dagh,  
Tarson, Marash, Sis and Ayntap,  
We, certainly, will embellish.” [T. 658]*

Therefore, the repatriate Western Armenians came also to Eastern (Soviet) Armenia having great hopes of righteously retrieving their occupied native lands. However, the historical conditions were different...

Consequently, the eyewitness survivors deported from more than 150 localities have not only told me their sad experiences of the past, what they had seen and felt, but they have also mentioned the countless losses they had suffered and have come to certain political conclusions, as the survivor from Ayntap, **Pargev Makarian** (b. 1915), who communicated me: “...*The Great Powers deceived the Armenians; they gave Cilicia to the Turks. The Armenians of Zeytoun, Adana, Sis, Marash, Kilis, Ayntap, Yedessia, 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 provoked the disaster of Izmir; the Armenians and the Greeks escaped through the flames, threw themselves into the sea; all those, who were saved, went to other countries. Thus, the Turks “cleaned” Turkey of Christians. Turkey, along with Western Armenia and Cilicia, remained to the Turks.*” [T. 272]

As **Hakob Holobikian** (b. 1902), from Harpoot, has concluded, after describing in detail the afflictions he and his compatriots had suffered: “...*This crime committed by the Young Turks will never be forgotten and should never be*

forgiven!” [T. 115]

While the survivor **Nvard Gevorgian** (b. 1910, Alashkert) has described in detail the atrocities committed by the Turks and has given her reasons why the Turks should not be forgiven: “*We lived peacefully in Alashkert. One day in 1915, the Turks attacked our village. They gathered the people of our village, tied their hands and feet and, dragging pushing them, filled them in barns and burned them alive. Our clan consisted of twenty-two and our family – of five people: my father, mother and three sisters. My uncle, his sons and grandchildren, my mother’s brothers and their children, my parents all were taken to the barn and were burned... The Turks slaughtered us, killed, made us orphans and deprived us of our houses, land and relatives. I did not enjoy my parents’ love. I missed them very much. I only see them on my dreams... My husband Rouben’s family had also been slaughtered by the Turks. The Turks harmed us very much. God won’t forgive them...*” [T. 67]

Besides their human losses, the survivors have mentioned also their land and property losses, as **Nvard Mouradian** (b. 1912, Bitlis) has done: “*...At the end I want to say that the Turks not only massacred us, but they occupied our land, captured our property. From our family, which had one hundred members, only I and my sister have survived.*” [T. 22]

The painter **Elena Abrahamian** (b. 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.*” [T. 77]

At the end of her narrative, **Evelina Kanayan** (b. 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...*” [T. 59]

**Ghoukas Karapetian** (b. 1901), from Moks, 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.*” [T. 57]

Or the eyewitness survivor **Dsirani Matevossian** (b. 1900, Harpoot), has mentioned one-by-one their losses: “*...Eh, my darling, do you know what we have suffered? I have seen numberless people killed. We have drunk water from under the horse hoofs. We had riches, which remained to the Turks. They have driven us like sheep. How we have slept at the doors of many people, we have remained hungry, how we have been tortured... The Turks wanted to burn us. They have exiled us under the lashes of the whip. May my enemy not see what we have seen. Let General Andranik be bathed (sleep) in light. He came and brought us to Armenia, but we have lost everything. ...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...*” [T. 113]

The people, however, led by their innate collective wisdom, have displayed a fair and correct attitude, as the survivor **Hmayak Boyadjian** (b. 1902, Bitlis): “*...I have named my children after my martyrs: Shoghik and Yervand... During the Genocide I lost all my relatives and when I was prisoner, I saw all the cruelties of the Turks and Kurds. I am full of revenge. I, too, think, as Yeghishé Charents has said that our salvation is in our united strength.*” [T. 19]

**Tovik Baghdassarian** (b. 1901), from Van, has bequeathed the precept: “*...I want to tell the new generation that they should know how their grandfathers have set foot on Eastern Armenia. The Armenians have had their beautiful Motherland. The new generations mustn’t forget and they must do everything so that justice prevails, and the Western Armenian question finds its solution. The great German political activists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg have criticized the Wilhelm government. The Turks themselves convicted Talaat pasha and many others. I hope that the UN will pass a righteous judgment.*” [T. 31]

Whereas, the Turkish propaganda and official historiography of today are not sparing any efforts to distort the

true historical evidences, with a view to carefully concealing from the coming generations the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk government. 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, by condemning them to death. 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 1st of August, 1926) also condemned the criminals: “These left-overs from the former Young Turkey Party, who should have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven on masse from their homes and massacred, have been restive under the Republican rule. They have hitherto lived on plunder, robbery and bribery and become inimical to any idea or suggestion to enlist in useful labor and earn their living by the honest sweat of their brow...” [Sassounian 2005: p. 13]

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

Having this circumstance in view, **Hakob Papazian** (b. 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 captive, 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...*” [T. 200]

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 20th 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 and in different languages, into academic 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 POLITICAL MASSIVE CRIME and it should not go unpunished, but it should be juridically elucidated also on the basis of the testimonies of eyewitness survivors. 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 20th century, the Armenian Genocide: Uruguay (1965), Cyprus (1982), Argentine (1993), People's Permanent Tribunal (1984), Sub-Commission of the United Nations (1985), European Parliament (1987, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002), Russia (1995), Bulgaria (1995), Greece (1996), Belgium (1998), Sweden (2000, 2010), Vatican (2000), Lebanon (2000), Italy (2000), France (2001), Switzerland (2003), Canada (2004), Slovakia (2004), Netherlands (2004), Poland (2005), Germany (2005), Venezuela (2005), Lithuania (2005) [<http://www.armenian-genocide.org>, <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/>, "France Arménie," Lyon, 2005, No. 260, 16-30 Septembre, p. 11], Chile (2007), as well as 42 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 21st century aiming to perfection and democracy and, particularly the demand of the historical truth.

The Armenian people, who have suffered more than 1.5 million innocent victims, have lost 9/10 of their native land, come out strongly today as claimants and demand a deserved retribution and a rightful compensation, particularly that the historico-political documents ratified by the Sèvres Treaty can serve as irrefutable legal grounds in the rightful solution of the **Armenian Case**.

It is time, therefore, that the present government of the Republic of Turkey, too, has the courage not only of recognizing the obvious historical truth, which has been substantiated by written and oral evidences and is not in need of any further proof, but also of condemning the accomplished fact and of compensating the Armenian people for the moral, material and territorial losses of the tragic historical event, which is called **the Armenian Genocide**.





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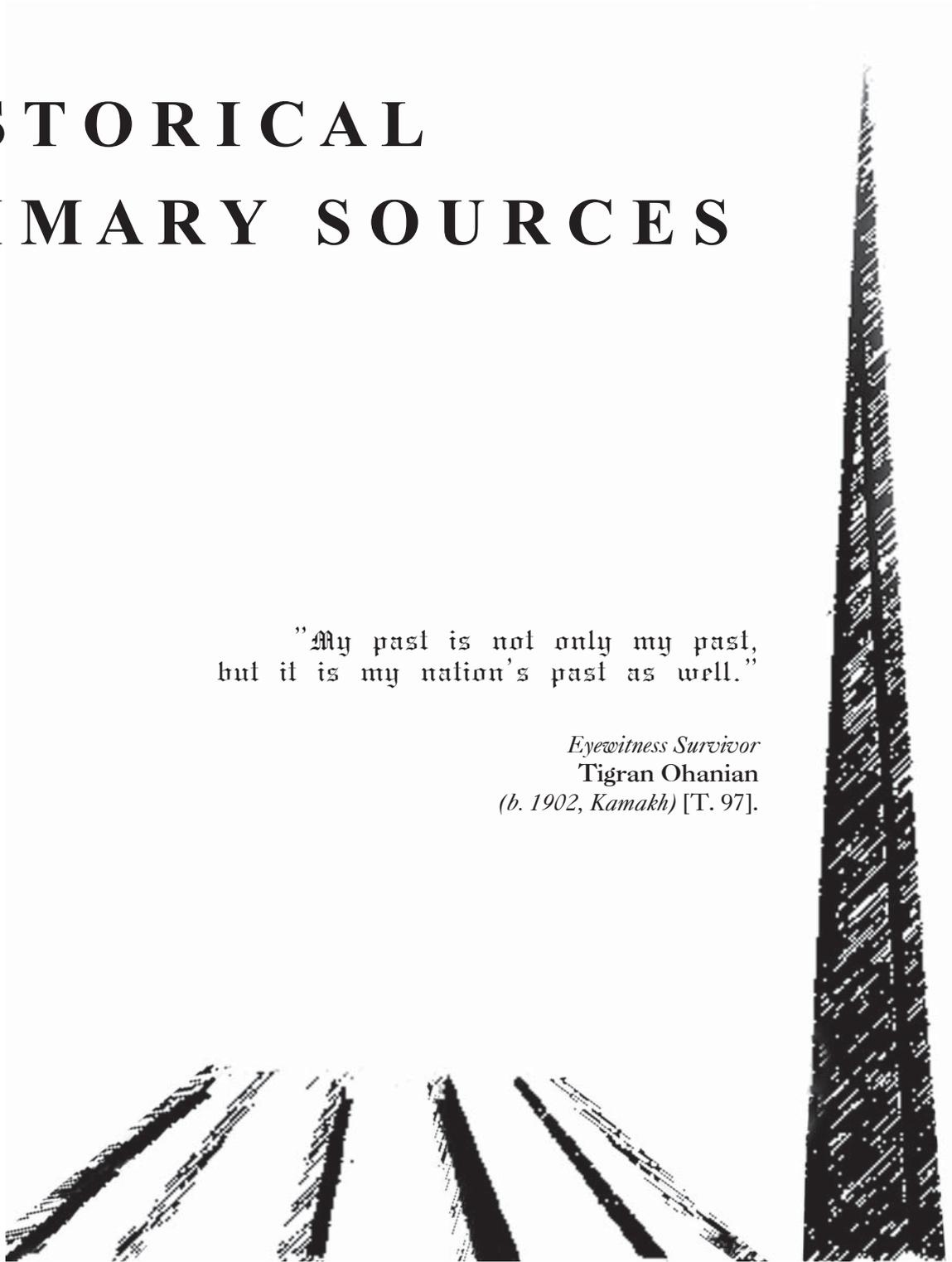
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## PART TWO

# HISTORICAL PRIMARY SOURCES

"My past is not only my past,  
but it is my nation's past as well."

*Eyewitness Survivor*  
**Tigran Ohanian**  
(b. 1902, Kamakh) [T. 97].





**I.**  
**HISTORICAL**  
**MEMOIR-TESTIMONIES**





**1 (1).**  
**YEGHIAZAR KARAPETIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(Born\* 1886, Sassoun)**

The Hurriyet of 1908 offered freedom to all the political prisoners, after which the Armenians, Turks, Kurds would have equal rights. According to the fraternal treaty of the Young Turks and the Armenian Dashnak Party the Armenian national-liberation struggle would come to an end and all the nations living in Turkey, filled with patriotism, would defend, with united forces, the Ottoman Empire, its newly created Constitution and the government: the creator of progressive laws. By a special decree the fedayis were invited to Moosh. Under the leadership of Rouben the group of hayduks came forth without guns. The Hurriyet 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. The new parliament in its first session issued a series of laws, among them the military service of the Armenians in the Ottoman army.

Sultan Hamid was still reigning when on March 31, 1909 thirty thousand Armenians were slaughtered in Cilicia. In April 1909 Sultan Hamid was dethroned and

his senior brother Muhammed Reshad succeeded him. Enver, Talaat, Djemal and Nazim's new government came to power. They cancelled the laws issued by Sultan Hamid and the centuries-old dream of the Armenian people: "Peace, equality, fraternity" came true.

The central committees of the two Armenian political parties: the Hnchaks and the Dashnaks were in close and friendly relations outwardly. Every day the leaders of the two parties gathered in clubs and delivered patriotic speeches dedicated to the Constitution. The Turk and the Armenian leaders in turn invited each other to feasts and banquets, walked in the streets arm in arm, visited government official establishments and the Armenian Patriarchate together.

The Armenians enjoyed great privileges: they even interfered with the law suits and the complicated disputes.

Reverend Mihran brought the news of World War I. On August 3 the eclipse of the sun took place.

Enver pasha's relative, Servet pasha, came to collect the needs of the army using brutal means.

The hatred towards the Armenian subjects was getting deeper and deeper. The fury was not limited only to the Armenian volunteers who had joined the Russian army and were fighting against them.

To worsen the irritation of the Turks against the Armenians, the government spread turbulent news declaring that the Armenian soldiers and officers serving in the army deserted the front when they seized the

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\* Born – henceforth: B.

convenient opportunity and passed to the Russian side, betraying them and conveyed military secrets and turned their guns against the Turks. To this were added also the old spite and revenge. Talaat's and Enver's constitutional Turkey decided, by means of sword and fire, to eradicate the Armenians, their subject citizens who had always made the country flourish. An order came to disarm the Armenian soldiers serving in the Turkish army and form from them 'Amelé tabour.' They took the guns from all the Armenians serving in the Turkish army, formed labor battalions and made them construct roads and carry loads in the severe winter cold.

From the very first day of war the attitude of the Turkish government towards the Armenians was not friendly and hopeful. They always considered them enemies. And the shots from the fugitives of the water-mill and the burning of thirteen gendarmes in the village of Koms would weigh heavily on the Armenians.

On February 20, at night, eighty representatives, invited from fifteen villages, gathered in the Arakelots Monastery for consultation and to get prepared for self-defense. The Sassounites had one thousand and five hundred rifles.

On February 22 shots were heard from the Arakelots Monastery.

On March 13 Sheikh Hazret was in the market-place of Moosh. There he had a consultation with Servet pasha, Hadji Moussabek and the leaders of the Young Turks, and decided to slaughter the Armenians.

On April 7 an unequal fight started between the Turkish government and the Armenians of Van. During the fighting at the St. Arakelots, where Armenian fedayis were combating near the St. Astvadsadsin Church, Ahmed pasha was killed. Mutasarrif Servet pasha of the Sassoun Province delivered a speech at the burial of Ahmed pasha where he said: "Ahmed, my son, sleep in peace. I swear on your grave that so many Armenians will be killed as many hair you have on your head." This was the last oath and the last words of the mutasarrif, who had lost his patience and was filled with revenge: He would never forget it, and the sacred promise would be realized in the near future.

In 1915 the Kurds attacked the Slivan Village of Sassoun and slaughtered the Armenians. On April 22, one thousands armed Kurds from Sarma, Mouser and Bakran, having Avdulaziz as their chief, attacked the 20 villages of Psank. They killed and plundered ruthlessly. The unarmed Armenians, after a short defense, left everything and ran away to save their lives: women and children took refuge in the mountains. The Kurds invaded the village, plundered it and then set it on fire. About 150 men, women and children not being able to escape to the mountains found refuge in the monastery, headed by the superior of the monastery, Stepan Vardapet, and Aghdjé from the village of Gomrter. Guessing that the

Armenians were in the monastery, Avdulaziz surrounded them, and the fighting went on. The Kurds could not enter the fortress and they closed the water-pipe from outside to force the Armenians to surrender. Almost a fortnight the besieged Armenians lived without water in great despair. A Kurd woman, named Sosseh, an acquaintance of Aghdjé, went and secretly opened the water-valve by night. It was so unexpected, and the Armenians rejoiced greatly. They filled the jars and all the pots with water till morning. At dawn the Kurds guessed it and stopped the water again.

The besieged Armenians, having no communication with the outside world, fought for a whole month and defended themselves, but, at last, noticing that the situation was getting worse and worse and no hope of survival was left, they wrote a letter to Andok describing their extremely hard situation and sent the letter with the Vardapet and a young man, Aghdjé Sahak, through a secret way. They entreated Andok to send them immediate help or advise them what to do. In his answer Rouben said that he was not able to send any help and their staying there was aimless, so, he suggested that they should find a way to come out of the monastery and join him.

One night after being surrounded for 30 days, the Armenians broke through without any loss, reached the hills of Talvorik and from there to the mount of Andok. The Kurds competed with each other in killing and plundering the Armenians; their greatest desire was to loot the Armenians' possessions and livestock.

On May 2, the Khian and Badkan ashirats, under the leadership of Kor Sleman agha (from Parga), invaded the Talvorik villages having in mind to occupy Andok, disperse the Armenians who had gathered there and to capture large booty. But they gave great losses and could not approach it. During the fighting 200 armed Kurds from the Balak ashirat, climbed up the Dsovasar by night. At dawn they attacked a pasture of the village of Aghbik and took away the whole herd. The Kurds of Shegotan, who were the landlords of the Aghbik Armenians, hearing about the plunder accomplished by the Kurds from Balak decided, instead of avenging them, to pillage whatever had remained. On May 6, the chief of the Shego ashirat, Habeyi Yousouf living in the village of Dalerdzor, his uncle Fado's two sons, Khalo and Mouso, and twenty armed Kurds went to Aghbik to persuade the Armenians: "Some misfortune may befall you, and others may take your possessions, so it's better you trust us your livestock. We are your landowners: we'll keep them for you. Who knows, maybe later you will get free and you will get back your property."

Seeing them approach, the Armenian youth opened fire. The fighting lasted the whole day, till sunset. The Kurds lost eleven people, among them Khallo and Mouso, the Armenians lost five. Yousouf ran away. This

event affected the Muslim Kurds greatly, as, in those days, one thousand Armenians were not worth a hen, while one Kurd was worth one thousand Armenians.

On the 14th of May the Balak and Shego ashirats, composed of 2,000 armed Kurds, joined and attacked the Armenians villages of Garmak and Kob in two directions.

The Armenians did not have regular guns; they defended themselves with chakhmakh rifles and moved to the village of Semal over mountains and dales. On their way they asked for help from the chief of Tapik Village, Talib efendi, but when the latter noticed the Kurds' invasion and the Armenians' flight, he immediately entered his kyoshk together with his gendarmes and shut the door. Losing all hope, the Armenians took up their position near the village of Iritsank and held back the Kurds. The fight was intense. The news had reached Semal. At midday, Koryun, Vardan and 300 armed Sassounites came to their assistance. After fighting violently for an hour the Kurds retreated taking away with them the booty.

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.

Vahan Papazian's house was searched when he was not at home.

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 as 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 in such an 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 north-western 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 Karapet had been committed to the assistant chieftain,

the Young Turk Rashid efendi, 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 north-eastern flank of the field, the massacre of the fifteen villages had been assigned to Derbo Djendi from Djebran, to Koloto 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 22nd of June, one hundred Kurd horsemen from Bakran settled on the slopes of the Krenkan Gyor 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 also here 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.

On the night of June 23, gun shots were heard from the village of Aragh. At night groups of runaway youths from Aragh reached Havatorik. They told that two young men of Aragh, determined to bring evil on the Armenians, had fired their rifles in the darkness of the streets, had rushed into the two-storeyed residence of the agha and had told him that Zorik had fired at them from his pistol. Mameh efendi, joining the mutineers, had

started firing with them from the windows of his house. Fearing that the army in the monastery might hear them and move towards Aragh, they had run away and come to us. Indeed, on the following day, the militia from the monastery entered Havatorik. The whole day they had been running here and there. We learned later that eleven Armenians had been killed. The next morning a few mothers and mournful women had gone, with tearful eyes to the government to protest against the crime, but the gendarmes had driven them with whips out of the town. This was the signal to begin slaughtering the Armenians of the plain, while we expected mercy from them. The Kurd tax-collectors continued their forcible tax-collecting so as to get their own share before the beginning of the massacres. The runaways from Aragh told: "Yesterday afternoon more than two hundred gendarmes, militiamen, sergeants and corporals under the command of a Captain Kamil efendi, came from Moosh, entered the village, closed the roads, gathered all the males in Alibek's stable and killed them there."

On June 26, in the daytime, Servet pasha summoned, through the chief police officer Behjet efendi, the well-known merchants, the Armenian officials working in the government, the primate Vardan Vardapet, three hundred and fifty men in all, and told them: "Armenians, for unknown reasons to me there is an order to deport you temporarily from Moosh to Diarbekir till war is over." After this announcement, the pasha did not let them go home. They were taken away to an unknown place, and none of them came back.

The 28th of June was the Sunday of Vardavar, the merry holiday of the Armenian nation, which, alas, was converted into the Sunday of Mardavar (burning of people – Arm.) for the Armenians of the Taron plain. On Sunday and the following night innocent and unarmed women and children were slaughtered in the villages of the Moosh plain. On Saturday three men were killed in the village of Aragh, fifty-five to sixty people were arrested; the army had not left the village. In the morning they moved from Aragh to Havatorik. The whole night Yussuf efendi and his gendarmes neither took off their clothes, nor slept. They sat gun in hand: they were afraid that the fedayis would come and kill them.

The thief Kurd Dondo said to the Armenians: "The Turk Osman onbashi just told me that yesterday Aziz chavoush had told him that on the next day the deportation and the massacre of the Armenians would begin for sure." And indeed, Moussa bey came to the plain of Taron with numerous horsemen. One part made its way to Berdak, the other – to Aragh, a third part – to Mokouk, another – to Tergevank, and the shooting began. Killing the men watering the fields, the reapers and the shepherds, they swiftly invaded the village. The Young Turk government, together with the Kurd beys, aghas and sheikhs turned the plain of Moosh into a

wilderness: that Sunday tens of thousands women and children were suffocated and roasted in smoke and fire. And the fifty-five men from Aragh were taken, hands tied, to the vicinity of the monastery. Kamil efendi, sat on a high place and ordered to open fire on the tied Armenians, killing them on the spot. The upper villages were subjected to fire and plunder; the lower ones – Norashen, Aziznan, Sokhgom, Oghonk, Hunan villages were still living in an ordinary life, but very soon, they were also besieged, plundered and set on fire.

On June 28, about ten to twelve thousand Armenian women, children, old and young people were burned down to ashes in the stables and barns of Krdagom, Khasgyough and Hunan. In that same night, Sheikh Hazret, Moussa bey's two brothers – Khassoum and Nerho beys, Koloto, Zuber and the Chechens, Rashid efendi and the Mudur of Zialet, Sleman agha from Fatkan organized the same butchery in Avran and the surrounding villages, in the vicinity of the St. Karapet Monastery, in Ghzlaghadj and the neighboring villages. The same was repeated in the vicinity of the town by the general commander of the bandits, the leader of the Young Turks of Moosh, Falamaz agha together with the gendarmes. On Monday morning not a single Armenian soul was left alive all over the plain. A thick smoke had settled on the burnt villages, the smell of burnt grease had filled the air, which reached our mountains.

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 small groups, organized by Koryun and the Dashnak rural committees, uncertain of their small forces, remained detached from one another and could offer no resistance.

One of the main reasons for falling into disappointment and an uncertain condition was that each village thought that the day's attack had been made only on it, and that the other villages were still free. The women and the children also hindered them to some extent, for they thought that the massacre would not be spread on them, and if resistance would be shown, they would be victims as well.

That morning the youth of the Alidjan Village fought bravely till evening against the numerous Kurds led by Jndi and did not give up the village; in the evening the Kurds left, the Armenians sent all the old people, women and children to the village of Aghchan, to the headman, so that they might get protection from him, and about fifty-sixty men headed for the Kana Mountain. On

their way they passed through the Oghonk, Sokhgom, Aziznan villages, saw slaughtered people's corpses with their own eyes and they saw the destroyed and deserted villages and only then they understood that there had taken place a general massacre on the whole plain.

That night the fugitives reached the Kana Mountain, but those five-six hundred people sent to Aghchan were filled in barns and burnt by the hands of the headman and the gendarmes. The men of the Avran Village, which had four hundred families, fought against the Chechen and Kurd hordes led by Zuber, but were defeated and martyred only then when their scanty bullets were used up.

To the north-east of Moosh at a distance of five kilometers from the town was the village of Garnen, which had three hundred and fifty families. For two days and nights they fought a battle of life-or-death against the bandits of Falamaz agha, the gendarmes from Moosh and other bashibozuks till they were completely exhausted and fell into the enemy's hands. The slaughterers entered the village, burned the whole village, killed and buried in fire about one thousand three hundred innocent people.

In some other villages, individuals or groups of three or four people fought, sheltered in houses, took their revenge for their martyred kinsfolk, but, unable to find a way out, they also perished in the fire. The inhabitants of the town had no information about how the massacre of the plain was organized and realized. On the night of the above-mentioned Mardavar Sunday, a group of armed and unarmed young people, forty-fifty in number, tried to get out of the city and run to Sassoun.

At midnight they moved very cautiously from the district of Gavaretsots to turn round and enter the canyon of Shekhants in order to be safe, but on the Sayk plain the entrenched soldiers noticed them and fired. Encountering that obstacle, half of the boys went back to the town, and the other half came out of the line and moved through the dense orchards to Havatorik. These, too, passed through the Mokunk and Tergevank villages and saw the slaughtered corpses and understood with terror what disaster had struck the Armenians. The firing at night and the fact that those three hundred and fifty noted Armenians had not returned arose alarm and suspicion. These events made men and women lose their sleep.

On Monday morning, the 29th of June, the streets were empty, no human being was seen: there was neither whisper nor movement. Only the ominous caws of thousands of black crows were heard from the tall poplars. At the moment when the sun had quite risen in the sky, all of a sudden the shrill voices of the Turkish town criers were heard in the Armenian districts: "Armenians, by the order of the mutasarriif pasha, you must gather together with your carts, mules and all your property and family, at the government door today at 10 o'clock to go to Diarbekir. Whoever refuses to obey the order, his

property will be confiscated and his family will be exiled by force." No one obeyed the order. About noon the police and the gendarmes moved to the Armenian Verin Tagh (Upper District - Arm.) to draw the Armenians by force out of the town and in unknown directions. They boldly approached and stopped before Asatour agha's two-storeyed house, which was locked from within. They knocked at the door and ordered to open it. When the door did not open, the gendarmes began to force open the door. On the second floor, a dozen of armed young men were watching under the command of Aslanian Levon. From above the boys took aim and fired at the crowded police and gendarmes. Eight of them were killed, and the rest ran away wounded or alive to the government building and told Servet pasha about the event. Hearing the news that at Bashmahleh the Armenians had opened fire on the police and killed eight out of them, he immediately gave the order and cannons thundered crosswise on the Armenian four quarters. One thousand three hundred inhabitants stood before a dreadful agony under the shower of cannon-balls and bullets and tried to fight hand-in-hand and die with honor.

At the time when thousands of cannons and guns were thundering over the Armenian quarters, pitiless voices of the town criers were heard from the Turkish districts: "Hey, Muslims, the command of the government for all of you: if any of you dares to take into his house and protect an Armenian child, girl, woman or man will be considered gâvur, when discovered, and his house and property will be burned down on his head."

Thus, the hope of getting help from anywhere was lost: the Russian imperial armies were resting in Bassen and Manazkert, while the butchers of Constitutional Turkey acted freely and boldly according to the instructions of the German representatives; having taken the plain of Moosh and the town under fire, they were killing and exterminating all the Armenians from big to small. The boundaries of Havatavorik included approximately a 300-350 km<sup>2</sup> territory, completely comprised of impregnable mountains, branched mountain – wings, deep valleys and glens, caves and rocks, and that network was joined with the Sassoun highlands from Moosh to Diarbekir, from Bitlis to Gendj and still further. The largest part of that area was covered with woods, thickets and dense herbage. There were a few pieces of arable land belonging to the village in the valleys and on the mountain-slopes where the peasants had build their houses and lived there with their families. Wherever possible, the land was cultivated and the field of wheat, barley and millet were either sown or reaped. At every step, there were cold-water fountains, crystal-clear babbling brooks and streams, green vegetation, the sweet scent of numerous flowers. The nature was beautiful, the air fresh and all this had given the possibility for cattle breeding: and the Havatorikites had a great quantity of

sheep and cattle.

Feeling that danger was at hand, they had secretly buried a month before, their valuable property, jewelry and ornaments, with the hope that one day they would get free and enjoy them again.

On July 1, only a few old people were left in the village, two-three blind women, dogs and cats and about two thousand clay beehives from which millions of bees flew out and in, like rain, splitting the air with the speed of light, brought their yearly provision of honey from the hills and dales, but they could not understand that in the near future, they would become preys to the barbaric fire.

One thousand two hundred people, taking with us ten thousand sheep, two thousand cattle, loads of pots and pans, felt and rugs, withdrew to the south, 12-13 km from the village, in the valley of Khrok, near Shekhnist, on the east of which, next to the main valley, stretched Krenkan Gyol, surrounded with forests and the mountain range with its open peaks. We all settled down in the thick woods: soon pots and pans were on fires, meat was roasting, and to while away the troublesome day, people began joking, laughing, mourning and weeping. We heard babies crying, lambs bleating, calves mooing, dogs howling ominously, and all this was harmonious to the sighs and moans of women. Thus, half asleep, half awake the second day of July opened. There were two hundred and fifty men, but we were to defend ourselves with only 8 ordinary rifles and about fifty tinder rifles. From afar a group of Bagran Kurds came, riding on horseback. They negotiated that they should be given a gift: it was agreed on twenty-four gold coins, which the Armenians collected and gave. Then they began firing at the Armenians hidden in the wood, killed five men, kidnapped a twenty-two-year-old pregnant woman and drove away thirty-five oxen and cows. The Bagran Kurds had always killed and robbed the Armenians when they were lawful, now why should they spare them, when the Armenians had become outlaws, and the government had given them the right to kill all the Armenians.

We had become a persecuted nation: the state authorities had driven us to slaughter-houses, had put the sword on our throat, the blood of Armenians was being shed everywhere. Our last hours had approached, our revenge on the slaughterers would remain unpaid, since, as we had no guns we had our arms folded on our chests, and human rights and justice had remained in the hands of the barbarians.

To avoid further danger we left the valley of Khrok, went back westward, climbed higher through Sinamerik to the place called Kapredavi and placed watching guards. The people and animals settled down in the small glade surrounded by thick trees.

Koryun, together with a group of soldiers, was on the heights of Kurdek, guarding the border between Moosh and Sassoun. He was looking at the town in fire, heard

the cannonade, his heart ached and he demanded Semal to send armed forces, so that he could attack the city by night, arouse confusion among the Turks and open a way out for the Armenians. The Sassounite were eager to help the besieged Armenians of the town. But, according to Rouben, that was dangerous. Rouben, Vardan and Manuk from Petar climbed, at the head of a large group of Sassounites, from Semal up to Kurdek, to Koryun, in order to attack the Turks by night. Near Kurdek, on the top of Archklor, the Turk guards had taken up a position. Manuk, with his friends, climbed the top and occupied the post at Archklor. According to former agreement, an immediate help would come from Kurdek when gun sounds were heard from Manuk's group, in order to begin the attack on the town. Manuk waited till morning, but no help came. They returned, in despair, to Kurdek and found there dispute and disagreement. Leaving there a few guards, they descended again to Semal. "Rouben's whim was fulfilled – his sole aim was to remain alive," said the privates, but the result was the loss of Sassoun.

It was the last night of the tragedy, the cannons were still thundering. The houses of Verin Tagh and St. Mariné district were in flames, and tens of thousands Armenians had gathered and crowded in the houses and cellars of the valley district. The end was near. It was very hard for people to die an unlawful and cruel death. Therefore, mature men and youths, gathered in groups under the walls and in dark corners, were speaking and organizing ways to get out of the town secretly, parting from their beloved ones: who would die and who would live! In groups of twenty-thirty they took to flight in different directions. The best way was to go down the stream running through the city. About forty young men swam and came out behind the village of Ter-Gevank and hid in the rocks. The next group of seventy people also entered the water, but the Turks noticed them and shot them all.

In the morning of the 6th of July, the army moved on from the right and left, entered the valley district, drove out of the houses ten thousand women, children, old people, youths and men, shot them on the spot, and the remaining people were driven out of town, to the nearby villages, were filled in barns and burnt alive.

The Armenians' properties and riches were plundered. The government gathered its share in the churches of St. Mariné, St. George and Shek Avetaran (Blond Bible – Arm.), and the rest was taken away by the Kurd ashirats and the town Turks. The unarmed Armenians of Moosh fought and defended themselves heroically during seven days, but the barbaric sword of Talaat and Enver beheaded them, and their homes were leveled to the ground. With the exception of five-six bakers who were separated from their families and enclosed in special bakeries to bake bread for the Turkish army, no Armenian was left on his feet either in the fields or in the town. From far away only the dreadful deserted

territory was seen and groups of Kurds running up and down for plunder.

On the night of the 7th of July, Vahan Papazian and Avetis, together with forty soldiers from Moosh and the plain, came from Semal to Kapredavy. The presence of the guests delighted the desperate people and they were accepted open-heartedly as an armed aid. From Semal to our place they had passed 35 km. So they were very tired and hungry. They ate and fell asleep. In the morning we went to survey the positions. On top of the Izam stone we erected a shelter of green branches and Papazian made it his center. Beginning from the top of Tsir till its foot and all the wings of the mountain range, the Arakelots Monastery, the largest part of the plain, the mountains of Gana and Marnik were clearly spread before us like a mirror. After a short consultation the arrangement and the guidance of the fighting forces was entrusted to Avetis, and the general command – to Papazian.

Avetis divided the armed boys in tens and appointed corporals over them. The groups took silently their positions along the mountain wing. Every day the militiamen, who were in the monastery, came to our positions and opened fire on us from afar. We also fired on them reciprocally till darkness fell. Then they returned to the monastery.

In the province, four self-defensive groups were created for the Armenians who were temporarily saved from sword and fire. They were as follows.

The first place was the Andok Mountain: the settlers here were the Sassounites who had not undergone any massacre yet. They had come from Slivan, Bsharik, Sgherd and other places, numbering about forty-five – fifty thousand people.

The second place was situated on the Kana and Havatorik Mountains, where the refugees were from the plain and the town, numbering about 10-12 thousand people.

The third were the woods around the St. Karapet Monastery, where the thick shrubs hid and protected the refugees from Vardov and the surrounding villages amounting about two thousand people of different gender and age.

The fourth was in Chkhour, beginning from the source of Meghraget and stretching to the north-east, a large swampland and a dwelling of wild pigs, where about one thousand five hundred women and children from Vardenis, Aghbenis, Ardok, Kars and other villages had taken refuge.

Once, disguising Tigran, from Slivan, as a Kurd – he spoke Kurdish well – we sent him to the Russian army for help, but he did not bring hopeful news. We sent him for a second time, but he did not come back. Every minute, the field-glasses on our eyes, we observed carefully the St. Arakelots Monastery, where the Turkish army soldiers were moving in and out. The militia were

pulling down from outside the altar walls of the ancient church and rolling down the stone.

On July 15, half of the militiamen, about two hundred people, remained with their captains, in the monastery, the other 200 men under the leadership of Kamil efendi climbed up the mount and pitched tents near Mirza agha's fountain, took up their positions along the mountain wing till the peak of the Tsir Mountain. Seeing this, we, too, took up positions nearer to the summit of the mount: now we stood facing each other. The Turks used to fire at us once in a while and then stopped. Similarly, fighting was going on around Andok, where our enemies were the Kurd ashirats.

Though Havatorik was deserted of its inhabitants, but it was still at our disposal: the army and the Kurds did not dare to enter the valley. The barley had ripened in the fields surrounding the village. Our people would starve if we did not use it: men in groups climbed down by night to the fields, reaped the barley and threshed it. Part of it they took to the mill, ground it, and they brought the flour, at dawn, to the top of the mount. The rest was roasted, made into pokhindz and used and preserved economically for a rainy day. But it was difficult to feed tens of thousands of people so they fed them on meat from their own cattle and sheep. It was summer and the people could live in the open air. The guard posts were in action, firing sounds were heard, and we lived thus till 29th of July. Nearly a month had passed after the plain and town massacre. As I've already mentioned, still sixty-five thousand Armenians lived in the enemy besiegement.

In the morning of July 25, the Moosh plain, which had become desolate, was now groaning under the feet of hundreds of thousands people and animals, who were coming like a flood, from Akhlat, Bulanikh, Khnous and other places and were moving towards west – to the Khozmo Mountain.

We noticed that they were Turk and Kurd peasants retreating before the advancing Russian army. General Abatsiev, at the head of thirty thousand soldiers and with the Armenian volunteers had advanced through Khadavin and Akhlat and entered Chkhour – into the Moosh plain. But the Russian army soon retreated. Vahan Papazian's conviction that on the next or following day the Armenian refugees would join the Russians did not succeed. He took a belated and desperate step. On July 27 he called a few friends and told them to go and reach the Russian army. Avetis, who knew Russian, and Martiros, the teacher from Bulanekh, set off. Soon Martiros came back. They had met Kurds on their way. Avetis had fought against the Kurds for a whole day and had shot himself with his last bullet.

In the morning of the 1st of August cannons began to thunder. About fifteen to twenty-thousand soldiers and Kurds had come from everywhere to the foot of

Andok and began climbing it by fighting fiercely. The eastern side of Andok – the peak of the Ambers was called Koryun's position. The southern side towards the Kablor Mountain was called Moushegh's, Davit's and Tigran's position. The western side – the peak of St. Jacob became Manuk's position, and the northern side – the pit of Merger was Chalo's and Ghazar's position, and Rouben, Mkrtich and Vardan stayed in the center at Sekhtor-Stone to keep discipline at the rear and to supply the warriors with armament, bread and water. The Turks had placed the cannons in pairs at Kapre-Sherif Khan, on the heights of Grekol, and from there they shelled and destroyed the Armenians' stone-made positions. Under the explosion of the bombs, soldiers, women and children were killed. Encountering the Armenians' stubborn resistance and giving heavy losses, the Turks moved forward with great difficulty. A few hundred Armenians were fighting against the Turks who had a large army, cannons, guns, artillery and infinite weapons. After four months of unequal and constant fighting, Armenians ran short of bullets, so, they divided the lead balls into two, added new cartridges and fired. During the last desperate moments the unarmed Sassounite men and women attacked the enemy's positions with stones and sticks.

On August 3, news spread that Koryun had been killed while going from one position to another. David and Tigran had also been killed. During four days of terrible fighting many of the soldiers and chiefs were killed. Half of the armament became useless. Confusion and escape were inevitable.

In the evening of August 4, the Turks occupied St. Jacob positions from the south-western wing of the Andok, assaulted on unarmed women and children with yells and cries. Frightened to death, people started running to such places where no human feet had ever stepped. That night the army and the Kurd ashirats remained in Andok busy with the thirty to forty thousand cattle and sheep left behind. They rested, ate khorovads and waited till dawn. Until noon they plundered what they found and killed whom they saw. In the afternoon, in the deep valley of Geliessan, between Andok and Gebin rivers, the slaughterers butchered and shot twenty-five thousand wandering women and children, whose blood flowed to mix with the waters of the Sassoun River, crept down to Eastern Tigris, then to the Persian Gulf. ... That evening the military corps of Sassoun lost its military forces, lost also its rights and lost everything for its existence. During the night of confusion, cries and tears, Rouben Ter-Minassian disappeared, together with a few boys, without informing his comrades in arms and without making any arrangements, and escaped to the impregnable rocks of Talvorik and hid himself in a cave near Ferfer-Stone until the perquisitions subsided and at last the greatest part of the army left Sassoun. For two

months, Rouben was hiding in the mountains.

After fighting for four months against the plundering and killing Kurd races for their existence, the heroic Armenians were knocked down by the government at guns and cannons. They disposed from the Andok summit of a group of forty-five armed Armenians, throwing them down the rocks into the deep precipices. The Armenians were defeated, for they were deceived, they had no one to protect them. From Shatak to the end of Talvorik all the Armenian villages were burnt down to the ground, never to be restored again: one could not find even a small hut to shelter a hen.

Captain Kamil efendi had received supplementary gendarme forces from the town, had called the militiamen from the monastery, had gathered the Kurds around him and was waiting for the fall of Andok. When he got the news that the Armenians had been defeated, he attacked, by the evening, our positions from the northern and eastern sides of the Tsir peak, together with the six hundred gendarmes, militia and the Kurds. Our fighters had thirty guns and were firing thriftily: for we had few bullets, while the enemy had six hundred guns and innumerable bullets. The unequal fight lasted for two hours. Sahak from Arindj was killed, Armenak and Ashot from Moosh were wounded, and the rest fled away. Five kilometers down the battle-field, in the valleys and woods 10.000 refugees, caught in fear and horror, were waiting for their destiny. A great number of men wanted to fight against the enemy, but how, with what? The people's hope was Papazian. Suddenly a messenger arrived, bringing news that no more bullets were left to fight the enemy. The people got in complete despair and confusion. Those from Havatavorik still had a great number of sheep and cattle, pots, pans and beds; to gather all that and run away was not an easy task.

Dawn broke. Gun shots began to be heard. The Turks were firing, running, coming to our side. At night the Armenian soldiers had left their positions had come down and had approached the Izam Stone, where Papazian was. They had taken a counsel and had decided to escape together with the people. Ten thousand people and ten thousand sheep and cattle mixed together, began to roll down like a snowball from the Dick mountain-side to the great valley. The strong ones trampled the weak and passed forward. A horrible scene was created. Until the foremost part of the people reached the other side of the valley, the Turks had already occupied the Izam Stone and began shooting at the fugitive crowd from above.

Kamil efendi broke, together with 150 militiamen, into Havatorik from the western side of the village and began burning the chapel, the school next to it and the two-storeyed house of the Reverend. Then they set fire to our house. They burned 60-70 houses. They also burned about 2000 beehives, which were filled with honey. With 600 men they turned our village upside-down,

and pillaged it. They found 3 blind women in a barn and killed them, too. Before the sunset they left behind the burnt village and under the mournful melody of the homeless bees returned to the St. Arakelots Monastery. The people moved from the mountains of Havatavorik to the mountains of Kana. The exhausted and hungry crowd scattered in the woods. The Turkish soldiers had gone and reached Manazkert, till the valley of Alashkert. When the enemy, composed of 20.000 soldiers and ruffians, destroyed Andok and daily massacred several thousands of Armenians, no one could be of any help to us. Papazian announced: "Let everyone save himself." He and his group got separated from the people and went to Burtel.

Khchurtsi (khach = cross, uratsogh = denier – Arm.) Avdula brought news saying that Hadji Moussabek and others would attack the Kana Mountain and massacre the remaining Armenians. The Havatorik Armenians went to the woods to confer with the Khchurtsi Kurds. At that time 300 slaughterer militiamen and Kurds appeared, but Avdula sent them away. The Kurd scoundrels had set a trap for the Havatorik Armenians: deceiving them, they had taken them to the valley of Shouzheng as a safe place, but Kazim bey was to go there. And the Kurds of Dampel and Pirzin had gathered near the valley of Shouzeny and were waiting for a rich booty. They took from the Armenians 8.000 sheep and cattle saying: "Hide yourselves in the valley. We'll watch you from afar till the army goes away."

After being expelled from their homes, the Hovatorik people lived in the mountains for forty days. They were completely plundered, they lost all their property, and taking the advice of the traitor Khchurtsi Kurds, they sheltered themselves in the valley of Shouzheng to save their lives. But the malicious Kurds, after realizing their dark plans, sent news to Kazim bey, informing him that there were many Armenians hidden in the valley. The mountains roared with the thunder of thousands of guns. The massacre started. Corpses fell down. The blood of men and innocent children began to flow. It's above my power to describe in detail how the mountains and the valleys were filled with screams and shrieks, how terror-stricken women and children ran from stone to stone, from shrub to shrub and that how in a minute they were shot dead and fell to the ground. Numerous and numberless killers had encircled and closed the roads of escape, they were firing, yelping driving out of their hiding places the poor victims and killed them all. The slaughterers butchered and massacred till evening darkness fell as a deliverer and with its black veil covered the luminous face of the sun that had become our enemy.

At night Kazim bey had returned to Sassoun together with his army, Kamil efendi had gone back to the Monastery of St. Arakelots with the militia, Hadji Moussabek had gone to Chkhour together with his

Kurds, and the plunderer ashirats to their dwellings to divide the booty among each other.

A man came from Sassoun and told that Kazim bey had left binbashi Mourat bey together with 500 gendarmes and militiamen in the village of Shenik, in order search every day, with the help of the local Kurds, for any Armenian left alive and to annihilate him, and he himself, together with his itinerant battalion, had gone to Bitlis. The slaughterers' brigade which had come from Diarbekir had also left Sassoun. Thus, Mourat bey and his five hundred soldiers settled in Sassoun to do away with the Armenians left alive. Captain Kamil efendi, together with 300 militiamen and gendarmes, took made his seat near the fountain of Mirzagha – four kilometers from the Arakelots Monastery. The commitment to do away with the Armenians still roaming on the borders of Havatorik or other places and to eradicate the Armenians hidden in the Kana and Marnik woods had been entrusted to Hadji Moussabek.

As far as I understand there is not in the world a more difficult and exhausting task than the killing of man. A barbaric trade which got its sources from the wild races and chieftains and developed during centuries, and included the civilized world, people, who, for the sake of their glory and interest, wage wars shedding the blood of millions of innocent people.

During those months the soldiers of Talaat and Enver had killed and burned so many unarmed Armenians in the field of Taron and the mountains of Sassoun, that they were already tired and exhausted of that "work," and now they were seeking a supernatural power to replace it, so that they might somehow get rid of that task and return home.

In August 1915 the government granted a pardon, which was a lie. There could not be any real forgiveness on the part of a cruel government who had exterminated the Armenians and there could not be any freedom for us.

In the autumn of 1915, there was left no bed, no clothing and nothing to eat in the fields. Typhus was spreading. "Forgiveness" was a lie: under that pretence Kamil had hunted 60-70 naïve Armenians.

All those, who were sent to Diarbekir to live, were taken to the Mourat River and drowned, thus, about 250 innocent victims lost their lives. Mihran Hovhannissian has told the episode as he had been a lad of twelve then: a kind Kurd woman had saved him from the river and kept him. Afterwards, he graduated as an engineer from the Polytechnical Institute of Yerevan.

...In the night of February 4, the Armenian General Nazarbekov's army and Commander Dro's volunteers occupied Moosh.

When the Russian army entered the plain of Taron and the town, it brought liberty to the Armenians for a while.

On the 3rd of February, the Russians occupied

Erzroom, on the 4th – Bitlis. On February 13 they entered Brnashen breaking the weak resistance of the Kurds.

The Armenians wandering in the mountains and valleys gathered in Moosh and congratulated each other. But the October Revolution had started, Kerensky's Provisional Government was overthrown, political fights had started in Russia. In November, the army disobeying orders deserted the front in brigades, in battalions, in troops, one after the other they withdrew to the rear day and night. When one asked where they were going, they would answer unanimously, "Domoy, domoy" (Home, home – Russ.). And thus, the Russian army left the Turkish territory, from Van to Trapizon, and everywhere they left great quantities of cannons, machine-guns, rifles, millions of bullets, innumerable sacks of flour, sugar, butter, canned food, cereals and other kinds of goods and returned to their country...

We heard that a treaty had been signed in Brest according to which Russia was to leave all the fronts and return home.

In the night of February 27, 1918, a telegram was received informing that Andranik had left Erzroom to the Turks, because the soldiers had not obeyed his orders,

and that the Armenian army had retreated to Hassanghala, toward Sarighamish.

On February 28 the Turks and the Kurds attacked from the mountain heights, having received new reinforcements.

On March 1, families and armed groups were leaving by the newly-constructed road of Khnous, together with the battalions of Colonel Samartsov; the large quality of armaments and material riches were left to the Ottomans. We walked eastward through deep snow, over Dutagh, Ghlichgetuk, Diadin and Korun-Mossun.

In the morning of March 16, we were on the upper part of the village of Khoudjakh. We were standing on the old Russian-Turkish border and for the first time, the Ararat plain opened before us: on the right was old Massis, in front of us was Alagyaz.

Allow me to stand on this high mountain and for the last time to bid "Good-bye" to my orphaned Motherland, to her consecrated monasteries, monuments, fragrant mountains, fertile fields, rivers and fountains, and as a refugee, together with my few compatriots, to be a guest and an inhabitant of Eastern Armenia, condemned to famine, migration and bloodshed.

## 2 (2).

### **KHACHIK GRIGOR\* KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Sassoun, Shenik Village)**

Our village was very beautiful. We had many fruit trees. The flattest spot was our village. The other villages were on the valley. The houses of our village were one-storeyed stone houses. Each house had a tundir (a hole in the ground for baking bread – Arm.) and a cellar. In summer night, we used to sleep on the roof, which was covered with earth. There was a hole in the roof through which light came in. We used to bring wood from the forest for burning and cow-dung was scattered in the fields to fertilize the soil. There was no science; it was a blind country. The heat of our stables heated us, too. Our beds, quilts and mattresses were made of wool. Land was private; you could cultivate what you wanted, but you had to give tax to the government. It gave seven measures of the crop to you and one measure was given to the state. We had two rivers, one was Mourat – it was a frightful river, the other was Meghraget.

We were two houses, all in all, twenty-two people. Our family consisted of seven people; my uncle's family had fifteen members. We all lived peacefully. In our country there were families, which consisted of sixty members. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law lived peacefully. My mother baked the bread, cooked the dinner, brought wood from the forest and collected tobacco. My father

took the crop to the town of Moosh on his shoulder and sold it.

Our village had a school, the girls and the boys learned separately in four classes. We learned Armenian, arithmetic and history. We did not learn Turkish. I went to school only for a few months. Then my father took me out of the school and told me to graze the cattle. In the school we set cross-legged on a mat till noon and read a book or the Psalms, there were no copy-books. We wrote on the blackboard with chalk. If we did not behave we were punished: we stood on one foot or the teacher used to thrash us with a knotty stick and for weeks the blue bruise would stay. Father Garegin gave us lessons. There was a boarding school near the monasteries: when a child became an orphan he was taken to the St. Hovhannes or St. Karapet Monasteries. Our church had an altar, holy books; the clergymen offered the Mass. The people attended on foot. On holidays we went to church. You're the man created by God, you believe and you say, "Glory to you, God, my Lord, keep us safe and healthy." In winter we celebrated the birth of Christ, in spring – the Crucifixion of Christ, and we colored eggs with onion peel.

We had built the church several times: the Turks

\* Henceforth the name mentioned between the first and the last names is the father's name.

burned them. We had a wooden church. Weddings and baptism were celebrated there. The weddings used to be joyful.

We brought drinking water with jars from the fountain. There was a stream where we bathed and did the washing.

Beginning 1914, they started taking into the military service young men of 18 years old. Therefore, when a boy was born, they registered the child as a girl at the parish priest, in order not to send him to the army.

We had few trades. They used to spin the sheep wool and women knitted. Cotton was spun with a spinning wheel, then the weaver wove it. There was one blacksmith and he used to forge ploughshares.

There were no Turks in our village: the government representative came with a gendarme and took his share and took it to the state. The Turks and the Kurds had nothing to do with us. The state was the owner of the land.

There were many Kurd villages in our vicinity. Till the deportation we did not know the Kurdish language. There were three well-known fedayis in our village – Zalo, Manuk and Ghazar. They were devoted to their nation; they had rifles, guns, spy-glasses and their special uniform. Wherever they were needed, they would call them. The people loved and respected them. All three of them were our relatives. In 1907 one of them was killed by betrayal. The peasants did not have guns. If we had guns, would we be defeated so easily?

The deportation began without warning. They had already slaughtered the Armenians of the Moosh plain, and fedayis and refugees came in July-August to our village, and we learned what had happened. When they came we shared their support: two people from Tigranakert stayed in our house. Those from the Moosh plain were few, later all of them were killed.

The people of our village gathered in one hour. My father, mother, together with our family, we went to Andok, we fought, many were massacred. The day we ran away, we had before us water and behind us swords. We all entered the water. My father carried me on his back, I clung to his neck and we passed the water, but only God knows how many people the river carried, away. My father and I – we survived. Three months later we heard that my grandmother and mother had been hiding in the woods of another village; we went and found them. My grandmother died. My two brothers and my uncle were killed during the fight. As males, only my father and I were left alive. 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 came to an end. We were fed only on 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. The attack lasted a day, but the slaughter continued for five-six months. The Turks were searching the forest, wherever they saw an Armenian, they killed him. My father and me, we ran away from our village and hid in the woods, hungry, thirsty, we ate the bark of the trees and faced all kinds of difficulties. November came and the winds shed off the leaves of the trees. My father said: “Oh, trees, we were hiding under your leaves, and now they are gone.”

The Turks had burned the last hen-house of our village. If someone went for water at day-time, the Turks killed him. We waited thirsty till night. They left the babies under the trees, for they were crying. They did not keep any babies, because the enemy would hear their crying. My seventeen-year brother was killed, my cousin also was killed.

In December we stayed in a Kurdish village. We were toilers. There, my father died. My mother was in another village, later we found each other. My mother said: “Khachik, go and sit under the bushes over there, I’ll come soon.”

Together with my mother we came and reached Shenik and sat there. Darkness fell. It was night. Where could we go? Suddenly we saw the Russian army coming. Together with the Russian army we went to Moosh. We were naked, bare-footed, our feet bled. A soldier took off his clothes and gave it to me. There was bread on the table; he did not give me any. He gave me only dried-bread and said: “This child has remained hungry so long, he has eaten so much herbs, that if he eats his fill now, he will die. Give him bread by and by.” We remained in Moosh for two months. Then, together with the Russian army we came to Alexandropol. There I lived in the orphanage for two years. Once my mother came, I saw her. She lived in Talin then.

Our orphanage was transferred to Kars. We were seventy-five; there were children of every age. Whatever I’ve enjoyed in life, it was during those years. They used to dress us well, we slept in clean beds, we had a dining-room, a bath-room, a school, where we learned. In the evening they fed us, then there were interesting activities. Our superintendent was an eighty-year-old woman from Shoushi who had two sons: one was a doctor, the other

was a Russian army officer.

The Turks came again and occupied Kars. We were transferred to Djalaloghli. It was the year 1918 and we were taken to an orphanage in Tiflis. Then I went to Krasnodar together with my mother. My mother got married.

In 1920, I came back to Armenia – to our Ashnak Village. It was already the Soviet power. That was a Turkish village. The Turks had run away. There were thirty-two Turkish villages till Ashtarak, with the exception of Talish. We came and entered them.

We came and settled here expecting the Great States to discuss our question. We were supposed to stay here for six months and then go back to our Land. When I open my eyes, I miss our Country: I wish I would go to our Land, see it with my own eyes, and then close them forever. The yearning for the Land is something special.

It's in my mind day and night.

In 1924 I married and had nine children. Now I live with the youngest one.

In the years 1935-1955 we were rather poor; we worked at the kolkhoz and got very little, life was hard.

The Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) broke out. For five years we lost so many human lives. In 1942-1944 I was at the front in Crimea. I have fought and I was wounded. In 1942 my son was taken to the front. He served in the army for six years. We survived. Armenia was reconstructed. Now we have bread, we have our home, work, we dress well, there's cleanliness, medicine, conveniences. Compared to those days we live well, thank God.

The Turks massacred us, but he solved his problem. There was a Genocide. If one is strong he can solve his land problem; with paper and pen no one gives back land.

### 3 (3).

#### **HAKOB MANOUK GRIGORIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Sassoun, Talvorik)**

Our country was a mountainous country; there were many hills and valleys. We raised animals. Our village was small. We gave tax to the Turk government. The best part of what we had, we gave to the Turk. Our village was in a valley, so there were many fountains.

My father, Manouk's family and my uncle, Karo's family lived together. All together we were twenty, twenty-five people.

Talvorik was one of the thirty Armenian villages. Not all the villages had schools. I have not gone to school. I took care of animals – sheep. Every village had a church. People came to our village for pilgrimage. At Easter we dyed eggs, red and green and we fought with them to see whose egg was stronger. Vardavar, Trndez were nice holidays. We made bonfires in the fields. From our places we went to Aleppo as pilgrims. Apré was the chief of the village. He used to take counsel with the fedayis. The Turks took our boys to their army for service and killed them.

In 1915 the Armenians fought against the Turks, the fedayis fought. The Turkish army came and massacred us. We ran to the mountains, to the woods. The Turks

killed all my relatives. Only I remained alive from our family. They killed them all before my eyes. We ran away and hid ourselves in a dilapidated Turkish village. I became a shepherd to a Turk, I used to chop wood and serve my master.

Suddenly we heard that Armenian fedayis had come.

In 1917 people from the Red Cross came. They found us and took us away to Moosh and then to the Khozlu Village of Khnous. From our village only two remained alive. The Armenians of Khnous kept us, and together with them we set out to exile. It took us months till we reached Nakhidjevan, then Khoy, then we came to Kyavar, later to Daralagyaz and finally to Ashnak. At that time they drove away the Turks. Soviet power was established.

In 1928 I got married. I had eight children – Moushegh, Siroush, Astghik, Anahit, Haykanoush, Petros, Tigran, Lucia. Then I went to war. I reached Hungary. When the war was over, I was demobilized and came home.

*"I'm the brave son of Talvorik,  
I won't bend down before the Turk..."*

### 4 (4).

#### **ARAKEL KARAPET DAVTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1904, Sassoun, Arivdem Village)**

Our village was Arivdem of Sassoun, which means facing the sun (arev = sun, dem = facing – Arm.). Our village had twelve houses: Armenians, Kurds and Arabs.

We were farmers: we tilled the land and kept animals. There was no wheat, we sowed only barley and millet, and it was hardly sufficient for us. There was no market,

there was no trading. The houses were two-storeyed: the animals were in the lower storey, we were in the upper one. Around our house there were walnut, oleaster, pomegranate and fig trees. Everything was home-made; we bought only clothes from outside. We used to sell fruit and buy clothing with the money.

I was then eleven years old. I remember, the Armenians spoke Armenian but they knew also Arabic, because Arabs lived in the vicinity. Four houses were Armenians, and eight were Arabs. The Arabs were very religious: they believed in Mohammed. The Armenians had a church. Once a year we went to the upper part of our village to Virgin Varvara Monastery for pilgrimage, we made offerings. They said Virgin Varvara had been a maiden and the church was named after her. Many people came from other villages, too. There was no school in the village. There was a school only in the village of Gomk, and we had to pay for it. Sassoun was not far from us: it was a day's walking distance. There were twenty more villages around us. The water and the air of our country were good. There were many Kurds in Sassoun.

Our house was a large hall. There was a tundur in the lower part. Bread was baked every day. Our bread was made of barley. We took a bath once a week. There were no doctors. There was malaria. Our clothes were made of wool. Wool was spun, knitted and sold. We used to wear slacks, a shirt and moccasins made of hide, the sides of which were sewn. We wore caps. Women used to wear dresses of different colors. They tied white kerchiefs on their head. On the Holiday of St. Cross, they dropped the cross into water. At Easter time they fasted for forty days, then they ate eggs. On the New Year they ate and drank as much as possible. On Vardavar they sprinkled water on each other.

In 1915, after the Constitution, the Armenian Genocide took place. The men above twenty were taken to the army. The Turks attacked and began to massacre.

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. Those who escaped took refuge in the caves. Then we came to Moosh. Those who remained alive were deported. That was in December 1916. We came, passed through Moosh and went to Khnous. We were four – my mother, brother, me and my sister. There we stayed for a year. In 1918 we came to the village of Khonzlou. It was an Armenian village, the Armenians had been massacred, the houses were empty. We passed the Arpachay River. We wanted to go back to our country. Who knew that there would be a revolution. The Russian army withdrew in order to go and defend their country. We came to Igdir, then to Kanaker. There we stayed for twenty days. We were to go to France, as Yerevan was starving and it was dangerous. General Andranik went back. We went to Khoy after him, then to Gharabagh. In 1919 he came to Yerevan, to the primacy of the Armenian Church, disarmed his soldiers and let them go. Lenin signed a decree that we had no claims from the Turks. He gave to the Turks Kars, Ardahan, Sarighamish, Igdir. In his turn Stalin gave Gharabagh and Nakhidjevan to the Turks, Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha to the Georgians, and every day he sent a whole train of Armenians to Siberia. When we came to Ashnak, we lost all hope of going back to our country, for they had signed that they had no territorial demands from the Turks.

In 1930 they sent my brother to Siberia – Irkoutsk, as he was considered a member of the Dashnak party. He remained there for six years. He came back in 1936. They arrested him again in 1937; we learnt that they had killed him, Vardan, Arshak, Nerso and many others.

## 5 (5).

### MOUSHEGH HOVHANNES HOVHANNISSIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1908, Sassoun, Talvorik Region, Karavank Village)

Our family from the Karavank Village of Talvorik consisted of forty-two people: eight working men, the rest were young women, children and old people.

Though, I was only eight years old then, I remember everything as I used to go everywhere with my father: I remember the land, the water, the fountains, everything...

It was in June 1915, when the wheat and barley were ripening in the fields, when they deported us. During the deportation all our family together we crossed the river coming from the fortress of Sassoun, which was called Zandousagialy – meaning: coming from Zandous.

We passed to the other bank of the river – toward

the west, and settled down in a large cave. The Kurds had already begun attacking the villages and were slaughtering the Armenians. We saw it from our hiding-place. In two hours the Kurds reached our house. As soon as they reached, they gathered straw, wood, branches, put them in front of our door and set fire. Our house was made of stone, which had been built two hundred and fifty years ago in the days of my great-grandfather. Before our eyes our ancestral house burned in flames. My father, who was an enormous, huge man, cried like a child and said: "Lao! Our last days have come, we won't see good days any more." The money, gold, silver that we had,

my father distributed to his brothers, to his nephews and continued: "Lao, go, take care of yourselves; we may see each other again, or we may not."

The next day each one took his wife and children and went to search for bread, to find life. We were dispersed. We were left, my father, my mother, my brother's wife, my two sisters and my uncle's son; my brother was in Aleppo.

We hid in the woods and caves till late autumn. From the ripened fields we gathered wheat, barley, millet, nuts, hazelnut and filled them into sacks and stored. We wandered about, for the Kurds attacked the Armenians in groups and killed them. That was why we hid ourselves in deep caves.

Once, together with two-three families from the neighboring village we had entered a cave. We were about forty-fifty people, it was August, it was a hot day and the children were very thirsty. There were two boys among us, one was my brother, Khacho, the other was my uncle's son, Tigran. We sent them to the river to bring water in leather bottles. The boys filled the leather bottles with water and brought. A group of Kurds had seen the boys from afar and had pursued them. They had followed the boys and came and found us. They took us out of the cave, passed us over the river to take us to a Kurd village. Then they took us to a place to stay at night, for it was late. The sun had set. My sister and my sister-in-law had babies in their arms. It was clear that they wanted to own the young women. They snatched the babies from their mothers and threw them into the lake. It was already dark. My sister-in-law and my sister escaped. The Kurds did not see where they went. Our group arrived at the decided place. The chief of the Kurds was called Toumo Amar, which meant son of Amar, who had been an Armenian until 1896, but had become a Kurd during the Sassoun massacres. They had taken an oath, they were very cruel.

Two hours had not passed when they came and took away my brother Khacho, who was about twenty or twenty-one years old. They separated him from us and said to him: "Go and sit on the dam of the field."

My brother sat. They shot him with eight bullets. My brother fell down. The Kurds asked: "Khacho, how are you?"

"I'm fine," said Khacho.

The Kurds said: "Khacho, come, we'll cure your wounds."

My poor brother crawled towards the Kurds, but they shot him with four more bullets and he died.

My mother had one gold coin. We gave it to the Kurd Amar, and he set us free: five children, me and my mother, and said, "Go."

My brother's corpse remained on the ground, unburied. We came and joined the boys hidden in the woods. For a while we remained there wandering in the

woods and river-banks. Then each one took his kins and went away. My sister with her husband went to Bsharik, which was a very large plain, and there lived Armenians who spoke Kurdish; they even had a priest. My sister-in-law had gone towards a Kurdish village. They had caught her; they had turned her a Kurd and taken as a wife. She was lost that way... My mother took me and my sister to a Kurdish village, called Sinor, where we had acquaintances. Our Kurd friends accepted us and hid us. And so winter came. There had remained my cousin, my father and mother. They lived in the caves till February.

In February the Russians occupied Moosh. Many people from Sassoun, who were hidden, joined the Russian army and came to Moosh, where Russians were.

The Armenian Dashnak national committee gave relief to the Armenians coming from different places. The Armenians in Moosh received allowances.

I and my sister remained in that Kurdish village. In August my cousin came to take me and my sister to Moosh. They did not let my sister go. She was ten years old. They married her to one of their boys. My cousin brought me to Moosh. It was August 18. On August 19 we went to the Russian army, and they gave us bread and sugar. That night an alarm was given announcing that: the Russians were withdrawing. We migrated with the Russians.

When I came back, my father had already died. We were left with my mother, cousin and my brother's wife. So we migrated, crossed the Mourat River and reached the village of Charbouhour. There we remained one day to rest. Then we moved to Khnous: on the way we were plundered, some of us died, moaning, groaning, hungry, and soon typhus began. Roaming like nomads we reached the fortress of Alashkert. Then we moved and reached Kaghzvan, Koghb, we passed the bridge of Gharaghala and reached Arax station, which was a central one. Again, with the help of the national committee we were transported by carriages and ox-carts to Verin Talin. They had butchered several sheep, had laid open numerous tables to meet us. They fed us. We were about three to four hundred people. They lodged the refugees in Mastara (Verin Pertikan) and Soghousou (Sarnaghbyur). They distributed the people over the villages of Talin. We were taken to the village of Taliboghly. My cousin had been a soldier to Andranik. They took me to the American orphanage. The manager was a young lady. I remained there till May 1918. My orphanage-mates were Serob Demirjian – Karen Serob Demirjian's father, Hamo Israelian, Nikoghos Danielian, Moushegh Khachatryan and others.

In April 1918, when the Turks occupied Kars, the refugees from Western Armenia, foreseeing the danger, gathered and emigrated to Georgia. They reached Tiflis. They remained there for a week and then they moved to the Northern Caucasus via the Kazbek Mountain.

After staying in Vladicaucasus, we scattered all over the Northern Caucasus to the Krasnodar Region, to the town of Armavir. We lived there somehow, by begging and dragging out a miserable existence till 1922.

In February 1922 we came to the village of Shgharshik – Talin Region. The village is called Shgharshik (shgharsh = gauze – Arm.), for it's always covered with mist. Since 1922 I've lived here, till 1929 I worked as a shepherd.

During 1929-1932 I tilled the land. In 1932 I became

a member of the kolkhoz. I was a manager then and we had eighteen farm-houses. First I worked as a store-keeper, brigadier, and manager of the farm. I've been chairman of our kolkhoz for 14 years, then agronomist till 1972. Then I went to Yerevan to my son's place. After staying there for the winter, I didn't like urban life, as I've always been a man of hills and dales; I came to this village – Nerkin Sasnashen, where my relatives lived. I built a house. I have a son, a daughter, three grand children and two great grand-children. Thank God!

## 6 (6).

### REHAN MANOUK MANOUKIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1910, Taron, Ouratsn Village)

I was born in Taron. Mesrop Mashtots also was from Taron. There was a church and the Monastery of St. Astvadsadsin in our village. Many pilgrims came to Taron. Khout was close to Taron. My father's mother was from Khout.

On April 24, 1915, we had got up early before the sunrise; my father had to go to the fields and my mother had to bake bread. I had a younger brother. Suddenly the Turk soldiers, rifles on their shoulders, rushed into our house and said: "War is going on, our sultan has ordered that we should deport the Armenians."

In fifteen-twenty minutes they drew us out of our house: we were surrounded by askyars who shouted, "Hurry up, hurry up." This way they drove us out of our village. We saw that they had deported the Armenians of the neighboring village of Koumb, too. On this side of the monastery we were climbing up; on the other side – the people from Koumb. They brought us to Khout; I've already told that my father's mother was from Khout and she lived there. Half of the inhabitants of Khout were Armenians, the other half were Yezidis. They deported us like a flock of sheep. After us they had started plundering our houses. Walking like this, hungry, thirsty, tired and exhausted we reached Van-Artamet. We rested there a little. There, my grandma and my brother died. My father buried them with his own hands.

We came out of Van. We walked at night for safety. It was already dark, and we were walking, when we reached the Turkish tentage, their dogs began to bark. The Turks came and surrounded us, searched the males, took their guns and then took them aside and killed them. They took the women and the children to their tents. They had heard, however, that the Russian army was coming, they came and said: "Those who want, we'll take them to the Russians." My mother said: "You're Turks, you killed my son, I won't stay with you, I'll go to the Russians."

The Turks drew us forward, brought us to the edge of a valley and fired. When they killed shot at my mother,

I fell on her crying, my nose got wounded, my hand was broken and fell loose, and I lost consciousness. The Turks thought that I was also dead; they left us and went away. I remained on the corpses. It was silent all around. I was in great pain; my nose and my hand were aching badly. The stars began to twinkle. Then it was morning and the sun rose. I don't remember how much time had passed. Then I saw the brother of my uncle's wife, who was about nine or ten. He had come and seen that I was alive on my mother's corpse and I was then sitting on her; I was not big enough to understand that my mother was already dead. The boy took me by the hand and we began to walk. There was no one about, only corpses; the Turks had killed everybody and then had left.

We, two children, were going hand in hand; when night fell we hugged each other and fell asleep. I was wounded; my nose was wounded, the blood had dried in it, my broken hand was hanging loose, but we were walking hungry, thirsty, not a single human being was seen around. All of a sudden we saw a tent. My friend spoke in Yezidi, and they understood that the Turks had harmed us. They took pity on us, took us to their tent and killed a goat-kid. Eighty-three years have passed, but I cannot forget it: they removed the skin of the kid and they covered my hand and nose with it. Then they gave a jar to the boy and sent him for water. He went; I began crying when I saw my new brother had gone. Then he came back, and I stopped crying.

The Yezidis said: "Stay with us for a week, let the wounds heal, then you may go." But we did not stay. They gave us bread and cheese to eat on our way and we left. We went and reached the Russians. My uncle's wife saw us, came and took us with her. Then she gave me a tin-pot and said: "You're wounded, go and ask for some food from the Russians. I went, brought some food, and we ate."

The Russians set out towards Russia, and we began walking with them. My uncle's wife was on my one side and that boy on the other. From the other side two

women said to my uncle's wife: "Why are you taking that wounded girl with you? She's good-for-nothing."

She listened to what they said, and gave me to the Russian soldiers. My new brother left me in tears. The Russians took me to a cart covered with tarpaulin, where there were many wounded soldiers. Together with them I came to Igdir.

There were very many refugees there, all of them sitting on the ground. The Russian soldiers came and asked my name and surname, I did not know my name. News was spread about me that Manouk's daughter was wounded, but had remained alive. Then a girl came, saw me and said: "I know her, she is Manouk's daughter." She had my name written: Rehan Manouk Manoukian. Then good people brought me to Yerevan.

Our family was rather large: my grandfather, my uncle, his wife, my father, mother, my younger brother. All of them were killed by the Turks, only I survived with this split nose like a rabbit's and broken hand. See, I have not got a finger, it's broken off, and I'm ashamed to speak with you, but: it can't be helped, this is my fate. They brought me to the orphanage of Gharakilissa. I remained there for a year and a half; they gave me clothes, shoes. Then they took us to Tiflis when the [Russian] Tsar was overthrown. The Nersessian School of Tiflis had become an orphanage then. They had gathered there all the orphans. Even the corridors were full of orphans.

In 1918 we were taken to Kars. Amercom protected the orphans, brought them to Kars. We were at dinner

when the fighting of Kars began. The Turks knocked at the door. The Americans stood before the door and did not let them rush in. They hoisted their flag, so that the Turks might not harm us. Our American principal said to the Turks: "We don't have Armenian orphans only; we have Turk orphans as well."

In Kars, the Turks had started their plunder and pillage; wherever they saw a pretty girl, they would take her away. Many young women and maidens came out of despair, to our Amercom orphanage. The Americans admitted them in and, in the evening, after tea, they were appointed as our caretakers. Each of them slept with one of us, as tutor. They cut the bed-sheets and pinned them to their neck as night-dresses. Thus, they saved not only us, but those young women as well. Me, and many others like me, are very thankful to the Americans, since they saved our lives. Besides, in the American orphanage I learned needlework, which helped me to support my family in the future. Then, at school I learned well also. The Turks wanted to kill me, too, as they did with all my relatives, but I not only survived, I lived with my strong willpower and created three generations.

Now I have my son who is so fond of me, Razmik Ayyvazian, a merited trainer of Armenia and professor of physical education at the chair of the Armenian Architectural University.

Now I'm enjoying my third generation: I have a good son-in-law, the artist-painter Garegin Papoyan, and I'm surrounded with my relatives.

## 7 (7).

### **NOYEMZAR MELKON MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1883, Moosh, Mkragom Village)**

The Turks killed my husband on the day of Vardavar. The massacre of the Armenians in the Moosh plain started on that very day.

It was the Sunday of Vardavar. The sun had just risen when an uproar rose in our village. Rumors spread that the Kurds had invaded the Moosh plain and were collecting and taking away the adult males and were packing the women and children in barns and burning them. I took my children and entered our barn; we stayed there for a while, then I rose to the roof. I saw that the houses situated on the border of our village were on fire, and heavy smoke rose and covered the sky. My little

daughter was still a breast-fed baby. I had five children – Avissar, Grigor, Sossé, Kyaram and Satik. I was at a loss; I did not know what to do and where to go. Finally we came out of the house warily and wanted to escape. The Kurds noticed us from a distance; they captured us and imprisoned us in a large barn, where our neighbor women and children were shut. Everybody was crying and screaming. My little daughter also started to bawl. The Kurds locked the barn-door and went away. We stayed there for a while. I suddenly noticed that a corner of the barn-wall was torn down and a beam of light penetrated through the crack. I tried hard and removed several other

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\* This testimony, inscribed by the daughter of the eyewitness survivor, Maroussia Hovhannissian, in 1970, has been handed to me, in 2005, by the granddaughter of the survivor, Jemma Barnassian, Doctor of Philology, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Linguistics of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, who gave me also the following information about her grandmother: "My grandmother Noyemzar was from the Mkragom Village of the Moosh Plain. She had been extremely beautiful in her youth. Even in her old age, when her whole family called her "Nané," Noyemzar still bore the stamp of beauty and charm on her face. Her fair, long hair was only partially white till a venerable old age. But the crown of her beauty were her sky-blue eyes, which only a few of her numerous grandchildren were lucky to inherit. Her big and clear eyes dimmed only when she uttered the words "massacre" and "stampede." She lived long and remained always beautiful. The number of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren exceeded a hundred."

stones and pushed my children out of that breach. I only could not find my daughter Sossé in that confusion. I crawled also out, and we fled running and entered the barn of the neighboring house. We hid ourselves in the haystack. Suddenly we heard cries and shrieks from the barn we had just escaped from. The Kurds had set fire to it, and its crackling sounds were heard.

Oh, my child, what dreadful days they were! I'll never forget those days...

After our flight, we encountered thousands of hardships, and we faced death a thousand times, but I succeeded in saving my three sons and taking them to this bank of the Akhourian River, while my beautiful

daughter, Sossé, got lost traceless on that unfortunate day. Nobody knew anything about her fate..., whether she got burned in the barn, or she could escape and then got lost on the road of exile, or she got drowned while crossing the river... Maybe the Turks or the Kurds took her away. My poor suckling baby, Satik, also died of thirst on the distressing road of exile, endlessly asking for water and crying out "bu-bu"...

Thus, I was miraculously saved from the massacre with my sons, then I remarried and settled down, thanking my Lord every night for the day He granted me, praising Him every morning and imploring Him to let me "pass away with dry eyes."

## 8 (8).

### TONAKAN ABRAHAM TONOYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1893, Moosh, Bulanekh, Hamzashekh Village)

I remember my childhood, when boys of the same age came together and went to the woods, which was the continuation of the village, to gather nuts, mushrooms, pears and berries. Nature was beautiful and rich with its products. But World War I ruined our normal life, and we became birds, whose nests were destroyed and we were driven to distant countries.

We lived in Hamzashekh, a village of the Bulanekh Province in the valley of the Mourat River, in the plain of Moosh. My father Abraham and my mother Mariam had 14 sons, daughters-in-law of the same quantity, many grand-children and great-grand-children. The family members were about seventy, not counting the four daughters who had married and gone.

Mariam was my father's second wife. The first wife had died at the eighth child-birth. My father Abraham had married Mariam who was much younger, but she looked after the orphaned children with love and gave birth to the children together with her elder sons' wives. I was Mariam's youngest son.

My elder brothers, who were married, had surrounded our house with newly built houses and their entrance was through our father's large yard. Many things in our household were common as the four pair of oxen, the buffaloes, the harrow and the plough. The cellar, where food was stored, was also common. All the members of the large family worked together, they ate together, they rejoiced together and they grieved together.

In the year of the Hurriyet – 1908, my father, shocked by a horrible event, fell ill and closed his eyes forever.

My father was one of the most respected persons in the village. During disputes he always played the role of a reconciler, especially when the tax-collectors or the authorities came in search of weapons or enlisting young men for the army, he always entertained them in our house.

My mother, Mariam Dashtetsi, was the sole princess of our home. My brothers, who were almost her age, obeyed her with love and respect.

In 1908, in the days of Hurriyet, my eldest brother Aghadjan, who was already married to avoid military service, had joined Andranik's army, and, I don't know how, he had gone to Russia, and had been living in Yalta for seven years far from his family. After four years, in 1912, I was called to serve in the Turkish army, but I ran away and went to look for my brother. My mother Mariam, tears in her eyes, used to repeat: "Times are complicated, son. A new storm is being prepared for the Armenians. Find your brothers, bring them home, let the members of the family come together again."

But how would they reunite as most of them were in Andranik's army?

My poor mother, she never saw again her sons and grand-children. Only after years, through the Armenian Church, I could inform my relatives who lived in Krasnodar. Through the Armenian Church I found my elder brother's two sons: Mkhitar was in Greece, and Hrant in the Leninakan (now: Gyumri) orphanage.

Hrant had seen many hard days. In the spring of 1915 the Turk askyars invaded Hamzashekh to search for weapon and recruit the youth, but their main aim was to plunder, pillage, kill and deport the Armenians. They drove the inhabitants to the wilderness. My mother decided not to leave her house, so she stored weapons and provisions in the far end of our yard in the huge barn, and hid there. The soldiers opened fire on them, but my mother did not shoot, she spared the children. But when they approached the door and tried to break it down, my mother fired, and did not allow the soldiers closer. The askyars left a soldier to watch the barn, and they go away.

Next to our house we had a kind Turk neighbor. He invited the guard soldier to eat something in his house.

The soldier refused. Our neighbor brought him some food and wine. Soon the sated and drunk soldier fell asleep. Taking the opportunity our neighbor, approached the back-door of the barn, which led to the woods and begged my mother to go away from the village, for he knew the secret command to kill all the Armenians. My mother refused, thinking that they could pursue her and kill, but she asked him to help the young people to run away.

And so, 20-25 young women, girls and children came out of the secret back-door: among them was the twelve-year-old Hrant.

When they approached the bridge on the Mourat River, they divided into two groups in order not to be noticed. One group tried to pass over the bridge. Soon, shootings began, and those hidden in the bushes saw the Turk askyars attack the young women. They tried to take them away. A soldier snatched the baby from his mother's arms and threw it into the river. Without any hesitation, the mother followed her child. Frightened of the furious soldiers and knowing what awaited them, all the young women threw themselves into the waters of the Mourat River. The ruthless askyars pushed and kicked into the river those defenseless children standing on the bridge, and opened fire on them. Seeing their work completed the askyars left.

Night falls.

The other group, hidden in the bushes, came out cautiously and continued to walk. In the morning, they hid themselves in a ruined small church. But the soldiers came and saw them all asleep. A chaos began. I cannot describe the state of the young women and defenseless maidens. When the askyars accomplished their infernal act, they killed them all and went away.

Hrant, who had hardly escaped the chaos of the bridge, heard shooting sounds. He approached the half-ruined church and saw his own people half-naked, in blood, slaughtered. Hrant recognized his mother among them. She was dead. The boy embraced his mother's corpse and cried. Weary and exhausted, he remained asleep there.

The next day a new group of refugees, hearing a child's cries, came to the ruined church, saw Hrant and separating him by force from his mother's corpse, took the poor orphan with them and continued their way.

Walking, Hrant reached Kars and then the orphanage of Alexandrapol.

The child of such a great family, who had so many relatives, fell into an orphanage.

In Yalta, I found my brother Aghadjan and we wanted to go home, to Moosh, but the roads were closed. Finally, after great difficulties we reached our summer pastures. Our Turk kind neighbors took pity on us and kept us, gave us refuge. We learned from them that from our prosperous family only Aghadjan's wife, Vardoush had survived and that she had gone to her father's house

in the village of Shervanshekh.

When my brother Aghadjan's wife returned from her visit to her father's house, she saw our house all in ruins; she went there by night and buried the corpses of all those killed in the barn, but observing that there weren't any young women and children among the half-burned corpses, she, too, got mixed, out of despair, with one of the refugee groups going to Kars.

When I and my brother reached Kars, we joined Andranik's group, but we did not find any of our brothers. Andranik, furious by the order he had received to surrender Kars, had disbanded his army. Later we found my brother's wife Vardoush. In 1916, I married in Kars a sixteen-year-old girl named Satenik. In Kars she had studied with Yeghishé Charents and Kariné Kotandjian.

I and my brother could not come to an agreement in Kars. I wanted to go to Alexandrapol, to save our family, but my brother had loaded his property in a cart with the intention of going to 'Englia' (England). He was trying to persuade me to go with him, for he was 15 years my senior and the only person who had received education.

I insisted that it wasn't easy to go to England, for he had already a four-month-old baby, but my brother's intention was to reach Batoumi, and then continue his way by sea. He entrusted me with his wife's and child's care and drove the cart away...

My poor brother could not part with the property he had created with great difficulty, but he parted with his beloved ones.

We started off from Kars with great difficulties, me, my wife and my brother's wife, Vardoush, traveling on the roofs of the wagons of a military train, then by hired carts, then on foot until we reached Alexandrapol, where thousands of refugees had gathered and typhus was devouring innumerable victims. Horrified, we went to Tiflis. In those days Tiflis did not admit any Armenian refugees. Exhausted, broken and weary, we reached at last Ekaterinodar (now: Krasnodar). There the refugees were allotted lodgings in wooden barracks where families were separated from each other with bed sheets hung between them.

Three years later I found my brother Aghadjan. I wrote him to come and find us. He came. We found each other. We lived there for a few years.

In 1932 we came to Armenia and settled in Yerevan.

In 1941 the Great Patriotic War broke out: new difficulties and new sufferings awaited us.

Sometimes I fly with my memories to Moosh...

When I begin thinking, it seems to me, that I'll go mad, when I remember my father's house, my relatives, our huge yard surrounded with tall poplars and the storks knitting their nests in them every spring... The well, the barn, the tonir-house, the cool wood, which was the continuation of our yard and the summer pastures ... the hazelnut trees, the nuts, the wild honey combs with

bekmez, kamads madsoun, the New Year table garnish – oleaster, the dried fruits (apricot, apple, pear, plum) and raisins and the baghardj, kneaded and baked with my mother’s righteous hands. At Easter or on my birthday the luck button hidden in the baghardj. I remember with a deep grief, one by one, name by name, I remember our dear ones who did not even have a grave, who were not buried, my lost and forever gone brothers, their wives and children. My innocent sisters, the young women who, escaping the brutal askyars threw themselves into the

Euphrates-Mourat River; which one should I mention, which one should I deplore...

I’m ready to become a guide-boy, to barefoot to my father’s grave, to kneel before it, to burn incense and ask his pardon for my sins. I want to find and deliver to the holy earth the unburied bones of my relatives; I want to take out from the bed of Euphrates-Mourat River my sisters’ and cousins’ sacred relics, who, for their honor, threw themselves into the river. I want to tour the whole world, to search and find my forty-eight lost kinsfolk...

## 9 (9).

### SHOGER ABRAHAM TONOYAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Moosh, Vardenis Village)

My grandfather’s name was Hovhannes and my grandma’s name was Kishmish. In the days of the Sultan they took my grandfather to Istanbul by force. They imprisoned him. My grandfather died in the prison.

I was born in 1901 in the village of Vardenis, Moosh region. There were eight hundred Armenian families in our village. Meghraget (Honey River – Arm.) flowed through our village. When it rained, the fish came out of the water. We brought drinking water from the fountain in jugs.

The roofs of our houses were covered with earth. The tundir was in the middle of the house. We used to bake lavash every day. There was a hearth outside the house and we burned wood in it. Outside, there were two stones at the foot of the wall, upon which there was a cross-shaped iron grate to hold the cauldron.

The house, where we lived, was large. We had no garden. There was a special place in our house where we arranged the folded beds one on top of another, which reached the ceiling. There were no bedsteads. It was a dark world. We raised sheep, cows, buffaloes, horses. We sowed wheat, lentil and linseed. We had twelve buffaloes, eight cows, two hundred sheep. We had a plough. Five-six families came together and ploughed the land and sowed. We had so much wheat that there was no place to store the crop.

The land belonged to the Turks. We paid land tax. The wheat was sown, was harvested and threshed, then the bran was given to the wind. When they finished, a man came from the Turkish government together with the village chief and he brought a stick with him. He drew lines on the wheat pile. The Turk measured seven parts gave them to the owner of the wheat and took away one part. There was no tax for peas, lentil and linseed.

In our house everybody knew his work: they were divided. Seven women lived peacefully in the house, daughters-in-law and sisters-in-law; the eldest woman was the manager. Our daughters-in-law were Voski, Mariam and Naré... We played with pebbles with the

boys in the evening.

In the evening and morning everyone went to church. Elderly women, young women and girls used to wear their nice clothes and went to church. On holidays we fasted. There was church service every day. Our village had two priests. The Turks killed both of them. There could not be any marriage without the church. The bride used to wear nice clothes made of good material, a jacket, on her head there was a head-wear made of silver. Her face was covered with yellow-green-red cloth. Her face remained closed till she had her first child born. The bride’s dress was velvet. The clothes of our country were nice. The girls were married at the age of thirteen-fourteen. If she became twenty, they did not marry her, they said: “She’s old, she has remained at home.” They used to have many children. They gave the girl a dowry: quilts, mattresses, pillows, shawls and stockings. The bride was given gold rings, golden necklaces as a present. On carnivals dhol-zourna played: they ate and drank. We made halva: gata. During the feast days we made bishi.

It was hot in our country. There was a shed: in hot weather we used to sit there and talk. The women did not work outside; they worked only at home. In hot weather we used to bathe in the river every day. We had a well. There was something like a pond where water gathered: horses used to bathe in it and then they let the water flow to the fields.

In Moosh there were no doctors; there were hakeems. We were very healthy, we lived well, there wasn’t much to care.

There was a school in our village. Children came from ten other villages to our village-school. The school was for boys. Girls did not go to school; they made handiwork at home. There was a teacher in our village. There were books. The people of our village read the Bible; they read Armenian books.

Until the proclamation of Hurriyet they did not take young men to the army. My uncle went to the Turkish army.

We had Kurd friends from Kurd villages; they used to come to our house. The plates, spoons, cups for the Kurds were washed and kept in the bread barns. We had no right to eat with them. My cousin was ten years old during the massacre; our Kurd friend took him to their place and saved him. The Kurds were better than the Turks. There are good and bad people among the Turks, there are good and bad people among the Kurds, and there are good and bad people among the Armenians. There are good and bad people among every nation.

Teacher Margar, God bless his soul, was a revolutionary; he fought with the askyars, they took him to Moosh and hanged him. The Turks cut off his head. The Armenians bought his head with gold, took it to St. Karapet of Moosh and buried it under the monastery wall. It is said that a ray of light descended every day on his grave. Margar's grave had become sacred place of pilgrimage for the Armenians.

Under the pretence of taking the youth to serve in the army, the Turks gathered them, took them away and butchered them.

My father Abraham had a rifle, the Turks came and killed him with his own gun, then tied a rope to his neck, pulled him and threw him into the fire and burned him. My mother Altoun saw it, could not stand it and died on the spot. My brother Hovhannes sucked his mother's milk only for ten days. My brother and I remained orphans.

On the day of Vardavar, 1915, The Turkish askyars 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. Those cattle-sheds were as large as those of our collective farms. 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! Only I and my brother 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, at these distressing scenes, the Turkish mullah hung himself. During that turmoil the greatest part of

the people choked and perished. The roof of the stable collapsed and fell upon the dead. I wish I and my little brother had been burned down in that stable and had not seen how sixty souls were burned down 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 burnt in the same manner in their stables. I do not wish my enemy to see what I have seen. There was a very old woman among us. Those who knew her called her Polo, Arshak's mother-in-law. She was about one hundred years old. When smoke began to enter the stable, she gathered the children and made them lie on their faces, their nose and mouth on the ground, then she made their mothers lay on them. She made my brother also lie on the ground. She took off her apron, covered him with it and pushed me to lie down on my brother and not let him get up, even if he cried. May God bless her soul. That woman said: "Lao, what's the use of crying, we must act so that from each house one boy remains alive and comes out of the fire, so that their hearth is not extinguished, so that they may tell the world the acts of these godless and ruthless Turks. People, don't get disappointed, don't lose your head, be staunch in your belief. God is great; He shall open a door." I covered my brother with my body. Fallen on his nose and mouth in the dirt of the stable, the poor boy was not able to breathe, he wanted to come out. He cried and cried, he cried so much that he fainted and calmed down. When the roof of the stable collapsed, the flame and the smoke escaped from the opening, and air penetrated in the stable. I and my uncle's daughter, Areg, 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 round, swinging and striking their sabers and singing merrily 'Yürü, yavrum, yürü!' (Dance, my child, dance! – Turk.). Up to this day that song resounds in my ears. That dance, lao, should never be danced in an Armenian house; that's the dance of the ruthless, godless, wild beasts. Fascinated with the dance they did not see us. I put my brother on my back and ran away. I escaped and entered the nearby reeds. When dark fell I took my brother and ran away. How far did I run, or where, I don't know? Suddenly I saw people coming towards us. I took my brother and hid under the shrubs. Then I heard those people speaking Armenian. I ran and joined the group. That was Andranik's group. May I die before his foot-dust! We went. Wherever we went the Turks cut our way. We went to Persia together with Andranik, on the way to Khoys, the Turks were in front of us. We ran away: we went to Nakhidjevan, Gharabagh, Ghapan, Goris, Sissian, Sevan... Eh, lao, where didn't we escape to, where didn't we suffer! From the Goris pastures we came to Talin. What days I've seen, lao, I don't wish my enemy to see!

In a village near Sissian or Goris – its name was Aghoudi-Vaghoudi – the refugees had gathered wheat ears about 5-6 kg. Together with 8-10 small children they had gone to the water mill of the valley to grind the wheat. Those children went and did not come back. Grown-up men went to see what was the matter. What did they see? I wish my eyes had become blind, so that I would not see... The Azeri-Turks had filled the children into the chimney of the mill and had burned them. Lao, the Turks here don't differ from the Turks there. To tell the truth, they are even worse, more pitiless and crueler than the Turks of our country.

They came and told Andranik that the Turks had filled the young boys into the chimney and had burned them alive. General Andranik took off his papakh, knelt on the ground and swore that he would avenge the young boys' massacre. He did avenge. He made short work of the Turks of that village, may I fall a victim at Andranik's feet.

In 1922 we came to the Talin Region, to the Mehriban (now: Katnaghbyur) Village. This village had been an Armenian village. The Turks had occupied and destroyed our churches; when they began constructing the road, they dug the ground and many khachkars were found. I married Grigor Tonoyan from Sassoun, Arpi Village. My husband became the first chairman of our village-council. He had no education, but he was very intelligent. Of my ill fate, he died in 1955. I have brought up nine children. Their names are: Aghavni, Vardoush, Gulnaz, Mkrtich, Sargis, Vachagan, Hreghen, Anahit, Shoushik. I have thirty-six grand-children and great-grand-children. They are good children. None of them became a hooligan.

My brother got his education in the orphanage of Kars, he became a well-educated teacher. I wish I hadn't given him to the orphanage, he had better stayed with me and became a choban, then he would have married, have his family, his children, he would have filled what the Turks had emptied. I saved my baby brother from the Turks' sword and fire, thinking there wouldn't be other swords. I said: "This is Armenia: there aren't any

Turks or fire here. I thought, let him study and become an educated person and let him tell the world what we saw. How should I know, lao, that there would be the 1937 exile [of Stalin period in the USSR] for us?"

My brother Hovhannes Abrahamian was born in 1912, in Moosh. My brother came from the orphanage, he went to Russia, Krasnodar, then he came to Meghri, Aparan as a school-inspector, then he became director of Talin – Azizbekov, Gndevaz Village schools. In 1937 he was accused as a member of the Dashnak party. 1937 was a year of harvest. They took him away, they took away many, many people; they took away my only-born brother as well. They connected my brother with Yeghishé Charents and Aghassi Khandjian and they took him away: they took him away and they ruined him. I freed him from the mouth of the beast, I saved him and brought him here and I threw him into the mouth of the godless hyena. The godless and impious hyena took away my only brother; it took him away and devoured him. I cry night and day. I will cry up to my grave. I want my brother's name to be written on my grave-stone. In this big, large world I have no one else left besides my children, nothing else, I'm all alone...

My son Sargis<sup>1</sup> is my sole hope and protector. God is in Heaven, here, below is Sargis. My son Sargis took me by the hand and we went to the Monument of the Genocide [in Yerevan]; mourning and crying I lay flowers there and it seemed to me all my burned ones were there. It was the Tomb of all my lost ones. I cry very much, I want to go to our land. I want to go and drink the sweet water of our Meghraget, I want to breathe the fresh air of our mountains, of my sweet land. The taste and smell of our land was different, lao. I want very much to go to our land. I hope, by God, I know, I won't see it, but my children, my grand-children shall see it, our Moosh will become Armenia, as Yerevan is our city today.

I wish all the Armenians hope, love, faith honesty and conscience. This country is good, but it doesn't believe in God. If you have conscience, you are righteous; your soul is holy.

<sup>1</sup> Shogher Tonoyan's son, Doctor Sargis Tonoyan, has told me about his uncle Hovhannes Abrahamian's and Armenian poet Yeghishé Charents's friendship. It turned out that Charents and Hovhannes had been in the same jail in 1937. Doctor of History, Colonel Armenak Manoukian has discovered from the archives of the Ministry of State Security, Republic of Armenia, Y. Charents's poem "He Burned the 'Capital'," where the great poet has written about his prison life and has dedicated several verses to my tormented narrator Shogher Tonoyan:

*"Holding grand-son by the hand,  
And a sack on her shoulder,  
Poor old Shogho her head bent low,  
Implored the guard of the prison:  
'It is three days we have left home,  
And we're waiting for our turn,  
To hand over some clothes and bread.'  
But who was listening to her?  
'The chief of guards came,' they said.  
Poor old Shogho ran to him.  
'About meeting with him again?  
Then tomorrow...!'"*

**SEDRAK ABRAHAM HARUTYUNIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1904, Moosh, Arndjkous Village)**

I was born in 1904, in the Moosh region, Arndjkous Village. Till 1915 we lived peacefully.

Till I became eleven, I had seen no deaths in our family, but then the Turk slaughtered them all.

In 1908 the Turk government declared Hurriyet; it meant: it gave liberty to all. There were forty Armenian villages in our vicinity. The Sipan Mountain was in our region; its side reached the northern bank of Lake Van. All the inhabitants of the territory were Armenians, not a single Turk, not a single Kurd lived there. There were only Turk officers in the city.

A deep river flowed down Sipan and there were twenty-five water-mills on it and the best flour was ground there. If we had any skin trouble we entered the Lake Van, bathed there and we were cured. On the New Year and Easter we ate herring, which had no bone.

One evening the sun was about to set, the sheep came home. My mother and my uncles' wives were milking the sheep, I and my father, stick in hand and were guiding the sheep.

Suddenly, from the western part of the village, from the side of Moosh, Bitlis, there came cries, "Woe, they are slaughtering the villagers..."

Mothers and children lost each other; everyone began to run here and there. The whole village got mixed up; it was a stampede.

I was the youngest in our family. My father said: "Suppose I save you: what about the others?" And so he ran away. I said, let me climb up and see what's going on. I saw riders, rifles in hand, coming. My father and uncle escaped, entered a house and hid there. I was at a loss; I did not know what to do. My hair was long. They used to dress me like a girl. My uncle, wealthy Peto, had seven hundred sheep, and he was ninety-eight years old. He and his shepherd Melo were coming; they shot both of them. Suddenly somebody on my right side hugged me. I looked: that was the Kurd woman whom we used to give bread. I might be trampled under the horses' feet; she took me to my mother and said: "Sareh, let me hug him, so that they do not kill him; they will think he's a Kurd child."

When the riders came, the Kurd woman said: "They came and killed everybody, no one is left."

The riders believed and went away.

That woman took me to her house. All the children of our family were hidden there. My uncle's son Harutyun was also there, he was tall and well-built.

Darkness fell. The Kurd woman said: "If they come now and take away these girls, what should I do? You better go to the village headman's house."

As we came out to go to the village headman's house, the askyars came and they wanted to kill my uncle's son.

He struck them, and all three fell down. But, instead of taking their gun and kill them, he ran away. I and three other children walked along the village, hand in hand. They were beating people with whips and were killing them. I saw near the headman's house that they had killed eight men; they had tortured them before killing: they had cut a man's arm, had struck another on the head. We remained at the headman's house for a few days. One day my mother went to our house, where she found some bread crumbs and brought them to us. We were altogether seven children. We were hungry. My mother went again to our house, there was nothing left. They had filled the stored flour on the ground. My mother had gathered the flour mixed with earth and brought it, she baked bread with it, and we ate. We have even eaten grass.

One day my father came and found us. The Turk soldier had seen my father coming and going. Then he said to my mother: "I have seen Abre coming and going, but I could not kill him. I turned my head, as if I did not see him because I have often eaten your bread."

In 1915 the Russians were coming. The Kurds were running away eastward to Bitlis. But they fell on the people and began to plunder; they were even taking off their clothes and pillage. The Ottoman askyars came and drove away the Kurds.

We thought of going to the village of Gharakeshish, as it was of the main road and it would be safer. We began moving towards east. The Kurds began firing on us. A young woman gave birth to twins; she left them on the earth and ran away.

We reached Gharakeshish. There too they were kidnapping the pretty girls. Our five children – three boys and two girls: Samson, Yenok, Souren, Azniv and Haykoush – died of hunger in one day. My mother went to the askyar and asked him to let her dig the ground and bury her children but he refused, saying, "No graves are allowed." We dug the earth somehow with our hands; we put them in and covered them.

One day we saw there were no askyars. The bugler-policeman had taken a girl from our village as a wife. They had taken seven girls from our village. My mother kept my uncle's daughter under a heap of straw, at night she slept over it.

I have seen not only the slaughter of my village, but also the panic-stricken flight of the villages of our region. Corpses were stretched out on the ground like a straw-mat.

Suddenly a man came from the sea-side and said: "The Russian army has come from behind the Sipan Mountain, from Manazkert and has occupied Bitlis, and Andranik and the Russian army from the southern part of the sea-shore have taken Van and have reached Tigranakert."

There was one Armenian traitor. He had become a Turk. He had gone and told them that the Armenian men were hiding in the tunnel. The Turk askyars had taken the traitor to show them the place. In fact, Aram Manoukian had come by night and taken all the Armenians with him. They brought the traitor Armenian to the village of Gharakeshish, put him in the center and fired at him a dozen times. My mother asked: "Why did you kill him?"

"He is an Armenian and he betrayed his people: he'd better die."

They brought boats and took us away. All the Armenians from Bitlis, Sassoun, Baghesh were taken to Van.

My father was wounded and he went to a Russian doctor, but he died on that same day.

We were eighteen. From our large family composed of one hundred and fifty people only me and my cousin Tatos survived.

All of a sudden the Russians announced that they had to retreat, and that we should go to Russian [Eastern] Armenia. The Russian border was till the town of Olti. On the way the Russian army protected us and brought us to Igdir. The Russians began to provide us relief. Sacks of flour were piled on each other like hay heaps.

We arrived. I was an orphan. I went to the American orphanage; Tatos went to Edjmiadsin. In 1920 Serob Demirjian, Nairi Zarian and many others were in the orphanage. Charents was our teacher. He was a lean orphan young man, but he was literate.

Our orphanage was brought to Yerevan in order to be taken to America. They took some of the orphans to

America; they would take us, as well, but they did not manage. The Dashnak government of Armenia, having Khatissian as a leader, signed a mean treaty with the Turks: they gave the railroad Djulfa-Gharakillissa to the Turks.

On November 29, 1920, Sargis Kassian entered Idjevan with the 11th army and sent a telegram to Lenin, saying: "Congratulations! Armenia is under Soviet power."

Years passed. I grew up and went to the Soviet army as a volunteer. The colonel called me and said: "My boy, you want to go to the army, but you're young."

I said: "I'm an orphan, I want to go; I have no home."

I joined the Second Armenian Division, our commander was Bagrat Avagian and the commander of the Armenian Division was Melik-Shahnazarov. The first brigade was in Yerevan; the commander of the regiment was Baghramian.

I came back from the army. I studied at the militia school in Yerevan. I was appointed in Meghri. During four years I worked as the deputy chief of militia. After 1935 I studied in Tiflis. Then I took my family to Tiflis. I finished my studies there and we came back to Yerevan.

From among forty student graduates, I was appointed chief of the railways in Armenia. At that time the railways belonged to Georgia.

In 1941 the patriotic War began. A reserved quota came from Moscow, and I was not sent to the front.

In 1945 Germany capitulated.

For my good service in the rear during the war, I was decorated with the Order of Red Star, Order of the Red Banner and Order of Lenin, and I have twenty medals.

## 11 (11).

### SATENIK NAZAR PETROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Moosh, Gyumgyume Village)

Nazar agha was my father, who was a rich, well-known merchant and chief of the village. My mother's name was Srbouhi. We were four brothers and two sisters. One of my brothers died before the war. My brothers' names were Abgar, Touro, Guirish and Zohrap, my sister's name was Aregnaz. I had also two sisters-in-law: one was Makrouhi, the other's name I don't remember.

When Touro died, my father said to his daughter-in-law, Touro's wife: "This is your house, you stay here." A rivulet ran at the outskirts of the town. We built a house there and planted trees. My father was a cloth merchant; the Kurds bought cloth from him.

My brother Abgar was a tax-collector. Touro was a tailor. Guirish was a farrier. Our house was composed of two rooms. There was a tundir a barn, a stable, a place for storing straw – for the horses to eat.

The ceiling was made of beams, the floor was wooden. The Armenian quarters were separate, but we lived peacefully with the Kurds.

For winter we made cabbage pickles in brine. We cooked tolma, porov kyufta and ate them with pickles. We cooked pilaw with bulghur, and madsoun soup with dzavar. Pastry – gata, bishi were eaten with sugar-powder. We had as vegetables green beans and cabbage. Bread – we kneaded the flour, flattened the dough, we put the flattened dough on a cushion-like pad and then we stuck it to the walls of the hot tonir. We baked lavash once every fortnight.

To have our bath, we heated water. The dirty water ran out through the open drains. In winter we burned wood. The smoke was let out through tin flues.

The beds were spread on the floor. In the morning we folded and arranged them in the yuklik. My mother had a

teacher brought from Moosh with her family, and our old house became a school. We were fifteen schoolchildren. There was one Gregorian Orthodox Church in our village. We used also to go to St. Karapet: it was a day's journey. We celebrated the Easter and Christmas. We fasted for forty days, eating only food made with oil and nuts. At Easter we colored eggs and distributed them to our neighbors. On New Year eve my father kneaded dough in a large basin, it was baked, then father carved it: everyone had his luck-dime in it by his name, even our cattle had.

The kinds of fruit we had were apples, pears, plums; we did not have citrus fruits. Winter was severe: it closed the roads.

I remember Touro's wedding. The bride was the daughter of a poor family, and my relatives did not want her. My brother had fallen in love with her. My mother was a heroine: she took me, my brothers, and we went to my uncle's house. She called the priest; he married them, and that was all.

My mother's brother worked in the government. His name was Shoukri. When we went to the Monastery of St. Karapet, we stayed at night at my uncle's. My mother had ten children: five of them had died. There were no doctors in our village, but there was a mid-wife.

On St. Karapet's holiday my mother, my uncles' wives went together to pilgrimage. Me and my uncle's daughter, we were put into saddle-bags, we were small. Once a rope-dancer began playing on the rope, he fell down and broke his leg. There were acrobats who wore wooden legs and collected money. There were rooms near the monastery and we stayed in them. The monastery had big iron gates. There was a wall fence around the church. The floor was made of white marble. There were women who sold white chewing gum. The pilgrims entered the church on their knees. While coming out they used to go also on their knees backward. The church was big. We burned incense and candles. There were no beggars. Most of the pilgrims were women.

There were party members. My brothers were Dashnak. They were educated, they knew Armenian, French; they went to meetings. We had three or four guns in our house. One day my brothers took out the guns to clean, one of them threw a bullet into the fire; it exploded and burned his face. My mother put pickled cabbage on the burn and it healed. I have seen Aghbyur Serob's wife, Sossé Mayrik (Mother - Arm.). She came to our village in mourning clothes and stayed at Levon efendi's house.

We lived peacefully with the Turks. Turk gendarmes came and said to Armenian women: "Come, clean wheat and knead dough for the Turk soldiers." My mother gathered the Armenian women and went to the prefect. I was with her. Mother said to him: "We are equal, why do they compel us to knead dough, to bake bread?"

My brother Guirish was a farrier; horsemen came to

him, he shod their horses.

They enlisted my brother Abgar and, together with other boys, took him to the Turkish army. My mother sent Guirish a telegram saying, "Abgar is coming." But Abgar did not reach Moosh. We heard that they had killed him. My mother saddled a horse and went to Moosh. In a few days the Turks came and gathered all the males. There was a bey who wanted to help us, but nothing came out. My father surrendered, they took him to prison. Before he was imprisoned, I asked my father for a dress.

"Hush, times are very bad," he said.

The gendarmes came and said: "Get out of your houses, take with you whatever you want."

What we had we distributed to our Turk neighbors and all the Armenians gathered in the center of the village, in the garden. My sister had braided her hair with gold: that was a rule among the rich. My sisters-in-law had put on blue velvet clothes ornamented with golden lace. A huge Kurd came. We gave the velvet clothes to our acquaintance, the Kurd to save us. He took us to his house. We had walked hardly an hour when the Kurds attacked us. They took off the women's clothes. I also remained with my pants. A Turk kidnapped my sister. We were naked. We got up in the morning. The gendarmes came and took us away. The Kurd came, took us and led us back to his house. My sister who had been kidnapped came back and told me: "I have drunk poison; if I die, you know where our property is buried."

I had gone for water with my uncle's daughter. Suddenly, the Kurd came and took my sister away. They took away my uncle's daughter, too; I remained alone. That Kurd took me to our Kurd neighbor's house. He saw me and was surprised and said: "Are you alive? Your Armenian acquaintances are in our neighbor's house. Shoushan and the others, they are baking bread for the Turks, go to them."

I passed by our house and cried. A Turk was living in our house. He said: "Tell me where your father's riches are." At night a turmoil was heard, the Turks ran away. The Russians came. We went to Harpoot on foot. The Armenians of all the villages had already been deported. Ali efendi took me to his house and kept me like his daughter. Then that Turk family moved to Malatia. The Turk died. His wife sent me to buy mulberry flour. I went. I saw two Turk girls sitting, and their mother was with them. They took me to their house; they bathed me and gave me clean clothes to wear. The mother and the daughters loved me. My Turk mother kept me.

In Harpoot, in front of Rev. Yeghoyan's house, I saw a woman who said: "Come, let me take you to the orphanage."

"No, I don't want. They're taking good care of me," I replied.

The daughter-in-law of the family ordered me to sweep the stable.

I thought of running away.

It was already armistice. A lady took me to an orphanage. I stayed in the Harpoot orphanage for four years. It was an American orphanage; I was already twelve years old. All of us were orphans, like each other. We got up in the morning, we prayed, we sang spiritual songs, we had our breakfast, then we went to school where we learned Armenian. I had already gone to school in the village of Gyumgyum, so I began reading the Bible, but there were elders who could not read. Half of the day I worked as a nurse: I bathed the sick; I fed them, I made the beds and the second half of the day I studied.

In 1922 they put us in coaches with food, beds and pillows and took us from Harpoot to Tigranakert. They had prepared rooms for us. They bathed and fed us and then boarded us in a train and sent us to Aleppo, then to Beirut, Constantinople, then they brought us to Greece and I went to the School-Orphanage in Corinth. Doctor Hekimian adopted me. Then they took me to Egypt. In Egypt I got married. Bishop Mambré was the religious leader there. One day we had gone to church, and Father Mambré told me: "Do you know, Satenik, there's a young man who has gone to Sudan. He has told me that he wanted to marry a girl with long hair. Do you want to marry him?"

"If you have wanted it, I want it, too," said I.

My mother-in-law came and took me to their home. I said: "I'm an orphan."

She said: "I have been an orphan, too. We'll be your mother and father."

They took me to their house. Then we went to Sudan. Their son was a blacksmith. There I had three children.

There were six Armenian families in Sudan. Then we went bankrupt: during the English power our condition worsened.

In 1931 we came to Egypt. They began to speak of Armenia, saying, "It's nice there." I was already a widow then. They brought us to Batoumi by the "Pobeda" ship. We went to Armenia. All of us worked at the factory. My son's eyes began to ache. They gave him a wrong medicine, and he lost his sight. People were very poor. Our girls did not want to work at the factory and they left their jobs. I worked in a fatherless children's home. I worked as a cook. My son became blind and died. My daughters married repatriated boys. Now we are in America. My sons are here with me.

I always pray, may God bless the souls of our victims. I believe in God. I pray for the whole world. The Bible says: "Do not hate your enemy." Jesus said: "Seek and you will find."

## 12 (12).

### ARSHAK STEPANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1908, Moosh)

I was born in the year of Hurriyet. My father was a shepherd. After eating and drinking, the sheep lay on the sand to have much milk. At noon the workers came, milked them and took the milk away.

One day the sun eclipsed. Father and me, we were on the bank of the Mourat River. The sheep were scared, jumped to their feet, the dogs began to howl. On the bank of the river I was shouting, "Hey, hey!" My father took me to the harvest-men. A man said: "There will be hail." Another said: "There will be an earthquake." Still another said: "It's alright. There is nothing to fear." The sun shone again. And in those days, in 1914, the World War I broke out, which shook the world and had its horrible consequences. The Turkish government began to encourage plunder, pillage and the genocide of the Armenians. The frightened people could not leave their houses, reap the wheat and bring it home. Hostility towards the Armenians began. The Turks attacked the houses of the Armenians, plundered, then they snatched the booty from each other's hand, they fought and slaughtered each other.

In those days, one late evening, the flock had settled down to rest and my father went to milk the black sheep. He brought the milk, gave it to me to drink and then put

me to bed. Suddenly the dogs of our flock jumped up and ran forward. My father cried: "Who are you?"

"We are friends!"

My father calmed down the dogs. The horsemen rode nearer, but did not greet my father.

My father greeted them and said: "Where are you going so late at night. Come down now. I'll prepare khorovads and serve you."

The horsemen got down. My father entered the flock to choose a sheep. One of the horsemen got ready to shoot. The other said: "Wait, we'll eat the khorovads and then we'll him."

From my sleeping place I heard all that, but I did not move. Then I felt someone sat on my lying place. I moved and began to cry. I called my father. My father came. I was trembling. The Kurd said: "As if he was a ghost, I got frightened. Shan't I cut the throat of this lad?"

"No," said my father. "This is my beloved son. Don't kill him."

The other Kurd said: "Hey, kirva, you're a shepherd; my father also is a shepherd."

"Who's your father?"

"Temour."

"I and your father, Temour, we are friends. Do friends kill each other?"

"If they are in a difficult situation, they kill. Our Nado bey says that you're not a real shepherd, you're a fedayi. He has sent us to cut your head and take it to him." Then he added: "Come on, get up and go, so long as you're alive."

"God is great, he will open other doors," said my father and left, taking my hand.

From that day on, we lost our sheep.

Autumn came. Gypsies had come to sell sieves. The tax-collectors had also come. In Turkish they were called "tadji" – seal-makers, as they put a seal on the heap of wheat that should not be disturbed, it was the part which should go to the Turkish government.

At that moment I wanted to eat some water-melon, and my mother brought me some water-melon to eat, but while passing by the heap of wheat, she inadvertently disturbed the seal. The Turks began shouting, yelling, and saying that the seal had been displaced. And as a punishment they forced my father to carry a sack of wheat on his shoulder to Boulanekh.

Winter came. The elders of the village were thinking about how they could find a way out of that situation.

The spring, the bloody spring of 1915 came. Djan-feda Nado had returned home. He had come down to the village from the mountains. The peasants, as I said, were afraid to bring the wheat home from the fields in carts. Djan-feda Nado, gun in hand, accompanied the peasants to the field to bring the wheat. Suddenly the Kurds attacked them. Seeing this Djan-feda Nado fired and ordered the peasants to fight with spades and the scythes."

The cart-driver said: "Djan-feda Nado, they have betrayed you, come, get on the cart and hide yourself under the clover."

Feda Nado hid himself. The horseman approached and asked: "Where's feda Nado?"

"He went to the river," said the cart-driver.

They set fire to the cart. Feda Nado jumped out of the cart like a partridge and began to fight. The Kurds shot and killed Djan-feda Nado. His mother Khatoun Maré took care of Nado's sons. At that time the massacre had reached our village and they were slaughtering everyone: old people, children, whoever they got at hand. One day in April, all of a sudden, the Turk soldiers and Kurds invaded the village. Kurd Nado, a turban on his head, came forward towards fedayi Nado's house. Gun in hand, he wanted to enter the house. Our fedayi Nado's mother, Khatoun Maré, fell to the feet of the bek: "Nado bek, spare my grand-children, they've already killed their father."

The bey laughed, "Ha-ha," and his turban fell down. Grandma, who believed whatever was told, entered the house and said: "My sons, hand your guns to the bek."

Leading Gegham and Armen, grandma brought them before the bek. The bek shot dead Armen on the threshold of their door and then he killed Gegham.

Hearing all this my father came home horrified. My father took me and my elder brother to the other side of the river to a village. There was a barn there, which was dug in the earth and was covered with grass as high as a man's height. My father left us there. There were many women and children hidden in that barn. Light penetrated through a small opening. How long we stayed there, I don't know, but, I remember, when the children cried, their mothers reproached them.

One day we heard noises on the roof of the barn. A crowd of Turkish soldiers dashed in and began slapping the women and children. They pulled out the ear-rings from the women's ears and bleed them. A tall, broad-shouldered woman began heating the soldiers with a rolling-pin, another woman stroke a soldier on the head with a jar; the jar was broken. Hiding us under their skirts the women led us out of the barn. We crawled out of the village. We took out our clothes and tied them on our head.

They caught us. They slapped my brother on the face. They snatched the clothes tied on our head and distributed among each other. They tied our hands and made us stand our backs to the river, intending to shoot us and to throw us into the river. Suddenly the Kurds began talking among each other. My brother understood Kurdish, he said: "Ashot, don't be afraid, they want to spare their bullets."

They shot my brother, and he fell into the river. They threw me into the river. In the unclear water I saw my brother's head. Somehow I caught him by the hair. The current was carrying us. The Turks saw that we were not dead, they began to shoot. They wanted to spare three bullets, now they wasted more. The river carried us away. We reached the other bank and we stood on the sand. My brother and his friends were glad that they had remained alive. My brother and his friends buried me in sand, and they buried themselves also in the sand and fell asleep. My brother was listening and suddenly he heard Armenian voices: "Hey, hey, help! But they were afraid and went away." Then my brother yelled again, "We are Armenians."

They came, approached us, they saw that we were naked, they took off part of their clothes and gave them to us; we put them on. They were boys from our village; they told us that they had burned the women and the children who had remained in the barn.

It was late evening when we reached our village. We saw the new-born calves of our cows, Djeiran and Khndzor, had died. We stayed till quite late in the evening. Our family, which was rather large – three sisters, four younger brothers, joined the group of deportees. On our way, I got tired sometimes and my brother carried me on

his back. We reached the Mourat River. They placed us in different houses. Early in the morning we set off along the Mourat River. In the evening we reached a place, where we saw white tents and were glad, thinking that they were Russian tents. When we reached the tents, we saw that there were Turk askyars in them. They rushed out of the tents, attacked us and wounded the men. A Turk pulled my mother's blood-stained kerchief; they drove us to the valley and tied our arms. I kept close to my mother, holding her by the skirt. The moon came out, but soon it went under a cloud. We walked on in the dark. A few Armenians managed to approach the Armenian men and undid their ties with their teeth. They were freed. My wounded father was among them. Four of them attacked the askyars, took their guns, they took off their uniforms and put them on. They tied the Turks' hands and feet. We reached the turbulent Mourat River. The poor people were confused about how to cross the river? The men could swim across, but how could they leave their family and property? A young man took off his clothes, hugged his wife and child and entered the water. The violent stream drifted them along. Until a few men jumped into the water; they could save only the young man and his child.

Our four men, who had become "Turks," brought sheep, slaughtered them, made wine-bags from their skin, joined them with willow branches, they made a raft and took us to the other bank of the river. My mother took out the last crumbs of our provision, divided them among us according to our age and said: "Go, there's manna there; put it on your bread and eat."

We went and ate. We used to cut branches from the trees, made sword and gun and played. Suddenly we heard my mother's voice, "Children, run away, hide in the grass: the Turks are coming."

We saw that a group of horsemen were coming, their rifles held erect. They wondered how we had crossed the river. One of them, holding his gun up entered the river. The river carried him away. Our four "Turkish" soldiers told us to run away. They were following us. We were walking hungry and thirsty. Suddenly we saw another group of Turkish soldiers coming towards us. The armed four "Turkish" soldiers, father as their chief, went forward. The horsemen were so nimble that they were driving from under the belly of the horses. They had no beard, no moustaches. They were blonde and handsome. They were laughing. They said something, which we did not understand. They reached our four "Turkish" soldiers, tied their hands and took them far away. We were terrified. Somebody said to Artem: "Ask, who are they?"

They saw Artem with his long moustache, a turban on his head and began laughing, "Ha-ha." One of the soldiers asked, showing the four men whose hands were tied, "Oni armyane?" (Are they Armenians? – Russ.).

Our absent-minded Russian-knower Artem, shook his head negatively. The soldiers doubted that we were Armenian refugees. Seeing that two of the soldiers were running toward our four "Turk" soldiers to catch them, Artem said belatedly: "We are Armenians, we are Armenians." But when we saw that they tied them all four, we got worried. In reality, these were Germans, since Germany was Turkey's ally. We did not suspect the Germans. At that moment a cloud of dust rose from the road we had come. Horsemen were coming. Seeing this, the Russian soldiers shouted, "Hurrah, hurrah!" and attacked them. Our four men joined them. The fight began. Artem fell. We exclaimed, "Alas!" The Turks were yelling. Suddenly, from the road where the Russian soldiers had come, new Russian soldiers arrived and began killing the Turks. The rest of the Turks ran away. The Russians took us to their tents and gave us their ration. Then they saw us off to the east.

We were being deported. One day we were passing through Great Gharakillissa (later: Kirovakan, now: Vanadzor). Only one lean cow was left. My father had left us forever: he had been killed. My mother had gathered us and we were going after our cow through a narrow street in Gharakillissa. We saw a shop with baskets full of hazel-nuts. Me and my brother stood before it looking. Our mother came and said: "Why are you standing?"

The shop-man said: "Buy some hazel-nuts, give your children to eat. If you have no gold, give me the cow and take hazel-nuts."

My mother went to the cow, took down its load and gave the cow to the shop-man. He gave mother an apronful of hazel-nuts. We began to eat greedily. We went to a kind man's house. We cracked the hazel-nuts and ate. The landlord was a wonderful person. He went to and fro and repeated: "Soon, everything will be alright."

In the morning mother took us to the railroad station, to go to Russia. At that moment they came and pushed us down the wagons. Again we took the road of exile.

We reached the bends of Dilidjan. Mother gave us the last crumbs to ate. We were thinking what to do and where to go? It was November and the Red army entered Armenia. We got mixed with the soldiers and the migrants: We were glad. My childhood relatives: my uncles, their families, my friends were no more in the land of the living.

Later I graduated from the pedagogical vocational school and worked at the school. In late autumn I saw pupils coming to school in the rain, in wet clothes and attend the classes. I did not approve of it and said: "Children, don't come to school in such a weather."

I thought of having built a bridge from Bayandour Village and I had it done. In 1934 I entered the Yerevan State University to become a lawyer. I was a third year student when they called me to the Dean's office. Then I was summoned to go to the Central Committee.

Somebody came out and announced that he was appointed judge in Artik. I went in. I was appointed prosecutor in Artik. I came home and said to my mother: "They've

appointed me prosecutor."

My mother said: "Son, whatever your position is, don't violate other people's rights."

### 13 (13).

#### HRANT HOVHANNES GASPARIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1908, Moosh)

I was two years old when we went from Moosh to Khnous. When the massacres began in 1914 I was in the first form.

In 1914 my father had gone to other regions to collect wheat for he was a baker.

When father returned, he hadn't come down from his horse yet, when two policemen came and said: "Hovhannes, the government is calling you."

My poor father hadn't eaten anything yet. They took him away and he never came back. We went to ask why they had arrested him. We learned that they had arrested thirty-one well-known people that day and taken them to prison. Their names were Antoniants Moushegh, Terzi (tailor – Turk.) Ohannes, my father – Ferenchi (baker – Turk.) Hovhannes (they called him Tulip) Alte Parmagh (with six fingers – Turk.). I cannot remember all their names but they were related to us.

The following day in the morning we went to the prison to take food, but the askyars did not let us go near. That prison was situated on the rocks. My father was behind bars. He said: "Let me kiss my son at least." I went closer and he kissed me. The arrested people were sitting over stack of hay. A barrel was in the middle for excrements. My father gave me a coin. I kept it long in my purse. The following day all of them were sent to exile.

The Araz River took its sources from the Bingyol Mountains near our town. My uncle's two sons, Mihran and Khachik, had come from Moosh that day. All of us, my mother, sister, brothers, my uncle's two sons, we went to take food to my father: my cousin was carrying the bag. That son of a bitch, the gendarme threw the food-bag to the ground and kicked it and began beating my uncle's son. Crying and moaning, we came home. All at once, our village headman, who worked near the Turks, came on a white horse: he had also gone there and treated likewise. They had taken all the thirty-one notables to the Mourat River bank, they had tied stones to their neck, they had shot them and thrown them into the river. One of them had been saved by miracle, he came and told us everything, but they caught him later and hanged him.

They took away all those great men and slaughtered them. Who remained? We: the children and the elderly

people.

The askyars came and said: "Get up, lock your doors: the government will take you to a new town, Veranshah, the gâvur Russian is coming."

We took with us a cow, a saddle-bag of flour: my mother put a purse of gold in the flour bag; he sewed a few gold coins in coats, in my sister's pants.

The Turkish soldiers came shouting and yelling: "Get out, set off."

Before us they had taken away the people of our nearby village and had massacred them all.

They gathered us and drove us to the fields of Sogho, as they gather and drive the cattle to graze.

They surrounded us with thirty or forty askyars, they took us down to the bridge of Khnous, then up to the Bingyol Mountains.

It was in June 1915, when they took us to be massacred. The Kurds came with scythes; they were coming from the harvest. The Chechens took us to the slopes of the Bingyol Mountain, which were covered with flowers and vegetation. The wicked Chechens took us to a valley, the sun was already setting. They said: "You stay here. In the morning you'll go to the town of Veranshah."

When dark fell, an uproar was heard. Those vile officers took away the pretty young women and maidens: they caught them by the neck with leather belts and took them away. When a mother began to yell, they stabbed her with the sword; she fell down and became silent.

The sun had not risen yet; maybe it was about six o'clock, when they began driving us forward: moaning and groaning we moved on. I saw a priest who had swollen up. There were dead people everywhere, under the trees, on the ground. We saw some white things from afar. They were the Kurds. The government had sent them to kill and plunder us. There was neither judgment nor justice.

My sister was riding a donkey and going in the front. The officer fired and gave the signal. The Kurds fell upon us. That scene won't give me rest even in my sleep. Now, that I'm not healthy that scene is before me all the time. They tied my uncle's two sons arm to arm and took them down to the valley. They had come to our house, in Khnous, as guests, poor Mihran and Khachik, they killed

them. The valley was full of corpses and blood flowed. They had cut off the hand of a fifteen-year-old boy, the blood flowed, he cried, “Mama djan, mama djan” (Dear mama, dear mama – Arm.). The askyar thrust his sword into his belly to silence him; he fell dead. That young boy’s mother drank poison. My mother also wanted to take poison, but I threw it away.

We reached the bank of the Mourat River. There was one pear tree; we sat there thirty to forty blind, lame and wounded people, like sheep. Once more the Kurds came with scythes on their shoulders. The Kurds were after plunder and pillage. They plundered everybody. They opened the babies’ wrappers to see whether it was a boy or a girl. Finding out the boys, they struck with their scythes and cut open their throats; the babies floundered like slaughtered hens. I can’t forget it up to this day. I felt a blow on my head. They hid me under the skirts of women.

The Kurds pillaged, killed and went away. Suddenly I saw a naked girl creeping down the hill. I yelled, “Mum, my sister Aghavni!”

My brother ran forward to help her; a bullet pierced his heart and my sister’s foot. My brother fell dead on the spot.

The Kurds had taken off my sister’s clothes, and who knows what they had done to her.

Mother took off some of her clothes and dressed my sister who was shuddering with fear.

There was an acquaintance of ours, the Kurd kirva Mahmed agha. He had been an old friend of ours. He lived in a village on the slope of Bingyol. He used to bring wheat for my father from Russia. He smuggled different kinds of weapon, rifles in the wheat sacks to sell them to the Armenians. The authorities found out about it and he was condemned to hanging. His wife came to us, fell before my father’s feet and said that they would hang Mahmed. My father went to the state attorney. The later told him that it was already decided and they would hang him, “But,” he said, “If you can, bring another Kurd to be hanged instead of him...” My father had done so. So that explained his kindness towards us.

So, Mahmed agha’s son who had come to those parts saw us. My mother knew four languages. My mother approached and spoke to him. That Mahmed kirva’s son, pretending that he was taking us away to kill us in order to take our clothes to his children, took us to their house. When the Kurd’s wife saw us she exclaimed: “Woe! What have they done with you!”

During the slaughter my brother Andranik had also come to this house safe and sound. It’s true, we had many losses, but Andranik was alive, so we were glad.

In the evening, kirva came and said: “I cannot keep you here: the officers may come and see you.” There was

a forest on the opposite side, he took us there and said: “In day-time you have to stay here, at night you may come to our house.” Our friend gave us a quilt in tatters. Mother applied plantain on my sister’s foot and it healed.

Kirva took us to his house at night, gave us food, drink and bed. One day our friend changed our names, gave us Kurdish names for safety. My name became Adraman, my sister’s name was Gulé, my mother’s name – Asya, my brother’s – was Haydo. We ploughed the fields. Once, mother and me, escaped to the forest. My sister and brother were ploughing. They caught them and took them away. Mother began lamenting. They took away Gulé and Haydo. They gathered people by eights and tens and took them away.

There was no toilet at our kirva’s house; we used to go to the back of the house for our needs. I went out to pass urine; I saw my sister and brother coming. They had shot sister in five places and they had poured open my brother’s intestines. We went to the woods again. Mother treated them again with plantain. Suddenly I began scratching my head and I saw two worms in my hand. In fact, when the Kurds had struck me on the head, it was wounded, but we hadn’t paid attention to it, then it had inflamed and became suppurated and wormy. Mother remembered, when it happened to the sheep’s foot, she applied alum on the infected place. Mother rubbed my wound with alum: seven or eight worms fell out of the wound.

One day kirvan said to my mother: “Let’s take your son and daughter to the orphanage of Khnous.”

Mother said: “No.”

One day the Turks came on horseback and took me and my mother away. They made us walk before their horses. My sister and brother remained there. They took us to Khnous. They had turned the church of Khnous into a prison; they threw us there. As we entered the church, what did we see? A horrible scene: some ten people had starved to death and they were swollen. There was no toilet, it was dirty all about and they had fallen ill. A few were agonizing. What should we do? There was a school near the church. Mother wanted to come out through the church window, but did not succeed. Mother began to cry and said: “Lao, I wish we were killed amid the flowers of the forest, and the wolves had eaten us up.”

Our St. Sargis Church of Khnous was built on the brim of the valley. There was a small window on the valley side. My mother made a rope from the 6-7 shawls of the women who were there, made something like a sack and lowered me out of the window to go and bring bread. It was as if in Yerevan – I went from Dzoragagh to the market: well, it was our village and I knew it well. I used to buy six-seven loaves of bread, put them in the sack, they drew them up and then they drew me up. That

way we lived for a week. After a week the guard standing in front of the door saw me climbing down the rope, came and beat me. He beat me so, that up to this day my body aches. There we remained three more days. They came and opened the doors with six or seven askyars, in order to take us away and kill us. They were taking us through winding roads. The Turks had bayonets on their rifles as they were driving us. We were about sixty or seventy people. They were taking us away to kill us. My mother said to me: "Lao, run away, go to Anar's house."

I did not want to leave mother's hand. Suddenly everybody got mixed up. Mother held me by the hand and we ran to Mahmed agha's house. Mother said: "Sister, we have escaped. For God's sake, help us."

That woman sent us to the stable. Two askyars came and asked: "Two people escaped, did they come to your house?"

That woman came to us and said: "No, no I can't hide you."

Mother gave her gold earrings to the woman and said: "Take, give these to them."

The woman took the earrings and gave them. Those hounds went away.

Mother had two sisters. One of them was seventy-year-old Turk Hasso's wife, who had taken her by force; she was twenty years of age. We saw Hasso come; he brought a bed-sheet. He took us to the manure house. Mother gave him a gold coin. Hasso went to our village and said: "I am keeping Hovhannes's wife and son."

They put us on the back of oxen by night and took us to meet my sister and brother. It was a miracle.

We remained there for a while. One day Kurd Mahmed agha said: "Sister, I can't keep you any more."

We were in Bingyol then. They would take the wheat home, so we came with them. We saw a stable; we went in. In one corner of the stable there was a heap of dung, which was fresh. We opened a hole in it and entered there. The cold in Khnous was like in Siberia. We remained there. Mother went to sieve wheat and she brought some wheat with her. We roasted the wheat and ate it.

Then a Turk came and saw us in the dung, as it was warm. He pitied us. He brought some bread and made a fire. They were husband and wife. They said: "They are to pity."

There are also kind people among them.

One day that Turk came and said: "Badji, can you bake gata?"

My mother said: "It's my business. My husband was a baker."

The Turk brought flour; he heated the tonir. My mother baked gata. He gave us some.

After a while the Turk gathered his cartload and left, for the gâvur Russians were coming. He gave the key to

my mother.

Mother thought that suddenly the Turk soldiers might come and see us. We took each other by the hand and went down the valley. There was an arsenal there; the Turks exploded it, lest it should fall into the hands of the Russians. We were hungry. Mother had kept some gata. My mother covered her head with the Turk's bed-sheet and the Turk who had helped us, a gun in his hand, and went away. After a while, the Turk came back, the bed-sheet in his hand.

I said: "Where's mother? Did you kill her?"

"What killing? The Russians have come."

That was in 1914, the end of December, soon it would be New Year. While going with the Turk, mother heard a boy say: "Armenak, come this way."

My mother said: "My dear ones, are you Armenians?"

"We're Armenians; we're together with the Russians."

Mother remained there.

We came and found mother. We found a rich man's house. There was plenty of food and clothing. We began to carry horseshoes and nails. We started to live again. We found a few Armenian men and women. They began dancing kochari. After all, it was New Year. The women were singing madly:

*"Where's my husband?"*

*Where's my brother?"*

*Where are my children?"*

We remained there for a month. Then we went in vans to Alashkert, which was the Russian border. There was a big orphanage there. I and my brother went to the orphanage. Mother became a cook. There were 400 orphans there. My sister worked at the hospital. She fell in love with Doctor Simon's son; they got married.

After a year the Russians went back. We were scattered again. We passed by Massis and came to Armenia. General Smbat brought us. On our way we passed through Djulfa, Goris, Nakhidjevan and came to Yerevan – Kond.

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.

That was World War I. I have taken part in World War II as well. While fighting in Poti, I fell prisoner. They took me to Germany. They wanted to take me to America, but I knew my five children and my wife were waiting for me. But after the victory, they sent me directly to Siberia. I remained in exile for nine years. In 1954 they freed me, but did not permit me to live in Yerevan. I've worked in Ghapan, in the molybdenum mines. I have worked as a fitter; I've built a factory. In 1962 I came to Yerevan. I was acquitted.

## 14 (14).

### HRACH YEGHIAZAR HOVHANNISSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Moosh, Havatorik Village)

Our ancestors have come from Zeytoun and settled in the village of Havatorik, Moosh Province. They had often fought with the Turks. Methouk was one of our ancestors. He had come to Sassoun from Zeytoun, Aghbi Village. The Sassounites had a good tradition – everybody like to dance. Methouk, wounded and lame, began to dance. Everyone got astonished. Methouk said: "I want to get married!"

Methouk got married and had four sons. The sons grew up and became well-known men. Our elder people used to tell that Methouk had sent one of his sons to the village of Pethar – Moosh Province, the other – to Havatorik and the other two remained in the village of Aghbi. Methouk became rich and had a church built. The kolkhoz chairman of our village, who was from Havatorik, told us that they used to go to that church; on the altar of the church there was the carved hand of Methouk. He was called Ter Khmé. They say that the church still exists.

Methouk's offspring still lived in Aghbi. All the inhabitants of the village were Armenians. My grandfather Hovhannes Greyan lived in Havatorik. He had four sons. In 1915 the members of our family numbered thirty-two; the Kurds had filled 30 of them in the stables and had burned them. Only two of them – brother and sister Yeghiazar and Kazhé Khachaturians survived.

My father had married in Moosh. When the deportation began my younger brother was forty days old. On the way to exile Petara Akho and Manouk, who had been in the band of Gevorg chavoush, were among us. The poor deportees, burdened, tortured and tired, were walking along the road when the baby started to scream. They said: "The Turks will hear the voice of the

child and they'll pursue us." They forced my mother to leave the child on the road and go with them. My poor mother, as she had no way out, put the baby on one side of the road. Soon my grandma, who was following us in a cart, saw a baby on the roadside; she recognized the clothes and said to the cart driver: "Grko, lao, isn't that our Tammy?" And the cart stopped.

Grko went and brought the baby. My grandma said: "This is our child."

When they reached their destination and got saved, Petara Akho met Grko, hugged him and said: "You reoffered us this child."

The child's name had been Harutyun, but Akho said: "Now the child's name will be Ferman, that means a command, because a command had come that the Armenians should be deported." In World War II Ferman went to the front and got killed.

General Andranik declared that the bridge of Djulfa had been occupied by the Turks, and the problem was to defend ourselves.

Anyhow, with the help of Andranik and Akho we could cross the bridge and find our liberty. We settled in the region of Talin.

When we came there, there were six houses of Turks and six houses of Armenians. The Armenians settled down in the village of Verin Bazmaberd. Later the Turks brought the Armenians children who were left with them and sold them by ransom. My sister gave one gold coin for each child and bought them.

My father was illiterate: he could only write his name. In 1937, at the age of 50, they [the Soviet government] sent him to Siberia on exile. They deprived us of all our possessions.

## 15 (15).

### KHACHATOUR HARUTYUN GHOUKASSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1898, Bitlis, Havarik Village)

My mother's name was Noubar, my father's name was Harutyun, grandma's – was Koto, my brothers' names were – Margar, Miro, Mkrich. All of us lived together. There were about 200-300 houses of Armenians of our village. There were also many Turks and Arabs. We used to grow wheat and barley. We gave sixteen poods of wheat as land tax. I worked with my father till I became 15.

There was the St. Astvadsadsin Church in our village, but there were no schools. In our village they gave water to the Armenians for five days and then five days – to the

Turks, but the drinking cold water was brought from the fountain. We had sheep, goats, cows, oxen. We had one hundred to one-hundred and fifty sheep on our sheepfold. My father used to go to the Bitlis market and brought presents for everyone.

Then the massacre began. There were fedayis, they fought bravely, but they were killed. I was in Andranik's detachment. We had German guns. Andranik did not like Dro. Andranik wanted to go abroad, they did not permit him. The Turk soldiers came and we were defeated.

We came here. There were many Kurds here; we

fought frequently with them.

During the war I went to the Soviet army. I have

fought at the fronts of Gori and Sochi.

Now I live with my three sons.

## 16 (16).

### TAGOUHI ANTONIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Bitlis)

When the deportation started, I was fifteen years old. Order had come from the Turkish government to gather the male Armenians to serve in the Turkish army and to deport the rest of the people and then slaughter them.

My grandfather and my mother's eldest brother were taken to the Turkish army. As one of their relatives was in the government, they were not deported with us. I was the only daughter of our family. My brothers – Sirekan, Harutyun, Grikor, took the valuable things of the house down to the cellar and hid them there. What we needed most of all, we took with us. The officers said: "Haydi, ermeniler, arabalarınıza binin!" (Come on, Armenians, get onto the carts! – Turk.).

They put handcuffs on Garnik efendi's hands and took him away.

They took us to Konia. There a Turk came and said to my father: "If you give me your daughter, I can arrange your escape." Neither my father, nor my mother agreed. On the way my father died. Four women came, took him by the feet and hands, carried away and threw him into a pit, which was dug beforehand. I saw it with my own eyes. They also threw into that pit those who were very sick, but were still alive, or they stabbed them with a sword, and threw them into it. Blood flowed everywhere. Is it possible to forget all this? I remember: there were large swarms of locusts flying in the air. They were so hungry that some ate locusts, others ate cow's blood. My aunt boiled the blood of a dead cow and we ate it. Live or die! We used to drink the muddy water, stagnant in the puddles of the road; we were so thirsty. My mother and brother were very sick, so we left them under a tree on the roadside; they would die sooner or later, all the same. I had taken an antique copper vase with me. The Turks robbed it together with the gold coins, which were in my possession. Then another chaos began: they kidnapped the young girls; many of them ran away and hid themselves. I had fallen somewhere all alone. I saw many girls who threw themselves into the Euphrates River. I didn't. The sun was setting and I was still lying on the ground. I thought soon it would be night and the wolves might come and devour me. Suddenly I felt strong. I got to my feet and walked. I saw a camel from afar and I thought there should be people there. I walked on till I got there; it became quite dark. A strong wind began to blow and everything was covered with dust.

Then I saw several tents side by side; I took a deep breath. When I reached the first tent, I could hardly

breathe. I saw an Arab woman. She helped me: she took me in, fed me, cleaned me of the lice and washed me. Those Bedouins lived in the desert; they raised sheep and camels. That woman had children. There were other Armenian girls there also. I remember Azniv Krbachian. They had given her the name of Mariam; they called her Mariam tawil, that means – tall, in Arabic, and they called me Mariam zughayar that means – small. There we spoke Armenian with each other. To save us from the Turks, the Bedouins had tattooed our faces with green ink. We were altogether 12 Armenian girls. There was a pasha nearby. Every day he took one Armenian girl with him. He had made something like a harem.

One day I was sitting before the door, when someone said: "Ya benti, benti (Hey, my girl – Arab.), I'm going to put you on the camel, be careful not to fall." I got up and hugged the camel's neck. That Arab wanted to marry me. I said: "I'll marry you on condition that you'll find my brother." "I will," said the Arab.

There I learned to bake bread. I made a fire of dry branches and remained near the fire for a long time; I baked bread for everybody. That's why the pupil of my eye is damaged: I see with one eye only.

One day a merchant came to the Bedouins to buy goats and sheep, to take them to Syria, Mosul...

I had already two sons of my Bedouin husband. My Bedouin husband loved me very much and he pitied me. One day he said: "Come, let's go to Mosul: there are many Armenians there. Our friend, the merchant is also there; maybe we can find your brother."

We got ready and went to Mosul with our two children. We rented a house. My husband loved me very much. He brought me everything I needed from the market. But my two sons fell ill there and died. My Bedouin husband applied to the Armenian Church, with the help of the merchant, to find my brother. Through the newspapers we learned that my brother was in Egypt. I fell into a most difficult situation: my Bedouin husband or my own, Armenian brother? I used to cry and sigh. My husband saw my condition; he took pity on me and let me free. All alone, I set off towards Syria, then Lebanon and then to Egypt and found my brother there. After a while I married Arzerounian and had two children – Abraham and Zarouhi.

From Egypt we came here, to Los Angeles. My daughter Zarouhi became an artist-painter, my son Abraham owns a jeweler's factory, and I enjoy my old age...

17 (17).

**YENOK KARAPET ASLANIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1901, Bitlis, Khnous Village)**

I was born in 1901, in the large village of Khnous, Bitlis region. Our family was very large, more than 40 people, and all of us lived together: sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles. My father's name was Karapet, and mother's name was Mariam. I was the eldest of the children. My mother died during her second child-birth. She was very beautiful and kind. My father married a second time. I ran away, but my father found me and brought me back home. My father was rich and he always gave me money. Our neighbor's wife knew that I was saving money, and I was only seven then, so she persuaded me to go together with her to a seaport by cart and then to go to America. But my father came after us and brought me back home – for the second time. When I wanted to run away from my stepmother, the deportation and massacres started, so I know nothing about my relatives. I ran away on foot and reached the Russian army. The Armenian volunteers were in Ardahan. I went to their commander and said that I was an orphan, had nobody and he accepted me to look after the horses. As the Russian army was advancing the roads were covered with corpses, beheaded men, and dead naked women, some of them with open bellies. Our commander closed his eyes in order not to see the

corpses piled on each other. The vultures were tearing their flesh and flying away. When the Russian army retreated I went with them. On the way we stayed at an inn, which belonged to a Greek. The inn owner and his wife liked me very much, and I remained with them. I began working at the inn. They wanted to adopt me, but I did not agree, thinking that I might find my parents.

By freight train, I managed to reach Tiflis. There, by chance I met my cousin, Aram Aslanian, with whom we had lived in Bitlis. He had miraculously survived. He said that our family of 40 was driven as sheep with whips and bayonets. He had hid in a barn and was saved. He had come to Tiflis and met his aunt's son, Missak, who had managed to flee. I could learn only this much about our family.

Aram and Missak married. I lived with Aram's family, until I met a boy from Bayazet and came with him to New Bayazet. Here I met a young teacher, Armenouhi, and we married. She had also lost her relatives who had been deported from Bayazet. We had 4 children: Vazgen, Anik, Djemma, and Lena. They all got a higher education and are Doctors and Doctors of Sciences.

Thus, from our family of 40 people only I, Aram, Missak and my aunt's daughter, Vardik, survived.

18 (18).

**SOKRAT HAKHEY MKRITCHIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1901, Bitlis, Khlut Province, Prkhous Village)**

Our Prkhous Village was situated in Western Armenia, in the Khlut (historical Bznounik) Province, on the bank of Lake Nazik, in front of the Nemrout Mountain, beyond which the Moosh plain stretched westward, and to the south lay the Lake Van, and to the east was Sipan. Our village had winding streets, thatched roofs leaning one upon the other. The dwellings of the peasants and the stables were very close to each other and people breathed the same air as the animals. The village had a church built of red tuff. Near our village there was Lake Nazik, of which it is told that the Arab horses arose from its depths. The waters of Lake Nazik were rich in trout, which, besides being delicious, had curative properties. The stream Tlbi took its source from the Lake Nazik and ran into the Lake Van.

On bright days big manlike stones were seen on one of the flat peaks of the Nemrout Mountain. The people had yarned a legend, according to which in ancient times, a shepherd had climbed the mountain with his sheep. All of a sudden everything got mixed up, the clouds came down on the mountain, and it began pouring and

dropping hail in an unprecedented size. That was why the following was sung in the village:

*"The sky is cloudy, it's hailing,*

*It's pouring, pounding on luckless Nemrout."*

The horrified shepherd knelt and entreated God to save them, promising to sacrifice his best ram. Rain and hail stopped all at once. The sun began to shine. The rainbow threw its arch on the sky. The flock and the shepherd got saved. But the shepherd, instead of sacrificing his best ram, caught a fat louse from his body, put it between his nails, cracked it and raising his head shouted: "Oh, Almighty Lord, accept my sacrifice." And, it is said that God, hearing these words, flew into a rage and changed the shepherd and his flock of sheep into stone.

"He was a godless shepherd, lao! That's why he got his punishment, lao!" used to say my grandfather.

My mother was literate to some extent that was why one winter she sent me to school giving me a book at random. There, I began reading somehow.

In our village wheat, barley, linseed, hemp, cabbages,

turnips and other vegetables were grown. Cattle-breeding was developed also. Our village had few links with the provincial town Bitlis.

At the age of seven I began working with my father: I've ploughed and kept the cattle.

In the winter of 1913-1914 a comet appeared. The elders predicted: "War will break out," "Blood will flow down the rivers," "There will be an earthquake," "There will be famine."

It was the scorching summer of 1914. The ripened wheat and rye fields were floating in a gentle breeze. Suddenly I noticed a horseman riding towards us. He approached my father and said that war had started and he had to go to the village for enlistment.

Even elderly people were called to the army as "damour bashis" (porters – Turk.). Under the severe winter conditions of the Armenian Highland, they loaded elderly men from Bitlis, Van, Erzroom, Kharbert, Sebastia and other places with 3-4 poods of barley to carry to Sarighamish for the Turkish army. That was the most cruel, the meanest, the most malicious, brutal and disgusting plan, which started in 1914 to annihilate the Armenian males, silently under the effect of cold and hunger. From the very beginning of World War I the snow-covered roads were covered with hundreds and thousands of corpses of Armenian men. They took away my father as well, and we never saw him again. That devilish act pursued an aim – to empty the Armenian villages of their males and then to exterminate easily the defenseless women, children and old people.

News came from Sarighamish that the Turkish army was entirely defeated, that part of them was frozen dead in the forests of Sarighamish, and that the whole forest was covered with corpses. It was said that only Enver pasha had been able to save himself by a disgraceful escape. They said that the Russians, who wore warm clothes and were not afraid of snow or frost, drove away the Turkish army. They said that there would soon be salvation.

In March 1915 the remnants of the defeated Turkish army reached our village in ragged clothes, emaciated covered with lice, sick with typhus and dysentery.

In the spring of 1915 the Kurds living in the impregnable mountains and valleys of Zillan (Alashkert) started to escape westward as the Russian army was advanced. That mob had received instructions from the Turkish government to plunder the gāvurs and slaughter them without sparing women, children and old people.

One day in April that mob, armed with rifles, reached our village in the evening and surrounded it. Darkness had not fallen yet when they killed a man near the graveyard. No one dared to go there to see whether he was dead or alive. We had come together in families. No one could come out of the besieged village. That pack of Kurds did not dare to enter the village by night. In

the morning, as they saw that there was no resistance, they attacked the village on all sides, together with their women and began plundering and killing with such atrocity as could be done only by hungry wolves when they attack a defenseless victim.

At the beginning they were killing only the seventy-eight years old people, and then they began to massacre the teenagers. Before my eyes, on the threshold of our house they killed my ninety-year-old grandpa. Not a single bullet was fired in vain. Soon corpses were scattered in the streets and houses. Corpses had fallen on the roofs and roads. Mothers had lost their children, and children had lost their mothers, for they did not allow them to stay somewhere. They drove people from street to street. I, too, lost my mother and sister. Then, I don't know how, my mother, almost mad, found me and took me to a yard with high walls, where a few terrified women had taken refuge.

Hardly a few minutes had passed when we saw two Kurds aiming their rifles at us from above the wall. A toothless Kurd put his gun on my breast saying: "He is a boy, it is enough; we must do away with him." In an instant I noticed how my mother knelt before the Kurd and kissed the old man's feet and begged him to spare my life. The Kurd began to hesitate, and I grasping the opportunity, left my mother and ran into the street and throw myself into the yard opposite my uncle's house. Soon, my mother, disheveled, panting and pale, came into the yard saying: "They're killing, they won't spare any boys, and many boys have already fallen in the streets. Let's go, let's go from here, soon others will come and kill us," and, dragging me behind him, she took me to her brother's house. There we saw my uncle's son – Benjamin, who was of my age, bathing in his blood on the ground. They had just killed him. My mother made me lie near him, stained me with his blood as if I was also dead. Then she took me out to the street and made me lie next to the killed ones, a round whom the maddened women were tearing their hair and clothes. The pretty young women and maidens had disguised their faces by applying soot and mud in order to escape being kidnapped. But often that didn't work: they pulled them by their hair and took them away. Every minute the corpses grew in number. I was laying among them who were alive a couple of hours ago, with their bright faces, my dear relatives, friends and neighbors: half-maddened women had surrounded us moaning, groaning and lamenting; my mother was among them. They were wailing the heads of their dead children, brothers, husbands in their arms. They tortured to death men and women demanding to tell where they had kept their property, gold and silver. The sun had already set, but the shooting had not stopped yet, when news spread that the people were escaping towards the Lake Nazik.

After flooding the village of four hundred houses

with blood and tears, the pack of hyenas left the village, and the remnants of the maddened people began to escape without knowing where. The disfigured corpses of their relatives were lying under the sun, swollen and ugly. My mother who was by me all the time had left no hair on her head. She raised me to escape from the village. We had hardly passed two streets, when an armed Kurd came out of a house and ran towards me. Just at that moment Simon – my friend, was also running away. The Kurd left me and ran behind him. Catching the opportunity, I climbed the roofs and ran to our house. I got in and hid under the manure house. I remained there till night. Then I came out. I wanted to enter our house, but my grandpa's corpse was lying on the threshold. I decided to go back and lie down again near the corpses, but there I saw my mother, pressing my younger brother in her arms to her bosom. She saw me and did not believe I was alive, then she took me to a neighbor's house where a group of women and children had taken refuge in a dark corner of the room. I wanted to drink, but there was no water left. They had broken and spoiled everything. In the morning we set out to escape. The groups of women and children, escaping from the village, went in different directions. Early in the morning one group ran away through the valleys to the Armenian village of Khoulik and got easily saved, for the Russian army was very near. We entered the glen. The refugees began to eat the springtime fresh herbs and drink the overflowing river water. My mother put down my younger brother on the riverbank, on the green grass, under a huge rock and told me not to move away from the child, and she went to the Armenian village of Spradzor to get something to eat. But hardly had she gone when a group of Kurds, yelling and swearing, began to shoot at the women and children scattered in the valley. The valley was filled with the uproar of women and children. I left my brother and hid behind the rock. Mother, hearing the shooting, came back breathless, picked up my brother and began looking for me with her eyes. When the Kurds left, I came out and went to my mother. We climbed towards the lake. Suddenly another group of Kurds attacked us. One of them fixed his eyes upon my big shoes, took out his dagger to kill me. My mother fell before his feet asking to spare me, but he remained unmoved. A Kurd woman did not let him shoot. I escaped towards the village of Khiartank. My mother also came there in a group of one hundred and fifty hungry and thirsty refugees. We stayed there for a while. At the beginning of June, officials came and declared that, according to the new order of the Sultan, the Armenian massacres were forbidden and that all the Armenian should go back to their villages. We had to return.

Part of the twenty-three Armenian villages of our Khlat Province lay at the foot or on the slopes of Nemrout. All the inhabitants had been slaughtered. The Armenian villages of the Khlat Province were razed to the ground:

they were Agrak, Haghagh, Eymal, Teghvout, Toukh, Tapavank, Khoulik, Khotadzor, Dsaghken, Dsghak, Koshtian, Kdsvak, Kamourdj, Hersonk, Djiziré, Medsk, Matnavank, Djamouldin, Shamiram, Ourtap, Djrhor, Spradzor and Miandzak. Arriving at our village all of us went to a large house in the upper part of the village. Hungry and thirsty, leaning on each other, we passed that dreadful night. In the morning the Kurds came and found us. They raped the young women and maidens before our eyes. There was a boy who had put on girl's clothes; they took him away, but when they had found out that he was a boy, they had killed him. We saw his corpse when we were running away to the lake together with my mother, younger brother and sister. On the way my one-year-old brother died. We dug the earth with our hands and buried him in his swaddling-clothes. My mother gave me to an old Kurd acquaintance of ours – Binbo, and I worked for him as a shepherd-boy. But he did not keep my mother and sister, so they went back to our ruined yard where my brother's grave was.

After a few days the Kurds began to run away towards the Moosh plain. The army of Nicolay II was moving forward. There had not remained a single Armenian in our Khlat Province; the inhabitants, who were mostly Armenians, had been entirely slaughtered. Now it was the turn of the Moosh plain and the Sassoun highland.

I hurried home and found my mother crying by my brother's grave. We parted with great difficulty. In June 1915, as a prisoner, I set off with my Kurd master towards the Moosh plain. The Kurd peasants of the Djizren Village were running away in horror. Kurd Binbo had yoked four oxen to a cart and I, seated on the last ox, was driving them. We passed by the field of our village. No smoke came out of any chimney. I was like a Kurd in everything. They had changed my name from Sokrat to Avdelbaghi, they had trimmed my hair in the fashion of a Kurd and I had a turban on my head. But the Kurd lads had found out about my being Armenian, when I was grazing the cattle, so they held me, they made a cross of their sticks and forced me to curse the Christian cross. I did not submit: they poured a whole pan of milk on my head as a sign of vengeance and went away. One of them stayed back and said to me in Armenian: "Why didn't you swear? What would happen? You would get rid of them easily." I was astonished that he was an Armenian and he could reconcile himself to his state.

I ran away from my Kurd master. The Kurds attacked me several times, but I was saved by miracle. With great difficulty I reached the Russian army, where there were many Armenian volunteers. But they remained in the Moosh plain for one day only; it was July 16, 1915. When they began to withdraw, all the Armenians of the Moosh plain took the road of exile. The road of exile was terrible. There wasn't my mother anymore. I had found my five-year-old sister, and hand-in-hand, we reached,

with great difficulties, Igdir, then – Edjmiadsin. As typhus and other contagious diseases had spread among the exiles, we gave innumerable victims. Every morning they came and took away in carts the dead and those who were dying.

Then I entered the Edjmiadsin orphanage, after

which they transferred us to Ashtarak. At the end of the autumn of 1915 there were five orphanages in Ashtarak, with more than three hundred orphans. Those children's houses were patronized by Moscow, and we got very good education, both practical and theoretical. But the yearning for our Land remained in our hearts.

## 19 (19).

### HMAYAK BOYADJIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1902, Bitlis, Khaltik Village)

Our village was surrounded with forests. We did not cut wood from the Khach (Cross – Arm.) forest, for it was considered a sin. We cut wood from the other forests. Our village lay at the foot of the mountain. There were nine fountains and two rivulets in our village, which made it possible to irrigate the fields. Five hundred and fifty Armenian families lived in our village. Each family consisted of six or seven members, so there were about three thousand Armenians.

Our village was like a town. We lived in two-storeyed stone houses. Most of the inhabitants were occupied in agriculture. Of trades, weaving, pottery and blacksmith's work were common. My father was a blacksmith. He used to forge special nails, which were used for nailing under the shoes. We grew millet, wheat and turnip. We gathered crops twice a year, which was hardly enough for us. We grew cotton as well. We sowed and collected the cotton, spun with distaffs and then wove cloth, dyed and then sold it. The potters made pottery for the village inhabitants and took their goods to other villages and towns.

There were two arched bridges in our village: those were made of stone and were strong.

Our families were the families of two uncles and they all lived together. We were fifteen families and each of them consisted of ten to fifteen members. They all lived in harmony. In summer we used to bathe in cold water, in winter we heated water and took our bath in the cow-barn. In the cow-barn we had cows, donkeys, oxen. Once there spread an epidemic disease of animals, and they all died.

On the first floor there was the general room where we slept. The house had windows, but there was no glass; they oiled the paper and stuck it.

There were me, father, mother, my brother and my sister in our family. There were two schools in the village, one was Gregorian Orthodox, with one hundred and four pupils, of whom four were girls and the rest were boys. There was also a protestant school. The subjects we studied at school were the native tongue, Turkish, French, history and geography. I've gone to school till 1914.

We had the St. George Church, which was built of polished basalt, with four pillars inside. The whole village

went there on holidays. The Apostolic Church and the Protestants lived in harmony. During the Genocide the Turks wanted to pull down the church, but they couldn't.

In the village we had hakeems, who even healed trachoma. We spoke in Armenian; though we were close to the Kurdish villages, most of the people did not know Kurdish. There were many grabar [classic Armenian] expressions in the sermons.

The gatherings were held in the church-yard, and the baptisms and weddings – in the church. The mode of life was almost European, for many people went to work abroad and came back bringing with them European clothes and shoes.

The Armenians and the Kurds lived almost in peace, but I remember an event when Faraz agha had kidnapped an Armenian woman, whose husband had gone abroad to earn money. The Kurd's wife had protested and the husband had said: "I've brought her to work; you are my real wife." That Armenian woman came to the village, then ran away to Moosh.

We had fedayis – Mourad, Hakob by name, who were in Aghbyur Serob's detachment, but they were not in harmony with each other.

When Hurriyet 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. But the following days showed that it was a fake. My cousin took me to Bitlis. On the way I caught him by the skirt of his coat. We went to Bitlis, went about the market and found the music place. We, peasant boys, were watching in surprise. The governor got up and gave the musicians a gold coin each. We came back; we passed by Karmravank (Red Monastery – Arm.) where Aghbyur Serob's grave was, a cross on it. We kissed it and continued our way.

During the following years, an atmosphere of coldness prevailed; soon people understood that Turkish policy had not changed. During World War I, I was thirteen years old. The fighting was against the Russians whom the Turks and the Kurds considered our 'uncles.' Till the Hurriyet the Christians weren't recruited in the army. After its proclamation, they began

taking the Armenians to military service to fight against the Russians. Those who refused to serve were beaten and killed. They gathered all the weapons. They were searching weapons even there, where they didn't exist.

In our parts the Genocide began on June 12, 1915. The people of our village were massacred together with those of Bitlis; as most of the inhabitants of our village were craftsmen, the Turkish government sent a detachment as if to protect us. They were afraid of our village inhabitants. There were also the soldiers of the surrounding Kurd aghas and our village was obliged to feed them all. They had already taken the Armenian youth to the Turkish army. They had dug trenches on our mountains to defend Bitlis. Considering who was skilled in what trade, they put them all to work. All the craftsmen were serving the army. They were cutting trees, the potters were making water-pipes to conduct water to Bitlis, and the tailors were making army uniforms. Three times a week they took the ready goods to hand over to the government.

The Russian army was drawing near. The Turkish soldiers escaped in masses. One day my uncle fell ill. We had a donkey. I went to Bitlis together with the peasants to deliver the goods. Four armed Kurds accompanied us. They said to us: "Be quick, return to your village." Suddenly we saw soldiers in Arab uniforms, turbans on their head, sandals on their feet and in pants, rushed to Bitlis. The movement in the town came to a standstill. In order to go back we passed through a long street. All of a sudden we heard mourning and lament.

The Genocide had started. The Turks attacked us, robbed us of our donkeys and mules, began beating us and then took us to the police station. The Genocide started in Bitlis. They set fire to the houses. We stayed there till morning. We were five or six children. We were thinking when they would kill us. There came a coach; they pushed the curtain with the end of a sword, they spat on us and drove away. A few hours passed. I saw a killed Russian soldier, whom they took near a pit. There was also a Russian general. They struck him on the head and threw both the corpse and the half-dead general in the pit.

We were six boys; one of them was Moushegh Ghazarian. They returned us to our village, but till we came out of Bitlis, we saw Turk women on the roofs shouting: "Where are you taking them? Kill them." They brought us out of town. There was a field on our way. Suddenly we saw Turks and Kurds coming to kill us. They said: "Promise us something and we'll set you free." We promised. We reached our village. We saw the massacre had started in our village. We, three boys, together with Moushegh Ghazarian, ran to the mountains, from where the Lake Van was visible. Darkness fell. We saw those who had run away from the village, had taken refuge behind the rocks. They sent us – the children, to the village to find out if the massacre had stopped. We

saw Turkish soldiers coming towards us. We began to run away. The Turks followed us. I and my cousin Hrach were running away. They caught Hrach, and we could never find out what they did with him; probably they killed him. Then I came home and saw my kins were mourning.

Some twenty days passed by and we were getting ready to go to the town again, but we saw that they were killing people again. I wanted to escape. A gendarme came and wanted to kill me. A Turkish woman saved me. I could not find anybody from my family. I searched for them long, but find no one. Only the last day we climbed up a mountain; we were hungry and thirsty. There were many women and children behind the rocks – some of them alive, others dead. We saw a man coming up the mountain. We went down to meet him. He saw us and was delighted. He gave us two pieces of bread and a handful of wheat. We – the four of us, ate it greedily. He said to us: "Drink much water and run away." We ran up the mountain. At night we stayed in the valley. In the morning we decided to go to the village again, as we were hungry. We went to the orchards to look for some fruit. We saw a group of refugees from our village: about twenty people hidden in a pit. The women had gathered in the fields and were crying and mourning. I climbed up the mountain again. I thought I might find my mother. It was morning already and the Turks were plundering our village. We saw how the Turks snatched the booty from each other's hands. I found not one of my relatives. The whole village was burning. The sky was lighted. We saw a wounded man – Toros was his name. We said: "Come with us." He replied: "No, I can't. I'm wounded."

We escaped. A thorn had gone into my foot and it was pricking me sharply, and I was crying. Suddenly we saw people coming. We ran away. The Turkish soldiers had gathered a group of women from the village and were driving them to the military barracks. At that moment the Armenians, hidden in the pit ran away. The Turks fired; they killed a man. Then I felt a man crawling beneath my feet who wanted to escape. I fell on his back. Crawling on our hands and knees, we advanced about one hundred meters. We entered a cave, which was full of people. There was no air; we were suffocating. We could not move. They put us – the five children, out. We saw they were firing outside. The Turks had taken position below and on top. We came out one by one. A Turkish officer caught a boy from Harpoot, gave him some sweets and ordered him to say in Armenian: "Come out!" The Turk gave the boy a candle in the hand and said: "Go in and see who are inside."

The boy came out and said: "There is no one."

Shooting was heard from the valley. They took us to the Turkish military barracks. Evening fell. They bound the men's hands. Presently our people guessed that they could promise them bribes, but in the morning the

fight began from the side of Bitlis. We saw the general commander came to the barracks. The soldiers brought cannons. We were waiting when they would slaughter us. We were hungry. They came and bound all the children. When it was my turn, no rope was left. I thought that I was the happiest, that I was not tied, so I escaped. All around were refugees and massacre. I met four Turkish soldiers who had caught two Armenians. The latter asked to let them drink water, and as they bent down, the soldiers struck them on the head and killed them. The two corpses fell down on the ground. I was trembling with fear.

Then we heard that the Russian soldiers were coming. The Turks ran away. Uproar and confusion... I wanted to flee. I ran behind the house and took to my heels. At midnight I climbed up the mountain. In the morning, from the peak of the mountain, Bitlis appeared. Our village was also visible. For two days I remained behind a rock. I was all alone; there was no one around. Suddenly I heard a child's voice. I saw a wheat field and a group of women sitting there. I found among them my mother's sister and my uncle's son. All of them were hungry; they were eating wheat grains fallen on the ground.

They told me to go and wake Rouben. I went and woke him up. Two Kurds came and pulled me away. One of them wanted to kill me, the other said, "It's a pity." They took me to their house. By daytime I took the herd to pasture, at night I came home. I had also been infected with typhus, but I took the animals to feed; our village was seen from afar. In the evening the Kurd lads used to hit me with sticks. I worked hard. My uncle's wife was also in that village, but we had no right to see each other. In the Kurdish village I met Askanaz Manoukian. He was also from our village, and we began grazing the cattle together. He lived in some other Kurd's house together with his mother and sister. Winter came. We lived there more than a month. Everybody thought that I was a Muslim. But one day a man came and said to me: "You are Armenian, you are not a Muslim."

The Kurd women said: "No, he is a Muslim."

The man said: "If he is a Muslim, let him swear at the cross."

I did not know Kurdish well, but I swore at his faith.

He got furious and wanted to kill me. The house where I lived, I was fed separately. The Kurd children took their spoons and came and ate my dinner. So, I lived out the winter.

In February 1916 the Russians came. We were all running away our property on our back. News came that the Russians had entered our village; the Kurds had run away and the cattle had remained in the cow barns. We undid the ties of the animals and we moved. It was frosty: the rivulet was frozen. I fell into the river. I was wet, shivering. We ran away for two days. My burden was heavy. I thought of finding a way to run away. In

the morning when everybody was ready, I hid behind the house. I had a turban on my head and was in Kurdish clothes. I reached a deep valley. I saw a group of Kurds coming towards me: they were running away with their animals. They shouted: "Where are you going?" I ran away. I entered a barn and fell asleep on the hay. I got up in the morning and went to the village. Two Turkish soldiers were coming; I ran away from them. Suddenly I saw a Russian Cossack coming on a horse. I hugged him.

I said: "I am an Armenian."

He asked: "Do you want to come with us?"

I said: "Yes."

He took me to his commander. They brought food. They gave me a jar saying, "Go fetch some water." I went and brought water. They put the jar of water and a loaf of bread before the Turkish prisoners.

I followed the Russians. We went to another village. I met two boys. They were hungry. I gave my bread to them. They ate. We got ready to go to Bitlis. The Russians named me "Bala djan" (Dear child – Arm.). They went on horseback and I followed them on foot. They left those boys in the village and took me with them. We entered a village. The horses' legs stuck deep into the snow. They caught two Turks. There were already two of them; now they became four. We came to cross the road; they took the four prisoners by the bridge; I entered the water with the commander, and we crossed the river. We entered Bitlis. They gave me clothes. Suddenly I met my mother's brother. He took me to the Protestant Chapel. In a few days they would take us to Van. They went and took permission from General Andranik and Smbat. That day, when we would go to Van, Andranik had come from Moosh to Bitlis. They would take us to Datvan. General Andranik came and reached us. From Datvan we went to Van on foot. There I remained in the orphanage from March 1916 till the summer. There were five hundred children in that orphanage.

During the second deportation they filled us in coaches and brought us to Old Bayazet. The Armenian volunteers guarded our way. We crossed the Berkri River; then: to Igdir, Alexandropol and Dilidjan.

In 1916 we settled in Sevan. Andranik came from Djalaloghli to Sevan. We were under hard conditions: we were begging for bread. Yeghishé Vardapet suggested that we should go and ask for some flour. We went, but they did not give us any. Then they took us to Dsaghkadzor. I remained in the orphanage till 1920.

When we came out I could not live alone, so I married and had four daughters and a son. I have named my children after my martyrs: Shoghik and Yervand...

During the Genocide I lost all my relatives and when I was prisoner, I saw all the cruelties of the Turks and Kurds. I am full of revenge. I, too, think, as Yeghishé Charents has said that our salvation is in our united strength.

## 20 (20).

### AGHAVNI MKRTICH MKRTCHIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Bitlis)

We are natives of Bitlis. I'm the granddaughter of Moukhsi Vardan. The Turks destroyed our house. Our family was composed of seventy members. There were seven boys and five girls in our family. All the boys have been killed by the Turks. From our large family, only I have survived and Missak, who is now a general in Moscow

Before the deportation, in 1914, they took my eldest brother to the army; he became a corporal. Once he came to see us. My father said: "Khosrov, lao, don't go."

My brother said: "How can I? I'm a corporal, if I don't go, the Turks will burn you."

He went and never came back. A few Armenian soldiers had decided to run away; the Turks opened fire on them, but they threw themselves into the Arax River and were saved. They joined the Russian army.

My father had run from the Turkish army and had hidden in the straw heap. The Ottoman Turks came, drew him out and killed him. We remained orphans.

Our neighbor, Turk Yousouf efendi had pity on us and took us to his house. The Kurd Hamidié soldiers came and asked my mother: "Where are your gold coins?"

Terror-stricken, my mother said: "There, they are in the jar."

The Turks took the gold coins and went away.

Our Turk neighbor, who had taken care of us, got angry with mother and asked why she hadn't given the gold to him and put us out of his house. We came out; the corpses of the killed Armenians were everywhere; they had massacred all the Armenians. Those who were still alive, were driven we did not know where. On the road there was confusion and uproar. The Turkish gendarmes drew us forward with bayonets. At night they came and took away the young women and girls. One day they took away my mother, too, and then they brought her back. It was good that my father was not alive and did not see himself dishonored.

I remember, on the road of exile our cart turned over into the water. Many people were drowned in the Euphrates River and many were killed and thrown into the river. That was why the Euphrates River was

completely colored bloody red.

Walking on foot we reached Kars. We saw the statue of Loris-Melikov – a man, who had put his foot on an eagle. From there we walked to Igdir. With the refugees we reached Edjmiadsin. The exiles, sick, emaciated and exhausted, lay under the walls of the monastery: old and young, all of them ill and dying. Two men came and distributed bread and eggs to the children. They gave mother an egg and some bread. My mother said: "I have two children." They gave one more egg and we ate. In fact, one of these kind men was had been Hovhannes Toumanian. Suddenly it began pouring and all the exiles remained under the rain. My mother covered us with tarpaulin.

Hov. Toumanian sent the sexton to the Catholicos to fetch the keys to the monks' chambers, to give shelter to the refugees, but the Catholicos had refused saying that they would soil the chambers. Hov. Toumanian took an axe and began to break the doors of the chambers and let in the exiles. He said: "Go and say that the Catholicos of All Armenians refused, but the poet of all Armenians Hovhannes Toumanian broke the door with an axe and sent in the refugees."

My mother took away the tarpaulin, poured away the water and took us into a room, where it was warm. But in the morning many of the refugees had died. Cholera had infected most of them. My poor mother also died of it. I remained all-alone. Together with the refugees, I came to Yerevan. They did not accept us well in Yerevan. They used to call us "refugees."

In Yerevan I studied at the school named after Khachatour Abovian. In 1933 I graduated from the Agricultural Institute, which, at that time, was a faculty of the University. From 1933 till 1936 I worked in Stepanavan as an agronomist. I was acquainted with Aghassi Khandjian, while Matsak Papian was the chairman of our kolkhoz. I have received the title of "Honored Agronomist." During the war I served in the rear and have received rewards. For fifty-five years I have worked at the Ministry of grain storage as a chief specialist, and I have received rewards.

## 21 (21).

### SRBOUHI MKRTICH MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1911, Bitlis, Khizan Province, St. Khach Village)

I'm a survivor of the Genocide, living in Yerevan. I want to tell you the story of our family. I was born in 1911, in the Bitlis region, Khizan Province, in the village

of St. Khach, near the Monastery of St. Khach. My great-grandfathers' great-grandfathers have founded the village of St. Khach on the side of a mountain, a beautiful

location, where only ten Armenian families lived and all of them were kins.

Our family has been very large – about one-hundred people. My grandfather Mourad Mouradian had visited Jerusalem; that was why they called him Moughdousi (a pilgrim to Jerusalem – Turk.) Mourad. My grandfather had three sons: Hakob, who had been a very intelligent person, Khachatour, who, before the deportation, had brought down the golden cross of the monastery by night and had kept it in the wall. My father Mkrtych had been a trustee, a brave man and had kept the link between Bitlis and our village. My grandpa Mourad had been a very intelligent person and his name was well-known in the province of Khizan.

My mother's father, Baghdassar, was a peasant of the Khizan Province. He had three daughters and many sons, of whom I remember only two, and Kakavik was my mother. Her sisters were Parishan and Nigiaran.

Still in the times of Sultan Hamid, my grandpa, considering the atrocities of the Turks, took his children, even his daughter, hunting with him. He said: "My children, we live in such times that you have to learn to use the gun." And he had succeeded in it. During the deportation my mother Kakavik has killed two people; one of them was the chief of the bandits – Djbo. He had attacked the village. The people defended themselves. That Kurd Djbo had come and had sat on the roof of one of the richest family's house and had claimed their gold. My mother had secretly informed my grandpa Baghdassar that Djbo had come again and claimed gold, but that she had no money.

Grandpa said: "You resist from the inside, we'll shoot from the outside."

And so the fighting began. At that time, my father, who was in Constantinople, had sent my mother a pistol. My mother fired from the garden and killed bandit Djbo with the bullet of her browning.

In 1915, when the Turks attacked, my father, master Mkrtych, transferred his forge to a cave in the mountains of Khizan and began producing hand-made pistols and rifles and sent them to the fedayis hidden in the nearby mountains.

My mother Kakavik had remained at home with the children: we were eleven all together.

In 1915 the Turks invaded the region of Bitlis; the roads were closed and a terrible massacre began. The Turks gathered the Armenians in barns and set them on fire. They did not put any difference between women and babies; they killed them all.

Our shepherd Abro, who was a Kurd, came to our

help. He took us to the nearby village of Boussakants, where we stayed for two months. But we were betrayed, and they wanted to throw us into the river and drown us. But Gnel, who was the chief of the forty-five fedayis of the mountains of Boussakants, attacked the Turks and opened a way for us. They took us to join the caravan, moving from Bitlis to Van.

As far as I remember the chief fedayi Gnel was my aunt's husband, who during the massacres of 1894-1896 had fought against the Turks, had gained experience and had organized his group of fedayis. He had got his education in the Aghtamar Monastery. In 1915 he had organized his detachment of fedayis consisting of two hundred men. By night they had attacked the Turks who blocked the Armenians' way, had raised a panic among them and had opened the way for the refugees and had escorted them to Van.

Many Armenian refugees from different provinces had come to a glade. They had arrived near a fountain, had drunk some water and sat down to rest. We were among them. My mother Kakavik had put her two babies – her only son Mouradik and a girl in the two pockets of a saddle-bag, and we the elder daughters, were holding her by the hand. Suddenly a Turk appeared; he became petrified by my mother's fascinating beauty, began shooting at us – the children, in order to kidnap my mother. But my mother took out from under her dress the pistol and fired. The Turk fell getting the bullet on his forehead. But I was wounded, too. I stretched my hand and could hardly hold mother by the skirt. She saw that I was wounded and took me to the fountain, cleaned and washed my wound and gave me water to drink. We passed the night in a cave. By night the Turks assaulted and fired at us. My mother lay on us to defend us with her body. When the Turks left mother began kissing us, but my brother Mouradik's blood filled her mouth. My mother cried and lamented bitterly, then she dug a grave for him with her own hands. At dawn we set going. We had gone quite a lot when suddenly the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard. Thinking that the Turks were attacking again, mother said: "It's better to throw ourselves into the waters of Araz River than fall into the hands of the Turks."

My poor mother put the saddle-bag with the two children in it on her shoulder, took me by the hand, and we threw ourselves into the river. But the horsemen were Russian soldiers. They had felt that the woman had thrown herself into the water in despair; they jumped into the river, saved us and took us to the Russian general. As a sign of gratitude my mother gave her pistol to the Russian general and said that she had killed with it a Turk askyar.\*

\* The eyewitness survivor has handed me the memorable photo of her courageous mother, **Kakav Mouradian** (b. 1883, Bitlis). See it in the "Photographs" part of this book.

And so, we reached Vagharshapat from Van. Our family, which consisted of about one hundred souls, had been reduced to only four: mother, my two sisters and me. My father, who was in Constantinople in 1920, came back, found us in the orphanage, where we were sheltered; mother worked as a nurse and

brought us to Yerevan.

I studied in Yerevan and became an agronomist. In 1953, I defended my thesis and became a doctor of sciences. I've worked for fifty years in viticulture and wine-making as a scientific worker in Parakar. Now I am a pensioner.

## 22 (22).

### **NVARD MKRTICH MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Bitlis, Khizan Province, St. Khach Village)**

In Bitlis we lived in peace and quite well. Our house was a two-storeyed building. On the first floor we had the cow-barns, where we kept our cattle; the goats were in a separate shed. The doors to the cow-barns were opened on the forest-side. There was an arched monument fountain in the northern part of the village. A big current of water came from under the mountain, which ran our mill like a river.

Our Bitlis had very rigorous winters. One year the snow had come down the mountains and had closed the roads; our house had remained under the snow and the animals had died. We had a beautiful church. Our family members were believers, kind and rich. My grandfather had done something interesting: he had built several inns on the roads, which led to Bitlis. On his own initiative he had placed firewood and food there, so that the travelers might eat and rest. During the heroic self-defensive battle of Van, my grandfather and his sons had transferred their gunsmith workshop into a cave in the mountains where they made different kinds of rifles, hand-made guns and sent them to the fedayis. The leader of the fedayis – Gnel, was the husband of my grandfather's daughter, a very handsome man.

One night Gnel, that is, my aunt's husband, together with his detachments, came to the mountain passage, which the Turks had closed. He exterminated the Turkish guards and opened the road to Van.

Although there had been a great massacre, and a great many inhabitants of Bitlis had been murdered, they had filled the people in barns and had burned them; those who were still alive had gone to Van. Gnel had escorted the refugees to Van. In 1915 we migrated to Persia; some others went to other countries. We remained in Persia for two years: 1915-1917. Then we came back to Van, for the Russians had reached Bitlis. Revolution broke out in Russia, the Russian army retreated and we went with them to Vagharshapat (Edjmiadsin).

I remember: they had put me and my sister Srbouhi in a saddle-bag. My mother's feet were swollen; they

had put her on a mule. Near the Khoshaba River the Kurds from Zillan and the Turkish army attacked us and began slaughtering; we gave many victims.

The Kurds asked my mother: "Where are you from?"  
"We are from Khizan."

"If you're from Khizan, then say, who was the sheikh there?"

"Sheikh Saydali," answered my mother.

Hearing that name the commander said: "Do not kill them."

And they got satisfied by only plundering us. They carried us in saddle-bags by vans. I was small, and I used to cry very much on the road. A nurse of the Red Cross took me in her arms. We reached Vagharshapat. They took me and my sister to the Children's Home for boys in Kanaker.

In 1920 they came and said: "Your father has come from Constantinople." Mother was with us, she worked as a nurse in the children's home. When father came, he wanted to take us to America, because my uncle's son was eighteen years old, and they would recruit him. Father brought us to Yerevan.

In 1926 my father died. I entered the school named after Khachatour Abovian. I graduated from the Polytechnical Institute with excellent marks. Then I began working at the Kirov factory as an engineer, but I liked party work, so I became the secretary of the Young Communist League, and then worked as an instructor in the city's Communist Party Committee. For 16 years I have been a Regional Party Secretary, and then I became an instructor in the Central Committee in the branch of manufacturing industry.

Now I am retired, on pension. I have a daughter, Nelly, who has graduated from the Yerevan Conservatoire named after Komitas. She is a pianist. Now she is looking after me and my sister.

At the end I want to say that the Turks not only massacred us, but they occupied our land, captured our property. From our family, which had one hundred members, only I and my sister have survived.

### 23 (23).

#### **HAKOB MOURAD MOURADIAN'S<sup>1</sup> TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Sgherd Province,<sup>2</sup> Fendek Village)**

My father's name was Mourad; my grandfather's name was Martiros. We were three sisters and three brothers. We lived in the Sgherd Province, Fendek Village. There were no Turks in our village. In our village there were fifty-sixty Kourmandji families, who were on good terms with the Armenians. The Kourmandji Kurds were on bad terms with the Muslim Turks, and they never took arms against the Armenians. They committed no crime.

In Fendek the peasants were occupied mainly with cattle-breeding, agriculture and basket-making. There was no market. We went out of Fendek to Djeziré for shopping. There was no school or anything of that kind. There was only one teacher who came from Deher and taught the children the Kurdish alphabet.

In 1915 I was twelve years old, when the Turk askyars entered our village and began to destroy the Armenians' houses. They killed my two brothers and kidnapped my three sisters: they did away with all my kins. My mother had given me to the kind Kourmanjis to keep me, and so I remained alive.

I have seen many awful things with my own eyes. My eyes goggled seeing all that. The Turks slaughtered all the Armenians. A few like me remained alive thanks to the neighboring Kourmandji villagers. And the survivors kept their existence somehow by begging and asking for

help.

One day I found a dagger in our kind Kourmanji's house and took it in order to go and kill the Turks. They told to me: "What are you doing? They will kill you!" Many Armenian refugees had come to that village and somehow continued their existence.

Then we went to the village of Ouaské. There, too, forty to fifty Kourmandji Yezidi families lived. There I married a girl, Khalila by name. She was a Kourmanji. We had two sons and three daughters. I named my children after my martyred kins. I gave my son my father's name, my daughter – my mother's name. [The eyewitness survivor was deeply moved and began to cry – V. S.]. I want very much to take revenge on the Turks for all that, but I am helpless. The Turks were not human beings.

After a year we left, in fear, that village for Istanbul and we lived in the house of an acquaintance. Then we went to Djeziré. There I had my house, opened a shop. I bought a plot of land. I thanked God that I had remained alive. There were many Syrians there. And one day I heard that there was Armenia on the earth and she was in progress. In 1946 we repatriated to Armenia. Now I have more than thirty grandchildren. All of them are learning in Armenian schools. Most of them know Kurdish as well, for they have heard it from their elders.

### 24 (24).

#### **HEGHNAR GABRIEL GHOUKASSIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1896, Bassen, Dalibaba Village)**

I was born in the Bassen Province, Dalibaba Village. I don't know my exact birthday, for, according to the custom, the name and the date of the newborn were written on the side page of the church Bible. Our church Bible remained a captive of the Turks.

In 1915, during the exile, according to my calculation, I was about 18-19 years old.

My father, Father Ter Gabriel, was a priest; he was anointed in Van. There was a beautiful church in our village, Dalibaba. Besides my father, we had another priest, Father Anton.

My mother, Yeghissabet, was a very skilful, beautiful woman. She made very pretty jars and pots of clay. Those

who saw them were amazed. Alas, she died early, a year before the deportation. She fell ill with typhoid. Mother had given birth to five children.

My mother's father was a plough-smith; he made such ploughs that it was as if no hand had touched them. People came from remote villages and asked grandpa to make ploughs for them.

I have heard about snake fights. Outside the village, in an open field, hundreds of snakes would be divided into two groups and would fight. Someone advised to take milk to the field in pails; the snakes would drink and calm down. Indeed, the snakes drank the milk and by and by, crept away.

<sup>1</sup> The survivor is a Kurdish-speaking Armenian. His testimony has been translated into Armenian by Zenfira Khatieva, scientific worker of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>2</sup> Bitlis State of Western Armenia, Sghert – Sanjak center (Aghdznik State of Greater Hayk).

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1972, has been delivered to me by her daughter, writer-publicist Margo Ghoukassian, in 2001.

A more beautiful village than ours one could hardly find in the world. It was surrounded with mountains and hills, which were covered with flowers of wild-roses and briars. We had fountains, what fountains we had! The fountain of Grnov, Gyadouk fountain, Horhor fountain... They had cold, life-giving waters. In my dreams, I sometimes go to the Grnov fountain; the water is so cold that I can hardly drink two handfuls.

My father, though he was a clergyman, was also a good peasant. The biggest wheat grains were from the wheat of our field; they were almost as big as pomegranate seeds. Father made us harvest the field. From the crop, he selected the seeds to be sown – the tallest and the biggest.

Peasants came from the neighboring villages – Arjarak, Gomadsor and Toty to ask father's counsel.

All around the village there were good lands of different colors – black, white, red. Most of all I liked our red field. Oh, let me not forget to say that the earth of the black land was so black, as black as soot; mother used that earth to make her jars and pots.

We had a watermill; my uncle Avetis ran it.

A river ran through the village. I have become old now, sometimes my ears whisper, and it seems to me it's our river whispering. Or, from afar, the noise of our millstone reaches my ears.

There was a good school in our village; it was a branch of the Sanassarian College of Erzroom. Only boys attended that school, they studied Armenian, French and Turkish. The Ghoukassians, my second husband's family, read French newspapers and books. They put on airs!

Eh, what should I say, Dalibaba was a big village full of life. The main road to Bassen passed through our village. Those who went to Van, Erzroom, had no other way.

It was 1915, we had not left the village yet, in one night the Turks gathered 126 men, as if to make them work on the construction of roads. Later we learned that they had killed most of them, and the rest were taken to the prison of Erzroom. My father was among them. I had been married for only six months yet. My husband took food and clothes to the imprisoned. He went and never came back; and the rest were killed in the prison.

The order of the deportation of 1915 came all of a sudden. Whatever we had – our house, carpets and rugs – we left everything and escaped. It is not something to be told; we had hardly come out of the village when we looked back – my aunt's cowshed was all in flames; they were accused of having weapons. The Turks had filled them all, beginning from the suckling baby, into the hayshed and set it on fire.

Oh, oh! Let those days go away and never come back. Eyes, what haven't you seen! On the way of exile, I saw a swaddle in the grass; the baby was still breathing.

There was no water, no food, but we were going, we did not know where.

General Andranik saved us. Had he not been there, we would also get massacred like many others. Thousands of people were deported from different towns and villages, some of them carrying sick or wounded people, women holding their children by the hands and the babies tied to their breast. Andranik gathered us and led us. He brought us near a deep canyon, on the upper side of which was the Turkish army. Andranik would pass us from there and take us to Khoy, Persia. We waited until darkness fell. We were to pass the canyon without any noise or voice. Not a stone would stir under our feet. Andranik had ordered mothers not to take out their nipples from their babies' mouth, even if the child got choked, so that any crying voice would not be heard. We passed by night, we passed without any noise. At twilight Andranik asked his rearguard soldiers, if all of them had passed. "No," was the answer. "A woman is in labor, she remained there with the mid-wife." Andranik ordered his soldiers: "Go and bring her on your back." The soldiers went and brought her. Poor Andranik, he had taken his people into his mouth like a pup and was taking them this way and that in order to save them.

We did not reach Khoy. Fighting was going on. Andranik took us to Zangezoor and from there we got dispersed: some went to Gharakillissa, some to Tiflis, or Baku. We came to Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri). Of the thirty men in our family, only one male survived. Two of my sisters were lost on the way, my younger sister, Sona, was 16 years old. The Americans had gathered the orphans. Sona had heard that they would shave her hair, she had beautiful dense hair, and she had thought if they shaved her hair, she would become ugly. While passing over the fence she had fallen. She came and found us. After four days she died. Hands, why did you not break up? I sewed her shroud with these hands. When I reached her face, I stopped. How could I close that pretty face! At that time a man was crying outside, "In whose house are there dead people?" I continued sewing quickly the shroud and called the cart-driver. We did not know where they took her. The Turks demolished our house.

Then I married for a second time in Leninakan (now: Gyumri). My husband was Gevorg Minas Ghoukassian, from our village, Dalibaba. We have three daughters: Siroush (1923), Margo (1927) and Clara (1928).

Margo Ghoukassian is an honored journalist, publicist. Her articles have often been translated into German, Serbian, Georgian and Belarusian. She writes about the problems, which interest the republic and the people.

I would very much like to drink the water of our native village, the water of Grnov fountain, to forget my sufferings. But how can I go there?

## 25 (25).

### NVARD AVETIS MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

#### (B. 1903, Shatakh Region, Korovank Village)

I was born in the village of Korovank, Shatakh Region. That region had a marvelous life-giving soil and water. The village headman was my grandfather, Vanits Khacho. His father Gilo and uncle Sargis had founded and populated the village round the ruined St. Stepanos Monastery. Gilo had 10 children: 5 sons and 5 daughters. Vanits Khacho was the eldest of the children. He himself had 5 sons. Our large family consisted of 83 souls. Twelve cradles rocked in our house.

In 1915, before the beginning of the massacres, people both in our village and in the neighboring ones consulted together and decided to organize self-defense. But they had no arms and their forces were negligible. So, the whole village decided to migrate to Van and await the march of events.

It was in the spring of 1915, in April-May, that we collected and tied up everything which was possible to carry and which could be of use on the road, loaded the bundles on 5 oxen and came out of the village. My grandmother Khazik went on foot with her daughter-in-law, my grandfather walked with his five sons and grandsons, and we, the elder children ran here and there and played. We were unaware that the coming Sodom and Gomorrah would continue for 5-6 years and that very few would remain in the land of the living.

We were going to Van. Large groups of the emigrants had already passed through the same road. What I saw on the road of exile, I do not wish my enemy to see. Mothers threw their daughters to the river and then followed them in the water in order not to fall in the hands of the Turks and be dishonored.

On the road of exile and from the beginning to the end, our young men, armed with whatever they could lay their hands on, were going in front and on both sides of the group to protect us against the Turks' attacks. But what could a handful of unarmed men do against the well-armed Turkish soldiers on horseback and against large groups of brigands. So, many people died and remained unburied on the roads and in the valleys.

After a few days we reached Tagh, the center of Shatakh. The district was divided into two parts: the Armenian quarter and the Turkish quarter. The Turks had gone off long ago. We rested in one of their abandoned houses; we washed ourselves in the cold water of the rivulet flowing through the town; we had a light supper and slept. But, in the early morning, we heard a noisy confusion and people screaming: "The Turks are coming, the Turks are coming..."

We set out again in a hurry. We arrived at Sevtkin. The peasants had abandoned their homes, and the village was deserted. We found some bread and cheese and even cold cooked meat in one of the houses. In that village we came across an abandoned swaddled baby. My mother Hasmik had compassion for the infant; she took him in her arms and breastfed him.

After Sevtkin we arrived at Gorondasht. That abandoned village was full of orchards and wheat fields. The wheat-ears had grown to a man's height. It was a hot summer day. We hurried to the wheat field to gather a stock of grain for our journey. The Turks attacked us once more. Our men defended us at the cost of their lives against the Turkish gang of robbers, and we started on our journey.

I remember: there were everywhere abandoned and ruined villages, ownerless cattle, unburied murdered people. There was a pregnant woman among our refugees who gave birth to her child on the road.

We arrived in Van; we came to a halt in Aygestan. The people of Van were defending the town with the help of the Russians. My father Avo, my uncles and all the adult males joined the volunteers and went to the defensive positions. I have often taken bread to my father there.

We, the elder children, began to go to school there, to study the letters and the Bible.

However, the inhabitants of Van also migrated. I remember, my sister got lost on the first day of the exile from Van. My mother Hasmik cried and wailed loudly. But soon we found my sister. It proved that the Russian soldiers had seen my lost sister and had taken her with them. I remember also that on the first day of our departure from Van my grandfather Khacho counted the members of our family, and it became clear that out of the 83 souls of our large family only 27 were left. The others had died, had been killed or were lost on the road.

We reached Sev Djour (Black Water – Arm.), which was a quiet large, violently flowing river, which was dangerous to cross. We saw on its bank a killed priest. The Turks had cut off his head and put it on his buttocks. A little farther there was a dead woman laying on the ground, her little baby still sucking her breast...

The Russian soldiers were with us. The armed gangs of Kurdish brigands attacked us; the Russians defended the people. We were obliged to retreat to Van. Before getting to Van, we went through the Hayots Dzor (Armenians' Valley – Arm.) to Khoshab, which was deserted.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1970, has been delivered to me by survivor's grandson, the TV-operator and director of the TV serial-program "Karot" (Nostalgia – Arm.), Manouk Mouradian, who placed it at my disposal in 2005.

I remember the ruined village of Bashkala. There, too, armed gangs of Turkish and Kurdish robbers attacked us; we suffered little casualties, since the Russian soldiers were defending us.

We arrived at the St. Bartholomew Monastery, which was also deserted. There was nothing to eat or drink. It was good that the Russians shared their military supplies with us.

We wandered here and there for days and months. We reached the village of Mahlam, where ownerless dogs and cats were roaming. The Turks attacked us again.

My grandfather, Vanits Khacho, was filled with great despair. He did not utter a word. He did not want anything. He had no forces to walk. He was about 80 years old.

Winter came. We reached Nerkin Bzhnkert. It was the second winter we were wandering on the roads. We remained in that village during the whole winter. It was in 1917. Spring came. Our people thought about finding ploughs and sowing wheat. Spring sowing was accomplished; the fields turned green. But the ottoman soldiers and robbers appeared again in armed groups. The Russians had left; our men were defending us.

My grandfather was so desperate that he did not want to migrate again.

“Apo, we’re going to Korovank, come,” implored our people in a persuasive tone.

We reached Bayazet, where the Russian army units stationed. But soon the Russians began to retreat, and the Armenian refugees followed them. There were many clashes with the Turks. Two of my uncles were martyred, numerous children were lost, one of our daughters-in-law got drowned in the river.

My grandmother Khazik passed away in the village of Gyolu due to the sufferings of the journey.

The villages of Dara and Kotola where completely deserted. We rested somewhere for a while and then continued our journey since the armed ottomans attacked as incessantly.

The refugees suffered great losses in the village of Kondaghsez. A large number of people were drowned in the river.

I remember, my uncle Mkhitar’s only son got lost. He had had that son after fifteen years of married life. The boy was born on the road of the exile. “Marto, my dear, where is my son?” Asked uncle Mkhitar to his wife. It turned out that the mother had been fearful that she would not be able to cross the river with the infant in her arms, that he would get drowned, so she had placed the swaddled baby behind a big stone. My uncle did not listen to the entreaties of our relatives. He returned back to find his son. And, in fact, he found and brought him back. Our joy was boundless.

We reached Payachuk where we stayed for two months. Then we moved to the town of Urmi, where famine prevailed. There was not even drinking water. Suddenly a loud roar was heard there; it was a British airplane. The British made the refugees understand that they would help them.

We got to Hamadan. The Russian soldiers quitted us and went to Russia.

When we arrived to Baghdad, 12 souls had remained from our large family. My grandfather Vanits Khacho also died in Baghdad.

In 1921, after staying for 2 years in Baghdad, when I was married and had my son, Andranik, we embarked, together with many other refugees, and reached Batoumi, then – Soviet Armenia by train. We lived, in the beginning, in Ashtarak and Artashat, and in 1932 we moved to Yerevan.

## 26 (26).

### ANDREAS YESSAYI GULANIAN’S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1905, Shatakh)

About a year had passed of the time when the Young Turks took the power in 1908 and they were pretending that they were the kins to all the nations living in Turkey. They declared that Turkey was the motherland of all the nations. However, all that was false. The World War I gave them the opportunity to realize their aim as they were an ally to German, so they would invade Armenia and massacre the Armenians. Many secret meetings had been held for that aim, and it was put in action during World War I.

Our Shatakh peasants have taken an active part in the self-defense, and they told various historical events, which I’ve heard and remember.

Twenty years had passed from the 1894-1896

Hamidian massacres of the Armenians. It was the spring of 1915. The Young Turks in Constantinople had ordered the prefect of Van, Djevdet pasha, who was the cruel assistant of Talaat, Enver and Djemal, to slaughter the Armenian of Van and Shatakh.

First of all they arrested and beheaded the famous Shatakh political activist, Hovsep Choloyan, who was the leader of ARF, appointed by the Armenian population of Van on March 29, 1915. He was an acquaintance of the Shatakh prefect, but they arrested him while walking in the street together with his five friends and took them to the police station found in the district of Shatakh called Tagh. One of his companions was Tigran Baghdassarian, who was wounded during the Russian-

Turkish battle, was set free and returned to Shatakh. He went to the prefect and said: “Why have you arrested Hovsep Choloyan? You know he is the superintendent of the Armenian schools of the province and he isn’t subject to imprisonment.”

The prefect of Shatakh, Meyti bey, who had received a French education, replied: “Never mind. Hovsep Choloyan is in the next room together with his companions. If you bring 50-60 young men from Tagh here together with their arms, then we’ll set Hovsep Choloyan free.”

Tigran Baghdassarian answered: “It’s already 5-6 months that the Turkish government proclaimed a general mobilization, and all the young men of Tagh were mobilized to fight against the Russians. We have no armed young men.”

The prefect replied: “We know everything.”

In fact, it turned out as follows. In the months of March-April, 1915, the Armenians of Shatakh, under the leadership of Hovsep Choloyan, made the list of the 55 Armenian villages and cartridges. They had organized groups, which would defend Tagh and the other Shatakh villages in case of a massacre by the Turks. There were about 12.000 Armenians in Shatakh, of which one thousand two hundred lived in Tagh. All these lists and documents were in Hovsep Choloyan’s pocket and were discovered during the perquisition.

Tigran Baghdassarina went home, but on the following day he went with another friend to the prefect again with the same request – to set free Hovsep Choloyan, but the prefect gave them the same answer. At the same time the prefect gave orders to his gendarmes to kill some Armenians under the pretext of collecting taxes. They instructed the Kurd bandit-chiefs to kill 4-5 Armenian innocent young men. Thus, the Turks had already started the extermination of the Armenians.

Beginning from the late autumn of 1914, post-guards (so-called cordons) had been located in all the villages of Shatakh, among them two post-guards in Sevtkin Village, one post-guard near the houses of the village, and another five km north of the village – at the foot of the Artos Mountain, where, according to the historian A-Do, “the famous valley of Shatakh” began, to the south of which lay the Kaoukan Mountain range, on the other side – the Rshtounyats range. The valley stretched from the North to the South, the fields and the meadows spread on the sides of the mountains.

After clearing up the details of Hovsep Choloyan’s arrest, a meeting of the elderly experienced people and the young men was held in the center of Tagh in order to decide their future actions. They decided to elect a body of armed self-defense.

1. Three men were elected – Tigran Baghdassarian, Samvel Mesropian (from Tagh) and Azat Simonian (from Sevtkin).

2. They decided to cut the telephone-telegram posts from Tagh to Van in 1-2 days, to prevent the prefect getting in contact with governor Djevdet.

The Armenians had messengers to carry news.

3. To destroy in two days the post-guards in Sevtkin since the road went from there through Vostan and the Hayots Dzor (Armenians’ Valley – Arm.) to Van.

Together with my mother I have been a witness from the mountain-top of the fighting, which took place in the village of Sevtkin. It was decided that the women and children should go up to the mountains till the fighting was over.

On March 31, Arshak Petrossian’s group (from the Sevtkin Village), came from the village of Hashkants, to the edge of Sevtkin and there, together with the well-known fedayi Bazik Petrossian, arranged the Armenian warriors all around the village; when Arshak Petrossian arrived at the edge of the village, he shot a bullet as a signal. Bazik Petrossian, from the top of a house of the village, where they had take position, shouted at the commander of the Turkish guards, corporal Bayri, to surrender. The Turks did not surrender. They began shooting at each other. The chief of the Turks, who had taken position behind the window of the newly built school building, fired. The whole village was boiling before our eyes. We were watching the fight from the top of the mountain, together with my mother, hidden behind a stone. There were about forty shots. Then the shots stopped. The sky was cloudy, but it was not cold. Holding my mother by the hand, we descended the valley and came to the village as the other women did and we were told what had happened. Corporal Bayri was killed and his assistant, together with the askyars, threw down their guns from the inn window and, holding up their hands, surrendered. Our fighters imprisoned them in the house of an old Armenian woman. The details of the Sevtkin battle reached Van. The governor of Van, Djevdet pasha, called the famous political activist Ishkhan (from Gharabagh) and told him (Ishkhan was elected the chief of Van): “Take a few soldiers, go to Shatakh and see what is the cause of the fighting. Go and calm them down.”

Ishkhan hadn’t passed, together with the gendarmes, half the way to Sevtkin, near the Armenian village of Hirj, when darkness fell. The chief Turk gendarme said to Ishkhan: “Darkness fell, how shall we continue our way? Come, let’s rest in Hirj, and we’ll go to Shatakh in the morning and calm down the Armenians.”

But that was a trick. At night, when Ishkhan and his four friends were asleep, the Turkish gendarmes killed them, buried them by night and covered them with earth. On the same day Djevdet pasha called a member of the Constantinople medjlis, Vramian, who worked in Van. He took him to the shore of the lake, to the village of Avants, tied a sack full of stones to his neck and drowned him in the lake. But, fortunately, Vramian had succeeded

to write a note to Aram Manookian, who later became the leader of the self-defense of Van. Before leaving, he had written a note, had given it to his wife, saying: "If Djevdet calls Aram, he shouldn't go, he will kill him."

The self-defense of Shatakhs began. The Turks assaulted Armenian villages of Shatakhs. The self-defense began on April 4 and lasted until the middle of May: about 45 days.<sup>1</sup> Both Van and Shatakhs resisted the well-armed Turkish and Kurdish executioners.

During the 45 days of Shatakhs self-defense, the Armenians defended themselves well in spite of their being besieged and the lack of arms and cartridges. But, the defenders of the Sozvants Village (Shatakhs Province), 3-4 km away from Tagh, committed an error, because of the cold, despite the order of their chief, Garoumian Hovsep; they went to their houses to rest. In the morning they went late to their positions. Sozvants was Shatakhs's storehouse. The Turks occupied the village. Despair began to be noticed in some groups of Shatakhs fighters, but the main groups displayed courage and said: "We will die or we will live together."

Then the Armenians took back Sozvants. Shatakhs continued its self-defense. Fortunately the Russian army reached Berkri from Alashkert and approached Van. Djevdet ran away with his soldiers. For the first time in history, the Russian Imperial army entered the town of Van on May 6, 1915 (by the old calendar). The famous Armenian General Dro's volunteer group was with them. On May 15 (by the new calendar: May 27), Aram Manoukian sends Dro's group to Shatakhs by the demand of the Shatakhs authorities. Hearing about the arrival of the Armenian volunteers, the Turks of Shatakhs ran away. Thus, the 45 days of the self-defense of Shatakhs ended in a glorious victory. A prefecture was created in Van under the leadership of Aram Manoukian and another one in Shatakhs having Tigran Baghdassarian as governor.

The peasants went to their summer resorts, and the peaceful life was re-established in the town: agriculture, crafts and trades began to get back to normal. The Armenians met the Russians in Van and Shatakhs.

At the end of July 1915 the Russian military units joined on the northern and southern parts of the Lake Van, but there took place an event. The Turks succeeded in breaking through the front on 7 km and the Russians retreated. They withdrew several hundred km in 5-6 days and reached Alashkert, the plain of Abagha, till Berkri. The situation became dangerous for the Armenians in Van.

General Nicolayev called Aram Manoukian in Van and said: "There are twenty-four thousand refugees in Van gathered here from the provinces, these people

should be moved to Eastern Armenia."

The deportation of the population of the Van region and of the Shatakhs Province started at the beginning of August.

We were at our Krdasar summer pasture, on the top of the mountain with our flock of sheep and herd of cattle. Dawn had not opened yet; it was twilight, when my father came and woke us up: "Get up, we'll migrate."

We loaded the animals and in two-three days reached our village. From the village house my parents took some more food: we loaded them on donkeys, and saying "Good-bye" for the last time to our land, we left our house, and property, sad and downcast, and took the road of exile.

In two days we reached Van, which is 40 km from our village. The Van inhabitants had already migrated two days ago, leaving in their houses some trading goods. We remained near Van for one night that was the third night.

Two hundred thousand Armenians were moving. People took from the houses whatever was left behind: sugar, cotton, cloth, different kinds of fabric, which were plundered on the way.

In three days we reached Berkri by night. There was a bridge on the river. It was pitch-dark. In the evening, before sunset, we saw the Russian army driving to Berkri from the north of Lake Van and on the other side the Kurd bandits attacking the immense caravan of the refugees who passed the bridge on foot, children on their shoulders, and of the animals loaded with their property. It was a horrible scene. Two hundred thousand Armenians were migrating: the front part of it had reached Igdir, the end was still in the southern provinces of Van – Shatakhs, Moks, Gavash. Once they put me on donkey-back; I saw the moving column of the refugees at the back, in the front, lost in the dust, in the heat of summer – it was the month of August.

When we reached Berkri, it was dark midnight. We had walked incessantly the whole day. We had reached ten km from Berkri the bridge of the Bandimahu River. On one side the refugees wanted to cross the river over the bridge, from the other side – the cavalry of the Russian army with their two-wheeled carts. Everyone wanted to pass and reach the Abagha plain to be saved. My father and our people saw that it was impossible to pass over the bridge. Many women threw their children into the river. My father took us to one side waiting for the crowd to get thinner, but how could it become thinner if the other end was in Van. My father saw that the situation would never improve. Women, men and loaded animals got into the stream to pass the bridge. By jostling and pushing each other, we crossed the bridge, but we lost each other. I, my elder brother, his wife, who had a seven-month-old baby, with one donkey and ox, lost our father, mother, grandma and junior brother. Many were killed near that Bandimahu bridge. Having lost each

<sup>1</sup> The self-defensive fights of the Armenian inhabitants of Shatakhs province of Van, against the Turkish slaughterers lasted 45 days: April-May, 1915.

other, we walked the whole night, without rest, without stop, we were going, going towards the Abagha plain, where the Russian army was. A red light was seen in the dark sky. People thought that it was the enemy's light. And we kept on walking in the darkness of the night, and at last, at dawn we reached the Abagha plain, where the Russian army bivouacked. Part of the people settled down to rest, the other half continued their way.

In the morning about 10 o'clock my lost father, mother, grandma and brother came and found us. We had not eaten anything. Father took me and my second brother to a large basalt stone a few meters far from the group and we sat there.

The Abagha plain was green, and the stone was a little high. Our father made us seat on the stone, brought a bag, in which some crumbs of lavash were left, emptied them on the stone and told us to eat them.

It happened that I again lost my father and brother. I ate the crumbs; I got thirsty and went to drink water. I came back, but I could not find them. I looked for them for about 2-3 hours; I could find none of our family members. I was walking among the people, looking for them, but I could find neither my family, nor water. At last I saw some water gathered in a puddle. I stooped, I wanted to drink, but it was stinking. I continued my way. All at once I heard father calling me from among the masses of refugees: "Andro, you puppy, where did you get lost!" There was no limit to my joy. The greater part of our load had been plundered. At last, we reached, together with the people, the upper stream of the Bandimahu River. Father took off his shoes, rolled up his trousers, took me in his arms and entered the water; the stones in the water were slippery. We crossed the river. The high Taparisi Mountain started, we ascended it. Night fell. We slept there in the open. Early in the morning the caravan had to move on. That night I dreamed that we were on our village summer pasture. My mother had brought me milk cream to feed me. I was dreaming when I heard father's voice, "Get up, we're moving." They made me sit on a donkey. We had to pass by Gezel Diza, near Old Bayazet. It was dark, when we arrived. We slept there. We got up early in the morning. We climbed up the western side of the great Mount Ararat, the place was called Orgov. It was the Turkish-Russian border. It was a high place. Though it was summer, it was rather cold there, since the place was about 2 km high. It was very windy; we stayed there for the night. In the morning we descended to the foot of the mountain. There was a stream there, the people rushed to it and began to drink. Everybody was thirsty. Till we got down it took us a whole day. We arrived to Igdir, Avetis Aharonian's birthplace. We did not stop in Igdir, we continued our way and came to the Arax River, upon which the Russians had erected a three-arched bridge. On the left bank of the river was the Margara Village. There weren't many houses. On

the edge of the village in a clearing, we took down the loads, put everything on the ground and sat to rest. They had planted cotton nearby. We remained there about 2-3 weeks. There was no food, and what we had had been plundered. An open dry place surrounded with oleaster trees and cotton fields, where there was no medicine, no hygiene.

We remained there the first night. In the morning father said: "Andro, son, take the donkeys to the meadow, let them graze."

There they gave us food once. The queue was long. My brother said: "You wait; I'll go and bring the ration."

Each family received 4-5 kg of flour and 1 kg of sugar. There was no bread. We kneaded the flour and baked bread. On the one hand the August heat, on the other the dirty water of Arax made typhus and cholera to spread. Many of our family members fell ill. To withstand the heat, everyone had erected a stick and put a cloth on it. Our family consisted of 8 members. I hadn't been anywhere, and I was watching with astonishment the lorries carrying food for the Russian soldiers. All our family was taken ill. The terrible days of Margara will never be forgotten. Had our three thousand sheep been with us, we would remain somewhere near Igdir, in the highlands and occupy ourselves with cattle-breeding.

The first who fell seriously ill was the wife of a grandpa of mine – Shartsis. She used to look at the snows on top of the Ararat Mountain and say: "If you could bring me some snow from there, so that I may eat it and die."

Her husband went on a donkey and brought her some snow. She ate it and died.

News was spread that the Russians had occupied Van again. The Turks had stayed in Van for three days. The Kurds hadn't been able to plunder. The people heard the name of Van. Many had already reached Tiflis and Yerevan. Thirty to forty thousand Armenian refugees from Edjmiadsin and Margara went back with the hope of resettling in the native Land. It was the end of August. We were going back. On every side were wounded, sick and moribund dying people in agony... Before we reached Van, my second brother said from over the donkey-cart: "Take me down, let me rest."

Father said: "Aram djan, little is left."

In half an hour we moved on, but father knew that he was seriously ill. As we went down the hill, we put down the loads to rest. All the refugees were sitting round the loads; I was looking towards the road. Father said: "Aram djan, get up, raise your head and, whatever its cost, I'll go to the orchard and buy a water-melon for you." He repeated it three times, but got no answer.

Early in the morning, before daylight, we loaded the donkey; we put Aram in a sack, his head out, and placed him on Tato, the donkey. The road was visible. After two hours grandma said, "Aram died." His head was bent on

one side.

We reached Gezel Diza. Our peasants dug graves, because there were many, who had passed away on the road. They took Aram, too, and buried him. In half an hour we moved on. After two or three days we reached Berkri. We came to the Panz Village – to the west of Lake Van, remained there under the walls of the houses. My eldest brother's foot began to ache. It got swollen and he fell to bed. They said to cover it with the skin of a newly slaughtered goat; but it didn't help. And my eldest brother also died. We came to the village of Janik, 30 km from Van. We were passing by. My eldest brother's wife, who did not speak,<sup>1</sup> made us understand by gestures, that her seven-month old baby had died. We buried him right on our way in soft earth.

On the second day we reached Lezk, a village of Van. There we settled under the house walls. Grandma and mother gathered dry branches and made a fire. They boiled wheat. Suddenly grandma made a few steps back and fell dead. We took her to the Armenian cemetery and buried her there.

My father's sister, who was married, had two young sons, one of them died, too. His wife went to her parents. My aunt, mother, father and I were left. My mother, Shaghzik, was already ill. In Lezk she fell into bed. The sheep had already been robbed. I was taking the donkeys to graze. There were grapes, apples and pears in the orchards. After the Van self-defense, the people of Van had, for two months, created a good ruling power also in Shatakh, the fields were ploughed, cultivated and there was a good yield of crop. My mother and aunt had died. When I came back from grazing the animals, mother had already gone forever. Only father and I remained.

I and my father, we went to Hayots Dzor (Armenians' Valley – Arm.) and stayed in the village of Berdak, which was 10 km from Van. We remained there during the winter of 1915. When we went back, there was a nut-tree; father gathered the nuts and we lived on them.

In spring we got down from Berdak by the other side, went to Hayots Dzor, to the Gelbalasan Village. There were many wolves there. The village was on the mountain-side, the Khoshab River was running by, and near Vostan it fell into the Lake Van, which was full of fish. Near it the stream of Shamiram flowed, which had been constructed by the Urartians. Its length was 60 km. It came by the Hayots Dzor through Artamet, irrigated the vegetable-gardens of Van, and that part was called Aygestan, on one side of which the Armenians lived and on the other – the Turks. There were almost no Turks in Shatakh, while in Van half of the population were Armenians, the other half were Turks.

We remained in the village of Gelbalassan in the spring and summer of 1916. Then in August news came

<sup>1</sup> According to the patriarchal custom, young women did not speak, out of respect, to their in-laws.

that the Turks would attack by the side of Vostan and would slaughter the Russian soldiers and the Armenians. The refugees who had gathered in Hayots Dzor passed through Van and we had not yet reached Berkri, that news spread that it was a lie. We went back together with the other refugees. We came to Van, and stayed in a house at Chaghli Street from the autumn of 1916 till the spring of 1917. I went to school in Norashen; I was in the second form. We lived there till April 5, 1918.

We, the 30,000 Armenian refugees, who had returned to Van, were led by Kostya Hambardzoumian from Gharabagh. He wanted to bring us to Eastern Armenia through Berkri, but the Turks had closed the road. It was not possible to go to Yerevan.

A revolution had already taken place in October 1917 in Russia, so the Russian army withdrew. Hambardzoumian thought of bringing us to Yerevan through Khoy, Djoulfa, Nakhidjevan, but that road also was closed. We, the 30,000 refugees from Van, turned, before reaching Khoy, our way through the Koturi Valley and went to Salmast. Fighting was going on there. The Christian Assyrians and the Armenians were fighting against the Turks and the Kurd bandit groups. It was in those days when General Andranik occupied Djulfa and Khoy with the object of reaching Salmast and helping the Armenian refugees coming from Van and taking them safely to Hamadan-Kirmanshah, where the English soldiers had arrived from the Persian Gulf.

I and other children from the different villages were sent to Hamadan to the newly-opened orphanage, and the rest of the refugees were taken by the English by train to Baakuba, a town near Baghdad. On the bank of Tigris, in the desert, the English had pitched big tents, in each tent 5-6 families lived for three years: from October 1918 till January-February 1922. Many refugees could not bear the heat and died. They lived in tents for three years in Baakuba, later in Nadjerumar, in Basra, near the Persian Gulf. Ten thousand survivors were sent to Batoumi, by three English ships; about three thousand people on board each ship. The ships sailed from the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal. Port-Saïd, the Mediterranean Sea, the Bosphorus Strait and the Black Sea. There, they delivered us by trains to Alexander Myasnikian, the governor of the newly created Soviet Armenia. We were settled in Artashat (Ghamarlu) and the Ararat Region villages (Great Vedi). We remained in the village of Davalou for a few days. Then my father and I came to Yerevan. I went to Amercom: the office of the Near East Relief Committee and began working as a letter-carrier. I worked by day and studied by night. Then I studied at Banfac. I entered then the agricultural faculty of the State University. I have become a merited agronomist. I've taken part in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) and I got a number of high ranks.

**HAYRIK MANOUK MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1905, Shatakh, Jnouk Village)**

The side of our Varaga Mountain was on top of the Van Mountain. The wing of that mount descended gradually and entered into the Lake Van. The best apple of Armenia is the apple of Artamet.

On the side of the Varaga Mountain, there was a flower, which burnt at night like a candle, as if there were lights shining. When you approached to pick it, it stopped giving light. That flower was called Siradegh (Love remedy – Arm.).

We had a Khald temple, which was covered with the lake waters. Aghtamar Island was small and stony. King Gagik had the famous Aghtamar Monastery built on the island.

All around Van camphoraceous roses grew; they were of blue color.

One bright day in May, mother Zozan went to our Jermuk (Spa). Once I asked my uncle to mention the names of those mineral springs; he mentioned 210 names. Almost all our fields were watered by natural springs. That day my mother went to the side of the Arnos Mountain to gather edible greens. Suddenly it began thundering, lightening, raining and then hailing heavily. My mother decided to get somehow to a cave. Covering herself with large leaves of rhubarb, one on her head, the other on her back, she reached the cave. She was pregnant then. Suddenly her childbirth pains began, and I was born. With a plant blade she cut my navel, took off her shirt and wrapped me in it. Seeing the weather change for the worse, my father came there, met my mother at the brink of the cave, brought us home and put me in a cradle. My grandma put a piece of rope under my pillow to tie up the evil, the village teacher put a pencil by my side, wishing me to be literate, and my grandfather, put the sword beside me, saying: “Let him be a fedayi.”

I remember when the heroic battle of Shatakh started. There were Kurds from the village of Mihran, who lived on good neighborly terms with us: they used to come to our house, eat, drink, sleep at night and then went home. We used to call them ‘acquaintances.’ At that time our acquaintance came and gave grandpa a purple gown and an Arab foal, which was three years old. That was my horse, and I liked very much to ride it; we took it with us till Mesopotamia.

During the battle Shatakh had 360-400 armed warriors, and the enemy brought an army of six thousand soldiers against us. The fighting lasted a month and a half.

We were defending the whole province. The Armenian lost forty-eight fighters, the Turks lost two thousand askyars.

Dro came to our village and delivered a speech, praising the heroic people of Shatakh and said, “Well done.” But the Russian army began to retreat and the exile began. The whole road to Van was covered with corpses.

In 1915 the condition of the Russian soldiers was very grave. The Russian soldiers came to the Armenian houses and begged for bread, because they had not received any food for three months. But we, the Armenians loved the Russian soldiers; we called them ‘kind Russians.’

We suffered from scurvy. An Armenian from Salmast came; he made us smoke in a pipe something like tobacco and we got well. On the way my father and uncle died, grandpa died in Salmast. My mother sang well. My grandpa loved my mother very much. He used to say: “She is the lady of our family composed of thirty-four members.” A day before his death, when we were going to bed, he said: “I won’t see the sun tomorrow; come, let me give you my blessings.” Then he asked mother to sing, he blessed us all and then he left this earth forever...

On our deportation way Kostya (Constantin) Hambarzoumian was guiding us. We had an army of five thousand. The army was divided into several regiments: one regiment went on the left side of the valley, the other – in front of us, and the third – behind us. Thus, forty thousand Armenians came out of Van. We did not know that the Turks had bribed Smko’s bandit group. They had surrounded our way and closed it. We should go by the road of Khoy and join the Armenians of the Caucasus, but we were compelled to go to Salmast.

We were going through the valley; the way was narrow. They had put an enormous stone in the middle of the road to hinder our passage. Pushing the stone, our youth threw it in the canyon. Then the Kurds began to attack us. We climbed up through the impassable path of the valley and saw that the Kurds of the right ring were surrounding us, but our fighters killed them all. Their corpses were lying about.

As we helped the Russian soldiers before the deportation, now they began helping us: they not only defended us, but they gave us food; while eating, they called us: “Come, let’s eat together.”

In Salmast there was an artillery battalion, who hadn’t been able to escape, and they helped us. Their commander told us that they would defend the Armenians till the end.

On our way of exile the Turkish army pursued us. The Turks attacked us with their fifteen thousand soldiers at Salmast and we suffered great losses. The enemy’s positions were strong; they fought from above, we were in the open field. We were saved with the help of the

Russian soldiers.

In Urmia the Persians met us with bread and salt. Three were many Assyrians in Urmia. Zhamharian was the commander of our battalion. When he saw that the Turks were attacking the Assyrians, he began to defend them. His soldiers were numerous, he suffered great losses, but he saved many Assyrians. The fighting went on. During the Urmia fighting the Azerbaijanians also attacked us. We went and reached Kirmanshah. The Turks were following us. A well-known Persian unit of seventy-eighty soldiers had gone forward to attack from the flank. They met Kostya Hambarzoumian.

The Shah had ordered not to offer any resistance to the Armenian caravans: that was why they had met us with bread and salt. We met an English mounted battalion. They did not move from their place. There was no food in Kirmanshah; we were hungry. The Arabs approached several times my mother, saying: "Sell us this horse." At last mother agreed: "How much will you pay for it?"

"Twenty gold."

If mother had asked more, they would pay, for it was an Arabic horse. I cried very much for my horse. I was thirteen years old then. I used to ride it to take the animals to the pasture. It had learned to bend its back for me to sit. We had become close friends with each other. We moved very slowly on our way to Mesopotamia. The Russian division was with us. At last we reached Mesopotamia. There the Englishmen were under tents in the Nahrumar desert. The Armenians of India sent us material help, doctors and English teachers. In 1918, the Englishmen wanted to make our soldiers colonizers. Independence War had broken out in Iraq. The Arabs of Iraq rebelled against the Englishmen. The English wanted the Armenians to go against the Arabs.

Levon Shaghoyan was the commander of our caravan, after Kostya. He had only a sixth form education, but he was an intelligent man. Shaghoyan said: "We are in a foreign country; we won't fight against the Arabs." The Englishmen got furious. They were getting ready to refuse the Armenian mandate. The news reached to the sheikh. The Bedouins came in groups to our tents and said: "Marhaba, well done!"

But the Assyrians were fighting against the Arabs. The Arabs killed them till the last person.

After 1921, we received an order that the Republic of Armenia was created in the Caucasus, and Alexander Myasnikian had put the problem before the Iraqi government to send the Armenian caravan to Armenia.

We had two merchants in Iraq. They, Hakob efendi and Hovsep efendi, decided to transport us to Armenia. We came by the Persian Gulf, through the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and Batoumi, where the representatives of the Soviet power met us on January 1, 1922. After sailing for 45 days we arrived to

our Motherland, but we had lost about 10,000 people, most of them from epidemics.

From among the thirty-four members of our family, only seven survived: my mother, me, my brother Rostom, my sister Nouné, my uncle David, my grandma Zano, my grandpa Djibrael, that's all.

Levon Shaghoyan did not come with us, he said: "There the Bolsheviks won't understand me, I'm Dashnak, where can I go?"

Abrahamian said: "I'll stay with you." The people of the village of Armash said: "Our Abrahamian is staying, we will also stay."

The sheikh heard that about three thousand Armenians were staying, he said: "I'll give you the right to choose your place. Go, look about, the place you like, you'll live there. I won't take taxes from you."

The Armenians saw a wonderful river flowing through the desert, they liked it and said: "We'll put a pump here and irrigate the desert."

That place was Zakho. It was founded when we moved there. It still exists now. The Arabs have always received us, the Armenians, well.

We came to Armenia and spread in Yerevan, Ashtarak, Edjmiadsin and Artashat. There was a pious man, Yeghik, who had small cottages opposite to his house. He put them at our disposal, and we lived there. I fell ill with severe dysentery. Yeghik came and said: "Nana, give that boy to me, I'll cure him." Mother cried day and night. I was a bag of bones.

Yeghik put me in a cart together with lavash bread and took me to his farthest vineyard, which was on the border of the village of Aygezard. On the upper side of the vineyard there was a wheat field and there were numerous quails there. He put traps, filled them with millet to catch the quails. He told me: "Here you are, all this is for you. Every morning: eat grapes as much as you can. Take a walk round the hills, collect the quails from the traps, roast them and eat them."

On the seventh day my mother and grandpa Djibro came to see me. They saw my color was normal, they were delighted. The trunk was full of lavash bread. I slept on the roof, in fresh air.

They usually gathered the grapes in autumn, filled them in the wine-presses and made wine. Yeghik said: "Let's harvest the vineyard."

Suddenly it began to sleet. We gathered the crop and transported it.

Yeghik gave mother two gold coins and said: "Nana, the boy has guarded the vineyard, he deserves it."

Mother said: "Eh, Yeghik, you have saved my son."

Yeghik repeated again: "He has guarded the vineyard."

Mother did not take the money. Yeghik threw the two gold coins into our house through the window: we had to take it.

In 1936 when Aghassi Khandjian was maliciously assassinated, Amatouni Vardapetian became the First Secretary of the Central Committee. He began to exterminate Khandjian's partisans; I was one of them.

Khandjian looked on me with favor; he was fond of me. I had already been promoted when Khandjian wasn't in Armenia yet. I have written about him in my memoirs. I was the secretary of the Leninakan (now: Gyumri) city committee organization. I and my wife Anne lived at a

hotel, which was cold and damp; we had only a kerosene heater. I applied many times; they did not dismiss me. Khandjian invited me and appointed director of the Yuva sovkhos. I've done a lot there.

Then they took me to a comsomol activity in Ghourdoughouli (Hoktemberian, now: Armavir) Region.

I've seen a lot, many things have occurred to me, I've seen great sorrows, nevertheless now I've sat to write my memoirs...

## 28 (28).

### EDWARD MARGAR DASHTOYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Shatakh, Kajet Village)

Our village was Kajet one of the villages of the Shatakh Province. The Turks and the Kurds came and took possession of our village. My grandpa's brother killed the chief of the Kurds and we moved to Van: Khachpoghan, where we had a house.

My father was a good cook and he worked at a restaurant in Aygestan that was why they called him Ashji (cook – Turk.) Margar.

In 1915, during the self-defense of Van our folk fought, but when the Russians withdrew, we were compelled to deport. The whole surrounding was burned,

destroyed and full of corpses.

Father, mother, my uncles, aunts, my grandfather, grandma – we all departed together and reached Igdir, crossed the Arax River and settled in Ashtarak, where an epidemic of typhus had spread and nearly all my family was exterminated.

Only me and my mother remained alive, and we came to Yerevan, to my grandpa's cousin Mourad Dashtoyan's house. There, my mother also died. They entrusted me to the Polygon orphanage in Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri).

## 29 (29).

### SAHAK MIRZO BAZIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1913, Shatakh, Djnouk Village)

My cousin Bazikian Bazik has told me about the heroic fight of Shatakh.

April 1915. A group of vanguards consisting of eighty people entered the village of Djnouk, Shatakh Province, the last village on the Shatakh and Moks border. They had received the order to collect taxes and, under the pretext of enlisting men, to bring the males out of the village, till the arrival of the main forces to begin the massacre. Led by that criminal plan, the guards entered Djnouk and collected the taxes by force. When they finished collecting the taxes in a few hours, they compelled each house to knit mittens and socks during the night and to hand over eighty pairs in the morning. The poor peasants did not sleep all night; they knitted and handed over 80 pairs of mittens and socks at the dawn. In the morning they began to gather the men, as

if to recruit them. They forced some men to accompany them in every house. One of the accompanying people was Bazké Shahin\*, who, upon entering each house and seeing the tonir burning in the morning, added on it more firewood, thus causing much smoke; not being able to see much in that thick smoke the guards were leaving the house. Soon the other accompanying people and the housewives followed suit and did the same. Thus, the Turkish guards, in spite of their impudence, could recruit only three men from the whole village: Avdo, Chako Manouk<sup>1</sup> and another. The second person was later freed from mobilization by bribery. Thus, they did not succeed to gather the men, for most of them had gone to the fields early in the morning, in order to dig the ground and cover the snow on the fields with that earth, so that the thaw and, consequently, the spring

\* Bazké, Shahin – Shahin Bazikian, eyewitness survivor **Sahak Bazian's** uncle. Talented narrator of the epos "Davit of Sassoun." His name has gone in the history of epos in the first volume of "Sassna Dserer" ("The Saga of Sassoun"), edited by Academician Manouk Abeghian, since 1936. Up to that time Bazké Shahin's song-narrative "Davit of Sassoun" had been written down twice. Hovhannes Toumanian himself attended the last recording. Bazké Shahin's song-narrative "Davit of Sassoun" was well-famed in Shatakh and Moks. See "Hayreniki Dzayn" ("Voice of Fatherland" - Arm.), Yerevan, 1974, No. 59.

<sup>1</sup> Manouk, Chako – he is singer **Hayrik Mouradian's** (b. 1905, Shatakh) [T. 27] father (information of the narrator).

sowing began early. The remaining men and teenagers of the village had hid themselves in the sheep wells. Those were called so, because the peasants hid in them part of their sheep when the Turkish secretary-gendarmes came to take stock of the sheep in order to fix the tax according to their population. They kept there also their sheep when Turk and Kurd robbers came. In this case those wells saved also to hide men. Seeing that their work was fruitless, they arrested the chief of the village, Keto Kazar, and forced him to reveal the place of the villagers. He escaped from the gendarmes and threw himself in one of the sheep-wells to hide, but there was no place, it was already full of hiding men. He ran away. They fired at him and wounded him. He fell into the Tigris River and remained there without help and died of profuse hemorrhage. His brothers-in-law went and brought his corpse only when the guards had departed from the village. The guards, seeing that they got no results in recruiting askyars, went out of the village, surrounded it and remained there. That did not help either. The villagers neither came out of the wells, nor returned from the fields. And so, seeing that their three days' plunder, recruiting and surrounding the village gave no results, and losing hope about the arrival of the main forces, the eighty-person vanguard group decided to leave Djnouk and go to Hinents, collect the taxes and askyars, then go to the villages of Kaghpi, Vank and Sak. Everywhere, under the pretext of collecting taxes and askyars, they threatened, frightened and plundered. But everywhere the result was the same. Everywhere they collected the taxes but no askyars. The Armenians rebelled and did not go to serve in the Turkish Army; they did not want to become Turk askyars.

That was the first step of the indignation and the resistance of the Shatakh people, which was created spontaneously from the depth of the popular masses.

The first test of popular resistance. They recruited three men from Djnouk, three men from Hinents and five men from Kaghpi – eleven men altogether. Later all of them ran away from Sak, when they were surrounded in a house together with the Turks; knowing the secret passage of that house, they run away and a few Turkish soldiers followed them.

The second step was the encirclement of the eighty-person guard group in Sak, a village in the forest, where there were five houses of Armenians and a few houses of Kurds. Then they captured the group, which was taking the taxes to Tagh. The guards had impatiently been waiting for the auxiliary soldiers. They stayed in Sak for three days, but no assistance came. During those three days the Armenians of Sevtkin Village, forming a group of 15-20 armed fighters attacked the kordon (the guard group of 80 people), snatched their arms and took them to Tagh.

The armed Armenians of Djnouk, Kaghpi, Hinents,

Vank and Dsidsants claimed from the committee the permission to rise in rebellion. Samvel (the deputy-chairman) headed the committee, since Hovsep, the chairman had been killed.

He had been killed as follows: they had call Hovsep to Van for a consultation. The question was whether the Armenians should rebel or not. Hovsep insisted on a rebellion, Aram Manoukian was against the idea. The Van committee members were Vramian, Ishkhanian and others. Hovsep left the meeting and returned to Shatakh to start the rebellion. On the way the Turks captured him. There was a proposal for exchanging prisoners. They agreed. The Armenians set free the Turkish prisoners, the tax collectors, who had been taken prisoner together with the tax money. But the Turks killed the Armenian prisoners. Eight policemen had seized Hovsep and brought him to the Tagh prefect, and they had killed him according to his order and thrown him into the Tigris River. An Armenian prisoner managed to run away and came to the armed Armenians. The Tagh Committee refused the proposal of the Kaghpi Village to rise in rebellion. After being refused, they returned to Sak and informed the armed Armenians about the decision who, in answer to that, went and besieged the group of eighty Turk guards who were in Sak. Gulamir and Haro-Haroutyun Gulanian led the rebels. The besieged guards were shut up in a house. Haro proposed to pour kerosene on the door of the house and set fire and shoot those who tried to run escape. My father, Bazké Mirzo, opposed the proposal, considering it an imprudent step, since they were shooting from inside. Gyulamir, too, did not agree with Haro, saying, "That's not bravery." Early in the morning Gyulamir took two mausers, entered the house where the Turks were besieged and killed about sixteen-seventeen people. When he returned to recharge his guns, they shot him on his nape, and he fell on the threshold of the door.

That became a cause for our fighters to attack. Someone came and announced, "The mob is coming." The Turks heard it from within, rejoiced and exclaimed, "They're welcome" and shot and killed the announcer. Ours got confused and began to escape. At that moment Bazeyan Seto, who was coming from Van, shouted, "Don't run away, help is coming." They returned and continued fighting against the besieged Turks. They killed all of them. Only two people managed to escape and reach the bridge of Kholksan. Bazké Mirzo's well-aimed bullet reached him right on the bridge, and he fell into the river. The other one ran away to the forest, climbed on a tree and pretended to get ready for shooting. Bazké Mkhitar, who was my uncle, noticing that he had no cartridges, attacked and killed him.

With this event in Sak and with the captivity and murder of Hovsep and the other six prisoners, the rebellion started, which happened a week before the Van

revolt.<sup>1</sup> During those days, the Shatakh rebels prepared in Tagh a cannon of nut-tree wood, covering the wood with tin. Gelké Thomas made it. After every three cannonades the wood exploded, and they prepared a new one. That hand-made cannon played a great role. The rebels from Shatakh also cut the telegram cable connecting Van, Shatakh, Bashkala (Aghbak). The Turks and the Kurds suffered great losses. Ten days had passed from the Shatakh rebellion, when Djevdet pasha sent for Aram Manoukian requesting him to send people to Shatakh to conclude peace. Ishkhan set off from Van with eleven people. Hearing about it, Djevdet pasha sent soldiers to capture them. They caught them in the Hirj Village of Hayots Dzor and killed them all. In Van they arrested Vramian. As a member of the Medjlis, they ostensibly sent him to Constantinople, but when he reached Taron, they killed him on the Bitlis bridge and threw him into the river. They intended to capture Aram as well; in order not to arouse suspicion, they sent a Turk coachman to bring him with honors, but the coachman informed Aram about their intention and returned without Aram, saying,

“He did not come.”

In the morning the heroic battle of Van started.

The Sak battles were the initial stage of the Shatakh rebellion. The second stage were the fights of Sokants – a Kurdish village. This second stage was still larger. In June, when the Armenian volunteers entered Shatakh, seven people from Sokants went to the ashirats and asked them to come to Shatakh and slaughter the Armenians. Hearing that, the Armenians besieged Sokants for three days. After three days, in the beginning of June, when the volunteers came, they slaughtered Sokants people; the Shatakhis had besieged it, but had not attacked. After destroying Sokants, Dro’s volunteer regiment entered Moks. Bazké Mirzo went with them as a guide. The fighting continued in Moks. The Kurds ran away. Two twelve-year-old Kurd children appeared near the night post-guard. Mirzo was on guard. Mirzo took the children to the bridge, showed them the fires burning from afar where the Kurds had gathered, he accompanied them to the tents in order to safeguard them from the volunteers. He saved them and returned to his post.

### 30 (30).

#### **VAHAN MKRTICH KTRANIAN’S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1900, Van, Timar Province, Ererin Village)**

The village of Ererin was in the Eastern part of Lake Van, in Western Armenia, at a distance of 1,5 km from the lake, near the fortress of Amyuk. In 1909, it had 110 households of Armenian inhabitants, who were engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding, fishing and handicrafts. There was the St. Sahak Church and a school in the village.

In April 1915, our villagers were informed that there was a fight with the Turks going on in the town of Van. The men in the village lost their heads, while the women cried and wailed. Some people thought of escaping to the desert of Lim.

The prefect of Berkri, Riza bey, attacked with 200 gendarmes and several hundreds of Kurd brigands the village called Astvadsadsin or Tiramayr and started to massacre the male population, even the young boys aged 10-12. They besieged the village, and the fight between 4 to 5 hundred Turk and Kurd bandits and 25-30 Armenians began. The situation was very critical. The enemy had encircled the village, and there was only one way left free and that was the sea [the lake]. The men decided to fight till the end, but the situation

was desperate. Then suddenly a miracle happened! The dean of our monastery, the Very Rev. Fr. Hovhannes Hyussian organized the assistance, and we sailed and joined the fighters of the Ovoun group.

My father, Mkrtych agha, was a literate person; he knew Turkish and French. He was a teacher at the village of Ererin. My elder brother, Armenak, was also an educated young man; he, too, was a teacher. My mother, Iskouhi Ter-Harutyunian, was also well-educated. I had my elementary education at the village of Ererin. At the time of the deportation I was 15 years old. When we arrived in Yerevan, there were famine and epidemics.

The Van Cooperative Organization was opened in Yerevan, in 1918-1919. I and my friend Martiros worked there. Martiros became later my sister’s husband.

In 1925, when my father moved to Artashat, I went to Tiflis and later to Donetsk, where my sister Satenik lived. There I met Drastamat Kanayan.

In 1948 I went with Martiros to the United States. There I started to work and I helped my family, which had remained in Donetsk.

<sup>1</sup> The April-May 1915 self-defensive battles of the Armenian inhabitants of Van and its surrounding villages against the Turkish slaughterers.  
\* This Armenian testimony was written by the eyewitness survivor in 1947, in Germany. His relative, Edward Ktrianian, delivered it to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

**TOVIK THOMAS BAGHDASSARIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1901, Van, Hayots Dzor, Hndstan Village)**

I was born in a poor family. Even today our village is before my eyes. Our village had thirty-seven houses of which twenty-nine were Armenians and eight were Turks, all in all about two hundred and twenty people.

The peasants were busy with agriculture and cattle-breeding. In the village we had only two carpenters, who repaired doors and windows free of charge and made benches. Our village was lost in vineyards. It was told that when a man had come from India (Hindoustan) and founded the village, it was called then Hndstan. And Mkrtich Khrimian has said: "It is a vineyard (aygestan) fields and meadows, that's why it's called Hndstan."

The inhabitants of the village had their farmstead: the houses were made of round, small stones, straw and earth mortar and they were joined to each other. Each house had a separate passage, from where they secretly passed the important news to each other. The Turk officers entered where they wanted and from those passages the Armenians sent their young daughters to hide, in fear of being seen and abducted. The floor was earth. They burned dried dung in the tundir and smoke was unbearable for two-three hours, even one could not see the house-folks. We used to go out, then come in and squatted around the tundir. Oil was filled in a small clay pot, a wick was put in it and was nailed to the pillar and a young girl standing at the foot of the pillar raised the wick with the end of a bow.

I had already come of age. We had a calf, it had become a cow, it was spotted. Mother sometimes compelled me, apart from father, to take her to graze. A river flowed by. At noon the animals rested by the waterside, and we used to swim in the river.

I was six or seven years old when the American Protestants opened their school. The teacher prayed with closed eyes; he was pious, he used to repeat Jesus Christ's name all the time. The school children were twenty-thirty people. Many had heard about the Bible from their parents, and they came and listened to his lessons. We learned the alphabet by the letter names (aib, ben, gim... = a, b, c... – Arm.) not by phonetics, in order to sing it easily. By this method they had taught the Koran in the East. I learned for a very short time in the village. Whatever book a pupil brought, he read it.

I was three months old when my father died, and my mother married for a second time. Her husband died and together with his four children I also became an orphan. But my mother's brother took me to the Varag Monastery, which was at a distance of twenty-five km from our village. It was so beautiful, it's beyond description! From the window down, Van spread on the lake coast, the fortress of Shamiram, the Shamiram stream, which

ran to the lake.

The Kurds of our village were like brothers with the Armenians. There were brotherhood ties between the Armenians and the Kurds. The Armenians spoke Kurdish, Armenian and the Kurds did the same. The Armenians worked with the Kurds: they reaped and threshed together, they ate in turn with the same spoon. When the Kurds came in, the poor Armenians bowed before the bey, fed his horse. That was why the Kurds treated the Armenians well. But later the Kurds also began to kill the Armenians. The government knew that the Armenians were strong and rich, that was the reason why Sultan Hamid organized the Hamidean regiments of Kurds which became a great danger for the Armenians.

In the villages the Turkish officers came and gathered the taxes, but when the Kurd beys came, they left their houses. That was a real horror.

I learned at the Varag Monastery. In 1912 great celebrations were held in the monastery dedicated to the one thousand four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Armenian alphabet. I remember Ishkhan's speech. To get rid of Ishkhan, Djevdet pasha sent him to improve the Armenian-Kurdish relations.

The Turks fought against the Armenians for thirty days. The Armenians were digging trenches. We had no experience, we did not know what was taking place, but the children of Van knew a lot. When they brought us from Varag Monastery to Van, I saw at the Armenian quarters – in Aygestan, the band was playing "Our Motherland"<sup>1</sup> to encourage the fighters. After thirty days, the Turks began to escape hearing the name of the Russians. As only a few men came back from Enver pasha's army, Andranik went and occupied Bitlis. The Russians did not want to occupy Bitlis. Andranik occupied it with his volunteers.

When fighting was over I went to our village. My mother lived with her six sons. I and my step-brothers joined and brought back from the Kurds the animals they had stolen away from us. We became owners of two cows and one horse. The peasants of our village had escaped. Those who had arms and had fought had come and gathered in the Varag Monastery, which had become the center of the refugees.

Tsarist Russia ordered his army to withdraw. So we were obliged to migrate towards Berkri, where there was a very deep valley, after which we would enter the Abagha plain. Hundreds of thousands refugees had gathered there; they sought their salvation in reaching Yerevan. With mother and the children we reached the turbulent Bandimahu River. I asked mother to let me

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian national anthem.

go and rub my face with water. I went and suddenly something like hail began to drop from the sky. The Kurds had taken position on the upper part of the opposite valley, were shooting, and people rolled down. I saw how those coming threw themselves into the water. I took off my clothes and threw myself into the water. I swam the first half of the river, and the water current took me down. Hundreds of corpses were coming down the river one after the other and were being drifted to the sea. Suddenly a skirt touched me: a woman had clung to a tree; I caught her by the skirt and slowly came out. I owe her my life. Who was that woman? I don't know. We came out of the river; I was cold, I was shivering. I asked a Russian soldier to take us on his horse. The horse did not go. I got down. I saw a cow. The load of the cow had fallen down; it was a sack, there was some gata in it. I was hungry. I ate it. A man made me sit on the cow and tied me with a rope. People were shouting and crying; everyone was looking for his folks.

In the evening, together with the others, we reached somewhere and we sat down to rest. I got off the cow, I tied the cow's rope to foot and lay down. I was thinking about my family. Suddenly I heard a voice. I looked up; that was my married sister. We hugged each other. I moved forward together with the cow. I found my mother, my sisters, my mother's sister sitting on the grass and mourning my death. Suddenly they saw me and raised me up on their hands. We continued our way and reached the Abagha plain, then Orgov, which was the Russian border. They gave the first help to the Armenians, then distributed bread and we ate it with appetite. We remained there for two-three days, then we went to Igdir and we came to Edjmiadsin together with a friend of mine to study at the monastery. Suddenly I saw a woman who approached me, and learning, that I could read and write, asked me: "My boy, don't you like to be my adoptive son?"

My mother had already moved forward. Me and my friend, we had remained near the St. Edjmiadsin Church. I said: "I want to."

"All right, get up; we're going to our house."

She took me to her house: to the Khatounarkh Village. She called her husband, her relatives and we made a feast. They baptized me and named me Aghvan. They were glad that at last they had a son, and besides that he was literate.

They went to work, leaving me my food. I remained there for a week, then I began to miss my relatives. Suddenly I heard my name: "Baghdassar!" That was my friend. He told me it would be better, if we ran away. We went into the house. It was full of riches. We had no money; we had nothing. There was one ruble in a trunk, I searched and I found a silver belt. I took it to sell. I tied it on my waist: it went round twice. We came to Edjmiadsin. We slept in the orphanage. In the morning

we got up; about two hundred children had died. Cholera was reaping the people. They carried away the corpses in vans and filled them in pits. At that time Hovhannes Toumanian had come to Edjmiadsin to comfort the refugees. Those people, who had fought in Van and Shatak, then were dying of diseases there.

In the morning we were before the Seminary, when my adoptive mother appeared; she struck my friend on the head and said: "Where are you taking my son?"

She came, embraced me and began crying: "Aghvan, dear, why are you leaving, what do you need?" The poor woman was crying and trying to persuade me.

I said: "I have brothers, sisters and a mother."

"So you have a mother? Ay, son, I cannot grab you from your mother."

She hugged me, clasped in her arms; the silver belt loosened and fell down on my feet. She picked up the belt and went away.

It was not possible to stay in Edjmiadsin, among the corpses, any longer. We were hungry, we knew no one. Eating melon skins, we reached Yerevan on foot. I began to sell water. One day I saw a cart coming filled with fresh bread-loaves. I approached and begged, "A piece of bread..."

"It's for the refugees," said the coachman.

"I'm a refugee, too."

He threw me a big loaf of fresh bread. Suddenly I saw my friend's mother, sister and brother in front of us. They found us. That friend of mine had a brother-in-law called Israel, who had studied in Germany. He had heard that the Armenians were being deported; he had come from Berlin to find his mother and take her to Berlin. He told me: "I'll take you to Baku."

He took my friend and me to Baku, to an orphanage. In 1916 I was already in the orphanage of Baku. We got up early in the morning and sang spiritual songs. It was a very good boarding school. Israel was the manager. We prayed, only then we began to eat. The manager sat at the table with us. Even for one kopeck he demanded an account. There was a Protestant community in Baku. Every week they came with presents; they were very mild and kind people. The woman, who used to bathe us, wrapped us with towels and then dressed us. We were glad that we had such masters. I stayed there a year and three months. I was not in the habit of eating cooked onion, and they cooked all the meals with fried onion. I used to gather the onions and put them in my friend's plate. The manager saw that and said: "What are you doing?"

"It is nauseating."

He picked up the onions with a spoon and filled them into my mouth. I spat, and it went and stuck on his forehead. He got angry and began beating me. I said: "I won't stay in the orphanage anymore."

In the morning he asked me not to leave.

He bought a coat for me. He took eight rubles for a

ticket, so that I might go to the Aghstafa station, then go to Idjevan, Dilidjan on foot. That day we could not get a ticket. I went to the Baladja station, bought a ticket and reached Aghstafa. I found my uncle Melkon's son, whose father had been a fedayi. Then they took us to Tabriz. The Persians were very bigoted, ignorant. We remained there for two months and a half. Myasnikian sent people saying: "All those who are refugees may come." We came to Armenia.

I built a house in the village of Arshalouys. My brother was a Party Secretary; I was a teacher. In 1929 I entered the University. I got married. I had six sons and a daughter. I was awarded with the orders of Lenin and the Red Star.

The main reason of the Armenian Genocide was that the Armenians wanted to live with the Turks and Kurds with equal rights, but the Muslim religion would not permit it. Besides, the most intelligent people of Turkey were the Armenians who had a highly developed culture; most of the architects, composers and merchants were Armenians. In order to avoid the Armenians' autonomy, in order not to create a new Bulgaria, they tried in every

way to annihilate the Armenians.

Our attitude to the Turks is that we'll never forget what happened. But what could the Turkish people do, since the Turkish authorities slaughtered us. We will never forget what they did to us. We must transmit to our generations the claim of our rights, the claim to give back our lands. They have destroyed our four thousand churches. They have massacred hundreds and thousands of people. April 24 is a sacred day for us. On that day we go with our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren to the monument of the Armenian Genocide, so that they may keep that memory in their hearts.

I want to tell the new generation that they should know how their grandfathers have set foot on Eastern Armenia. The Armenians have had their beautiful Motherland. The new generations mustn't forget and they must do everything so that justice prevails, and the Western Armenian question finds its solution. The great German political activists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg have criticized the Wilhelm government. The Turks themselves convicted Talaat pasha and many others. I hope that the UN will pass a righteous judgment.

## 32 (32).

### MANVEL MAROUTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Van, Berdashen Village)

Our family was large: five brothers, forty-five people, we lived in a patriarchal way in peace and harmony. First, the men had their dinner, then the children, then the woman and then the maid-servants. Until the heroic battle of Vaspourakan, we were happy and joyful at home.

I remember my grandmother; all her sons and daughters-in-law were obedient and turned to her for advice. We, the children, loved her. She used to tell us stories about kings. My grandma had eighteen grandchildren, but she loved me very much, since my mother had borne me after losing seven children.

My father's brothers were – Panos, Martiros, Vahan, who was the mayor, Khosrov was a merchant, Marouth was the youngest. He and my father used to go to the eighteen villages and administered them. My father secretly brought arms to Van. Each of the five brothers had three rooms, which now are equal to fifteen rooms, and we had special rooms for the servants and the guests. We had special thick mattresses for the guests. There were no bedsteads. We, the children also were very fond of each other. I've never heard any one of us who had offended another. We used to quarrel with each other, but my mother slapped me, her mother slapped him and then they used to say, "Kiss each other," and everything ended.

My father's sisters, Nvard and Eliz, were married. The daughters of the Hovakimian dynasty were our

daughters-in-law. The in-laws were in very close relations. Very often the New Year eve was met in our parlor, where we gathered and the table was loaded with different kinds of dried fruits.

When my uncle married, his wedding lasted for three days. On the first day the Armenians were invited, on the second day – the Turks, on the third – our acquaintances.

Our house servants came from our villages and they were very glad to come. They came in families from the village to get education. One of them even became a priest. We used to play with them. Once one of our children said to one of them, "You are a peasant." My uncle punished him: he ate all alone for three days.

Our parents had to get up at 7.30 in the morning. Eighteen boys from our house went to school on donkeys. Once my father slapped me; my father had a German mauser, and I stole it, tied it to my waist and went to school. I passed by the police station; they did not notice it, but my father found out about it and punished me by slapping.

The American missionaries had a school and a hospital in Aygestan. The German missionaries had theirs as well. The school director of Kaghakamedj was Haykak Kosoyan, who became later the leader of the Kaghakamedj fighting. He had studied at the Gevorgian Seminary, had a staunch heart; was a marvelous man. Our teachers were scholars, who had studied in Europe. There was no beating or thrashing in the classroom, they

taught us with advices and education. There were thirty-three pupils in each class. We studied English in the Protestant school and French in the others. Once a week a Mullah came, during those periods we used to sing and dance, then he left and went away. The school had 11 grades. Hambardzoum Yeramian was the director. He was blind, but he recognized each of us by our voices. He taught us history. The school had a good teaching staff, and, as it was expensive, only the children of well-to-do families attended it. The Protestant schools were free of charge.

My eldest uncle had a large library. Till the age of fourteen I had read not only Armenian literature, but also Victor Hugo, Balzac, for I was very fond of reading. I did not like playing. We had “Louys” (Light – Arm.) and “Tiramayrik” (Little Madonna – Arm.) libraries. We received the periodicals “Byuzandion” from Constantinople and “Mshak” (Cultivator – Arm.) from Russia.

My mother knew French. She had a good voice. Our Van had many beautiful songs, which were collected by Komitas and performed by Shahmouradian. Among them were “Dlé Yaman” (an exclamation of sorrow), “The Rose has Bloomed,” “Mokats Mirza,” “Alexianos” and others. We had a four-part choir in Van.

When I became fourteen, my mother said to my father: “Martiros, sell a village and let’s send Manvel to study in Paris.”

My father opposed the idea.

I wanted to become an ashough.

My father’s five brothers were fabric merchants; they had a huge shop in Arjesh. My father and my youngest uncle surveyed our villages and my eldest uncle was the governor. The inhabitants elected him. The third brother was the mayor of Van. The Turks and the Armenians had the right to elect at the age of 21; they could be elected above the age of 35 for 20 years. We built the houses of our villages, gave them the seeds to sow, the ploughs, the ploughshares, sheep, cows, and the crop was shared by halves. In all our villages there were churches, priests, schools and teachers, and we paid their salaries.

The husband of my mother’s sister was the mayor of the town of Vostan; he was killed, because he did not allow the Kurd mob enter the town.

In the past the Armenians were on high posts. The Turks were soldiers, policemen; they sold fruits on donkeys, while the Armenians were merchants and craftsmen. We used to have many guests; besides the Armenians we had special rooms to receive Turkish guests. Pashas and beys came to our houses and we laid abundant tables.

There was a court before our house where the stables and the conveniences for the servants were built, and the court gate was made of iron. The stairs led to the six rooms covered with carpets. There were separate

apartments for my uncles’ families.

Our stone-built house was very large, about four thousand square meters. We had a large garden with fruit trees, vegetable and green gardens. We had cooks, but my uncles’ wives and my mother helped them. They planned everything beforehand, and accordingly they slaughtered lamb or chicken. We had cellars, where we kept meat and wine. All the room-mates had a hand in the cleanliness of the house. There was no electricity. The youngest wife’s duty was to fill the lamps with kerosene. The other one surveyed the bread and so on. We had a well and a motor brought from France, which pumped out water. There were also fountains in the town.

The market was big. The different craftsmen had separate places for example the goldsmiths, the blacksmiths. We didn’t need to do our shopping in the market; everything came from the village. Only in winter, when the sheep were pregnant, we bought the meat elsewhere. We baked bread at home; those who bought bread from the shop were poor.

When I was born my mother had made an oath that I should serve the church for a year and they did not cut my hair for seven years. My brother went to the church instead of me and sang. We went to church on holidays, but our mothers went almost every day. The ringing of the church bell was forbidden; they struck on wood.

In Aygestan the American Protestants had their church, hospital, pharmacy, school and very often they helped the poor.

My grandfather had the St. Vardan Church built near our house, and he wanted to be buried there. He supplied the government soldiers with food on his own expense. One day when the pasha came to us, he burned all the bills under the coffee-pot and said, “I burnt, them all.” My grandfather’s tombstone was made of marble brought from Italy. On it was carved:

*“I said, ‘I am.’*

*Whoever says, ‘I am,’*

*Will become what I am.”*

There were many minstrels in Van, who played on chongour and sang about General Andranik and Aghbyur Serob. I wanted to be a minstrel. Once my father slapped me on the face, and I ran away, reached the village of Djanik. They asked me: “Where are you going, little boy?” I said: “I’m going to Edjmiadsin to become a vardapet.” At night I slept there. In the morning, as I opened my eyes, I saw my youngest uncle sitting at the head of my bed. He said: “Hello, Bishop agha.” And he took me home.

There were almost no divorces in Van. An Armenian girl eloped with a Turk gendarme; her brother went by night and killed both of them by cutting their throats. In marriages the parents often played a role. At a wedding my father had seen a beautiful girl and said: “Girl, girl,

will you marry me?" My mother had not refused, for he was the son of a wealthy family. My mother was very kind. All of a sudden we could see her crying. She said: "Someone has died, I do not know him, but the orphans are to pity."

There were American, German orphanages in our town. They kindly treated the patients and the handicapped; they pitied them.

There were also superstitious people: for example, they wanted to go somewhere, if a black cat crossed their way, it was bad, or if he sneezed, you didn't go. The backward people had talismans.

Little girls at the age of 16 and boys at the age of 18 married. In recent years there was some freedom and they could speak with each other from over the garden wall, but they shouldn't approach each other.

My father had a trunk, in which he had pistols and rifles. All my uncles had pistols, for there was always the fear of the Kurds' attacks. Those who brought arms were the Dashnaks; they brought them from Russia, for they felt that the situation might burst into flames one day.

Three hundred years ago my ancestors had come from Taron, from the Marout Mountain.

I remember the events of 1915; I see them as though they are before my eyes. A lot of Armenian youth had been taken to the Turkish army. News spread that they had been brought out of the army and were shot. The Armenians endured it. Then they attacked the people and began to plunder; rebellions occurred. The pasha called Aram Manoukian and said: "Send an efficient person to calm them."

Arshak Vramian, who was a Parliament member in Constantinople, elected by the Armenians, went to Manoukian and said: "I am going, but you shouldn't come. My heart is predicting something bad."

The boatmen hung heavy iron loads on Vramian's neck and threw him into the sea. After Vramian's murder we felt that it was deceit and very soon it would burst out, so we began to arm ourselves. In Kaghakamedj two hundred people had guns. We fought for 25-30 days; it was a fighting of 'life or death.' The inhabitants of Van fought against the regular Turkish army, which had 15 thousand soldiers and Kurd rabble, but they resisted. The teenagers fired cannons; they used tinder to fire them. Each contained ten kilograms of gunpowder. They removed the tinder, took it away and filled it again. There was a Frenchman, 'Mon Cher' by name; he was a chemist. He said: "I'll make gun-powder. Tell only the Armenians. Let everyone collect urine in the house." And he prepared gun-powder. Then he was killed.

About 200 people were under arms, 400 people prepared the trenches by night. Whoever had food supplies, brought them to the Primacy. Every person had a function. They had sent a mad girl from Aygestan to collect news from the Armenians, but she was killed

on her way back. They bribed a Turk to take a note to Kaghakamedj informing the Armenians to resist for a week since the Russian army was coming. The Turks, hearing the news, left gradually. We were children, but we were not afraid; we collected cartridges. My father was an architect; he surveyed the construction of the positions. The priests and the vardapets were also fighting. The Turks drove the Kurds on us. I remember, when the fighting was over a Turk came and said: "Everywhere are slaughtered corpses. The priest is beheaded on the church threshold and his head is put before the Holy Virgin's portrait." After the Turkish army left all the villages we entered were full of corpses, and furious dogs, cats and vultures were devouring the corpses, which the Turks had slaughtered and filled in pits. They were committed to the earth without prayers. The Vaspourakanis gave 30-40 victims, but thousands were killed among the defenseless people. Whatever I'm telling you are my memoirs as an eyewitness. The Russian army approached. The volunteer army entered first, and we were saved. If they hadn't come, we would also be annihilated like the people in Yedessia, Shapin-Garahissar.

We, the young people, went to meet the volunteers. The first group that arrived was Nzhdeh's. The son of my mother's brother was in that group. That night Nzhdeh was our guest.

During the heroic fighting many houses were destroyed, the people ran short of food. The Turks escaped, but we also suffered much. We had already occupied the fortress and had raised our tricolor on it. Aram Manoukian was appointed mayor.

Aram Manoukian's government was created, but it turned out that the Russians wanted to empty Van and populate it with Cossacks. It was a Russian trick. The Russian army retreated, and we also took the road of exile. We were so rich, but nothing had remained any more. Everybody was exiled, but separately, losing each other.

We reached first the village of Djanik, then Berkri. The volunteer groups were accompanying us. Whatever someone had was his own; the people were not unanimous any longer. On the way, near Berkri, the Turks attacked. Some people turned back to Persia. Many threw themselves into the Bandimahu River. A woman threw herself into the river together with her seven pretty daughters. A boy had come in contact with a large stone in the river and was saved. He is now in Germany. We had no cash money with us, but we were safe and sound.

The Russian intrigue compelled the Armenians to leave their birthplace, monasteries, graveyards and migrate to Eastern Armenia. Many of them on foot, others on donkeys reached Orgov, which was the Russian border. Then we arrived to Igdir, where typhus and cholera broke out and killed hundreds and thousands

of people.

At last we reached Yerevan. We rented a house in Nork. All of us fell ill with typhus. One of my brothers died. Everybody was hungry. The HOC [Relief Committee for Armenia – RCA], under the leadership of Hovhannes Toumanian, helped the refugees: they distributed food and clothes.

We, the survivors, had hardly drawn a breath, when the Turkish invasion began anew. Georgia, Azerbaijan and Russia betrayed us.

The Turks had invaded Eastern Armenia. They were only 14 km from Yerevan. They had occupied the Arax bridge, and very little was left for them to enter Yerevan. It was a war of 'life or death.' If the heroic battle of Van was a self-defensive one, this was, by the military map, an open field battle. Aram Manoukian was elected dictator. He organized the army. They trained the soldiers for a week and then sent them to the front. And we were already trained. The battle of Sardarapat – Bash-Aparan began. The Armenian people resisted again. All the commanders, Nzhdeh, Sepouh, Dro, brought their armies. They dug trenches. The women were baking and cooking. The girls carried water to the fighters with jars. The wives of the rich, kerchiefs on their heads, were treating the wounded. The main fighters were the refugees from Taron, Moosh, Van, who were the officer staff. The idea of independence was a great joy and it was a reality. It is true, we were almost hungry, but our souls were satisfied, and we didn't feel hunger. The Turkish armed forces were attacking all the time, and we were short of arms. We, the pupils, wanted to become soldiers. They took us to the front of Sardarapat, but we had to wait till someone was killed, in order to take his gun. Aram Manoukian transmitted a message: "You will either remain in the field of battle or return victorious: 'Either under the shield or on the shield'." The Armenian people fought fiercely.

There were many boys like me. I had a group of twenty-five. Out of 25, only 7 returned, 4 of them got wounded and fourteen were killed. The enemy was defeated, and May 28 was celebrated as the day of victory.

The Dashnak, Hnchak and Ramkavar parties took

part in the elections. Of the seventy-five members, sixty were Dashnaks. Meanwhile the army and the ministries were being created; schools were opened for the refugees. The University was founded, with its professors. The dramatic studio was opened.

When I graduated the Yerevan Diocesan School, I was seventeen. I was fond of the theater. Zarifian had come to Yerevan. We were staging "Paghdassar Akhpar." I played the main role. He approached me and said: "Balik djan (sonny – Arm.), can you come to me tomorrow at 10 o'clock at the dramatic studio?"

At night I could not sleep. I went and took part in the plays. We staged Schiller's "The Robbers."

During the Republic, when Nicol Aghbalian was the minister of education, he appointed Levon Shant to teach at our dramatic studio. He often came to watch the plays. Gourgen Djanibekian, Ori Buniatian, Charents' future wife, Arpenik, were in our group. I received prizes for two years. It was even mentioned about it in the Armenian Encyclopedia last year.

At that time my father was the inspector of orphanages, which were organized by the American Relief. An uncle of mine was killed in Arjesh, another uncle directed the bakery. We already lived as separate families. Many people had died from our families due to the epidemics. Our women were glad that we had come to Armenia, because we turned on the button and the electric lamp would light up.

At that time the Dashnak party was in function. There were almost no other parties. There was only one Bolshevik party, but gradually they undermined the Dashnak party, and the Russians helped them. I was a member of the Young Cadet Union.

On May 28, 1919, at the celebration of the 1st Anniversary of Independence, the Catholicos of All Armenians and the ministers were seated. The members of the Parliament delivered speeches. As I was the president of the workers union, I was a good worker and well-educated; I had the gift of speaking and my voice sounded well, I was given the honor to recite the following: "Glory to them who fell on May 28 for the Republic of Armenia; honor to them, who live today."

### 33 (33).

#### AGHASSI GAREGIN KANKANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1904, Van)

I was born in the beautiful town of Van, in the picturesque province of Vaspourakan. My father was an engraving craftsman. He was well known for his skill. He made a person sit in front of him and engraved his face on a silver box. My mother was a teacher at the Sandoukhtian-Mariamian Secondary School, one of the first women teachers of Van. Among her pupils were Silva

Kapoutikian's mother, Zhazhan Lia and others.

We lived well in Van, in an atmosphere of peace, morality and creative activity, but the danger of the Turkish slaughters and massacres was always suspended on our head like the sword of Damocles. Such massacres were repeated in different parts of Western Armenia from time to time. It's well known that such massacres have

taken place in 1894-1896,<sup>1</sup> and among the victims were my grandfather and my maternal uncle. They lived in the St. Jacob Church quarter of Van. On one side of the street the Turks lived, on the other – the Armenians. When the massacre began the men of that quarter took refuge in the St. Jacob Church and closed the door tightly, hoping that the eight foreign consuls would interfere and the massacre would stop. The Turks tried to set fire to the church. The people in the church decided to open the door and run away. Among those trying to escape from the church were my forty-three-year-old grandpa Khachatour Ishkhanian and my mother's seventeen-year old brother.

My grandma did not allow my uncle to jump out and escape. Their neighbor Mahmoud agha said: "Sara Khatoun, let me hide your son till this confusion is over." But grandma did not trust him. She dressed the boy like a girl, and he began running over an open space to get to the Armenians quarters. There he met Turkish lads, who recognized him and shot him. My grandma ran after him and hugged her wounded son. His blood flowed on grandma's apron from top to bottom. Grief-stricken, grandma lost her senses. She did not take off her blood-stained apron. She also lay down on the ground to die. And the twelve-year-old girl, after losing her father and brother got a mental shock: she lost her power of speech. The relatives gathered and talked to her: "Sara Khatoun, try to come to yourself: your daughter is too young, she'll become an orphan if something happens to you."

By and by my grandma Sara came to herself, but she did not take off the dirty, blood-stained apron. Years passed. In 1902 her daughter, my mother, married an orphan, who was to become my father. The following year a grandson was born to her, they named him Andranik and my grandma recovered by miracle and she threw the blood-stained apron into the tonir. In 1904 a second grandson was born to her, and grandma occupied herself with the household. In those years my mother finished the school and was kept at the Sandukhtian-Mariamian School as a teacher of religion and Armenian language. Two girls were born. The family became larger. We lived well; father and mother earned well. We had a wonderful vineyard in Van. I miss it up to this day. I remember where the violets grew, where the tulips were, and the house, which we had newly built ... we could not enjoy it.

That was our family. During the war, after the heroic battle of Vaspurakan, news was spread that the Russian army was moving towards Van to take it back, for the Turks wanted to occupy it. The Russian army did not want to fight, and the Armenians had no force. We had to leave Van and go to the Russian soil: to Igdir. The panic-stricken people got ready to exile, which was awful for a people who had lived on that land for centuries. Our family also got ready. Under mother's guidance we decided what to take with us, to endure the hardships of ten days' journey

on foot.

On July 13, 1915, at 11 a.m. we left our dear house forever. Before leaving, mother gathered us all, kissed us all with tearful eyes and said: "We are taking a difficult and unknown path, and we do not know what's going to happen to us. Your problem is to endure and not to lose your father and mother in the turmoil."

We came out of the house. We did not lock the door; we were petrified; we had lost our senses. We moved to the main street, Khachpoghan. Other families were coming out of their houses and joining together. The sad procession was getting larger and larger and was moving forward. Till we got to Igdir we marched under the rain and the sun, in the mud, half-starving and thirsty, during 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. Though I was the healthiest child of our neighborhood – I used to run barefooted on the snow, but never fell ill – and after the exile that rosy-cheeked, healthy child became pale, colorless, sad and taciturn. Mother compelled my father to take me to the doctor. We were already in Yerevan. In two months father gathered two gold coins to give to the doctor. Father took me to Dr. Aram Ter-Grigorian, who went about with a hand stick and in a coach. The doctor examined me and said: "The boy has no illness."

"Then why doesn't he speak, has become thin, has lost his color."

"Where are you from?"

"We are refugees from Van."

"The boy has seen so many sad events on his way, that he's got the grief-disease; it's the consequence of the exile. The sad events have affected him. Time will cure."

This much was by the way, but it had its psychological effect.

So we continued our exile road. In the evening we reached the Lezk (Aralezk) Village. Wherever we stopped, we put down our head and slept. Mother, father, grandmother watched us in turn.

In the morning we continued our way towards Ararat. On the way the Kurds attacked us often, killed and plundered our property. For example they slaughtered my school friend, Semerjian's parents, and the poor boy remained an orphan.

We passed by Bayazet. Mother found time to tell us that it was the town of Bayazet, which Raffi has described.

<sup>1</sup> 1894-1896 Armenian massacres organized by Sultan Hamid.

A town, where there wasn't a single tree, and the doors and the windows of the houses had been removed and taken away to burn. By the other side of Ararat, over the Abagha plain, through the mountain pass Chelder we went to the Ararat plain. On the eleventh day we arrived to Igdir and went to the house of our acquaintance. All the rooms had been occupied by those, who had arrived before us. They gave us a place on the balcony. They gave me a kid hide to sleep on. Thus, our emaciated, battered and tortured family tried to reach Yerevan. But, to our bad fortune, the Russians had closed the Margara bridge and did not let the refugees to go. The typhus and the cholera epidemics had spread in Igdir. Mother urged father to do something to go further. Father found a coachman, who agreed to take us over the bridge and then to Yerevan on condition we paid one lira. By today's currency it was equivalent to one hundred dollars. Our family, who had almost nothing left, got on the coach. We hadn't reached the bridge yet, when the coachman whipped the horses and shouted, "Khabarda" (exclamation warning of danger).

Seeing the furious horses the Russian guards ran away. We weren't visible in the coach; he had covered us with a cloth as if there was no one. He brought us to the old Zangou bridge, and we crossed it and reached Aptchekaya Street, where the State Bank is today. There

was a refugee camp. It was the end of July we got off the coach and sat on the ground, under the sun; we had nothing whatsoever.

Our family consisted of seven members; they didn't give us a room. In the Turkish district father rented a small room. He gave one lira as lodging rent; there remained one lira in his pocket. We slept on straw. My mother lived 98 years. Grandma fell ill with dysentery and died. Our family began to struggle. Life was hard. There were epidemics in Yerevan. The vans came, rang the bells, gathered the corpses, took them to a place where Komitas Park is today and threw them in open pits one on the other. There was also an Armenian Church there and the Sardar fortress. All those gardens belonged to the Persians. Now, the Persian mosque in Yerevan is being reconstructed.

I've worked since I was ten. In the market father sold his working power. I sold water and cigarettes. In the evening I ran to the school for refugees. I've never left my studies. I graduated from the Yerevan State University. We had lecturers, professors, who had studied in Germany. I, too, became a lecturer, professor of chemistry. I married Gayané Hovsepian, who became a lecturer of psychology at the Pedagogical Institute. I've written 13 books, 6 of them have been published. My book of analytic chemistry is a handbook for students up till now.

### 34 (34).

#### **SMBAT DAVIT DAVTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Van, Narek Village)**

Our village has been the village of Grigor of Narek. On holidays pilgrims came to the village of Narek. There were 250 Armenian houses in our village; there were no other nationalities. Our neighboring villages were Kurdish. Our family consisted of six brothers: I remember them all. We had a big one-storeyed house. My uncle always hugged me. The whole family had dinner together. One of my uncles was a carpenter; my father made carts. My mother did not work. We had sheep and cows. In summer there was a fountain on the upper side of the village. In front of the house we had a large orchard full of fruit trees. We were six children: three boys and three girls, father, mother – altogether: eight. By and by my uncles built their own houses and lived separately. Most of our peasants were occupied in agriculture; many went to America or France to work there and sent home money; then they came back. In our village there were 4 two-storeyed buildings, which belonged to the rich people and to the priest, the rest were one-storeyed: a room for baking and keeping bread and a barn. Later, many people raised a second wooden floor on their houses. My father wanted to roof our second floor, when the massacres began. We had many kinds of fruit in our orchard, but we did not sell them; we

gave them to those who were poor. People helped each other. We had a big oil-mill in the village. In winter the men of the village gathered there and talked. There were no means of communication; they used to go to town in carts.

In our house, as we entered from the yard, there was a tundir, where bread was baked. Our animals were separated from us by a curtain, which hung from wall to wall. Water was brought from outside a fountain flowed down the hill and passed by our house. That water was gathered in a pond where the buffaloes and the children bathed. The stream was called Cold River. On the other bank of the stream Kurds lived, on this side was our village. We visited each other; we were on good terms, then everything changed.

In our village there was a school in the church-yard; it was till the seventh form. I went to the first form. The boys and the girls learned separately. We learned Armenian and religion. The teacher told us about Grigor of Narek; they educated us with the commandments of Christ. We fasted before the Easter. For Easter we dyed eggs, then we fought with the colored eggs, whoever broke the other's egg, won. The church was always full of believers. We kept the Holidays. When a child was

born, they took it to the church and Christened him. All of us belonged to the Apostolic Church. In our free time, in summer, we went to the countryside for a walk. My father, mother knew Kurdish and they spoke in that language while buying things. On holidays people came from other villages to the monastery; they threw money, slaughtered lambs for sacrifice, they cook them in big cauldrons, and distributed them to the people.

In summer people gathered on the threshing-floor to thresh the wheat and they spoke about the possible massacres. In the village there were chieftains, who gathered and organized the people. Our peasants were armed; my father and brother had mausers. They did not recruit from our village.

In 1915 the Turks began to attack. They entered the villages; they reached our village and went up to the mountain. Our men also went to the mountains, the women and the children remained in the village. We all went and entered the church. Everybody was crying and moaning. Then the Turkish soldiers came and surrounded the church. They came, knocked on the church gate and entered in. There was an order to kill even the suckling baby boys. My mother pierced my ears and hung earrings and dressed me like a girl. My two sisters had already died. It was my mother and our neighbor with her son standing side by side. They came, explained and they saw that the woman's baby was a boy; they cut his throat with a dagger and killed him. The woman fell on her child and began to wail; my mother also fell down and began to cry; I shrieked; they killed there 20-25 boys. They took me for a girl. They gathered the young girls and took them away. Mothers began to scream. The gate was left open. We saw: they filled twenty-thirty men into the monastery barn, poured kerosene on it and set fire. My mother's brother with his foot cut off was among the victims. My mother died of grief. We lost our dear mother. Suddenly news came that General Andranik was coming. Andranik came on his white horse and entered the church-yard. My grandfather made a present of 10 sheep and a cow to Andranik. During the deportation General Andranik's army came and we went to Russia. Our entire village and the surrounding villages were being deported. We came and reached the Berkri bridge. The Russian Army stopped there. It dawned. All of a sudden the Russian soldiers went back to Van. They turned us back. We went to Salmast. Andranik was with us. They attacked Andranik in Khanassor. Andranik ordered to take the people into the monastery. The Armenians came and led us. In the morning they brought a corpse on wooden stretcher and said: "He is Chieftain Keri, who has fallen victim in Khanassor. People gathered, and funeral orations were made." They took Keri to Tiflis and buried him there, and they told us to stay at our place. In winter we remained there. My father was wounded and he was coming with us on an ox.

In 1916 an order came that everyone should return to his village. We hadn't gathered the wheat in 1915; it had grown again. We began reaping the wheat. The houses were burnt, only the walls had remained. We began covering the roofs of our houses. Once again an order came to leave our place and go to Eastern Armenia. We came and reached the Berkri bridge, which had been reconstructed. We reached Igdir. We had nothing. My father had an acquaintance there; he went and found him. Then that man's wife and children came and took us to their house. We lived there till we were deported from Igdir.

Of my six uncles two had died. My mother's father, her brother and my other uncle's two sons had survived.

In 1920, when the Bolsheviks entered Yerevan, we lived in Kond. The houses of Kond had belonged to the Turks, then the Armenians had come to live in them. My brother took a rifle and joined them. I was fifteen years old. My brother went to Zangezour to fight with the Dashnaks; he was shot there. Thus I lost my poor brother Rouben. Disturbances began again. There was nothing to eat. Father said: "Let's go to my cousins, to Armavir." The following day we heard that the priest of our village was in Gandzak. Father took me, my younger brother and sister; he sat on an ox, and we came to Gandzak.

It was 1921. There was an old Armenian Church in Gandzak built in the days of Shah-Abbas. Armenians lived all around the church. An elderly man approached and said: "Let me take these people to my house." He took us to his house. He had a garden. He gave us the ground floor of his house and said: "We are old husband and wife; you live here. We'll help you, and you'll work." We, the children, were taking care of the garden. On the back-street of the garden there had been a shop, which was transformed into a bakery. He took us to the bakery and said: "These are refugees: help them." They gave us bread.

Later we came to Yerevan. Of our other relatives no one was left alive: all of them had fallen victims or had died on the road. Father was on foot, but he wasn't able to work. They took us to a building, next to the wine factory on the Zangu River bank, where there was an orphanage. One or two hundred orphans were gathered there, hungry and naked. A couple of people told father that there was a good orphanage in Kanaker. Another one said that the Edjmiadsin orphanage was better. We went to Edjmiadsin. We asked: "Where is the orphanage?" "There, it's a two-storeyed building. They took us to the supervisor. I said: "I and my friend Soghomon have neither father nor mother." They took us in, changed our clothes and gave us food. We remained there for two months. One of my brothers had remained at an orphanage in Yerevan, and we, my friend Soghomon and me escaped and went to Kanaker. We went asking people where it was, but we went by Ashtarak, we did not go through Yerevan, for we had orphanage clothes

on, so they would catch us. We went through Ashtarak. We were hungry. We saw they were baking bread. We went in and asked: "Mother, give us some bread."

"You, good-for-nothing! They've escaped from the orphanage, have come here and are asking for bread."

We came back. A man took us to his house and gave us a lot of bread. We continued our way and reached Yeghvard. The peasants approached us and asked: "Where are you going?"

Someone turned out to be a relative and he took us to his house and fed us. I went to our house. Father said: "Where have you been, boy?" He took off my clothes, so that people might not know that I was from the orphanage. He took me and my brother to the orphanage of Kanaker. They gave us a piece of bread, a few raisins and a cup of tea. There was no food. Then the Americans came and took very good care of us. I began to go to school. Many, those who had no parents, were taken to America. Then father came and took us to Gandzak. We remained in Gandzak till 1948. I married there. At the beginning the Azeris were not on good terms with the Armenians, later,

they changed by and by for the better. We began getting closer, till 1936, when a kolkhoz was organized we had very good relations with each other. Now in Gandzak I have a brother, whose three daughters lost their husbands in the war. I want to bring them all to Armenia. One of them sold her house and came to Armenia. On the way they murdered and plundered. They'll come and stay in Armenia, for they are treating the Armenians there badly. They can't go out for bread. A Turkish neighbor buys their daily bread; they don't let them go for water. They don't let them speak Armenian. As soon as they hear an Armenian word, they strike on their head. Now my wife's brother is there; they have beaten him and broken his shoulders. They have slaughtered in Sumgayit<sup>1</sup>; they are killing in Gharabagh. How can we become brothers with the Turks? There is much injustice. My wife died, I married a second time; I had a son and named him Rouben after my brother.

If we are able, we must bring all the Armenians from Azerbaijan to Armenia. Let's be hungry, but let's be together.

### 35 (35).

#### SIRAK MESROP MANASSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Van, Kem Village)

I was born in 1905, in the village of Kem of the Hayots Dzor (Armenians' Valley – Arm.), which is at a distance of 16 km from Van. Our dynasty was called the house of Jhouz. I had four uncles, who had gone abroad to earn their living. One of them was killed during the 1914 war, the other died in America, and my father remained in America.

On the 4th of March 1915, we heard that they had killed the public-educational man, Mr. Ishkhan in the neighboring village of Hirdj. 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. Iskhan and threw him in the well. Not satisfied with this crime, they threw also his two children all alive in 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. Everyday 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 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.

We succeeded 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 Shaghat 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 all alive 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.

The Turks and the Kurds took away our cattle. The family of our villager, Kakos, who was very rich, had forty pairs of these buffaloes; one of these buffaloes,

<sup>1</sup> The massacres of the Armenians in February, 1988, in Sumgayit, and in January, 1990, in Baku, and the liberation movement in Artsakh, started in 1991.

Maral, ran away, came back and entered the sheep-fold. What did we live on over the mountains? Our sheep kept us. In the morning our dogs took the sheep to graze and brought them back in the evening. We milked them and we lived. One day our neighbor's son shouted: "Sirak, your uncle has come!" We had lost my mother's brother, Arshak Mkhitarian. He began to take care of us.

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. Varag is one of our sacred places, where there are many churches. Father Khrimian has been a school director there. They lodged us in barns. The vardapets gave us two hundred grams of daily bread, cutting it from their own ration.

I'll never forget an incident: when they lodged us in cowsheds, one night, after midnight. I felt an enormous foot pressing on my belly. I yelled. Everybody woke up, frightened, they lit the candles and we saw it was a buffalo.

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 Kaghakamedj, 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. In the town there were also foreign consuls. Mother, who was leaning against a post, said: "Boys, put your ears here and listen." We listened and heard voices. It probably was a telegram post. Mother said: "Call your father from America, let him come."

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 center 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 they exterminated the Turks, but also acquired a considerable amount of artillery units, bullets, etc.

On the 6th 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. When it was merrymaking all over a Russian officer approached us and took a photo: me, mother and my brother. Then the Russian revolution began, which compelled the Russian Army to go back to Russia, and with them many refugees came to Armenia.

We deported to Armenia. The road passed through deep valleys and over turbulent rivers. Again the Turks tried to cut our way. The Armenians suffered great losses near the bridges of the rivers. The people were overcrowded, so were the animals; mothers threw their children into the river and then they followed them. Finally, with the help of our volunteer troops, wrecked, hungry and thirsty, we reached Eastern Armenia.

The first stay was in Orgov, near the Russian border guards. The Russian guards met us very well. They gave us bread and fed us.

We came and reached Igdir – Surmalou. In a village of Surmalou, Hakhveris, I worked as a farm-hand. I took care of two buffaloes. One day before coming home my mother's brother came running, embraced me and said: "Congratulations, your father has come."

Father began to support the family. He was an educated person: he had been in America and now, in 1917, he returned and found us. He took us from Hakhveris Village of Igdir and brought us to Yerevan. We lived in Yerevan for two months and then we went to the village of Avan. We had lost twenty-seven members of our family.

I worked in Yerevan as a worker at the railway station, then in a printing house as a printer. Alazan and many others worked there. Then I began to work as a Young Communist League organizer, then I studied in instructive courses and I became one of the founders of the Ashtarak Children's Home. I've attended the party school. At the same time I've continued my studies at the Diocesan school, which was in the yard of today's St. Sargis Church. I have been the chairman of the Ashtarak and Edjmiadsin kolkhoz, the First Party Secretary of Edjmiadsin Region. At the same time I've attended the History Faculty of the State University and I've been director of the wine factory.

In 1936, when Aghassi Khandjian was assassinated, I was dismissed from my job for being a Vaspourakani, then I entered the correspondence course of the Pedagogical Institute and graduated from faculty of history.

When the Great Patriotic began, I went to the army from the first days as the commander of a battalion. I was in the army till 1946.

Then I became the vice-president of the Yerevan Radio Committee, the Director of Haygirk (Armenian Book Committee – Arm.) and the Scientific Secretary of the Gitelik (Knowledge – Arm.) Society.

I'm retired since 1965. I have two daughters, five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

**36 (36).**

**VARSENİK ABRAHAM ABRAHAMIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1905, Van)**

In Van we lived in peace. There was the Lake Van there. We had a vineyard and we went to the Avants Village in summer. My grandma's house was in Aygestan. One day they announced that all the Avants people should gather in the square of Khachpoghan, in Aygestan, at a given hour, where speeches would be made on behalf of the Armenians." All the people gathered there. Many people spoke and at the end they shouted: "Hurriyet, adelet, moussafat."

I said to my father: "What did they say?"

"We, the Armenians and the Turks, will be brothers."

When the speeches were over, the Turkish music band began to play. Then other people also spoke.

Some time passed and they took our leaders, Vramian and others, killed them and drowned them in the lake. Then the Turks got ready to fight. First of all they closed the Armenian Churches – St. Nshan, St. Paul-Peter, St. Vardan, St. Amenaprkich, which they burned and then the fighting began. They attacked the Armenians, but the Armenians resisted up to the end. The Turks sent people telling the Armenians to surrender, but the Armenians answered in the negative and that they would fight till the last drop of their blood. The fighting began. My father was Ramkavar [member of the Armenian Liberal Democratic Party]. Mother prepared dinner, and I took it to my father in the trenches twice a day. The position was in a very dangerous place. Father wrote a note, gave it to me to take it to the Diocese. The note ran as follows: "This position is very dangerous, it's under the fortress." Really, to get there they used to put a ladder by the barn side and climbed to the roof. They got on the top of the roof; they dug there, closed the door of the yard and placed the people there. The Turks, who were looking through their field-glasses, thought that there was nobody on the

positions and they attacked. We were ready. Whoever of the Turks tried to climb up, fell down and was killed. In this way the Armenians gained an advantage over the Turks.

During that fight my aunt, a pail of water in her hand, poured water on the hot cannon-balls, which fell on our side, then collected them and took them to the factory to make new bombs again.

Many people died from our family. The Turks came and forcibly took an Armenian sailor to sail them away and help them to escape, for they had heard that the Russians were coming. The Armenian sailor took them on board of the boat, sailed to the middle of the lake, turned the boat over, and, as he was a good swimmer, swam out and got saved. The Turks got drowned.

The Russians came. They lived with us for a long time. They said: "There is a new front in such a place, we have to go. But if we go, the Turks will kill you." So, our men went to the mountains to fight, and the people took the road of the exile.

The Berkri River brought corpses one after the other. My aunt entered the river with her child; the water drove the child away. My poor aunt remembered him all through her life: "I could not save my Babken; the water carried him away. I had sewn my gold coins in my clothes; they were wet; I wrung them, put them on a stone to dry and I forgot them there, and went away."

The water took her son away, she lost all what she had, and when we reached Igdir, she died of sorrow. My uncle died during the fighting. From Igdir we came to Eastern Armenia in carts. Father said: "We are people of water, land and fruit."

They took us to Ghamarlu – Artashat. We went and lived there. After many-many years we moved to Yerevan.

**37 (37).**

**SIRANOUSH SIMON TOUTOUNDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1906, Van)**

I was born in the family of a rich merchant of Van. Our family was large. My father had six brothers, three of them had fallen victim during the political events of 1895. The Turks had attacked Van. The inhabitants of Van had cut the poplars had erected barricades and resisted the Turks for ten days. But the bullets of the Armenians had come to an end. Van has had many rich intellectuals who thought it would be better to move to Persia. My father and uncle had come back and taken refuge in the mountains, in the

Varaga Monastery, in the temple of Goddess Astghik, for my father's head had been estimated two hundred gold coins.

My mother has had twelve children: eight sons and four daughters. My father was a merchant. There were many craftsmen in Van. All the houses had their gardens. Aygestan was extensive. There was an abundance of fruit trees and flower gardens. If it happened that the neighbor did not have any, they would offer them. The melon and

the watermelon were brought from the nearby villages. There were few Turks. The trade was mostly in the hands of the Armenians. The coppersmiths made very beautiful engraved cups of red copper. All our armchairs were made of apricot or nut-tree wood decorated with mother-of-pearl. Our tableware was made of silver. We had fine glassware of high quality.

Van had several markets. My father's shop was in Khachpoghan Street. The shop was large; in the front part, there was my father's glass-walled office, where he sat and read the newspapers. He imported the best English fabrics, Russian chintz and velvet. Father had shop branches also in Trapizon and Erzroom. Jewish merchants from Bashkalé visited the shops. Jeweler's art was also developed. The big halls of our house were decorated with antique carpets.

The city was founded in the 9th century B.C.. It was first called Tooshpa, then Yervandavan, Van. The city of Van had sinuous streets, and Aygestan was a summer resort. It was a huge district. Our house was at a corner. We received many guests.

After the 1896 events my father had relations with Paramaz. Aram Manoukian, Arshak Vramian came to our house. In 1913 the Dashnak House was opened in Van and its founder was Barounak Kapoutikian, poetess Silva Kapoutikian's father.

Our house was of two-and-half-storeyed. Each storey was five-six meters high. The roof was flat. We used to dry apricots there, which became sapphire yellow and it would melt on your tongue. On the first floor was the bread storehouse. There were other big stone-rooms, too. Bread was baked every fortnight. Next to it was the pantry. Foodstuffs were preserved in glazed pots. We used to hang the grapes for winter. Opposite to it there was a room covered with blue basalt-stone, where we kept the pastry. There were tonirs, which were heated with kerosene. We had a cellar, where there were wine-jars as tall as a man's height and they were buried in lake-sand. Those jars were filled with Shahbagh wine. The fruit-jams were also kept there. We had cheese better than Roquefort (blue cheese), which was kept with different kinds of herbs; the pot was closed and kept in sand. There was also a woodshed.

We wore galoshes and boots. Our sumptuous clothes came from Constantinople. On the first floor we also had summer and winter dining-rooms. There were pictures on the walls and curtains on the windows. The portrait of Father Khrimian hung was on our parlor wall.

On the second floor we had a huge square hall, which held two hundred and fifty people. When the volunteer groups came, General Nicolayev was our guest for fifteen days, and a feast was organized in our house. There were armchairs, sofas covered with green velvet in that room, on the ends of the armchairs there were gilt lions, on the table a pair of field glasses and an album of the ruins of the town of Ani. Lake Van was visible from one of our balconies. From the other balcony we could see the Sipan Mountain

buried in azure, to the south started the Taurus Mountains, to the north lay the village of Shahbagh and Akerveti – the famous Agravi Kar (Crow Stone - Arm.) of Mher and the flower field, which looked white, from there the Turks attacked later.

We had four servants, a cook and a coachman. We had a stable, two Arabian horses; cows and sheep in the Darman Village. Our servant, Agho's wedding took place in our house, which was flooded with lights. The chandelier hung in the middle. We had a gramophone, which was brought from Europe, and Armenian records as well.

There was great respect, honor, love and obedience towards the elders and relatives, too. I've never heard a bitter word in our house. We all loved each other.

Van had three theatrical troupes. We had definite visiting days. My father's name was Simon, on Tiarnendaradj Day we used to have about one hundred visitors. The vine branches were burned and young people jumped over it.

In summer we went to the Varaga Monastery. It was a sacred place, and from different villages people came there. The Armenians gathered, sang and danced.

Van had seven churches. There were also Catholics and Protestants, who had their schools and hospitals. But the Gregorian Orthodox Armenians were much more. We used to go to St. Astvadsadsin Church. It was quiet large; it could accommodate about five hundred people. On April 7, when the self-defensive fights began, priest Arsen was offering the Holy Mass; the old people and the children were praying with arms spread out. We believed that God saw us from the heaven and watched each person's conduct. There was such a piety. Every rich family sent bread to the church: it was taken in large trays and was distributed to the workers of the church. When my grandfather Grigor was going to be elected Head of the district, they had lighted the big tonir and baked bread. Avetis Terzibashian had written about it in Paris in his article "The Eagle in Its Color."

We had seven schools; the national school was Sandukhtian, where I have studied. There was an orphanage. There were also two-year and four-year higher schools, where children from the village schools continued their studies. We also had the Kentronakan (Central – Arm.) School.

The teaching staff was not large. Many of them had received their education in Constantinople, like my brothers who at the age of seven and nine, had gone to Constantinople to study. Later they would go to Paris to become architects. I've gone to the kindergarten at the age of seven. All our schoolteachers were famous personalities. They taught us Armenian, geography, law, physics, music, drawing; they also taught patriotic songs. During the breaks we played with a ball, which we sewed at home. We played rope-jumping and hide-and-seek. I was a spoilt child. One day I said: "There is no school tomorrow." The next day no one had gone to school. The teacher found out about it and called my parents, but I bagged their pardon in order not to

be called a 'liar.'

Levon Shant's "Ancient Gods" was staged for the first time in Van. Father and mother did not take me and Gourgen with them. We put our holiday clothes in the coach and, in the evening, we dressed well and went after them. Each ticket cost one gold coin. When father saw us, he was surprised, but said nothing. That play was staged at the Central school. They were amateurs, but they staged also European plays. When Zarifian was in Van, he was surprised. One of the actors had been Ler Kamsar. The people of Van were theater fans. Later, they built a hall, next to the pedagogical school, which seated seven hundred people.

Exhibitions, lectures and political meetings were organized there. We received the "Ashkhatank" (Labor) and "Vantosp" newspapers. Our mother was also an educated woman. She told us about Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables." There was no illiterate male in Van. Our Sandukhtian School was very advanced.

Lake Van had an abundance of herring, which was cheap, so both the rich and the poor could buy it. There were poor people in our district. In autumn father loaded carts with flour, cheese and other things and distributed them to those families. Many went abroad to work in order to help their families.

We had cherries as big as apricots. Fruits were abundant except melon and watermelon. The apricots sparkled and were tasty and sweet. In our free time we played in the orchards. We went to the lake-shore to swim. The beach was twenty-five km from the town. Every morning mother went to the lake-shore by coach and bathed in the lake; I went with her. It was a very beautiful shore. We also went to the Varaga Monastery, Narek Monastery and St. Grigor the Illuminator Monastery. There were ships and steamboats for sea-tours. They carried apple from Artamet to Baghesh and brought big watermelons, so big, on which one could sit.

We had house-clothes and Sunday-clothes. When going out we always had our best clothes on and we always remembered the saying: "You keep me well inside the bundle, I'll keep you well in the society." Mother used to wear blouses of satin in red, violet and white, which came down on her skirt. She had also dresses of velvet. Her hair descended loose on her shoulders, but she had a kerchief on her head. Father used to wear suits, a blue or black hat, a walking-stick in his hand, a vest, a watch with a gold chain. We received tobacco from Trapizon. We used to travel. In summer we went to Artamet, which was a cape in the lake, and there were tents there.

At home we slept on iron bedsteads. Mother was the manager of the house. Every day we had ten-fifteen guests. There was everything at home: chicken, lamb and vegetables. For pilgrimage days, we got ready beforehand; we used to bake baghardj, we prepared halva, boiled eggs and greens.

Children were not taken to funerals. Women did not go to the cemetery. There was a pantheon at the Varaga St. Astvadsadsin Church.

The weddings were very luxurious and official. They could live without love. All the nuances of love existed. For marriages, the final word was the parents' agreement. There could be a divorce in case of a foul-smelling mouth and barrenness. I have not heard about immorality. Mother had been sixteen and father – twenty, when they had married.

The Dashnak House was near our house. There were also Hnchak and Ramkavar party members. All those parties were revolutionary, but it would be good if their efforts were devoted to the same purpose. We should have one party as it had been in Van. Vardges Serengyulian and Zohrap were members of the Constantinople Parliament. We had fedayis, too. Tigran Deroyan was well-known.

The inhabitants of Van were armed. There were four fire-arms in our house, which the men kept in their pockets. When the war of 1914 broke out, father handed over the arms to the Turkish government. After the 1909 Adana tragedy, the people of Van thought about arming themselves. They gathered money and asked Vramian and Davtian for help. They went to Constantinople; they met Zohrap and Serengyulian and explained the matter to them.

Until 1915 we had political activists in Van as Vramian, Vahan Papazian, Artak Darbinian, Paramaz and Ishkhan. The Hnchaks could play a great role had they been able to keep secrets. In 1914 the Turks found out about the conference organized in Constantsa and they hanged twenty Hnchak members in the Bayazet square of Constantinople.

Paramaz had come to Van in order to try the effect of the Hnchak influence there, but he saw that the Dashnaks were numerous in Van and well-organized. The traditions of the Armenakans were strong. They gave many martyrs, as Mkrtych Avetissian and others.

There has been a time when there weren't persecutions against the Armenians in Turkey and the Armenians' condition was good. The Armenians could live in harmony and peace with the Turks.

After the Constitution they began recruiting the Armenian men from eighteen to forty-five years of age. Many Armenians gave fifty gold coins and were freed from the military service. My brother was getting ready to leave for Paris, and the other brother – for Switzerland, when the chaos began. The Kurds always were attacked the people coming and going from the town. The Kurds were plunderers and the Turkish government did not prevent them.

Until 1914, the Turks had unofficially intensified the violences, the Armenians were moderating them diplomatically, but at the same time they were getting armed.

The city had three bathhouses, which were very nice.

People went there in the morning, took their bath, had their dinner and returned home in the evening. In the bathhouse, women used to go and choose wives for their sons, to evaluate their bodily merits. People met in the bathhouses, talked with each other. We took our bath at home, in a large tub, once a week. There was a well near our house. Every street had water-ways on both sides. We had a toilet in our house. There was sanitary cleanliness everywhere.

When my younger sister was going to be born, a mid-wife came. They took us away from the house. We heard our mother's voice from the garden. Father said: "I went and brought a little girl from the sea." We believed it. I was eight years old. We were bashful. Our knowledge had limits. It was a family, where each one knew his or her place. We used to do much needlework, especially lace-

making, but I liked reading.

Men drank raki in thumb-size goblets. The relatives visited each other. Our daughters-in-law were from the Jitejians, Hyussians, Gapamadjians, Terlemezians and Shahbaghoontsians, who were well-known families and had contributed to the national liberation struggle.

There was a Women's Union in Van. The fedayis came to our house disguised. We used to call them 'ghachagh.' They were supplied with food, so they came and gave accounts. We, the children, knew that we shouldn't tell anyone anything about them. We knew that the 'ghachaghs' were revolutionaries. I knew many of them personally.

We were also in good relations with the Turk governor Djevdet and Gassim beys. Mother and I visited them at their houses.

### 38 (38).

#### PATRICK AVETIS SAROYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1906, Van)

According to my passport I was born in 1906, but mother said that I was born in 1907, after the death of Father Khrimian.

I remember our house very well, which was at the foot of the Van Fortress in the vicinity of the St. Nshan Church. Our house was a three-storeyed building. I remember my friends with whom we climbed to the fortress clearing and played there. We weren't rich. I remember the beautiful lake of Van. One day my father, held me by the hand and took me to the lake, which was very salty and there I was on the point of being drowned. I was seven years old, when the Turk gendarmes came, threatened us and told us that we should hand over our fire-arms. They often came and threatened father and my uncles.

In those days my elder brother, Harutyun, died. My mother sent me to the kindergarten of the church. Once, I was going to my grandma's house, when the bees stung me.

At the kindergarten my teacher was Mrs. Mankassarian, who taught me the alphabet. At school we were educated with the spirit of patriotism.

I remember, Armenians with fur hats came to our house and they held meetings.

In 1914, an eclipse of the sun was observed. The church bells rang. Many people predicted that there would be war. At the beginning of 1915, in April, the Turk gendarmes, led by the monster Djevdet, attacked Van. They had already gathered the young men as if recruit them, but they had slaughtered them on the way. My uncle Ghevond had managed to escape from that massacre.

The fighting began. The Armenians had heard

the Turks say: "Van will belong to the Turks." A few days before the Turks and the Kurds had attacked the shops of the Armenians and had plundered them. There were parties in Van – the Dashnaks, Hnchaks and the Ramkavars, who, seeing the danger, joined and confronted the enemy together. In the city they used to shoot from the fortress incessantly. My uncles Ghevond and Martiros took part in the fighting. Martiros had a family, while Ghevond was a bachelor. I and Martiros's son, Vruyr, supplied them with food and water.

From the third floor of our house my father was watching, lest the Turks should come down from the fortress towards Kaghakamedj. All of a sudden father saw that the Turks were getting down the fortress with ropes. Father began to fire, and the Turks stopped coming down. Everything was for the front. Refugees started to come from Kharakonis and entered Aygestan.

At the beginning of May cannons began to roar. Mothers dressed their sons as girls and rubbed their faces with mud.

The Turks used new kinds of cannons, with which they dropped shells on our houses. They were long and mortar-shaped cannons. The bombs often did not explode, and our women rendered them harmless very carefully.

On May 5, when we won, the Turks began to flee by boats over the lake. They took away with them their families, too. The victorious Van people came from Aygestan to Kaghakamedj with a great musical band and began kissing each other.

Aygestan was at a distance of 4-5 km from Kaghakamedj. Soon the Russian army approached Van. My father had raised me on his shoulders to see things

better. Finally, the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard. The first who approached Van was General Andranik, then – Dro, Hamazasp, Gaï. Andranik did not enter Van. After the battle some people of Van began to plunder the houses of the Turks. My father did not participate in it. In those days, holding me by the hand, father took me to the top of the fortress. In a clearing father saw fifteen eggs. He put them in his handkerchief and we took them home. Mother laughed at father, saying: "He went to rob a caravan, but brought only a feather."

Before the fight the Turks had taken away Ishkhan and had killed him by night. I remember Ishkhan's funeral. He was a great Dashnak activist and had taken part in the fedayi movement. Ishkhan's coffin was put in St. Vardan Church, a requiem was held, and his son used to say: "I'll do hop-hop and kill Turks."

Then General Nicolayev organized the Van government which began to function. On 15th of July, General Nicolayev demanded that the Armenians should migrate, for the Turkish army had received great reinforcements and was getting ready to attack. The Armenian leaders, Aram Manoukian and others, refused to migrate and they said to Nicolayev: "We got our victory without any outer help, and we have a strong will-power to defend our country." But Nicolayev and Andranik, as leaders, agreed to retreat together with the Russians. A great commotion started.

They gave us three days' time. Whatever copper pots and pans we had, we took them and filled into the wells, with the hope that we would come back. Mother baked gata and halva. Father bought a donkey and we loaded the beds on it and the bridled cow was entrusted to me. Mother said: "Let's burn the house." Father said: "We'll come back."

The exile began. We reached the port of Avants. We saw there many corpses; the Turks had killed them. Father had made moccasins for me. The people of Van, tears in their eyes, were leaving their homes and land, but they were all filled with horror, that soon the Turks would come. The howling of dogs and the uproar of the people was heard... In that hubbub our donkey got lost and with it all our beds.

We reached the Abagha plain. Alongside the Bandimahu River flowed with a terrible turbulence. Many mothers threw their suckling children into the river there, for it was very difficult and dangerous to cross the bridge. That was why people said: "The waters of the Bandimahu River's have become bloody."

The Kurds came down from the mountains to plunder us. We were walking day and night with blood-stained feet, exhausted, hungry. We reached Orgov. After Bayazet we ascended a mount and my eyes fell on Ararat. It was the first time I saw the sacred mountain.

I forgot the hardships we had had and our tiredness. I remembered Raffi's words: "Will there ever come a time when the Armenian flag will float on top of Ararat?"

Then by and by we began to descend. The Kurds attacked us and began to slaughter. The young Armenians were resisting and defending us.

Finally the huge mass of refugees reached Igdir. The inhabitants of Igdir did not receive us well. They had watered their orchards and vineyards so that the refugees might not sit on their land. Four or five days after the deportation from Van, the Russians entered Van again and organized a government.

Mother settled us in Igdir, where I fell ill with typhus.

We heard that they would send the Armenian refugees to Siberia. That was why many refugees went either to Krasnodar or abroad. The Armenian refugees were spread under the walls of the Edjmiadsin Monastery and the lake-shore. Mothers buried their children without a shroud. Then my mother hired a van, and we came to Yerevan. We settled near St. Sargis Church. My grandma had passed away; on our road of exile mother had given birth to a girl. She was ill and was going to die. They said: "If you don't baptize her, we won't bury her." So we baptized her and named her Dzhbakht (Unfortunate – Arm.), for she was born in the misfortune of the Armenians.

I've done so many odd jobs. I've sold cold water on Astafian Street; I've given water to the Russian Commanders. They broke my cup and my jar. I began to cry. A girl came and asked me why I was crying. I told her. She had pity on me and took me to the "Louys" (Light – Arm.) printing house to work. I used to take dinner to my master from his house. Then I learned and became a printer.

During the Sardarapat Battle news came that the Turks were coming; they had closed the passage from Kanaker; the country was in danger and they begged help from everyone.

The warriors of Nazarbekian, Silikian and Dro defeated the enemy. If Andranik had joined them from Djalaloghli, it would be better. On May 28, 1918 the Dashnaks had organized the Armenian government.

The Soviet government arrested me in 1937 as a Dashnak-Trotskyist. My case was examined in Moscow. Several people were accused in a few hours, but it was all false; they had threatened the witnesses and they had signed, fright-stricken. According to the clause No. 67, I was condemned to imprisonment for five years. On the front of the prison it was written: "Who hasn't seen, will see, who has seen, won't forget." There I fell ill and I was taken to the hospital.

Then I returned home and worked as a polygraphist. I've taken part in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945); I've been awarded with orders. Now I'm retired.

**MAKROUHI MIHRAN SAHAKIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1907, Van, Bzhnkert Village)**

I was born in 1907 in the village of Bezhinkert, Van region. Our family was very rich. Our house was always full. We had vast lands, which were ploughed and harvested; we had a mill of seven stones, thousands of cattle and sheep. There was always plenty of milk at home and we drank it instead of water.

My father's name was Rafik, but they called him Rafo. My father has had four sons; two of them had died.

In 1915, on a bright day in the morning, my mother Koto took the pitcher to go to the Shamiram Stream for water. My uncle's wife was baking bread then. Mother had seen from afar horsemen approaching and their bayonets shining in the sun. Young and old people in Van were on the roofs, watching. The Turks came, surrounded our village and killed whoever came before them. Seeing all that, mother had broken the pitcher and had run home. She saw that the Turks had entered our house. They had turned over the dough on the ground and had upset everything. They put two of my uncle's wives and their seven children into the barn. One of my aunts tried to run out of the barn with her child, but they caught and killed her. I had a nine-year-old brother – Movses. The bey's wife took away to keep him; we never saw him again; they made him a Turk.

They put the pretty girls on their horses and carried them away. They raised the babies on their bayonets and threw them onto the ground, slaughtered, then they put the mothers on their horses and carried them away. My mother hugged her child and ran to her brother's house. The young women, who were taken by the Turks and did not obey them, had their breasts cut and thrown them to the dogs. They killed one of my uncles and threw him into the Shamiram River.

I've seen all this with my own eyes and they're still before my eyes the whole day-long.

We were present there: I, my sister Vardanoush, my uncle's son Yenok, when they killed my uncle's wife Hasmik with bayonets on our door-step. As the riches of the family were in the hands of the eldest brother's wife, and it was usually tied on her waist, they killed her, tore away her clothes, found the belt filled with gold coins tied on her waist, they grabbed it and went away.

We, the children – Hayro, Nshan, Yenok, Vardanoush and I remained in the care of our uncle's wife – Paydsar. They killed my uncle's four sons – Petros, Hmayak, Harutyun, Mesrop, before our eyes.

My uncle's wife, Paydsar, took us to the barn. The

Turk neighbor's wife covered the barn door with straw and hay, so that they might not find us and kill. Our neighbor's eight-year-old daughter, who had gone away from her parents, was caught by three Turks and raped in our yard. We saw all that through the haystacks. In an hour she died.

The following night that Turk woman took us: five-six children, to her house, fed us, kept and sent us to Van by night. We stayed there till the deportation began. We began to migrate with our uncle's wife Paydsar and our mother's brother, Atom, who was Andranik's soldier. On the two sides of the road were mountains, and they were killing from both sides; some people were saved by hiding under the cattle. Finally, we went and reached the Bandimahu bridge, where almost no people had remained; they put the children on carts drawn by oxen, and they turned over the carts into the river. Some were killed by the Turks and others threw themselves into the water. The people were running and at the same time looking back to see if the Turks were pursuing them.

We reached a field. Some began to make fire, others prepared bread on a piece of tin foil. We were hungry and thirsty. We were exhausted, some faltered, fell on the ground and remained there, the rest moved forward.

We came and reached Igdirdir, but did not remain there. With torments and tortures we reached somewhere near Edjmiadsin. My youngest uncle, Manouk, died from cholera. And suddenly we heard someone calling: "Who's there from Bezhinkert Village..."

My uncle's wife said: "Come, Atom, let's go."

They gathered us: me, my uncle's children – five children altogether – we came to Edjmiadsin. The building of the Seminary became our first children's home. I don't remember any more. Then they took us to Dilidjan.

My uncle's wife took Arshalouys and Nerses – they were older – and went away. They kept us at the children's home. The conditions were not good. They sent a telegram to America. Mr. Nelson and Miss Campbell came, gathered the Armenian orphans, took them to Alexandrapol and placed them in the barracks. We were so many that two children slept in one bed, and the bedsteads were double-deckers. They supplied us with enough food and clothing. The Americans stayed with us. Mrs. Tagouhi, Mrs. Nvard, Miss Makrouhi, Shoushanik, Gohar (all of them from Van) looked after us. The nurses bathed us. A song was created about the Americans:

*"They sent a telegram to America,  
Mr. Brown came,  
He gathered all the orphans,  
No one was left  
Homeless or unprotected."*

There I studied well. I already knew English and Russian. One day Mr. Brown called me, saying that he wanted to send me to America. I did not agree.

Very few people from our family reached Armenia. My uncle's daughter Arshalouys told that her husband Sahak had taken the cattle to the field very early that day: about 7 o'clock. On his way home his Turk neighbor had warned him: "Sahak, son, don't go to your yard, the Turks have come, entered your yard and are killing everybody."

Sahak entered into a haystack and watched what was

going on in their yard. He saw that the Turks took his father out of bed, brought him out in his underwear, brought his three sons with their hands tied, and forced him to kill his sons. Father would not fire. The Turks tied him also to a tree. They pulled out the teeth of the three sons and nailed them on their forehead, then they pull out their finger-nails, cut their faces with bayonets and killed all the three with inconceivable tortures and at the end they killed their father.

Sahak saw all that with his own eyes and lost consciousness in the haystack. At dawn the Turk neighbor came, took Sahak and hide him. This way Sahak was saved and came to Yerevan.

In 1965 Sahak, sacrificed three sheep in memory of his three brothers and father memory and gave a funeral repast to a group of people.

#### 40 (40).

### ARDSROUN MARTIROS HARUTYUNIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Van)

I was born in the Aygestan district of Van. Most of the Armenians of Van were craftsmen, tailors, goldsmiths, carpenters and florists. My father was a tailor; he made clothes for men.

There were three and four-storeyed buildings in Van. My parents had seven children. We had also two cows, an orchard with nut trees and other kinds of fruit trees.

The fedayi movement was aimed against injustice, plunder and persecution. Father kept his rifles in the wood-shed. In 1915, the people of Van could defend themselves owing to their fire-arms. Self-defense is born when there is violence against the people.

On the way of deportation, while passing over the Bandimahu bridge, the Turks opened fire on us from behind the rocks. It was Sodom and Gomorrah. We were in the carts with some children. A child began to bleed and then bent his head. Then we did not feel that he was killed.

I'm over eighty now and I feel that the massacre was planned. Those who survived that hell will never forget what they saw with their eyes.

Father found us in Igdirdir. We came to Edjmiadsin. The whole town of Edjmiadsin was filled with refugees. An entire nation was dying under the walls of the monastery, on the shore of the lake. We did not stay long in Edjmiadsin. We came to Yerevan, where my two-year-old brother died. We went to Tiflis. On the way my bleary eyes had almost become blind. In Tiflis my uncle's son gave us shelter. From our family I, Varazdat and mother were left alive. Father died in the Aramian Hospital. My youngest sister, Arpenik, who was one-year-old, died of

typhus. So did my eldest sister Araxy. She had a baby, who became an orphan. My brother-in-law married my other sister, Siranoush, in order to take care of the baby, and they went to Egypt. From the nine members of our family we remained only three. Our massacre was due to contagious diseases on this side of the border.

We remained in the orphanage till 1918. The future poets – Vagharshak Norents, Azat Vshtouni and Norayr Dabaghian were also there. In the orphanage I was taught to read and write. One night I heard that they were transferring our orphanage to Kars. There, our orphans suffered great losses. My poor mother had become a washer-woman. I cleaned shoes in the streets and sold water. I used to take hold of wagons to go to the village.

In 1928, I became a young actor in the Leninakan State Theater. Mravian directed the work that was why the theater was named after him. That theater gave me much. I became a devotee of the theater. I had to serve my people through the theatrical art.

During the years I became an Honored Actor, then – People's Artist. During the Great Patriotic War the direction of the theater was entrusted to me.

I've thought much of the Armenian Genocide. I'm really astonished that there are still countries, which do not acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

It has been my dream to go and see Van. I remember the huge reservoir, which irrigated the Aygestan vineyards. I want to see the man, who is enjoying our family earnings without shedding a drop of sweat.

Oh justice! Let me spit on your forehead!

41 (41).

**YERVAND SIMON SHIRAKIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1907, Van)**

My father's name was Simon, my mother's – Aghavni, my sisters' names were Varsenik and Prkouhi; I had also a brother – Hrant by name.

My father was a shoe-maker, at the same time he had other people make shoes for him and he sold them. He had several shops. We lived very well.

Father took me to the kindergarten by phaeton.

In 1914 I began to attend school. But in April 1915 there was no school any more, because World War I had started, and the Turks had attacked us. All the Armenian males were being taken to the army, but they did not draft my father, since he was supplying the Turks with shoes.

In 1914, when the World War broke out, Eastern Armenia and the Armenians of Tiflis organized volunteer troops and joined the Russian army. The Turks had sixty thousand Armenians in their Army. When the Turks learned about it, they took the Armenian soldiers out of the army, organized working battalions and began to slaughter them.

When the news reached Van, the people of Van organized a Military Council, barricaded the town and built defensive positions; in the middle of Van were the Turkish barracks; the Armenians set fire to it and demolished it.

Beginning from the 6th of April 1915, up to the 4th of May the Armenians were defending themselves with success. On May 4 the Russian army entered Van, in which was included also the Armenian army consisting of six thousand soldiers under the leadership of General Andranik. The Russian authorities elected Aram Manoukian as the leader of the town of Van. This way we lived till the beginning of July. In the beginning of

July 1915 the Russian authorities ordered the Armenians to migrate.

The people of Van organized a general meeting, where the youth spoke against the exile, but the elderly people agreed.

Father bought a donkey; we loaded our food-stuff on it and put our quilts on an ox. Our family members were my mother's brother, who was not married, my other uncle with his family and my father's brother's family. My sister Prkouhi was three months old; my four-year-old brother Hrant – on my shoulders. The bullet passed through my hair, entered my brother's body, and he died.

We moved on and when we crossed the Berkri bridge (which was called Bandimahu) they announced that the Kurds had attacked us. The Turks taught the Kurds to slaughter us, so whenever the latter saw an Armenian, they kill him.

My sister was sitting on the donkey, and I sat behind her. The donkey entered the river, shook itself and I fell into the water. They could save me with great difficulty.

Somehow we reached Igdır. We slaughtered a sheep, cooked it and ate. Father hired a cart, we all got on and we came to Yerevan. We were two families in one room – eight people.

Father went back to Van. His leather shop had been completely plundered, but the Russians had occupied Van. Father came back in order to take us to Van, but the Turks had already occupied it. We settled in Yerevan. I learned, then I went to Moscow and continued my studies; I became an engineer. I have constructed the rubber factory and several habitable buildings. Now I'm a pensioner.

42 (42).

**GHAZAR GHAZAR GEVORGIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1907, Van, Hayots Dzor, Hndstan Village)**

Our ancestors have lived in the village of Hndstan, Hayots Dzor (Armenians' Valley – Arm.), in the province of Van. It lay on a half level plain, 1 km from the Khoshab River. That was the reason why Hndstan had plenty of water, for the branches of the Khoshab River encircled our village on the north and on the south, rendering the land productive and fertile. The village had many orchards and vineyards, but under the Turkish yoke the Armenians did not enjoy human rights. That was why certain orchards had become deserted because of the Kurd rabble. Even the owners of the orchards – the Armenian peasants had stopped cultivating them. The territory belonging to our village was divided into two

parts: the plain where lay the orchards, vineyards and the vegetable gardens and the mountainous part where the climate was favorable for cattle-breeding.

According to the census of 1913 the village consisted of thirty-seven families, seven of which were Kurds and thirty were Armenians.

In 1894, during the massacre of Sassoun, Sultan Hamid's Turkish slaughterers invaded our village to destroy it. My grandpa's family consisted then of eleven members. The Turkish and Kurdish bandits entered the Armenians' Valley and began to destroy the defenseless villages. Our village was the last one. Those miraculously saved from the previous villages brought the news.

Hearing that, our peasants decided to send the children up in the mountains and hide them in inaccessible places, and they got ready for self-defense, hoping that they could resist for three-five days till the Turkish government stopped the vile action of the Turkish and Kurdish slaughterers. But the Turkish government knew very well what was going on in the Armenian villages and pretended to be unaware of the happenings, so that more Armenians would be massacred. Of course that was not the first case. Such cases had happened very often. The Turkish government expected that an Armenian generation would grow up, who would work, flourish the country and, under a trifling pretext of not obeying them, would be strictly punished. The state officials had secret links with the Kurdish chieftains and incited the Kurd mobs to rob the Armenians' cattle, sheep, to steal the fruits from the orchards, cut down the trees, destroy their houses and plunder their possessions.

Such a lot befell our village. And our village resisted. But what could twenty-thirty people do against the Turkish and Kurdish mob? They filled the inhabitants of the village by force into the houses and burned them all: men, women and even the suckling babies.

The Turkish yenicheri charged children with their bayonets and threw them five-ten meters away and then they looked and admired their deed. During these massacre nine members of my grandpa's family fell victim, two remained alive – a sister and a brother. One of them was eight years old, the other was fourteen. The boy – Gevorg, became my father, the sister – Voskehat (Kako) – my aunt. So my grandpa fell victim at the age of forty-five.

With a view to distracting the Armenians' attention, the Turkish government proclaimed the "Constitution" in 1908, as if to grant liberty to everybody.

I was born in 1907, but my father Gevorg, being a twenty-five-year-old vigorous young man, became a fedayi to revenge his victim relatives. He fought against the Khan's group and lost his own life.

In 1914, World War I broke out, and the Ottoman government took part in it. Not a single Armenian village and house was exempted from the horror of the war. The Turkish government enlisted all the conscripts and took them to serve in 'Amelé tabours.'

For safety purposes, my aunt Kako sent me and my mother to Van, where my mother's uncle lived.

During the Russian-Turkish war Djevdet pasha was the viceroy of Van. He kept contacts with Khalil pasha: in case the latter occupied the Persian Dilman, Tabriz and Khoy, which were under the Tsarist Russian command of Chernozubov, and fulfilled his plan, which was received from Germany, then Djevdet would condemn all the Armenians living in the province of Van to the same fate to what the one and a half million Armenians deported to Der-Zor had been condemned.

The Armenian revolutionary parties of the Van Province, under the leadership of Aram Manoukian, Ishkhan, Vramian and Vardan, guessing Djevdet's crafty plans; having transferred, in advance, the Armenian population of the rural regions of Van, and choosing the Aygestan district as the main defense center, they began to take strong defensive measures until the arrival of the Armenian volunteers and the Russian army. Thinking that Khalil had successfully reached Dilman, Djevdet ordered the Turkish commanders in Van to begin their atrocities. But the people of Van, together with the villagers of the province began to counterattack the Turkish army.

The resistance lasted a month. Many heroic exploits were performed.

During the siege we were in Van. Our relatives also were with us, so we were forty-five people living in my carpenter uncle Vardan's house. It was summer. We slept in the yard. Our foodstuff soon came to an end. The communication between the village and the town had stopped. Djevdet's soldiers had closed the roads. But my resourceful aunt Kako put on men's clothes and, armed with a rifle, went to the village and returned in a day bringing two oxen loaded with wheat. With that food we kept body and soul together until the liberation of Van.

After the liberation of Van we went back to our village again. Creative work started anew, hoping that there would not be any displacements any more. The troops of the Armenian volunteers under the leadership of Andranik and Nazarbekov went, together with the Russian army, till Bitlis and Erzroom. The Turkish army retreated, leaving the four provinces.

Returning to the village, aunt Kako reassumed her peaceful domestic activities. I and mother lived pinning our hopes on her.

When Andranik was about to come, Kako pillaged from the Kurdish villages five hundred sheep, fifteen cows, four oxen and two horses, thus avenging for the memory of our victims.

In a few months there came a general order – to withdraw completely till Igdir, Yerevan.

The deportation brought us terrible privations and tortures. Kako, mother and I (I was six or seven then) began to emigrate. I remember all the sufferings. Though many years had passed, I cannot forget. The whole Van Province inhabitants used all the transportation means available – carts, all kinds of pack-animals and on their own backs – people took and carried with them the most valuable and necessary things. The sheep herds and the cattle were entrusted to those whom they thought reliable and the rest was hidden in wells with the hope that they would return some day.

Crossing the Khoshap River we went up to the west of the Vark Mountain range and then moved north, towards Van. Coming out of the town, we took the road along the Lake Van, towards the north-east till the village

of Berkri, then the gorge, called Gayli of Berkri, through which ran the Bandimahu River. Running from the north-east it poured into the Lake Van. After walking for five days, news was spread that some gangs of the Kurdish Zilan tribe had come and occupied the Bandimahu bridge in order to plunder the refugees from Van, for they knew that the people of Van were rich, they had much gold and valuable things, many sheep and cattle.

And so the refugees, moved slowly forward through provinces and villages unaware of the imminent danger. One part of the refugees had crossed the bridge and was on the open Berkri plain and the other part was moving on slowly, since the bridge was narrow, and they should cross it in turn.

It was sun set. Suddenly a gun shot was heard from the southern side of the gorge, and the Zilan Kurd's hullabaloo, "Shoot, hey shoot." They closed the exit of the bridge, and some of them had stopped the tail-end of the caravan and others, hidden behind the rocks, were firing at the refugees, hoping that they would defend themselves and leave their possessions on the spot and run away. But the people of heroic Van, who had been able to defend their honor against the Hamidian robbers, did not lose heart, in spite of the great losses they suffered. But there were also people who threw themselves into the swift waves of the Bandimahu, in an attempt to cross the river, but the waves drifted them down the current.

The armed volunteers immediately took their position. But the Kurds had thought in advance and had hid themselves behind the rocks on the upper sides of the gorge and fired at the helpless refugees. A lot of people and animals were killed. The fight lasted for two hours until a garrison of Cossacks, who were having a rest in the village of Berkri came for help. The bridge was freed. That night, without taking any rest, the refugees continued their way.

Since Kako was dexterous, she looked after the animals together with a few young people of the village, and mother and I moved forward together with our loaded oxen. When we reached Berkri, they did not let us go any further, for the commander of the garrison announced that assistant forces had been sent, and the road would be free in a few hours. We remained in Berkri for the night. The following morning we continued our way. At that moment, Kako arrived together with her flock of sheep, and again we took our road of deportation.

As we passed the bridge, we witnessed the corpses of our refugee relatives lying in the gorge. What a scene it was! It's even horrifying to remember, though the Armenians have seen so many similar scenes perpetrated by the barbarous Turks.

I only want to recall an event connected with a man who had been an eminent person in our province Mkrkich agha was the landowner of our village. He lived in Van. Our village had been the estate of his ancestors. He had

a magnificent two-storeyed house in the village, which was like a fortress. He had a wonderful orchard of five-six hectares, which was surrounded with a three-meter high stone fence. In the village he was known as Mko (Mko's fence, Mko's fortress, Mko's fields, etc.). And on the road of deportation we met him sitting in a cart, holding an umbrella in his hand. He felt victim on the road of deportation to a casual bullet. The distinguished estate owner's inglorious death was a kind of show for all those refugees passing by, to grieve less for their lost possessions.

Crossing over the bridge of Bandimahu we felt ourselves somehow free of dangers. We rested for a while to gather strength for our future journey. I can't remember how long it took us to get to Igdir. What I remember is that when we arrived to Igdir (Eastern Armenia), we began to sell our animals to the local Armenians. We kept for us a few pack-animals to carry our foodstuff and we set out for Yerevan and the other localities where the authorities had foreseen for us.

They decided to send us to Gyogcha (Martouni Region), Upper Adiyaman. We, together with our village-folk, went to Yerevan, Plani Gloukh [district of Yerevan]. Now, I want to tell you a few words about Plani Gloukh. The Abovian Avenue of nowadays was then called Astafian. The road beginning from St. Paul-Peter Church on Astafian Street till Kanaker was covered with vineyards and orchards. The street stretched along thick and high clay walls, but, as today, the black building of the State University and the 1st Hospital were at their place. They lodged us in the barracks of Plani Gloukh, and it was decided that the authorities of each province would transfer the refugees, who were assigned to their province. In winter, carts came from Gyogcha and transported us to Upper Adiyaman. Fifteen families from our village would live there. Each peasant received in his house a family of refugees. We settled in the house of an old woman, whose son's name was Rouben of Mourad. She lived with her daughter-in-law, named Glaz. Our landlady's name was Guleh and her son Rouben was a soldier, serving at the Russian-German front.

As she was a kind and prudent woman, Mother-Guleh took the management of the whole house in her hands. She treated us all equally, putting no difference between her daughter-in-law and us. So, we really felt at home.

Since Kako, as she was the 'male' of our house, she took up the hard domestic work. In the spring of 1916 news came that our lands were liberated and those who wished could go back to their homes. You know what magic force has got one's birthplace, what magnetic properties it has got, it attracts towards the Motherland: the graveyards of our martyrs were calling us. Loading our two oxen again, we returned to Yerevan and from there – to our birthplace.

From Yerevan to Van we should go by train. The train would take us to the settlement called Soğuk Su (Cold Water – Turk.), after that we would go in vans.

In the spring of 1916 we reached our village – Hndstan. We came back home as the swallow returns to its old nest. Our house was just as we had left it. When we were going to migrate, Kako had kept many household utensils and agricultural tools in the wells, now we took them out and began our hard life.

Of course, all the Armenians of the Van Province did not come back, only part of them returned.

During World War I the Red Cross international organization, which was bringing relief to the victims of the war, organized in 1916 a Children's Home in Van. I was lucky enough to be admitted there. I remember the day when Kako and my uncle Harutyun were persuading me to go: I would learn to read and write, I would have nice clothes.

And so on a bright May morning my uncle Harutyun took me to Van and entrusted me to the Children's Home. Obeying the rules there, I did not feel comfortable, but after three months I was convinced that it should be so. But when has life smiled on an orphan that it should smile on me. The spring of 1917 came. The October Revolution broke out in Russia. The chairman of the Van Red Cross Relief Committee was Kostin Hambarzoumian (athlete Sergo Hambarzoumian's brother), who, taking into consideration the general political situation conveyed the one thousand five hundred orphans of our Children's Home to Alekpol (Alexandrapol, later: Leninakan, now: Gyumri) in the autumn of 1917. From that day on I lost all hope of seeing my relatives again. We endured many privations – hunger, dirt, whatever was possible. In Alekpol, they lodged us in different buildings, but even there we could not have a rest, for war was threatening Alekpol as well. After staying there for the winter, they transferred us in the spring of 1918 to Djalaloghli (now: Stepanavan). They fed us horribly: in the morning we had two hundred grams of bread, a cup of half-sweetened tea, at noon only soup or borshch, rather just a little colored hot water and in the evening two boiled potatoes. This was our food. Those were poignant days. Even today I cannot forget them and often remember those dark days.

In May or June 1918 General Andranik's Volunteer Army, fighting against Vehib pasha, reached Djalaloghli to rest for a few days and to reorganize his fighting forces, hoping to get assistance from the local regiment. But he was out of his calculations. The local regiment, seeing Vehib pasha advancing with a great army towards Djalaloghli, was panicked and many began to desert in spite of Andranik's strict measures; the latter did not succeed to stop the mass desertion, since the wave of the Bolshevik Revolution had reached the Trans-Caucasus, had entered every village, every house and the minds of the people. Andranik stayed in Djalaloghli for ten-fifteen

days. Every morning he rode his horse and, together with his bodyguard officers, went to examine the mountain-tops surrounding Djalaloghli and he chose suitable positions to stop the hordes of Vehib and help the people to emigrate in case of danger.

I have been a witness of those days and a bearer of those sufferings. Andranik's army consisted of one thousand horsemen and one thousand infantry-men. During their stay there for a fortnight, they fed us, the orphans. The army had settled in the clearing between the vineyards opposite our school, and the head-quarters were in the school building.

It was a cloudy, gloomy day. General Andranik was in the head-quarters and was having a military counsel. A messenger arrived and soon Andranik appeared on the balcony, ordered the guard to have his horse ready, and then turning to the military doctor Bonapartian and the commanders who were at the counsel, Smbat and the others, ordered them to bring out the cavalry and let the infantry climb the opposite hill waiting for new instructions.

Then Andranik rode towards the road going down the valley, crossed the river to the open field. He divided his army into regiments and dashed over Vehib pasha. Djalaloghli was living tragic hours. At night Andranik had ordered the people to emigrate to Kolageran. The day was rainy and the road muddy. It was impossible for us, the orphans, to go on foot to Kolageran. It was just at that desperate moment that Andranik, remembering us, sent a group of horsemen consisting of sixty riders, who took us on their horses to the railway station. In the evening we reached Kolageran. We were waiting for the train, but the station-master announced that there would not be any train, because the Armenian-Georgian border station, Sadakhlou, had been occupied by the Borchalou Turks and the communication with Tiflis was cut off. Vehib pasha had got in touch with the Caucasus Turk inhabitants and moved his army towards Djalaloghli and Gharakilissa, intending to cut the railway road with the help of the local Turk rebels. He wished to win a great victory and, at the same time, to stop the return of the Russian soldiers from the front.

The Lori Valley, along the Debed River, was full of refugees. The orphans were taken from Kolageran on foot in the direction of Alaverdi. In Alaverdi they separated us into groups according to age. Those who were older and could walk continued their way to Tiflis. The youngsters – nine to eleven years old, remained at the Alaverdi station; we were about four to five hundred. For three days we were wandering among the refugees asking for a piece of bread, but who could help us, when they themselves were starving? It was spring. The vegetation was fresh and we were fed only on grass. We had become grazing animals. I can never forget the days, when, together with my friend Patour, we wandered all

day among the refugees to get something to eat, but all in vain. We picked up bones, put them on a stone, ground it with another stone and ate it; and we ate that thriftily. All the time our eyes looked at the ground. One day on a railroad track we found a bundle. We thought that they were clothes. We opened it and saw forty pieces of sugar, hazel-nuts and walnut kernel, dried mulberry and raisins. At first, we did not believe our eyes, we thought it was a dream, but we lived on them for a few days. One morning, an ordinary morning, we climbed again the mountains for food, and we heard a respectable man's voice. He, Mirzoyan, was a member of Tiflis Red Cross Charity Organization, a rich, middle-aged, somehow blond man, with thick eyebrows, a stammering and fast talking Armenian. He ordered us not to go anywhere, we would go to the village of Sanahin and there, in the monastery, food and comfortable life were awaiting us.

Mirzoyan gathered all the orphans scattered on the way from Alaverdi to Sanahin and took them to the Sanahin Monastery. They accommodated us in a church and began to feed us with oil and cereals, received from Tiflis. But after so many sufferings and so much dirt, typhus began to spread. Every morning as we got up, we saw ten-to-fifteen corpses lying dead on the mats. Seeing the disaster, I and some other boys of my age came out of the church and went to the villages called Haghpat and Vornak and began to beg. Seeing our condition, the inhabitants proposed us to work for them. We agreed gladly.

One of us became a shepherd, the other – a herdsman or we brought wood from the forest on donkey-back. Thus, we lived until 1919. That year the English left Tiflis and moved to Baku. The road was open. And one day through the mediation of the International Red Cross and by the assistance of the American Near East Relief Committee (ANERC) a sanitary train stopped in Alaverdi station, which had a bathroom, kitchen, dining-room and three wagons for passengers. With Mirzoyan's efforts, they gathered us from the nearby villages and the children, who had remained at the Sanahin church (from five hundred children there had remained only two hundred and thirty), they cleaned us thoroughly, then fed us and transferred us to Tiflis – Navtlough.

Mirzoyan was one of the wealthy Armenians of Tiflis. He had a mansion in Ortadjala District, on the south bank of the Kur River, on the upper part of Adelkhanov's Leather Factory. The three-storeyed building looked like a palace. A three-hectare orchard with various fruit trees lay on the east, with vines climbing on both sides. There was a beautiful pool built for irrigation purposes twenty meters wide, fifty meters long and ten meters deep. A mountainous rivulet flowing from Telet ran into the pool, then overflowed down after filling it, and the accumulated water was raised up by means of a special apparatus into another pool near the balconies. In the morning

the sunrays fell onto the pool water and were reflected on the windows of the mansion creating a beautiful fascinating picture. The Tsar's viceroy Nicolay had lived in that mansion. And here, we, the orphans, lived from the summer 1918 to August 1920 August. Almost two years we lived in Tiflis; we were fed well and got a good education. But that was also of short duration.

In 1920 they transferred us to Kars. They lodged us in the military barracks. It was a three-storeyed building where they accommodated two thousand five hundred orphans. Once more our hard days began – hunger and dirt. The manager of our orphanage was an American missionary from Shatak, who was called Arzoumanian. As he knew English well, he reported the American trustees that we were pleased with our life; whereas we saw so many odd things in Kars for four-five months.

In 1920, after the fall of Kars, we were transferred to the Alexandropol barracks, which had been transformed into orphanages. They were sponsored by the American Relief Committee and the manager was Mr. Earo, an American, who went away with some American men and women, when Soviet power was established in Armenia. We, the orphans, were deprived of our guardians. We wandered in the fields looking for mouse nests, which we destroyed hoping to find some wheat there, and these mice were typhus infection carriers, so many of us got infected. Our comrade Mourad fell ill with typhoid and died in a few days. We put him on a stretcher, and two men carried him. We, the orphans, as his relatives, followed him. Suddenly, Mourad moved and sat on the stretcher. The two men threw down the stretcher and ran away, but we took our comrade to hospital, where he recovered. Later, we used to joke with him and called him a 'ghost.'

At the end of 1920 Armenia became a Soviet state; there was no sponsorship by the Americans anymore. The care of the orphans passed to the authorities of Soviet Armenia.

In 1921 the first immigration began. Those who had been deported from Van in 1917, had gone to Iraq through Persia. Among the first immigrants were my mother Elizabeth and my aunt Kako. They were accommodated in the village of Bedjaghlu, at the house of a kind woman, Mother Zardar.

The spring of 1921 brought famine, inter-national fights and civil war to Armenia. The famine reached Ghamarlou as well.

The 1917 October Revolution, having spread in Russia, reached the Trans-Caucasus. The Russian army left the Turkish front and returned to Russia.

The defensive regiments of Armenia and the volunteer troops were not able to defend the Turkish-Armenian front, and thus they abandoned it. The Russian army withdrew; Karabekir pasha cut the road between Turkey and Yerevan, thus putting in danger the Armenians of

the Van Province. The Armenians of Van, who had come back in 1916, saw the threatening danger. Sixty thousand Assyrians and forty-to-fifty thousand Armenians led by Kostin Hambardzoumian, Levon Shaghoyan and the Assyrians' Religious Leader Marshoumon migrated to Persia – Dilman, and from there they moved to Baghdad, which was occupied by the English then.

But that was not an easy road, which lay on the borders of Persia and Turkey, where different Kurdish gangs and Turkish leaders lived.

Kostin organized, under the leadership of Levon and Marshoumon, self-defensive groups and explorers to escort the huge number of refugees. He divided them into four parts, and they moved forward having the people in the center. While marching through the territory of each gang, they warned them to let the people pass without incidents; otherwise they threatened them to use armed force.

There was a Kurd robber near Dilman named Smko, who, with his bandits, wandered about and sought suitable 'preys,' to attack and plunder them. He attacked the Armenian and Assyrian refugees, but the latter responded with a strong counterattack and dispersed the gang of robbers.

In Djoulamerik the refugees had asked to give them a free way, to pass and to go to Mosul. They sent a delegation under the leadership of Kostin Hambardzoumian, but the Turkish delegates treacherously killed Kostin. Levon and Marshoumon sent a telegram to Mosul and got into contact with the English authorities and informed them about Kostin's perfidious murder. The next morning the English airplanes flew over Djoulamerik and threatened the Turkish and Kurdish authorities to bomb them, if they

wouldn't let the Armenians pass through Iraq to Mosul.

Iraq was then under English domination. The refugees reached Mosul, and they were dispersed in different towns – Mosul, Baghdad and Basra.

My mother and Kako, who were dressed like men, remained in Basra for four years and worked there. But, as they knew that I was in an orphanage in Armenia, they wished to come to Armenia. At the first call and by the first caravan they came through the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, the Black Sea and reached Batoumi. They came to Armenia, Artashat Region, in the Bedjaghlou Village and settled in Mother Zardar's house. Then they came to the orphanage and took me to live with them.

But soon my mother was taken ill by an infectious disease and died. My aunt Kako married me at the age of fifteen to Knarik, a girl, whose family had also been deported. During the years our family grew, but I could never forget that we had lost eleven souls.

The Patriotic War began and I served in the army until 1945. I was wounded, but I returned to my dear large family.

Who could dream that, after the beastly behavior, in 1896, of the Turkish Sultan Hamid, who took the life of the 12 members of my grandfather's family, after losing my own family and being left alone following the Genocide of 1915 and wandering for 5 years as a homeless orphan from the Tiflis orphanage to those of Kars and Alexandrapol, after so many privations, after being taken ill with infectious diseases, I would be lucky to re-establish my grandfather's lost family of 12 souls and thus to take revenge on our enemy.

#### 43 (43).

#### **NSHAN SOUKIAS ABRAHAMIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Van, Ardské Province, Ziraklu Village)**

It was a spring month. While cultivating the fields, they took us, the children, to a suitable place in the field, lay us to sleep, and they got busy with their labor. I remember there were mushrooms in that field and they were so big that a child could not carry them. At the time of ploughing, there were many different plants that we ate – they had healing properties.

Our cowshed was full of cattle. A stream ran before our house and ducks swam in it.

We were in the field when they came and said that the Kurds had taken away our cattle. At home I heard that they were speaking of cannonades. I also wanted to hear it, my father said: "Go and put your ear on the ground under the wall, you'll hear it."

I put my ear on the ground, listened, then I began to cry. The Russian army came; they were Cossacks. All

the time we used to cross ourselves to be different from the Kurds.

I was on my grandma Tello's back and I don't know where from she had put a bullet in my hand, A soldier snatched it from my hand and took it away.

My father, his brother Nazo, our family, the family of Garé, Hrachouhi's family, without her husband and brothers, almost thirty people had agreed with two Kurd brothers, that they would take us by night to the bey's house, on condition that we should leave all our riches to them. Then the bey's order was as follows: those Armenians, who entered the bey's house, would not meet any danger any more; he would send the Armenians secretly to Armenia.

It was dark night; we were going through ploughed fields. At a certain hour of the night one of the two

Kurdish brothers shot my uncle Nazo. My uncle fell. Father threw me to my mother saying, "Take the child" and he himself attacked the Kurd, snatched the rifle from his hand and killed him. The other brother ran away in the dark. My father threw the gun away. At dawn we reached the bey's village, named Haghtapa, I think.

They had noticed us from the village and had sent someone to meet us; if there were any men, they would be killed and they would accept only the women and the children. The comer turned out to be one of my father's acquaintances. They called him 'kirva,' Msto by name.

Father said: "Msto, I have nothing to give you, no gold, no silver, I've got only a pair of well-made, military trousers. I have only this, take it." Msto took it. Father said: "Msto, take the trousers, only I don't want to be killed by you. He took the trousers, went away and sent someone else. He came and shot my father with a pistol. Mother held my father in her arms, and we, about thirty people, reached, crying and moaning, the bey's house and entered the barn.

Father, with his wounded back, leaned against the barn door, because forty Kurds wanted to open the door and rush in. At the uproar the bey's wife came out and scolded them that so many people had attacked an Armenian. Then she added: "No Armenian blood will be shed in my house."

Father, thinking that she was the bey's wife, left the door. The Kurds rushed in and shot father for a second time. Father did not die at once. He used to love me, kiss me, and I took nuts from his pocket and ate.

It turned out that my uncle had not died at night. He had gone and entered into the dung-stack and hid there. In the morning a Kurd girl came in to take some burning material, saw my uncle and began to shout: "There's an Armenian here." The Kurds rushed in and kill him.

Digging the earth with our fingers we buried the two brothers. It turned out that the bey was not at home. He did not come; he had gone with his group to lead the Armenians through the border. They had filled us all in the barn and they would burn us. They used to come, choose the Armenian pretty woman and, pulling and dragging them, they would take them away. For that reason the Armenian women rubbed mud or soot on their faces. A river ran before the barn, and many women hugged their children threw themselves into the river. Many women died that way. The Kurds saw the corpses, pierced them with long iron bars to see if they were dead, in order to plunder them.

My grandmother said to my mother: "Listen, take your two sons and run away." And we succeeded in doing so.

It was a rainy day, there were thunder and lightning. Taking the opportunity we ran away. On our way we met a group of Armenians; they were numerous; we joined them and entered the forest. A Kurdish tribe, named Jelos, attacked us. They did not kill us, they plundered;

some of them were looking for pretty women, others – for children.

Someone chose my mother to be his wife; he took also my younger brother, but pushed me aside. A Mullah adopted me. Some time later, the Mullah found a wife with a child: he brought them home and turned me out. I came out on the road passing through the village and met a group of Armenians. They were seven people: women and children. I joined them. When we had gone out of the village, they began firing at us. All of us fell down. They did not notice me in the corpses or did not pay attention to me, for there was nothing to be pillaged. I came out from under the corpses and approached a field. I saw young men of the same age who had been killed and arranged in one row. They had cut their head, put them in a line and their bodies in another line. Those were the young men who had been recruited for the Turkish army. They had done loathsome acts on them. They had put out one's eye, another's nose was cut off, a third's ear was removed, they had opened pockets on their thighs and put their hands in, one's male organ was put in his mouth... I was passing over those corpses. They were swollen, as if they had been inflated.

Then I don't remember what happened to me. It was very cold, my feet were frozen. Water was filled in my soles, the skin was thick, so I could not walk: I rolled this way and that. Thus, I reached a Kurdish village and asked for bread in Kurdish, for I had forgotten my Armenian. There was an old woman at home, who was baking bread. When the woman saw me in that condition, she took me to the tonir, made me sit near it and began looking for something.

I got frightened. As it turned out, she was a very kind woman – a healer. She brought a packing needle, hugged me like a hen and pierced my soles, the water ran out and she made me hang my feet into the tonir by force. That woman kept me at her house as a shepherd. She had two sons; the elder was a farmer, while the younger one went and plundered the Armenians. I took the sheep to graze, but I couldn't keep them well, they often got lost, they rolled sometimes into the gorge. One day the younger brother laid me on the ground; took out his knife and wanted to slaughter me like a hen.

The elder brother said: "What are you doing?"

"What should I do? I'm going and plundering people at the cost of my life, and this one is losing our sheep."

The elder brother stood up for me. The two brothers began to quarrel. Their mother got angry, "Are you going to kill each other for an Armenian lad?"

On the next morning the younger brother had gone to plunder again and was killed there. I was in the field, when they called me and said that my boss had been killed. They buried him. Some time later, the elder brother married an Armenian girl. When she came, my condition got better: as an Armenian she paid special

attention to me.

One night that woman woke me up: "Nshan, get up, they've come to save us."

Later I learned that the village was called Harmizon. There, the Armenians and the Kurds had lived together. It turned out that that woman had been the wife of the brother of the ghachagh, an Armenian Dashnak captain, nicknamed "Kurd Ghazo." Ghazo had come with sixteen men to save her. Together with her he saved also a great number of Armenians, among them prisoners like me, and took with him the whole cattle of the village, including my master's cattle. The bey had been busy with a wedding; they told him about it, but he did not pay any attention to it.

We sat in an open field. They put me on a donkey, but I fell down. Ghazo took me on his horse-back. He had put on a felt-cloak; I didn't see anything, I felt only that we descended valleys and then ascended.

We reached Igdir. They brought us to Ashtarak, to a Children's Home. My grandpa's sister, Sanam, had heard that I was saved. She came to take me with her, to adopt me. I didn't go with her, since I didn't know her. She went and brought Massis's father, Levon. As I saw Levon, I fell into his arms. I came to Edjmiadsin. So Sanam adopted me. We lived at the doctor's house. I fell ill with dysentery. Many people died of that disease. By the care of the doctor I got cured. I came home and found Sanam on the verge of death and soon she died. They sent me to an asylum. The buildings of the Edjmiadsin Seminary had been transformed into boarding houses. At daytime we went to graze; we ate whatever we could get hold of: dogs and cats; at night we lodged there. In the morning only half of us woke up alive. It so happened that we bit each other out of hunger, we had become wild beasts. There was no one to bury the dead. The corpses were so many, that it was not possible to bury them in due form, there were no men to dig the earth. There was an ox-cart and there was a pit on the road to Zvartnots: the corpses were thrown there and covered with earth.

The Americans came, they gave us beds, they cooked dinner with beans, they gave us clothing and opened an orphanage in the same building. We were four hundred children. At night when a cat passed by or someone screamed, all the orphans began to do the same. Instead of calming us the priests, asserted the existence of ghosts.

There was a well in the monastery and the priest said: "If the Turks come, these waters will become a sea." One night we came from the Monastery of Hripsimé to the orphanage running, again because of the fear of ghosts from the grave-yard. I used to keep close to Levon. He was with the seniors and worked at the Hripsimé Monastery. He had made a wooden rifle for me.

The large buildings of the Seminary had been transformed into orphanages. In the evenings songs and dances were organized around each building. The children

of each province sang and danced their own songs and dances. Tatoul Altounian's mother was the manager. In those days Tatoul learned to play the tar, sing and so on.

The Americans began to select children and take them to America. My instructress kept me under the bedstead and did not let me go. Why? I don't know. I was seriously ill; I was running a high temperature. She wetted the bed sheet and covered me with it; I was so hot, she wasn't able to change it fast enough. Later I tried to find her, but I did not succeed.

From Edjmiadsin they transferred us to Kanaker. It was terribly hot there. The wooden bedsteads were full of bed-bugs. We were obliged to sleep on the cement floor.

One day we went, together with five-six children, to eat mulberries. The landowner caught us, made us stand in a line, but there was nothing to take from us. He took a belt from one of the boys. I was hidden behind the man and he did not notice me. When he saw me, he ran after me and threatened to kill me. Killing was a common thing then. They had killed a draftee for a few apricots. There was a bridge in the valley. The water was shallow: I swam across to the other bank. A boy, named Shavarsh, threw himself into the water as he had no other way out. Everyone was amazed. The pursuer stopped. Luckily he had fallen into the water and he was rescued. We came to the orphanage. Mr. Gevorg, who was our tutor, had arranged the children and was checking everybody. We were surprised at his behavior, for he said nothing. He was a very kind person.

They brought us to Yerevan to the 5th orphanage, opposite the wine factory. Arakel and Minas were with me. Then they transferred me to the 7th orphanage. I had sore eyes. We were together with Sarmen and the conductor Ispir. Yeghishé Charents taught at the 9th orphanage and Arpenik was our teacher. The commissar of the armored train "General Vardan" was Charents. We heard that he frequently went to Alexandrapol secretly. There was no bread; we ate wheat. Charents and Arpenik were in love with each other.

In February 1921 the Dashnaks had surrounded the Children's Home. They were questioning us about whereabouts of our teacher, Charents.

During the revolution in November 1920, when the 11th Army entered Yerevan, cannons were placed on the upper side of Kanaker, where the monument is now. The cannons had taken the town under their fire. A horseman with a red flag was announcing that the power was in the hands of the Soviets. The boys were going out for theft. One day I also went out, the bullets hit the wall at my back, and I ran away.

The Dashnaks were delivering speeches in turn and going away. I went, with a friend, to the Officer's Home. There was a big mirror. We, the children, had put sticks on our shoulders, as if they were rifles and were going up and down before the mirror.

The same day we went to the Russian Church, at the place of the present statue to Shahoumian, where a man was ringing a big bell incessantly. We walked and came up to the place where Armenia Hotel is now, there was a shop there; next to it was a pharmacy. From the shop window we took a package of tea and a big thermometer from the pharmacy and came to the Children's Home.

Arakel told us that the Bolsheviks had placed their machine-gun under the walls of the 5th orphanage, and they fired at the Dashnaks. The big boys wanted to go out for plunder and, when they opened the gate shouting and yelling, the Bolsheviks thought that the Dashnaks had occupied the place; they left the machine-gun and ran away.

The Turks had withdrawn from Alexandrapol again. So we were again transferred to Alekpol (Alexandrapol). The train was moving very slowly. It went a little, then stopped. We got off, gathered wood as fuel for the train and moved on.

The Seversk and Kazachi-Post barracks had been transformed into orphanages. I was at the 5th orphanage. My number was 1899. We had given names to the orphanages: the 1st, where the youngest children were, was called 'the lousy,' then 'the jumpers': they brought the news excellently. The others were named the 'the hooligans,' 'the proud-poor,' the manager of this last one was a woman. Dashtents and Shiraz were there. Many of the professors of the University were orphans, as Nairi Zarian and others. I was responsible for their table; that's why I know them.

In 1924 they transported us to Stepanavan (Djala-

loghli). In Alekpol I had become a member of the brass band. Zazik Soghomonian also came with me; he was teaching me to play the viola. The maestro found out that I knew the gamut, so he included me in the orchestra.

A group of little girls had been organized who staged plays with our boys; they sang and danced. Siroush (Siranoush Georgevna<sup>1</sup>) was among them. With combined efforts, they gave good performances in the town. Karo played in the drama "For the sake of Honor."<sup>2</sup> Derenik Demirjian kept Karo in Tiflis. The latter came to us, to Stepanavan in 1926. I, Karo and another boy were friends. We were together with Siroush at the School of Young Peasants. Later it became a technical school. We finished the school together. We already sympathized with each other. After the technical school, in 1929, I and Siroush were appointed zoo-technicians at a cattle-breeding farm organized by the Americans. Siroush worked at the local kindergarten. She stopped working in the field of agronomy and became a pedagogue. I went to Kirovakan (now: Vanadzor) for my compulsory military service.

In 1931 I entered the State University, the Geological Faculty. I received a military ration. I got married with Siroush.

A jazz group was organized for the first time in the town to perform at the circus. I became a member of the group as a trumpet-player.

In 1936, the Cinema "Moscow" in Yerevan was opened, and we performed there, too. On the basis of our group Artemi Ayvazian's jazz band was organized. Our pianist was Robert Atayan.

#### 44 (44).

#### AZNIV ASLANIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1908, Van, Arjak Region, Kharakonis Village)

Kurd Sayid had entered our house from the roof, had tied my grandfather to the pillar and had killed my uncle. My other uncle had seen it and had killed Sayid. So all our family was compelled to move from the village of Mandan to Kharakonis, for had the Kurd lads learned about it they would come and slaughter all our folks.

Then I was born in Kharakonis, where Nahapet Kouchak was born. When I was born, my parents died of malaria. The Kurds have persecuted us. My grandfather and grandmother took me, and we moved to Van.

I remember our house in Van. The rich people had several-storeyed stone houses, while our house was one-storeyed: a room and a larder. We lived out of Aygestan. The Shamiram River ran before our house. Women used to wash rugs there. The market was on Khachpoghan

Street. My guardians were my uncle, Petros, and his wife Margarit. The poor woman knitted socks to support the family. She gave birth to two daughters, but both of them died. I was an orphan that was why they loved and pampered me. I was clever: I danced and sang. My uncle brought goods and sold to the Turks. I had learned to count in Turkish.

There were schools in Van, but at the age of three I attended the German orphanage. They gave me a slate to write on. I began reading and writing there; I learned German. Until the age of eight, when the deportation began, I lived there. Our German mistress took good care of us; they often took us for a walk. They rode their horses and we went, in coaches, to the Varaga Mountain, which was on the eastern side of Van. The St. Grigor the

<sup>1</sup> Gevorg Demirjian's daughter.

<sup>2</sup> The play of the famous Armenian realist writer and dramatist Alexander Shirvanzadé (1858, Shamakhi – 1935, Kislovodsk, is buried in Yerevan).

Illuminator's Monastery was there, where boys studied. Once in summer they took us to the Karmavor Monastery, where we played, gathered rhubarb, we ate and drank and we looked round the monastery, we visited Mher's Door.

On holidays they would let us go home. We went home also in summer. There were one hundred and fifty girls and one hundred and fifty boys. It was a five-storeyed stone building with balconies. There were no bedsteads. The beds were arranged next to each other on the floor. That orphanage was supported by the Swiss benevolent fund. Each of us sent our photo to a family; that family adopted us and sent us presents on holidays. They were our benefactors.

Each street in Van had a church. Our street was called Shempoghan. Next to our street began the Turkish quarters.

On holidays, for example on Easter, we boiled eggs, there was a plant root "madder," with which we dyed the eggs in red color. We visited and congratulated each other. On New Year we made aghandz. The merchants brought from abroad almonds and dates. They gave us as present dried fruits tied in handkerchiefs. They decorated a Christmas tree at the orphanage. We celebrated Christmas on January 6 as well. On St. Khach Day we made harrissa. The German mistresses celebrated the holidays separately in their rooms. On Vardavar we used to be at home and sprayed water on each other. The Armenians, Assyrians and the Turks lived in harmony and peace with each other. We had craftsmen as carpenters and blacksmiths. The Assyrians had no craftsmen, they were tradesmen. The Turks also traded with the Armenians. The Kurds were good-for-nothing; they beat and killed each other.

The first deportation began in the summer of 1915. The mistresses of our orphanage said: "Those who want to come with us, let them come, those who don't want, let them go to their relatives." I joined my relatives. I emigrated with my uncle's family. In the heat of the summer we walked for a month and reached Igdirdir. Cholera spread. Eighty people from our relatives died. We went to Edjmiadsin. The Catholicos had to sheep slaughtered daily with which they cooked dinner and distributed to the refugees. My aunt came, found us and took us to Oshakan, where they were given some place to live in the school-building, which was in the church-yard. Then we went to Djrvezh. Then the Armenian wet back to their mother-country. In 1917 we went back to Van. My aunt had two children and me; we were three. My aunt took the three of us to Van. Then we went in a cart for a whole day and we reached the Kharakonis Village. We remained in Van from October 1917 till April 1918.

My uncle had heard that I was with my aunt; he came and took me to Van, so that I could continue my studies at school. I went to school till April 1918. Then the Turks attacked again, besieged the city and killed the greater part of the people. As I was an orphan, they put me in a van and took me away. On my way I waited for my aunt's family,

but they had gone to Arabia, and my uncle had been killed by the Turks.

During the second deportation the road was very difficult. We passed through the Djanik Village; the waters of the Berkri River drifted away my aunt's youngest child. Years later my aunt's son who had repatriated and had come to Armenia, told that they had thrown his sister into the river. My shoes got lost in the van. I remained with my stockings. It was still cold and there was snow. My mother's brother found me on the road of deportation. He was in the Russian army. He gave me his fur coat, took me to his commander and said: "My sister has remained all alone, what shall I do?" "Take her beside you at night," said the commander. "In the morning we'll put her in the van of the wounded soldiers and she'll go."

My uncle gave me dried bread-crumbs and some sugar. The commander slept with his family in the room and left me in the corridor. I was afraid, but in the morning they put me in a van and we set off. We stayed in Kormus one night. At night we slept in an open field. I put my head on a stone and fell asleep. In the morning I woke up and saw that everybody had gone. I began to cry. There was no one about. Suddenly I heard the neighing of a horse. There was a family at a distance of one hundred steps. I ran and said: "I have no parents; they've [Kurds] killed my uncle. I have remained asleep. Now I'm all alone."

The man said: "Don't be afraid. I'll take you in the van, and you'll reach them." And he took me to the group of refugees.

We passed Savoukhlu, Old Bayazet, and in Igdirdir they gathered the orphans. There were many orphans like me. They registered me, they sheared my hair, they gave me a bath, they gave us a hot dinner. I hadn't eaten a hot dinner for the last ten days. In Igdirdir I saw General Andranik, his fur hat on his head. Our mistresses placed us in a van and took us to Margara. We slept there at night and in the morning we continued our way.

It was already summer. In 1918 we reached Yerevan. They kept us for two days in a hostel. I and another girl were taken to an orphanage. There I met the girls from our German orphanage; we were very glad. I remained there. I fell ill with typhus. I was taken to a hospital. I hardly remained alive. Then they brought me back to the orphanage. The Americans gathered ten thousand orphans and took us to Kars. There they registered us, subjected us to a medical examination in order to take us to America, but the Turks attacked the city. Every night the Turks bombarded the city from Olti and Sarighamish. We heard it at night. By and by the sounds got closer and closer. And one day we heard that the Turks had invaded the city. The Turks were breaking the window glasses with their bayonets and entered. The older orphan girls rubbed their faces with mud in order to look ugly, so that the Turk soldiers did not take them away. Our American woman principal raised the American flag and went forward

with bread and salt towards the Turks and said that it was an orphanage. Next to us there were barracks, where Armenian women had taken refuge. The Turks entered the barracks and undressed the women: then they killed them and spread their naked corpses on the ground. For eight days we remained in the orphanage. Then the Americans loaded our food supplies on trucks and transferred us in cars to Alexandrapol.

In 1920 the Turks reached Alexandrapol. The power was in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The Turks withdrew. We lived in the Kazachi-Post barracks then. At school they taught us needlework and sewing, and I remained there until 1929. I already knew English; I could even type. When I was leaving them for good, the Americans, Miss Mary, Miss Macca, Miss Hill and Miss Keeper kissed me.

At the age of twenty-five the orphan girls were sent to work at the textile factories or continued their studies. The boys and the girls were separate. They used to come to the Polygon quarters to choose a girl for marriage. They paid attention to their appearance and manners. After

choosing, they went to the American principal; she gave them presents and sent them away solemnly.

They I finished the pedagogical technical school. I went to the Ghoukassian Region to work. There I married a youth from Artik. We had three children. In 1933 we came to Yerevan. My husband was a graduate of the University and he began to work at the Matenadaran, and I worked there as a bibliographer. I used to type lists. When the Great Patriotic War began (1941) the people brought all the goods from the shops and filled their houses. My husband went to the army as a volunteer. He worked there as a political instructor. Then he was taken to Kerch and was declared missing.

Now I'm happy with my children and grandchildren. I'm already eighty. I wish our youth good health, long life and the fulfillment of their dreams. May the memory of our innocent victims live forever and I wish peace to their bones. I want to take revenge on the Turks and the Kurds because they killed my kinsfolk and I became an orphan. All through my life I have longed for the love of parents.

#### 45 (45).

#### **KADJBEROUHI AVETIS SHAHINIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Van)**

Our land of Van was very nice. We lived in the Chaghli-poghan. It was a nice street: on both sides of the street the water of the rivulets ran murmuring and filled the pool.

I had four uncles; each of them lived separately in our yard. We had many animals. My father was a carpenter and a gunsmith.

Our family consisted of twelve people. My mother was a dress-maker; she had two daughters. I lived all my life in dreams until we came out of Van.

My father Avetis was an intelligent man; when he had heard that the Turks were coming, he gathered us, and we left before the massacres began. My father was armed, he made mother sit on a horse, put me and my sister in the saddle bags, and we set off. My uncle's family and my grandma were with us.

On the way we heard the cannonade of the Turks. We hid behind the rocks. I used to cry out of fear. My uncle found me and fed. The refugees began to come

behind us. There were people lying between the stones. I thought they were alive. In fact, they were killed, but there was no one to bury them. The cannonade sounded like thunder. Even a priest lay dead, his odd and ends behind a stone. Mother picked up his garments and brought them to Yerevan and delivered them to the St. Paul-Peter Church. My mother's brother died on the way. The Englishmen and the Americans helped us. They fed us well, clothed us, cleaned and gave us education.

Then the Turks attacked Yerevan. My father gathered twenty-five people, armed them and attacked the Turks. He was a captain; he had taken part in the Battle of Sardarapat. He had hardly come home that they called him again to go against the Turks.

In 1932 and 1937 they [the Soviet government] imprisoned my father as a nationalist. He had buried all his rifles and bullets. My poor father was exiled to Tashkend and he died there. They said that he had died of starvation.

#### 46 (46).

#### **SILVA HOVHANNES BYUZANDIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Van)**

Our family in Van was a family of culture. The French had come to Van to spread their language. My grandfather had put a room in our house at their disposal to teach people there. And that school was called the Byuzandian's School.

We have had a very large library, which was getting richer we and richer as we received many books published abroad. Another room in our house was put at Khrimian Hayrik's disposal: when he returned from his tours, he came there to rest.

My father has been a very graceful man: he often took part in party meetings and spoke freely. Many people said to him: "Hovnan, you have a golden mouth."

There were agitations in Van for a long time. The Turks came and attacked the Armenians of Van and its surroundings.

And one day there came an order that we should migrate. The Turks attacked the peaceful people. The Van inhabitants had to be deported on foot. At that time my parents lost me. The Russian soldiers picked me up. Suddenly my godfather saw me and recognized me. He put me in his saddle-bag and went on.

The Turks kidnapped my sister Sirvard. She was a very beautiful and graceful girl. She had played Seda's role in Levon Shant's drama: "Ancient Gods."

The Turks killed whoever they met. They cut their hands and their feet, they hammered nails in their forehead, took out their eyes. They killed children before their parents and the parents – before their children. And they got pleasure seeing all that. Their goal was to kill the last Armenian; they killed one and a half million Armenians.

We reached Igdır completely naked, for they had plundered us. We were hungry and thirsty. Then we crossed the Arax River. Most of my relatives were of an advanced age, therefore they could not walk and they remained in Van and were slaughtered. The typhus also took away many lives. Famine and diseases – a horrible state...

And we faced all that heroically and endured.

#### 47 (47).

### SARGIS BARDALIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Van, Vospitak Village)

Our village was at a distance of six km from Van. I remember, when we left Van and took the road of exile, the people of Van had already been deported. When we reached Van, we joined the inhabitants of Van. My grandfather and grandmother remained in our village; they could not part with their possessions.

Every night the Kurds attacked us; we resisted. We walked on hungry and thirsty. First our animals were slaughtered, and then we were plundered. We reached the Bandimahu, which is a very turbulent river. The people entered it in order to cross, but it drifted many people down the stream.

In 1915 we arrived in Edjmiadsin, where famine prevailed. Tsar Nicolay's army went back to Van, and we went with them. For two years we lived well in Van. When Nicolay was dethroned, our life also changed to the worse. Again we took the road of deportation. We came on foot. We were very tired. I and my sister were too young. Our mother made us lie down to sleep. When we woke up, we saw the refugees had moved further. We, those who had remained back were not few, but there was no one to show us the way. A woman said: "I know the road." She led us and took us to the Persian border. The Turks were glad to see us and they began to plunder us. They used to undo the buttons of our clothes, took off our clothes and spat on us. We had no weapons. They took us to the Assyrian prisoners' place. We got mixed with them. They were eating, we were watching. We were hungry. We remained there a whole month. We went to the fields, gathered clover and ate it; we picked mushrooms and ate them. The Turks massacred the Assyrians.

We had no right to go out. We soiled where we sat. The Turk pashas came, kidnapped girls and women and then brought them back dead. My mother gave birth to

a child there. In the morning we woke up and saw that mother had bled to death. They dragged her and took her to bury. A woman began to look after me and my sister.

General Andranik heard that there were Armenian prisoners there; he came, entered the town of Dilman and surrounded it. The inhabitants of the town heard that General Andranik had come; they left their shops open, their gold, silver and silk, and ran away.

General Andranik said to the Turks and Persians: "You give me the Armenian prisoners; I'll give you your prisoners."

We set off again, but half the people had already died of hunger. Ten askyars rode horses, we walked on foot: they stroke those, who fell behind. They had no right to kill for they would deliver us to Andranik. When darkness fell, they filled us in a barn; we remained there huddled together.

In the morning we went to the clover field and began to eat again. Our people saw us; they came and took us to their place and gave us food, but it did not go down our throat. We stayed there for two days. Our father found us. He took me on his back, and my sister on foot, we went to Dilman, the town which Andranik had occupied. Our people, who were hungry and had lost everything, were allowed to enter the open shops and take what they wanted. We took silk, gold, silver, my aunt brought a sack of almonds, for which we were very glad. But that plunder cost us very dear: the Kurds had heard that we had pillaged Dilman, they attacked us by night, between two mountains and began to plunder and kill us. We had no weapons to defend ourselves. So they took away from us everything.

We came and reached an English colony. Our defender Levon came with his army to rest and then to go Nahri

Omar with his army. Two English horsemen came dressed in white and said: "Where is your Levon?"

A naive man said: "There he is," and pointed to Levon.

They shot Levon, our brave, patriot Levon. In fact, they were Turks, dressed as Englishmen.

Our caravan moved to Mesopotamia. In front of us appeared dark-skinned soldiers with short trousers. They were English soldiers, but they were Black; their faces shone of darkness. They took us to Nahri Omaar – a town of tents. There, the Englishmen took good care of us. There were chiefs to every ten people in the tents, there was discipline, they gave us work, when a disease infected us and they brought doctors and cured us. At the orphanage, there were Kurd orphans together with the Armenian orphans. My sister and I were together at the orphanage. We were five hundred boys and girls, and there was nothing to disturb us. My father died in Nahri Omar, and my aunt married Khachik Voskanian from Arjak. He was one of the appointed chiefs. He took care of us, but he treated us as aliens.

A man by the name of Mr. Harutyun from Baghdad had heard about us. He came to help us. He went to India, collected money from the rich Armenians to help us materially. The rich allotted money. Mr. Harutyun returned gladly, he even brought a gramophone with him and records of Komitas and Shahmouradian for us to listen to and get educated.

We were in the desert. We heard that the Cilicians were in fight and we wanted to help them. We applied to the Englishmen. They trained us. The Turks were already defeated, but Clemenceau, the President of France, ordered the French army to withdraw. All our plans failed.

The Euphrates River was calm and wide. The Turks were following us. They had come to terms with the Arabs, planning to cross the Tigris and come and slaughter the Armenians. Through the trees the bullets reached us.

We told the Englishmen about it. They said to us, "Organize your army." The Englishmen surrounded them, sent airplanes and bombarded them.

They brought two wheeled ships. They took us on board the ships, and we sailed through the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and reached Jerusalem. Mr. Harutyun said good-

bye to us. We presented him with a carpet. Mr. Harutyun said: "I want a living present." And he married an orphan girl. We had a wedding that evening; we were so glad.

Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Yeghishé, accepted us, the orphans, very well. What a man he was! He was like God, he was a conscientious man. There was a printing house and a museum at the Monastery of St. Jacob. At Easter many people came to St. Harutyun Church, which is a round and tall building and has iron gates. Each nation has his separate place. There is a Chapel in the center: it is Jesus' grave: it is made of marble. You must approach it on your knees. On Easter days, in the morning, as the gates opened, the people rushed in. On that day, they threw out of the Chapel a burning candle. Someone of each nation standing there must try to catch it and carry it to his Patriarch. Every year the Armenians won. There were carpets on the ground. They held an umbrella over the head of the Patriarch. The orchestra of the Armenian Benevolent Union played. The King of Ethiopia was there; he said: "I'll take this orchestra for five years to play in my palace."

In 1924 there was already Soviet Armenia. Our superintendent said: "Let's send the big boys [orphans] to Armenia. Who wanted to go to Armenia?" I had a sister: I did not take part. They sent to Armenia about one hundred orphans. They did not allow the person, who had taken the boys to Armenia, to come back. I and the middle aged orphans were sent to the Kelekian Orphanage, which was supported by the AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union). Our superintendent, Yeghishé Vardanian bade us farewell and said: "Boys, for so many years I've brought you up..." He could not speak; he was so moved. He went to America.

They brought us to Beirut, to the Kelekian Orphanage. The boys were taken to masters to learn a trade. I learned to make furniture. The Arabs are very kind people. They accepted us very well and kept us. In 1930, I left my sister and went to France. I went and worked in the field of construction. Then I worked in the vineyards. I lived there for seventeen years. In 1947 I came to Armenia. I entered the furniture factory and worked there. I married and became father to five children.

#### 48 (48).

### VARAZDAT MARTIROS HARUTYUNIAN'S<sup>1</sup> TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Van)

I was born in the Chaghlipoghan Street of the Aygestanner district of the town of Van. My mother used to say: "Every autumn we rolled out one." That is, they had a child. My parents had 7 children – four sons and

three daughters.

We lived in a patriarchal house in the Chaghlipoghan Street. On the street side of the house lived my grandmother Zatik, who did not want to leave her house

<sup>1</sup> Famous architect, author of numerous valuable books, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Honored President of the Vaspourakan Compatriotic Union of Armenia.

and was martyred. My uncles lived on one side of the street and my mother's brothers lived on the other side. But the gardens were really worth mentioning. My uncle, Ter-Artinents Harutyun grew flowers. Whoever had a feast at home came and took flowers from him.

My father had gone to Constantinople, had learned the trade of a tailor and had returned back home. We lived a peaceful, happy and creative life.

I remember the events of 1915: on April 7 the Armenians rebelled, which ended with our victory in May 4. The Turks were very fierce. They had imprisoned many distinguished Armenian intellectuals beforehand. Among them were Arshavir Solakhian and his friends, whom the Turks had killed all. All the time gun-shots were heard from Kaghakamedj and Aygestan. The Armenians fought with limited bullets against the multi-thousand Turkish regular army. Hearing that the Russian forces were arriving, the Turks ran away.

It was the policy of the Russian army. We were obliged to retreat. I remember: my mother and sister were baking bread; my father was preparing the saddlebags in order to load our goods.

We walked out of Khachpoghan Street. What we had, we had loaded on our cow, which threw down the unusual load and ran away. We were obliged to carry our goods ourselves, and left Van towards the highlands of Berkri.

While passing by the bridge over Bandimahu River, the Van people suffered too many victims. The bridge was narrow: it was so deplorable; many were obliged to throw their children into the river.

We met the most violent battles near Berkri. The Russian soldiers had taken the children on the Russian vans, and the Kurds, who had been hired to slaughter the Armenians, attacked us. They were overturning the vans and were pouring the children into the river. Finally the Russian soldiers, who were accompanying us, succeeded in expelling the Kurds, and the entrance of the valley was opened, after that they returned. I was sitting in a van. We reached Igdır and stayed there. Some of the people began to complain that they were hungry and wanted bread.

We passed the Arax River and came to Edjmiadsin. The refugees were scattered all around the walls of the St. Edjmiadsin Monastery. Hundreds were dying daily of typhus. The situation was very grave. Even the houses were converted into hospitals. When my brother Gourgen died, I saw how the corpses were arranged like sticks over each other, in order to carry them to the group cemeteries at night.

My father realized that we were also going to die, so he gathered us and took us to Tiflis. My uncle was there: the Ter-Harutyunians with their families, who had taken

refuge there after the tragic events of 1896. We were – me, my mother, my father and my brother Ardsroun Harutyunian, Araxia's father. We were accommodated at the Aramian Hospital. Here my father died of typhus.

We found ourselves in an orphanage. Me, my sister and my brother were brought up at the Armenian Benevolent Union orphanage, which was supervised by Hovhannes Toumanian. He had adopted three boys: the future poet Vagharshak Norents, the literary critic Norayr Dabaghian and Mihran Tutundjian. The orphanage was in the yard of the St. Dsiravor Monastery in Tiflis. Pilgrims used to come to make offerings, and we were fed, but later it became difficult.

Our teacher of the Armenian language Dzeroun Torgomian published the "Hambavaber" journal, where the complete list of our orphans was published in the March 1916 issue. There I was registered under the number 204. At that time I was seven years old, my brother nine and my sister eleven years. My birthday was unknown; I registered it as November 29 – the rebirth date of the Armenian people.

The condition at the orphanage went from bad to worse. Half starving my brother Ardsroun and I escaped from the orphanage and came to our relatives. My uncle said: "Boys, whom did you repose your hopes in?"

Even if we were not killed by the Turks, at the end of the exile, we had survived only I, my mother and my brother out of the nine members of our family.

I've cleaned shoes in the streets; I've sold water and cigarettes. I had no shirt to put on. My mother sewed for me a shirt out of an umbrella cloth, so that I might attend school. But my shoes were both of the same side. I did not want to go to school with them. My brother worked all night and repaired them, so I put them on.

There was Tigran Nazarian's canteen in Tiflis, where the refugees were fed. There was a wooden theater in the courtyard, and the refugees slept on the stage platform.

Among the survivors of Van, it seems that I'm the only lucky one who later had the opportunity to travel from Armenia to see Van. The Vaspourakan Compatriotic Union undertook a tour to the Van-Vaspourakan region. Among the 31 participants I was the only one who was born in Van. The town of Van was built at the side of historical Tooshpa, which was founded in the 9th century B.C.

We stayed four days in Van. We climbed up the citadel of Van. We passed very emotional moments in Van. Not one church has remained on the site. Van has changed into a modern city with 170 thousand inhabitants. In our times it had 30-40 thousand populations, most of them were Armenians.

Nowadays, the Genocide of the Armenian monuments is in progress.

**49 (49).**  
**ARDSVIK GALOUST TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Van)**

Our house was in Khachpoghan Street in Van. It was a two-storeyed building surrounded with rose bushes. We lived in peace. Our neighbors were the Khandjians, Ararktsians, Derdzakians.

Before the war my father had escaped from the Turkish army. They had found him and imprisoned him. He had managed to flee again, and the Turks pursued him, for he was also a member of the Dashnak Party. While escaping, he had reached our house and was about to jump over the wall; a Turk had noticed him and fired. So, father was no more alive.

When the deportation began, we were eight in

the family. The road was very hard; everybody was tired and hungry. We left the dead ones on the road and moved forward, for the Turks were pursuing us. The Russian army guarded us. They distributed to us dried bread. We became waifs, and there was no one to take care of us. They gathered the orphans. They put me and my sister Armik in a closed van and took us to Igdir, then to Anipemza and later to Yerevan. Our Children's Home was near the St. Astvadsadsin Church, at Nork.

Our supervisor was Miss Azniv. The children's Home belonged to the Amercom.

**50 (50).**  
**LOUSIK SAHAK BALASSANIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Van)**

I was born in Artamet, a village of Van. Our family consisted of eight people – mother, father, three brothers and three sisters.

On April 15, 1915, the Turks attacked our village and killed my brother. They pillaged the people and went away. My grandma told my mother to take the children and to run away while they were still alive. We did not even have time to bury my brother. They killed all the men of the village, and those who remained alive, ran away to the mountains through the village grave-yard. My two sisters, two brothers and mother went to the mountain, and I, having lost them, went along Van Lake to the summer resorts of the Americans, where half of the people had taken refuge. I stayed there for three days, and the Turks attacked again. We returned to the village, where our neighbor – a Turk woman saw me, recognized me, and told me that she knew where our folks were. She took me to my mother.

The following day the Turks came and announced that we should go to Van, where they should accommodate us. For the meantime, they put us in military barracks. The next morning they brought us out and, setting us in lines showed us the way to Van, which passed by their military unit. Somehow we reach Van, where we were met by the Van authorities, who divided us among the local inhabitants to be lodged in their houses.

Then the Russian soldiers came; they liberated certain regions and we went back to our village again.

After some time, my father returned from the army, but he found our house in ruins and his mother's and my

brother's corpses in the ash piles.

Then the Russian soldiers said that they could not help us anymore; they had to return to their country, and those who wanted, might go with them. It took us two-three days to set off, till father could prepare some food for the road. We placed the food on the ox and moved on. We rested on the waterside. My father fell ill, and they took him somewhere like a hospital. He died there. We remained two sisters and one brother. We continued our way on foot. One of our brothers was lost and we could not find him, and our Arshalouys sister had already married and gone away with her husband.

Near the lake of Igdir, my sister Siroun, who was two years my elder, died. Then we went to the village of Igdir, where the authorities accommodated us somehow. They sent us – me, my mother and my brother to the village of Blour. It was summer; we slept outside, and in wintertime – next to the fire. When the Turks attacked Igdir, we came to Edjmiadsin. We remained in the yard of the monastery. Then the Americans came and organized orphanages. They had even a dining-room there. They organized small work-shops, where we span cotton, then made thread and received food for our work. Then my mother died. We remained alone. My brother was blind, so we did not want to part, but they took me to Leninakan (now: Gyumri), where a girls' orphanage was organized. The Americans selected the pretty and healthy girls and took them to America. Then I found my sister Aroussyak, whose husband prepared my documents and took me to Yerevan. But I never saw my blind brother again.

**51 (51).**

**VARDGES MELIK ALEXANIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1911, Van)**

Our family consisted of about forty people. I had uncles, an aunt. They killed them all, they exterminated them all.

My grandfather has had six sons and a daughter. They have been rich. They have had a two-storeyed house in the center of Van. The Turks have killed my father and my uncles in Van. The Turks have slaughtered all the males of our family. My mother has carried me and my two sisters on her back. The third day of the deportation my mother had been completely exhausted; she had not been able to carry the girls, who were unable to walk. Mother had left them on the road and had moved forward having me on her back. On our way famine and diseases threatened us. Our acquaintances helped my mother until we reached Orgov. And suddenly mother also got lost and I remained all alone. On the third day my mother found me. The neighbors had taken care of me. Famine and diseases prevailed. On the other hand the Kurds plundered us. They were looking for gold, and when we told them that we hadn't, they killed us. Thus a good many people lost their lives on the road of deportation. There were no carts. Women, small children went on foot, lost in the dust, trying to avoid the assaults of the Turks and the Kurds. We walked mostly at night: first, to avoid the enemy and second, to avoid the heat, which might kill us. The enemy massacred us ruthlessly, both old and young. The adult males had already been killed in Van.

We passed Igdir. No males were left with us: there were only women and children. We crossed the Arax River. We came to Vagharshapat, where there was starvation, a terrible heat and no water... A new massacre awaited us: hundreds and thousands of people were on the ground, suffering from diseases and moribund. My mother lost me again, since I had fallen ill with typhus.

Together with other children, they sent me, as an orphan, to the American orphanage in Bayazet. There, they gave us, at times only one nut a day. Then they transferred us to the Gyumri orphanage, where about forty thousand orphans lived. They put us in the former military barracks, according to age. I was in the youngest children's group. There, too, deaths were frequent: the

barracks were not heated, the nourishment was bad, the Americans punished sometimes very severely: they deprived us of food. We ate our dinner, and the punished child sat in a corner and looked at us. We often ate cold beans. Scabies and trachoma were common. They rubbed sulphur all over our body and made us stand in the sun. There was a school there; the teachers were Armenians. We loved teacher Sahak very much; he was Soghomon Tarontsi's father. There were no chairs, no tables. One orphan had to write his calligraphy on the back of the other. I learned in the agricultural section. We had our classes in the first half of the day and then we did practical work. They took us to work in the field. In 1928 no more orphanages were left.

I began working since 1937. Really, there were too many bad customs: one laborer wrote complaints against the other, and the person was punished. Before the war many people were sent to Kursk to study at the higher party classes. Hardly had I finished the Kursk classes, when it was announced that war had broken out and the Turks might attack our borders. We strengthened our posts on the Armenian border. Our army was waiting for the moment. All the Armenians, who were born in Turkey, were ready, but England, Churchill, was very crafty...

I often think: where did a hundred thousand Armenian orphans come from? Why did England, France, Germany allow so many Armenians to be massacred, so many children become orphans, waifs and strays. Among these orphans were General Safarian, colonels and many other great men. I have been the Second Party Secretary of the Vagharshapat region and have held different high positions. Now I'm retired. I have a son, a daughter and four grandchildren. I'm a member of the Vaspourakan Compatriotic Union.

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. Those people weren't working people and they made the Armenians work for them and serve them.

**52 (52).**

**AGHAVNI BARSEGHIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1911, Van, Aralez Village)**

I was born in 1911, in the Aralez Village of Van. My father's name was Abraham Margarian, my mother's name – Katariné, born Karapetian. We were four sisters

and two brothers. We had a house, fields, orchards, cattle and so on. During the war, when the Russian army advanced, we went back to Van, to our places, when they

withdrew, we escaped to Artashat (Eastern Armenia), which was two hundred and thirty km from Van.

In 1917, when the Russians said, “Back home” and retreated, leaving the Armenians alone, they agreed to leave their cannons, rifles and other ammunition to the Armenians. We set off. For a while we remained on the shore of Lake Van, opposite to the Aghtamar Island. As there were no boats, we could not go to Aghtamar for shelter, as it was usually done. From there we went to Persia – to the Armenian villages, where we remained for six months. One day we saw an airplane above our heads, and some people decided to shoot at it, thinking it was an enemy plane, but soon an English flag was thrown down the airplane, and they didn’t do anything. Later we heard that it was an airplane belonging to Lawrence of Arabia or his group. That day the English accompanied us to Baghdad. On our way, as we were going along a valley, we saw armed people on both sides: on one side were the Armenians, on the other side – the Turks. The latter fired at us; a bullet passed by my brother’s nose, and it was so close that my brother fainted. Thinking that he was going to die, he motioned us to walk forward, but fortunately he soon recovered and we continued our way together.

We set out in our carts, but soon, as there were no roads, we left the carts and continued our way on our animals till Basra. They accommodated us in camps. It was decided to take fifty families to Baghdad, those who had a handicraft. Years ago father had worked in Constantinople as an ironer of clothes, so we became part of that group.

In Baghdad a rich Armenian lady put under our disposal a large territory of land to pitch our tents on. At night the local Arabs used to steal our scanty possessions,

so we were obliged to build earthen huts, which were safer. As my brothers knew English well, they worked in the English airways and petroleum companies and received high salaries. The Baghdad climate was hot, so many people fell ill with cholera and died due to the absence of medical aid.

In 1918 all the Armenians decided to go to Armenia. We set off; armed men were in front and the old people, women and children followed them. At a certain place, when our armed men passed, armed Turks closed the road. We were compelled to go back.

Two English ships took some of the people to Armenia via Basra and Batoumi. A third ship would take us, too, but it didn’t come. Therefore we decided to go either to Canada or to England. At last, in 1925 we came to France, as merchants. From Baghdad we went to Damascus by taxi. After remaining there for eight days we went to Beirut by taxi. My elder brother had studied at the Varaga Monastery, where the principal was Mr. Manoukian, who had then become the principal of the Kelekian Orphanage. He said to us: “Save an orphan girl; take her with you.” Thus my brother Margar Margarian married Miss Arshalouys Degidjian, who was from Tigranakert. We celebrated the wedding and came to France in 1925.

In France, in 1930, I married Serob Barseghian from Van, an orphan, who remembered that his brother Ardsroun had died of hunger; the English had taken him to Jerusalem and entrusted him to an orphanage, which prepared clergymen. There he had been a classmate to Serobé Manoukian, who later became the Archbishop of Paris and the delegate of Vazgen I, Catholicos of All-Armenians. We had two sons – Aram-Paul, in 1932, Artashes-Henry, in 1941.

### 53 (53).

#### SHOGHIK HOVNAN MKRTCHIAN’S<sup>1</sup> TESTIMONY (B. 1911, Van, Endsak Village)

I was born in 1911, in the Endsak Village of Van, in the family of a peasant-cultivator. I remember our modest house, which was made of earth. In our large room we had the tondir, around which my mother, Shousanik spread the mattresses, on which we slept at night.

My father’s name was Hovnan. He had brothers – Avetis, Serob, Thomas, who lived next to our house with their families.

My grandfather’s name was Mkrkich. He was respected in our village and had some authority. In my childhood memories there is a very sad one, which is pegged down in my brain and I can never forget it: the

Turks hanged my sweet grandpa in front of our house. I’ve reached this age and still I can’t forget that dreadful picture. The Turks also cut my father’s tongue and he died on the spot.

I remember the night, the horrible night, when the Turks entered the houses and killed, slaughtered the peaceful Armenian peasants. It was past midnight, when we abandoned our house and together with the other peasants took the road of exile. The Turks fired at us from behind. The bullets killed people at random.

They had seated me on a buffalo. I remember when I fell down from its back into the river, my uncle who was very nimble, jumped immediately into the water

<sup>1</sup> People’s Singer of Armenia.

and saved me. Then they put me in a van, where there were other small children like me, some of them were ill, the others moribund. Thus, we reached Igdir, but we had already lost each other; from our large family were left only my uncle's sons – Vardan and Levon. They accompanied me till Alekpol (Leninakan, now: Gyumri) to the Children's House. There they kept us in the American Orphanage. The times were bad – famine and epidemics prevailed. Half-starving, I grew up with the other orphans; Shiraz, Nayiri Zarian, Khachik Dashtents, Samson Gasparian and others were together with me. Later, they separated the girls' orphanage.

I was in the limelight of the orphanage: I sang, dance and entertained everybody. They called me Sparkling Shoghik (shoghik = small ray – Arm.).

I remained at the Children's House for ten years. One day news spread in the Children's House that they had come to select children, who had good voices, in order to take them to the city to study." I was thirteen or fourteen years old then, the composer Nikoghayos Tigranian and the well-known singer Tigran Nalbandian wanted to listen to me in the office of the director of the Children's House.

I sang with emotion and tearful eyes, recalling my lost parents and our home.

"My daughter, why are you here?" Said Tigran Nalbandian.

"I have no one; I'm an orphan," I said with emotion.

They brought me to Yerevan. I studied at the school named after Khachatour Abovian. When I graduated from school, I continued my studies at a musical school and then at the Conservatoire. Even when I was a student, I sang at the radio. In those days, in 1926, our Yerevan radio had just been established, and the transmissions were live, but that did not frighten me; I was the first to sing Armenian folk and bardic songs in our country. I married kamanchist Gourgen Mirzoyan, who was the director of the ensemble of folk musical instruments of the Armenian Philharmonic. Later I began to sing with that ensemble. A great many people have adored my songs, among them – Yeghishé Charents, Aghassi Khandjian, Avetik Issahakian, Hrachya Ajarian, every one of whom has helped me in his own way. I have given concerts in different republics. I've even sung at the Kremlin for Stalin, Anastas Mikoyan and many other great people, introducing the Armenian song to foreigners. And all of them listened to my song in admiration; even many people shed tears, because there was the voice of my suffering and tortured people in my song. In 1956 I was awarded the title of People's artist of Armenia. After my husband's death, I live with my sole consolation, with my beloved daughter Zhanna.

The Turks wanted to cut into pieces and destroy the Armenian people, to break our will power, but the Armenian song sounded again and the Armenian hands constructed again...

#### 54 (54).

#### VARDOUHI MARGAR POTIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Van)

We have been very rich in Van. My father had seventeen houses. When my mother (God bless her soul), heard that we were going to be deported, she buried her necklace and all her jewelry under a tree, near the well, believing that we would come back. Mother had left only one ring on her finger. When we set off, I was three years old. I did not understand that we were being deported. I only remember that my mother put a gata in my hands, then our gates were opened and we came out. My mother (God bless her soul) said: "Leave the doors open, so that when the Turks come, they won't break it." According to her, we would return back. On the road mother put me on a donkey. We were going with the people. On the way I got lost. The Russian soldiers gathered the lost children and put them in vans. Do you know what we saw on our way? 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 had not 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 drifted them down the river. They were yelling, screaming and crying. The Kurds were firing on us. Mothers forgot about their children.

God damn that Berkri River! How many people did it devour! The Russians had gathered all the lost children and had filled them in an open place. I remained with the Russians for two months. My mother came and found me.

We reached Igdir. Mother took me by the hand, and we were walking about. I was crying, because I was hungry. A woman was baking lavash. My mother (God bless her soul) approached her and said: "Give us a lavash, let the child eat." The merciless woman did not give any. My mother took off from her finger the only ring she had and said: "Take this ring and give the child a lavash." The woman took the ring and gave mother a lavash. I began to eat. I was very hungry. I was small, but

I remember it very well.

We came to Edjmiadsin; we were lying in the woods. People died one after the other. My mother's brother died in the woods. They brought a cart and took him away to bury. Many died of typhus and cholera, a few survived...

My mother found me, but she could not find my brother and sister. They had gone back to Van together with the refugees, with the families of my aunt and uncle. My uncle and his son-in-law had resisted the Turks and got killed during the fight. My sister and brother remained in Van. They had rubbed soot on my sister's face, had hidden her in the baking pit. Finally, they had married her to an old man – of my father's age – in order

to safeguard her. In 1924, they also came to Armenia, plundered, wounded and sick.

I remember: my mother and I were sitting near the bridge of Zangou, when they came. My mother hugged her and fainted. Eh, how much I have seen!

We noticed that my uncle and his son-in-law were missing. I remember two sisters of my father came with their children. I don't know what had happened to the rest.

I remained some time at the American orphanage in Kond, in Yerevan. There I fell ill with scabies. My mother came and took me home. That lodging had been previously inhabited by Turks.

### 55 (55).

#### **DERENIK AVETIS SAROYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Van)**

Whatever I'm telling you about my childhood, I've heard from my parents and elder brother. I remember Van as a dream. I was then only two and a half years old.

The deportation was an awful tragedy, for the old and the young were in torture and torment. We were told that we should leave Van, for the Russian army was retreating and so was Andranik.

The unspeakable deportation started. Those who had carts packed their things on them. We lived at the foot of the Van Fortress. We had nothing. We set off. We reached the Berkri River. The people were so tired and exhausted that many mothers threw their babies into the river to save their own lives, since the Turks followed us to bring us death. We reached Surmalou (Igdır). The crop was abundant. The inhabitants of Igdır entered their vineyards and orchards, and irrigated them plentifully, so that we should come out of them.

Our family consisted of eight people. My grandma died on the way. On the road of deportation my sister was born and, as we were in misfortune, we called her Dezhbakht (Unfortunate – Arm.). On the way we lost also my mother's sister. She fell ill with typhus and we buried her in Igdır.

We reached Edjmiadsin, where terrible conditions prevailed, but they treated us very well; they immediately

gave us food and lodging. Every day corpses were taken, in carts, to the yard of the St. Gayané Monastery, where there was a large graveyard, and next to Khent, buried them there. Later, they brought us to Yerevan.

Alazan, Gourgen Mahari, Darcho Gabouzian, Hovhannes Mokatsian and we, about one hundred people reached Yerevan; only four people were left alive from our family.

The road of my three uncles forked: one went to Leninakan (now: Gyumri), the other remained in Edjmiadsin, and we came to Yerevan. Thus, we were scattered.

In 1936, when they [the Soviet government] imprisoned me, I was the chairman of Armenia Tourism. In 1935, when I was twenty-three years old, Khandjian called me and asked how we could climb to the summit of the Ararat Mountain and put Stalin's bust there.

It was a very difficult task and they blamed us that we could not fulfill it. That was the reason why they persecuted and imprisoned me.

Later, I became the director of the Museum of the People's Arts of Armenia and I discovered many self-taught artists and I have been awarded the "Honored" title. For example, I was the first to tape-record Hayrik Mouradian and many others.

### 56 (56).

#### **ARMIK GALOUST TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Van)**

I was very small when we were deported from Van. I was hardly three years old. Our father had been serving in the Turkish army, but he had escaped; then they had arrested and imprisoned him, but he had

escaped from the prison as well. He was a member of the Dashnak Party. They had pursued and shot him. So, I don't remember my father. But I remember that they put me in a netted cart, where there were many other

small children, one up on the other, but as the sides and the top of the cart were covered with wooden planks, we reached Yerevan safely. They accommodated us in the Children's House, which was near the St. Astvadsadsin Church in Nork.

Then I studied at the State University, at the Faculty of Chemistry. I successfully maintained my thesis for the doctorate degree and worked at the Institute of Fine Organic Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of

Armenia.

At that time the Professors Mndjoyan and Mednikian worked there.

I have devoted all my knowledge to the development of science in our country. I have served to my country for years. But now, together with my elder sister, Ardsvik, we're living under very hard conditions. Both of us are invalid pensioners, there's no one to help us. So, we're orphans again, we – two sisters.

## 57 (57).

### GHOUKAS ABRO KARAPETIAN'S TESTIMONY<sup>1</sup>

#### (B. 1901, Moks Province, Arnabat Village)

We lived in the village of Arnabat, Bohtan Province. In summer we moved to the mountain pastures, we returned to our village in late fall. There were five Armenian families in our village, who lived with the Kourmandjis in peace and harmony. The Armenian tilled the soil and bred animals. An Armenian, whose name was Mkho, had a mill. Our house was small, with a small yard.

My father's name was Abro. We were four brothers – Sevkin, Akhen, Dhen and I. My eldest brother died early. There was no school and no hospital in our village. We did not busy ourselves with politics. Our folks wove felt. Once a week the Armenian families visited each other. On Sundays we went to the church, which was a small chapel. There were ten families in the village: five Armenians and five Muslims. The state was always partial to Muslims. Sultan Hamid always treated the Armenians badly. The Young Turk government, which succeeded him, was even worse toward the Armenians.

One day an order came, telling that all the Armenians should be massacred. That day all of us were at home. My mother brought the meal cooked the day before and put it on the table for us to eat. All of a sudden three Turk askyars came in. They killed my uncle on the spot; they tied the hands of my father and nephew and took them away. They took away my uncle's daughter as well. We saw that the Turk soldiers had filled the village. I and my brother hid ourselves. The Turk askyars began to destroy the village, slaughtered all the Armenians, kidnapped the girls and plundered everything. They did not spare anyone. Many people escaped and entered the chapel. We also ran and entered there. Those who hid themselves were saved. There wasn't an Armenian family, which did not suffer a victim that night. We – I, my mother and brother, did not return home: we went to the fields and hid there. We remained there for three days. Whatever I saw, I do not wish my enemy to see. All the Armenians'

houses of the neighboring villages were destroyed: some families lost their daughters, others lost their sons, some lost their children, and others lost their parents. The Turks plundered ruthlessly. They also demanded money in order not to kill us.

For eighteen days we remained in the Dekabra Village of Djeziré. A kind Kourmandji family kept and fed us. Their father's name was Mohammed. He loved me very much and he kept me. A man came, gave to my master three ghurush in order to buy me, but my master did not sell me. That family kept us. They gave us new Kurdish names. Thus we were saved.

Then we found shelter in a man's house, called Hadji. We were very helpless; we had only our God. God helped us to survive. Hadji also kept us. Out of one hundred souls in our large family, only two or three people survived.

Then we went and lived in the family of a Kurd sheikh. Then we came out of there and crossing over a bridge continued our way. For eight days we remained in the open air. We walked on, crying, during the night, so that they might not see and kill us. That was our destiny. May God not show others what we saw! While fleeing, I passed through three villages. I had never seen a good day.

Then I heard that there was Armenia and she was calling the Armenians to her. I got registered and we came to Armenia. I built a house. We lived first in Leninakan (now: Gyumri), but after the earthquake of 1988, we came to Yerevan and settled in Loussavan. Now I'm 89 years old, I have three sons, three daughters and sixty grandchildren. All of them are alive. It's already twenty-two years we're living in Armenia. Thank God!

But 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.

<sup>1</sup> The survivor is a Kurdish-speaking Armenian. His testimony has been translated into Armenian by Zenfira Khatieva, scientific worker of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

**KAMSAR HARUTYUN KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
(B. 1898, Bayazet)

The town of Bayazet lay at the foot of the Great Mount Ararat, in the vicinity of the Bayazet Fortress. The fortress was on a highland and looked very gloomy. The sides of the town were defined by the fortress: it was said, 'to the right of the fortress,' 'to the left of the fortress,' 'at the foot of the fortress,' 'higher up the fortress' and so on. Narrow streets rayed down round the fortress. On both sides of the streets there were houses, which stepped back one after the other; the roof of the lower house was the yard of the house above. From the higher houses we descended down, where there was a flat place.

Our house was under the wall of the church, very close to it. Our church was without a dome; the roof was flat. They said it was for avoiding attention. The back wall of the church was always wet. They said there was a live girl in the wall, and her tears made the wall wet. When they were building the church – the elderly people told – they built up the wall till evening and the following morning they came and saw the wall was pulled down. The old people had advised to put a young girl or boy in the wall, in order to keep it erect. And so they had done. They had brought a young orphan girl, having paid to her aunt a large sum of money. When they had put the girl on the foundation of the church and continued building the wall, the girl had addressed her aunt with a song, and the aunt had calmed her, saying, "Let them build, darling, let them build till the knee, until the waist, to the breast and higher, let them build." When they had reached the shoulders, the girl had understood that her aunt had given her to be put in the wall, she had cried and cursed her aunt: "May you become a black crow, sit on my wall and caw." And so her aunt had become a crow and sat on the wet wall. Until now near that wet wall there are many crows flying. They always told this story and sang, "They built, aunt, they built," and the girls made a circle and danced.

The town had an elementary school with separate classes for boys and girls. During the breaks all the children came out into the yard to play and they played separately. The girls used to dance, and the boys watched them. That was the reason why every day I quarreled with my sister, Victor, and told her not to go to school to dance and jump "Laylo Khaneh." At last I tore her books in order to prevent her from going to school.

Armenians and Turks lived in the city and the Kurds lived in the surrounding villages. Everyday the Kurds came to Bayazet to the market to buy and sell. Everyone

knew each other in the town, for most of them were acquaintances, relatives or friends. While speaking about each other they mainly used the nicknames. For example our family was called "Umbershat," for they lived long, and the word means: "people, who have longevity."

On my mother's side they were called "Bourd (wool – Arm.) Hayro," for they have been very hairy, they used to keep long beards and moustaches. It is said that once grandpa Hayro, while storing up his wool had found its weight insufficient. Finding no other way out, he had cut his beard and added it on the scales, and got the necessary weight. After that the family was recognized as "Bourd Hayro."

Our family was large: four brothers lived next to each other with their families, as one family. My mother, as the wife of the eldest brother, was the landlady of the family; she was responsible for the cooking. Bread was baked almost every day, and gata was made in our baking-room. The woman who baked the bread was a Turk woman, who almost lived on our account. The dinner, which was eaten in the evening hours, consisted of yakhni, tolma, kyufta and so on; these were cooked in earthenware pots or copper pans and lowered in the tonir.

All the family members' surname was written Khachatourian, for my grandpa's name was Khachatour (khach = cross, tour = give, given by the cross – Arm.), but when they spoke of the family, they mentioned "the Umbrshats." My grandfather had four sons and a daughter. His sons were Avetis – a tailor, Arakel - a teacher, Harutyun – a goldsmith and the youngest, whom I hardly remember and if I am not mistaken was called Simon. I was small when his wife died first and then he himself passed away, leaving two small children, a girl and a boy, to my mother's care. Uncle Arakel was not married: he lived with us. Avetis had three sons – Vahan, Gagik, Hrant. Harutyun had two sons and two daughters; their names were – Sirakan, Kamsar, Victoria and Yepros. My grandpa Khachatour's daughter had married early; we had lost her during the exile, but in the 1940s we found her children in Tiflis. Then we often visited each other. Avetis had also gone to Tiflis together with his children. Later, two of his sons came to Yerevan, and one of them went to Batoumi. All of them were married. The eldest had two sons, the second – a son and the third had a daughter, whom we couldn't come to know, for Hrant died young, and our relations stopped.

My uncle Arakel was a teacher at a school in the village of Ardsap, 3 km from Bayazet. Every day in the morning

\* This testimony has been written down and handed to me by the daughter of the survivor, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Doctor of History, Zhenia Khachatryan.

he went to his school and came back in the evening. In winter, when the thick layer of snow covered the land, a narrow path was opened through it wide enough to let a man pass. If a person came from the opposite side, both of them had to stop and pass by, touching each other and the snow walls. In spite of the thick snow, the higher part of the town was a white flat field, on which, particularly at sunset, quails used to walk. We called them partridges. They looked for food, looking fearfully this way and that. When they heard a voice or felt that people were coming, they immediately hid their heads in the snow and stuck out their tails. Every day on his way home uncle Arakel caught them from right and left and put them in his bag, so everyday, when he reached home, he brought twenty or thirty quails. I waited uncle Arakel impatiently. As he entered the house, he threw the bag before my feet and said: "Kamsar, take your partridges." I had the boiling water prepared beforehand; I immediately pulled off the heads of the dizzy quails, plucked them, fried in plenty of butter and ate them with my friends. I haven't eaten anything more delicious in my life.

In the house each of us had our duties: for example, every morning uncle Arakel had to go to the market to bring meat before going to his work. The butchers knew their customers: they divided the meat according to their order, considering at the same time the part of the beef and the weight. They knew also when their customers would come. Every morning uncle Arakel gave the children one shahi or abassi [kinds of Persian money] each. It was our money to buy fruits. Immediately we ran to the shop, gave the money to the grocer, opened our pockets and waited. He filled our pockets with raisins, lablabou, dried fruits or sweets, which we ate the whole day and it never ended.

We gathered with the boys of our district, we collected money or brought food from home and went somewhere to eat and drink on holidays. We also came together to play lakhti; we competed and tried our strength. On Easter we used to 'fight' with colored eggs. Sometimes we went in groups to the other quarters for 'stone-fighting.' In our neighborhood I was surrounded with boys two-three years older than me, nearly at the age of Sirakan, and made friends with them; for example, Zaven of Markhents, with whom we remained friends till the end.

Together with our boys we've climbed higher on the slopes of Massis [the Armenian name for Ararat], there was an ice-cold fountain there, which flowed like a small stream and then disappeared in the grass. We looked for it quite long to find the place, but we couldn't. Once we filled some straw in the fountain water and followed it to see, where would it come out? And we found it in the Bayazet River. We understood that the fountain water was running toward the Bayazet River. Still higher the fountain, there were burning tundirs. We used to climb

to the tundirs, made khorovads, ate and drank the cold water, which was very tasty, and soon we felt as if we had eaten nothing and went home hungry. Once, one of our friends could not come with us, so we decided to take his share home. We wrapped the barbecue in lavash and took it down with us and when we opened the lavash, we saw raw meat instead of barbecue. I was very young then, 7-8 years old and we used to run often over the plains and meadows. Once, together with older and younger boys, we went to gather flowers. In spring the feet of Massis became a sea of flowers. There was a flower; they called it spring-flower; it bloomed in different colors. I remember the white, blue and red fields of that flower. The flowers opened before dawn. That was why, we went early in the morning to make big bunches of the flowers and bring them home. It had a sweet fragrance. The flowers bloomed approximately at the end of May and the beginning of June. There was a rock in the middle of those beautiful fields, and when we went to pick the flowers, we climbed that rock facing Massis, and waited till the sun rose. While watching from there, the sun rose just between the two Massises. It was a magnificent picture. When I became an adult (e.g.: before the exile), I don't remember that I have gone to those places again.

When we came out of Bayazet to an open space, on a few km from the town in the plain, there was a hill with stone piles around. The whole plain was covered with big and small stones. The hill was called "Bomb-thrower." Once a year the hill began to eject gases from its top; a strong thunderous roar was heard; the earth began to tremble and stones flew right and left at different heights and distances. The stones remained hot enough to burn for a long time. It was told that there had been Kurds' villages there long ago. The travelers passed by that places almost running, for no one knew when the hill would 'fire stones.' Among the elderly people there were those who foresaw the time of 'firing' by special signs and they warned the people.

In our town my father was known as goldsmith Harten. His workshop was in the lower parts of the town. We descended the hillside to the lowest part, where there was a flat space. We climbed two stairs up and entered the workshop. When there were no classes he took me with him, telling that he wanted me to help him. Long after that I understood that he wanted to teach me his craft; I saw everything, but paid no particular attention. Father worked all day long, people came and went incessantly, and I worked as an apprentice under father's supervision. I obeyed whatever he said, otherwise he would frown at me, and I feared him, not for other things, but for my great love and respect, I did not want to vex him. Generally, people were scared when father frowned, he was a severe person. He had large blue eyes, so, when he frowned, his whole face became awful. His customers were mainly

Kurds, for whom father made silver ornaments, and the Kurds paid father in gold for his work. I was always astonished that people gave gold for silver. Father kept the gold in small purses under the burnt and unburned coal in a corner of his workshop.

Every morning the Kurds from the villages around Bayazet came to the market for trade. Once in a while someone entered the workshop, a piece of iron in his hand, saying: "Master, what iron is this?" Father looked at it then applied a kind of liquid (now I don't remember how it was called) and if it was copper or silver, he exchanged it with a silver or copper ring or bracelet and sent them away. The Kurds were always pleased with father and respected him very much. He put those bars in a special box, till he needed them. Once it so happened that a Kurd came in bashfully, a piece of iron-bar in his hand, and said: "Master, this iron looks like silver." Father looked at the Kurd and said angrily: "How do you know that it's silver?" He took the iron-bar, threw it on the heap of coal, gave a silver ring to the Kurd, who, blushing like a child, hung his head and went away. When the Kurd had already gone, I looked at father in surprise, wondering why he had rebuked the man, and asked very carefully: "Father, did you look well at the iron." He looked at me strictly, went and found the iron bar in the coal-box; he tested it again and sweated: "Oh, I lied to kirva, run and see; he may be in the market yet, catch him and bring him here!" I ran out of the workshop, ran to the market, looked for the man, but could not find him. After that, father was searching the Kurd everywhere, because the 'iron' bar contained a good percentage of silver. After years, in Yerevan, such iron pieces had remained in my father's tools. We melted them out of curiosity and, really, 30 per cent of it was silver. In Bayazet and its surroundings such pieces of metal were abundant.

When I was small, I remember an incident, which turned the whole of Bayazet upside down. Mother's youngest sister, Haykanoush, was a very pretty girl. My grandpa's family did not know how to keep her, so that the Kurds or the Turks would not kidnap her. At nights she did not remain at home; she was almost at our house all the time, for there were a lot of males in our family; besides, there was a particular veneration and respect towards our family by the Kurds and the Turks. I remember, father was seriously ill and there was a well-known Turk military doctor, who did not go to the Armenians' houses. His fee also was very high, but he came to our house of his own will to treat father.

Finally Haykanoush got married. Her husband was a very handsome youth. I remember him always on horseback. He was tall, intelligent and brave. He had a great fame in the town. Vahan was often absent from home, and Haykanoush remained alone with her old mother-in-law. I was small, but the boys treated me in a special way and they often trusted me a man's job. If,

before, I only accompanied Haykanoush, now they sent me every night to guard the women and the house. In town they whispered to each other: "Vahan is an outlaw; he goes to the mountains." But he had some kind of a mysterious behavior; besides, when anyone began to talk about him, all the others kept silent, keeping in secret who was he and what he was busy with. And that respectful silence created a veneration towards him. In Bayazet he had his partners and links.

The house of Haykanoush's husband was in the upper district, on the top of the slope. One evening, the sun had not set yet, when a row was heard; everybody was confused. News was brought to us that Haykanoush had been kidnapped. Father and the neighboring men left their work at once got on horseback or ran to pursue the fugitives. Several painful hours passed. They returned very late to our house, bringing with them Haykanoush. Much time hadn't passed, maybe about a year, when again a hue and cry was heard from that quarter. All of us ran there and saw that they had brought Haykanoush's husband, Vahan's corpse. The Kurds had trapped and killed him. Poor Haykanoush had been married only for two years. The funeral was very distressing, because he was young and loved by everybody. The whole population mourned over his death. All the Armenians of the town took part in the funeral. Old and young were very strained; they were searching a cause for revenge. The elders kept the young back with great difficulty. The Armenians had rallied and had become one family.

Such events were not rare in Bayazet; tension rose and fell from time to time. They tried to forget, but when blood was shed, they could not stand it. That was the reason why they were always heedful and vigilant. Everybody kept weapons at home. They tried at least to have a horse, which they always kept ready to saddle. In case of necessity, one or several horsemen flew out from each house to render help. It seemed that the ordinary day was calm. The holidays and particularly the weddings, the open air festivities and merry-makings were held together – Armenians, Turks, Kurds, but they were always watchful to the surrounding and the people. They kept guard day and night and were silent. There were Dashnaks in Bayazet; it was told that there were also revolutionaries; the elders knew about them, but they did not allow us to get in touch with them. According to the traditional custom, the children's respect and obedience towards the elders was immense and no one tried to disobey. And our elders were very careful and they never left us alone.

Our family was always uneasy. Father went sometimes to the villages to the pastures of the Kurds to work there, and we arranged so, that there was always a man at home. Our women and children were never left alone, because various incidents happened.

My mother – Alkhatoun, was in charge of the

household management. The two orphans of my youngest uncle, a boy and a girl, had been left in my mother's care. Uncle Arakel had also passed away. Father, mother, Sirakan, Victor, me and the two children lived in our house. Avetis and his family were in a separate house.

Our birth dates were written on the last sheets of our church Bible. When the exile began, we all lost our calculations, the more so, as the recruiting to the Turkish army approached. We tried to avoid it, and no one told his exact age, and thus, everything got mixed up. I knew that Sirakan was the eldest, then Victor and then me. Mother had told us that the difference in our ages was two years. Later, when we underwent medical commission examinations, I became the eldest and Victor – the youngest.

In 1914 the whole town got into a panic, because news came that the Turkish army was coming to slaughter the Armenians. We locked the doors of the house, kept the keys and fled to Igdir. Soon people calmed down; the first confusion subsided and in a few months we returned home. We had rented a house in Igdir and we lived there as in a summer resort. For the first time we did not even suffer. We went back; everything was in its place. We took out the keys, opened the doors and began to live as before. Nothing was missing in the house. The neighbors received us well, but fear was in our hearts. I don't remember how much time had passed, when we fled to Igdir again, but this time it was for a shorter time. We stayed there almost for a month and then came back. For the third time we hesitated, we did not want to leave, but the whole town was in a turmoil, and everybody was moving to the Russian border. It was in the autumn of 1916. When the town became half-empty, we understood that it was unavoidable, we had to go and we began packing our things. Little time was left. The neighboring Turkish women were already in our house and each one pointed out what she wanted. In our presence they divided our property among themselves. We were silent; we were very careful and spoke with each other in mimics. Our Turk baker woman knew the place of everything and she showed the others where they were. I could not stand any more; I did not know what to do, I took the rifle and wanted to kill the woman. Father guessed my intention and held my hand: "Kamsar, don't shed blood in my house, let it remain clean." He knew what the consequence would be. If I killed the woman, they would slaughter us all in our house. All of us got out of the house in silence, with broken hearts. We had put a few rugs and clothes on the donkey; we did not care about anything anymore. We had a few valuable mirrors; Sirakan put them on the clothes for safety. We hoped that we would come back. Mother embraced my swaddled new-born sister; I took up in my arms the children of my late uncle – the 6 year-old girl and the 5 year-old boy, and we came out. We locked the doors again and kept the

keys in the same safe place as before. The town seemed empty. We were almost the last people to leave. When we were coming out of the town, I looked back, there were almost no people coming after us. We were running to catch up with the group of the refugees. We reached them. The Russian soldiers on horseback were defending us on both sides and at the back. On our way I made friends with a Russian; he was a very kind boy. While coming out of the house I had not thought that it was autumn, and the nights were already cold. I understood it on our way, but it was late; I was cold. My Russian friend guessed it, took off his overcoat and gave it to me. It was large for my size: the shoulders were falling down, but it was warm. And then, when they were leaving us, he gave me his horse to ride. The Russian soldiers gradually fell back. Young boys, teenagers and adult men from among the refugees, who were armed, came out and occupied the soldiers' places. The throng of the refugees was becoming denser and denser, since people fleeing from other places were joining us. The crowds of the people were dragging themselves on the road, crying, mourning, the horror of death in their heart. Turkish officers were following us from afar. They did not fire at us, they were silent, but they did not leave us alone. All along the way lavash was scattered in packs. Those escaping before us had taken food with them, but getting tired, they had left some on the roadside. Whoever got hungry, picked up the bread and ate; even the donkeys and horses were grazing on lavash. It was distressing to see bread scattered under our feet.

I had put the children on horseback and was dragging my feet forward, at the same time searching our folk with my eyes. We had almost reached the Russian border, when I noticed that my mother was missing. Our people did not know where she was. I began questioning right and left. No one knew anything. I stood on the road and began to ask everybody in turn if they had seen a woman with a baby in her hands. At last a woman told me that she had seen a woman with a baby in her hands, who were fallen behind due to exhaustion. My heart and conscience began torturing me: all the time I had been watching mother from afar, and now, as we were reaching the border, I had lost her. I approached a lonely old woman and asked her to take hold of the children by the hands till I came back. She agreed with difficulty. I rode the horse and galloped back. I don't know how far I went. The heads of the Turkish soldiers and the end of their weapons were visible in the distance. Suddenly I saw my mother, the baby in her arms, dragging her feet with difficulty toward a big stone. As she saw me, she collapsed and fell on. She put the baby on the stone and started to cry whether out of despair or joy, I don't know. I hugged her, put her on horseback, gave the baby to her, and holding the horse by the rein, we moved forward, running till the village of Margara. It was getting dark.

Having passed the border, the multitude had, exhausted and in despair, scattered all over the field. After settling mother in a safe place, I begin looking for my uncle's children. It was dark and cold. People had made fires and those who had food, were eating. The peasants had come and were trying to help and were nursing the sick. It was dreadful scene. At last I found the old woman and ran to her, but as she saw me, she began to wail. I couldn't understand what had happened. When she calmed down a little she told me: "When we reached here, many people had gathered in the field. Among them there were people from the town. A woman came near, held the boy by the hand and asked whose child he was. I said that I didn't know, a young boy has asked me to watch them till he came back, but he hasn't come yet. The woman told me to give her the boy to keep. I did not know what to do. I thought you had gone and probably would not come back. Me – alone, an old woman, what could I do with the children, how could I keep them? I told her, 'Take him.' When she stretched her hand to take the boy by the hand, his sister screamed, hugged her brother and began to cry. Both of them were crying so bitterly, that the woman could not stand and said: 'Give me both of them; I'll take care of them.' So, I gave them."

I was much pained and at a loss; I did not know what to do. Day broke; I began to ask here and there. I could not get any news from anyone or anywhere. All through my life, wherever I've gone, wherever I've been, I've told this story and inquired about them. I've always hoped and still hope that I'll find them one day. On the road we had lost Sirakan as well. Years after we learned that the mirror, which he had put on the load, could be the cause of his death. On the way the sunrays had fallen on the mirror and had been reflected over the mountains. They had fired in the direction of the rays, and the bullets had touched he mirror. It had been broken into pieces, and Sirakan had been hardly able to throw himself into the bushes and be saved. Years later we found Sirakan and in 1934-1935 we found our lost aunt and other relatives in Tiflis and Yerevan.

Many of those who had reached Margara with us remained there and in the nearby villages close to the border, hoping to go back to their houses in case of possibility. We set off towards Martouni. We had friends and acquaintances in those places. We hoped to get their assistance. Winter was approaching. We went to Upper Adiyaman, Zolakar, Dzoragyugh, Avdalaghalou, but we couldn't stay in these places. Everywhere we used to rent a house and work as goldsmiths. We passed the winter somehow and settled in Kyavar. Sirakan came and found us and married Navoy's daughter – Assanet. After the exile they lived in Yerevan. Victor married Avetis of Mirzo, went to Darachichak (now: Dsaghkadzor). After the deportation the Mirzos had settled there. They lived a hard life. Father went to Agrija to work among the Kurds

as a goldsmith and they paid him in foodstuff – butter, cheese and so on. We lived somehow. We had friends and acquaintances in Kyavar. Yepros grew up. All of us were together again. I did not have a permanent job.

In 1927 I married Araxy Ter-Abrahamian, who was ten years younger than me. Father had close relations in Yerevan. Their daughter, Hripsimé had married Araxy's elder brother, Arsham. After her father's death Arsham had brought Araxy to the town to study and she had remained with her brother. When I learned that I wanted to get married, he invited me to his house. We got acquainted with Araxy and married. A year passed and our eldest daughter was born; then we had two daughters and two sons. After getting married, when we had already two daughters, Araxy's cousin found a job for me in a geological expedition. Artashes was a well-known geologist, a very intelligent and educated person. He loved Araxy very much as a sister and nourished same feeling towards me. We often met each other. He worked in Nournous and often came to Kyavar. Since going and coming was difficult, we decided all to move to Yerevan. In the 1930s I was transferred to a more permanent job, to the State Printing House and then to the first printing house of Yerevan. All my future life I worked as a polygraphic worker.

I was fond of reading and I have sat up numerous nights reading Armenian historical novels. The second copy of all the printed books were mine. I had collected a big library and it was my greatest joy. During 1936-1937 many valuable books, with wonderful illustrations were burnt secretly with my own hand, in a wood-burning stove, but, all the same, I was persecuted. I hardly escaped exile due to my resemblance to the Minister of Education Arto Yeghiazarian. Once my portrait had been published in a newspaper, and they had taken me for Arto Yeghiazarian, and for a long time I was under cross-examinations and persecutions.

In 1935 Sirakan received a flat and they moved to live there with father and mother. Before that, Yepros had died being infected with typhoid. We remained, with Araxy and the three children, in a rented house and our dream was to have our own house. I the autumn of 1940 I bought a one-room stone house from Gzoyants Souren of Bayazet and rebuilt it with my own hands. Then the Patriotic War [1941] broke out. I was recruited a few times, but, to my good fortune, I remained at home. Father died in 1937, dreaming to have a grandson. He did not see my two sons, and mother died in 1947, when my second son was already born. Sirakan did not have any children.

All through my life I've dreamed to see Bayazet once more, to see our house. It seemed to me that if I go to Bayazet, I will pick up the key from its hidden place, open the door and see everything in its place as before.

## EVELINA HAKOB KANAYAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Igdirdir)

I was born in 1909 in Igdirdir. In our Igdirdir we lived joyfully and happily – Armenians, Turks, Russians, Kurds and Yezidis. We had good customs. Our weddings were full of merry-making. My mother was from a well-to-do family. Her brother was the military commissar of Surmalou (Igdirdir).

In Igdirdir, we, the children had a happy life. We used to play a lot. We had Turk neighbors next to our house. The Armenians and the Turks were very intimate with each other. One day, when we were playing; we saw that the Russian army had come to our yard; they had their canteen, they had everything with them. They settled and began to cook. They had brown loaves; I took them some lavash.

After two or three days they moved towards Western Armenia. Though I was young, I thought all the same: "Why did they come? Why did they go?"

I had an uncle who had just finished the officers' vocational school in Yerevan. Then we saw a jeep, passing swiftly, with two generals inside it wearing uniforms with shining buttons. They came from Margara and went towards Kars, Ardahan, Erzroom. One day before the fight the Armenians lived with the Turks peacefully and in harmony. But one night the Turks assaulted the Armenians; they began to threaten, destroy and kill; they slaughtered the old and the young people. The Armenians, taken a back, escaped even barefooted, from their houses. Thus the massacre of the Armenians started.

When the day dawned they met Armenians coming from other towns, who were also in the same state.

The Turk pashas had decided to massacre the Armenians and Igdirdir was on the crossroads from Western Armenia, from Kars, Ardahan, Sarighamish, Bitlis and others.

Many Armenians were slaughtered. The emigrants reached somehow Igdirdir with swollen feet, hungry, thinking they would find something to eat there, but we were almost in the same condition. It was 18 km from Igdirdir to Margara.

I had three uncles; all three of them were at the front. My eldest uncle had four children. He was in the "Troutsik" (Kite – Arm.) cavalry. The other one was in Dro's group. One day my officer uncle brought an orphan-child home so that my grandmother looked after him. That child was crying the whole night, yelling "I want my mummy..."

Famine caught the whole town of Igdirdir. The merciless Turks infected us with cholera. Igdirdir became an open grave full of bones and corpses. No one had anything

to eat.

When the Turks attacked, there was an unequal fight. The Armenians had no arms. Not only the refugees, but the inhabitants of Igdirdir died also of cholera. My mother was 22 years old, my father – 25, my aunt – 18 years old, she was newly married and was waiting for a baby, my sister – 10 years old and my officer uncle, all of us set off on foot to the Margara bridge.

The Turks attacked not only Western Armenia, but Eastern Armenia as well.

I remember that we, the children were asleep, when my grandmother came and said: "We're being deported." My heart ached when the bells of the Armenian Church began to toll. They had set fire to the haystack and wheat stacks to show the people their way by night.

On the road people lost each other. The bellow of the animals, and the confusion of the people created a real turmoil. People trod on each other.

We walked and reached the house of Dro's father, which had been transformed into a hospital. The wounded Armenian soldiers were left there in beds. 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. Igdirdir was flooded with corpses. Even if the representatives of the United Nations come, I'll tell them all I have seen. They had killed a child's mother. Igdirdir had become a source of infection. The Turks entered Orgov, but they immediately came out on the road, they did not step into the town, because cholera had spread there. The Turks had incited the Kurds, too, to kill and plunder the Armenians. They had promised to give them land. If I go to Igdirdir, I can remember how many corpses I've seen in every house. There were ten houses on our street, which were full of bones: all of them had died of hunger and cholera.

At midnight grandma said: "Emma, dear, look, we're crossing the Araz, see how large it is!"

Really the Araz River was very wide. And when we were passing with our carts and horses over the wooden bridge, it creaked. We passed over the bridge, but we did not know where to go.

When we passed, Dro withdrew a little. The people thought that Dro was escaping. In fact, Dro had gone to keep the enemy back, to defend the people. In the darkness the water was hardly seen. Dro waited till the last Armenian crossed over the bridge. Then he said: "Bring some kerosene and burn the Margara bridge."

He burned the bridge to stop the advance of the Turks. We reached Margara and then to Edjmiadsin. We gathered later in Sardarapat. Dro had gone near Aparan.

If our soldiers had not fought courageously, we would have lost the Sardarapat battle.

We reached Yerevan. My uncle, Shahinian Hovsep, fell in the battle of Sardarapat.

**60 (60).**

**ISRAEL APO GRIGORIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1909, Igdir, Gulaba Village)**

My dear child, I was born in Igdir (Surmalou), in the village of Gulaba. The rich people of our village used to come to our house; they gathered in our guest-room and had a chat with my father, whom they called Elder Apo. My father used to sit on a large marble stone in the room. All our jewelry and riches were hidden under that big stone. We were quite rich. Our family consisted of 60 members – sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. We kept shepherds who grazed our sheep. If I were to go to our village now, I'd dig out the gold coins. I know the place where they are hidden.

We led an easy life. We lived side-by-side with the Turks amicably. Why did they begin that fight? I don't remember. Before our flight, the Turks oppressed the Armenians. Gradually, our conditions worsened. My father and mother had already died. My uncles were alive, they were very rich and they began helping the peasants, they distributed bread. They used to slaughter animals and give the meat to the needy people. Slaying the Armenians, the Turks gradually reached our village. News came, that we, too, should run away. Everyone began to flee as fast as he could and take with him what he could.

I was small. My elder brother had fallen from the horse and had broken his backbone, so he was in bed. I told the news to my brother. My brother ordered me to

go with the peasants.

Before I left home, he thrust his hand under his pillow, took out his revolver and said: "Shoot me first and then go!"

I stopped, began crying and said: "How can I shoot you? I am not a Turk."

He said: "All right, go, escape and join the peasants."

I left home; I had gone some ten meters, when I heard a shot. I ran back and saw that he had shot himself. I lost my head and ran, crying, out of the house. I had been going the wrong way. A Yezidi acquaintance of ours told me not to go that way, since the Turks were coming.

I turned back, ran and joined our people. We crossed the Araz River together with our peasants and came to the place, which is now called Shenavan. At that time, the village was called Kyalagyarin. What sufferings we have endured, my dear child, I am not able to tell. [Tears filled the old man's eyes]. Our folk found each other and remained in this village.

Now I have six children, 15 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. I thank God that I reached here safe and sound, that God gave me so many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Now we are living in peace and harmony. [The old man took out his snuff-box and took a pinch].

**61 (61).**

**DSAGHIK GEVORG CHINIMIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Igdir, Koghb Village)**

My father's name was Gevorg, my mother's – Tagouhi, my uncles' names were Galoust, Manouk, Khecho, Sargis, Mnatsakan. We lived in a large yard, each one separately, but in peace and harmony.

In 1915 my father Gevorg participated in the Erz-room battle against the Turks. My mother Tagouhi had remained in Koghb with her three children. When we were being deported, the Turks fired at us from the mountains. We had nothing whatsoever. Mother was with her three children. Those who could escape were saved and those who remained were killed.

Then it was said that the Turks had withdrawn, so we went back to Igdir. We remained there in winter.

Many people died. My uncle's children died of hunger. The houses were destroyed. The wheat had grown all by itself; we gathered it, ground it and ate.

In spring we were deported again. Mother had tied her youngest child on her back, had taken the other by the hand and I had taken mother by the other hand.

Mother used to curse the Turks, since my brother and sister had died because of them. When the name of the Turks was mentioned, mother said: "The Turks caused the ruin of my family." Then mother brought us to a Children's Home.

I had five paternal uncles. All of them had children; only I and a grandchild of my uncle have

\* This handwritten testimony has been delivered to me, in 2001, by Svetlana Vardanian, Doctor of Philology, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

survived. All of them died. Out of thirty people we two were left alive. We have grown at the Alexandrapol Children's Home. Then I learned at school and graduated from a party school. I have worked at Armcoop [Armenian Cooperation] as an instructress. During the war years, I was the manager

of a kindergarten. My husband, Shavarsh Chinimian (b. 1907) has reached Berlin with the Soviet army. He was saved by miracle from under the wheels of a tank; he was only wounded.

Our generation suffered very much; we experienced the genocide, the deportation and the fascist war.

## 62 (62).

### HRANT GEGHAM KHONDKARIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1911, Igdır)

The name of our family has taken its sources in the 11th century capital of Armenia, Ani.

The grandfathers of our grandfathers have lived together with their brothers and families. By the order of Shah-Abbas they were deported, in 1604, and settled in Gharabagh and in the village of Hakhveris, Surmalou Province, which was 1-2 km from Igdır.

Our ancestors had settled permanently in Hakhveris, had built their own houses next to each other and had grown orchards opposite their houses.

My father Gegham had moved to Igdır to start his trading activity there; he had opened a large shop on the central avenue of Igdır and traded in wool, cotton and linen cloth, ready-made clothes, gold and silver jewelry. My father was proud of his shop and his riches. He used to trade with Yerevan, Alexandrapol and Tiflis merchants.

In 1910 father married Matevos Avagian's daughter, Lousaber. I was born in Igdır, in 1911. Then my sister Rosa was born.

In 1917, father was not with us. He had gone on a commercial trip, when an order came that we had to emigrate to Eastern Armenia. My helpless mother lost her head: what could she do with her young children? Suddenly our door opened and our kind uncle Avetis Avagian came in. He immediately helped mother to gather the things we needed, hired a van, placed us in it and we moved.

The Russian army military unit was near us; in those hard days they cooked porridge with yellow cereals and distributed to us, otherwise we might die of famine. I, too, have eaten the porridge they made. The Russian army helped us again. First they closed the road before the Turks, so that they might not reach the Armenian refugees and harm them, then they moved behind us and we came and crossed safely the Margara bridge. First we reached Edjmiadsin, then we went to Kanaker and at last we settled in Yerevan, the Kond district, on Amirian Street.

The government was in the hands of the Dashnaks.

I remember, one day Dashnak officers came to our house and declared that we should help the army.

Uncle Avetis said astonished: "But they have nothing to give you."

And really, we had nothing. The fabrics, which had remained from my father's shop, were being used as mattresses to sleep on. The officers gathered them to take away. Much perturbed, my uncle Avetis said: "Where are you taking them, they have nothing else besides these."

The officer charged his rifle to shoot at us, but then he probably spared us. They took the fabrics away. We remained on the dry floor.

During that turmoil my mother's other brothers, Abgar, Nerses, Karapet and Souren went to America. On the way to America, Souren was lost for good, but the others settled in California. The fact of having relatives in America affected later my Avetis uncle's son. Matevos, who was a doctor; forming part of the Tamanian Regiment, he had reached during the Great Patriotic War to Berlin, but because he had relatives in America, he was exiled in 1949 to Siberia, together with his family. Poor Matevos did not even have any correspondence with his relatives in America. The eldest son of my uncle Avetis – Zaven, went to the front as a volunteer [in 1941] to fight against the fascists and he did not return. The same happened with my uncle Rouben's son.

Thus our family has been forfeited a lot for having relatives in America.

In 1936 I graduated from the Yerevan State University (Faculty of Economics) and worked in different establishments.

In 1949 I went to Leninakan (now: Gyumri) to work as a permanent inspector at the Children's Home. Then I married Sonia. We had Shoushanik, Lousik and Davit. Davit married Nouné and offered me two lovely grandsons – Hrantik and Hayk.

Now, I'm retired and often recall those scenes of deportation.

**ANDRANIK AZIZ SIMONIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1902, Alashkert, Gharakilissa)**

I was born in the town of Gharakillissa, Alashkert Province, in 1902. Our family consisted of eight members: my father – Aziz, my mother – Hamas, my elder brother Missak, my sister – Vergoush, me – Andranik, Artavazd, Garnik and my grandmother Nargiz. My father was a merchant, he had a shop that dealt in cloth; he had more than two thousand heads of livestock – oxen, cows and sheep, which were kept on the mountain ranges called Kyossadagh, under the surveillance of sixteen shepherds.

We lived in comfort and peace. When the First World War broke out, the Turkish government recruited many young Armenians and those who went never came back. The government confiscated five hundred sheep and also a great quantity of cloth, under the pretence of army needs. Meanwhile news were coming that they were massacring the Armenians in Bitlis, Sassoun and other places and that soon our turn would also come: they would deport the Armenians of Alashkert and would exile them. The Armenians of Gharakillissa were alarmed. They began to get ready for self-defense. I remember they were putting sacks of sand in front of the windows and buying weapons, for they were anticipating the danger every minute.

One day a great number of Cossack cavalry and Armenian volunteers arrived. In the town the Armenians met them with great enthusiasm, with bread and salt as our savors and gave them lodgings in their houses. We also put two rooms at the disposal of the officers. Thus, some peaceful months passed. One day the Russian army gave order to retreat and that the Armenians would be deported with them; if not, they would be slaughtered by the Turks. Being at a loss, the people took the road of exile. We had four milker cows and one horse. My father loaded the cows with the necessary items and food, saddled the horse, putting on it the saddle-bag, in one pocket of which Artavazd squatted, and Nazik's three-year-old son – in the other. My mother sat on the horse, with seven-month-old Garnik in her lap. I could walk then, so, holding my grandma by the hand, we set off.

We walked over mounts and through valleys for fifteen days; many people died of exhaustion and diseases. It happened so that women could not carry their children anymore and left them on the roadside or threw away their possession in order to be able to walk with less burden. We reached Igdir. Igdir was filled with refugees. From Igdir the national authorities transported the refugees in vans to Edjmiadsin and Yerevan. We were taken to Yerevan. They put us down

near a church and we lived there, I don't remember how long, we were then given a dwelling-place in Kond. Later my father rented an apartment on Beyboutovski Street in uncle Arshak's house. We lived in poverty. From among all his riches father had been able to take with him only twenty Turkish gold coins, and, selling also my mother's jewels, we lived in that apartment for two years.

I went to school till the fourth form, after which, as we had nothing to live on, I was obliged to sell newspapers or water to earn a few kopecks. Father did not have any job, so there was no one to support the family. Father took me and my grandma to the village of Sogotlou, near Kars and he lodged us at the house of a close relative of his to have two people less to feed. Later father brought us back to Yerevan. Then he took me to the Edjmiadsin orphanage. Food was so scarce, that we were suffering of hunger, and one day, with three other boys like me, we ran away from the orphanage and came to Yerevan. I began to sell newspapers.

In 1919 we set off for Russia. We settled in wagons at the railway-station of Yerevan. In those days the railway station-master was Shakhhatouni, a handsome man with dark eyes and brows. Together with his escorts he checked our passports, and then the train moved.

The road was very difficult, for the Turks were everywhere. It happened that the train stopped at a station for several days, and we had to continue our journey in freight wagons. The passengers were numerous, the places were packed, there was no food, it was dirty and lice-infected. It was an unbearable, terrible journey. Our aim was to get to Tiflis, for my sister, Sandoukht, was there together with her husband. From Tiflis we went to Poti to take the ship for Novorossiysk. At last the ship appeared and we got on board the ship together with our family and occupied our place on the deck.

In Gelendjik we stayed with my aunt's family for a month. The Armenians had been deported there in 1896 and almost all of them were worked as porters on board the ships.

Then we went to Novorossiysk. We lived there for three years. I had a good job, but our family moved to Persia, and I had to go with them, for I was the only working hand.

In Tabriz we rented a house, but there was much unemployment. Many Dashnak emigrants had gathered there, fleeing from Armenia after the establishment of the Soviet regime. Among those fugitives in 1921 there were many who had occupied high positions during the First Republic of Armenia: scholars, group leaders and

distinguished personalities. Tabriz had two churches, a few elementary schools and one secondary Diocesan school. The bishop of the Diocese was Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tangian. The Diocesan school was well-known and had not its likes in Persia. The teachers were the fugitive scholars, among them Adjarian and others. The graduates of the Diocesan school went to the towns and villages of Persia, inhabited by many Armenians, and became teachers there and they were sent by the Dashnak Party. The schools in Persia were under the supervision of the mentioned party. There was also an Armenian Club, where dancing parties were organized on Sunday evenings. There was also a four-part choir, which was conducted by Mr. Levon Grigorian. He trained several violinists, for he was a very skilled and talented musician.

Besides the refugee Armenians, there were also Armenians from Turkey, who had emigrated in 1914 and had settled in Tabriz. Most of the Armenians were busy in wine-making. There were also craftsmen, but almost no merchants, since trading was in the hands of the local Turks and the Armenians could not compete with them. There were a dozen of rich Armenian merchants, among them the Boudaghians, the Arzoumanians, the Baghdassarians, the Melik-Aslanians and others. In those days Riza Shah was reigning. The country was suffering from unemployment, there were no factories; the country was an agricultural one. There were landowners who owned whole villages. The peasants cultivated the land and shared the crop with the landowner. The country exported dried fruits, raisins, almonds, dried apricots, carpets, wool and other agricultural products. They imported almost every kind of industrial products: from needles to cars. Among the unemployed the Armenians formed a great number. The native inhabitants of Tabriz were well off; their children lived at the expense of their parents until they were forty and did not engage in any job. It was disreputable for them to learn a craft, to become a shopkeeper or a worker; and if they were not lucky enough to do what they themselves wanted to do, they just remained unemployed or became a teacher. Among the refugees there were craftsmen, as goldsmiths, silversmiths, mechanics, bakers, who found work without delay.

I began to work as a barber, Then Khachatour Baghdassarian advised me to go to Maragha and open my own barber-shop there. I was quiet successful, for my shop was the only one in the town. Maragha had two hundred Armenian families: about one thousand people. There was an Armenian school and a church. The Armenian actor Mkrtich Tashjian had come there

and was giving performances in Armenian and in Azerbaijani languages, such as “Namous” (Honor), “For the Sake of Honor,”<sup>1</sup> “Mashtabad” and so on. There were two Armenian doctors: Melkonian and Aroustamian, both of them had come from Armenia. The native Maragha people were traders and craftsmen. Maragha was rich in vineyards and produced raisin in great quantities, which was exported, that was the reason why all the merchants of Tabriz had their raisin factories in Maragha, where the raisin was cleaned with machines, filled in boxes and sent to Europe and Russia. Besides raisin they exported almond as well. Very soon I made friends with the Maragha youth, who used to gather in my shop in the evenings, and we had a nice time together. Soon I learned Turkish, because the Armenians of Maragha knew Turkish well. I began to earn well. I brought my family from Tabriz. Mkrtich Tashjian invited me to take part in his performances and I played roles in “On the Ruins,” “Ancient Gods”<sup>2</sup> and others.

In 1934 I married Miss Lidia, who was a very lovely, lyrical and educated young girl. We were very happy, specially when Anahit was born and soon also Vahagn. We settled in Tabriz. At her third childbirth my beloved closed her eyes forever, leaving me and our daughter and son forlorn.

*“Even in my deathbed, my love,  
And you standing by me,  
I can close my eyes with a calm heart,  
Knowing that I’m dying beside you.”*

As the children were very young, I had to marry again to have somebody to look after them.

After several difficulties I hired a cinema hall, I brought good films and displayed them, and I succeeded. Then I built my own cinema hall and “Hotel Asia.” I have always helped my relatives, especially my brothers who have good positions now in Tabriz. My daughter Anahit has graduated from the Tabriz University, Department of Philology, then got her M.A. in Library Science from the same University and continued her higher education in London, getting a second M.A. in Library Science from the University College. She is married to Gevorg Ghazarian and has two children – Lidia and Ara, and is currently the Head of Gevorg Tahta Armenian Community Sunday School in London.

My son Vahagn graduated in Civil Engineering in Germany and got his Ph.D. in England and is currently a lecturer at the Tabriz University. He is married to Julliette and has two children – Ani and André and lives

<sup>1</sup> The dramas “Namous” (1909), “For the Sake of Honor” (1905), “On the Ruins” (1911) are Alexander Shirvanzadé’s (1858, Shamakhi – 1935, Kislovodsk, is buried in Yerevan) well-known plays.

<sup>2</sup> The drama “Ancient Gods” is written by Levon Shant (1869, Constantinople – 1951, Beirut), Armenian writer, pedagogue, public activist.

in Tabriz.

I have been in many countries; I think there isn't a country on the world-map, which I have not visited, but my dream was to come and live in my homeland. In 1995, at the 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, as a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, I was given a passport as a citizen of the Republic of

Armenia, which was an exceptional phenomenon. And now it's already three years that I've moved to Yerevan, where I have my house and live happily, enjoying constant visits from my daughter, Anahit Ghazarian, her family and lovely grandchildren. It was my dream to live in my native country and that dream has come true.

#### 64 (64).

### PARUYR GEVORG KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Alashkert, Yerets Village)

During the Armenian Genocide I was very young, but I remember it. Our family members consisted of my father, mother, my two uncles, my brothers – Rouben and Khosrov, and sister – Heghiné. As we were very young, the Russians put us on carts. On our way we saw burning villages, houses and barns lost in smoke. They said that they had filled the Armenians in the barns and had burned them. The Mourat River was flowing blood. Corpses were floating on the river everywhere. The Turkish soldiers had taken Armenian girls to the valley, had taken off their clothes and had forced them to dance. Our volunteers had seen that, had attacked the Turks and kill them and had rescued the girls.

Our youths were well organized and were defending us, for the Turks were persecuting us, and we reached to our destination safe and sound. We reached Igdirdir and then Edjmiadsin.

We remained in the village of Elektan for three years: 1917-1920. Then we heard that the Russians had taken our lands, so we took a train to Sarighamish. The train was very crowded; there was no room, so our father took us to the roof of the train, and we reached Sarighamish. Then we went to Chamourlu on foot. We reached and found out that my mother's brothers had emigrated. Then we went to our house and saw that the Turks had destroyed it.

The Turks have been and are still our deadly enemies. There are hills and mountains between us. They are Moslems, we are Christians.

Now I am ninety years old, but I still remember how the Turks drove us out of our houses, of our village and made us homeless. They occupied Western Armenia, seized our lands and massacred the natives of the country.

#### 65 (65).

### LOUSIK ARSHAK MARTIROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Alashkert)

We lived well in Alashkert. The land and the water were very good. We got a good crop of wheat, melons, radishes and carrots. Now they are before my eyes – our house, our garden, the windows of our house. The green vegetables and the fruits of our country tasted differently.

Before the exile many of our relatives, our uncle's sons were drafted to serve in the Turkish army. They took them away as soldiers and slaughtered them. From our family they took three young men.

I was a small girl then, but I remember. I was at my granny's house. It was a two-storeyed house, and there was a cellar nearby. There was a sofa in the room with embroidered cushions on it. When a hue and cry was heard, I said: "What noise is this?"

My grandma said: "The Turks have come; they want to kill us."

"What must we do?"

"Let's see, if the Russians come, it'll be alright, if

not – we must leave our houses and migrate."

"How can we 'leave our houses'?" I said.

We were talking this way, when the Russians came. We calmed down as the Russians came. Hanging their head, the Turks fell prisoners, many of them escaped. I went out and saw the Turks fleeing on horseback. I cursed them.

From many places, Bitlis, Moosh, Khastour, many Armenian refugees had come and accumulated in Alashkert, but that quiet state did not last long.

When the Russian went away, the Turks came again. God damn them. They threw the children into the river; they killed the adults. My uncles put us – the children, and our grandma in an araba, and we moved. I don't know what happened on the road, for I saw nothing from the carriage. We came in fifteen days. We reached Orgov, near Igdirdir. It was already Russian land; there was nothing to fear.

After we had left the town, they had slaughtered the

Armenians who had remained there.

Then we came out of Igdirdir on foot, like animals. There was confusion. Everything was so mixed up that I lost my mother. I began shouting with all my might, "Mama." I was afraid; I might get lost.

Someone said: "Daughter, do not be afraid, the Turks won't reach us anymore." We reached Yerevan. But my three uncles, father's sister and my grandmother died on the way. They took us to the Katoghiké Church. The Americans fed us. If they had not helped us, we would have all died. Every morning a cart came, picked up the corpses and took them away. Typhus and cholera infections were horrible; all those who fell ill, died. I

remember a child was crying. "I am hungry," he said. They ground the wheat, made a dough and gave him to eat to save his life.

All the hospitals were turned into orphanages. We suffered very much till we grew up.

My mother-in-law used to tell me that she had a three children, among them three-month-old baby. The Turk neighbor had said that he would keep them. He had kept them for three months. Then my father-in-law had gone and brought them safe and sound. Later I married their son. I thank God that I have survived and now live with my children. The Turks and the Kurds massacred us. May God damn them!

## 66 (66).

### MIHRAN HAKOB BAGHDASSARIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Alashkert)

When I was born, our family consisted of my father, mother Anoush, my sister Calipsé, my brother Andranik and me.

My mother was a skilful woman; she taught young girls needlework free of charge. My mother was also well-educated. She was the daughter of a teacher; she had good authority. Her father was teacher Grigor. Mother was very kind and friendly. She wove rugs, made different kinds of needle-work and hung them on the walls.

Our houses were made of stone, with conical roofs, which had a window on top. In winter the window was closed. The door closed from the inside; there was an entrance towards my uncle's house. Outside we had a well; we used to draw water to drink from the well. The houses of the rich were two-storeyed and had windows. Our house had two rooms, one of which was the barn, where we kept the wheat and the flour, and the other was the bedroom, where there was the tonir. There were no bedsteads. There was a large piece of felt on the floor. The boys slept in one corner and the girls in another. We used kerosene lamps. I loved the harrissa, krjik and khavids [Armenian national dishes], which mother cooked so well. We had no markets. We prepared everything in autumn with the exception of father's tobacco. Our main products were dairy products and the wheat we got from our field. We prepared dzavar, bulghur from the wheat. In our orchard we grew grapes, apples, watermelons, but the dried fruits came from outside. There were special people, Armenian or not Armenian, who brought and sold tobacco. We had a buffalo, which we had named Arabo because of its quarrelsome nature, a cow and hens; we did not use dried meat. Father was an independent person; he never lowered his head before anyone. We filled madsoun in the churn and made butter,

curds and tan. Father had friends. At harvest-time, they went together to reap the wheat.

Uncle Martiros had two sons and three daughters. Our house was close to the school and church. There were many Catholics in our town. I have heard about them that they are the same Armenians. When Christ was born they had said: "We must see Him in order to believe." They were doubtful about everything. We did not give girls for marriage to the Catholics. The twenty, twenty-two percent of our peasants were Catholics. They were richer. They had nice houses, many animals. The idea of private property was stronger in them. Their school had four classes, while ours had six forms.

I have begun attending school at the age of eight. As I was born with difficulty, they said that I was one of the twins. Our school was near the church. The school had one floor with bright classrooms. There was discipline at school. Every day one of the parents cleaned it. Those, who came from afar, were given food. We studied Armenian, Turkish at school and also arithmetic, geography. Those who learned bad, were put on their knees. During the exams the parents came and listened. Our village has given many intelligent people, for example Hakob Harutyunian, who had learned in Edjmiadsin and collaborated with Komitas.

Inspectors came to our school from Edjmiadsin and checked our knowledge. Every morning we gathered in the hall of the church and read a passage from the Bible. Kurds also came to our school to learn. From my early age I have been kind to the younger ones; I loved my sister and brother dearly. Father did not meddle in mother's housework. My grandpa had gathered his sons and given advice: "A man must not break a woman's heart; the heart of the woman is similar to glass." Mother was so intelligent that she never gave the occasion to

make her a remark. Father was very fond of kissing her cheeks, but he was always decent. At school they taught us how to open and close a rifle. We played prisoners. My younger brother liked to beat; my father encouraged him. Father was a great patriot; he did not tolerate injustice. I have enjoyed very little of father's love.

My elder uncle prepared medicines from plants and flowers. We used to gather the flowers. They took us to weddings. I remember my cousin's wedding: the girls had long dresses on and nice silk head-kerchiefs on their heads. There were musicians and singers; one group sang and the other answered, singing. We had a singer in the village.

There were two fountains in our village – Kamaravor (Arched Fountain – Arm.) and Zulal (Pure Fountain – Arm.). They were in different parts of the village. The village was on a slight slope, which gradually formed a plain. There were upper meadows and lower meadows. Beyond the stream the land was flat. The fields were irrigated. The rich-men had their own plough; they took out the animals to plough the fields.

As I said, I have enjoyed very little of fatherly love. I saw father for the last time, when he fled to Russia with a group of two hundred and fifty young men. They became volunteers in Keri's group. Later, when father came with the Russian army, I was already at the orphanage.

In October-November 1915 the damages caused by the Kurds became greater and greater. They attacked our people, plundered and killed them. When the Russian army began to attack they brought a Hamidean army of Kourmandji Kurds and settled them in our village. The Kurds of our village who were humane warned us not to leave the children alone. Young women and girls went out of the village somewhere about 1 km away. We also went there. The Hamideans were Kurds, who had become Muslims and served the Turkish government. The people of our village fled from there. Once or twice I came to the village to take some butter and flour, but nothing was left; they had plundered everything. They had left only the walls of the houses.

Before that I had dreamed that the Russian star had dimmed and the moon had become brighter and I had told my parents about it. Father had replied: "What's that, puppy, so the Turks will slaughter us?" In 1915, at the end of October our folk had already gone there to hide, where they remained for two months. At that time I was in the village of Khachouk, at my uncle's house. The exile began and our people fled. I, too, put on my clothes and moccasins and fled with them. We migrated. We passed by our village. I said to my cousin: "Take a look, are our folk at home?"

He went and saw that there was no one there. I also went and looked, really there was no one. I ran back to join the throng of the refugees; I did not find them. We passed Khastour on foot and reached Gharakillissa; my

feet were frozen, my moccasins and my clothes were in tatters. Kind people noticed me and took care of me. I slept. I woke up in the morning and found that those kind people had frozen in a sitting position. I cried for help. The Russian soldiers came and took up the frozen people. They covered my head with a military beret, clothed me with a military coat, put me in a cart and took me to Yondjalou, then Diadin and later to Igdir, where they accommodated me in a house. There were many refugees with whom I reached Edjmiadsin at last.

Up to the beginning of 1917 I remained at the orphanage of Akhta. Then I attended the Kanaker co-educational school and became a third form pupil. Our teachers, especially Shavarsh Amirkhanian, treated us very well. They treated every one of us according to our character and psychology. Our teacher Shoushanik Ter-Hovhannissian was our class-mistress; she gave us the idea of justice and equality.

In February 1917, after the fall of the Tsar [in Russia], Shavarsh Amirkhanian said: "I cannot stay here anymore." And he went to Edjmiadsin.

In 1919 I finished the school. Our orphanage was transferred to Yerevan. In 1920 I became a worker at the Yerevan railway station. I hoped that life would become better. The Dashnak government was still there.

One morning we got up and saw that red flowers were put everywhere; it turned out that the Bolsheviks had come. When the Red army entered our orphanage, we, the children, met them with red banners.

When we were being deported, mother had my six-month-old sister in her arms. The Kurds attacked us. My uncle released the dogs. The Kurds killed the dogs and my uncle. They kidnapped my mother. Mother put on Kurdish clothes and remained with them, so did my sister-in-law. Father went, found my mother and my sister, who had become a year old. They had no news from us, the boys. Later I learned that my brother was at the Kars orphanage. Mother, father and sister came to Kotayk and lived in the village of Zar. Mother baked bread and somehow they kept body and soul together. Then they moved to Yerevan.

I made inquiries about them and learned that they lived on Gnouni Street in Yerevan. I went and found them. Father did not recognize me. I had grown up a lot. When father recognized me, he began to cry and said, "We are unfortunate people."

I asked about mother; she was sleeping. I went and got into my mother's bed. She opened her eyes and was astonished; she thought she was dreaming.

Then my brother was brought to the Edjmiadsin orphanage; he became a member of the Young Comsomol League, began to write poems. I studied at the University, my brother – at the Veterinary Institute. We graduated. I became the head of the Department of Propaganda of the Shahoumian Cultural House.

**67 (67).**

**NVARD AVETIS GEVORGIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1910, Alashkert)**

We lived peacefully in Alashkert. One day in 1915, the Turks attacked our village. They gathered the people of our village, tied their hands and feet and, dragging pushing them, filled them in barns and burned them alive. Our clan consisted of twenty-two and our family – of five people: my father, mother and three sisters. My uncle, his sons and grandchildren, my mother's brothers and their children, my parents all were taken to the barn and were burned.

We, three sisters, were left orphans without anyone to look after us. On the road of exile, we walked over corpses, exhausted and with great difficulty. We reached somehow Igdır. Then to Hoktemberian (now: Armavir), the village

of Evdjilar, which is on the bank of Araz. A great many refugees were infected with typhus and cholera and died there. My sister took care of me. Then we went to the village of Djanfida. From our entire village, only I and my sister survived.

The Turks slaughtered us, killed, made us orphans and deprived us of our houses, land and relatives. I did not enjoy my parents' love. I missed them very much. I only see them on my dreams...

My husband Rouben's family had also been slaughtered by the Turks. The Turks harmed us very much. God won't forgive them...

**68 (68).**

**VARDOUSH HOVHANNES KIRAKOSSIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1911, Alashkert)**

My parents have told me about the 1915 events, for I have been very small then. My father and mother told me about the sufferings caused by the Turks and cried. They had driven the Armenians out of their houses, had filled them into barns and churches and had set fire and burned them. They had slaughtered the ones who had remained alive. As they had burned all the houses, the Armenians had taken the road of exile, my mother and my three brothers among them. One of my brothers, Gaspar Ter-Meliksetian was in General

Andranik's army. He has helped much the Armenians, who were deprived of their property and had become homeless.

On the way of exile many people died of exhaustion, hunger and thirst. The Mourat River was full of corpses. Mother and her three sisters had put on men's clothes and had helped the people to swim across the river. Mother told me how their relatives had been killed before their eyes. They had forced naked women to dance; they had raped them and had amused themselves.

**69 (69).**

**GOURGEN ABGAR MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1914, Alashkert, Gyulzetkan Village)**

Until I was twelve-thirteen years old, I did not feel that I was an adopted child, for my grandma did not have other children, and they had surrounded me with tender love, but later I heard about it from our neighbors' children, and it continued till the 1950s.

My brother Soukias Minassian found me, but this is how he found me.

The eldest among us has been that brother of mine and two sisters. I was one year old when in 1915 we were exiled from the Gyulzetkan Village of Alashkert. After coming out of the village at a distance of 1 km, they had stopped our caravan, tied my father to a tree and killed him before the eyes of the people. Then they had ordered my mother: "Take your four children and go!" The three of them had gone on foot, I had been in my mother's arms, and we walked for three months and

a half until we reached Bayazet, Igdır, Edjmiadsin and then to the yard of St. Sargis Church. The yard had been full of people then. Everywhere there were sick people and corpses. There was a special cart, which collected the corpses and took them away. In those days, beyond the St. Sargis Church was the place called Ghantar. The exiled children, among them my brother and sisters, used to go there to get some bread. On our long journey, mother had suffered a lot, for she suckled me, but 12-13 days after arriving to Yerevan mother had felt ill, and I had cried.

A husband and wife, who had no children, had come to the church-yard every day and had seen my mother's state. The next day they had come again and seen that my mother had died, and the child was crying on her breast. At that moment my brother had returned from Ghantar.

They had said: "We're taking this child to Kond."

When brother became sixteen years old, he began thinking about his sisters. The Americans had opened an orphanage and they accommodated my sisters there. Later, they transferred the orphans of that orphanage to America. He wrote to a few cities, trying to find his sisters, but he could not. He began thinking about me, and remembered that, when he was ten years old, a man and a woman had taken his brother to Kond.

At that time I was in Ashtarak, constructing the Xeres wine factory. Before my brother found me, a man approached me and said: "One of these days I'll come to you, for I'm looking for my brother."

"Are you sure?" I said.

After seven or eight days I was sitting in my office, when a man and a woman came in. The woman came in and sat down, but the man did not. He came and stood behind my shoulder. The woman began to tell. Meanwhile, the husband standing beside me wanted to touch me. He was born in 1904. The woman was telling details, while the husband looked much exited. The conversation lasted for an hour and a half, and it turned out that the man was my brother.

Finally, they asked my opinion. I told: "I must speak

with mother, who has looked after me, only then I can give you an answer." But in two days they called me to Yerevan for a session. I had two hours; I had close friends: I went to my friend Gerassim. Yerevan for advice. He got up from his place, hugged me and said: "Where does he live?"

I came out. My friend had found my brother and had told him everything. After the session I went home. Father had passed away, mother was alive. I asked my wife about them. Mother said: "Calm down, Gourgen djan, until now I had one son, now I have two."

At that moment my brother and his wife came in; we lay the table and began to celebrate the joyful occasion. My grandma's name was Dsovinar. Mother's name was Shoghakn, my wife's name is Yevgenia and my children are Laura, Ara, Abgar and Gagik.

The cause of all those disasters were the Turks, the Genocide they organized and fulfilled. Alashkert also fell a victim to the calamity.

Thus, up to the end of my life I shall keep my gentle father Abgar Mouradian's name and surname, for they saved my live. I and my brother, however hard we tried to remember our own mother's name, we could not, for both of us were too young.

#### 70 (70).

### NATALIA AVETIS BARSEGHIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1889, Kars, Dspni Village)

Our family was called Darbinents. We were very rich. My uncles and aunts, both from my mother's and father's sides came with us.

Before the Turkish war, they took away, together with the other Christians, the Armenians also and killed them. That's why we left our house, property, riches and fled. Mother took her four daughters: Siranoush, Hranoush, Nounik and me, put the buffaloes before a cart, and we fled. We reached a large river. Uncle, on horseback, took us, in turn, to the other bank of the river. The mothers were getting very tired, on the way. They could not carry their children anymore; they put them on the ground and walked forward. We were big enough to

walk. We reached a village, went to a house. We lit the tonir, we dried and warmed ourselves. That was already Leninakan (now: Gyumri).

I and my elder sisters had gone out to play. It was a dark night. People had thought that we were orphans and had taken us to the orphanage. Mother had begun to yell that her children were lost.

My uncles told that people had seen us being to the orphanage. Then mother came and brought us back home. Then we went to Bogdanovka; there I got married.

Now I have a nice son, a good daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

#### 71 (71).

### ANNMAN HAMBARDZOU ARAKELIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Kars, Dspni Village)

When in 1918 the Russians left Kars to the Turks, the latter rushed in the Armenian villages. The Turks entered our village, too. I was a small child then. I had an elder sister. Mother rubbed mud on her face, hid her in the tondir, so that the Turks would not kidnap her. But the

Turks came. There was a Turk pasha with them. He found my sister and took her away. I had another sister, too, who died of fear. My father was the village headman. My uncle had eight sons. The Turks took them all and killed them; they killed my two brothers, too. They slaughtered

the whole village. My mother died of sorrow.

The people were compelled to migrate towards Aragads and come to Eastern Armenia. At that time the Turks opened fire from the Mount Yaghloudja. The Arpachay waters had risen, and when the Armenians tried to cross the river, the strong water current drifted them away. Seeing that the people were perishing, they put six oxen on one side and six on the other, they carried the people across. And the Turks were firing from the Yaghloudja slopes giving no rest to the poor people.

My uncle Khachatour, who was a very brave man, gathered forty young men and began to fight against the Turks, so that the people might cross the Arpachay River.

During the fight, eighteen Armenians were taken prisoner and my uncle, who was the commander, among them. The Turks made a fire and began torturing him, opening 'pockets' on his body with hot iron bars, and at the end they roast him to death. They killed the rest. Meanwhile the people had crossed the river.

Getting news that the Russians had reoccupied Kars and the Turks were thrown out, the Armenian refugees

returned there again, overcoming the same difficulties. Arriving to their village, they found out that the Turks had beheaded the priest, who did not want to leave his native village, and had nailed his head on the door of his house. Thus, in 1919, we again came back to our village, near Kars. We ploughed and sowed our field, and when harvest-time approached, we heard that the Turks had reoccupied Kars. Once more, we took the road of exile. The Turks invaded our villages again, they plundered and destroyed everything. My aunt Varsenik, seeing that the Turks were approaching, threw herself into the river with her two children and got drowned in the river. My husband had seven uncles; they slaughtered all seven.

The deportation torments started again. We were driven out of Kars. We walked through Kaghzvan by night. My uncle's wife went for water; I followed her and got lost. Then she came and found me among the refugees. From Kars we came to Leninakan (now: Gyumri). They put me up at the American orphanage. Our peasants settled in the Tatoulavan Village, Talin Region.

## 72 (72).

### PEPRONÉ ANDRANIK TOUMASSIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1910, Kars)

My father Andranik was from Erzroom. They were seven brothers; one of them was Harutyun Kyuchyukian. Three of the brothers were watch-makers. There was a cellar in my father's shop; when the Turks attacked, they hid there, but the Turks killed his younger brother, shooting him from behind; he was 21 then.

His corpse remained unburied in the street for a whole week. The brothers were afraid to come out. At last my mother wrapped herself in a yashmak, went out, took her son's dead body on her back, carried him away and buried him.

Grandpa's surviving brothers migrated. My father remained in Sarighamish. He had also another brother who was a teacher of French in Yerznka. His fate also had been very cruel. The Turks came and told my uncle: "Order has been received; you must migrate." My uncle came out of the house with his family; they went to the grave-yard. He said to his wife: "Wrap a cigarette for me," he got a heart attack and died on the spot. The Turks kidnapped his eight-year-old daughter Arousyak and took her to a Turkish orphanage. My mother managed to free Arousyak from the orphanage, but the Turks took away her young son to become a shepherd for the bey's sheep.

I remember that the Turks killed the people with

axes and threw them into the water. Many women, as the wife of my mother's brother, threw herself into the river together with her child.

News spread that the Russian army, together with the Armenian volunteers, was coming to Yerznka. The Turks began to escape. Many Armenian young boys, who had become shepherds for the Turks, said to each other: "Let's lay the bread aside. We may need it while fleeing. If the Russians come, we'll run away with them." In spite of the fact that they had already been circumcised and had changed their religion under threat, they had remained Christian Armenians at heart.

In Yerznka, when these boys were fleeing, three Turkish soldiers stopped them and said: "Who are you? You are certainly running away. Are you gâvurs?" "We are the bey's shepherds," said the Armenian boys and came to Yerznka. No Turks were left in Yerznka then. They had all fled.

It was midnight. Suddenly the town was illuminated. The Russians were throwing light to see if there were people in the town. In the morning when the Russians entered the town, the boys ran to meet them. The boys were wearing Turkish clothes. The Russians wanted to kill them. The boys knelt down and crossed their face. The Russian asked: "Are you Armenians?"

\* This testimony I have inscribed and video-recorded from the eyewitness survivor Peproné Toumassian, living in Milan (Italy), in 1998, when she had visited Armenia.

“Yes,” said the boys. “We are Armenian prisoners.”

The Armenian volunteers helped them; they took them to Sarighamish to the orphanage. Then my father went to the orphanage and asked: “Are there any Kyuchyukians here?”

My uncle’s son came forward and said with tearful eyes: “I’m Avetis Kyuchyukian’s son.”

Father took him and sent him to Kars, since my father’s brothers were living there.

The other brothers also were watch-makers. Arshavir married an Armenian girl and came to Yerevan and died here.

In 1918, I was eight years old and I remember well. Cannonades were heard, and General Andranik came to Kars. Next to our house was the Chaltikov’s big house. He came there. Everybody was running there, so did I. General Andranik, in his military uniform and grey fur hat on his head, said to the gathered people: “Armenians, you must be enlisted as volunteers. We must struggle otherwise this land will be your grave.”

The Russian army received order to go back, because a revolution had started in Russia. Taking the opportunity, the Turks invaded Sarighamish and Kars. The Armenians were hiring vans in order to migrate.

My mother was very clever; she went, with her brother-in-law, to bake bread and to fry meat to have something to eat on our way. But the Turks were already coming. The Russians, together with 2000 Armenians volunteers, began to withdraw. On the way the Turks opened fire on the Russians, but the train filled with Armenian volunteers left, so they were saved.

By the Vayenni-Gruzinski (Georgian-Military – Russ.) road we went from Tiflis to Vladikavkaz. On the way the Chechens attacked us, pillaged everything we

had, took away the girls with them to the mountains. We reached Vladikavkaz by a military train, but my elder sister died of fear. My uncle was in Yerznka; only his two children were saved, the rest were killed.

We were a large family: half of us survived, the other half was massacred. We fled from Vladikavkaz to Armavir, since the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks came, in turn and killed people. Once my father and mother were standing before the door, when an armed Bolshevik came and said: “Why are you here? Are you waiting for the Cadets?”

A neighbor came and said: “What are you speaking about? They are refugees.” Thus, they were rescued.

There was fighting going on in Armavir, too. When the fighting ceased, for a while they took away the dead ones to bury and the wounded to the hospital. We left Armavir, too. We reached the Caucasus on foot. Finally we came to Rostov. We attended school. Then we moved to Moscow.

In 1920, Armenia became a Soviet republic. Father wanted to buy a house. We came back to Vladikavkaz. Father fell seriously ill.

Mother entrusted me to look after father and she went to call the doctor. Until the doctor came, father was no more in the land of the living.

Later I married Bunitian Shavasp. Then we went Rostov, Moscow, Persia. I was 23 years old. In Persia I had my Margo, Lizik and Aharon. We lived there for 40 years. Shavasp was a very worthy person, a perfect husband and father. He was an industrious and diligent person and he appreciated the good woman. He used to say: “In each successful man, there is an intelligent woman standing.” Then we went to England, America, now I live in Italy.

### 73 (73).

#### SIRANOUSH LAZAR PETROSSIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Kars)

Until 1918 we lived freely in Kars. In 1918 the Turkish-Armenian war began. I was a child. My mother Vardanoush had four children. They sent us two horses, saying: “Ghazar, as soon as the fighting begins, you put your children on them and leave.” We left our country when the Turks had not invaded yet. We had a cow. I loved her very much. We took the cow with us, but seeing that the cow was disturbing us, we let her rope free, and we went on. The cow turned her neck and looked after us, till we were lost of sight. We went on, other Armenians joined us. All of a sudden we saw the Mezré Kurds came. Heavy gun-shots were heard. We got off the vans and entered the orchards in the valley. Misha was then ten years old.

I’m telling what my eyes have seen. The people were

crowded one up on the other; it was something terrible. My mother wanted to throw me and my sister into the water. Our brother Misha, who was ten years old then, did not let her. We continued our way and reached the side of a hill. Suddenly we heard a soldier cry: “Peace.” We did not know if he was a Turk or an Armenian refugee. People began to shout: “Let everyone find his relative.” Our father found us, took off his hat on the bank of the river, dipped it into the water, brought some water and gave us to drink, for all of us were frightened.

We continued our way. Now I can’t say how long we had gone, when on the road to Akhalkalak the Turks attacked us. Luck smiled at us, for General Andranik arrived at the moment. The Turks feared Andranik greatly. Not a single Turk remained. We reached Akhalkalak. We

went to the Gulikam Village then entered the Bakurian Forest. We had been walking for a whole month. Each one had made his home under a tree, had burned a fire, was cooking and baking bread.

The priest of our village said: "Let me go to Tiflis and bring permission to take our children to the orphanage." They admitted everyone, except me. I began crying. I cried bitterly. Mother said: "Go, take that child by the hand and get in. Who'll find it out?"

And so I did. They took us to the orphanage of Souram. We leaped out of the frying-pan into the fire. The children lay on the floor. All around were dead children. There was an epidemic of cholera and typhus...

We said that it was better to go to our parents. I and Misha and two other boys escaped from the orphanage. On the way we picked the ripe wheat, chewed it and ate. We reached a village. Night fell. We asked a woman to let us sleep at her place at night. May God bless that woman: she brought us two loaves of bread and water. We ate and drank. We did not want anything else. We slept. How we reached Suram, I do not know, but I know that we reached Borzhom. A man and a woman came and asked to take me with them; I began to cry.

"Misha djan," said I. "Do not give me; take me to my mother safe and sound." At night we slept. The man and the woman came again in the morning. As they saw that we did not want to go with them, they brought tickets for us, brought some bread and pears, they put us in a wagon, and we reached Bakurian. Those two boys said: "Let's go to the dining hall and eat. We know our way back."

We came and saw that our tree was there, but not our parents. The four of us hugged the tree and began to cry. Our voice could reach the sky. In fact, our folks had run away by night, only the priest had remained. He came and said: "Why do you cry, my children? Come, I'll take you to the orphanage."

He took us to the orphanage. We were hungry at the

orphanage; we picked up things from the garbage can and ate, and in the forest we ate acorns. We had become so thin that our skin touched our bones, hair had grown on us.

It turned out that our parents had been looking for us. We were neither at the Suram Orphanage, nor at the Tiflis orphanage. The priest went and told our parents: "Your children are at the Bakurian orphanage." My mother had fainted. Mother sold her bracelet and sent father at Bakurian. I was sitting with two or three girls. I said: "Whoever comes and brings me good news, I'll give him my dinner."

Suddenly somebody came and said: "Your father has come."

I did not believe him. I went to the window and looked out. Really, it was my father. Father came in and hugged us; we began to cry. We were crying and repeating: "You'll put us to bed and then leave and go."

Father said: "My darlings, I have especially come to find you. How can I leave you and go?"

The day dawned. We set off. Father was not familiar with the roads. We reached somehow the railway station. We were walking home. We reached the door. Father said: "Do not make any noise."

Mother asked: "Who's that?"

Father said: "That's me, Ghazar. Open the door."

"Have you brought my children?"

"The children are not there."

My mother had lost consciousness. It was good that brother was old enough; he lit the lamp, gave mother some water and helped her to regain consciousness.

People came to see us. Everybody gave an advice: feed them little by little, they have been hungry for a long time. In those days we had a kind of djadi bread. In one month we had plump cheeks.

In 1920 Armenia was liberated: it became a Soviet republic, and we came to Yerevan.

#### 74 (74).

#### ARMENOUHI BALABEK YEGHIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Kars)

In Kars we lived very peacefully. My father had a shop, and our house was private. One day mother said: "Let's go to the bath-house." She took us to the bath-house, which called 'Baths with balconies,' since it was built on water. We were having our bath, when an uproar was heard. The Turks had entered silently the bath-house. They were taking away the young naked girls. Mother took us to our relatives. Father came, found us and said: "Mariam, this is not a place to remain any more. Let's go to Alexandrapol."

"What shall we take with us?" said mother.

"Let's not take anything; let's save the children."

We took the train to Alexandrapol. Mother's relatives met us. Two days had not passed, when father came home perplexed, all his clothes torn to pieces.

"What's wrong with you?" asked mother.

"The Turks have invaded Kars. They caught all our folk, filled them into barns and set fire. They burned them all. Those who were able fled to the Kars Valley. Those who fled, remained alive, those who fell into the hands of the Turks, were killed."

The Alexandrapol Square was filled with trucks; people wanted to leave for Tiflis. Mother tied my younger sister to my back. Mother took with her clothes, coats and food.

The people had crowded in the square. A train had come to take the people to Tiflis. I was pulled up to the wagon, my sister on my back. I was crying. Mother was down, on the platform. Every moment the train might move. We reached the roof of the wagon. The train was cram-full with people. Thus, we reached Sadakhlu. Suddenly, Turks lying in ambush threw a bomb: the locomotive stopped. The engine-driver was killed. The people got off. We also wanted to get off; the Russian officer did not allow us. He gave my father a rifle. He got down and began shoot at the Turks. We were looking from the wagon window; we saw the killed people on the ground. The Turks ran away. The dead were left there; the wounded were taken on the train, and we moved. We reached Tiflis. They lodged us in the yards of different houses.

Father went and brought us djadi bread. We could

not eat it, for we were not used to it. People who came to the theater looked at us with pity. The children were lying on the ground.

In Tiflis we hired a carriage drawn by horses, and went to Russia. We reached Kuban. There was a tall tower; on it there were a few men. It turned out that they were Chechens, who attacked us and began to slaughter.

We went and reached Armavir. And there, in Russia, Chapaev and his rabble started to plunder and to kill people. He was a very ruthless man: he did not like the refugees. He fired his machine-gun and killed everybody. We came to Alexandrapol again.

It was good that father had a shop in Kars. He saved us with it. Father had tied his gold coins on me. Those gold coins also saved us. We were seven children, only I have survived.

## 75 (75).

### **PARANDZEM KOSTAN TER-HAKOBIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Kars, Zayim Village)**

I was born in 1912 in the village of Zayim, near Kars. We had estates: a house, many animals, fields and laborers. The laborers cultivated the land: they ploughed, sowed, gathered the harvest and took care of the animals.

I remember my grandfather, Father Hakob, who was the priest of twelve villages. At the same time, he served in the church of Kars. He was white-skinned, gray-bearded, and liked cleanliness very much. He was a godly person.

My father, Kostan, was a craftsman; he was a carpenter, repaired carts. He was a very industrious man. I had four brothers and two sisters. We were seven children. My sisters: Siranoush was 14 years old, Aregnaz – 16. Hmayak was the eldest of the children (b. 1899), Bagrat (b. 1908), Gourgen (b. 1910) and Hakob, I do not remember his birth-date, he was younger than me. Hmayak studied at the Kars Seminary and took part in the students' gatherings. I did not understand what their aim was.

In 1918, when the Turks attacked, we were getting ready to bake bread. Suddenly it was announced, "Run away; the Turks have attacked." We brought the cart, got on it and ran away to Gyumri. On the way to Gharakillissa (later: Kirovakan, now: Vanadzor) our cart was stolen. We went on foot. We reached Gharakillissa where we were put on open freight wagons, which moved towards Tiflis. We had not reached Tiflis yet, when the Turks attacked, opening fire on the train. I don't know who died, who remained alive. I only know that they took us off at the station of Naftlough. In Gyumri we lost our two sisters. At Naftlough our patron was the wealthy Mantashov. Food was distributed to the refugees once a day.

False news was spread that the Turks had gone away. We believed and returned to Gyumri in order to go to Kars, to our house. In Gyumri we found my sisters and together we went to Kars on foot. We saw our house destroyed. From spring to autumn we lived in the ruins of the house. During harvest time the Turks attacked the Armenians again. They had occupied the Kars Citadel and were staying there. The Armenians did not have any army. The soldiers were the Dashnaks, but they had run away. We were left defenseless. The Turks had closed the roads, so we could not escape. Many members of our family lost each other. I remained with my Hmayak brother's wife, Sofia, in the valley of Kars, where there was an orphanage. The other members of the family had fled with my mother, Sima. There were my father, sister and brothers. We did not know where our eldest brother was. Later we heard that he had participated in the May Rebellion. He was well-educated and mastered the Russian language. Later, he served in the newly organized [Russian] Red Army as a political worker. Our relatives decided to go to Yerevan with us, where father would use his trade to support our family.

In Yerevan, all the refugees had gathered in the yard of the St. Sargis Church, where the people lived in the open air. A great epidemic broke out; my father died. Hundreds of people died daily. Their corpses were taken away in carts.

As we lost our supporter, mother took us to Gyumri, where my elder sister, Siranoush, died of malaria. Mother could not find any job, so she gave us to the orphanage. She found my uncle's family and went to live with them in Meghrashat (Ghazanchi). We were transferred to different

orphanages: I – to the orphanage where the prison is now, my brother – to the orphanage called “Chashka Chay” (A Cup of Tea – Russ.). Later my brothers were transferred to Mr. Hakob’s orphanage, which was then at the place of No. 5 Music School. I was transferred to the orphanage of Slobotki, until the Soviet power was established in Armenia. As there were no means of living, we were put to another orphanage, which was in the place of the Merkurov Museum and was patronized by the Americans. The interpreter was Miss Satenik. We used to sing there, of which I remember two lines:

*“...The American came – the time shone,  
When he saw us, the orphans, his feet trembled...”*

My sister Aregnaz died in the orphanage, and dying Gourgen was taken home.

My brother, Hmayak, was in the civil war. The Soviet power was already established in Armenia, but the war was not over yet. The Dashnaks, instead of saving the nation, that had hardly survived, were persecuting the participants of the rebellion. They killed many participants in the valley of Argina, Kars. By the will of fate, Hmayak was saved and joined the newly-created Armenian First Army. He worked there as a political instructor. We had no news of him. A son was born to him. He died soon after in 1920 during the epidemic. At that time, my brother’s wife, Sofia, had been on the battle field together with her husband. They had been in Shoushi, Zangezour, and then Dilidjan. Later

the Armenian army was transferred from Dilidjan to Kanaker.

Asking the soldiers, who came by, mother had found my brother’s place. Together with a few mothers she walked to Kanaker and found my brother. It was already 1923. Learning about our father’s death, and that we were in orphanages, and the Americans would take us, the orphans, to America, my brother came to Gyumri in order to take us out of the orphanage. That was the reason why he left the army. He was given a post in the judiciary system. He rented a house near the town-park.

My brothers and I began to attend school. Bagrat learned very well. In 1940, he graduated from the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow and devoted himself to his specialty for long years. He participated in the Great Patriotic War [1941-1945] and returned home wounded in 1944.

Gourgen became a craftsman. In 1929 I graduated from the 7-year school and married. I had a good husband. He went to the Soviet Army, studied and became a commander. He was a good parachutist. He was sent to serve in Poland (Western Ukraine). We moved with the family. We had four children. The Great Patriotic War started just from the town, where we lived. Early in the morning at 4 A.M. we fled from that town by truck with our four children and, through different means of transport, we arrived in Armenia, where I live to this day. I am 87 years old. I live in Gyumri.

## 76 (76).

### **KHANOUMA DJNDI DJALIL’S TESTIMONY<sup>1</sup> (B. 1912, Kars, Ghezelghoula Village)**

I was born in 1915, in the Ghezelghoula Village of Kars. My grandfather was the water distributor of the village. Our kinsfolk were busy in farming and cattle-breeding. My father’s name was Djndi. My father’s house was a good home, it was a real hearth. The Russian officers used to come to our house; they were treated as real guests. Ours were very close friends with the Armenians. Father even knew Armenian.

Our family consisted of fifty-seven people. All of us lived together peacefully and in solidarity. From our large family only I have survived.

My father had a brother, Rezgo by name and his other brother’s name was Gharo. My uncle Saïd also had very good relations with the Armenians.

In 1918 we also, together with the Armenians, as Yezidi Christians, emigrated from Kars, because, according to our custom, if the clan was moving, everybody should follow it.

We had people of the same race on the slopes of

Alagyaz; we came and settled there.

On the road of the exile the Turks were persecuting us. They were following us and slaughtered those who were on their way. Armenians, Yezidis, we had all mixed up and were fleeing, leaving behind numerous corpses. There was a bridge, I remember until today, the Turks attacked us and began killing the Armenians and the Yezidis. They killed and threw them into the river. The corpses had piled up in the river. There they shot also my father and mother. We had hidden my uncle in the mattresses, and he was rescued. My uncle took me and his son Kamel, and came, on foot, to Ashtarak.

It was already 1920. There was a Children’s Home in Ashtarak, and its director was Yezidi Alikhan. But he did not accept us, saying that we had no documents. There were Armenian and Yezidi and even Turk children in that Children’s Home. There was a pretty Turkish girl, Telli by name. That Children’s Home had been rich Beklar’s house,

<sup>1</sup> Although Yezidi Khanouma Djalil is in her advanced age and is ill in bed, she speaks very good Armenian and together with her husband, famous Kurdish writer, Djasme Djalil has educated and brought up cultured, scholarly offspring.

which was taken from him by the government and turned into a Children's Home. My uncle had left us and gone away. We, I and Kamel, remained out of the orphanage. By night, we slept under the walls and we begged by day, to keep body and soul together. What could we do? We were hungry, we were asking for bread. There was a woman there; they used to call her Sofi-dsalo. One day she called me and said: "You're a girl, don't go for begging. Come, I'll give you a place in the yard of my house." She had two sons, Vardan and Tigran and a daughter by the name of Arpenik. Sofi-dsalo asked them to bring a document so that we might show it to Alikhan. The boys brought it. Alikhan accepted us to the Children's Home. God bless her soul, since we remained alive, thanks to her. My uncle's son, Kemal, fell ill with typhoid. I put him on my back and took him to the hospital of Ashtarak, but he died there. One day Hovhannes Toumanian came, with his daughter Nvard, to our orphanage. He did not put any difference between the Armenians and the Yezidis. He stroked our heads and asked me: "Dear girl, how are you?"

I was ashamed. I nodded my head, meaning: "I am well."

I remained at the Children's Home until 1926, when an order came that all the orphanages should be united and taken to Djalaloghli (later: Stepanavan), which became a center of orphanages. Then an order came that those who were of an adequate age, would be taken to Leninakan

(now: Gyumri) to work at the textile factory, which was to be opened then. I also wanted to go, but they did not allow me. Then I entered, craftily, the rows, which were going and reached Leninakan (now: Gyumri). There they gave us checks for food. We had no money. We sold our dinner checks, bought tickets with that money and came to Yerevan. It was already 1929.

The orphans, who came to Yerevan, went to Louszhoghkomat (Ministry of Education – Arm.) and presented themselves. There a kind Armenian man helped us very much. He said: "We were looking for you with lanterns; we found you in daylight. Aghassi Khandjian has opened a technical school for Yezidis: I'll send you there to learn."

I went to the technical school for Yezidis, where Djasmé Djalil had been appointed the first director. There they gave us clothes, food and education free of charge, and then I married Djasmé Djalil. So, thanks to the Armenians, and with their help we were rescued and had our house and family. May God bless the souls of those kind Armenians, who helped us. My children received Armenian education: Ordikhan and Djalil have maintained their theses; they have received scientific degrees. My daughter Djemilé, is a musician, and she has brought up good, intelligent children and she is taking care, with her grandchildren, of me, too. I'm very thankful to my children. I am delighted with my grandchildren

77 (77).

**ELENA LEVON ABRAHAMIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1912, Kars, Dspni Village)**

I was born in 1912, in the village of Dspni, Kars Province. My mother Araxy was the daughter of the priest of St. Arakelots Church, Father Khoren Stambultsian. My father Levon was a teacher of mathematics in Dspni. Father was sent to Ardahan, as the director of a school. Our family moved to Ardahan. My brother, Benyamin was born there. Mother's brother, Grigor Stambultsian had graduated from the Moscow Lazarian Seminary and then continued his studies at the Medical Institute and worked as a doctor in Baku. Later, he served in the Russian army as a military doctor.

Kars has been one of the capitals of Armenia. It was a beautiful town. The Kars Chay, i.e. the Kars River flowed through the town, then it was divided into two branches and in between was formed a triangle of green territory, which was transformed into a garden and there was a café there. The Kars Fortress watched the town from above. It was surrounded with ramparts and towers. It was a very strong construction. In those days, about 10 thousand Armenians lived there peacefully. They were

busy in agriculture, cattle-breeding, and bee-keeping. There were also craftsmen such as tailors, cobblers, masons, carpenters, coppersmiths, and goldsmiths. Kars was connected with Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri) and Sarighamish by rail.

In 1915, when the Turks occupied Ardahan, father immediately put us in a carriage and sent us to Kars, as a safe place and he himself walked from Ardahan to Kars. We had taken nothing with us, only father had a bag in his hand, which was filled with our gold and silver ware. On the road, father's hands got tired, and father put the bag on a cart going before him, just to give his hands some rest. But soon the cart began moving faster and faster. Father tried to catch it, but in vain. This way, we lost all our property. My mother's sister, Iskouhi, who, after finishing the secondary school had come to Ardahan to work at father's school, was with us. We reached Kars and went to our grandfather, Father Khoren's house. In 1918, father got a job in Yerevan, and we all moved to Yerevan, where mother died. Our grandmother, Astghik,

\* More than 90-years-old Elena Abrahamian is famous Honored Painter of Armenia.

and father's sister began to look after us, and soon we went back to Kars, for it had been taken by the Russians.

But soon the Russian Revolution [1917] began, and the Russian army began to withdraw from Kars, saying, 'Domoy!' (Back Home! – Russ.). The Armenians did not have forces to keep Kars, and the Turks occupied the railway station and entered the town. Confusion began. The Turks began their ferocities. They entered the Armenians' houses (according to the lists they had) and plundered their property. Those who resisted were killed on the spot. They took away the Armenian girls and young women, raped them, and after sometimes brought them back exhausted, battered, disheveled, and psychologically killed.

I remember my grandfather's house was filled with Armenians who had come there for shelter, as grandfather was a priest. A Turkish soldier was guarding the house and our safety. The young girls had rubbed mud on their faces and were hidden in the cellar trembling with fear.

One day, the commander of the military headquarters, Ahmed efendi's friend, Kemal efendi, who as if to guard my grandfather's house, had appointed the guards, came to grandfather's house in his uniform, his sword hanging by his side, stood on the threshold and declared that he had come to ask beautiful Tigoush to be his wife. And grandpa, as a priest, had to marry them according to 'Allah's law' there in his house and he would take her to his house. If not – he would slaughter them all just then and there. So, it was better for us to agree. Grandpa was a wise man and he began explaining that according to the Armenian law no marriage can be allowed with a person of different religion. It was not possible. But Kemal efendi did not want to listen. He was ready to kill them. Finally, Tigoush appeared with tearful eyes and announced that she was ready to sacrifice her honor, to save her relatives' lives. Grandfather 'married' them according to the Armenian ritual with a trembling voice. Kemal efendi took Tigoush to his house. But after a week Tigoush came to grandfather's house and declared that she would not go back to 'her husband's' house, for he forced her every night to sleep with a different soldier: "He had neither honor, nor conscience."

Plunder on one side, slaughter and kidnapping on the other, had rendered the Armenians' life unbearable. From the belfry of the St. Arakelots Church, the Muslim mullah uttered his azan, and on the dome of the church shone 'the star and the moon.' They had forced an acquaintance of ours, Stepan, to bring down the metal cross. He had done it with great difficulty, had removed it from its height and brought it down. Then they had forced him to carry the cross and they had taken him through the streets of the town. At the end we heard that they had taken him to the Kars Valley and killed him, as a 'payment' for the hard work he had undertaken. The streets were full of corpses washed in their own blood. For, whoever dared

to come out of the house was killed. The Kars' deputy mayor, Fakhrettin efendi, with his 'sweet' words, blamed the Armenians for all the barbaric actions. And the Turk public crier declared: "Peace, justice, quietness, safety," as if nothing had happened.

My father was the administrator of the Russian army. When the others surrendered, he also gave himself up. The Turks killed him. They also killed my uncle Doctor Grigor.

The railway was closed. My aunt thought of taking us to Alexandrapol in vans through the Kars Valley. The Turks found out about it and opened fire on us from above the valley. The van, which was carrying us, was under the fire of the Turks. Many of our relatives died: my uncle's two sons and my aunt were wounded. Father's cousin, with his wife and daughter were killed. The bullets were falling like hail. And, the most horrible was that Russia, Lenin had given those bullets and arms to the Turks. Lenin expected that the Turks would have a socialist revolution. The Turks did have their hellish revolution to the detriment of the Armenians. They organized the Armenian Genocide and became the absolute owners of that ancient beautiful country...

It was a horrible scene: the bullets were falling on us like hail. Then I saw a woman who had come from the village. Her son was wounded in the back; he was bleeding at the spine. The mother was screaming, crying and shrieking... All through my life I could not forget their terrified voices. That voice is still in my ears and I become agitated just by remembering it. There I fainted. I don't remember where our people had gone. A Kurd woman, who had crept under our van together with her daughter, came out and said to me: "All of them have run away, why have you remained here?" I saw my cousin, four years old Tsoghik, on the ground beside me. She had fallen helpless, without any voice, almost dying. The bullet had hit her in the thigh; the wound was big.

I came out of the van almost senseless; I did not know where to go. The Turks were still shooting. There was a bridge on the Kars River, over which the people were trying to pass, pulling and pushing each other. It was a narrow, swinging bridge. A rope was tied along the bridge, so that the people might hold it while crossing. But all the same, the bridge was so narrow and swinging that many people fell into the river, or threw down their children. The river drifted everyone and everything. I approached the bridge. The man before me fell into the water. I don't know, maybe someone helped me, for I was a child and somehow I crossed over it. I looked around; the bullets continued to hit. I was so indifferent towards everything. I did not understand what was happening, any moment a bullet might hit me. How many people lost their lives there? It was impossible to count. Those who had come from the villages were all killed. All through my life I have tried to forget all that, but I have not been

able. At the same time, I have not been able to talk about it, for tears choke me.

At the end of the bridge a man in military coat and fur hat (probably he was a Russian) came up to me, held me in his arms and took me to the opposite side of the road. I was hitting him with my feet. I feared he would harm me. There was a building there; he threw me in through the windows, but I was not harmed. Later, I learned that the man had brought other children, too, and thrown them in through the window. There were many empty rooms. On the floor were wounded people, all covered with blood. In a corner of the room I saw my aunt. She also saw me, but said nothing. She was somehow strange. My grandmother was no more: her head had been shattered by a bullet. Aunt had covered her with a quilt and left her near the bridge. Aunt was wounded in the hand. She had put her hand on my brother's head to protect him; the bullet had passed through her hand.

Then we went to town on foot. Our house was empty, plundered. Aunt took us to my grandfather, Ter Khoren's house, which was next to the St. Arakelots Church. We entered the yard; we saw our dog poisoned in front of the door. Because the dog had not let them enter the house, they had poisoned him and entered in to rob.

Then my two aunts (mother's sisters) were taken to work at the American Orphanage. We went with them as

orphans. In the spring of 1921, our American orphanage was taken from Kars to Alexandrapol. They brought us with freight wagons. It was a few hours' way, but it took us several days. The wagons were sealed from outside, we were inside. The small ones could not bear all that suffering from hunger and thirst. They were dying. The corpses were thrown out of the window for fear of infection.

Before leaving Alexandrapol the Turks had exploded all the store-houses. The Turks had reached not only Alexandrapol, they had occupied Gharakillissa (now: Vanadzor) as well. That was the reason why there was nothing to eat in Alexandrapol, but we survived, somehow. Then I studied and became an artist.

The Turks do not admit that they have massacred the Armenians. Azerbaijan is protected by the same Turks, if not – how could he dare to organize a Sumgait,<sup>1</sup> for the Azerbaijanis were sure that they had Turkey behind them. 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 is only a drop of what the Turks have done. In 1920 Turkey pretended to be Bolshevik. The Turk is a Turk. If the Turks do not admit what they have done, there can be no reconciliation with them.

## 78 (78).

### AGHASSI ARSHAK KAROYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1913, Kars, Dspni Village)

Kars was a Russian colony. Russia began war against the European countries and sent her army to the front.

First, why is our village called Dspni? The answer is that the river flowing through it divides the village into two, that's why it is called Dspni.

The first exile took place in 1918, when the Turks forced the Armenians to be deported. The village of Tigor was a military center during Tsarist Russia. It is about 3-4 km from our village.

Armed Turks had come and were compelling the Armenians to accept their religion and customs. The Armenians did not want, but could not resist either, because our forces were weak, therefore they took the road of exile.

I remember our family: father lifted me and my elder sister on the cart and tied us, lest we fell. On the way the Turks were firing at us. We had to escape. I remember that father stopped the cart; my sister and I got off. That was our village caravan. A boy approached me, my father's rifle was in my hands, he wanted it; I refused. I fell and broke my arm. My grandpa's brother was an

orthopedist; he bandaged my arm.

The road from Dspni led to the center, toward Kars. When we entered Kars, mother pointed to the town.

I and my sister raised our heads and saw the town spread before us like a plate, surrounded with hills, where there were two fortresses. When we passed through Kars, I saw the town, its people and shops. It was richer than our village Dspni. We came out of Kars and went to the station of Alagyaz.

When we were crossing the Arax River, it was overflowing, and the current drifted half of our people. I was on the cart; half of the cart was in the water and did not move forward. We dragged it somehow out of the water.

Our family consisted of twenty-three people. After crossing Arax, only a few were left. Father wanted to go to Yerevan, but, on the crossing of Mastara and Talin, the Turks robbed and killed him.

My uncle had taken our cattle to graze in the pastures near Mastara, the Turks attacked, killed my uncle and his friend, and took away all the animals. Since that day we

<sup>1</sup> Sumgayit – city in Azerbaijan, where the Armenian ethnic minority was massacred by the Azerbaijanis in February, 1988.

were left without any cattle. We started to collect and to eat every grain of wheat, since we had become so poor.

Then grandpa was infected with cholera and died. The Turks pursue my grandpa's brother near Maralik and killed him, his wife and their son Vachagan.

Then, I do not remember, how we came back to our village. Our village was completely ruined. They had destroyed our houses and emptied our barns. We began to live there. In the village we had special pits to hide the wheat. Mother held me and my sister by the hand, and we climbed the opposite hill, where our cowsheds were. Our wheat pits were there, too. We saw that the Turks had discovered them and had plundered. They had not left a single grain and had burnt the cowsheds. Then mother said, pointing to the lands of the Turks: "Wait, let me go and gather some edible greens."

The Turks saw us and began to run after us. We ran down the hill out of breath and fled.

Seeing our condition, the Russian government organized humanitarian aid, food and clothing for the starving people. Many people starved to death in the village, for they were ill and hungry. They gave us barley to sow. We and all the peasants had not any animals to till the land. My uncle came, ploughed a piece of land for us, sowed the barley and went back to his village Zrchi.

During the second migration, in 1919, when we had sowed the barley, we gathered avelouk from the fields. We ground some barley and ate it with the greens. All our family was impatiently waiting for the barley to ripen. The barley ripened, we reaped it, threshed it and spread it to dry, when it was announced that Russia had given Kars to the Turks, and the Turks were coming. There was nothing for us to do, but flee our place.

We took the road of exile again. We had neither animals nor anything to live on; half-naked and barefooted, we began to migrate. Part of the family perished on the road. The wife of my grandpa's brother had left her suckling baby on the stones of the roadside, for she was not able to carry it anymore. Grandpa noticed that the baby was not in his mother's arms, he said: "Anoush, where is the baby?"

"I'm not able to carry him myself; I left him on the stones of the roadside."

Grandpa, who was the elder, said to his younger brother: "Go and bring the child."

He went and brought the child.

We came and reached the Alagyaz station. Many of us had died. We reached Mastara. The small children had fallen ill, they were hungry and they died. Out of 23 members only 12 were left.

We remained two-three days in Mastara. People said: "The Turks are coming to Mastara." Mother held me and my sister by the hand, and we fled to Yerevan. The Turks were firing from the heights. We were barefooted. The road was stony and thorny. We reached Edjmiadsin.

There mother gave my sister to the American orphanage.

It was the autumn of 1919 when we reached Yerevan. In the Tsakhi Meydan (Firewood Square) there was a cattle market then. We, the emigrants, were hungry. 30-40 families settled down in a khan, where there was no light, and we slept as it got dark. Infections diseases as typhus and cholera were spread in Yerevan. Every minute people died, even while walking in the street. Special carts were circulating in the streets to collect the corpses. People had become so poor that they took off the clothes of the dead; the naked corpse was put in the cart and taken to be thrown into pits.

In 1920 mother, who had remained alone and in despair, married a countryman from our village. His name was Karo. He took us to the village of Aramous. We remained there for two months. My step-father said to my mother: "Take your children to an orphanage, I cannot support them."

Mother was pregnant then. Barefooted she brought me, on foot, to Yerevan and delivered me to my grandma, my father's mother. My uncle's wife, who lived with grandma, said: "We are not able to keep ourselves, take him to an orphanage."

One day in the yard of the Shoustov Factory of Ararat Trust they were gathering orphans. The number of children gathered there was more than one thousand. My turn had not reached yet. There were about 200 children before me, when they stopped registering. When everybody had gone away, my uncle's wife came close to the wooden fence of Shoustov Factory and noticed a passage at the lower part of it, through which a child could pass, she said to me: "Now, thrust your head here, see, can you pass through?"

I thrust my head through; it was alright, and she pushed me from behind, so I fell in and I went, got mixed with the children in the yard.

In the evening they put us in carts and took us to Edjmiadsin. The children in the cart were half-naked, dirty, lousy and scabby. They placed us in the small rooms of the Hripsimé Monastery. In the morning clergymen came and began to check how many children they had brought. They read the list. My name was not there. One of the monks ordered to send me back to Yerevan, but a tall clergyman saw that I was crying, took pity on me and ordered to add my name on the list. 90 percent of the children were infected with scabies. Every morning they lit up the stoves and made the orphans stand naked by the stoves; then sulphur ointment was applied to their body, which was then the only medicine for it. In two months some of the children were cured. When I was in Edjmiadsin, my sister had been in the Edjmiadsin Girl's Orphanage, but I did not know about it. My grandma came from Yerevan to see my sister and found her dying. The old woman took her to Yerevan on her back, but my sister died in 1920. She is buried in the Komitas Park.

In 1920, when mother was in Aramous, she gave birth to a child. She asked a peasant to tell my grandma to bring her only son – Aghassi to her, for she was dying. My grandma brought me to Yerevan and from there to Aramous, but mother had already died.

I went back to Edjmiadsin, to my orphanage, which was transferred to Stepanavan. In Stepanavan I was infected with trachoma. Every day, together with the sick children, I was taken to the clinic, and blue alum was applied to my eyes. One day our line of children stopped before the storehouse of the American orphanages, because a child felt unwell. At that moment one of the workers of the storehouse, whose name was Antik came up to me and asked: “Where are you from?”

“I’m from Dspni,” said I.

“Don’t you recognize me? I’m your aunt’s brother-in-law,” he said.

Till that time I was considered lost for my family. Through Antik they learned my place, for later they transferred our orphanage to Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri) and was called Polygon. Shiraz and Alazan were with me. The conditions were very bad there. We passed our days half hungry, for the food-stores of the orphanage were burned, and there was no food.

My grandma came to the orphanage of Alexandrapol to see me and till 1927 she did not have the chance to see or call me.

In 1927 the Soviet Union demanded from the Americans to send the orphans to their relatives if they had any, and those who did not have relatives had to be sent to Soviet Children Houses. I did not have any relatives, who would be interested in me. A man from Talin, who had no children, had applied to our orphanage to be given an orphan as an adopted child. A child from Talin, who was in our orphanage, had told him about me that I had no one, and that he could come and take me. That man wrote to the Leninakan (now: Gyumri) Orphanage that I was his nephew, and that he wanted to take me to Talin. He wrote that the boy called Aghassi Sahakian, son of Arshak, was his brother’s son. But they found no child by that name in Leninakan. They gathered all the Aghassis, inquired about them and then stopped on me.

In the autumn of 1927 they put me, with other children, in a cart and brought us to Talin. There a man approached the head of the group and asked who Aghassi was. I felt that he was not our relative. I was very afraid, because I knew that they took children and exterminated them. I did not go. I said: “He is not my uncle.”

I set up a clamor in Talin; there were many peasants there.

The man in charge of our group noticed that it was impossible to break my will, so he took me back to the Leninakan (now: Gyumri) Children’s Home.

A fortnight had not passed when my grandpa’s

brother who lived in Pirmalak, hearing all about it, had exclaimed: “He is my brother’s grandson.”

Writing in detail about my person, my grandfather’s brother claimed me, and after a month they brought me to Pirmalak. I came and found my grandma, but I did not stay in Pirmalak. My grandpa’s brother brought me to the Alagyaz station, where there was a cattle-breeding farm. I remained with my grandpa’s sister for five days then they put me in a wagon full of sheep and closed the door. The locomotive stopped at every station to take water and fire-wood. When I arrived in Yerevan, I was covered with dirt. I reached Yerevan, but I had forgotten the place of my grandma’s house. I came and stood near the Park of the 26 Commissars. A porter came up to me and said: “What are you standing for?”

“I just came from the orphanage; I do not know where my grandma’s house is.”

“Where are you from?”

“I’m from Dspni.”

“I know people from Dspni. Come, let me take you to their place, they’ll help you to find your relatives.”

He brought me to the Ghantar (Old Market of Yerevan). He made inquiries and then took me to the shop of the husband of my grandpa’s niece, Arshalouys. The latter said: “Sit down, when I close the shop, I’ll show you your grandma’s house.”

In the evening he took me to my aunt’s house. When my aunt saw me, she began to cry. She went and called my grandma. My grandma came to see me together with my uncle’s daughter. When I saw that girl, I said: “I have seen this girl at the orphanage.”

Just imagine, she was my own uncle’s daughter, and I did not know.

My grandma lived then in the corridor of a private house. When the landlord saw that I was going to live with my grandma, he told her: “Do not stay in my house anymore.”

For two months we lived in the street. Then the City Council gave us a cellar, the door of which was broken and it had no windows. To keep my existence I have sold water in the market. With the help of my friends I have joined the pioneer organization. Every Sunday we had pioneer meetings, where we engaged in sports and listened to lectures.

Once we were engaged in athletic activities in the yard of the National Committee Council. I had on a pair of shorts, which was tied with a strip of cloth. During the exercises the strip of cloth became undone, and my shorts fell down. The children began to laugh at me. At that time Hayk Azatian told the pioneer leader to take me to him after the lessons. He called the Women’s Section manager Siroush Makints and told her to give me new clothes. They assigned a monthly pension of 20 rubles to me and sent me to learn at the Kond School, in the 4th form and ordered the City Council to give me a room. I

learned also at the Abovian School. After finishing the school, I studied at the Construction College and then at the State University, Faculty of Economics. I began to

work. I participated in the Great Patriotic War.

Now I am a pensioner. I have found myself, but I am already quite old.

### 79 (79).

#### EMMA HARUTYUN ASATRIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1914, Kars)

I was born in 1914, in the village of Orta-Kadiklar, Kars Province, in the large family of the local priest Ter Stepan. Our family consisted of twenty-eight members. Father had three brothers. The Apostolic Church, which was in the center of the village, served three villages: Bash-Kadiklar, Orta-Kadiklar and Lower-Kadiklar. The church was on a height and had a beautiful scenery: it was surrounded with picturesque sights and rivulets. It was the health resort of the rich families of Gyumri. My grandma, the beautiful Nanadjan, who was a relative of the famous ashough Sheram of Gyumri, had formed a strongly built family with Ter Stepan: they had four sons and two daughters. My mother has told me all about it.

The eldest son of the family, Ter Martiros, was occupied in cattle-breeding; he bartered farm products with the neighboring villages and supplied his large family with food products.

The other son, Aristakes, was sent to Kars to study at the Seminary in order to replace grandpa in the future.

My father Harutyun, having finished the local school, continued his higher studies in New York. His aim was to return home and open a school in his village.

When I became four years old, my father Harutyun Ter-Stepanian returned from the USA after receiving a higher education, but he could not realize his dream – he could not open a school. After a month from my father's return, everything got mixed up, because news was received that the Turks had occupied Kars. The Russian regiment and the Armenian volunteers offered a strong resistance, but the Turkish well-armed army of many

thousands occupied the Kars Fortress, slaughtered all the defenders and threw their corpses into the Kars River.

My eldest brother perished during the defense. They massacred my young brother and uncle, and my grandpa Ter Stepan was brutally killed on the altar of the church. The Turks captured my eldest uncle agha Martiros; they take off his clothes and wanted to throw him into the fire. Two Turks recognized him and said: "This is agha Martiros, our cattle breeder. Let's not touch him." This way my eldest uncle was saved.

My youngest uncle was taken to the army and he died of cholera there. The exile began, with endless caravans. The road of exile was terrible: we walked incessantly hungry and thirsty. On the way the Turks attacked us frequently. At last we reached the Horom Valley, which was near the ruins of Ani. We hid ourselves. Then, the Russian army came and accompanied us to Gyumri. Only a few of our family reached Gyumri.

Now, I am the only witness of my priest-grandpa's large family of 28 members. I'm 83 now, but I remember quite well, though I was 5-6 years old during those tragic years. Even now, those massacre scenes are before my eyes: I was seated on my sister Araxia's shoulders, and we passed through the slaughtered corpses. Somehow we crossed the Arpachay and we were in Gyumri. There a family gave us shelter. Later I married Tsolak Asatrian, a youth working at the Leninakan (now: Gyumri) railway station and had three sons. Then we moved to Yerevan. I have taken an active part in the construction and the prosperity of our Republic.

### 80 (80).

#### STEPAN MARTIROS HOVAKIMIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Ardvin, Tandzot Village)

Our family lived in the village of Tandzot, in the region of Ardvin. My father was a tanner. He was a handsome and broad-shouldered man. My grandpa was rich and he had married his beautiful daughter to my father.

I have not seen the 1914 events. But they have told me that the Turks had come to Olti, had tied the Armenian men and taken them to the rivulet near Tandzot and

had shot them all. At that time if the Russian army had not retreated, we would not migrate. We were taken to Ardahan in carts. We were in the front, and the Russian army was behind us. The Russian army left us in Ardahan and went away. We were put up in the Russian military barracks.

In 1918, at night, the Turks came at night, by the Ardahan bridge, armed with axes and scythes. We were

hiding in the barracks. They searched and dragged out two men hiding under the mattresses and killed them on the spot. They hanged our Armenian fedayis and at night they poured kerosene on them and burned them to light the surrounding. I can't forget that horrible scene. It was in 1918; we had remained in the barracks as prisoners, when the Turks came and surrounded our building; they poured kerosene around the building and burn it in order to kill us in the smoke. Only women and children were left in the building. They had already kidnapped the teenage girls.

At that time the Russians had taken the prisoner in Akhalkalak the Turk khans and beys with their families. They said to the Turks: "If you touch the Armenians in the barracks, we'll kill these high ranked Turks together with their families." Thus, we were set free by miracle. I, my mother, grandmother and my younger brother were saved. But my two brothers, father, grandfather, my uncle and many others, about 200 people, were killed.

The Turks drove us to Akhalkalak, those who fell behind were killed. Mother had left her wedding clothes and jewels in Olti, at her father's house with the intention of taking them on her way back. Mother had made a cushion and had put in it her wedding clothes. The cushion was in my grandma's hand. The Turk officer came up and struck grandma on the back with his bayonet. It tore the cushion. The Turks saw the nice clothes; they seized them and took away. We were left without the cushion.

On the way the cholera epidemic started, of which grandma and brother died. We were hungry and thirsty, but there was nothing to eat and no water to drink. I remember that I saw a raw potato in the field, I ran and brought it, and we ate it: I, mother, grandma and my little brother. The Turks brought us to the Kura River. The bridge on the river was swinging. We were thousands, but the Turk prisoners were few. They wanted to exchange

us, and there was some confusion. They began to fire from both sides and we had a narrow escape and got free. We came to Akhalkalak, in Djavakhk. The Armenians received us very well. They gave us a bath; they fed us, dressed us and gave us rooms to live in.

All these cruelties I've seen with my own eyes. They brought me to the Suram Orphanage, which had been a school before, but they had converted it into a Children's House. The Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA) had organized it, which became a salvation for numerous refugee children like me.

When we say Turk, we understand an executioner, a killer. They massacred us. Their goal was to organize the Armenian Genocide, so that no Armenian survived on earth. The Turks and the Kurds slaughtered all the members of our family.

Then my mother came and found me at the Children's House. We wanted to go to Batoumi, but there had been Armenian-Georgian clashes in 1920. We came to Zangibassar (now: Massis). In those days most of the inhabitants of Yerevan were Turks, but the Armenians were greater in number in Leninakan (now: Gyumri). I married in Yerevan and I started to study.

When I graduated from the Polytechnical Institute I was already a lieutenant. When the war broke out I was in Tiflis. I came to Yerevan. Mother met me with a smile on her face, but tears in her eyes: "God bless you, you have a son, but you must go to war." I went to the maternity hospital and sent my wife a bouquet of flowers and I went to join the army. I became a platoon commander. There were many Turks in the army, but we were on friendly terms with them. I have fought in the Caucasus and Crimea; I remained miraculously alive in Kerch.

But Fascists were not like Turks; they did not touch the inhabitants of the places they occupied; they did not disturb women and children. Turks were different.

## 81 (81).

### NEKTAR HOVNAN GASPARIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Ardvin, Tandzot Village)

The village of Tandzot, Ardvin region, my birthplace, was a beautiful orchard. It had its name for the 13 kinds of pear growing there. The Jorokh River divided the village into two parts: the Armenians lived on one side and the Turks on the other, where there was a tall mosque. The two sides were joined with a small bridge. The Armenians and the Turks lived in harmony until 1914.

In 1914, when we heard that the Turks would attack the Armenians, father got ready to take our whole family

to Tiflis, where his sister lived. But the Turks had closed the road and they did not let us go forward. We were compelled to come back. Then the Turks of Tandzot came and collected all kinds of weapon from the Armenians, even the bread knives. Then they gathered the men, filled them in the church and at night they killed them all. Father had been able to escape away from there and reach my aunt's house. A kind Turk woman, who had seen my father, had later said to my aunt: "Your handsome brother-in-law came by night, went round

your house and then entered the forest.”

Father had encountered there a group of Turks and an Armenian traitor, who had killed father. In the morning when we heard that all the men had been killed, everybody was filled with despair. Mother, who was the daughter of the well-known Grigor agha and Shoushan khanoum, decided to put an end to her and our lives. She had arsenic with her; she gave it to a few girls of the village; she drank it and made me and my sister Anoush drink it – I was four years old, but she did not give it to my brother who was ten months old.

The house of my mother’s brother was on the bank of the Jorokh River. All of us had taken poison. There, on the river bank, a few women were crying and moaning that the Turks would kill them as well. Mother, in despair, and having already taken the poison, threw herself into the river. People came and took mother’s corpse out of the water. My aunt Anoush also died, she had also drunk the poison. I was small. They made me drink pickle water and gave me an apple to eat. My sister Anoush did not die, too, but, as the effect of the poison, her feet were swollen. They gave her also pickle water to drink. I, Anoush and our ten-month old brother remained orphans.

At that time Vardan Mazmanian, who was the director of the Tandzot School and mother’s cousin, had been hiding in my uncle’s cellar. He heard how the Turks came and began talking that in the morning they would come and kidnap the young women and the girls and kill the rest. Vardan heard all that from his hiding place. After they left, he came to my uncle’s house. They hid Vardan near my mother’s and aunt’s corpses, which were covered with a bed sheet. They covered them with a sheet leaving open the two women’s faces only. At that moment the Turks came and searched the house: they were looking for Vardan. They looked at the two dead women, spat on them with disgust and left.

Vardan’s neighbor, the kind Turkish woman, brought a few of her clothes and said: “Let Vardan put on these clothes, so that I may take him to the Jorokh River as a Turkish woman.”

It was already December. Tandzot was surrounded with forests. Uncle Vardan disguised as a Turkish woman, accompanied the neighbor woman to the Jorokh River.

Uncle Vardan reached with great difficulties Ardahan, where the Russian army had settled. He crossed his face, spoke in Russian and told the Russians that he was not a Turkish woman; he wore women’s clothes in order to be able to come and tell them that the Turks intended to slaughter the Armenians and it was necessary to reach Tandzot without delay to help them. The Russians listened to him and agreed to go and help the people. Vardan knew the road: he walked by night, and the Russian soldiers followed him. The Russian soldiers reached Tandzot before the Turks could realize

their hellish plan.

Gun-shots were heard, accompanied by the ringing of the Armenian Church bells. When my sister Anoush heard the ringing of the bells, she told me to kneel and cross my face. She took out the hands of my 10 month-old brother from his swaddling clothes and crossed his face; she thanked God for helping the poor people of Tandzot.

When the Turks saw the Russian army, they ran away to save their skin. The Russians came and began to help the Armenians. They said: “We’re leaving in 24 hours. Get ready if you want to come with us.” Learning that we were orphans, the Russian soldiers put all three of us: me, my sister Anoush and our baby brother and on a sledge and covered us with a military coat to keep us warm. They fed us on their own ration and brought us to the military barracks in Akhalkalak.

The local photographer Yortanian Tatos, who was a very kind man, came to the barracks and seeing us, three orphans, wished to adopt us. But our grandma gave him only our ten-month-old brother and kept us near her.

After staying a year in Akhalkalak, we went back to Tandzot, when the Russians occupied our lands again. The mulberry had ripened. Tandzot had become a paradise. The Tandzot mulberry was exclusively tasty indeed.

It was already 1917. Vardan got information that the Turks would come again. He gathered the people again and we set off. When we came out of Tandzot, we passed through Armenians villages, which were burned to ashes: old women and children lay on the ground, killed; dogs and cats were feeding on them. Those horrible scenes I could never forget through all my life.

Passing through burnt villages and slaughtered corpses, we finally reached hungry and thirsty an Assyrian village, where the inhabitants received us very well. The following day, under the guidance of Vardan, we all reached Ardahan and from there to Akhalkalak. Half of the inhabitants of Tandzot remained there and where taken prisoner when the Turks returned again.

At that time many Turks of Akhalkalak fell prisoners into the hands of the Russian army. They decided to exchange prisoners. Thus, many people were saved. During this second migration, my kind grandma, did not want to come with us: she had grown very old; she remained in Tandzot. We heard later that the Turks had come and burned our house and had hanged my poor grandma from the tree.

*"I have written a poem about it:  
I went all over the world,  
I couldn't find my granny's tomb.  
How could I find it anywhere?  
When the Turks had hanged her from the tree.  
I found my mother's burial mound,*

*I shed bitter tears on it,  
And from those tears of mine  
The stony mound turned green.*

*I looked for my father's grave,  
But where could I find it?  
When the ruthless Turks  
Had torn him to pieces."*

On the way to Akhalkalak, we had a rest in the Bakourian Forest. But we were exhausted; all of us were hungry and thirsty. And the miracle took place: the Armenian Benevolent Union came and gathered all the orphans like us and took us to the Suram church, which was converted into a Children's Home. At that time the cholera epidemic had started. Then the Americans came and the Near East Relief Committee took us under its care. They supported us very well: they gave us food, clothes, education; they transformed us into human beings. Besides our lessons in Armenian, Russian and English, I've learned there to play the violin, to dance

ballet and to understand art, which later made me almost a person of arts. Look at these tree trunks and roots. I've gathered them with my own hands, I've shaped them. I've given them an artistic form. Each of them looks like a statue: the creation of nature...

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 no rest ever since. I have shed tears so often... Other countries did not lend a helping hand to us, but the Russians did. 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.

## 82 (82).

### SHOUSHANIK HOVHANNES PACHADJIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

#### (B. 1901, Trapizon)

My father Hovhannes had seven brothers and one sister, Nvard, who had married Onik Makhokhian. The latter was the elder brother of the marine-artist, Vardan Makhokhian. Their parents were well-off and had given a good education to their children. When my aunt was engaged, they had hired a special governess for her to teach her French and they had brought a piano to our house in order that she learned to play the piano. And only after that they had taken my aunt as a daughter-in-law.

I attended the American kindergarten since the age of four, then I studied at the Anatolia College in Marzvan, where the headmistress was Miss Charlotte Willard.

When the exile began in 1915, our college people were also forcibly deported. We were 48 Armenian girls and our teachers. They put us on 15 carts, and we set out. Where? Nobody knew. We passed through bazaar, through caravanserais and reached Amassia. There they packed us in two small rooms on the second floor of a building to spend the night. But all night we heard heart-rending moans and harrowing groans of people, and nobody could fall asleep. We found out, in the morning, that on the first floor of the building and in the rooms right below ours there were the terribly cut and wounded bodies of Armenians in their death throes, piled one upon another, whose horrifying groans had not let us go to sleep.

Our headmistress, Miss Willard, and her assistant, Miss Cage, had meanwhile written letters to the American Ambassador in Turkey, Morgenthau, and had got the permission to exempt the 48 girls of their college from being deported. However, the prefect of our small town of Turkal, where we had reached, objected that he had instructions from the governor of Marzvan to exile all the Armenians, without exception. And so, they gave us, with great difficulty, a place in a caravanserai to pass the night. In a corner of that inn we saw a human form, which was still moving. We, the girls, approached him and learned that he was an Armenian, and that the Turk gendarmes had thrown a millstone over him and had broken his backbone, but he had not died yet. We gave the poor man part of our dinner, although we knew that his life was short, but we did not want him to die hungry...

Then our coachman took us to Sharkeshla. There the Turk gendarme and the coachman got off the coach and started to demand money from us. We were schoolgirls and we had very little money with us. Besides, our headmistress had told us that the fare had been paid in full. The coachman and the gendarme saw that nobody was willing to give them money; they threatened us that they would abandon us at the next station and continued the journey.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1970, has been delivered to me by her daughter, the pianist, the Professor of the Yerevan Komitas Conservatory, Alda Zakarian, 2006. The survivor's testimony is presented here with some abridgements.

We thus reached Yenikhan and got off the carts. They put us up in an empty hall, but the armed watchman standing at the door did not let anybody out even to satisfy our natural needs, unless we paid him for it. That armed watchman earned a lot of money that evening.

Shukri bey was following us from Amassia, since he had his eye on one of our girls and he was chasing her until the day when he possessed her and made her his wife.

Our college professor Gyulian had two daughters, Arminé and Hranoush, who were graduates of the Anatolia College. The elder one, Arminé, had taught me arithmetic in the third form. Before the exile, the government had forced her to adopt the Islamic faith and to work at the Turkish school in Marzvan. She was a good specialist in Armenian, Turkish and French languages. As a result, they did not exile her and, besides her own family, she rescued her brother-in-law, the latter's wife, her brother's wife and two Armenian schoolchildren, Hasmik and Lyudvik. Her brother-in-law's wife, Maritsa, passed away in Yerevan, in 1969.

Our college professor, Svazlian, was infected with typhus and could not be rescued. They buried him at the Turkish cemetery with Turkish burial rites. All our remaining professors were exiled and perished.

We reached Svaz. There was also an American Girls' College, but they had deported all of them. Their beds and bed-linen had remained. We were accommodated there. We stayed in Svaz for three weeks. The governor was not in Svaz. We waited until he returned. Then our supervisors entered into negotiations with the governor. It lasted for quite a long time. Our leaders had presented him the official permission signed by Talaat about the exemption of the 48 Armenian girls of the Anatolia College of Marzvan from being deported and obtained from the governor the right to return to Marzvan.

We set off on September 1st, from Svaz to Marzvan. It should be noted here that there were quite a good number of Armenians in Svaz, naturally apostatized. Hence the staff of the boys' college, all Armenians, had not been exiled and had remained at their place. Only the girls of Miss Krapham's school had been deported and, although Miss Krapham herself had left the town with them, they had allowed her to accompany her girls till Malatia. There they had beaten her and had sent her back to Svaz. Miss Krapham always remembered her Armenian schoolgirls and grieved over them who were all martyred.

On the appointed day, 15 carts came to take us to Marzvan. Two Turk horsemen, sent by the governor, escorted us. One of them went in front of the carts and the other followed close behind. On the fifth day we reached Marzvan. What a great joy it was, I remember. The Greek boys and girls, who studied at our college, welcomed us amiably. We settled down as before and restarted our normal school life. Miss Willard gathered

us one day in the college hall and rendered us an account about how much had been spent during our exile. Forty gold pounds had been spent on every girl. She told us that, undoubtedly, no one was able, at the time, to pay, but that it would be good if we paid our debt during our lifetime. I, of course, was not in a position to pay my debt. Marie Svazlian had, in person, paid Miss Willard when they had met later in Athens.

We thus continued our studies till April, 1916. On May 16, Miss Willard gathered us and announced that the Turkish government was sending them to the United States. Our college was closed.

Our college headmistress, Miss Willard, has described in detail all these historic events in her book.<sup>1</sup> The Turkish soldiers had surrounded our college when Arsham, the son of the college baker, informed me that a Greek family wanted to take me and Zarouhi to their home. We went to live in Mrs. Desbina's house. We helped them with the housework. They spoke Turkish at home, and the wives of the wealthy high-ranking Turk officials often visited them. They played the lute and sang...

I, who had studied the piano at the college, was often obliged to accompany them and I felt very bad that I had to take part in the revelries of those careless women, while my nation was in death throes.

When the political situation changed, they collected us once again from the Greek families, and our boarding school started to function again. But that also did not last long.

I got a letter from my mother telling me that she had survived and was in Batoumi, then another letter followed informing me that she had gone to Tuapsé, since the Turks had already seized Batoumi. I bade Miss Willard and my teachers farewell and reached Tuapsé by ship. I found my dear mother. Father had already passed away.

There I got a letter from Miss Willard saying that I could continue my studies at the Robert College in Constantinople. My mother told me that a great part of our large and patriarchal family, composed of 32 souls, had been martyred during the Genocide. Then my paternal uncles, who lived in Paris since a long time, invited me there, and I could perfect my musical skills. I got acquainted there with Levon Zakarian, who studied in Paris to become an electrical engineer. We moved to Tiflis and got married. We lived in harmony until 1937. Along with many others, my husband was also taken to the cellars of KGB and then was exiled to Siberia. A period of hardships started for us [in Soviet Armenia]. I have raised alone my three children with great difficulties.

<sup>1</sup> See: Charlotte R. Willard of Merzifon (Missionary, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; Formerly President of the School of Religion, Athens, Greece...). *Her Life and Times*. New York, 1933.

**ARSHALOUYS KYUREGH TER-NAZARETIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1905, Baberd, Loussonk Village)**

Do you know what horrible things have come to my head? I, myself, have rescued my head from those dogs. I was born in 1905 in the village of Loussonk, Baybourt (Baberd) Province. My grandfather Ter Nazaret has been very rich. I was born in the fields. My mother was Aghavni, my father – Kyuregh, my brothers were Missak and Hakob, my sisters – Vardouhi, Tourvanda. There was no other estate owner as rich as we were. My grandfather was a priest. The Turks used to come and ask: “Where is Ter Nazaret’s house? They came, stayed at our house for months, they ate and drank; God damn them...”

We had jars full of honey, olives, cheese. Everything was reduced to nil. Our barns groaned under their abundance. Ter Nazaret was a benefactor and he had many friends among the Turks. He had even given a field to a Turk to sow. One day that Turk came to our house secretly and informed us that the Sultan had given them order, and had said: “Go, plunder and bring the riches of those gâvurs!”

At night our young men and my uncles took their arms and went away from home. Mother gave them a supply of provisions. We had one hundred horses; they took them out of the stables and rode off.

Our youths went and joined Andranik’s group in the mountains. We were relieved that the youth people had gone away from the village.

One morning in 1915 the Turkish soldiers invaded our village and our house. My grandma, the priest’s wife, was baking bread, seated near the tonir. The Turks saw that we had many hens – they ordered us to kill and boil the hens for them to eat. We obeyed and then they burned my grandma’s arms with the red hot skewers, on which the chicken were roasted; soon my grandma died.

The Turks said to my grandpa: “You’re a priest: you have much gold, take them out and give us.” They burned my grandpa’s beard. Grandpa said in despair: “God damn it, go and take it. A saint is buried under the altar of the church. Go, the gold is there.”

The Turks went, took out the gold; they filled two saddle-bags with gold coins, then came and struck grandpa on the head and killed him on the spot. Then they passed to the young women. My uncle’s wife, Iskouhi, said: “You, dogs, you took the gold, what else do you want?” And she took her children, threw them into the water and then she threw herself and got drowned.

They took the women to the nearby river, took off their clothes, kept the clothes for themselves and kicked the women down into the river. The river was full of corpses. They had taken my father to a village, had thrown him into a dark place; they had beaten him and imprisoned him. Father was a builder. He had found an

iron bar in the earth, had pulled the wall down and had escaped. A Turk had seen him, and father had struck him on the head with his iron bar and killed him. He had taken his passport and gone to Stavropol. They drove us, our whole family, out of the village on foot. They drove us for forty days, and at last we reached the town of Yerznka. They gathered the people to throw them into the river. The Turks threw the young women and the girls into the river, and the waves carried them away. We fled. We reached a village. We saw that they had massacred all the Armenians. The village was empty. We entered a half-ruined house. My brothers and me, we were all hungry. Grandma said: “Hakob djan, take out from your sandal two gold coins; let’s buy some madsoun.”

We had just begun to eat the madsoun, when we saw two Turks, who came in, seized my brothers Hakob and Missak, and took them away to kill them. Then we saw a Turk, who had squatted opposite us and was looking at us. He came and said to my uncle’s wife: “Give me that girl, I’ll keep her well. It’s all the same; they’re going to drown you, maybe she remains alive.”

They gave me to him. He brought me to his house. In fact, his wife had died and the child had remained without anyone to look after. I, the daughter of a rich family, could I take care of a child? I remained there for three days. I saw that I was not able to do the job; I left the doors open and ran away, thinking that it was better to go and throw myself into the water. Why should I live all alone? They had killed all my relatives. On the way I heard some Turks talking: “No Armenian remained: I threw them all into the water.”

I heard those words and I was terrified, so they had drowned them all. I sat and cried. Suddenly I saw two Turkish women who came up to me and said: “Will you come to our house?”

They were the wives of high ranking officers. I went with them. They took me by the hand and led to their house. They bathed me, changed my clothes and kept me for three years. They called me Gyuly. One day they took me to a wedding. I saw someone who was dressed as an Armenian priest and was poking fun of him. I became nervous.

They used to send me to their brother’s house to take something there or bring something from there. One day they cooked subeureyi and gave it to me to take to their brother’s place. On my way the old Turk recognized me and ran after me. When he approached, I threw the bowl filled with the meal on his head and ran away. In the evening when our masters came home and heard about the incident, they went and beat that Turk.

After three years, when the Russians came, they

had hidden me in the cellar, because they gathered the Armenian orphans and took them to Armenian orphanages. The Russians used to say: "Whoever harms the Armenians will be punished."

The cellar window was covered with a net. The door was locked. I found a pair of pincers and began to pull the nails out. I pulled and pulled and fell on my back, but the door opened. I got up, put the ladder and climbed up on the roof. I saw a Russian and an Armenian soldier. I said: "I am an Armenian."

They heard me and said: "Are you Armenian? Jump, we'll catch you."

I said: "I can't jump. In the evening at 5 o'clock come and ask for me."

It turned out that the neighbor had heard me; she came and told my landlady about it. The two sisters came crying and implored me to tell the soldiers that I was a Muslim.

I said: "Alright, I shall say so." But I knew what I was going to say. In the evening the Russian and the Armenians soldiers came, and brought an Armenian woman with them; her name was Zarouhi. They came and asked me: "Are you an Armenian?"

I said: "Yes. I am an Armenian."

They took me with them. Mrs. Zarouhi made me sit on her knees and said: "Your uncle has opened a shop in Baybourt. The Russians have entered and occupied Baybourt."

And suddenly father came and found me. Father had

gone to Stavropol. He took me to Baybourt in a troyka. Ruins were everywhere. Our house was empty; there was nothing in it. Only a churn was left. The kind Turk, who had come and warned us about the massacre, said: "I've often eaten your bread. Get up in the morning and hurry away from Baybourt." He was a kind man; he saw our conditions and he brought us our cow with one horn broken, which he had taken to his place and had kept it. We could live on it somehow. Elizabeth, my uncle's daughter was the other survivor from our big family. A Turk had taken her away and kept her in the barn. In 1918, when the Russians came to save the Armenians, the Turk said to his son: "While drawing water from the well throw her into the well." Elizabeth had been lying in the barn and she heard those words. When the boy took Elizabeth to the well, he said: "Draw up the water." She said: "I do not know how to do it. You draw first, I want to see." The boy tried. Elizabeth pushed the boy into the well, and she ran away. In the darkness she climbed up the tree. At dawn she saw a few soldiers coming. They were speaking Armenian. She explained: "Oh, that's my uncle Andranik."

The other soldier said: "There are devils in this forest."

Elizabeth said from the tree top: "No, that's me, Elizabeth." And so she was saved. After three years we went to Tiflis. There I have taken part in theatrical group activities. I recited and sang well. In 1938 we came to Yerevan.

## 84 (84).

### MASSIS NIKOGHOS KODJOYAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1910, Baberd)

Part of my memories I've heard from survivors. Our family had lived in Kyumishkhana, before moving to Baybourt (Baberd). There were silver mines, and my ancestors, especially my grandpa had been busy in making silverware. He had been a big man, that was why they have called him 'Kodjo,' and our family name had become Kodjoyan. Later they had moved to Baybourt. One of his brothers, Karapet, had come to the Caucasus, to Akhaltsekha; he had four sons; one of them was Hakob Kodjoyan, the famous artist-painter. My grandfather Martiros had been a cloth merchant in Baybourt. He had three sons: Manouk, Mkrtich and Nikoghos. I am Nikoghos's son.

My father was born in 1865. He had studied at the Sanassarian College of Erzroom. He was the only literate person in their family. During the massacres of 1895 my grandfather had been at the casino. They had brutally cut his finger and taken off the magnificent ancestral ring. It was then Sultan Hamid's reign. The Turks had

completely plundered all our property.

Our family had links with the merchants of Venice, Genoa and Constantinople, who helped us to restore our property and position. But Sultan Hamid had released all the criminals from the prisons and had instructed them to rob, plunder and kill the gâvurs. They had killed my grandpa and uncle then. In two days there was not a family without a murdered member. All the Armenians were mourning over their murdered kinsfolk. The slaughtered Armenians were so numerous that the people buried their dead without a coffin. The church gave coffins for my grandfather and uncle, for they were well-known people and buried them in the church yard.

After the massacre of 1895 our house was filled with orphans and widows. Father took all of them under his care. Father, mother and all our kin were hidden in the barn along with the orphans and widows.

The Jorokh River flowed near our yard. There were aspen trees all around. We were five children in our

family.

Until the massacre of 1915, when the war broke out in 1914, the Armenians were allowed to be freed from serving in the army by paying a ransom of 50 gold coins. Father paid 50 gold coins, and my eldest brother did not take part in the Russian-Turkish War.

In April 1915, a week before the Easter, all the well-known people were imprisoned, among them – my father. The following day mother took some food and we went to the prison. Father was pale and looked at us with troubled eyes. They inspected us outside the prison and only then let us in.

Then an instruction came that twenty-four families from Baybourt should be sent to work on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad in Mesopotamia.

The Dashnaks had urged the people to have arms in every family. Mother took that weapon by night and threw it into the Jorokh River. Brother sold the cloth of our shop cheaply to the Turks and bought a horse, so that we might travel in a cart.

The next day, after loading the most necessary things on the horse, we set off. Besides those 24 families, they exiled other families, too, in parts. Grandma, who was seventy years old, threw herself into the river; the gendarme fired at her and killed her. After two days when we were in a flat country surrounded with hills, the Turks, armed with axes and daggers, attacked us and began to slaughter, plunder and kidnap. Half of the people were killed there. The gendarmes, accompanying us, disappeared at that time. After 4-5 hours they began to kidnap the girls and young women. They took away my sister. My brother wanted to defend her, they struck him on the head and killed him. I remained with my mother, my other sister, elder brother and my uncle's wife. They had already taken away our horse and cart. Nothing was left to us. We were left naked and bare-footed. Thus we walked from Baybourt to Yerznka, hungry, thirsty, wounded and bleeding. Near Yerznka, as we came down a hill, we saw thousands of corpses, naked and deformed, which were scattered before us. We were all exhausted to death. Two brothers, 17-18 years old who were not able to walk with the group anymore, asked the gendarme to kill them. Without even thinking, the gendarme made them stand back to back and shot them with one bullet; he was glad that he had saved a bullet.

When we entered Yerznka, a Greek doctor lived there. He saw our miserable state and cried; he bribed the gendarme and took away my thirteen-year old sister. We continued our way. We walked and reached the Mourat (the Euphrates) River. There many women and girls threw themselves into the river, in fearing of being taken away by the Turks. I saw the Mourat River was full of corpses. There my uncle's daughter threw herself into the water together with her baby. Standing on the bank of the river the Germans were laughing and photographing.

The Euphrates took away my uncle's daughter and her baby. A Turk came up to us and wanted to take me away. My mother resisted. He struck mother on the head with his dagger, another Turk hugged me and took away; a third Turk took my brother away.

They brought me to a Turkish village. That Turk had two daughters. It was the family of a mullah. They thought me to pray. I learned to pray in Arabic. One day I was praying in a corner of the barn, they came and began to beat me. I did not understand why they were beating me. It turned out that I was kneeling on the opposite side. They had taken it as a despise to their religion. I was taking their cows and sheep to the pasture. I often took them to the orchards of the exiled Armenians to graze.

In the spring of 1916 the Russian army was approaching. Instructions came to evacuate the Turks. When they got the instruction, they held a meeting to decide what to do with me. One of the girls suggested throwing me into the well, the other said: "It's a pity; let's take him with us." And so they did. I set off with them towards Sebastia. The next day their elder daughter died. On the way I lost them, but I continued to walk with the other Turk refugees. I walked with the calves, sucked the milk of the cow; the cow allowed me to suck her milk longer than her calf.

We reached Yenikhan, which is close to Sebastia. They called me Mittaris oghli, that is, the teacher's son, but my name was Sapit, as if I was a Turk. In Yenikhan a Turk took me to the aouls, where there were separate houses. Later I learned that the man was a chief of bandits. There, too, I was grazing the sheep and calves. The man used to disappear for months. One day he brought a military man with his gun. Later I learned that he was a commander in the Caucasian army, who had deserted.

One night there was a knock at the door; 15 Greek deserters had come to ask for bread. That man plundered the Greeks who had deserted the Caucasian front. I had my share, a pair of trousers, which I put on.

Once in 1917, while grazing the cows, I had fallen asleep. Suddenly I woke up and saw that it was night; the stars were twinkling, the cows had disappeared. I could not go to my master anymore. I went on foot, by night, to Yenikhan. I asked a shopkeeper for some bread. That shopkeeper took me, as a Turkish boy, to another village of Sebastia. The folk with whom I stayed were very poor. I went with them to thresh wheat. I had already become 7-8 years old. I stayed there in summer, in the autumn they said: "We can't keep you any more." The landlord took me to Sebastia together with the wheat. A man took me in and said: "I'll keep you this winter; in spring I'll give you to an orphanage." And so he did. They took me to a Turkish orphanage. I remained in the Turkish orphanage of Sebastia a whole year. Most of the children there fell ill with typhus. They transferred those who

were healthy to another orphanage, me too. On the list my name was a Turk's name.

In Sebastia the Armenians came and took the Armenians to their orphanage, but they did not take me, because I was considered a Turk. They put on me a big military uniform, in the pocket of which I found a needle and some thread. The orphans hired my needle and thread and gave me a piece of bread.

One day I was gathering the indigested grains from the excretion of horses to eat, when a boy saw me and cried: "Massis." I fled out of fear. He went and told about me to my sister, who was a governess in a Turk's house. My sister came and searched me, but they told her that there were no Armenians there.

In 1919 one evening, when all the orphans had gathered to carry bread, my sister saw me, recognized me and began to cry. I did not recognize her. I was all covered with wounds. They questioned me at the board of the orphanage; I said that I was an Armenian, and she was my brother's wife.

My sister took me to the Turk's house, where she lived. My mother had gone to Harpoot on foot with the other twenty-four Armenian families. She had found my younger sister there and was leading a miserable existence by sewing. My sister sent news to mother that she had found me, and that I was with her. Mother organized our flight. Sister and I, we went to Harpoot and found our mother and younger sister. I recognized my mother.

Mother had an aunt who lived in America. Mother was in correspondence with her, and she had proposed mother to go to America together with her children. Mother, sister and me (my younger sister had passed away) would go to Constantinople by American cars in

order to travel to America.

Sebastia was a town where there was an American school. There mother met a woman, friend of hers, who persuaded her not to go to America.

Mother started to work in a clothes factory. My sister married a youth from Khnous, who was in exile there. I entered school and began learning Armenian.

Our family, which consisted of twenty-three people sitting at a table together, was reduced to only three.

When Ataturk came to power, he went to the provinces. Everybody went to see him. We also went, and I saw Ataturk.

In 1925 Aram Aramian's mother, who is my sister, found her son. We came from Trapizon to Tiflis. A month later we came to Yerevan.

I began to attend school. Then I went to study at a technical construction school. Later, I worked on construction projects. After the Zangezour earthquake I went to rebuilt it. In 1934 I entered the Architectural Institute of Moscow and graduated from it. I had received an assignment to go to Estonia and work there on Baltic Sea, but I received a letter from my mother and came to Armenia and was sent to Poti to build military constructions. I have constructed the Factory No. 447.

When the war broke out, I was sent to the front. I returned. At the Central Committee I got an assignment to head the Non-Ferrous Metal Industry. I have had several responsible positions. I have carried out a great deal of work at the Agarak, Kadjaran, Alaverdi factories. I have had relations with the Ministry Non-Ferrous Metal Industry in Moscow. I am a family relation to Zaroubian, the Secretary of the Central Committee of Armenia. Now I am a pensioner.

## 85 (85).

### GEGHAM POGHOS HATSAGORDSIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

#### (B. 1902, Sper Province)

The province of Sper is surrounded by Baybourt on the west, Hovtik and Tortoum – on the south, Kiskim – on the east, Pontian Khaghtik – on the north and it lies on the banks of the Jorokh River. The Sper Valley is covered with thick forests on both sides and the banks of the river are covered with orchards and vegetable gardens. The population of Sper consisted of 4,500 families in 1830 and in 1915 only 500 families, of which 62 were Armenian, the rest were Armenians who had been forcibly converted to Islam.

I was born on January 27th, 1902. My father was Poghos from Sper, my mother was Yeghsa. I remember our house, our large family. My eldest brother Vardan,

then Andreas, my sister Almast, who used to hug me, my younger sister Sultan, my uncle's son Manouk, who was 12 years my senior.

Sper had two Aygedzor districts: Upper and Lower. The Upper one had many Armenian inhabitants. It had a church, which was called "the monastery". There was a manuscript Bible made of parchment and it was called the "Red Bible". The pilgrimage day to that monastery was the first Sunday after Easter. People came from everywhere. The sick came to be healed. There was a legend about the Bible. I don't know, but when a Turk stole the Bible, on the next day he was surprised to see that the Bible was not in its place. The soothsayer

\* The manuscript "Memoirs of 1915: Days of Exile," written by the eyewitness survivor in 1960, has been delivered to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, by Mariam Blikian.

Margarit of the village dreamt that the Bible had fallen into the Jorokh River. But the people did not pay attention to her. The dream repeated itself three times. Finally, people went looking for the Bible in the waters of the river, found it, and took it back to the monastery. Since then the monastery had become a place of pilgrimage.

Lower Aygedzor was covered with orchards and the natural surroundings were wonderful. There was a school where the teacher was a pastor.

There was a Turkish Hamidié regiment in the town. I was terrified of it. They always warned me: "Do not speak loudly. Do not hold your head high; the Turkish soldiers will beat you," as it often happened. Or they kidnapped Armenian girls and women by night and raped them.

One day, I was playing "knuckle-bone" on the roof, when gunshots were heard from the market-side, and people shouted: "Yaşasın Hürriyet!" (Long Live the Liberty! – Turk.). My brother, Yessayi, explained to me that the Turks would not beat the Armenians anymore and they would not treat them badly.

My father Poghos was ordained as a priest and he was called Father Ghevond.

Years passed. We, the children were happy, for we were with our parents, sisters, brothers, nephews, all of us living together, and we had not seen the "yataghan."

It was the year 1914. It was written in the calendar that there would be an eclipse of the sun on August 8, and that "there would be a great bloodshed," as predicted by Ephemeredes. And actually, one day I was sitting on the yoke and driving the oxen, the sun was obscured and it began getting dark. The Armenians and the Turks started to pray.

One summer day, the town-crier announced: "All men from the ages of 20 to 45 are called up to be soldiers." War had started with the Russians. Erzroom was filled with soldiers; their conditions were terrible; a typhoid epidemic was mowing them down. That was why most of the soldiers deserted the army, but the government paid one gold coin to those who handed in a deserter, therefore they were being searched everywhere. If they could not find the deserter, they tortured his parents to death.

When the war started, a military hospital was established in Sper, and wounded Turkish soldiers were brought there, most of all from Sarighamish. They were brought to hospital with frozen bodies, almost half dead.

It was the winter of 1915 when Enver pasha attacked the Russians with an army of 12,000 soldiers. The Russians withdrew to Sarighamish, but there the Turkish army was surrounded and badly defeated. The war minister, Enver pasha was just saved by a young 19-year-old youth named Arshak from Baberd, but the soldiers fled in every direction. Those soldiers were brought to the Sper hospital in a very bad condition and most of

them died. An Armenian physician, Dr. Harutyunian, was blamed for that and he was taken to Erzroom hands bound.

Then they began searching the houses looking for weapons and deserters. They tortured and robbed the poor Armenians. They tortured specially the peasants of the Upper village. They had tortured the priest so much that he had gone to a Turk, paid him 5 gold coins, bought a mauser, and brought it to the chief in order not to be beaten anymore, but the chief had demanded 5 more gold coins in order not to beat him.

On the first day of Easter, the Armenians of that village were all deported, but the Armenians helped the Russians and joined them. The Armenians of our region had one motto, 'Not to give the Turks any chance to kill us.' And one day, the men from 45-50 were called to serve in the army, the youth from 17-20 as well. All the young Armenian boys went to the army, and the elderly people wanted to pay the ransom in order to be freed from military service, but the government did not agree. A decree was issued, according to which each person had to pay 55 gold coins as a ransom. The Armenians paid, but the Turks did not pay, neither were they taken to the army.

When the Armenians of Upper Village were deported, rumors spread that we also would be exiled towards Merdin. After their first retreat, the Russians started to advance again, subsequently; every day Turk emigrants came with their animals from Id, Ardahan and Livana and continued their way.

One day, one of them had met Sargis agha, who was about 60 and had worked as a gendarme in the Turkish army and had his former service uniform on. Sargis agha had understood that the Turk had taken him for a Turk, so he had kept on talking to him calmly. The Turk had said: "There are many Armenians here. Why have you left them free, why have not you killed them?"

Sargis agha said: "The government has not given the order. How can we kill them?"

"What does order mean?" The Turk had said. "They had not given us any order either, but the order has arrived in Constantinople. So, if you kill the Armenians, no one will tell you anything. Do you know the valley of Narman? We filled that valley with the corpses of Armenians."

Sargis agha came and told it to us. In those days, a large army of outlaws had come to Sper and from morning till evening under the sounds of drum and zurna they made awful noises, danced wild dances and frightened us.

At the end of 1914, a new gendarme commander came to Sper. He was only a lad of 18. It was said that he was chavoush khalif's son. He came and settled down on the eastern height of the Armenian district in Mrs. Marinos's house. She was a widow. Field-grass in hand,

he used to watch which girl or young woman left the house. That was the reason why our girls were afraid to come out of the house.

One day in June 1915, I went to our orchard. On the way, I met a 10-year-old boy, whose name was Mamed, and he said to me: "Come, you become a Turk now, for soon they'll exile you. On the way they'll kill your father, mother, brothers who are adults, and the small ones will be turned into Turks, and if they did not want to become Turks, they'll kill them, too. You become a Turk, so that you remain here and be the owner of your fields and houses."

I said: "If they are going to kill all my people, and there won't be anyone to weep over me, let them kill me as well. I am not afraid of death, I won't be a Turk!"

He spoke for quite a long time to persuade me, but I always refused him.

I went home and told our people all about this. On the following days, they started exiling the Armenians from the villages. They took them to town and then to Baberd. My elder sister, Elmas, with her 4 children was among them, her 102-year-old father-in-law, Sargis Zournadjian, who was blind and his daughter, a widow, Mariam khanoum, were exiled as well.

On the 5th of June father bought 6 donkeys for our journey, and I took them to the field to graze. In the evening when I returned home, I learned that all the eminent Armenians had been arrested and among them was my father, Father Ghevond Hatsagordsian, who was a priest and the representative of the prelate.

On the 6th of June the Armenians were informed to get ready to be deported to Harpoot.

In the morning, the gendarmes came and gave orders to hurry up, to come out of the houses, lock the doors and hand over the keys to the government. The Armenians of Sper still remembered that they had fallen under the heels of such brutes as Lala Mustafa and Arif Ahmed, but had survived. Now, they lived the fear of being annihilated.

In the falling rain, all the Armenians gathered in the garden near the mill. Our men, who had been imprisoned for two days, also came there; 5 young men were with them.

Until the Armenians of Sper and the villages reached Baberd, most of the well-known men were murdered, and it was decided to take the inhabitants of the town to the banks of the Jorokh River and slaughter them there, but the heavy rain of the whole night prevented them from realizing their plan. In the morning, the sun had just risen, when from behind the stones of the hills, 25 soldiers and 6 young officers, their rifles ready in hand, dashed over. There was an uproar in the people, but they calmed us saying that they had come to save us. What was the reason? I don't know, but these soldiers led us to Baberd.

According to the new calendar, it was the 1st of

July when we reached Baberd where we saw that the Armenians of our villages had arrived before us and pitched their tents in the graveyard near Jorokh. We stayed there for two weeks. One night, the shoemaker Sargis agha came and told us how they (that is the Armenians) were separated from their armies and were taken to a mountain as if to construct roads, but when they had reached the mountain they had forced them into the valley and opened gunfire on them from all sides and killed most of them; just a few had survived. After seeing his wife and children, he disappeared that very night.

One day Nshan Peloyan came to me and said: "Gegham, look over there, that's Enver pasha passing by."

I turned my eyes to the opposite bank of Jorokh, the road leading to Karin and saw 2 black coaches moving ahead covered in dust.

On the 14th of July, we set off towards Erznka. The same officers and soldiers were leading us. We gathered 60 gold coins for them, and they took us to Erznka without any incident.

When we reached Erznka, we saw many gallows. It was a sign that they had hanged people. When I was in Harpoot, my master from Erznka, Tigran Pirzikian said that on that day they had hanged 30 tailors of the Erznka tailors' atelier.

In Erznka, we were taken to the cemetery, where we remained for a month. Towards the last days, Armenians came from Kiskim and Kurashen. They were also brought to stay in the graveyard.

On August 17 we left Erznka. The same soldiers led us without the officers and also gendarmes from Kiskim, having their chief a sergeant-major, Shukri by name. When we reached the Euphrates River, we saw many corpses. They were floating down with the current: women, children, men. There was a narrow path along the river, we walked along it and came to an open field and remained there. At night, I was suddenly awoken by a gunshot. It turned out that the Kurds of Dersim had come to rob us, and our sergeant-major had been resisting them. He fired about 5 bullets. In the morning he said that the Kiskim people should give 120 coins, and the Sper people also should do the same.

Two days after passing Kamakh, at noon, we came to a height on which was a village and in front of it there was a valley where we had to descend and then continue our way, passing the narrow path along the village. It was the 27th of August. They separated all the males over 13, pretending to take them to reap the field. In the evening Hadji Poghos' elder son from Kiskim and consul Harutyun's son, Garnik, from Sper, came and said: "Give money, otherwise they'll kill us." They collected money. I do not know how much.

The next morning we saw on the southern side of the mountain that they were taking away our men. To our question they answered: "Don't you see they are going

to reap the fields.”

Half an hour later all the gendarmes accompanying us gathered together. The sergeant-major ordered that all the cattle must be given to the government to feed our soldiers. To one of the peasant's question how should they transfer their loads, he answered: “Do not bother yourself; we'll bring them after you in carts. Bring here whatever you can't carry.” And they began to grab at anything that was worthy: carpets, rugs, quilts, etc. They

made a huge heap of our things in the middle of the field and drove us ahead, saying: “We'll send them after you by carts...”

They're still sending! That day no one brought anything to sell. We passed by the village called Kurchay. We rested a little and then continued our way again and at midnight reached somewhere to remain. Hidden in the darkness of the night, 3 men from our caravan joined us...<sup>1</sup>

## 86 (86).

### SARGIS MAKAROV'S TESTIMONY (B. 189?, Erzroom, Ardsat Village)

On August 11, 1915, I went to work as usual, to Varakji Khan. At 13.30 gendarmes came to the Khan, arrested me and took me to the center of Bayazet together with twenty other Armenians. There, they wrote down our names. After that they took us to the directorate, where there were more than 200 Armenians. We remained there the whole night in the open air, in the cold. Early in the morning at about 5:30, they sent us off under the supervision of soldiers; they took us to the quay, and loaded us in the hold of a ship.

We reached the town of Smyrna (Izmir), which was on a slope covered by trees. They took us to a stable and locked us up. Then, by train, we were taken to Buyuk (Great – Turk.) Derbend, where I saw the awful sufferings of the Armenian people. I tried to control myself seeing all those heart-breaking, heart-rending scenes. Then they took us to the Sabanji Lake, then to Sarenja, Arifé, Duzanchay, Keyvé, Akhissar, Mekejé, Vezir Khan, Biledjik, Garakeoy, Choukour-Hissar and at last to Eskishehir.

Together with Karapet, we went to the local Armenian Catholic Church, where the local Armenians took us to a khan to stay for the night. The local national leader Stepan Galpakjian did everything he could to help the suffering Armenian people without any religious discrimination. In the morning, gendarmes came and took us out of the inn, so we were obliged to pitch a tent and live there. After a while, they drove us to Azizié and we remained there in the yard of the Armenian Church. Then we were driven to Malkara, where we slept in a grain store-house. Then we walked to Akshehir.

On the 25th of August, I was not able to walk any longer. I had no more shoes; my bare feet were bleeding.

We were 85 people in the group. Each of us gave the chief of the guards 10 ghurush to let us rest, for we were so exhausted and feeble, almost ill, and we were not able to walk. He let us rest for 2 days. On August 28 a train arrived full of Armenian emigrants. We climbed up onto the roof of the wagons and went to Konia. There were many tents, and we slept in them. The next day, four of us went to the American Hospital. Mkrtych Mazmanov and Serobé Mananov joined us. Every day, caravans of Armenian deportees arrived on foot or by train. Now we were six and none of us had any money. We had no shoes and we were terribly hungry. Finally we went to the Latin Church, and there I saw our Mkhitarist Vardapets. Among them was Father Avetik and others, who had been deported with the Armenians from Smyrna. The rest of our companions also came and joined us.

Then they took us out of Konia and put us in a wagon, which was already full of Armenian deportees. We were suffocating, and yet new people were brought in. A gendarme began lashing at us with a whip to make room for more people, but it was impossible to get more. The lashes of the whip made our bodies black and blue. We passed the night in the wagon. On the 3rd of October, they let us walk with the other deportees. On our way, we saw many unburied corpses. We saw indescribably heart-rending scenes and we all cried. Then they made us walk to the village of Bayala, and the next day to Ak-Kyoprou. On the 6th of October, we walked to the station of Bozanti and were taken to a police station, where we stayed for the night. The following day, we went to Gavagle Khan. On the 9th of October, we remained with an Armenian family from the village of Gimlek, near Buras. The family had a tent. The next day a terrible rain

<sup>1</sup> The incomplete manuscript ends here.

\* Sargis Makarov's birth date is incomplete. His son, Noubar Makarov, at the beginning of his father's day to day (August 11, 1915 – January, 1921) handwritten diary (in Armenian) “Notes from My Exiled Life” wrote in French, that their family tree goes back to 1830, and that their ancestors had lived in the country-town of Ardsatagyugh (Silver Village – Arm.), Erzroom region. Due to the Kurdish attacks, together with 100,000 Armenians, they had moved to Russia and become Makarovs. The citizen of Russia, Sargis Makarov's diary I present here in an abridged form.

fell. The tents became all wet inside. Everywhere people were crying and wailing under miserable conditions. It was impossible to enter the town without a vesika. I succeeded in getting one. I got to the town in an hour, went to the director of the cotton factory, who was at the same time the vice-consul. He promised to write to the Mersin consul about us. Then we took the train for Yenidjé, then to Zeytounli, Adana, Indjirlik, Gyurjiler, Misis, Djihan, Toprakkalé and Osmanié. Here also there were many tents of exiled Armenians. As the weather and the water were very bad there, hundreds of Armenians died every day. The corpses were piled on each other. The wretchedness of the people there was worse than anywhere else we had seen. We stayed in the tents of the people from Enkyuré.

On the 26th of October, the soldiers came from Adana and savagely pulled down all the tents. Many sick and weak people were killed with bayonets; many tents were consumed by fire.

They made us walk again for days.

On the 30th of October, we arrived at Beylik Village, inhabited by the Armenians. The pouring rain had drenched us all. The misery was indescribable. On the 1st of November, we reached the Islahié station on foot. On the 5th of November, we reached Gavagle Village. Our feet were bleeding because of our walking. On the 6th of November we reached Katma. There were many tents of Armenians, but many were sick and dying. Karapet Merdjimekian and Tokatlian Vardapets passed away.

The rain fell continuously, and everybody was wet to the bone. Misery was everywhere. Numerous corpses remained unburied in the rain. I caught a cold and was running a high temperature; I could not sleep. Every night, robbers were going about, robbing and plundering. Those who tried to resist were killed. I was in that state, when they drove us to Azizié. On the 28th of November, we reached Akderé. We were exhausted by walking. I still had a temperature and I was getting weaker every day.

On the 4th of December, we sent Sedrak and Petros to the consul of Aleppo to tell him about our wretched condition. I was shivering. I had no money. I sold one of my two shirts. I became still worse. I began taking quinine pills. I felt a bit better. The gendarmes came and forced us to get up and walk. We walked to the village of Myultevé. I was weak and could not walk. We reached Meskené, where there were many tents with Armenians in them. It was the 19th of December and they were making us walk incessantly. We reached the bank of the Euphrates River. I had no money. I carried other people's packs in order to earn 5 ghurush and buy some bread. We reached Rakka. The whole area was covered with many tents. It was forbidden to enter the town. In any case, it was impossible, for one had to cross the river. We slept in an Arab village in the open air. On the 3rd of January

we reached Der-Zor, where there were numerous tents of the refugees. Unimaginable poverty, dying people, corpses, lice, hunger, starvation, cries and laments... Mkrtich Mazmanov was seriously ill. My young friend, Nazareth, could not bear it and died. I became so feeble, that I thought I would soon follow him. Who would bury me?

On the 26th of January, we were called by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. An order had come to separate the Armenians with Russian citizenship from the other refugees. I was looking after my sick friend, but he passed away. I was also very weak. On the 23rd of February, I was lying down, unable to get up from my place. I felt seriously ill. I had not eaten anything for so many days... It seemed I would die. On the 10th of April, I confessed to Father Petros. On the 4th of May, I received 4 gold coins from the consulate. Tiran had sent them. I got a letter, announcing that all our relatives had been exiled, and they were in Ankara. I rented a small house. I received a letter informing me that my uncle Serob Makarov had died of a heart attack during the deportation. Karapet Gidjian also had been sent to exile with his family.

On September 12, 1916, Archbishop Zaven of Constantinople arrived with the families of his brothers and sisters; he was to go to Baghdad.

On September 15, 1916, we set off – after staying there for 8 months and 16 days. We arrived in Hama, where there were many Armenian refugees. Then we left for Meskené. On September 20, we were in Aleppo. The Ottoman government gave each of us 5 gold coins as our fare to Konia. I wrote a letter to Tiran and Anik, informing them of my departure to Konia. On September 24, we took a train and passed by Moulimié, Katma, reached Hassanbeyli, the Armenian village, where no Armenians were left.

On September 25, we passed by train through Osmanié, Toprakkalé, Veisié, Djihan, Misis, Gyurjiler, Indjirlik, and Adana. There were no Armenians in all those parts; they had all been exiled. Until there, a policeman, Mustafa, accompanied us. After that another policeman, Nazmi, was with us. We passed Zeytoun, Yenidjé, Tarson, Mezar-Oluk and finally Bozanti, then Ereyli. On October 3, 1916, we reached Konia and went to the Hotel Halep (Aleppo), which was next to the government house. I met Tiran and his sister-in-law. I wrote a postcard to Anik. I went to the church. I heard that the Mkhitarist Fathers Avetik and Anton had been freed by a special order and had gone to Constantinople.

On October 4, an American missionary, Miss Goushman, gave me 4 gold coins. I settled down in Bozkir, where there were no Armenians. Only families of soldiers lived there, and all of them were poor. From there I moved to Sedishehir. No Armenians were left there either.

I wrote letters to my relatives. After staying there for 6 months we moved to Pouldour by carriage. On January 1, 1918, I began reading "Les Miserables," by Victor Hugo.

On March 4, 1918, peace with Russia was declared.

We celebrated.

On November 18, I arrived in Constantinople. I began working at Tiran's shop.

Today is January 5, 1919. On September 26, I was engaged to Iskouhi.\*

## 87 (87).

### HARUTYUN TOROS GRIGORIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1898, Erzroom, Avrdnik Village)

When I was born, my mother died. My father delivered me and my seven-year-old sister to the German orphanage, to the care of Mother Margaret. I was at Mr. Palentinad's orphanage, my sister – at Tanté Katariné's. There were one hundred and fifty orphans at our orphanage. Once the big boys of our orphanage had broken the branch of a mulberry tree and put the blame on me. The director called me and said: "Have you broken it?"

I said: "Look at me and look at the branch; I'm small, how can I break that branch. But if they want me to have broken it, let it be so."

He gave me a loaf of bread. The boys thought that he had given me the bread because I had broken the branch; they surrounded me and demanded the loaf saying: "We broke the tree, and you eat the bread?"

The director called us all again. He asked again. The boys thought that they would get bread; they said: "We have broken the tree."

The director gave them each six blows with a stick.

Then they transferred me to Pery's orphanage. There we were ninety girls and boys together, but the bedrooms were separate. They gave us little bread and water. They taught us handicrafts, they made us spin wool and prepare yarn. The girls knitted socks of that yarn. Our school was a large hall and it held about six hundred people. On Sundays we went to the Protestant's Chapel. The Reverend's family loved me very much. I remained there for two years. In summer they took us to summer health resorts. On the New Year eve they used to decorate a fir Christmas tree, and we sang round it; at the end they gave us dried fruits in handkerchiefs, apples and oranges with a picture of Jesus. Then a workshop was opened, where the craft of a blacksmith and carpentry were taught free of charge. One day I ran away with my friend. He had relatives; they took him in, but not me. I wanted to go back to the orphanage; on the way the Armenians said: "The Turks will kill you by night."

In Datem the Djegelian family adopted me. Datem had three hundred and fifty houses of Armenians and twenty houses of Turks. The people were busy with agriculture. They sowed wheat, barley, lentils, caraway,

cotton and linseed. There were few artisans – 5 joiners, 8 masons, 6 shoemakers and 4 grocers. The Turks bred sheep. Not far from the village there was a ruined church and near it a fountain flowed, which turned 4 mills, where the peasants ground their wheat and the fountain watered their fields. In the high rocks there were wild animals, wild pigeons and bees. We used to go to the Big Water of St. John for bathing. Turks and Kurds lived in the villages all around Datem; I left my patrons in disgust. Then the Ulohodjian family adopted me. The eldest boy's name was Hovhannes, the second's – Hovsep, and the youngest one's – Levon. All the boys went to get education. Only the girls were left – Kara, Brabion, Kutina. I lived in that family for four years. They wanted me to marry one of their daughters, but I thought – one day they would remind me of my being an orphan. One day I had gone to town; on the way I met my uncle's daughter. She took me to her house. She sent me to a blacksmith to learn the trade. In those days most of the artisans worked on credit, and during the harvest they went to collect the money their customers owed them. So did my master, but as he could not read and write, I wrote down his accounts. So, when the harvest time came, he took me with him. We went to collect the debts. For a whole month we went to the Kurdish and Turkish villages of Harpoot, collected the debts and returned home. Winter came. Then it was spring. One day we saw that the sun was in eclipse. Many people said: "It's a bad omen, let's see what will happen."

In 1914 one day a group of people went through in the streets with drums and zurna, and the crier announced: "It is mobilization, everybody must get enlisted to become a soldier to defend his country, everyone must be enlisted voluntarily." The Turks and a few Armenians got enlisted voluntarily. There was a man from Akn, whose name was Grigor; he got enlisted, but ran away on the way. They arrested him and sent him back to the army. He escaped again, was captured and chained in the military barracks. He was a blacksmith; he managed to cut his chain with a stone and run away. He came to my master's shop and asked for bread, but he was caught again and imprisoned.

\* The diary ends here.

Harpoot was a productive land; the soil was fertile, the fruits were abundant, it had sweet waters, colorful flowers; it was rich in silver, copper, coal, salt mines and mineral waters. There were many historical monuments; there was a fortress near Zeva with Armenian inscriptions and labyrinthine caves. There was a part of a pagan temple with its sacrificial altar. The monasteries of Khulavank, Datem and the St. Astvadsadsin Church still existed.

Harpoot had many villages around. There were purely Armenian villages and there were mixed ones, where Armenians and Turks lived. There were five brothers in Harpoot, who had a silk factory and one thousand five hundred people worked there, but these five brothers were exiled, and the Turks could not run the factory; they stole the tools, destroyed the factory, and the Turk officials lived in the houses of the five brothers.

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’ 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. Once they gathered also round pieces of iron with a hole, which were used as mortars to pound salt and grain. 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.

In April-May, 1915, the Turkish government arrested the distinguished Armenian scholars, rich men, clergymen, professors, teachers: the Harpoot Prelate Ter-Khorenian; Yervand Srmakeshkanlian (Yeroukhan); the well known literary man and superintendent of the Mezré National Central School, Hakob Djanikian; Dr. Michael Hakobian; the professor of Euphrates College Prof. Tonapet Lulejian; Prof. Nikoghos Tenekejian (the chief of the Harpoot Armenian Protestants); Prof. Karapet Soghikian; Prof. Mkrtych Vorberian; Prof. Hovhannes Pujagian; the teachers: Hovhannes Tinklian, Hovhannes Harutyunian (Tlkatintsi), Reverend Fr. Vardan Arslanian; the scholars – Hadji Hakob Fermanian, Karapet Ekmekjian, Karapet Hovsepian, Armenak Terzian, Artin bey Helvajian, Arzouman Arzoumanian, Martiros Mouradian; the lawyers Alexan Nalbandian, Hovhannes Kharboutian, Serob Vardapetian; ARF comrades Karapet Demirjian (from Huseinik), Tigran Astikian, Dr. Nshan Nahikian, Aram Arabian, Karapet Kokyoushian (from Arabkir); from Social-Democrat Hnchak Party – Harutyun Semerjian, Karapet Tashjian;

from Liberal Democratic Party – Khosrov Tepekijian, Smbat Arslanian, Hovhannes Danielian.

Many well known people were dismissed from their offices. Chained and beaten these people were taken through the market places and streets, were stoned and thrown into the Mezré prison, where they were subjected to horrible tortures. At midnight the gendarmes surrounded the prison. The prison-guard Hassan efendi and corporal Ali enter Nshan Nahikian’s section and order the prisoners to go out one by one and get ready to go to Yedessia, but by order of Ferid bey they were all put to the sword. The Armenian prisoners decided to set fire to the prison, in order to get free, but thirty-seven of them perished in the flames. 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,’ 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’ 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 14th of July, 1915, when all the young men were sent to the slaughter-house, the Turkish government filled their place with exiled orphans, women and girls. The Armenian girls were sold to the Turks by auction. Kind Turks warned secretly their Armenian friends about the deportation.

On the 25th of June, 1915, in the morning the town crier of Mezré walked through the districts and quarters and announced the official decree of the government: “Armenians, listen, my word refers to the gâvurs. By order of our Glorious State and King it is resolved to send all the gâvurs of Harpoot to Yedessia. Beginning with the children in the cradles, till the oldest people, are

to be deported. The order is very strict: for all those who hear it or don't, the law is unchangeable."

Confusion started among the Armenians. Every house bought some means of transportation: animals, carriages, carts. They began to sell their houses and provisions at very low prices. The gendarmes used to say: "You'll go to 'Inkil dere' (Whining Valley – Turk.)." The Armenians understood that they would take them to 'Ingliter' (England) and opened shops there. The gendarmes also said: "You'll become 'balık yemeyi' (food for fish – Turk.)." But the deportees did not understand the meaning.

On the 1st of June, 1915, the first deportation caravan from Mezré set out, surrounded with soldiers, armed with rifles and bayonets and gendarmes on horseback, under the command of the cruel Captain Adam pasha. Two loaded carts followed the caravan – one was full of loaves of black bread and the other – of ropes. On the road they separated the men. Adam pasha collected from the women their money and jewelry as if for safety and said: "When you reach Tigranakert, I'll give them back to you." Later, near the military barrack he said: "You know well that you're traitors; we're exiling you, so that we may be safe."

A Turk boy struck an Armenian boy with his knife. They asked him: "What are you doing?"

"I'm trying my knife," said the Turk boy.

When the Armenians protested, the captain said: "We arrested the boy, he'll be convicted. You continue your way."

We climbed the mount called Deve Boyni (Camel Neck – Turk.). We smelled an unpleasant odor; we saw rotten corpses all around us. We walked and reached Fernouz khan. At the edge of Tigris they put us down to rest, under the trees. All the women and girls were crying, and the soldiers were laughing and saying: "Sing and dance, why do you cry; your men remained in Harpoot." After a short rest we continued our way. All along our way human corpses were scattered in the valley; they seemed to be buried, but a foot here and a hand there had remained out of the soil and they were stinking. We reached Khalkhana, near Tigranakert, where the Germans melted copper and sent it to Germany by camels. There a few Turk boys came to kidnap girls. They wounded one of them; she fell down; the Armenian women screamed; the soldiers came; they said: "Why did you kill?"

They boys said: "It's all the same; all of them will be slaughtered."

"Yes, they will be killed, but out of town," said the gendarme.

There were many corpses on the road. We reached Tigranakert. They made us sit outside the city ramparts, near the military barracks to rest. Tigranakert had four gates: Dagh Kapousi, Mardin Kapousi, Urfa Kapousi, Ouroum Kapousi. The city was surrounded with thick

walls. They took us along the Tigris River to the bridge on foot; we passed by the flour factory; they gave us a rest for half an hour. We sat down. Half an hour later they brought a caravan from Tigranakert: all of them were women in white yashmaks. An hour later a second caravan came. They took them away without giving them any rest. Then they sent us by the same road towards Merdin; we walked till noon, and they let us sit under a bridge. There were no trees. We sat in the shade of the bridge. There a woman gave birth to twin boys, but the gendarmes forced us to set out, leaving the mother and the new-born babies behind. We asked them to let us remain and help her, but in vain; they began to beat us and drove us forward. We reached a village called Khanik. At night thousands of Kurds armed with flint rifles, curved swords and clubs attacked us and began to plunder and to take off the clothes from the killed people; dead women were scattered on the road sides. They brought again three caravans from Tigranakert: all of them were women, wrapped in white yashmaks; they called each other 'Mariam khanoum, Marika khanoum.' They began to kidnap the children. A woman began to cry: "I had tied all my gold coins on my child's waist; they took away my child and my gold as well." Our gendarmes were replaced in Tigranakert.

The Merdin gardens came to an end, and we found ourselves in the desert. An old woman dropped behind; she had new stockings on. A gendarme wanted the stockings; the woman said: "I have no shoes; the stockings will keep my feet safe from the burning sand."

The gendarme struck the woman on the head with the butt of the rifle and took off her socks. The woman began to cry: "I beg you: my money is in them, do not take off the stockings from my feet."

"So much the better," said the gendarme, and the poor woman could not walk any more; she remained on the road.

We continued our way. The gendarmes did not allow us to drink water; they said: "Give us either one gold coin or a virgin girl." The women were obliged to urinate in water jugs and drink it.

We went to Veran Shehir. We saw killed people. The women said: "Did you bring us here to kill?"

The gendarme said: "If we want, we can kill you openly, but there is no order to kill you; they have not counted you when giving to us and they won't count when demanding. Whoever dies on the road – dies."

We reached a village in the desert. There was no water, there was only one well. I went down the well in order to draw water with buckets. The bucket full of water fell on my head; my head began to ache, and I came out. The Arabs wanted to keep me as a workman. I said: "No, I'll stay with my people."

The Arabs said: "Tomorrow they'll slaughter you, as they did to the others."

And in fact, the next day eighteen soldiers attacked us, spread a rug on the ground and began to take from us all they could – money, jewelry, rings, bracelets, watches. That was the biggest plunder.

We walked and walked. The gendarmes said: “Get back; we have taken the wrong road.” But we had already advanced quite a lot and we saw how they had slaughtered hundreds of people; naked and bloody corpses were scattered everywhere. We approached a well; it was full of corpses, heads and feet. We kept on going, leaving the old and the sick behind. We reached Ras-ul-Ayn. The railway reached till there. At that point, two streams joined; they said it was the Khabur River. On both sides of the river were Arab villages. On the road they attacked the people going in front and at the back of the caravan in order to plunder. So, they attacked us on both sides. We could not defend ourselves; we had to walk in groups. Our shoes were worn out; we were left barefoot, the sand burnt our feet. We did not have clothes either; what we had – we had exchanged with bread. We tried to walk on the grass, avoiding the burning sand. At night we remained there. In the morning we continued our way again. On the way, a sheikh came towards us and said: “Today you are my guests.”

A few Arabs brought food in big cauldrons. Everyone took his plate and received his share. When we had eaten and thanked the sheikh, he said: “I am thankful to you that you ate my food. I have a request: if possible, accept it. I have twenty-five wives and I have taken an Armenian wife. I am very grateful to my Armenian wife, but I want an Armenian woman, so that my Armenian wife won’t be alone. That Armenian wife has a son, whom I have named Ahmed.”

He called the boy. The boy came and began to speak Armenian with us. He said: “The sheikh is a very kind man; he takes good care of me and my mother. I am 14 years old, my name is Ohannes.”

The sheikh said: “I can take a woman from among you by force, but violence is not a good thing. Let the one who wishes, come by her own free will. Love can’t be forced.” But nobody among us wanted to go. That night a child died. The mother cried bitterly and said: “I carried my baby all the way upon my back and now I’ll bury him.” We dug the ground with a stick and buried the baby.

In the morning we reached Souvar. It was quite a large village. There was a small boat on the river, which took people from one side to the other. At night we remained there, rested a little, but the day had not dawned yet, when we continued our way. The road lasted very long. There the Khabur and the Euphrates rivers joined. We had no water; all of us were thirsty; at noon we reached a village near the Euphrates. We rested. The Arabs brought and sold us bread with money or exchanged it with clothes. We recovered to some extent and continued our way to Der-Zor.

On the second day we reached the bridge of Der-Zor. The bridge was very long. Ships stood four meters apart from each other, the five rows were joined with chains and a movable bridge was made on it. When the water rose, the bridge rose with it, when in summer the water level was low, the bridge was also lowered. That night we slept near the bridge and the third day we passed through the town of Der-Zor. We walked farther and we saw that new houses were being built. They said: “All those, who want to work, they can work getting daily 2 ghurush.” I began to work. We were not accustomed to the climate; it was very hot, but we had to live. I worked for a few days. I did not know the language. We hired an Arab, who had been a soldier in the Turkish army, to teach us Arabic. We went to town, bought a pencil and paper, but on the way Chechen boys threw stones at us. They used to pursue us till the town. As for the refugees, they were increasing in number. Famine and misery prevailed; sick and dead people lay under every wall. The government began to pay for each person 30 ghurush per month. But they gave us money for only two months and then they stopped it. They gathered the sick people and took them to the other side of the bridge; people made tents with rugs to get protection from the sun. The desert Arabs used to wear shirts as long as their height. While running they raised the hem of the shirt, so that it would not hamper their feet. If someone died, for example a married man, his wife wore the husband’s silver-chained watch, if her husband had a rifle, she hung it on herself, if he had a sword, the widow took it out of the sheath and began to dance, sword in one hand and the other hand held up high. Some women went to the neighbors’ and relatives’ houses, to tell them to gather, for a certain person had died. The men came, sat on the ground and began to smoke a cigarette or narguilé, and the women sat in rows on both sides and began to lament. The women sitting opposite each other slapped their own faces with their hands, plucked their hair and scratched their faces.

We passed the night in a khan. Hunger, illness and misery prevailed; the lice were like clusters of grapes. We had been robbed of our last clothes.

We reached Der-Zor. There was nothing to eat. The children of our orphanage began to eat orange and watermelon peels. The mayor of Der-Zor was changed, and a new executioner came, who hated the Armenians, and the Armenians’ massacres took a new impetus. Thousands of Armenians were sent out of Der-Zor towards Sheddadié, Souvar, Marat to be slaughtered. Misery, hunger, lice and typhus were everywhere. Every day from one hundred and fifty to two hundred people died near the outer bridge. There was no time to bury the dead. Every day a large pit was dug, and the corpses were thrown in. The next day a new one was dug. We saw them: many of them were without clothes, naked, a bag of bones. One

morning we saw in a small tent five people who were lying in old clothes, all of them – dead: probably they had been poisoned. A few women had killed a dog for its blood and meat. Another woman had asked her share, they had refused her. That woman had gone and had betrayed them. A gendarme came and beat the women, saying: “Why did you slaughter the dog? Are you worth a dog? The dog is much better than you.”

The women answered, crying: “We were very hungry; we had nothing to eat. Why do you slaughter sheep? Aren’t they to pity?”

“Sheep are created to be slaughtered, not the dogs,” said the gendarme. The women answered: “And people are created to live, but you slaughter them, shoot them and kill them with swords. We are human beings like you, why do you do such things?”

The gendarme answered: “Because you are gâvurs.”

The women said: “Man is a man, for God there is no difference between a gâvur and a Muslim.”

The gendarme said: “The dog is better than the gâvur, don’t do such things any more. If it happens a second time, I’ll shoot you.”

The women said: “We prefer death to hunger; the bullet kills instantly, but hunger kills us every day, every hour. It wears us out. We prefer death with a bullet, the sooner – the better. Already 200 people die every day from diseases and hunger.”

The gendarme did not listen to them anymore; he went away. So did we. According to the orders of the new mayor, they began to collect the Armenians every day and send them to the other side of the big bridge and from there to Sheddadié and Souvar. By hundreds and thousands they sent every day to the other side of the bridge as sick people; they sent with them the healthy ones, too.

One day they gathered 40 carts of children, and a man named Ismayil Hakki took them and burned those innocent creatures. We’ve passed very sorrowful days. They put out the elder orphans from our orphanage. I was obliged to come out with them. Persecution against us started. They caught me and took me to the other side of the bridge for the fifteenth time. That slaughterer recognized me and said: “It is the fifteenth time we catch this gâvur, but he runs away; tie his hands this time.”

I told to the gendarme: “I saw that every day they were carrying corpses not with four men, but – only one, who fastened a rope to the foot of the corps and dragged it near the pit, loosened the knot and threw the corps into the pit. That was that man’s job all day long.”

Our caravan set off for Souvar. On the way the gendarme was watching me all the time, so that my hands were not untied. I asked the Armenians going with me to undo my ties, but they were afraid. Then I saw an Arab walking beside me; I said: “For Mohammed’s sake, undo my ties.” The Arab took off his sword from his belt,

cut my ties and set me free. We walked for an hour and finally reached the place of slaughter, where we heard crying, wailing and entreating God for help; callings for help, but no help came. They did not kill by bullets, they spared them. The gendarmes said: “One bullet costs one ghurush, you’re not worth one ghurush, why should we spent money?” They killed us with swords, hatchets, axes, clubs and of iron bars. They had taken off the screws from the rails of the railway, they had fastened them on heavy sticks and they hit with them and killed. I was standing stunned, when a Turk approached me and with a screw fastened on a stick struck on my head. I lost consciousness and fell on the ground; I had fainted. How long I had lain there, I do not know; when I opened my eyes I saw that all the Armenians were lying on the ground, a few were running away and the slaughterers were running behind them. I drew myself towards the valley and slipped down the valley, but I had no strength to stand up. I pulled myself together, moved from my place and stood up, but fell down again. I have remained there, I do not remember how long. Then it seemed to me, that someone told me: “Get up, go away from here.” I stood up and began to walk. I was all covered with blood. The wound on my head was big: my two fingers could go through it. I walked for two nights and reached the Der-Zor bridge. As I have already said, the Der-Zor bridge was built on small ships: they had arranged them in line and covered them with boards. I went to the last part of the bridge, where the gendarmes kept guard so that runaways might not enter the town. I hid myself under the bridge in a ship and threw a small stone. No one paid attention to the sound, so they were asleep. But the iron-netted door was closed. I climbed up and passed to the town side. I went straight to the house of a girl from Harpoot, Margarit, who had married an Arab in order to save her life. I knocked at the door. From inside she asked in Arabic: “Who’s that?”

“Open the door; it’s me, Harutyun,” said I.

She opened the door, saw me in blood and screamed. I put my hand on her mouth: “What are you doing? They may come and take me away again.”

Margarit said: “What a state you are in?”

I said: “All those who were taken from here were killed, slaughtered, no one is left alive. I can’t remain here. I must go away; if they see me they will take me again and kill me. I only ask you to wash my clothes and buy food for me. I have got money about me.”

She did as I asked her. She brought food for me to eat, gave me an Arab’s aba for me to put on. I remained at that Arab family’s.

One day a gendarme came and said: “There’s an Armenian here in your house, you must give him to me; I must take him to Der-Zor.”

Margarit’s Arab husband said: “There is no Armenian here.”

The gendarme said: "I've got information that there's an Armenian here."

The husband gave the gendarme 5 mejits and sent him away. A few days later another gendarme came. He gave him also 7 mejits and sent him away.

Margarit's husband said: "Son, you see, I'm trying by all means to save you, but it won't help. If I hand you over, my conscience will torture me. Come. Let me give you a few mejits and tell you the names of the villages from here to Aleppo. Go, save yourself. God be with you."

I kissed his hand and he kissed my forehead and we parted. I set off, recalling my past life; I thought that no Armenians were left on Earth, but I never lost my hope completely. When I was all alone, I used to write the Armenian A, B, C... on the sand, in order not to forget

them. I walked the whole day. At night I became the guest of an Arab. I remained there: I worked in their bean field. But they had a girl, who had eye-sore; they wanted me to marry her. I ran away by night and went to Sabia, a small town. There were about thirty Armenians there. There I was grazing sheep, but they recruited me in the army. I ran away from there, too. I reached Rakka, then Hama, Meskené and then Aleppo. There I found work as a blacksmith near two brothers from Yedessia. Then I worked at a man, who repaired telegraphic apparatuses.

In 1946 I repatriated to Armenia with my family. I began to build my house in Yerevan, in the Bandjaronots (Vegetable Garden – Arm.) district. The government lends me credit. By the sweat of my brow, I changed the stony field into a flower-garden. Now I live with my wife, Brabion. I am a pensioner.

## 88 (88).

### LORIS ABGAR PAPIKIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1903, Erzroom, Aghadir Village)

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.

I was born in 1903, in the village of Aghadir, Derdjan region, Erzroom Province. Our family consisted of eight people. My father was a well-built, broad-shouldered man.

In the village we had a church, but no priest. Mother wanted my father to become a priest, but father preferred to go to America, to pay his late father's debts. Soon we heard that he was dead. My elder brother also died; he was supporting our family. My younger sister fell into the tonir and got burnt. We remained: me, my brother and mother.

In those days we got news, telling that mother should go to the prefect of Mamakhatoun, who would deliver mother seventy-five pounds: my father's insurance sum, for he had been on the "Titanic" ship and had fallen victim to the disaster. My mother sent me to the Sanassarian School of Erzroom.

In 1914 the World War I began. Soon we heard that the Armenians would be transferred to the 'depths' of the country. It seemed that the Armenians felt what was going to happen to them and did not want to leave their homes; they were opposing the order.

We, the 800 pupils of the Sanassarian School were deported, too, and were sent to the 'depths' of the country. In order to 'calm' the people and realize their mean objects and achieve their atrocious aim, the bloodthirsty gendarmes of the Turks were accompanying, from Erzroom till the town of Mamakhatoun, the deportees as if 'for security'; they were putting into action

indescribable repressions, such as violence, plunder, kidnapping and slaughter of distinguished people. In a few days we reached the Derdjan Valley and pitched tents near the Euphrates bridge, which was not far from the village of Koter. All the Armenian refugees from Erzroom and its vicinity had gathered there, approximately 300,000 people. The terrible scenes from Erzroom to Mamakhatoun convinced the Armenians that death was threatening them, so they began to seek means and ways to escape to the mountains. Soon the people's intention became known to the gendarmes. The next day the whole caravan was surrounded. All the roads of salvation were closed. A horrible scene began. The Turk outlaws and gendarmes attacked, together with the armed mob, the unarmed and unprotected people; they separated the men, took away the young women and girls and began to plunder them. Thousands of Turks and Kurds had come from the surrounding villages with carts and donkeys to take away the loot. Four days they were carrying the Armenians' properties, which had been earned by the sweat of their brow. After that the human slaughter started. They did not kill with rifles; they killed with swords, daggers or they simply strangled them. The human cries, wails, groans and moans continued day and night, the children died and bawled; all that was so horrible and awful that even the stone-hearted people could not stand. But the bloodthirsty executioners, the wild beasts, on the contrary, used crueler means to kill those, who were still alive. They massacred the elder boys of our school, and a few boys of my age got mixed with the deportees.

The Turkish gendarmes were feasting near the

bridge around their tents and were having a good time with the Armenian 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. The Euphrates, which for centuries had been the joy and the emblem of the Armenians people, the source of his creating power and abundance, had become today their slaughterhouse, their annihilator. And I was thinking: what have these unfortunate people done, why are they being barbarously exterminated today?

In the valley of Euphrates I met my mother by chance. She had heard that they had deported the pupils of the Erzroom Sanassarian School and had come there with great difficulties, to search me. She embraced me madly, pressed me on her bosom, kissed my cheeks and did not believe her eyes that it was me. Now, how could we get out of that death ring? In order to do it we had to hide among the dead and wounded. For two days, day and night, we heard the moaning and groaning of all those in agony. It was our luck that in the third night it began to rain cats and dogs, it got dark. Using the opportunity, we crawled through human corpses and in half an hour we got out of the death field and began to run towards the nearby Armenian village. At night about 2 o'clock we reached the Koter Village. We rested a little, dried our clothes and in the morning we went to our Aghadir Village. At that time news was spread in our village and in all the Armenian villages of the vicinity as if the Armenians of Erzroom had resisted, had not obeyed the orders of the Turkish government, that was the reason why they had been massacred, but that nothing of the kind awaited the rest...

I and mother, we had not regained our consciousness yet, when news came that the Armenians of the Aprank Village, which was at a few km distance, had been slaughtered and plundered. Confusion started in our village. And from the heights of the village rifles began to thunder and hardly a quarter of an hour had passed when Turk and Kurd bandit hordes invaded the village.

In the darkness of the night, the thunder of the rifles, the wail and the cry of the people, the shriek and scream of the children, the bellow of the animals

created a horrifying scenery. The terror-stricken people were running in search of their children and relatives, unaware that all the roads had been closed beforehand by the bandits.

To our great surprise, the chief of the bandits announced in Kurdish: "Armenians, if you want to remain alive, leave all your property and get out of the village, but all of you must pass through the road leading to Tarou Village, and whatever money or jewelry you have must be handed to my men, otherwise you'll be all slaughtered!"

Life is dear. The people agreed with the bandits' proposal and we came out of the village in groups by the mentioned road. While passing by the guards of the plunderers we noticed that the gold and the jewelry taken from the Armenians formed heaps.

Leaving everything to the barbarians, we reached the mountains of Tarou Village with empty hands. It was in May, 1915. While coming out of the village, they had not allowed us to take with us anything to eat. On the mountains where we were, there was nothing to eat, and it was dangerous to go to the surrounding Turkish villages. We remained on the mountains for thirty days. We lived on grass and roots. All of us had become pale and unrecognizable. Every day four or five people died.

One day we woke up in the morning and saw that we were surrounded with hundreds of Turk gendarmes. They began to separate the men, women and children. The ferocious gendarmes tied the men together ten by ten, took them a little far from the people and the guns roared in volleys: they massacred all the men. During that monstrous act many of the relatives threw themselves on their killed sons' and husbands' corpses and were screaming awfully: "Killers, executioners, barbarians, hyenas, kill us, too, together with our relatives." Taking the opportunity of that turmoil, some men and women freed themselves from the hands of the gendarmes and fled. They gathered the rest and took them to a Kurdish village nearby.

The following day mother took me and brother by the hands and went to the chief of the gendarmes; she knelt before him and entreated him to let her go to one of her Kurd acquaintances, who lived nearby. But the furious chief officer, whose name was Shoukri bey, slapped my mother on the face violently and kicked her so, that my poor mother fell down and fainted. The gendarme sent us, me and brother, to the group of the children, who were under surveillance. Since that day I and my brother were separated from our mother, and until the day of my salvation, I did not know what had happened to her.

The next day they made us stand in a row, 30 children aged from 8 to 12, in the middle of the village. All the gendarmes came and began to choose children each one for himself. The chief of the gendarmes announced: "Children, if you want to live, you must be adopted by

my soldiers and go with them. Don't wait for you parents any more. They are all killed." What could we do? We were obliged to go with the gendarmes to their houses I tried very hard at least to be with my brother in the same town or the same village, but in vain; it was impossible. My brother, Voskan, went somewhere near Sebastia with a gendarme, and I went to the town of Bolomor. Since I've parted with my younger brother, I have no news from him; it was on the 15th of August, 1915.

The person, who adopted me, was the assistant mayor of the town of Bolomor, Yerznka region, Hagif efendi. Before taking me to his house, he had me dressed from head to foot, hired a horse for me and told me about the members of his family. He had a wife and two daughters: 8-9 years old. 'Father' gave me many 'precepts' and warned me that if I did not keep them, I was lost. Which were they? I should call myself the son of a Turk muhadjir from Erzroom, my parents had been killed by the 'sari (yellow – Turk.) moscovites' (so they called the Russians). My name should be Mavlyua. Never and to no one should I say of my being Armenian and the circumstances of my parents' death.

We started on the following day. After three days we reached my 'father's' home. On our way we met fugitive groups, who had been seized by the Turkish gendarmes in their hiding places and were being taken to be slaughtered.

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 prehistoric 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.

'Father' introduced me to his family, saying that I had become an orphan due to the Russians, for they had killed my parents. 'Mother' Nazlu khanoum washed me, dressed me and put me into a clean bed. But I could not sleep; I was thinking of my relatives. My new 'parents' took good care of me. I went to bring wood and water on a donkey. I attended a Turkish school and learned very well.

One day I was playing with the girls; I hit one of them on the head and wounded her. 'Mother' saw it and reproached me. I was much affected, did not eat the whole day, I did not enter the house. In the morning

'father' came home; he learned what had happened, took me by the hand, caressed me and took me home. I had been hungry the whole day; I went to bed and began to cry, thinking of my mother. So I had slept; my temperature had risen and I had fallen into delirium and began to speak in Armenian. Nazlou khanoum, who was very attentive to me, had listened carefully and had understood that I was speaking Armenian. She had gone to her husband and told him about it. He could not keep the secret any more and told her that I was an Armenian. From that day on, Nazlou khanoum became more attentive toward me, and she murmured parts of the Armenian songs. One day she spoke to me in private and said that she was from Istanbul. She was brought up in an Armenian surrounding. In her early age she had attended an Armenian school, then she had fallen in love with an Armenian boy, but the parents on both sides had been against. The Armenian boy's parents had finally agreed for their marriage, had come and asked on his behalf to become a suitor for her hand, but her parents had not agreed and had married her to Hagif efendi. Fifteen years had passed since those days, but she had not forgotten the Armenian boy.

I remained in that family till the middle of the 1916. The Russo-Turkish war news told nothing good about the Turks. Every day hundreds of wounded and deserter askyars passed through the town and they said that terrible fights were going on and that no force could stand the 'sari moscovites'; especially the Armenian volunteers, who killed the Turks without sparing them, so it was necessary to run away as soon as possible. The news spread terror among the people and created strong complaints against the government, who had brutally slaughtered the Armenians, and as a result the innocent people were paying for that.

In a few days it was officially declared that the town had to be evacuated. The people fell into confusion, for the town of Erznka was in the hands of the Russians; they could go only by the mountains, through the Dersim Kurd villages to Diarbekir. They left everything and ran away. We also took our valuable things and fled. On the way 'father' quarreled with his brother and did not want to go with him, so he preferred to return home. We reached our house; the Russians had already arrived; they did not touch us, on the contrary, they were very attentive towards us, and the Russian commander advised 'father' to move to Yerznka. The following day 'father,' 'mother' and 'sister' set off, leaving me and my elder 'sister' at home, so that they would return soon and take us and several important things with them. We waited long, but they did not come. I and 'sister' began to cry. At night, in the dark, somebody knocked at the door. It turned out that that giant man had been a servant at my 'father's' house. During the deportation of 1915 he had attacked a gendarme, had snatched his rifle and ran away. They

had fired behind him, and he had been wounded at the foot, but had reached Dersim. There, his Kurd friend had cured him. The man felt that I was an Armenian and suggested that I should run away, but I could not leave my 'sister' alone.

The next morning that man said: "Children, today I am going to our village, but considering the situation, I decided to go to Yerznka, find your parents, tell them about your state and only then go to my village. Now one of you take a pot and come with me to the town; I'll take food and bread from the Russian soldiers; you eat and wait till father comes and takes you with him." We were delighted; I took the pots and went with him to the Russians. That man took me to a tent, where two Russian officers were sitting; he told them that I was Armenian, but that I did not want to go to our village. The officer asked me: "Why don't you want to go to the Armenians; all the Armenians are being gathered and sent to their birthplaces." I could not answer in Armenian and said in Turkish: "I do not want to leave my 'sister' alone." At that moment the officer slapped me on the face and ordered the man, who had brought me: "Bind him on a horse and take him to the Armenian quarters." In two days we reached Yerznka with the military cavalry. He delivered me to the Armenian quarters and in my presence they gave the man, who had brought me, two gold coins. They took me where the Armenian boys were gathered, on condition that they would send me to our village. Only then I understood why that Armenian man was interested in bringing me here. He knew that whoever found an Armenian child and brought him to the quarters would get two gold coins.

Losing all hope and tears in my eyes, I asked the man who had brought me there by force to find my 'parents' and tell them what had happened to me and bring news from them. We, the children, who were to leave, had already taken our seats in vans and would be moving in a quarter of an hour, when the Armenian man came and said: "According to your request I went and found your 'mother' and 'sister.' I told them about your 'sister,' who had remained there and I learned that your 'father' had returned on the following day to take you, but he had met Turk investigators on his way, and they had killed him as one, who had remained among the Russians. And as the roads were dangerous, your mother could not come to take you and she is now crying day and night." What happened to them, I don't know, but until this day, as I remember them, my conscience begins to torture me; I don't feel well that I had been ungrateful and had left them.

In three days we reached Mamakhatoun and from there I went to our Aghadir Village. In the village I learned that mother had been killed and there was no news from my younger brother. Although a score of people had been saved and were living in the village,

none of my relatives had survived. It was impossible to remain in the village any more, where every moment I remembered my folk and went mad; I lost my judgment. I decided to set off for Yerznka on the following day. I was advised to go to an orphanage, but the conditions there were very bad, so I did not go there. Meeting a boy from our village we went to the village of Choutlouk. I became a farm-laborer there. The working conditions were very hard, so after working for six months I could not stand and left for Erzroom and began to work at ammo Manouk's café as a waiter.

There came the 1917. The news of the October Revolution in Russia spread like a lightning, and the Russian soldiers at the Turkish front left the front unprotected and returned to their country, leaving the defense of the occupied places to the Armenians.

Taking the opportunity the Turkish government, at the beginning of 1918, took the offensive and seized back in a short time Yerznka, Erzroom, and reached Alexandrapol. The great part of the deportees from Turkey had gathered in Alexandrapol and almost every day there took place disorders and murders. In those days General Andranik was in Alexandrapol. He was much offended by the Dashnaks and was organizing an army. In ten days he had already recruited eight thousand men infantry and cavalry. I, too, as a homeless boy, joined, with my countrymen, the army as a groom. In Alexandrapol it became known that Andranik intended to go via Djalaloghli, Dilidjan, Bayazet, Daralagyaz, Nakhidjevan, from there – pass to Persia and then to England. The news was enough for 30,000 refugees to follow Andranik's army.

Exactly in those days the soldiers of Kemal were under the walls of Yerevan and dictated their will to the leaders of the Dashnak government.

In six days we were already in Djulfa. The army and the 30,000 deportees were fed at the expense of the surrounding villages. In Djulfa, Andranik, negotiating with the Persian government, got permission to reach the Persian Gulf through the Khoy-Salmast road. The next day, in June 1918, we crossed the border and went towards Khoy. When the army and the refugees had passed the border, and were at a distance of fifteen km from Khoy, our vanguard forces entered in fight with the Turkish regular army. It became evident from the Turkish officers, who had fallen prisoner that the Turkish high command had known long ago about Andranik's intention and had ordered to transfer the 30,000 soldiers of the Turkish army to Khoy, to annihilate Andranik's escaping army and the refugees. After an uneven and stubborn fighting for twelve hours with the Turkish army, we were obliged to retreat back to Djulfa. Our scattered and escaping army returned to Djulfa and learned that Andranik and Smbat had not come back. The soldiers could not guess what might have happened.

Unexpectedly Smbat appeared riding another horse, and then Andranik appeared. The army and the refugees greeted Andranik's arrival with exultation.

While withdrawing Smbat had fallen behind his cavalry near Khoy and had stopped to shoe his horse and soon was surrounded by two Turkish officers and their two askyar bodyguards. He had begun to fight with his mauser till no more bullets were left. Immediately he had given the signal of 'surrender.' The Turkish officers, leaving their horses to the bodyguards, had started to approach Smbat. His mauser's brilliance, which was silver and gold-plated, had irritated the Turkish officers. Smbat had thrown the mauser before the approaching officers. While everyone of them was trying to pick up the mauser first, he had attacked the askyars guarding the horses, had killed them and, jumping on one of the horses, had disappeared behind the nearby mountains. Taking advantage of the falling darkness, without being noticed by the Turk guards, he had ridden off and reached Djulfa.

As for Andranik, being encircled with his fifty body guards, he had fought bravely in an unequal fight against the Turkish army, and, seeing that it was impossible to force his way through the front and pass forward, he had decided to turn back to the rear in a lightning speed. Until the Turks had come round and organized his pursuit, they had hurried to the mountains, leading to the west of Khoy, and taking advantage of the night darkness they had passed by the Turkish army, had gone down in the direction of Nakhidjevan to the Araz River and from there had come to Djulfa.

In those days the Armenian villages of Ordoubad were surrounded by the Turks of the neighboring villages. A few of the Armenian villagers came to Andranik and asked him to rescue the population from slaughter. The next day Andranik's army attacked the Ordoubad villages, annihilated the Turkish forces or put them to flight and saved the encircled Armenian peasants.

With the foodstuff, which was in the occupied villages, the army was fed for twenty days. In those days cholera broke out in the army, and more than one hundred soldiers died daily. The number of the dead was increasing so rapidly that pits were dug beforehand, and the half-dead people were thrown into them and covered with earth.

I fell ill, too. My temperature rose to 41o. They put me in a cart in order to throw me into the pit. I woke up, came to myself by the noise of the wheels and asked the driver of the cart not to throw me into the pit. He put me down near the stream, put my bag under my head and went away. I woke up the next morning. I felt hungry. I ate the dry bread, which was in my bag. I got better and stood up. I washed myself and went to our boys. They were astonished to see me. In twenty days the contagious disease took away the lives of two thousand soldiers, not

to speak about the large quantity of deceased among the refugees.

In those days Kemal's army was approaching Nakhidjevan. The National Council of the town was in terror. They sent delegates to Andranik asking him to come to Nakhidjevan with his army and organize the defense of the town and the surrounding villages against the Turkish attack. They promised to put under his command from seven to eight thousand soldiers and supply them with food, clothing and ammunition.

Taking into consideration the imminent danger and tempted by the vain promise of the National Council, Andranik, took his army and went to Nakhidjevan. For the safety of the rear, he attacked the Mehram Village, but encountering a strong resistance he was obliged to leave part of his army in the vicinity of the village and with the rest began to fight against the Turkish army, which was ten times superior in number. A few days of bloody fighting proved that it was senseless to fight with two thousand soldiers without any supply of food and ammunition against a regular army. The National Council of Nakhidjevan not only did not keep his promise of warriors and ammunition, it did not even supply the fighting soldiers with food. In despair, Andranik took his army, whoever had remained alive, and went to Zangezour over the Ghapan mountains.

Zangezour became the last refuge of Andranik's army and the 40,000 Armenian refugees. To feed the army, the soldiers were divided on the villages of Goris and Sissian, so that each family had to feed one soldier. I am not mentioning the fact that 40,000 refugees had spread all over the villages and kept body and soul together at the expense of the peasants.

In the spring of 1919 Andranik's army attacked the Turkish villages of the Sapough Valley in order to open the way and to join the Armenian villages of Shoushi Ghala (Fortress – Turk.). But a delegation from Baku, which was headed by an American general, stopped the fighting and did not allow Andranik to enter Shoushi Ghala. What was the motive that Andranik agreed with the American general, I do not know. So we went back with the whole army to Edjmiadsin. Only here it became clear to us that Andranik would demobilize his army and go to America.

After resting for a week and eating at the expense of the monastery the first contingent of the army – 400 soldiers were demobilized and were given certificates, which gave them the right to receive bread and go by train to their houses free of charge. The next group had not left Edjmiadsin yet, when a group from the demobilized soldiers from the first contingent came back from Yerevan with wounded and beaten faces and told Andranik, that the Dashnaks had not recognized the certificates given to them, they had not allowed them to go to their houses by train and, in general, they were

insulting and dishonoring him, and matters had taken such a turn that Dro's mauserists had attacked them, had killed two and seriously wounded five others. Hearing about the incident, Andranik ordered to call back all the demobilized soldiers, to give them arms, bring the army out of Edjmiadsin, to arrange them near the St. Hripsimé Monastery and wait for his next order. He, himself, took fifty of his body guards with him and went by night at two o'clock, to the Dashnak military quarters in Edjmiadsin, arrested the officers, cut the telegraphic communication with Yerevan, then came and commanded his army to move forward. Early in the morning all the heights around Yerevan were occupied by Andranik's soldiers, and they were waiting for certain reconnaissance information in order to attack the city and arrest the leaders of the Dashnak government. Andranik's intention was soon known to the city inhabitants and confusion started among them; the government leaders fled to Sevan, and the garrison got ready to surrender. An Armenian from America, who had recently arrived in Yerevan, came probably with the recommendation of the Dashnaks, to Andranik and entreated him to abstain from his intentions and not to enter the city. By the name of the government he promised to fulfill all his demands and put on the Dashnak's account a large sum at his disposal, to be given to the demobilized soldiers. Taking into account that a fratricidal war would take place following his entry to Yerevan, Andranik decided to return to Edjmiadsin and continue the demobilization. In a very short time Andranik demobilized his army, handed over the arms and the stores to the monastery and went to America.

After being demobilized, I went to Yerevan. I had no relatives to rely on. Besides, famine prevailed. Under the walls of Yerevan and Edjmiadsin hundreds of hungry people and children lay and could not get up. The corpses of the dead remained in the streets for several days, there were no people to bury them, and they were rotten. Dozens of murders took place in Yerevan every day. Robbery and plunder were of frequent occurrence. After begging in the streets for a while, I decided to go to Sarighamish. In those days the Turks had just retreated and it was possible to keep body and soul together on the wheat sown in the fields. I heard in Sarighamish that the situation was not good in Yerevan, Alexandrapol and Kars, that certain so-called Bolshevik organizations had been created, that they were carrying on a certain work, they had links with the Bolsheviks of Baku, but what all that meant, I could not understand. The Bolshevik ideology had also reached the soldiers of the 4th brigade. The high command suspected Captain Mkhchian of rousing the soldiers against the Dashnak government. And in fact, in May 1920, two battalions rebelled and occupied the Sarighamish railway station. The rebels armored a few wagons and took position in them. By order of Captain Mkhtchian I have taken a few parcels to

the rebels of the station and I was convinced that he was directing the rebellion.

The aim of the rebels was to join the rebels of Kars, but the railway communication had been cut beforehand, so they did not succeed. With the help of the forces, which came from Kars, the rebellion was suppressed, some of the participants were captured and executed.

In September 1920, the Turkish army attacked again and reached as far as Alexandrapol. The remaining part of our 4th brigade reached Talin on the 10th of November. After resting for a few days, we got up one morning and saw that almost all the officers of the brigade had run away. The next morning a delegation arrived from Yerevan and declared that the Dashnak government did not exist anymore. Beginning from that day, the 29th of November 1920, Armenia was under Soviet power. And they told us: "Those who wish to serve in the Red Army, may stay, those who do not want – may go away." The greater part of the soldiers agreed to stay in the ranks of the Red Army. Fifty soldiers, and I among them, were sent to guard the Margara bridge, as frontier forces.

On the 30th of November we reached the Margara Village, took the bridge over and lodged in one of the nearby houses. After a few days, we made the acquaintance on the Turkish frontier-guards, and we visited each other almost every day. As I mastered the Turkish language, the commander of the battalion appointed me to be his interpreter. One day I and the battalion commander went to visit the Turk frontier-guards to return their visit. After treating us well, they said that one of their friends had shot a big wild boar that day and asked if we wanted to take it with us. After getting our consent their soldiers brought the boar to our side. And as a sign of respect on our part, we invited six of them to a barbecue of mutton. At the exact time on the next day the guests came and the feast began. Under the effect of the famous Yerevan Shoustov Cognac and the local exquisite wine, the meat of a whole sheep was not enough for the barbecue. With our knowledge some more barbecue was prepared from the wild boar's meat and was put on the table. Everybody ate the pork barbecue with great appetite, and the Turks began even to praise it, saying that it was much better than the previous one. When the feast was coming to an end, the commander of our battalion quite naively, made the Turks understand that it was the meat of the wild boar they had shot. That was enough: all of them got up; they stimulated themselves to throw up what they had eaten and left. After that they did not visit us.

In December 1920, I was sent to Edjmiadsin to learn in the political courses. Then I learned at the Yerevan Officer School. In 1925 I was appointed chief of the Armenian Proletarian School in Baku by the Armenian High Command.

In 1926 I started to work at the second printing house of the State Printing House, as a superintendent. Then

I worked at the Cooperative Union of disabled people. I took part in the Great Patriotic War beginning from 1941. I went to the front.

For my work, both in the army and in civil enterprises I have been awarded dozens of medals, orders and certificates of honor.

**89 (89).**

**OVSANNA NALBANDOGHLI'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1905, Erzroom)**

In Erzroom all the inhabitants were Armenians. We spoke only Armenian. There was a rich man in Erzroom, they called him Chorbadjji. He had a wife. A Turk wanted to take Chorbadjji's wife; he said: "Don't go to the exile with that husband of yours..."

But Kurd landowner, who were leading the deportees, kidnapped Chorbadjji's wife. Another landowner got surprised and said: "Boy, do you know who that woman's husband is? How could you do that?"

Chorbadjji got news that his wife had been kidnapped. They began to beat him in order to reduce him to silence.

Oh! Which one shall I tell? We have seen a lot of misfortunes.

Finally the Americans came and opened orphanages. They went through all the Turks' houses, deserts and gathered the Armenian orphans. They opened eight orphanages. But no priest was left alive in the Patriarchate. They took them all away and exterminated them.

There were no doctors, no markets, no pharmacies then. Mother fell ill. My mother's sister came to us with her mother-in-law. In a few days the mother-in-law also died. We brought a donkey for mother to ride on the road of exile. What an awful turmoil it was!

My grandmother and mother were crying all the time.

While in Erzroom my father had taken our silver tea-service to the prefect. The prefect saved our family from deportation. He said: "I'll save you and your family from the exile, but you must not save anyone else with you."

Why did he save my father? Because he was a farrier, and they did not have anybody else besides my father to shoe the horses.

In 1936 we came here, Istanbul, from Arabkir. Now, the surnames of many of us, Armenians living in Turkey, are already not Armenian, they have changed. For example, our surname was Nalbandian, but was changed into Nalbandoghli.

**90 (90).**

**MARIAM TER-MKRTCHIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1908, Erzroom)**

I was very small, probably I was seven years old, but I remember well. The Turks came; they had begun to plunder; they had set fire to our house and they were throwing the young and old people into the fire. My elder sister was burnt in the fire; I saw that with my own eyes. They threw my mother into the fire, too, then they threw me, but I crawled out of it; my knees were badly burnt and the scars are still visible. Look! [And she opened her knees to show her scars – V. S.].

I do not know with whom I was, but I went to the exile with the caravan; I had no one to take care of or anyone to take care of me. They took us from Erzroom to Diarbekir on foot, from there to Aleppo; then I went to Constantinople...

I remember a Turk bey took me to his house; they put some ointment on my knees and they called me Ferida. There was another Armenian girl there, who was older than me, whom they had already turkified, and she had remained with them. I was younger than her. People came and asked me: "Daughter, where are you from?" I said, "I am an Armenian."

You just imagine: they were Armenian refugees. The news had reached General Andranik, that there were two Armenian girls at the bey's house: one of them had become a Turk and they were going to turkify the other one, too.

Andranik came with two English soldiers and knocked at the door. My khanoum and the bey had gone to the movies. The Armenian girl, who had become a Turk, went down to open the door. Andranik asked: "Are there any Armenian girls here?"

"No, there aren't," said the girl lying.

Then General Andranik said: "When your bey returns home, let him bring the new Armenian girl to the City Quarters tomorrow." When he was gone, that girl wrapped me in a bed-sheet and began to beat me. She had become a Turk long ago; she had become worse than the Turks themselves. I cried. In the evening when the bey came home, he saw me crying; he said to the girl: "Who gave you the right to beat her? You should have waited till we came and we could talk it over."

My bey called me and said: "Come, my girl; what

did you say?”

“I said nothing.”

“Who was that man?”

“I don’t know. I was afraid: I did not speak.”

Then my bey asked that girl.

She said: “Tomorrow morning you must take Ferida to the City Quarters.”

In the morning my bey took me to the City Quarters. They examined my case, they brought out big registers as if they were looking for the name Ferida, but they did not find it.

Finally they said: “No, she is an Armenian girl.”

General Andranik made me stand on a chair and

they took a photo of us together. He changed all my clothes and he himself took me to the Beshiktash Orphanage, where I learned Armenian and Greek till the 6th form. Then I grew up and became sixteen. An Armenian Catholic man and his wife came to the orphanage to adopt a girl. They liked me and took me to their house. In that man’s house I married Voskan from Moosh. He was a refugee, too. He had an aunt in Greece. We went to Greece. We had our home. We had a son and two daughters. In 1947, we came to Armenia. My son died. One daughter went to the USA with her family. I remained with my daughter, Vardouhi. Soon we’ll also leave for Los Angeles.

## 91 (91).

### MANOUSHAK HARUTYUN TER-STEPANIAN’S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1908, Erzroom)

When I was watching TV, I heard again that the Turks were denying the Armenian Genocide and I got very angry. I said, “It’s enough! Until today, I have only told my children and grandchildren about the atrocities committed by the Turks. Now I am going to tell everybody that the Turks have no feeling of shame at all.” Therefore listen: “I was born in Erzroom, in the street called Damir Ayagh (Iron Foot – Turk.). My father’s name was Harutyun, my mother’s – Maritsa. My sisters were Heghiné (1901), Nvard (1905), me, Manoushak (1908), and my youngest sister – Knarik (1911). I had many uncles and aunts both on my father’s and mother’s sides. My grandfather’s name was Hakob and my granny’s – Trfanda. We had a fine house, a shop. My father was a graduate of Sanassarian College. He was a very kindhearted and pious man. In the evening, as he came home, he washed and then said, “Leave everything and come for prayers.” Only then did we have our dinner. He had read much; he had a rich library. He was very fond of Narekatsi. I have taken after him. I know by heart many chapters of Narek and from other writers.

It was in the month of June; my aunts had gathered in our house and were crying, but there was no dead. In fact, the Turkish government had given us three days’ time to gather, for we were to go to Harpoot. From Erzroom to Harpoot, it was a month’s journey on foot. At that time, my father had put his savings (200 Turkish gold coins) in the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople; at least we could take that money with us; however, it remained there. Whatever we had, we loaded on mules and donkeys, and we were driven out like sheep in flocks out of Erzroom. May Talaat’s wishes never come true, as he had ordered the deportation of all the Armenians. We set out. We walked and walked; there was no end to it. There was no bread, no water; those who were

tired, had no right to stay back; the gendarmes, rifle in hand, watched us. Finally we reached a place where they permitted us to sit on the ground and rest. We had hardly taken out the bread – or whatever we had to eat – when we heard a strong whistle, and the Turkish and Kurdish mobs attacked us from the mountains. We could hardly throw ourselves into a shelter, resembling a stable. They followed us, broke the door, came in and began to take off our clothes and plundered us, leaving us only in our underwear. They stripped me of my clothes, leaving only my underpants. I was hardly seven years old. I did not know what to do. Suddenly someone snatched away my golden ear-rings from my ears, blood spurted out. We passed the night somehow. In the morning they came and said we were to continue our way. We were almost naked, we had nothing on. We started to walk. Suddenly a long whistle was heard again, and a huge mob attacked us. This time they had come to slaughter us. They started slaying with swords and axes whoever happened to be before them. We were almost naked. They struck father on the shoulder with an axe and killed him on the spot. We could not understand what was taking place. Corpses were everywhere. It was the first time I saw such a thing. I remember a man; they had cut his genital and put it in his mouth.

An order was given, “Those who are alive – move forward.” The people said: “Let’s see who has survived.” Everybody began looking for his or her relatives among the corpses. The corpses had fallen everywhere, but the gendarmes did not allow this. They said, “Whoever goes there will not come back.” Crying and lamenting, we continued to walk. As my mother was carrying my younger sister, her groin was swollen, she was not able to carry my sister any more, so she put her down on the ground, but the child began crying and scratching the

\* The eyewitness survivor was active and kind woman, who sang and also prayed from Narek’s “Book of Lamentation.”

ground; mother was obliged to take her up again and went on walking. It was raining, it was stormy, and we were walking almost naked. It was one month's journey from Erzroom to Harpoot...

We arrived in Harpoot. The gendarmes handed us over to the Harpoot police-station as prisoners. In Harpoot, my mother began going to houses and doing washing in order to support us. My mother rubbed mud on my elder sister's face, so that they would not kidnap her. One day there was a raid in Harpoot. Me and my sisters had hugged each other and were shivering, fearing that soon they would find us. They came, gathered us all and took us into the governor's garden. The gendarmes were watching us with bayonet rifles in their hands. They brought the list of the town's inhabitants and began reading. Those who were not inhabitants of Harpoot were exiled Armenians; they should be taken away and slaughtered. My sister said to me: "You're small, you're a child. Run away through the people's legs." I said: "No, I won't go alone." At that time, Almighty God, there was an Assyrian woman near us, who was from Harpoot; when her name was read, she looked at us, pitied us, took all three of us as her own children and led us out of the round-up. O, Merciful Lord! Your power is great... This way we were freed. Our mother had come from her washing to our ruined shelter, had not found us there and had begun crying. When darkness fell, the Assyrian woman sent us to our mother. We found each other.

When the Russians occupied Erzroom and Erzuka, the Kurds of Dersim, who were Armenians forcefully converted to Islam, began to free the Armenians and helped them to cross to the other side of the Mourat (Euphrates) River, charging 5 gold coins for each person. My mother gave the money she had earned from her washing to a Kurd. At night he took people across, three at a time, in his leather-raft. First, he took the men and then us. Finally we passed the border and we were free. We came back to Erzroom. Mother said, "Thank God, let's go to our home." We went and saw our house was ravaged. It had been razed to the ground. My mother's brother came and found us; he was an officer in the Russian army. He had heard that his sister's husband had been killed and his sister had come back to Erzroom with her children. My uncle said to my mother: "Give the younger ones to an orphanage; we'll marry the two elder

girls, and you'll come to live with me in Kharkov." They took me and my younger sister to an orphanage, but later, when the Turks occupied Erzroom, our orphanage was transferred to Djalaloghli (now: Stepanavan). But soon the Turks invaded the town. We ran away, because general Andranik's army left the town. The orphans scattered here and there. A Greek officer took me to his house out of pity. I remained in Chanakhchi.

When the Russians came back, they began to gather the orphans. We were taken to Naftlough – Tiflis. The Georgians expelled us and sent us to Kars.

When the Turks occupied the fortress of Kars, news was sent telling that everyone should try to flee. The children of the orphanage were dispersed again. Then the Americans came and helped. There was a two-storeyed building in the Kars Valley, and they gathered us there. Then the Americans brought us, the orphans, to Leninakan (now: Gyumri), to the Kazachi Post (Station – Russ.). The orphanage was for girls: the seniors, juniors and small ones were in separate groups. I was among the juniors. In the orphanage, in the morning we went to our classes, we did handwork, we knitted socks and we learned how to knit gloves.

Then a man came to our orphanage from Stavropol and took me to his house, for his wife was paralyzed after the birth of their third child. I looked after the children and his wife. In 1934, my elder daughter, Elisa was born and we moved to Yerevan, then Seryozha was born in 1944, and Seda – in 1948, who is now teacher. I have seen and endured much suffering and sorrow. I have devoted myself to God. Now, thank God, my children, my grandchildren love me and take care of me in my old age, they are so careful, specially my daughters, Elisa and Seda, who are teachers and my guardian angels.

*"I pray every night:*

*Glory to you, our Lord, I am content,  
We were saved from the great disaster,  
From the wicked Turks, from their spiteful danger,  
Glory to you, our Savior, our Lord!*

*We were saved by the sacred Cross,  
By the faith of Jesus Christ,  
The Armenian Tree turned green again,  
Glory to you, our Savior, our Lord!"*

92 (92).

### ASHKHEN HAKOB POGHIKIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1908, Erzroom)

I was born in Erzroom in baker Hakob's wealthy family. My father had a large bakery with several workers. He was a very handsome man. My mother, Iskouhi

khanoum was a beautiful woman, kind and modest. Our house had a large yard. We had many workers who took care of the animals. We were five children. The eldest

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor, in 1978, has been delivered to me by her daughter, Anahit Poghikian-Darbinian, in 2002, who is the English translator of the "Historical Memoir-Testimonies" and "Historical Narrative-Testimonies" parts of this book.

was my brother, Hovhannes, who was a student of the Sanassarian College, then my sister, Tagouhi; she was 7 years my senior, then my second sister, Varsenik, who was eleven years old and then my brother, Levon, who was 2 years my junior.

In mid December, 1908, on the day of St. Hakob (Jacob), a Saturday, father came home for the celebration of his Saint's name. They congratulated him, saying that a girl was born to him. He was delighted and said: "We'll call her Ashkhen. She will be an Armenian Queen." Later, when my younger brother was born, father named him Levon, after the last king of the Cilician Armenia, Levon the Sixth.

We lived prosperously. My father's bakery-shop was in the center of the city, while our house was at the far end.

In the autumn of 1915, I would go to school. I was waiting for it impatiently. My brother Hovhannes came home for his summer vacation, and...

All of a sudden everything got mixed up... It was July. Order came for the deportation. We had to take just the most necessary things with us. If I'm not mistaken, father had given the key to his bakery to one of his workers, a Kurd Hasso. We loaded our things on a cart: beds, provisions, and set off one sunny morning. We were thousands. We walked the whole day under the burning summer sun. We had already come out of the town. We were given the order to stop. We were surrounded by gendarmes who had rifles on their shoulders and whips in their hands. Then the order came: "Men above the age of seventeen stand separately. Our country is in danger; it's no time to walk with women," repeated the gendarmes. Father kissed us in the morning and together with my brother, Hovhannes, went to join the men. Early in the morning the men moved in one direction, and after a while our caravan moved forward.

Crying and lamenting we moved on until dark began to fall. Soon we noticed our moukhtar was looking for us. He was riding his horse, and there were two gendarmes with him. He came up to us, greeted us respectfully and addressed my mother: "Iskouhi khanoum, come, let me take you back with your children to your house, which is mine now. You'll live there comfortably."

We looked at him in surprise. Then we looked at our mother. She was a very silent one. She was standing with her head bent.

"I know, now you're thinking about your husband... If he is alive, let him come back to his house...," said the man.

Mother began to cry and said: "If my husband and son won't live, why should I live then? We'll go there, where all these people go..."

"Iskouhi khanoum, you'll regret it, but it will be late..."

In the morning the caravan moved again under the

guard of gendarmes. Our Golgotha had started. We walked and walked. We walked along burnt fields, down valleys and up hills. Older people remained behind. Soon we noticed corpses on our way.

Crowds of Kurds began to attack us. They turned over the cart and plundered all that was left. Now, only the donkey was left. My brother, Levonik, fell ill with fear. My mother had dressed him like a girl. We put him in the saddle-bag, as he was not able to walk. There was no food, no water. My brother's condition was very bad. He begged for water all the time. The Euphrates River was running along, but who could take water from there? Young Turkish and Kurdish boys brought and sold water: one gold coin for one cup of water. Mother gave one gold coin and bought water for Levonik.

We reached a large town, Tigranakert. We were taken to a large khan. Two men came up to us: "Give us your daughters, mother. The road will be still more difficult." My mother said nothing. The elder man liked my eldest sister, Tagouhi. He said that she would stay with his wife and help her. The other man took my sister, Varsenik, by the arm and said: "Pretty girl, I'll take you to my house; you'll become our daughter." Tagouhi bent her head and said nothing, while Varsenik began shouting, crying, especially when mother began undoing the golden coins off her clothes: "I don't want to go. I'll stay with you." Tagouhi followed the man calmly, while Varsenik continued to resist. Her 'foster-father' hugged her, put her on his horse and drove away.

The next day Levonik died. I remained with mother; I was comforting and consoling her. It was cold. There was no food. It was awful.

One day a woman came and said to mother: "Give me your daughter, let me take her to my place. She won't live here in this cold and dirty khan."

I did not want to go; mother was convincing me to go...

The Turkish woman said: "Gâvura iyilik yaramaz" (It is not worth being good to the gâvur – Turk.).

Then I went with the woman. She had two sons: one was older than I, the other – younger. They called me badji, but when they got angry, they used to beat me, especially the elder. My foster-father was a worker.

I lived in that house for more than two years. My name had become Ayshé. I used to bring water from the fountain, cleaned the yard, and helped my anné about the house. When I went to the fountain for water, I met other Armenian girls about my age who were step-daughters like me, maids.

All of a sudden I fell ill with diarrhea. Many people got it, especially children. It was dangerous and contagious. My anné took me to hospital. It was a large building where there were many other sick children. Previously, it had been an Armenian school. There were foreign doctors and nurses who looked after the patients.

Many died, but some got well. I was already well and was playing in the yard when a Turkish woman approached the hospital gate and said: “Kim iyileşti? Kim istiyor benim kızım olmak?” (Who has recovered? Who wants to be my daughter? – Turk.). I ran forward and said: “I’m well, I’m well, I have recovered.”

That woman took me by the hand and led me to her house. Now I had a new ‘anné.’ After two days, we saw that the hospital was burning. There were many sick children inside. They were all burned. They had burnt it to stop the disease. Later I learned that my sister, Varsenik, had been among the patients when it was burned...

It was the autumn of 1918. Turkey was defeated. I had gone to the fountain for water. I met a woman from Erzroom, who called me aside and said: “Aren’t you Iskouhi khanoum’s daughter?”

“Yes, I am. How do you know about us?”

“I know, because I am also from Erzroom and am acquainted with you kin. Ashkhen, your mother has come and found your sister, Tagouhi. She is staying at the rich people’s district.”

I decided to go and find my mother and sister. The next morning I told my anné that I wanted to go early for water. I came out, hid the water-jar in a safe place and went to the ‘rich people’s district.’ I was rather clever and asked several questions to those I met. I don’t remember how many days it took me, when at last I learned that Mahmoud efendi had ‘adopted’ an Armenian girl and that her mother had come and found her. But as I went up to the house, they sent me away. The following day I went again and began crying, shouting, and saying that my sister lived in that house. Because of the noise, people came out of the house, and learning what the matter was, took me in. I found my mother and sister after three years. The mistress of the house was very pleased with my sister and she did not want to part with her. She had even proposed that my mother stay and work in the house. But now, as I had come, it was not possible to stay there. So, we went to Deurtyol, where there were many Armenian charitable organizations. Mother gave me to the Kelekian Orphanage and she and my sister started working.

At the Kelekian Orphanage, I began learning the Armenian A, B, C.... I was ten years old then. There we had ‘Mayriks’ (Mothers – Arm.), ‘Oriorts’ (Misses – Arm., an unmarried woman as a teacher) and one ‘Hayrik’ (Father – Arm.). I remember Mr. Nshan Sahatdjian, who later, in Aleppo, became my daughter’s teacher at the American High School for girls.

In 1921, when Cilicia was emptied of the Armenians, our orphans were taken to Beirut on ships, and my mother and sister were taken to Alexandrette on other ships. My sister had already married, so my mother was alone again.

In Alexandrette, while in quarantine, Mr. Grigor

Poghikian saw my mother sitting all alone, her elbow on her knee and her hand under her chin; he stopped, pointed at her and said: “Look, as though she is Mother Armenia [lamenting Ani, the capital of Armenia of the Bagratouni Dynasty, which was destroyed by the Arabs in the 10th century].”

The group of men approached her, made inquiries about her: “Sister come, let me take you to my house. My Oghida khanoum also is almost as lonely as you. You’ll understand each other.”

He took my mother to his two-storey house in Iskenderun. He had his elder son, Sedrak, living with him.

One day, the director of the orphanage called me and told me that I had a letter. I was delighted; I was almost fifteen then and was getting a letter. I opened and read it. It was from my mother, but she could not read and write. The handwriting was beautiful. I began corresponding with my mother. In summer I was invited to visit Alexandrette. I went by ship. At the sea-port, an elderly handsome man met me, a hat on his head and a stick in his hand. He took me home by carriage. After three years, I had found my mother again. We hugged each other; we rejoiced and cried. Oghida khanoum was a pretty and very kind granny. She also had become old before her days, though her husband and eldest son, Sedrak, were together with her. Later, he became my husband. During the Armenian Genocide she had lost her second son, Missak, who had been serving in the Turkish army, and her eldest daughter, Parandzem, who had been exiled to Der-Zor, she had contracted typhoid and died. Her two daughters and two sons had gone to Egypt.

In September, I returned to my orphanage and continued to study and work. In the orphanage, the orphans were also taught trades such as shoemaking, tailoring, and carpentry. The girls learned needlework and made stockings on machines. When the orphans became of age, at 18, they were sent away to their relatives, if they had any. I remember the Kelekian Orphanage with gratitude. It existed until 1932. When I became 18, I came back to my mother and began helping her in the household. Soon, Grigor efendi and Oghida khanoum left for Egypt to visit their daughters and sons, who had married and had children. Sedrak remained alone in their flat, which was the second floor of the house. He treated my mother as his own mother, and my mother treated him as her son. Mother had written everywhere (with the help of Grigor efendi) looking for my brother, Hovhannes, for we had received news that my brother was freed from the Turkish yataghan and had survived after being seriously wounded. But we could not find him.

In the summer of 1927, Sedrak’s two sisters, Satenik and Gayané came to Alexandrette together with their husbands and children to spend the summer. They were rich and very well dressed. The elder sister, Satenik, had

no children, while the younger, Gayané, had three sons. They liked me very much and wanted me to marry their brother. He had a good job. We married and had three children Anahit (1928), Missak (1929) and Alice (1938).

Alice was just born when the Turkish soldiers entered Iskenderun. We had a very rich Greek neighbor, who immediately left the city as the Turks came. A Turkish colonel came to live in that house together with his family. They were very polite, and their children wanted to play with my children. The colonel's wife liked to visit me. The colonel's wife visited us and asked if we also intended to leave. When I did not answer, she said: "In 1938, the Armenians began leaving the town to Lebanon by ship. Just some dozen of Armenians are left. Don't go, madam Ashkhen, we aren't the former Turks, we have changed a lot!"

But the Turks always used to say about the Armenians: "Ters gâvur" (Malicious gâvur – Turk.), "Nankör gâvur" (Ungrateful gâvur – Turk.), "Gâvura iyilik yaramaz" (It isn't worth being good to the gâvur – Turk.), "Gâvuru ne kadar kesersen, o kadar sık biter" (The more you slay the gâvur, the thicker he grows – Turk.).

I could not control my self and said: "Though more than twenty years have passed, I can't forget what I have seen... 'İt derisinden kürk olmaz, Türk Ermeniye dost olmaz' (Dog-skin cannot become a fur, the Turk cannot become a friend to the Armenian – Turk.)."

On a morning in August 1939, our family left Alexandrette by a car taking with us two cases of our

clothes only. The car took us to Gherkhan, where we joined the local Armenians, who were moving to Aleppo in caravans, in trucks. We went to Aleppo where my sister Tagouhi was living with her family.

The Second World War had started and my husband did not succeed in his new job. Life had become difficult for us, but my children continued to learn at Kilikian School, and then Anahit went to American High School for Girls, and my son, Missak, entered the French Lycée. Soon Syria declared itself independent, and the French, defeated from Germany, were compelled to leave. The French Lycée was closed, so Missak went to Cyprus to continue his studies at the famous Melkonian Educational Institution.

In 1946, we repatriated to Soviet Armenia. My son came from Cyprus to Beirut and joined us, and we came to Armenia. In my life I have emigrated several times, but the first one, in 1915, was not emigration, but exile, the hell, which the Turks had created for the Armenians. Every night, in my dreams I run away from that hell, shouting: "Kaçın! Geliyorlar!" (Run away! They're coming! – Turk.). And I disturb the slumber of my family. They all wake up and try to calm me, but after that I can't sleep...

In Armenia we also encountered many difficulties. My mother passed away, my husband was overrun by a tram and lost one leg, but my children continued their studies and now they are professors of English. They love their motherland and are devoted to her development.

### 93 (93).

#### ISHKHAN HAYKAZ HAYKAZIAN'S TESTIMONY

##### (B. 1909, Erzroom, Bassen Village)

In Bassen we lived in peace. We had our house and orchard. My father and uncle were very rich.

In 1915, when the Turks attacked Bassen, my father and uncle became volunteers in the self-defense group. But when my father's bullets came to an end, he was shot and died.

My uncle came and gathered us: my grandpa, grandma, mother, younger brother; we left our village and fled. On the road there were corpses of killed people everywhere. Hungry, thirsty and barefooted, we reached Sarighamish. Grandpa said: "It's better to stay in the forest, so that the Turks won't see us." But the Turks were pursuing us. There the Turks attacked us, my uncle also perished while defending us.

We remained without a protector. Grandpa, grandma, mother with my younger brother in her arms set out for Kars. On the road my little brother died of hunger, and then grandma also died.

I and mother reached Tiflis, somehow getting on top

of a wagon. We had no acquaintances there. We slept, wrapped in rags, under the stairs of a house. Grandpa began to work. Mother got married and entrusted me to an orphanage.

At the orphanage all the children were like me: emaciated and feeble girls and boys. But at the Tiflis orphanage we were taught trades and got seventh form education. Many of us, finishing their studies, began to work at the plants and factories. And many others worked and studied at the workers' faculties and technical colleges.

One day I got a letter, telling that my relatives lived in Bolnis-Khachen. Muddy and dirty I went and reached there. The letter was written by my relatives. They gave me my mother's address. I went to Ghaltakhchi Station and found master Yeghish. He was my step-father. I found my mother, but she received me very coldly. I remained there for two days. My mother had had a son and a daughter from her new husband, but she told me nothing about that. Only at the end she said: "Farewell, son." I

went to the station crying and then to our orphanage. When I finished the seventh form, I came to Yerevan.

I married in 1936. I had two children. In 1941 I went to war. I fought. I was wounded twice. Then I was set free and returned to Yerevan with medals.

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. We have now an army and statehood.

#### 94 (94).

### SIRANOUSH NASSOYAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Khnous)

During the war with Turkey Andranik fought; he fought with his shining sword and freed the Armenians.

Our Khnous Fortress was a rich place, we had everything – barns, wheat, cattle, sheep; we lived in peace. God damn the Turks' sons; they came and they slaughtered us... They knocked little babies in swaddling clothes to the ground. Mothers cried and wailed.

And suddenly General Andranik came on his white horse, his raincoat on his shoulders; they shot at him with bullets, but no bullet would touch him; it was said that he had the signs of a saint on his body. General Andranik came

and stood on the bridge of Araz, near the Kyopru Keoy, and guarded it until the people passed over the bridge.

Andranik said: "Gather all the children and give them to their mothers." He was a real hero. The Turks feared him. They used to say, "Andranik Paşa geldi!" (Andranik pasha is coming! – Turk.), and ran away.

General Andranik threatened the Turks saying: "Don't touch my people and my orphanages; if not – I'll slaughter you!"

He saved the people of Kars; he sent the orphans to America.

#### 95 (95).

### GARNIK KHACHATOUR STEPANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Yerznka, Mamakhatoun Village)

I was born in Yerznka, in the family of a tailor. Our house in Mamakhatoun Village was an old hut; there was a tonir-room where we slept, and also a cellar. There were only fifteen to twenty Armenian families in our village. In 1914 when World War I broke out, my father was taken to the Turkish army, and we were not exiled as the family of a soldier. They did not exile my uncle's family either, for he was very rich and every week he used to give the prefect a handkerchief full of silver coins as a bribe.

In November 1915, there were about 30,000 Armenians in that region and all of them were exiled. The shrewd local prefect said to my uncle: "Now the Russian army is approaching Erzroom. I'll put a cart at your disposal, you ride your red horse, and I'll send you safely to the depths of the country."

My uncle's family consisted of six people – uncle Stepan, his wife Azniv, his daughters, Shoghakat and Perjouhi, and his sons, Mkrtich and Martiros. All of them got on the cart; my uncle rode his horse and the gendarmes led them to the Sev Djour (Black Water – Arm.). The gendarmes, who had received their instructions in advance, killed my uncle and then threw his wife into the river. While throwing her, they felt that she was very heavy. They take her out of the water again

and saw that gold coins were sewn inside her clothes. They took off her clothes and again threw her into the river. They threw also their sons into the river and took away the girls in an unknown direction. That same day, at midnight the neigh of my uncle's horse was heard. My grandmother said, "Woe is me, they've killed Stepan!", since the horse had fled and come to Mamakhatoun. I have told all about it in my book "Nightmarish Days."

In January 1916 we were also exiled, when the Russian army approached. All the Turk families, who had kept Armenians, were also deported from Mamakhatoun in a caravan. I was seven years old; I was with my mother, grandmother and my two sisters. In three or four days, through the frost and snow we reached Yerznka, which was already deserted. The water was frozen in the wells and they were filled with corpses. They had gathered the Armenians in the Turkish army and had shot them; my father was a short man, so the bullet had not touched him; they had hit him with bayonets, but he had remained alive.

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.

On the one hand, new refugees came from different towns, and our caravan increased in number, on the other hand, they slaughtered ruthlessly and the caravan decreased. We were near Der-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. There was also a family composed of seven sons; the dishonored mother poisoned the six other members of her family and threw herself into the Euphrates River.

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. Our caravan got thinner. My mother took me by the arm; we ran away and entered a forest and from there we went to the town. We changed our names; I became Mendo, my mother – Nadia. We went to the fountain; we saw two Turk women; we pretended to be Turk emigrants. But they guessed that we were Armenians and shouted. Two young men came armed with daggers; they thanked God that at last they got the chance to kill gâvurs, so that their souls might go to Cennet. They stripped my mother and tied a rope round her neck. The Turk women stood looking. Suddenly one of the women shouted – she was the bey's mother – it seems that her conscience stirred and she said: “You killed all the Armenians of the town, isn't it enough? Spare them at least; it's a pity, you must not kill them.”

They did not kill us. That woman took us to her house, gave us some food, and we ate. Then she said: “You can't stay here. Our men will come and kill you, go. On your way you'll see a two-storeyed house with iron doors. It is the workshop created by the Hnchak Party. There, linen is woven for the army. All of them are Armenians there, but they have become Turks.”

We set off. That night we remained in a ruined house. We made a friend there; it was a cat, which took part in our table. They had killed the owners of the house and had plundered the house. In the morning we continued our way. At last we found that mysterious iron-door building, but they opened the doors with great difficulty and fear. Their chief was Karapet Baltayan, who said. He said: “Take this boy, tomorrow he will grow up and will take revenge.”

We remained in that factory. My mother became a

weaver. It was the year 1917, a terrible famine raged, since Turk emigrants had also come by carts. Our condition was so unbearable that mother took me to a Turkish orphanage, the Osmanoghli Orphanage, where I remained for two months as a Turk. Terrible memories have remained from that orphanage. There was no bread. We ate only mulberries and also the ripe fruit of the Armenians' deserted orchards. We went to the caves, which were full of unburied corpses, and people could come and take photos. The Turk boys of our orphanage went there to take out the golden teeth of the corpses. They took me also with them. I went, so that they might not suspect that I was Armenian. There was a boy with us, whose name was Ibrahim; while turning the corpses upside down, he suddenly screamed; “Daddy,” and fainted. At night he was delirious and he was speaking Armenian. It turned out that he was an Armenian from Malatia; his name was Abraham.

The next day they would take us to the bathhouse. I thought, that they might examine me and see that I had not been circumcised and consequently I was not a Muslim. I left and ran away. After the armistice, American, German and Armenian orphanages were opened. Every morning carts stopped before the Armenian orphanage. The drivers were Kurds; they were doing a very profitable business. They were gathering the Armenian orphans from the Turks and the Kurds and were selling them to the Armenian orphanage. They even bargained for the price; the boys were more expensive than the girls. I remained there for a short time, because I was taken to the American orphanage, where life was much better, but any national expression was strictly forbidden. All the time we had to sing religious songs and recite or read prayers from the Bible. One day one of the orphans interrupted the prayer and recited:

*“I am Armenian,  
I am brave,  
I'm the grandson of Vardan the Great,  
The liberator of Armenia – Vardan the brave.”*

They put him out of the American orphanage. After years, in 1970, I met him in Abkhazia.

At the end of 1918 some of the orphanage boys were transferred to Sebastia. Mother and I also went there. Those Armenians who had survived by miracle had gathered in Sebastia, several thousands of children, young women and girls. The Turkish orphanage of Malatia, where I had remained for three months had belonged to the Catholic Church and it was returned to the Catholics again. In that church I listened to the psalm ‘Aravot Louso’ (Morning of Light – Arm.) for the first time. Among the singers was the wife of our director. I did not know she was an Armenian. The greater part of those Armenians – about 15 thousand – had gathered in Sebastia, of which 5 to 6 thousand were Armenian

orphans. There I remained quite a long time and learned Armenian with the text-book “Loussaber” (Bringing Light – Arm.) In summer I worked at the cobbler of the café till 1922. When Mustafa Kemal’s soldiers burned Izmir, they poured petrol and kerosene and burned the Armenians and the Greeks gathered in the churches. All the orphans of Sebastia were taken to Greece. They made a list of those orphans who had parents, like me (I had my mother), about fifty orphans, and took us to Samsun in the January frost in carts, where two big ships were waiting to take us to Greece. One ship was for the orphans of Sebastia, the other was for the Greek refugees. We had the luck to get on board the Greek refugees’ ship, where there were more than 2000 Greek refugees. It was awfully dirty. The epidemic of plague began to spread. At the beginning the dead were thrown into the sea, but later it was forbidden. No one accepted us. Our number became less and less: we remained 800 people. They vaccinated us... One day I also took to my bed with fever. I was dying, when I heard a voice, “Garnik!” It was our neighbor woman. I had no strength to sit. For forty days we ate only three figs a day. It turned out that the quarantine was over, and we were near the Greek islands. A Greek benefactor had sent us beans with olive oil, olives and bread for the requiem of his wife. We landed. We were disinfected, bathed and dressed. We all shouted, “Zito Hellada!” (Long Live Greece! – Greek), since during her hard days it had given shelter to five thousand Armenian orphans on her islands. First they took us to the town of Bono. We lived there for two-three months in nomad life. I lost my orphanage friends. At night I sleep at the station in a barrel. One morning a man caught me by the neck and said: ‘He’s a man.’ They fed me. Then I found my friends. They took us later to the Edipos Island, which was a hot spa resort. I remained there for a few months and I recovered.

Then they took us to Khalkida. For the first time we were given text-books. Levon Essadjanian, a Western Armenian poet, who had a narrow escape from the Genocide, but suffered from a mental disorder – stood, in the evenings, by the seashore, stretched his hands and recited poems and wept during the lessons. For the first time I learned “A Drop of Honey” in the Western Armenian version. But there was no water on this island. Five hundred people stood in a queue at the tap to get some lukewarm liquid. At the beginning we slept and ate in the open air, we were barefooted and had only a shirt and nothing else. Then we were taken to the Orosfos Island. I remained there for one year. The director was an American, who had been at the Polygons of Leninakan (now: Gyumri). We learned much there. But the director was a very cruel man. For stealing a cluster of grapes he struck the children 30-40 blows with a stick. There they taught us trades, like carpentry, and we sowed garlic.

In December 1925 they packed us into lorries and

transferred us to Athens. The Armenian and the Greek orphans lived in the dethroned king’s palace for a week. There I saw a cinema for the first time. I began to put advertisements in the newspapers: “There’s an orphan here – Garnik Ter-Stepanian by name, mother’s name – Voskegyul; anybody who knows her, inform.” One day a letter came from Constantinople, but I had become night-blind due to the lack of nourishment. The letter was read for me, where my mother wrote that she was glad to find me. Then we were taken to Egypt, Cairo. Considering us to have come of age, they gave us razors to get shaved as men and they let us go into the current of the human ocean, but we were still under their supervision. I remained in Cairo for five years. There I worked as a typesetter in a printing house. I have worked at with the “Arev” (Sun – Arm.) newspaper, a pro-Soviet Armenia paper. And as the clearest handwriting was Yervand Otian’s, I was the type-setter of his chronicles and the daily leaflet, which was Mark Twain’s “The Pauper and the Prince,” translated into Armenian. Every day I type-set those two articles. Yervand Otian was completely emaciated. He had been in the Arabian deserts; he had become a Turk and had kept his existence under the name of Nouri. He used to sit at the Phoenix Café, drank whisky and wrote his articles and novels.

I collaborated longer with Vahan Tekeyan and Hovhannes Hakobian, who was the editor of “Arev” and was persecuted as a communist, and he came to Armenia. Then Vahan Tekeyan became the editor, who gave “Arev” its literary aspect and published the work “God Willing.” His enemies had injured one of his eyes. One day when I went to him the telephone rang. He took up the receiver, listened and he fell in low spirits. I asked: “What happened?”

He said: “They said we’ll dig out your other eye, too, if you continue to advocate Armenia.”

That was the reason why the publication of “God Willing” remained unfinished. I have enjoyed my relations with Tekeyan for four years and that became a distinctive school for me. I got acquainted with several scholars and actors. There were about one thousand orphan boys and girls in Cairo. The rich families adopted girl orphans and took good care of them, making no difference between them and their own children. We used to have meetings at the club. They came there with their families. I’ve seen and listened to Armenak Shahmouradian, “The Nightingale of Moosh.” To listen to a live person is completely different; it has a kind of spiritual value. I’ve heard him singing “Mokats Mirza,” “Crane,” “The Harvest Song.” The director of our orphanage asked him to come to us, and he did not refuse. He came, and we listened to his singing, and then he said: “Orphans of my nation, you’re the flowers of our historical Armenia; each of you is a spark of hers, who have come to the foot of the Pyramids, to these deserts.

Young people, who have tasted Armenia's fruits, your future must be Armenia."

He remained with us till 2 o'clock in the night. Later in Cairo I saw Zarifian for the first time; I watched his performance in Levon Shant's "Old Gods" and "The Emperor." Well, that sphere became a school for me. I remained in Egypt for five years.

My father had already come to Armenia together with the Russian army and was working at the sewing factory as a worker. And my mother had come from Constantinople. Father had applied to the authorities to have me brought to Armenia. He sent the forms to be filled in.

In July 1930 I came to Athens. One day, after seeing the Acropolis, I was called to the Soviet Embassy and given the Soviet passport. I took a ship in Athens bound

for Batoumi and arrived in Yerevan in September, 1930.

That which befell our nation in 1915 was horrible. Of our large family, which consisted of more than a hundred people, only fifteen 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 has said: "If our sons forget so much evil, let the whole world blame the Armenian nation."

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### ARAKEL GHAZAR TAGOYAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1902, Derdjan, Chekhenlots Village)

Our village was called Chekhenlots, near the town of Derdjan. We lived together with the families of my four uncles: Hayrapet, Davit, Ghazar, Vardan, altogether twenty-two people. The same dinner was cooked for all of us, and we all sat at table together.

Until the Genocide we lived and worked in our village in peace. We had two hundred goats and sheep, which the shepherd took to graze. We had one horse, six oxen, whose heads were decorated with beads and they had bells round their necks. The oxen were yoked to the cart or plough. We had many bee-hives. We had the world's best crop. The women gathered the wheat; the men tied sheaves, then took them to the threshing floor and threshed. We gave the government's share and the rest was ours. Milk, madsoun, butter and ghavourma were always plenty in our house. There were three hundred families in our village, all of them were Armenians.

There was a mountain behind our village. Mamakhatoun was at two hours' distance from our village. We had fields; there were fish in our rivers. At night we set a basket at the narrow place of the stream and in the morning it was full of fish.

I was the only son of my parents. I went to school at the age of seven; I learned the Armenian ABC, when we were taught the prayer. Our church was underground, we went down the steps; there were pictures and crosses on the walls.

My father had already died. One day my mother's brother came and said: "Get ready; we're going on pilgrimage to the St. Karapet Monastery of Moosh."

It was a big, well-known place of pilgrimage. Pilgrims came there from Sebastia, Baberd, Derdjan,

Akn, Kamakh. There were guides who showed the way. It was a four-day trip on foot from our village. My uncle had put mother and me on horseback; he was walking by our side. We climbed up the mountains, went down the valley; we were taking with us animals for sacrifice, which were specially registered for that purpose.

The St. Karapet Monastery had forty rooms. St. Karapet's tomb was under the dome of the church; those who had sick people brought them there to be healed. We get up in the morning and saw that the big cauldrons were arranged and the offerings were being cooked. The St. Karapet Monastery was in a low place; all around were hills and streams in the valleys. There were walnut and other fruit trees everywhere. Mother told me: "Tonight, keep your dream in mind." I dreamed I was in Aleppo and had lost my friends. It was dark and I had fallen somewhere. Somebody came, took me by the hand and led me to a light place; I saw the sun.

My uncle Ayvaz said: "This child has seen Aleppo in his dream, God bless him."

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.

We were entertained by an Armenian family. Then we returned and came home. It was autumn. My uncle Davit wanted to slaughter our two-year-old calf and all of a sudden the sky darkened, and the sun eclipsed. Old people said: "It's not a good sign; some disaster will happen."

In 1914, early one morning a group of gendarmes came. My uncle came in and bade his son Hovhannes

and me not to go out: there were gendarmes outside. He lit the lamp, held the smoke close to his face to darken it and become pale. Manouk agha was our village headman. He had an errand-man. That man came and said to my uncle: "Get up, Manouk agha is calling you."

My uncle said groaning: "I'm ill."

The man left. A gendarme came in. He lit the lamp, looked uncle at the face, and saw that he looked pale; he left uncle in bed and went away.

Outside, all the men of the village gathered, held a secret council and decided to organize self-defense. But the chief of the village, Manouk agha, had said: "You must not do such a thing."

Meanwhile our people had heard that the deportees were coming from Sarighamish and that our turn would soon come. The men were thinking to run away, but the village had already been surrounded. We got up in the morning, because the shepherds would take the sheep to the pasture, but the gendarmes had already encircled the village.

First of all the gendarmes seized the village headman Manouk agha, tied his hands and feet and took him to a ruined wooden house, put hay stacks round it, poured kerosene and set the house on fire. Then they called the village priest and told him to gather Manouk agha's burnt bones in a cloth and bury them. Thus, they were frightening the people, annihilating first the leaders.

The next day, early in the morning they surrounded the village again. A great number of men had already fled from the village, but there were still many. My uncle had fled. My uncle Davit had fled from the Turkish army and had come to the village; at day-time he went out of the village to hide in the haystacks; at night he came home to sleep.

The gendarmes surrounded us and said: "Come on, get ready, we're going to a better place." Together with the gendarmes there was a group of Circassian ready to plunder us.

It was noon. Three hundred families were taken out of the village. Those who had money took it on themselves. In one hour and a half from our village we reached the Chamurlou Village. My cousin, Srbouhi, walked till there, but she could not walk further. We left her there and went forward. We reached a large river; it was Mamakhatoun, where the rivers joined. We crossed the river. Uncle Hayrapet's children, Aghoun, Varvara were seventeen, Minas – twenty, Stepan – fifteen years old, so they were five; my uncle Davit had a daughter Shoushan, Paydsar had just married, Srbouhi remained under the wall. My uncle Sahak, his wife and their children were seven; my uncle Vardan, Mariam, Zabel, Pilipos, Mayreni, me and my mother, altogether eighteen people, we were deported. They led us forward; we crossed the Mamakhatoun River. Darkness had fallen. Suddenly we saw that uncle Davit and a gendarme were

coming. My uncle caressed me and kissed me. The gendarme was standing, the rifle on his shoulder. He took us out of the caravan. Uncle said to mother: "Let Arakel come with me. I have bribed this gendarme. I'm going to escape. He will help us to run away."

Mother did not give me. That night uncle Davit's family, consisting of seven souls, fled to the Chamurlou Village. They had heard a voice on their way. They saw that it was our Srbouhi. They cut the tree branches, prepared a stretcher, they made Srbouhi lie on it and took her with them to their acquaintance, Kurd Ghazar's house to rest. Thus, all my uncles escaped. They had gone and seen that Srbouhi was also there. Later, my uncles went and joined General Andranik's army. Then Andranik had taken them all to Edjmiadsin. At that time the Soviets had come to power. My two uncles went to Tiflis, but my uncle Davit and his son, who had married a girl from Harpoot, came and settled in Kirovakan (now: Vanadzor). But, as we had buried our gold under the beehives, uncle went to bring the gold. He went and did not come back. In those days I dreamed that my uncle had goat horns on his head. I felt that he was in danger. He had passed the border and had been killed.

Mother and I, we remained on the roads of exile. We were about twenty people. From the river near Mamakhatoun, they led us on foot; we passed the bridge of Koter and reached the Dersim Mountains, where there were Armenians, who had become Kurds. There was an Armenian village nearby, which was deserted. We entered a house, we saw a man, killed in his bed, decayed and worm-eaten. The houses were all ruined. We were afraid and we went back. A Kurd had some bread and cheese in his handkerchief; mother gave him a gold coin: we took the bread and cheese; we had not eaten anything for several days. Our caravan consisted of six to seven hundred women and children. There were no men. The following day again they made us walk forward. They were kidnapping the girls and young women; they raped them and plundered us. Mother had dressed me like a girl. Holding me by the hand she took me to a stream to drink water; there we saw 4 or 5 girls, half-naked, who were killed. We were hungry and thirsty. We had walked for days, our feet were swollen, wounded and bloody. The women and the girls applied mud on their faces, so that they would not kidnap them.

We reached Yerznka. There was a bridge there; we crossed over it; there were Turks on both sides of the road; they took off our clothes and took them away. One of them took me by the hand and began to drag me; mother was pulling me back and did not let him to take me away. We could not walk, we were so tired. While walking we lost each other; some of us were killed with axes, many were kidnapped. A priest had put woman's clothes on; he had been betrayed; the gendarmes caught him, gathered thorny buckthorn-berries from the roadside,

made a crown of thorn and put it on his head; they hung bells from his ears, they tied thorns under his feet. They began to play the tambourine and ordered him to dance. But he took only a few steps and fell dead. Then a Turk came with an axe in his hand and began to slaughter at random. We reached in seven days. My uncle's wife had a three-year-old child with her; a gendarme snatched the child from her arms and threw him into the river. They gathered us on a hill and gave us each a small handful of barley. We were so hungry that we began to eat the barley like horses. I don't want to recollect all that...

And suddenly they brought a new caravan of 4 to 5 thousand people from Baberd, Sebastia. Till we reached Akn, new refugees joined our caravan, so we became about ten thousand. There was a caravan in the vineyards of Akn, composed of women and children; there was not a single man there. We remained there for a night. My mother had taken me by the hand. Uncle Vardan's daughter was with us. We crossed the river. We went to a village to ask for bread. We had no way out. Suddenly two women came and dragged and took away uncle Vardan's daughter. We came back to our relatives, crying. We remained there for a month. One morning we got up and saw that Parandzem and her suckling were dead, the mother's nipple in the baby's mouth. We dug the ground with our hands and buried them both. They used to come at night and kidnap girls and children. They did all kinds of inhuman acts.

We remained there for fifteen days. The gendarmes came and began to whip us, shouting: "Yalla (Come on – Turk.), get up, wove forward." The gendarmes were on all sides, they had surrounded us, they were on horseback; we were on foot. They led the people. Kurd women brought bread and water and wanted to sell them; the gendarmes did not let us approach them. My mother had hidden a gold coin in her coat. She gave it secretly to a woman and took some water. The gendarmes rolled people down the rocks and killed them; there was no bread. They did not let us buy any. If the child remained on the road, the mother could not pick him up. They hit her on the head and did not let her go near her dying child. Thus, we reached Arabkir. Mother took me on her back, since I was too exhausted and my feet were bleeding.

A man and a woman snatched me from my mother and took me away. Mother was crying, I heard her voice, I was also crying, but nobody paid attention. They took me to their house, put me near a cradle and told me to rock it. I slept there that night. I woke up early in the morning. I got out of the house stealthily, jumped over the fence and began to run through a narrow path. I ran till I got down a valley, where a stream was flowing. I walked through the trees; I came out and saw there were shops. I was looking at the people; I wanted to find my mother. Many thoughts crossed my mind. Suddenly I

saw a group of women; their heads were wrapped, and they looked back, they saw me, and I saw them, one of them was the wife of my mother's brother. They took me to my mother. I was that mother was lying ill. She saw me, she felt a little better. They kept us there for fifteen days. They would not let us go. Then we came out of Arabkir. We continued to walk. On the road they sold water-melon and bread, but they did not let us buy any. They brought us to the bank of the river. Every evening a street-crier came. He was a priest from Moosh; he had become a Mohammedan; he was preaching and telling us to become Mohammedans. "Hey, people, deny your Armenian faith, be Mohammedans, so that you may live."

A few boats approached the river bank. Twenty to thirty people got on each boat. When the boat approached, the priest said: "Those who have money, must hand it over, otherwise, they're going to throw you into the water." And they had already thrown a few people into the river to frighten the rest.

Autumn was coming. We had reached the rocks of the Euphrates River. They divided us into groups. The priest who had become a Mohammedan, shouted: "People from Sebastia, Malatia, Harpoot, stand in groups separate from each other." We don't know where they took those groups. They brought us beating and killing some of us to a village called Koshin, where there had been fifty Armenian families, but it was deserted then. They led us to the graveyard of that village to stay. There was a fountain there. A little farther we saw a cave; they had gathered the inhabitants of the village there, had shot them and then had burned them. I have seen their skeletons in the cave piled upon each other.

Two days passed, and they said: "Yalla (Come on – Turk.), get up and move along." Through a narrow path they brought us back to a flat place. There were vineyards all around. They made us sit on the ground. They spread a rug on the ground. Someone cried: "People, what jewels you've got, bring and put them here on the rug with your own hands." I did not know that mother had a gold necklace and ear-rings tied in a handkerchief. There were thorny buckthorn-berries behind us. We went together with mother; she dug the earth under the buckthorn-berries, buried the handkerchief there and said to me: "If we remain alive, I buried them here, remember."

And the gendarme was still crying: "Who has any jewels, let her bring with her own hand and put them on this rug."

Everybody took what they had and put it on the rug. The rug was filled with jewelry. Then they made a narrow passage, four gendarmes on each side. They passed us through one by one and examined us all over. Suddenly we saw a group of people armed with axes and knives, women with sacks full of stones came over us. The

gendarmes drew back. They came forward. They drove us to the edge of a rock on the bank of the Euphrates. They struck from behind and threw the people into the river. Countless people were slaughtered there. Suddenly I felt that my head was cut open; there was a hole under my eye. I had fallen and thirty to forty people had fallen on me, but my head had remained out. My foot was broken; it was aching. My eyes were filled with blood, but I could still see. I saw an old bearded man and a boy were looking at me; I closed my eyes immediately, pretending to be dead. They pulled out some people, who had fallen on me. All of a sudden I felt that I fell down, but not in the river; I was on the branches of a tree. After they had gone, I got up to escape. I could not walk. Somehow dragging myself, I stood up; one of my hands touched the branch of the tree. I looked down and saw an open space: it was a cave. I crept and entered it. I had remained there, neither asleep, nor awake. I had fallen into a nightmare; it seemed to me that I was near my mother. I came round, I saw two women coming. Their clothes were also covered with blood. They entered the cave. I was lying on the ground, I felt cold. That night they also remained in the cave. In the morning the sun rose. We saw several Turks coming with swords, axes and clubs in their hands. They came and took off the clothes of the women: they remained in the nude. I was on the ground in dried blood. Then again another group of Turks came. I don't know what happened, I was fallen on the ground unconscious. It seemed to me that I heard voices. I thought it was my mother, but it only seemed to me. Darkness fell. Those two nude women came again: wounded and hungry. May be they threw themselves in despair into the valley, where the river ran, who knows, they got drowned probably.

The day dawned. A faint voice reached my ears. Hardly one of my eyes opened. I looked; I saw that was my cousin, Shoushan. She saw me wounded, all covered with blood, she began to cry and disappeared. Suddenly I saw that my mother came. She made the girl urinate and gave me to drink it. I saw that all my mother's coat was covered with blood. Her forehead skin was cut open, the bone was visible. Mother tied her forehead with a piece of cloth. Shoushan's fingers were wounded, too. She was two years older than me. Mother wrapped me in her bloody coat. Suddenly we saw two Kurds coming. They said to my mother: "Come, let's take you away."

Mother said: "We are already dead."

"Sister, we have eaten your bread." In fact, they were those Kurd gypsies, who came before our house under the tree, lived there for a while, made sieves and sold them. They remained there for weeks and then went away.

That gypsy said: "Sister, you can't remember us, but we remember you. You gave us bread, butter and madsoun to eat. We haven't forgotten the good you have done to us."

They took mother by the hand, lifted me and Shoushan in their arms, and we went to another cave. On the trees, near the bank of the Euphrates, there were so many slaughtered corpses, as if handkerchiefs were spread on the branches of the trees.

Those gypsies went and brought bread and water for us. We ate and drank and recovered somehow. They had matches with them; they gave them to mother. She burned her bloody clothes with those matches and put the ash on our wounds.

So, our lives were saved thanks to those Kurd gypsies.

## 97 (97).

### TIGRAN MIRIDJAN OHANIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1902, Kamakh)

I was born in 1902, in the Gomik Village of the Kamakh Province. We, my father – Miridjan, my mother – Hnazand, and their four children – three sons and a daughter, lived in peace. The wheat grew, the floods watered our orchard. I've gone to school only for one year; I learned the letters. There were only Armenians in our village, but at a distance of three to four hundred meters there were Turkish villages. We were separated from each other by a valley. We went to the chapel on the hill for pilgrimage. There was an oleaster tree near the monastery; those who went there brought a twig with them.

We had no news about the deportation, for there were no means of communication. Once a large army of refugees came, with camels, mules and donkeys. They

spread in our village in the fields, on the roofs, on the threshing floors and settled down. We were supposed to feed them. They were about one thousand refugees, plus their animals. All were hungry, they had nothing to eat. From those refugees we knew that they had been deported. The first day we fed them. Their horses and donkeys tramped the vegetable gardens and spoiled everything. Finally they went away.

The men from 18-60 years had already been recruited; there were left only women, the old people and the children. They had taken away my mother's brother as well. Father had gone to Constantinople and from there he had passed to Bulgaria. My aunt's husband had also gone to the army. So, the village was left without the

landowners.

They deported us in the middle of 1914, motivating that we were near the Russian border. They came and announced: "Tomorrow you'll leave your houses and go." The women began to prepare provisions by night, bread, baghardj and bulghur. We were three children and mother. I was the eldest. Each of us had to carry a bag. There were no animals, for the Turks had already taken them away. Father was in Bulgaria; he stopped sending letters. We were deported. We set off the following day. It was 8 km from our village to the town. On our way we had to pass through Turkish villages, but they did not allow us to enter the villages, so we passed by. And thus, the road lasted a whole day, instead of a few hours. The end of the caravan was in the village, while the beginning was not visible. They gave us rest for the first night: we sat down at a place to eat. We even treated two Turk gendarmes. We slept at night, but the old people consulted with each other to remain awake, since there were young girls among us. Some of them kept guard at night. The next day we went along the Manoushké River. At the confluence of the river, we could see, from the stony height, the valley below. They took us to a prairie to rest. The people were coming in small groups. It was unbearable hot, there was no water; people brought water from a spring, which was flowing drop by drop. They did not allow us to drink the Euphrates water. From our twelve Tokat villages, three villages did not come. They had set fire to their houses and gone to the mountains.

The Turk gendarmes were few. We were about one thousand to one thousand five hundred people. We continued our way till the end of October. Many people fell, died on the road, some had drunk water from the swamps; they fell ill and died. They led us through the prairies, so that the peasants might not rob us. One day they attacked us; they wanted to kidnap our young daughter-in-law who had a baby in her arms. My grandma did not allow that; they struck her on the head, and she lost her speech. My mother's brother was a deserter from the Turkish army and was coming with us. He could not bear all that; he struck the Turk on the head, and the latter died. Without making any noise, we immediately buried him and continued our way. We were going by a village. Some people approached the peasants to buy food. The gendarmes did not allow them, but they saw that we had money. We reached near a rock. There was water there and a few mulberry and willow trees. No leaves and shoots remained on the trees because we were all hungry; we ate them all. Each family settled under a rock. Mother died there. My sister had already died. We considered them happy, since what we saw on the road of exile was worse than death.

The next morning they announced that we would move forward. I carved on the mother's grave-stone the letters 'P. G.' because her name was Paydsar Ghazarian.

They drove us forward. Below was a canyon. A cart could hardly pass through. They took us to that canyon. The massacre began; they slaughtered the people with what they could – with iron bars, knives, daggers and swords. They kidnapped all the children – girls and boys, without any difference. The mob of the peasants came and plunder began. They had closed the opening of the canyon, so that we might not run away. On top there were cliffs and below – the massacre went on. From our family of eleven people they kidnapped three – the two daughters of my aunt and my uncle's wife; they took off their clothes completely. My uncle, who had deserted the Turkish army and was in woman's clothes said: "I can't stand all this cruelty any more." He took off the woman's dress and remained in his underwear, he killed two Turks, then jumped below into the canyon, but then they killed him with stones. They had already kidnapped three people; we were left eight. All around us were corpses. Those who were wounded were dying and were asking for water; there was no one to give them to drink, since the water was 8 km away. Passing over the corpses we were looking around to see if we could see someone whom we knew. My aunt fell on a girl and was crying, thinking that she was her daughter. She was plucking her hair and tearing her dress. My uncle's wife said: "This is not our daughter; ours had black hair and a birth mark on her face." Only then my aunt remembered that she was not her daughter. She got up. We began to walk. They had already slaughtered nine villages. We were left about four hundred people. We reached a fountain; we wanted to take water to the wounded, but we were already too far away. I remember how they cut the finger of a live woman to take out her ring. I still hear the moaning of the dying people who beseeched water. We were stark naked and bloody. We were hungry; there was nothing to eat. I went back, found my mother's grave and began to cry: "Mother, get up, give us a space next to you, we want to come to you." There was no sound. All of a sudden I saw a Turk woman coming to take water. I began to talk to her. I asked for some milk or yoghurt. She went and brought some pilaw and yoghurt, hiding them under her yashmak. There, some Turk acquaintances appeared, who had made friends with my grandfather and my father had taught their sons carpentry. These Turks took me to their place and kept me. But later, when the Russian army reached Kamakh, I also was exiled with the Turks and reached Sebastia. The Turk, who was taking me with him, wanted to get rid of me. He fired at me and wounded my foot. I was coming out of Derdjan limping to join the Russian army. A Turk woman pitied me, took me to her house and treated my wound. Her husband was a gendarme officer.

The next day we heard a cannonade. I got separated from the Turks; I fell behind and hid behind the stones. I saw a watchman coming forward and looking backward

at times. I got out from behind the stone. It was night. The man said: "Son, let's go to our house."

We went by night to the man's house. He had two children. He kept me the whole winter. I was grazing the herd. Summer came.

It was already 1916. One day an earthquake took place and furrows were cut in the earth under our feet. I went to our Yenidjé Village but I did not see the village on the bank of the Alice River. I was naked, barefoot. A Turk soldier took me on his horse to their military barracks. Wounded people were brought there. They took me with the wounded soldiers, and we went to Sebastia. Having lost all links with my family, I remained in a Turkish orphanage for four years. No one knew that I was an Armenian.

Then I remained in an American orphanage till 1922. When Kemal came, I went from Samsun to Greece and

then from Salonica to Rumania. I inquired here and there, I found my father. Father had married for the second time with another woman.

In the years 1924-1934 a new organization was formed in Rumania – "Green Shirts." They persecuted the foreigners – the Jews. I became a member of the Shahoumian Club and also a member of the Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA).

In 1946 we came to Armenia. I got married and had three sons and two daughters; I called them by my martyred brothers' and sisters' names.

I wish that my grandchildren would not see what I saw. But unfortunately we see the same thing again. What is our sin, whom have we done evil. Simply we are demanding our right, that Artsakh be given to us. And the earthquake was another disaster. My past is not only my past, but it is my nation's past as well.

## 98 (98).

### KADJOUNI TOROS GHARAGYOZIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1905, Shapin-Garahissar, Tamzara Village)

My birthplace, Tamzara, is situated on the northeastern part of Western Armenia, on the Pontus Mountain range. Shapin-Garahissar and the road leading to Kirason, a seaport on the Black Sea, were the nearest towns to us. Tamzara was founded on several hills. It was surrounded by forests, mountains, green hills and sloping mountain sides. Water was plentiful. Below in the valley, a clear river flowed and orchards spread over its banks. Our seven mountains were famous. From there the water flowed through each district and irrigated the orchards.

Most of the inhabitants of Tamzara were Armenians. There were about 280 Armenian families and 100 Turkish families. According to tradition, the ancestors of Tamzara had come from Ani. Tamzara had several churches – St. Tagavor, the monastery of St. George, St. Astvadsadsin Church, Gyoot Khach and other places for pilgrimage.

After the 1896 Hamidian massacres, the number of Armenians decreased. My grandfather and my grandmother also had fallen victim to that barbarity. There were many orphans. Many people had left and gone to Christian countries. The Armenians of Tamzara were occupied in trades, cultivated orchards and were engaged in agriculture. Only the Armenians were occupied with all kinds of trades. In the market place the Turks had three coffee houses and two poor grocery shops. But

Avag Kyotahian's shop was splendid; you could find everything there. The flour of Shapin-Garahissar and the vicinity was ground by the Armenians in our mills. We had separate schools for boys and girls. There was discipline not only at school, but we walked home in straight lines in the street till we reached home without making any noise. Our house was separated in two parts; my uncle's family lived in one of them with two rooms on each floor. Father's workshop was on the first floor, the bedrooms and the living room were on the second and third floors. There were closets along the wall of one of the rooms; the largest was for the beds. On two or three sides of the rooms, a little higher than the floor, there were boards covered with carpets, rugs and cushions: people sat cross-legged there. In those days, there were no tables and chairs. Behind the house was the tonratoun, which was a large and light room and we spent most of the day there. It was kitchen, dining room, pantry and cellar. Besides the two tonirs there was a hearth, a wash stand, a cupboard, and a larder in the wall. In winter, it was also a place to sleep. Behind the house there was a large cowshed and a barn. Along the house there was a narrow yard, where different kinds of work were carried out. Our family consisted of nine people. We were six children. My father, Toros agha, was a well-bred, literate and respected person, with European-styled clothes. My mother, Haykanoush, was from the Ozanian

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor, in 1971, has been delivered to me, in 2001, by the Senior Researcher at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Doctor of History, Gohar Arakelian, to whom the account was given by people who had found it in the ruins of the disastrous earthquake of 1988, in Gyumri. This moving, expansive testimony is presented here with certain abridgements.

family of Shapin-Garahissar. She was a very lady-like woman, who knew everything except fatigue. My elder sister, Adriné, could cut and sew dresses, she was mother's help. Then – Tigranouhi, 13 years old. She was a tomboy, who loved to play with everybody. Then I was born: father had spoiled me, at the same time giving me a good working education and had named me Kadjouni (brave – Arm.), then came my three younger sisters. My father's youngest sister, Armanoush, lived with us. She had a strong faith, she helped at the orchard.

I remember our last celebration of Vardavar in Tamzara. What rejoicing! What merriment!

But one day drums were heard from the market place. The crier announced that Turkey had entered into the war against Russia. Everything changed. Our lively and happy life came to an end. The men were drafted to the Turkish army. Everyday those who came from the town, my father as well, brought alarming news about the barbarous treatment towards the Armenians. At night the houses of the Armenians were searched under the pretence of looking for deserters and weapons. People were beaten, threatened and slaughtered – including women and children. All those things were done with the permission of the authorities, day and night, openly, before everybody's eyes. Besides, news came from the town that, in many nearby villages, there were pre-meditated acts of violence, rape, murder and plunder with regard to the Armenians. One day we heard that the prelate of Erznka had been killed on the road by the Turks while coming to town. The arrests in the town had taken on a massive character. Distinguished Armenian scholars, national activists were arrested; armed gendarmes were brought to town and Tamzara.

One day, as usual, father went to his town cloth shop, but he did not return in the evening. And no one returned from the town. We got news that they had searched the shops of 300 Armenian merchants; that they had made them stand in line and taken them to prison. Among them had been our dear father. Our neighbors and relatives came to console us. The next morning mother took me to town to see father in prison. We had gone some distance when people coming towards us told us not to go to town, shouting "Ermenileri kesiyorlar" (They are slaughtering the Armenians – Turk.). We did not know what to do, we returned home, for my younger sisters and brothers were alone at home. The following day I had gone to town and from the corner of the market I was watching what was going on at police headquarters. I saw that they brought 8 men to the police headquarters. Then they made them stand under our cemetery wall and shot them. We heard that they had killed the 300 merchants by axes in the prison. We also heard that the Armenians of Shapin-Garahissar had ascended the fortress of the town at night and started their self-defense. We were thinking in horror that the Turks would take their revenge from us. Then the

Turkish gendarmes entered our houses and gathered the males above 15 and took them to the police station. They were about 400 who were taken to town, their arms tied with ropes. Later we learned from the Turks that they had all been killed and thrown into wells by criminals, who had been set free and sent there. The next day the crier declared that all the Armenians should enter the church. We all went to church and remained there for 23 days and nights; we were given only bread.

In the darkness of the church, each family crouched together in one place in order not to lose each other. Really, it was awful. In that tragic period, the only salvation was God. All of us were praying, big and small, each one in his place knelt down before pictures of saints.

After 23 days, early in the morning, the Turk gendarmes came and opened the door of the church and let us out; we filed out into the yard and on to the market place. The Turkish inhabitants had all come out and lined up along the market. They had come to see in what state we were.

The wife of the wealthy Turk, Mustafa efendi, came up to my mother and said, "Sister, it will be better if you leave those two young girls of yours with us; when you come back, we'll return them to you."

My mother refused categorically. We continued our way. A gendarme announced that they were taking us to live in Der-Zor. At night we slept under trees, fear in our hearts. Exhausted, weary, we fell on the ground and slept. We passed the Armenian village of Aghvanis; there we were settled in cowsheds. We had hardly settled on the dirty floor when a large band of men rushed in. They came in and began kidnapping young women and girls. Mother immediately made my two elder sisters lie down on the floor, and all of us sat on them lightly. My sisters were rescued, but they took away my uncle's daughter, pretty Manoushak, together with the others. That was something unexpected; the poor relatives of those kidnapped remained in distress; they cried and grieved.

In the morning, they took us out, and we set off. We had hardly gone a small distance from the village, when a group of brutes attacked us again, entered among us, chose young women and girls and took them away, crying and wailing. And the mothers continued their way in tears. In the middle of the day they took us out of the road into an open field and made us sit there to rest. One of the gendarmes took out a list from his pocket where the names of the well-to-do families were mentioned. They called mother first and demanded money from her. Mother explained to them that indeed we had money, but it had remained at home. We had taken nothing with us, except our clothes. They were not convinced. One of them aimed his gun at mother. She fell down on the ground out of fear. My elder sister noticed it, undid the small bundle wrapped on her waist containing some coins, and threw it before the gendarmes. She hugged mother and

brought her to us; she was extremely frightened. After that, mother lost her senses.

The days passed. We were exhausted by walking. The burning sun made us weaker and weaker; there was no water, especially our small children were unable to stand the heat. We ate whatever we found on the way: various kinds of grass, wild fruits. Other Armenian groups had passed by that road before us. On the road, everywhere, we met devoured and rotten corpses of women and children. We saw there a dead mother and her dead baby; another elder child had fallen on his mother's breast; he was still alive and was writhing and crying in a faint voice. We passed by these pitiful scenes with indifference: thinking that one day we would be in the same state. Mothers, who became unable to walk any more, came out of the group sat, on the ground and could not get up any more. And if there were no elderly people in the family to watch the younger ones, they remained with their mothers, captives of the whims of fortune. People died, succumbing to hunger and the tortures of the road. As a consequence of such losses and kidnappings the first group, consisting of about 500 people, who had been deported from Tamzara, gradually diminished. The state of those mothers, who had small children, was very hard. One of the children was tied to her back; one was in her arms, the others, held their mother by the hand and walked the whole day. Our family consisted of eight people, three of them were small, they could not walk; mother, my elder sister, and my aunt carried them in turn.

One day we walked all day long. It was hot; we were walking on the sands of a shallow river. I and many others like me had taken off their shirts and trousers to walk lightly. Suddenly a mob attacked us, plundered and snatched the clothes we had taken off. We remained in our underwear. The gendarmes, accompanying us, did nothing to prevent such deeds. They made us sit on the sand along the river. Sitting on the thin sand, I was playing with my fingers in the sand, when, all of a sudden, a hard thing touched my fingers. I pulled it out and, what a wonder, it was a heavy gold bracelet. Who knows, one of the Armenians, who had been deported before us, had left it in the sand? Mother put it in her bosom; we might need it one day.

Walking and walking, we reached the Euphrates River. We came and stopped along its banks. It seemed to us there was no more place for us to go. Full of fear, we stood closely next to each other. On the right side of the river there was a rock with a cave in it. Underneath, the stones were dyed with blood. Some blood below had gathered in puddles and had dried. The blood of the Armenians, who had gone before us, had flowed there. Now we had come and arrived at the place and our blood would also flow and get mixed with their blood. Suddenly three strange-looking people appeared in the cave, with rolled up sleeves and swords in hand. At that same time,

similar people appeared around us, they surrounded us and forced us walk towards the cave and go up to the cave. No one moved, we got closer to each other and again we felt as if we were standing before the reality of death. Everybody was crying, shouting, screaming. Our voices reached the sky. Women were praying to God for salvation. We stood before two kinds of death – either we had to throw ourselves into the river or be driven by force to the cave to be slaughtered by the hands of the executioners. Someone set an example: the mother of a family gathered her children closely about her, raised her hands, crossed herself and shouted praying, “Oh Lord, you did not help us, now we ourselves are coming to you. We are innocent.” Many followed her example.

My mother pressed us tightly to her, encouraged us and told us not to fear of water, which would be our salvation. Suddenly a loud voice was heard: “Yasak dır!” (It is forbidden! – Turk.). We stopped. All of us looked towards the cave. There was no one left there. The wish for life woke up within us. We turned back. Meanwhile some people had been swallowed by the river waves. We set out again. They spread a cloth before us on the road and demanded that we throw money there and only then go forward. Whoever had money threw something and went forward. We came out again on our road full of tortures. There was a bridge on the river with doors on both sides: we had to pay for the passage. We came and stood before the bridge. There were no more people who had money. At that crucial moment mother came to help. She took the golden bracelet out of her bosom and held it high. Everybody looked at mother's hand wondering where it was from. With that, all of us passed over the bridge. My mother said that the bracelet had belonged to Armenians, then it had passed to Armenians again, and then to the hand of the Turks. Exhausted and emaciated, we sat on the other bank of the river to rest. Many were lamenting the lost of their kin. Hunger was gnawing at us. Many people began to eat grass and shrubs along the riverside. Mother had gathered us around her, my youngest sister on her lap. She had fainted and was hardly breathing; she was looking for something to eat. All of a sudden my mother stood up giving the baby to my eldest sister and approached the gendarmes, who had sat to eat, and asked if there was a village nearby. One of them pointed to the side at some trees. They permitted me and my uncle's son to go and to beg for something to eat. We went and indeed we saw houses made of earth or dug in the ground. We were glad. We stood near the first house, which had a yard surrounded with a stone fence. The dog saw us and began to bark. An old woman came out of the door. The dog stopped barking, came forward and stood before us. With our gestures we made her understand that we were hungry, we wanted bread. The woman understood and invited us to the yard. She made us sit on the stone chairs, before which there was a stone

table. Then she went and brought for us two bowls of yogurt and two pieces of bread. What happiness! It was a miracle descending from heaven. We decided not to eat the pieces of bread and take them to our people. The woman noticed; she went and brought two big loaves of bread and told us to eat the small loaves. We came out of the house, the loaves of bread in our hands. On the way we hid the loaves of bread so that no one saw them. We brought them and put them on my mother's lap. She divided them equally and gave each one a share. There remained a small piece. We thought she would eat it, but she cut it into small bits, put one into her mouth, she wetted it, crushed it and then took it out of her mouth and put it into the mouth of the baby who was on her lap. She did this up to the last crumb. Who can believe that a hungry person could put the bread into her mouth, taste it and instead of swallowing it, take it out of her mouth? Motherly love is stronger than anything else. It can endure any temptation for her child's sake. Next morning, we set off again to continue our unending road full of tortures and torments. Our road went along the Euphrates. We were not short of water any more: we fed on the grass growing on its banks. We washed ourselves and did some washing. Our clothes had already worn out, they had become rags. Some were unable to walk. Those who were ill sat there and could not get up anymore; they remained there. It so happened that adult women, girls and young women crossed their faces and threw themselves into the river in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks. Thus, many families who had come with us perished.

Mother made great efforts to protect us from every kind of danger. She was only 36 years old; she was healthy, active and strong, she had never fallen ill, but she was already exhausted, emaciated, as were we all. We were not able to walk any more. We felt that we were going towards an unavoidable death, which had been planned by the Turks beforehand: to annihilate the Armenians completely.

The males were dealt with beforehand. They were all arrested, taken away with their arms bound; they were killed before our eyes. The women and the children were driven into the wilderness, far from the people's eyes and were subjected to unspeakable sufferings and starvation. The entire Armenian population was being exterminated.

Then we turned left, up a steep road. It was difficult to climb the height. The brown earth heated by the sun, the thorns and the dried plants made the way still more difficult. Finally, we reached the summit, from where, in front of our eyes, opened the Armenian town of Akn. We rejoiced that we might get something to eat, even by begging, for which we were not ashamed any more. We just had to stretch out our hands. However, the Armenians of Akn had already been driven out before us towards the deserts. We were placed under trees, but the fruit of

the trees had already been picked by the exiled people who had passed before us. So, nothing was left for us, except the mulberry, which had fallen on the ground and dried up; the sweet well-known mulberry of Akn gave us strength. We ate plentifully and then drank water and all of us had diarrhea.

We, the children, went to the market, with bent necks and stretched hands; we stood in front of the shops. Some people gave something, others shooed us away angrily. The streets were full of orphaned Armenian boys and girls who were roaming about. The gendarmes captured them, sent the healthy ones to a Turkish orphanage to become Turks, and the feeble, sick ones were taken to the bridge and thrown into the river. Noticing this, our parents did not let us go far from them. But the mulberry had left its incurable sequence. Every day, a few people died. Every morning special people came with long rods with hooks at the end, pulled the dead by their clothes, took them down and threw them into the river. That was repeated every day before us. We saw it and thought in fear that the same would happen with us.

In those days, the second group was brought from Tamzara. They came and settled near us. They also had gone through the same sufferings. Relatives from both sides found each other in a lamentable situation; they cried and mourned the loss of their kinsfolk and friends. My elder aunt was among them. She came and found us. She had become unrecognizable, she had seen much grief: she had lost her two brothers and two adult sons, she had remained all alone. She had come and joined my uncle's family, whose two daughters had been kidnapped by the Turks. She heard also about her brother Karapet's death, whose grave had become the Euphrates River. She listened to us in grief. She beat her breast and cried. As 20 years before, in October 1895, the Turks of the town had attacked the Armenians and killed my aunt's parents (my grandfather and grandmother), after which the two brothers were orphaned. My aunt (father's sister) had been newly married; she had two little sons. She had embraced one of them, and her husband the other, and had stood on the threshold of the house, so that the Turks saw the children and pitied them. But one of the Turks had struck her husband in the heart with a knife. He had rolled down together with the child and had died immediately. The 4-year-old child's feet were badly broken in the fall and had to be amputated. Then an order had come to stop the massacre and plunder, which had lasted for a few hours.

Thus, the well-to-do Armenians of Tamzara became poor and many children were orphaned. After that, numerous Armenian families left their birthplace and went to different countries. At the end, hardly 250 Armenian families were left in Tamzara. My aunt told her family's past and present, that one of her sons had been taken as if to the Turkish army, but they had killed

him on the road, and her other son, who was unable to walk because of his amputations, had been killed in his bed. The mother had cried on her son's corpse for two days and then she had thought of burying him, but had not been able to find any neighbor to help her. She had been obliged to dig a grave in her house all alone, had buried her son and then had gone and joined her relatives who, later, were exiled as well. My aunt was saying this and sobbing. Then she got up, went away, but soon returned with a small cloth bag in her hand, took a handful of flour from it; she mixed it with water to form a pap, dipped her finger into it and put it into the mouth of the lying children. She repeated it several times until nothing was left. The babies became a little animated. Even the eldest, Hakob, sat up, looked at us, opened and closed his mouth, he wanted again. But there was none. Seeing this, my aunt became sad again, became lost in thought, bent over and took up one of the babies, then the other, kissed them, called them by their names: "My pretty Hakobik, my Norayr, my darlings, your aunt has come, she is by your side, don't you recognize me?" Then she embraced my mother; she embraced my baby sister who had become so feeble that she was hardly breathing, pressed her on her breast, kissed them, shook her head, she whispered something hardly audible, then she put the baby down on the ground, closed the baby's eyes with her hand, got up without speaking and went away. It seemed to us that she would again bring something to eat from somewhere...

I don't remember how long we stayed in Akn. One day, the gendarmes came and made us get up and continue our bitter march. We got up with difficulty. The grown ups carried the three children, who were unable to walk. With slow steps we descended to the river side, along which the road stretched. We had hardly taken a few steps when mother stopped. We also stopped and gathered around her. She could hardly whisper, "My children, I'm not able to walk any more." We stayed back from the group without being noticed and hid ourselves in the shrubs and trees where we stayed long enough for the group to go on, then, walking back, we slowly returned to the place where we had been.

Besides us there were a few families, or members of families who had remained, as they were not able to get up since they were seriously ill and unable to continue their cruel road. All of them were either crying or moaning. Some of them were in agony. Here and everywhere the Armenians were dying. We had surrounded mother and were very anxious for her health. It was already clear that she was seriously ill. She also did not conceal it from us. After remaining silent for a while, she began talking in a faint voice and with interruptions, "My children, as you see, I'm in a very bad state. I was trying to conceal it from you, I did not want to sadden you and I brought you till here safe at the cost of all kinds of privations. Now,

I have no more strength: when I sit or lie down, I feel a bit better, but when I stand up and walk, my feet begin to wobble; I feel dizzy; I think I will fall down. I think we will rather stay here than go forward to a desert place." Then she spoke with my sisters with a heavy voice and then stopped. She did not speak for a long time, she was thoughtful about something serious and suddenly she leant towards my elder sister sitting next to her, whispered something into her ear; both of them stood up and took with them the youngest baby, my sister. They warned us to sit in our place; they were going to the bank to wash and would be back soon. And really, they soon came back; they had given my little sister to the waves of the Euphrates: that was the only way to shorten her sufferings. Thus, after our father's death, we lost the youngest member of our family. We had seen many such cases and were reconciled with them. That was why, in this case too, we remained silent and indifferent. Who had delivered her to the waves of the river remained a secret, but one thing was clear: mother had made the decision. They came and sat down their head bent, silent, devastated. Mother lay down immediately in silence and did not get up any more. We felt that she was getting physically worse and worse, she was also bad spiritually. Her eyes were closed; she did not speak any more. That day passed.

The next day, two Armenian women and a Turkish official came to us. They looked around, and then they came and stood near us and watched us carefully. Learning that the patient was our mother, one of the women sat near her, held her hand and bending over her, said in a loud voice: "Sister, do you hear? The government has opened an orphanage, here, near your place, we are gathering the children there and taking care of them, if you agree, we'll take these two children of yours with us."

Mother opened her eyes slightly, looked about and then staring at the unknown woman said in a faint voice: "Yes, that will be fine, take my small son, my Hakobik, before he gets worse. Let him get well, let him live. But my elder son, my Kadjouk, no. Though he is also small, but after all he is a boy. He is strong; let him stay here, with his sisters. What shall we do without him?"

The woman assured her that it would be all right: they were also Armenians. They would take care of them as their own children. They also had losses. After that the woman stood up, took my brother, Hakobik, by the hand, and mine too, in order to show us the place. When we were leaving mother pulled me by the hand: "Son, on the way make your brother repeat what I've taught you. Let him repeat it even in bed".

Our mother always reminded us and demanded that we should not forget our name, surname, whose children we were and to what nationality we belonged. She thought that one day we might lose each other, be

separated from one another and fall into the hands of the Turks.

The so-called orphanage was very close to us: it was a two-storeyed house that had been deserted by the Armenians. A large number of children had already gathered there. The woman took us to the kitchen and gave us food, but very little, considering the fact that we had not eaten for a long time, and it could harm us. At the end she gave me a piece of bread to take to our people.

On the following days, my mother's state became still worse. She refused to eat; her eyes were closed; she would not speak; she was only breathing slightly. My sisters sat near her bedside – sad and lost in thought. They were trying to make her speak, but she was silent and indifferent.

I woke up at dawn. An autumn cold wind was blowing slightly; the leaves of the trees were shaking, and the moonlight shone through them falling on us. I sat up. Mother was lying motionless. The moonlight lit her face for a moment. The color of her face had changed. My two sisters, with bent heads and crossed arms, were sitting beside her head.

“How is mother?” I asked.

My sisters began to cry instead of answering. My younger sister leant on me, put her head on my breast and began sobbing... Mother had passed away... We had become orphans. My sick little brother, who was moaning from the pains that tortured him, did not know that he had no mother...

In the morning, my sisters arranged mother's clothes, tidied her hair with their fingers and tied her handkerchief in an appropriate way. Then the corpse-collectors came with long rods on their shoulders. One of them struck the hook of his rod on mother's body and pulled her down toward the river bank. None of us followed our mother. We did not attend the ritual of burying her in her river-grave.

I had not seen my brother Hakob at the orphanage for two days. During that period of grief I wanted to see him. My heart was filled with sorrow, my soul weary, completely lonesome. I went to the orphanage to see my orphan brother. Before going, my sisters warned me not to tell brother about mother's death. I went, entered the orphanage. The number of children had increased there. I looked for my brother, I could not find him. I asked the working woman: “Aunty, where's my brother, I can't find him, his name is Hakob.”

“Son, so you're his brother. He died at night, in the morning they took him to throw him into the river.”

My feet weakened, I felt dizzy. I hugged that unknown woman and began to cry aloud.

“Don't cry, son, now all of us have losses among our relatives; all of us are in grief. Stop crying.”

“How can I not cry? My mother died in the morning, they threw her into the river. I came here to see my

brother, he is also dead. My youngest brother is also very ill, lying on the ground; it seems he is dying, too. How can I endure all this?”

“How do I stand it then?” said the Armenian woman. “Am I not a mother? Until I reached here my three children died of hunger. I left one on the road unburied; we threw the other two into the river. Now all the Armenians are dying; we all are crying. This is what the Turks wanted to do to the Armenians. What was our sin? Simply because we were Armenian Christians. May God punish them. Come on, son, I'll take you to your people.” She brought some bread and put it on my chest, and we set off towards my sisters.

On the way, she said that they [the Turks] had killed her husband and two brothers and driven them out of their place – just like us. When we reached our folk I told them about brother's death; my sisters and my aunt cried. That Armenian aunt sat with us and consoled us. She wanted to take me with her, but she thought it was better for me to stay with my people as a protector.

When that Armenian woman had gone, two Turkish officials came, stood in front of us and began watching my sisters. They said that if my sisters went to their houses, they would be saved from these tortures. My sisters did not want to part with us and began crying. But my aunt, the one who stayed with us, as our elder, said: “Go, girls, as you also have not fallen ill yet. At least you will be freed of these unbearable torments. You see, your brother is being tortured by his pains.”

The two efendis took my sisters to their houses; they took me with them, so that I learned their houses. Their houses were on the same street, near each other. My younger sister parted. I went with my elder sister. They took me to their house, fed me and gave some food for my aunt. I returned.

In the following days, my sick brother's health worsened. He could not eat anything, though he wanted to. When he tried to eat, his abdomen ached, and he writhed in pain. He scratched the ground with his fingers. He was suffering with intestinal pains. My aunt sat beside him, hit her head and breast with her hands as she did not know how to help him.

This way he suffered painfully day and night. Finally, a sick woman lying near us suggested that she should take him and throw him into the river to free him of those pains. My aunt was compelled to listen to the “advice.” She bent down and wanted to pick him up; she could not, she had no strength and she was also exhausted. She held my brother's head between her two hands and dragged him down to the river bank. Crying, I followed her. She put him down on the sand, knelt down, bent on the child, embraced him, kissed him on both cheeks, raised her hands, mumbled a prayer, crossed herself, remained silent for a moment and with her two hands pushed my brother slowly on the sand towards the water. When

the body touched the water, the body moved, made an attempt to free itself from the water, but could not. A wave came and carried my brother's body far from the bank. In the water only one of his hands was seen raised. Then I saw his two fingers, and my little brother was gone... With closed eyes I hugged my aunt and both of us turned our back to the river. We never returned to that place again considering it to be a place of misfortune. Walking half a circle we went to the upper part to find a place closer to where my sisters were staying.

On the way, my aunt said, "Kadjouk, let's go to the orphanage, maybe the woman there will accept you in the orphanage. I was against the idea, but when we went there the Turk guard did not let us in, saying that the whole orphanage was infected, and every day children died and were thrown into the river.

Disappointed, we left the place... We settled in a garden, which was near my sisters' place. I gathered fruits for my aunt. Once I went to see my younger sister. Hardly was she at the door when the landlady scolded my sister and said to me: "Go away from here. How many times I've told you to forget that provincial language of yours. Don't dare to come to our parts again; there's no one for you here." And she slammed the door in my face.

I went away from there thinking I had lost all my relatives. I was even deprived of seeing my sister who was alive. But it was not the same at my elder sister's; they took me in, fed me and saw me off with some food.

One day when I was walking in the gardens I met a gendarme who was accompanying three children. They took me together with them, led us to an empty house, put us all in, locked the door and went away. We remained inside, as though in a trap. We did not know what to do and what they would do to us. A boy came up to me, took me by the hand and whispered in my ear: "Let's run away."

We went down to the cellar and saw that the window was broken. Both of us came out through the window, ran away and hid ourselves in the shrubs holding our breath. Soon the gendarmes appeared again together with a group of children. They went in and took out those whom they had brought beforehand. They separated a few small children, and one of the gendarmes took them in another direction. The two gendarmes took the rest to the bridge and threw them into the river. Seeing all that from our hiding place, we shook with fear. We remained in our hiding place till evening and, being convinced that there was no more danger, the boy, who was with me, went his way, and I returned to our place. But my aunt was not there. I wandered about and I called out 'auntie.' But she was nowhere. I could not believe that now I would lose my dear aunt, who had fallen ill with smallpox, which had left scars on her face, and she had not married because of it, and we had become so close to each other. Was I going to lose her too? I fell in despair.

Lost in thoughts, I went to my elder sister's place and knocked on the door. Efendi opened the door, called me in and told me to stay at their place and called me Suleiman. My sister made a bed for me, gave me a bath, cleaned the lice, made me put on new clothes.

After four months I slept in bed again. I remained there for a few days, but I saw that my sister was very sad; she used to come, hug me and cry. I did not know what the cause was; I was too young. There were things that I could not understand at that age. My sister was already an adult, beautiful and a charming girl. Only after years I understood all that. We were trying to live: ours was a struggle for life, but the girls had also the problem of defending their honor and character. One day, the landlords were at dinner, when my sister, using the opportunity, held me by the hand and said: "Come, let's run away from here."

We opened the door without being noticed; left the house, came out into the street and, walking quickly, went away from that district. We did not know where we were going. We went again to the place where we were staying, expecting to find some Armenian families. On the way we passed by the place where I had stayed with our aunt, but she was not there. It remained a riddle to us as to what had happened to our dear aunt.

On the way, we met an Armenian woman whom we had known. They were from Kirason and, as they were craftsmen, the government was sending them back to Kirason. Kirason was a seaport on the Black Sea with an active trade towards Europe. It was close to Shapin-Garahissar and Tamzara. That woman proposed that we go to Kirason with them. But we were thinking of saving our younger sister from captivity. We went several times to her place, but we could not see her. To leave her there and to go – just the two of us – would be cruel. But we had to go, for they were setting out. We did not succeed in taking our sister with us, and it became a great sorrow for our hearts.

We were seven people to start our journey together with two mules and one donkey. We passed through those places where we had stayed until our family began to fall to ruin. Now there were no Armenians in those places. All of them had been forced to leave their homes and walk. Those who had not been able to get up and walk had been thrown into the river. At this time, the town "was clean of litter," as they used to say. And so, after losing the five members of our family, we were returning, but only the two of us. We left the place leaving behind our sister who had remained alive. We took together with us her love and longings as well as of the ones who had left this world. Their love and yearning have accompanied us throughout our lives.

On the way, they did not permit us to continue our way back home as gâvurs, but the family with whom we were going could find means to keep us with them. In

a few days, at noon, we entered Shapin-Garahissar and passed under the fortress by the Armenian district, which was burnt down; we saw deserted houses, the church and the trade arcades, where my father's shop was. Now they were empty. It was not long ago that it was lively, populated. The building called "Casino" was also there; it was used as a hotel. A few months ago, during the mass arrests, some of the Armenians were thrown there and slaughtered during the night. And at that same place we stayed for the night. In the morning, we got up and saw there was a thin layer of snow on the ground. Barefoot we began walking on the snow toward Tamzara, toward our own Tamzara. There were so many beautiful memories connected with those places. How we celebrated Vardavar! Those willows, the stones, everything was the same, but many Armenians were missing. Deep in thought and memories we reached our ancestral home. Now it had no windows and no doors. Our fellow travelers continued their way towards Kirason. Me and sister, we stopped before the wealthy Mustafa efendi's shop. He got up from his place and looked at our wretched state. He took us immediately into his house, recommended us to his wife and went back to his shop. His wife was the same khanoum who had told mother to leave her two daughters with them for safety, but mother had not agreed. She listened to our family story, our fate, was very sorry for us and began talking: "Woe, woe, what did they do with these poor people with whom we were living in peace and harmony." She was talking and wiping her tears. She was a Turkish woman, but she was a human being. She also had a human conscience. Not all the people participated in these atrocities. They fed us, gave us a bath and some

clothes. We regained our human appearance. We stayed there for a few days. Then the shop-keeper Biyouk agha came and remembered me. He took me to his house, where I saw our furniture. The next day he took me to his shop where I saw the rolls of cloth my father used to manufacture. My heart sank, but I said nothing. I was working and supporting myself. I also cleaned my master's cowshed. One day while watering the cows in the dim light a cow began licking my hand. I saw she was our cow, she had seen and remembered me, she had recognized her little master who used to water her.

At that time, my sister married a Turk, against her will. Who would ask of one's will? She could not oppose what she avoided most. The homefolk were surprised that sister had been able to protect herself and her honor under so much torture.

I worked well in the shop; my master was pleased with me. But one day I saw a gendarme who had captured an Armenian father and son and was taking them away. I got interested in them and ran out of the shop. My master got angry and swore at me. My heart was already filled with sorrow, so I left the shop with wounded pride. Then he sent for me, but I did not go back. I was thinking all the time about my poor sisters. How could they live with the Turk? But it was a fact, what could be done? I went to our house, but could not enter it. I did not even approach the tonir, where mother had buried our riches. I went down to the garden. The ripened fruits had fallen under the trees. It seemed to me that the trees and the plants were crying; I also cried. I recalled the past happy days full of animation, all our relatives; I clung to one of the trees planted by my father's hands and cried bitterly...

99 (99).

**MKRTICH KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Shapin-Garahissar)**

Our people used to weave felt in our village of Keheyoud of Shapin-Garahissar.

One day they came and chose the Armenian males and took them to built mosques. Then they came and took our mothers and sisters to the village of Zaray, Ghavakhlou. The gendarmes drove them with whips as if they were animals. The old people, who were not able to walk, they put their head between their feet, tied them and rolled them down into the Zaray Valley... They killed my father with an axe. From there they took us to Kayabash, an open plain beside a big rock...

There was a Turk gendarme, Hussein by name, and some others with him; they began to plunder what we had; they raped the girls before our eyes, they tore open the pregnant women's bellies, took out the unborn children and threw them to each other. One of them took

away a girl, another took away a boy; they took away what they could.

The Turk, who took me, made me sleep in his shop. I asked: "Where are my mother and father?"

He showed me his throat – meaning, that they had been slaughtered. In that man's house I saw our quilt, so, this was the man, who had plundered our house. I thought of running away. I ran away by night. I went to the square, where there were many Armenians. I said: "Take me with you to the exile."

My intention was to find my mother and father. People kept me in a van; they covered me with a cauldron. We crossed the Dalghos (Tauros) River. 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.

There, it so happened that a Turk took me from a place where there were seven mills, made me sit on a donkey, tied my eyes and took me to his village, to his house. I became a servant. There I met Sirarpi from our village. I said: "I'll take you away from here."

We were not afraid of death, we were afraid of the Turks. Three days and nights we hid in hay stack, in the fields. We licked each other's tears, we ate grains and we lived. There was no water, but we endured. They came and caught us and took us back to our aghas. I took the goats to graze. One day the goats had eaten the wheat; my agha put my head between his two legs and began to beat me. I bit him with my teeth as a self-defense.

In 1919 a man came to look for his brother; he saw me and said: "Do you want to go to Sebastia?"

I said: "Yes, I do."

I asked my agha: "I've worked here for four years: set me free."

He said: "I'll set you free, but you must leave your clothes here."

I went to Sirarpi and asked her to go with me. She did not agree. The man took me to an Armenian orphanage, to Miss Kushmen.

There I was given a bath and clothed; one of my toes was crooked: I could not put on my shoes; they healed my foot. Later, only in 1922 I learned the Armenian alphabet. I got married. I had my family. Then we came to Armenia.

### 100 (100).

#### HAKOB TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Shapin-Garahissar)

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. But all the Armenian boys of the Turk orphanage knew Armenian. Our teacher was a pretty Armenian girl about 20-22. A Turkish commander had proposed to marry that girl, but the girl had refused him three times, saying: "I better become a mass of

excrement than become a Turk." When the commander heard her words, he took out his sword and slaughtered the girl, our pretty teacher, and then commanded: "Since she wanted to become a mass of excrement, throw the parts of her body into the toilet of the orphanage."

At that orphanage they taught us military science, how to become a soldier and about their religion. We remained there for three years. Then the Americans came and took the orphanages under their care. They brought us to America, supported us, and we made our way in life...

### 101 (101).

#### HOVHANNES POGHOS GINOSSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1902, Arabkir)

In 1908 my father, Poghos, had left his three children to the care of our mother and had fled to Philadelphia, since the Armenians' condition was not comforting.

Arabkir was a small town in the Mamouriet-el-Aziz, Harpoot Province of Anatolia. The Turk Muslims were divided into two sections, Shia and Sunnite Muslims. The main part was called Ghezbash. The Armenians, who had survived the massacre, had come and taken refuge there.

Arabkir had a wonderful weather and was surrounded with orchards and flower-gardens. Every house had its orchard and a flat roof. There was a kind of clay called blue-stone, which had the quality of cement, and was used to protect the beams from dampness. The roof was fastened with that blue earth. Most of the Armenians

were either bakers or artisans. They wove colorful head kerchiefs of cotton thread. There was not a single Turk artisan. The Armenians were also coppersmiths, tinsmiths, potters and confectioners.

Arabkir has had four churches, but during the massacres of 1896 the Turks had destroyed them, Only the Mother Church had remained partly ruined, but it was later reconstructed.

According to our custom, we kept three mourning days in case of death. The relatives supplied the food and the neighbors took care of the coffee serving and dinner at the house of the dead person. The adults of the family wore black clothes, and had people to constantly console them.

The weddings also lasted for three days. It was very

rare that the couple knew each other or had been in love with each other, and the parents or the relatives of the young man chose a girl for him.

I remember there was an orator – Mihran Svazli by name, who was received with honors at Missak agha's house: the table was laid and people gathered. I also went. Everybody was applauding. I was young to remember much; I was only 14 then. I remember only the following, he said: "When they see a hole, they become mice, when they see water, they become fish." At that moment, two Turk gendarmes came; Mr. Mihran Svazli got down the back stairs immediately and disappeared from the lower door. The gendarmes came in and asked about him. They were invited to sit down at the table and they were told that the man in question had not been there. They saw that the person was not there, so they left. Already in 1912-1914 our schools were closed. All of a sudden World War I broke out. Turkey also declared a general mobilization on Germany's side, recruiting men from eighteen to forty-five-years old to fight against the allies. They drafted our best youth to the army to fight against the Russians. Among them was my uncle. The village fell in sadness and was mourning its black fate. Then they came and began to search for weapons and certain books. When they met a man they forced him to hand over his weapon. He would say that he had not got any weapon; then they attacked the person, beat him ruthlessly, till the man found any arm and gave it to them. In this manner, they searched the whole village four or five times and they called up the men aged from nineteen to thirty years for military service. They gathered them, too, and took them away. Among them was my aunt's son, Sargis. A few months later, the terrible exile began. They gathered all the remaining men and sixteen-seventeen year-old boys in the prison; then in a few days they took them all away and killed them. It was that time when the whole village had put on black and was mourning. Then came the horrible time when the whole village would go to exile. How horrible was it all. Next the soldiers broke into the village and shouted: "Hayde, çıkın sevkiate!" (Come on, get ready for the deportation! – Turk.). And when we heard that awful command, everybody was terrified, as though our hearts were pierced with spears. Oh! How nice that my father had gone. Finally everybody was prepared, and we were driven before the barbarous soldiers like lambs with bowed heads, who took us to the road of death – the road to Malatia. I was among them; mother, sister and brother we were taken to a place four hours beyond Malatia. They separated the children of my age in order to take us to Malatia, telling us that they had an

orphanage there. They separated me from my mother, sister and brother and took to Malatia. They drove the rest to the southern part of Malatia. Then I felt that I was really an orphan: I was very anxious about my mother, sister and brother. After that I did not get any news from them. I did not know what happened to them. I remained in Malatia. There were many children like me; we were about one thousand in number. They used to come every few days; they chose some children and took them away. They either killed them, or threw them into the river or gave them to the Kurds. In this way, from one thousand children we were left only one hundred and twenty. When they came to take children away, I immediately ran away and hid in the gardens; the soldiers came and looked for me, but could not find me. When they were gone, I came out of my hiding place. Thus, I escaped twenty times from death and at last I saw that it would not help. We were left already one hundred and twenty children. Some of us were to be slaughtered and some of us would become Turks. I went to the market place of Malatia. I hired a cart driver to take me to Harpoot by night. He agreed and I promised to give him two gold coins. The man took me by night and brought me to Harpoot in three days. I came to town. I took two gold coins from Mr. Riggs and gave it to the driver. There were some of our peasants in the town, who had been saved thanks to Mehmed bey from Erzroom. Our uncle Torikants Ohan's daughter-in-law, Torik's wife, was there; she came and took me immediately to her place and took care of me; Mr. Riggs bore my expenses. After staying in Harpoot for fourteen months, I went to Dersim with our Eva, on her account. After staying in Dersim for three days, I came to Yerznka. I remained at the orphanage of Yerznka for a month and a half and then in 1917, I came to Erzroom. Then I went to Sebastia.

Then I traveled to France; I became a member of the Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA) in Lyon. We organized a compatriotic union of Armenians from Arabkir, which was licensed by the state. The money gathered from our membership-fees and different entertainments was sent to America, to the Central Board of the Arabkir organization. In Armenia we bought a piece of land and lay the foundation of the first building in the district of New Arabkir; the head of Soviet Armenia put his signature on the commemorative silver plate.

In order to provide jobs to those, who had come from Arabkir, in 1925 a textile factory, the "Red Weaver" was established in 1925, followed by a "Chemical Cleaning Factory."

I also came to Armenia. I sold my weaving tools and built a house of my own.

**102 (102).**  
**HAYKAZ SEDRAK TORIKIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1902, Arabkir)**

In 1914 my father was called up to serve in the Turkish army. Those who were Armenians were considered outlaws. All the Armenian recruits had been taken to Erzroom, they were forced to dig pits, then they had been killed and buried in those pits. The news reached us. Lament and mourning started everywhere. We were crying in the house; the neighbors were crying. Every house had suffered one or two victims. Later they came and gathered the rest of the men. This time they took away my uncle. I saw him off till the lower market. He bought some dates, gave them to me and said: "Go home."

Later we heard that they had taken them all and thrown them into the Euphrates River. An order was proclaimed: "Those who become Turks will be saved." Our people did not agree to become Turks. The Turks came, put us out of our houses, made us lock the doors and drove us to exile. We were – mother, brother, sister and I. There were from Erzroom and other places, too. They put us all together and took us away.

Mother took a bed, some bread, some pickles of plum, so that we ate on our way. My poor mother was carrying all that on her back. She was carrying my younger brother as well. They drove us like sheep till the Euphrates River, till the place called Ferendjeler. There, they came and gathered the children. Mother gave me, my brother and my uncle's two daughters to be taken away. They took us to Malatia by cart. There were Armenians there. A man came and took all four of us to his house. They lay the table. When we were going to eat: I began to recite "The Lord's Prayer," and all of them prayed. The man sighed: "Ah, may God save us."

After two days I awoke up; they had taken away all the children and had killed them; only I was left asleep. All of a sudden I saw a gendarme who came and said: "We gathered one hundred and seventy-seven Armenian children and killed them. You are left. I'll take you to my house." We went to a village near Malatia called Husein bek. I had fallen asleep next to the gendarme. Suddenly the bek of the village hugged me and wanted to take me away. I began to cry. He brought me back to the gendarme.

He told me: "You stay here, I'll come." Then he came and took me home. They gave me a bath, cut my hair and changed my clothes. They changed my name and called me Husein.

The gendarme was married; his wife loved me like a mother. I used to take the sheep to the pasture. I knew neither Turkish, nor Kurdish. Suddenly I saw that the people took their rifles and ran away. A few Turk soldiers caught me, tied my hands and feet and threw me into the

Euphrates River. Luckily, there was a willow growing on the bank and its branches had bent down on the water. Somehow I caught the branches and remained there, till children passing by, saw me and rescued me. I came, crying, to the gendarme's house. At night, those soldiers came to the gendarme's house to eat and sleep. My master took me by the hand and led me to the soldiers and said: "Why did you throw this boy today to the Euphrates?"

They said: "We did not know he was your boy." My master sent them all away.

I remember when my mother was sending us to Malatia, she had said: "You go now, we'll come tomorrow." She lied to us, in order to save our lives. My younger brother was ill; the Turks said: "Let's take him and treat him." I don't know what happened to him afterwards. One day, when I was grazing the sheep, I came home crying; I had remembered my brother. My master said: "Why are you crying?"

I said: "I recalled my brother."

"Don't cry anymore," said he. "They have buried him alive." Later I learned that the Kurds had kidnapped my sister, and my mother had run after her plucking her hair, but they had killed my mother. Many years later my uncle's wife wrote me about it from America, for she had been with them during the exile and had remained somehow alive, and the Americans had taken her to America along with the American orphanage.

At my master's house there was a 'middle' brother. He knew that I was a Christian, gâvur. One day I was riding the donkey foal; he attacked me and wanted to kill me. His mother put her breast forward and saved me, crying and shouting in Kurdish: "A, fla e" (Have pity on him, he's a child).

That woman took me to the barn, calmed me and treated me, for my face was swollen, the 'middle' brother had beaten me so, that all my body ached. His mother put a few drops of molten incense into my ear. It began to bleed, and the pain ceased.

The peasants told me: "You better run away; all the same that boy will kill you."

There was another boy from Arabkir; we ran together. On the way we saw a man selling grapes; who said: "Where are you going? Go through the valley, there's a house on your way, knock at the door and say Husein chavoush has sent you."

We went and found the house. We were hungry. They gave us bread and food. We remained there for a week. They took me to Malatia to another village. There were a woman and her daughter-in-law, and I started to graze their sheep. A new lamb was born; I took care of it and it grew up. Somebody took it from my hands and sold

it. I ran away from that place, too. I came to Malatia, in a Turkish family. There also they did not take good care of me: they made me sleep outside. It had snowed, and I was lying under it. A man had come and seen me in that state, had taken pity on me; he took me to his barn where the animals were and put me in the hot manure to heat my body. And I really recovered.

After two days a neighbor was going to town and I was standing at the door; he said: "Come here, take care of my donkey, feed it. Do you want to come to me?"

"Yes, I will, but you're neighbors, you may quarrel for me," said I.

"No, don't bother about it, you come," he said.

They also gave me new clothes. They had many sheep and cows; they were rich. I was grazing their animals day and night. I brought them from the pasture, I milked them and again I took them to graze. I don't know how it happened, but two sheep were stolen from my flock. My master said to me: "You have sold them in order to run away." He took off my clothes; he tied me; he poured water on me and began to beat me with a whip. His wife took pity on me; she came and cut the rope and threw me out of the house. I ran away. Outside another man saw me in that state; he pitied me and took me to his house. A man with a rifle came to visit my new master; they said he was Khazandji oghli; he was an Armenian. That man asked: "Are you an Armenian?"

I was afraid; I had already forgotten my Armenian. They took me to a Turk, who was from Arabkir. I was looking for my parents and relatives. They wanted to make me a Turk. I was taking dinner to my master. They

were fifteen in the family. I was serving them.

Once I was sitting before their shop, a woman came, who was selling honey and beehives. As she saw me, she began to cry. I said: "Why are you crying?"

"Is your name Haykaz, your mother's name Makrouhi, your father's name Sedrak, sister's – Payloun, brother's – Moushegh?"

"I'm Haykaz of Torik," said I.

She had married a Turk. I said: "Don't tell anyone yet about me. Something has been stolen in the house; they may put the blame on me."

That woman went away crying. She had gone and told others about me.

In the morning we were having breakfast, when two women came; one of them was the woman of the previous day.

"This is Haykaz," said she.

"I have no relatives," said I.

My master said: "I have no right to separate you from your relatives."

The women took me to a house. We went and sat in the garden. I did not know any Armenian; I only understood a little. There was a man from Arabkir there, who was selling textile materials. I said: "If you go back to Arabkir, bring me news about who has remained alive from Sedrak agha's family."

That man said: "Is your name Haykaz? Your uncle has told me: "If you find Haykaz, bring him to Arabkir."

That man took me to Arabkir. That was already in 1925. In 1928, I came to Armenia, built a house in New Arabkir, got married and formed my family. Thank God.

### 103 (103).

#### SARGIS GRIGOR AMALIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1904, Arabkir)

Our ancestors had migrated from Ani and lived and worked in Arabkir. We were four brothers, father and mother in our family. In 1915 the Turks came and took my brother to serve in the Turkish army. My elder brother was in Constantinople; he worked with my uncle and they had exiled him from there. I was studying in the fourth form. Mr. Tigran was our teacher. He was from Tigranakert. One day he came and said: "Boys, this is our last day; all of you go home."

Suddenly, two gendarmes came and said: "Where is Mr. Tigran?"

"He's having a lesson."

"What lesson?"

"Mathematics."

"Go and call Mr. Petros as well."

We called Mr. Petros, too. The gendarme put handcuffs on their wrists. Mr. Tigran said to the manager of the school: "Gourgen, send the pupils home; lock the

school-door and take the key to the church."

In half an hour they dismissed us. The gendarme ordered: "Take your cushions home, the school of the gâvurs is closed."

After fifteen days they began to deport the Armenians. At night, they entered the houses and took away three hundred people. They took away the best boys, slaughtered them and threw them into the Euphrates River. The following day they came and took away the men aged thirty to fifty and they also killed them. Only the women and the children were left.

In ten days they came and drove us all out. They said: "Don't take a lot of things with you, take only your jewelry and food, because you're coming back in fifteen days."

We locked the door of our house and gave the key to our Turk neighbor. We set off. Other people had bought donkeys, horses and provisions. We had neither donkey,

nor anything. Then twelve gendarmes came and said: "Those who are artisans let them go and stand on the right side."

All the shops belonged to the Armenians. Everybody had already closed his shop; many of them had already been taken away and slaughtered. No men were left. It was my brother's turn. The gendarme asked: "Are you an artisan?"

"I'm a blacksmith."

"Let all your relatives stand aside." We stood aside. The others were driven to exile. We never saw them again.

The gendarme gave my brother a certificate and said: "Put this on your door and open your shop. Go to your

house."

Divrik was near us. My father had gone to Divrik with his brother, and they had taken my brother with them. They had shot my father there. My uncle was old, and he was blind. They hadn't killed him. And they had left my brother to hold him by the hand and walk together. But later they had shot my poor uncle, too. My brother had managed somehow to run away and come to Arabkir, to join us.

We remained in Arabkir still 1927. In 1958 we came to Armenia, passing through Yerznka. We came by ship from Trapizon to Batoumi and then to Yerevan. In Yerevan we founded the New Arabkir district.

### 104 (104).

### GHAZAR GYUMISHGERDANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1905, Arabkir)

We, the inhabitants of Arabkir are very hospitable, because we have lived in peace and abundance there. We had migrated from Ani, where West Sargis (with pro-West orientation) had deceived King Gagik. They said that Ani had one thousand and one churches. My grandfather used to tell us about it.

I was ten years old; the provincial authorities had summoned fifteen people, among them my aunt's husband Martik agha, the vardapet's assistant, Ter Koryun, who was our home-chaplain and others; they had returned, but we did not know about it. We were school-boys. On that special day, we saw two bayoneted standing at the school gate. We came out of school with my brother and went to our father's shop. My father was a nalband (farrier – Turk.). That was why we were called Nalbandoghli. My father had an apprentice, whose name was Khoren. Master Artin told him: "Take this children home."

On our way home, we saw that the market place was deserted. We went home and saw that the doors of the lower stables were open, our father was lying in bed, his head bandaged and his quilt open. The Kurd agha, Tatikli Msto, had beaten our father with a club in the market-place. My eighty-five year old grandma, my mother and my blind aunt were crying bitterly. The friends of that Kurd had come and stopped him. They had left our blood-stained father on the ground and had gone away. The Armenian boys of the market had taken father home. On his way home he had not been able to walk, so they had carried him on their shoulders and brought him home.

There were twenty-four thousand Armenians in Arabkir; later it was said that one thousand four hundred Armenians were left, only the craftsmen, who were farriers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths and carpenters. So the Turks kept the craftsmen.

The gendarmes had surrounded the market streets; they had taken out the Ahmeds and Mohameds from the prison; instead they had imprisoned the Armenians, among them my father. Pilipos was my father's cousin. He was very intelligent and had always the highest grades at the seminary. We were of the same age. During the holidays Pilipos used to come home and worked as a shoe-maker. The Turks had taken Pilipos somewhere and had wanted to turkify him. Another Turk officer wanted to have a pair of shoes made for himself and had forced Pilipos to make it. Pilipos said that he had no leather and he had no money to buy leather. The officer had begun to beat him for his refusal. At last Pilipos managed to go to Aleppo with foreigners. From Aleppo he went to America and became a doctor and, in 1926, he went to Armenia and settled there. Well, together with that Pilipos we took some milk in a tin pot to my father in the prison. A gendarme came and took it from us. After two days they took all the prisoners to the military barracks. We waited before the door of the barracks. Finally they allowed us to go in. We entered and looked right and left. Some kind of fire came to our faces from inside. Four or five people were tied to each other with ropes. It was a long corridor; my father and uncle were tied to each other. I took father by the hand. A gendarme came and threw us out. After two days, my father, also my father's cousin Shmavon, were taken there. I never saw my father and uncle again.

New caravans of refugees came from Erzroom, accompanied by gendarmes. They came in phaetons; they were well-dressed, with collars and ties; they were rich Armenians. The caravans of Armenians poured one after the other. When the Russians came, they drove and punished the Turks. But what was the use? At the end Erzroom also was left to the Turks.

**105 (105).**  
**PETROS KIKISHIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1906, Arabkir)**

I hardly remember my father. When I was nine years old, exiled Armenians came from Erzroom. In those days we went to see them; some of them were ill, some already dead; I've seen all that since my childhood...

When those deportees were taken away, the Turks of our town, accompanied by gendarmes, began to break into the houses of the Armenians and demanded to hand over their arms; if they did not give their arms, they would beat them. My grandfather knew when they would come to our district. On that day he took me and we went to another district, which had been already searched. In the evening, when we returned home, we saw that mother was lying in bed; we did not know that they had beaten her; they had struck her one hundred and fifty blows with a stick. All her body was covered with bruises. She could hardly get up after two months.

Then they began to gather the men: they imprisoned them, they took them away from the prison tied with ropes, and they never came back. And we, being too young, went to the street, sat and watched how they tortured them.

When they finished with the men, they ordered that the rest of the Armenians should be deported, and the Turk gendarmes went from district to district, gathered the Armenians and took them away. Where? We did not know. I and my younger brothers sat on donkeys, but my elder sister was going on foot. They took us out of the town, kept us there for two days, and then we continued our way. After going for three days, they made us sit at a place near Malatia, called Gherkhgyoz. There was a deep river. They stopped us by the river. The gendarmes began to gather the adult male who had remained. They even took away my grandfather, who was ninety-six years old, and we were watching, sitting on donkeys. They took away these men, made them stand in line one hundred meters away from our place and pushed them into the river. The Turk gendarmes stood by us and prevented anyone to come out of the row, otherwise they shot him with the rifle. We remained there about three days. During that time many people hanged themselves or got drowned. After three days, carts came from Malatia, and they told the mothers to give their children to the Turkish orphanage. Mother lied to us saying: "You also sit in the cart and go, we shall come soon." My elder sister was not convinced, but we were too young, so we got on the carts and went away. I, my two younger brothers and my aunt's little daughter took the cart. There were about fifteen to twenty carts and they took us to Malatia, to the upper part of the town. We got down there. A man approached me and said: "Give me that girl," pointing to my aunt's daughter. My two brothers stood by my side.

I did not know Turkish; he made me understand with his hands. I did not agree. The Turk slapped me on the face, and my nose began to bleed. He took the child from my back and went away. After that I never saw her again. I wiped the blood from my nose, took my brothers by the hands and went to the Turkish orphanage, which was worthless. There was no sleeping-room and nothing at all. And we, hoping that our mothers would come, lived somehow. Months passed, and we lost all hope. At that time the Armenians of Malatia had not been exiled yet. Those Armenians came secretly, took the children away over the fence of the yard. Almost all the children had been taken away. One day I was standing in the yard. I saw someone calling me by waving his hand from over the wall. I approached immediately. They asked me if I would like to go out. I said I would, but that I had two younger brothers. They said that they would take them, too. I called my brothers and convinced them. I helped them from below, and they pulled up and took us away over the wall. They took my brothers to some other place; I went to the house of the man who had pulled me up, and he said that he would take me there later to see my brothers. But, alas, I did not see my brothers anymore. They could not take me to see them, because after three days, the Armenians of that place had also been deported as the Armenians of our town. Thus, they had again taken my brothers to the orphanage, but I did not know about it, and they proposed to take me to the orphanage, but I did not agree. Had I known that they had taken my brothers to the orphanage, I would have agreed. I set off with them. You just imagine: that orphanage was on our way. When we reached it, they said that my brothers were there. I thought they were deceiving me, but they told the officer that I was a boy from the orphanage. He slapped me on the face and sent me inside. I went and opened the door of the room, where my brothers had been, but what? There was a bed in the room and the children entered and came out from under the bed, all nude. It was like an ant nest. But my brothers were not there. I asked the manager about my brothers, but he did not know about them; he said my brothers had gone to another orphanage. I rushed to the yard, jumped over the fence, ran to the house, where they had taken me, but what did I see? The Turks had taken away everything from the house; they had left nothing; the doors and the windows were all open. There was a small window; I went and sat there till evening. I was hungry. I had not eaten anything. Who would give? I began to fear and started crying. Suddenly I saw two people coming: one was an Armenian woman, the other – a Turk man. They approached me; the man had brought the Armenian

woman to speak with me in Armenian. The woman told me: "This man wants to take you and make you his son. Will you go?"

"No, I won't go," said I. "I won't go to a Turk."

The woman began to convince me again to go with the man, saying that he would give me bread and water and everything. They convinced me; they took me by the hand, and we went to the Turk man's house, who had no children. I remained there for three years. I had forgotten the Armenian language and was speaking only Turkish. One day there was a knock at the door, and I went to open it. And what did I see? My mother and my aunt were standing before me. Silently, without making any noise I closed the door, escaped from the back door and joined my mother and my aunt, so that the Turk won't take my anymore.

Now, let me tell you about my mother. During the exile, when they sent us to the orphanage, mother and the whole group were taken to the deserts of Der-Zor. In the desert the Turk gendarmes left the Armenians there and ran away. The Arabs robbed them all and killed many of them. They remained hungry and thirsty; there was even no grass on the ground for them to eat. They remained without bread and water about forty days. The Arabs kidnapped my sister, and mother did not see her anymore; she lost also my aunt, so each of them went in different directions to get some bread and water. Finally, after going for a long time they reached a village, where they found water. They wanted to drink water; their heads remained in the water, because they had been burned by the sun. The local Arabs understood what the matter was; they came immediately and took them away from the fountain, lined them up, brought one cup of water and a basket of grapes. They gave them one drop of water and a single grape, slowly and gradually, so that they would not swell up. Then they said: "Go and drink now as much as you like." Every peasant family took an Armenian woman to work in the house. Mother also began to work. One day the mistress said that there was an Armenian woman in the village and took my mother there. They went there, and my mother saw that she was my father's sister, but they both did not show that they were relatives and one day, they fled by night to Yedessia. There they worked as weavers, gathered money and decided to come to Malatia to find us. They came to the orphanage, found the woman they knew and asked her where their children were.

She said that one of them was alive, the other was ill and died. They took him to bury. The other was healthy, but was lying next to the dead, so they took him also and buried alive together with the dead...

We came to Arabkir on foot. I had forgotten my Armenian completely. They caught us and took us to prison, saying that we had escaped from the exile. Then they set us free. They had razed our house to the ground,

only the orchard was left with its trees. We went to my grandma's house and remained there, but then we left everything and moved to a new district. I had become already twelve years old. I went to school only for one year, in the first form. I left school very soon, because my mother could not pay the fee. Then I went to work in a weaving-mill without any remuneration, to feed me and gave me clothes. So I worked and learned for six years, after that I was taken to the Turkish army to serve; I was eighteen years old. We came out of Arabkir and went to Harpoot; we stayed there for six days, then we went to Diarbekir. We remained there again for eight days; we went everywhere on foot. We had been walking for about a month and a half. There were four Armenians with me; the rest were Turks – about three hundred. We, the Armenians agreed not to speak Armenian, so that the Turks would not know we were Armenians, otherwise they would give us troubles. When we were going to take the train, we spoke Turkish. They thought that we were Turks and did not close the door of the carriage before us. On the way we learned some secrets that they had to stop the train at the station of Misloumiya, which was near Aleppo. That same train left our carriage there and continued its way to Aleppo. When it would return from Aleppo, it would join our carriage and take us to another town. At that time we, the Armenian boys, held a counsel to go to the master of the dining-car and ask him to keep us. But the master of the dining-car persuaded us to go and continue our service, because if he kept us, they would catch us and take us back to serve for two years. He said: "You serve for two years and then you go home." Our boys were convinced that he was right. We went back to our carriage. I did not feel at ease. We had a water pot; I took it and jumped out. I went along the railway; I saw two children playing in a yard, and a man was talking to them in Armenian. He took the children inside. I thought that Armenians were living there. I went in; I saw that the house was also a shop. I greeted in Armenian, they also greeted me and asked: "Where are you from?"

I said: "I'm from Arabkir."

"If we bring someone from Arabkir, will you recognize him?"

"Bring him here, if I've seen him, I'll recognize him."

They brought a boy, whom I had seen at school. I recognized him. He began to ask me questions.

I said: "It's late, they're taking us to the Turkish army, now think only about my flight."

He said: "Do you know French?"

I said: "How can I know French, when I hardly speak Armenian?"

"What shall we do then? Armenian workers have come from Aleppo to construct the road, if you get out of the village and get mixed with them, you'll be saved."

I said: "Show me the way to go."

He showed me the way. I threw the water pot away and went. After I had gone for some distance, I heard someone calling me; I looked back and saw the boy was calling me and said: "You're going the wrong way."

I said: "You walk ahead at a distance of one hundred meters; I'll follow you, so that no one will suspect."

The boy walked in front, and I followed him. At last we entered the village. I ran, reached him and said: "I'm free now, but my friends are still in the carriage."

When we reached, he told the workers that I was from Arabkir; I was an Armenian. I had run away from the Turkish army. They said: "Let him sit in the tent, till the draymen come." I sat there, but I was thinking of my friends; their situation would be bad, if they also did not run away. I was in thoughts, when the workers called me out: "Come, people are coming from afar, who are they?"

I said: "They may be my friends."

And really, they were my friends. My acquaintance had gone and stood near the carriage. When they had seen that I was late, they thought that I had fled. They had come down the carriage and seen the man. He had called them and asked them where they were from. They had said that they were from Arabkir. Soon he had brought them also by the same way. So he helped them to run away and brought them to me. We thanked him a lot.

We had already run away and were rejoicing in the tent. The workers had told us that soon the carts would come and carry us away. I knew that there was a cart driver from Arabkir. I said to my friends: "If he is my acquaintance, he will take us. If he is not the man, all the same, he will take us for he is from Arabkir." We were talking like this and the railway engine was giving signals for the passengers to gather. Finally, when the train had left, the workers called us and asked if we knew French. We said: "No, why?"

They told us that they were calling from the hospital – not far from there – to give bread. How did they know in the hospital that we had run away and we were hungry? In fact, the Turkish authorities had announced everywhere that four Turk soldiers had run away and asked them to seize and hand them over. The workers sent someone from among them who went, brought four little loaves of bread and gave them to us. We ate immediately, for we were very hungry. When we had eaten the bread, they sent word saying that the carts were coming. We came out and stood on the road. The carts came, and what did I see? My acquaintance was sitting in the first cart. When he saw me, he jumped down the cart and hugged me. I told him that I had deserted from the army. He gave me a bag of bread and told us to eat it. We did not eat it, because we have already eaten bread. We wrapped it and put aside. Five minutes had not passed, when they called me again; I went out and saw the same

man. He gave me several bags like that, and I took them. Then he said to me: "Get on the cart."

That was another cart, and he said to the driver: "If suddenly they catch him, you save him at any price and show him my house to go."

I asked him: "Why should I go alone? What about my friends?"

He said: "You go; they are looking for you. If they catch you, they'll take you back. I'll bring your friend myself."

I got on the cart and moved. When we reached Aleppo, the gate opened and a gendarme came out and asked where we were coming from. The cart-man said that they had taken stones for the construction of the road and were coming back. He let us pass. We entered the city of Aleppo. The cart-man showed me the house of my acquaintance. As they saw me, they recognized me; they began their preparations to receive my friends. We walked for a few hours, two hours, no one came; darkness had fallen. I thought: "Let me go down." At that moment my friends arrived.

At the house of our acquaintance we ate and drank, then we asked them to take us for a walk in the town. When we came out, it was night, but as the street-lamps were on, it was like day-time. In the street we met two people, who had also run away from Arabkir. They, too, like us, had come out for the first time. We asked our acquaintance to take us to the telegraph-office. We sent telegrams to Arabkir, each of us separately, that we were safe and sound in Aleppo. Then we went to my relative's. At that house I remained for eight days. They sewed underwear garments for me, because what I had, I had left in the wagon. After eight days I went to Beirut, to go to France, but I could not go to France, for I did not have the French permit. In France I had cousins, the children of my father's sister. I wrote to them, asking them to send me a permit, but it was put off by different reasons, so I remained in Beirut for a year and a half. I worked in Beirut. I had enough money. I wanted to go to France and only then to take my family there. And one day I got a letter from Turkey, saying that they were going to Armenia: "Don't write to us till you get our letter. We're already on our way," they said. I was at a loss. What to do? To write, but – whom? My plans were ruined, I fell into thoughts: why should I go to France and from there to Armenia. In order not to pay double fare, I decided to go to Armenia from Beirut and wrote to my aunt about it. She answered: "Do as you have decided."

I found a man, who would get a passport for me, so that I might come to Armenia via Constantinople. The Turks did not give me a visa, for I had run away from Turkey. I fell in thoughts again. We decided that I might come to Armenia via Persia, but then my money would not be enough. We counted and saw that the money I had, would take me until the town of Kirmanshah in Persia; I

could not go farther.

I decided that I would remain in that town, work, save some money and then go to Tabriz. My passport was ready; I paid the car fare till Kirmanshah. We started. We reached the town of Lam by car. We remained there for eight days then we went through the desert to Baghdad. There, also we stayed for eight days, then we set off for Kirmanshah, where I would stay. I must not forget to say that when we left Beirut, there was a friend of mine from Harpoot with his family. He had paid for Tabriz, but I – till Kirmanshah. When we arrived in Kirmanshah, all of us went to a hotel. My friend was arranging his luggage in the hotel, while I was standing on the balcony and thinking: what should I do, my friend would go and I would stay here. I was in those thoughts when somebody tapped me on the shoulders from behind. I turned back to see who he was. I saw an Armenian. He said: “Where are you going?”

I said: “I am not going anywhere, I’ll remain here.”

That man said to me: “Will you go to Armenia?”

I said: “I’ll go to Armenia, but not now, I have no money. I’ll stay here, earn money and then I’ll go.”

That man told me: “So, you’re thinking about it. I noticed from below: you were in deep thoughts, that’s why I came to ask you how much money you have.”

“I have only 6 toumans.”

That man said to me: “Don’t you know that the Turks

here won’t give any job to the Armenians: they consider the Armenians dirty, what will you do here? There are no Armenians here, just a few are left.”

At that moment it seemed to me that everything had gone to pot: “So, I’m lost. I’ve got no money to go either forward or back,” I thought.

That man told me: “Come. I’ll give you a piece of advice: do as I tell you. There’s an Armenian here from Turkey, he has thirty cars; every day they go from Kirmanshah to Ghazvin, and came back. You go and ask him to send you to Ghazvin by one of his cars, and from there with your 6 toumans you can go to Tabriz. There, the Armenians will help you.”

I saw that his advice was not bad, but how could ask that man?

That man said: “Come, let me take you to him.”

We went down, and he showed me his place: “That’s the gate. Opposite the gate, on the other side of the road there’s a blacksmith’s workshop, the workers are Armenians. I’ll tell them to help you.”

In the morning I got up, went and asked that man to help me. He himself took me to Ghazvin in his own car and from there to Tabriz. From Tabriz I came to Armenia. I found my relatives. I got married, formed my family and had children.

Now, my daughter, Greta, is a Doctor of Biological Sciences.

### 106 (106).

#### SRBOUHI KIKISHIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Arabkir)

When they took us to Der-Zor, I was small, but I remember: there was no bread to eat, no water – to drink; it was only stones and desert. We walked and walked, at last we reached a village. The Arabs brought some water; they put water into our mouth drop by drop and just one grape. Then they divided us among the Arabs. They gave my mother to an invalid man. Mother was wounded in the arm and pus flowed out like water, but she worked day and night for that man, for she was a servant. One day that man’s neighbor came and said: “Your servant is wounded in the arm.” She took pity on her and bandaged her arm with tar; in a few days the wound healed. Then that neighbor said to my mother: “There’s an Armenian

woman near us, if you want I’ll introduce you to her.”

Mother saw that she was my father’s sister. They took me by night, and we fled to Yedessia. There, mother and aunt worked in a factory. Then we went to Malatia, to the Armenian district. We met a woman, who was from Arabkir, from our district; she said: “Sister, your son is here; he has a scar on his face.”

“And the others?” asked my mother.

“The others have died,” she said.

Mother took that boy on her back and we came, but he also fell ill and died on the way. We were six children, only I remained alive.

Mother used always to sing and weep...

### 107 (107).

#### ARPEN MIKAYEL AGHADJANIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Arabkir)

I was a child then. My mother was ill. Mother had two brothers. My sister was married. The Turks came and put mother out of her bed. They exiled all the people

of our district; they took mother’s two brothers away. Mother remained on the ground lying. She was ill; she could not move. And I was near my mother. A kind

woman came, took mother in her arms and carried her; I followed them.

We remained among the Turks for two years; they robbed all our property. Oh, how could we bear all that...!

### 108 (108).

#### MOUSHEGH SARGIS DEMIRJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Arabkir)

I was born in Arabkir in 1910. My father's name was Sargis, mother's was Satenik, born: Terzian. They had three children – Varsenik, Moushegh, Armenouhi. Father had two brothers; the elder was Karapet, his wife was Elmas; they had four children – Khachatour, Zabel, Avetis, Levon. All four of them were married and had children. The second brother was Martiros; his wife was Maritsa. They had four children – Grigor, Armenak, Maran, Andranik. All of them were married and had children.

Father and his brothers had received from their father houses and a blacksmith's workshop, where they worked together.

There was a settlement ten km from Arabkir called Andi, and there lived a Turk agha, who knew them as good craftsmen; he helped our three families not to be exiled in order to bring their service to the local people. I went to school and for a while I served in the church as a choir boy.

So, we remained in Arabkir until 1922. During the

war many people died and others who survived, survived. By the way, I must say that our standard of living had become economically better, but the enmity toward the Armenians continued more brutally. In 1922, we decided to emigrate. We walked for 5-6 days and reached Aleppo. There father opened a grocery shop and, thus, met our needs. After two years we went to Beirut, from where, by a family passport we went to Marseille by ship. There, an organization sent us to the town of Grand Lamps, where father found a job at a textile factory and I went to school. After six years our family moved to Lyon. Father found a job in the Berlier enterprise. My sisters got married. And I remained there with my parents till their death.

My mother's brother, Karapet Terzian, his wife Satenik, his three children – Grigor, Martiros, Araxy, as well as my mother's sister, Siranoush, her husband, Martiros, their children Karapet, Mariam, Grigor were exiled in 1915 and all of them fell victim to the Armenian Genocide.

### 109 (109).

#### ELMAS AHARON KAVOUKJIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1883, Harpoot)

I, the youngest of my family's six children, was born in 1883, in Harpoot, to Aharon and Anna (Goozalian) Kavoukjian. I graduated from Yeprat College (Euphrates College) in Harpoot, in 1904, and taught in a village-school outside the city.

Because my grandfather, Gevorg Kavoukjian, wanted to be close to all three of his sons, Aharon, Melkon and Grigor, they built a large house with separate sections for each son's family, in Harpoot. As the house was very sturdy, it withstood the ravages of the 1915 Genocide and later it was used to house orphans. We lived in the Veri Tagh (Upper District – Arm.), Harpoot Province. Every year, during the four winter months, we lived in the city and then moved to our country home in Harpoot, for the remaining part of the year. We owned a large orchard, with fruit and nut trees, and exported almonds through a broker.

I can trace the Kavoukjian family back to the early 1800's: my great grandfather, Asatour, my grandfather,

Kevork, and my father, Aharon. Many of my relatives were lost during the 1915 Genocide, including two of my sisters: Gulzar (Mr. & Mrs. Minas Demurjian) and Mariam (Mr. & Mrs. Mkrtych Pogharian) and their families.

My two brothers, Asatour and Baghdasar, were already in America, and they arranged for me to bring my parents to America. Because of my knowledge of English, I was able to guide my elderly parents safely, thus escaping certain death in the Genocide. They arrived in America, in January, 1908.

In 1911, I married John (Hovhannes) Petros Tayian (1874-1934), born in Malatia, to Petros and Margaret Tayian. After his schooling in Malatia, he finished his Freshman Year (1st Year) at Yeprat College, in Harpoot, before departing for America, in 1891. He became a United States citizen in 1897. His father Petros Tayian was killed in Malatia by the Turks, in the massacre of 1895, when he was eighty years old.

\* This testimony was inscribed and handed, in 1997, to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, by the daughter of the eyewitness survivor, Florence Tayian.

When I married in 1911, my husband was a widower with two small daughters, Elizabeth and Alice, whom I raised and gave birth to a daughter, Florence, and a son, Vahan; all deceased, except Florence.

Sometime, during the 1930s, my cousin, Markar Kavoukjian, met in New York City with Hayk Kavoukjian, the late philanthropist and benefactor of St.

Vardan Cathedral in New York, and found out that they were distantly related.

According to an oral tradition it was said that seven Armenian families were the first settlers in Harpoot, and the Kavoukjian were one of those families. I do not know from where they journeyed and during which century.

## 110 (110).

### HAYKAZ AJEMIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1892, Harpoot)

During the massacres of 1915 the Turkish government gathered all the men of our village, took them away and slaughtered them; one hundred and twenty-five people had their arms tied, were taken to the Euphrates River and thrown into the water and killed. After two days we were deported. We were driven to Aleppo and from there to Der-Zor. They killed everybody, my aunts, my uncles, all of them. Our village, Ashvan (Arshamavan) was on the bank of the Euphrates. I swam across the river to the other bank, fled to Dersim, where only Kurds lived. I remained there. I stayed in Dersim for a year.

Dersim was rebellious. The Turks could not enter Dersim. During World War I the Dersim men were recruited, but they did not fight: they received their weapons and went to their houses. So, they had always been armed. The name Dersim came from the name of an Armenian priest, Ter-Simon. He was secretly preaching Christianity among those, who had changed their religion under repression, put the sign of the cross on the dough of bread and during the days of St. Sargis they celebrated the St. Sargis feast as Orian, Kheder St. Sargis. In the village of Zeyva the Kurds kept the Armenian Church very well, for they knew that it was built by their ancestors. They confessed that their forefathers had been Armenians, but they were forced to change their religion and adopt the Mohammedan religion. The manager of that St. Sargis Church was a woman. One day she had come to collect the tax of the church. She said: "Come to my place, I'll keep you like a rose."

I went there, but remained only for a few days and ran away, because every day a gendarme came and asked: "Is there an Armenian refugee here?"

The woman said: "There are many Armenian refugees in the forests; go and catch them."

That woman helped me to run away through the forests, I crossed with Kurd chieftains the border, reached Yernka, which had already been occupied by the Russian Tsarist army, so I was saved. Then I went to Erzroom and there I became General Andranik's soldier. I have fought in Andranik's army since 1917. Andranik came to Erzroom; we met him. When he came to Erzroom, he fought against the Turks and withdrew in the direction of

Sarighamish-Kars-Alexandropol, securing the emigration of the Armenians to Eastern Armenia.

Andranik's army was composed of Armenians only; he had four thousand five hundred men, cannons and rifles. Sitting on his horse he used to say: "Don't keep silence, sing!" And we sang:

*"The hero roared, the sultan shuddered,  
From Wilhelm's eyes tears sparkled,  
Your sword glittered on the enemies' breast,  
Lover of fighting, hero Andranik!"*

The Dashnak government had already come to power.

Andranik said: "The Turkish government is a dead government. His army is small and tired; all in all they have two thousand soldiers. I have four thousand; you give me also two thousand, and let's fight against the Turks and expel them from our country."

The Dashnaks did not listen to Andranik. He called them 'impostors' and went away. They already did not like Andranik. He wanted cartridges; they sent him bread, Andranik wanted bread, they sent him cartridges. They wanted to get rid of Andranik.

The Turks moved forward; we went to today's Ghoukassian; via Gharaghach we went down to Djalaloghli (now: Stepanavan). There was the Moscow orphanage: about three thousand orphans. General Andranik ordered that they should be transferred to Tiflis. We went to the village of Tegh, then to Dilidjan.

General Andranik said: "We cannot cooperate with the Dashnaks; we should go away."

We decided to go to Persia; we passed over the Djulfa bridge and went to Khoy. There were emigrants with us; about thirty thousand emigrants followed our army. The Turks began to cannonade the emigrants; the people retreated. We came to Djulfa, went down to Ghapan and Goris. We remained there for a year. When we were there the Ottoman Turks had occupied Alexandropol and had gone to Baku through Dilidjan. The Turks sent an Armenian vardapet with two Turks to Andranik when he was in Goris, with a written order saying: "The main road of Goris is ours, you've gone from the Mountainous

Gharabagh to Djulfa by Goris; you're sitting on our way and you're disturbing us. Surrender! We won't kill you; or go away."

General Andranik replied: "Tomorrow morning I'll attack you. I won't give you any road. You have nothing to do in these parts."

After eight or ten days the English came. A British captain joined Andranik's army. Our army came to Edjmiadsin from Goris. Coming over the northern part of Yerevan we crossed the Wooden bridge without entering Yerevan and went to Edjmiadsin, handed over our weapons to the Catholicos. In Edjmiadsin Andranik gave us 'Leaving certificates' showing the duration of time we had served in his army.

Then Andranik went away. While coming to Yerevan

the Dashnak government gathered Andranik's soldiers, killed two of them and wounded many.

The British army had occupied Yerevan. Andranik said: "Give me that puppy Dro; I'm going to cut his ears."

There was a professor Tenekedjian; he asked me: "What has happened?"

"They wanted to kill Andranik," I said.

"O, you, sons of a bitch; such a man is born every one thousand year..."

When Andranik had left, the Dashnaks did not give us any jobs.

They made us clean the streets, they killed two of us. They did not like us, because we had been Andranik's soldiers. Again we ran away to Aparan, until the Bolshevik army came and occupied Alexandrapol.

### 111 (111).

#### **JOHAR (HELEN) ASLANIAN-MAMIGONIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1895, Harpoot, Kessirik Village)**

I was born in 1895, in Harpoot, Kessirik, at a time when the Turks were massacring the Armenians. In desperation, all the Armenians were either in hiding or fleeing to escape the Turk's knife.

When I was old enough to understand, I recall hearing the story about what happened to my family at that time. Forced to flee because of the fast-approaching threat of Turkish soldiers, my mother reluctantly hid me in my cradle, placed some gold pieces beside me and fled. She felt that I had a better chance of staying alive, as it was her hope that a compassionate person would find me and save my life. Some time later my elder sister came to the house and found me crying in the cradle. In a sense of panic she picked me up, wrapped me in a blanket and took me with her, not knowing where to go in all the confusion. Somehow she found my mother and brothers, but not my father.

At that time, my father was known as the "Hoja Bashee" (like a mayor – Turk.) of Kessirik. He was made "mayor," even though he was quite young, because he could read and write Turkish fluently. But now he was among the young Armenian men being hunted and killed by the Turks. The story is that my father had disguised himself in old clothes and was hiding in the home of one of the village Turks. His life was spared, and to show his gratitude, from that day until I was 16 years old, he saw to it that this Turkish family never went hungry.

I had two brothers: Hagop and Khachatour Aslanian;

two sisters: Zmrout and Zartik. My parents were Gohar and Sargis Aslanian. My mother's maiden name was Gohar Marjanian. My grandparents were Miriam and Hakob Aslanian. My brother Khachatour was my niece Varder's father. He had lived in America for 11 years and then returned to Western Armenia and was killed by the Turks.

I was married (by "arrangement") at the age of 16; even though it was not my wish to be married. My carefree and beautiful childhood days were over. Soon, after I was married, the 1915 massacre began.

One morning we awoke to hear the following announcement, being made in Turkish by the town crier: "Armenians! Prepare yourselves today, because on Thursday the first group of Armenians will be taken. Do not cry or become upset, sisters and brothers, as we are sending you to 'such-and-such' a place where you will be safe." But of course this was not true, which we were to learn later. And so this was the beginning of what would later be known as the Armenian Genocide.

It was my older brother Khachatour's ill fate that he returned from America at the very time when the Turks were gathering as many of the Armenian males as they could find, arresting them, putting chains on their hands and feet and throwing them into prisons.

I saw my brother in prison, and this mental picture of him has never left my mind. As I stood there, crying at the sight of his hands and feet in chains, he insisted that

\* These are some recollections, written by the eyewitness survivor, Johar (Helen) Aslanian-Mamigonian, in 1978, about her life during the 1915 massacre (translated from Armenian by her daughter, Pauline Hovsepian). This testimony has been handed to me, in 2005, by the grandson of the survivor, Marc Aram Mamigonian, a well-known American-Armenian intellectual, Director of Academic Affairs of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), Boston (USA).

I go home and get some gold pieces which he thought might be useful as a bribe to escape from prison. My sister and sister-in-law went to the prison with the gold pieces, but unfortunately it was too late. Sad to say, I never saw my brother or my father again. Eventually, they were both shot and killed – along with hundreds of other young Armenian men and boys – and were buried in heaps on top of each other in pits, which they were forced to dig before their deaths.

This, also, I saw with my own two eyes. My first cousin, Sedrak, a very handsome and artistically talented young man, was arrested along with many others and placed in chains. I saw my mother running after him in a long line of prisoners and calling out to him, “Sedrak, Sedrak, what can we do to help you? Shall we bring you money? Can I give you money?” Sedrak nodded his head back and forth, helplessly, and said, “What money, what anything? The time for that is gone-gone. What good will money do for us, when there is no chance to save our lives?”

There was weeping and confusion everywhere. The time soon came for me to part from my mother – never to see her again. I later learned that my mother was taken with many of the more mature women to be used for hand-beating the thousand of locusts, which were attacking the Turkish wheat fields and threatening their food supply.

In tears, I assured my mother that we were being taken first to prepare a safe place for the rest of them. An announcement had been made by the Catholic authorities that we were supposedly being granted a special area. We learned soon enough that this was not true; on the contrary, after a day’s journey, many were taken to remote areas and killed. Some were buried alive. Very few found ways to escape.

We left Harpoot on a Thursday, went to Merdin and from there to Tigranakert, to Ras-ul-Ayn – walking the entire way – most of the time on our bare feet. Whenever I found a piece of cloth or rag I would wrap it around my swollen and bleeding feet. It was only with God’s help that we were able to walk this great distance. How else could we have come this far without food and water? Water was within our grasp at times, but we were not allowed to have any. One can live without food, but thirst is unbearable – you simply cannot live without water.

After three days of walking, no more strength was left in me to go on. I finally dropped along the side of the dirty road. There was a large puddle of water a few yards away, but I had become so weak that I fainted and could have been left there to die. Except that, with God’s help, a woman saved my life by soaking her garments in the water and wringing drops of water on my face and into my mouth. She dragged my limp body over to the

puddle, so I could drink from it. The water was muddy and dirty, and we were repelled at the sight of the bugs crawling around in it; but it was water, and it saved our lives.

Days went by, and we were still being forced to march. We lost track of time. We arrived in Ras-ul-Ayn where there was a large body of water. We all ran into the water desperately – drinking it, soaking our clothes in it, washing our hair with sand and water, and bathing ourselves.

While we were there, a Turkish officer came and asked us where we were from. We said: Harpoot-Kessirik. He said, “Which one of you is from Kessirik?” I said that I was. He asked my name, and I told him that I was the daughter of Sargis and Gohar Aslanian. He said, “You are the daughter of Sargis Aslanian?” I answered, “Yes.” A kind look came over his face as he said, “I have visited your home many times to see your father about official town business, and your father has been very hospitable to me on many occasions. In fact, I recall once when your father gave me some figs and dates to take home to my child. There was a little girl who came and took them out of my pocket and ate some of them. Yes, you must be that little girl.” He smiled as he recalled the incident. I confessed that I did not remember that, but said, “Well, efendi, since you say that you have eaten at our table many times, then please save me and take me to Halab (Aleppo) or put me on a train, so that I may go there.” It was known that Halab had trains going in and out of it. He told me to stay where I was and that he would return with some food. He came back with food and told me that if he were assigned to remain there, he would save me out of respect for my father. However, he was sent away from that area and did not return. I gave up hope of ever being rescued.

Shortly after that, another Turkish army officer came to inform us that we were free – as of that moment. We listened in disbelief, for we expected to be put to death or die along the way, and had resigned ourselves that death would come “today or tomorrow.” We knew we had reached this point alive with God’s help, but we still had our doubts about what was to come. We were kept in this area for a week. With each passing day our suspicions haunted us that perhaps they were planning to drown us all in the water nearby. When the week was up, the army officer returned and asked us to prepare to leave, and we were marched to the Der-Zor wilderness (the Syrian Desert). We suddenly realized that it was nearly eight months since we had left our homeland. Once again we came upon a body of water and again our fears and suspicions were aroused. This was it – this was our “last stop.” We would be put to death by drowning. Some of us were crying (contemplating death), some were laughing

hysterically, some were even singing. All of us huddled together as if to say our last good-byes. As I looked around me I realized that everyone had some members of the family – a relative, a mother, a sister or a cousin – except me. I was completely alone – with no relatives – not even a friend or neighbor from our village. As I sat there crying and contemplating my fate, I noticed an elderly woman who had two of her daughters with her. I called her Mayrik (Mother – Arm.) and pleaded with her to look upon me as another daughter. I begged her, “Please, let me be your daughter; place your protective hand on me.” And she answered, “Why not: we are hungry, you are hungry; we are all going together.” I asked her to guide me and help me, so that I would not do anything wrong.

When we reached the desert, they confined us to an area where there were snakes and other forms of wild life, but what could we do? That was where they wanted us to be. That night we went to sleep hungry, and in the morning the mutasarrif came and doled out a military portion of bread to each one. Apparently this mutasarrif was a compassionate man, but it was hard for us to believe there could be such a person. Some of the people were kissing his boots and his clothes, as if he were a god, for the kindness he showed. For the following two weeks it was our good fortune to receive our daily piece of bread. Most of us would eat half and dry the other half for keeping in anticipation of a time when we would not be so lucky, for who was to know what was yet in store for us?

At the end of those two weeks we were placed in charge of one vile Turkish official known as Zeki pasha who was incensed that the Armenians should be so well treated. After inquiring and learning that it was the mutasarrif who was responsible for this, he quickly informed the officials at Polis (Constantinople) that “this mutasarrif must be an Armenian, if he is offering food to the Armenians.” Because of this, the mutasarrif immediately transferred and the evil Zeki pasha took charge. We soon realized that he was proceeding with a deliberate plan to gradually eliminate those of us who had reached this point alive.

A few of us were taken to a nearby orphanage to help with the cooking, cleaning and laundry, etc. We also sought refuge there – begging and pleading and promising that we would do anything if only they would allow us to come and stay there. And they did – but not for long, because that foul Zeki pasha decided to “clean the inhabitants of the orphanage.” He took hordes of people to the water site, butchered them and threw them into the river. The Euphrates River ran red with the blood of our people. And as this evil man watched with his cold and unfeeling eyes, he boastfully asked, “Where are your

brothers now? Why don’t they come and save you?” One of my brothers had already been killed by him.

The few who remained were supposed to be the final group of victims the following morning. A civil officer who was connected with the orphanage came to warn us to flee during the night, or we would be killed the next day. He told us that his wife was Armenian and that he had saved many of her people. But he feared for his life, if it should be known that he was helping Armenians to escape. However, with his help, another woman and I found a place to hide in the household of this woman’s daughter who also had married a Turkish soldier in order to save her life. We were hidden in the cellar, so that the Turkish sister-in-law would not find out about us and inform the authorities. For several weeks we lived in the cellar during the day and slept upstairs at night because her Turkish husband was away in the army. At the end of this time the infamous Zeki Pasha was transferred from that area, and the Armenian who had married Turks in order to save their own lives, as well as others like myself, who had been hidden away, were free to come out in the open.

With the help of the woman’s daughter’s husband I came to know an Armenian family who had lived in this area for several generations and were well-known and respected and quite wealthy. The mother of the household reminded me so much of my mother that I embraced her and wept as I longed and yearned for my own sweet mother. She asked me to come and stay with them to help with the chores and told me not to worry – that I would be well cared for. And truly, she did care for me in the same way my mother would have done.

I saw no other relative or family member again – until 1920. If my memory is correct, I believe it was 1918 when the British came to Der-Zor and the Turks and Germans fled. The British asked all Armenians to come forward, gathered us all together and took us to Baghdad. We were given the same food and care that was given to the British military – even tea. When we arrived in Baghdad, the British asked us, which church’s jurisdiction we wished to be placed under – British or Armenian. And we said, “Armenian.” So we were placed in the custody of the Armenian Church and the Armenian Orphanage there. I lived in the orphanage for several months and while there I sewed clothing – garments and aprons – for the children in the orphanage. Compared with what we had been through, life at the orphanage was quite good.

While I was there, a friend from our group in Der-Zor came to me and invited me to go live with her family. She had a married brother and sister there. I was very touched that someone who was not even a blood relative could care enough for me to want me to be a part of her

family. However, the orphanage director said that I was not allowed to leave the premises without permission; that they could take me only on Sundays. They did this and made me feel like I was part of their family.

During one of my Sunday visits to this family, I was approached by one of their friends who requested my hand in marriage, through them, and if acceptable to me. Several weeks before that time he had received word that his wife had been killed by the Turks and his two children were being taken care of by his sister in their village. He requested permission of the local archbishop and asked for his blessing. When I learned of this, I said that I was not interested in getting married. I felt that if I stayed at the orphanage, I would eventually find my brother and go back to Harpoot. They explained to me that since the man was now a widower and wished to marry me, it would be the best thing for me to do, as he was known to be a very kind man with a good education and well established business. And so we were married. The orphanage director spoke highly of me and was so respectful of my feelings.

After we were married all the Armenian people were granted permission to return to their original homes, if

they wished to do so. During our step-over in Aleppo, we learned through acquaintances of my husband that the information he had received about his wife was incorrect; instead of his wife being dead, it was his sister. When I heard this, I fainted from the shock. When I was revived, I was assured that everything would be all right, that my husband was financially capable of taking care of me, and that his wife was a very fine woman who would understand the circumstances that led to the marriage. A deep feeling of pessimism and darkness engulfed me, as I contemplated what fate had in store for me now. I refused to go to Constantinople and urged my husband to go ahead and join his family. He left after giving me some money to care for my needs. After weeks of waiting and searching, I was finally able to make contact with my brother in America and on April 18, 1920, I set sail for the United States with a three-month old baby boy.

Today, as I recall these happenings, I find that, while I seem to have forgotten some things, I witnessed with my own eyes, those things, which I do remember remain vivid and indelible in my mind. Truly, it was a miracle that somehow I survived all this in and came here to start a new life.

## 112 (112).

### **HARUTYUN ZAKAR MARTIKIAN'S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1899, Harpoot, Dsovkh Village)**

I was born in the historical Harpoot region at the foot of Mount Andzout, which is situated between Harpoot and Tigranakert, in the village of Dsovkh. There was a fascinating lake near our village. The hills and the mountains, the dales and valleys were covered with magnificent woods, orchards, thousands of poplars, willows, vineyards, and vegetable gardens. The wild-rose bushes made colorful belts for them. From huge heights, several streams ran down through the valleys and flowed into the lake. The inhabitants of Dsovkh were fishermen and weavers. Dsovkh was a purely Armenian village. It had one hundred families, about seven hundred people.

My mother used to say that I was born three years after the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896 organized by Sultan Hamid, so – in 1899.

The seven families of our house were saved from the Hamidian massacres by a Kurdish Haydar, who had taken our people in his estate and kept us there. In 1915, during the days of the Armenian Genocide, the Kurdish Haydar tried to rescue our families, but he did not succeed; he could only save my cousin.

Our family was large: eight brothers and two sisters. Our father was very strict, very particular and pretentious.

He believed that it was not possible to educate a child without beating him. And mother used to tell us: "If someone knocks at your door and asks for help, don't refuse."

The village had a seven-year school where the children were taught the Armenian alphabet in the method of Ter-Todik. We squatted on the cushions on the floor, and each of us after reading the lesson said: "Cross, help me." The teaching was free of charge, for the Harpoot children; people, living in America patronized it. The church service was compulsory with studies. I had a good voice, so I read and sang in the church, always full of belief. I learned at the school for three years then I looked after our sheep and cows.

The year 1915 became historically fatal with its horrors and nightmares. The prisons of Harpoot were filled with Armenian leaders, who were killed by burning them with petroleum. Then, again, they imprisoned the rest of the well-known men. The Turks had hung ropes from the trees along the lake, where they hanged the prisoners, the two hands tied behind their back. They hanged them head-down, poured water on them, beat them with sticks until blood ran from their nose and mouth.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1970, has been delivered to me by his grandson, historian Mark Adamian, in 2002.

All the men from 18-55 had been drafted to the Turkish army. I went to the house of Anania and Mkrtych Stepanian brothers, who had given the bedel and were freed from serving in the army. The Kurd Soro came there and told us about the massacre of Khokh, which was a nearby village, and said that in three days they would come to our village to deport the Armenians. We were immersed in thought. At night, Anania and Mkrtych ascended the mountain.

The awful alarming time arrived. At midnight the wild gendarmes invaded our village. They proposed that they would 'adopt' the boys from 9-13 and the women would be taken to serve in the houses of the Turkish beys, which would be similar to the life of a harem. Out of despair, some women tied their children to their backs and threw themselves into the lake in order to escape disgrace. Armed with bayonets, the gendarmes threw our beds and what we had out into the street, the mothers with their babies, in order to devour them. I ran up the mountain. There, I met three boys from our village and together we went to the lake shore, and with an old boat, we reached the island in the lake, taking with us an Armenian girl, Sultanik by name, whom the gendarmes had tried to rape, but she had fled together with three other girls condemned to the same fate. They were completely nude, their privy parts covered with leaves. Somehow, we arrived on the island. On the shore of the lake, deep in the forest, were the Haydars, the rescuers of our family, to whom I often went by night and brought food for our group of 12 people. But news about us had reached the government, as though 160 fedayis were sheltered there. And 1,800 Turkish and Kurdish soldiers (and the mob) surrounded the lakeshore forest. I could not visit our Kurd rescuer Haydar and bring food for our group anymore. Our resistance struggle started against the gendarmes. We were only twelve and were fighting with our few revolvers. Most of the group fell. Only four remained. We moved to the other island of the lake. There we also continued to defend ourselves and also we lost two of our friends. I remained with my name-sake, Harutyun. When night fell everything became silent. The Turkish gendarmes went away thinking that no one was left on the island. The fight, which lasted for nine days, had emaciated us. I had lost all hope, but my friend Harutyun encouraged me. We took out of the water our boat, which we had sunk, with the help of stones, to the bottom of the lake and with great difficulty reached the lake shore. There we met 18-year-old beautiful Payliné and 13-year-old Tigranouhi. They had barely escaped the Turkish gendarmes' beastly instincts. But they found Payliné and took her away, and Tigranouhi later became my life companion for good.

It was right that I had survived the lake fight, but I was filled with revenge and I was thinking about my countrymen who had been captured, since on the lake

shore the corpses of my relatives were still putrefying. Among them I recognized my mother's slaughtered and deformed figure together with the others. The corpses were left there under the sun and rain, were rotten and were stinking. Together with Harutyun we buried most of them; the rest were devoured by wild animals.

As a consequence of the Armenian Genocide I lost all the members of my family who were about one hundred.

Then I married Tigranouhi. In 1923, my daughter, Nvard, was born. In 1924, our family moved to France and settled in Marseille where we lived until the repatriation of 1947.

In Marseille, while working at the Curt factory, my class-consciousness was formed and due to it I became an active member of the social-political life. In 1925 the "Dsovak" (Little Sea – Arm.) monthly was published under my guidance, by which we appealed to allocate sums to the building of our native birth-right as settlements in our Motherland.

In 1939, the Second World War broke out. In 1940, France was shamefully defeated, and two-thirds of it was occupied by the Nazis, who, encouraged by their triumph, in 1941 attacked the Soviet Union, consequently our condition, as Communists, became still worse.

The Communist Party of France issued a manifesto to organize partisan groups and fight against the enemy. We, the Armenians, also gathered around the same goal. My daughter, Nvard, and I joined in dangerous activities. The Central Committee asked me to organize partisan groups. My daughter was renamed Helene. Under my guidance, and with the participation of my daughter and Nshan Ter-Martirossian and others, we blew up the "Splendid" and "Kardan" hotels, in the magnificent villages of the Catalan seaside where German high officers lived. At the same time, we supplied the partisans with food, clothing, lodging and ammunition, for which we were assisted by a group of Armenian patriots (Tekeyan, Fesjian, Shahbazian, Svajian, Terterian and the Martirossian brothers). With the help of the later, in 1941-1942, I organized 17 partisan groups that implemented numerous heroic assaults on targets occupied by the Germans. As Marseille was liberated I was arrested by the Gestapo. I was thrown into the hell of Buchenwald together with 24 Armenian Communists, among whom was Davit Davtian.\*

During our struggle for liberty and independence against Nazism, we, the Armenians felt in our veins that we were the heirs of the Armenian people's sad history, for no other people in the world had undergone such monstrous mass criminal acts as it was committed by the Turks and Kaiser's Germany against us, as the accomplice in 1915, which was called the Armenian Genocide,

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\* **Davit Davtian's** (b. 1908, Bursa) testimony *See* in this book [T. 214].

when one and a half million innocent Armenians were exterminated. No other people had been so deceived by the Great Powers as the Armenian people. No people had been called 'the biggest step-son of history,' as the Armenian people had...

During the indescribable tortures that I endured in the Buchenwald hell, I gathered strength from the thought that I was fighting for a sacred goal – for the great ideals of mankind, peace on earth and brotherhood.

### 113 (113).

#### **DSIRANI RAFAYEL MATEVOSSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Harpoot, Chmeshkadsag, Mamoussa Village)**

My grandfather was Karapet agha, grandmother – Varder Khatoun. My grandfather had six sons and three daughters. The son's names were Rafael, Shavarsh, Nshan, Sahak, Karapet, Martiros; the daughters were: Makrouhi, Berkrouhi, and Araxy. My mother's name was Marta. We all lived together: we were forty in our family. My grandfather Karapet agha was the richest man of the village. One half of our village was Greek, the other – Armenian. The Greeks had no relations with the Armenians. The Kurd Hassan was our servant, and we had a Kurdish maid; we married them. They ate and drank with us, lived with us and took care of the home.

There was much snowfall in our country. We baked bread once a month. It was quite a special place: all the young women had plenty of gold ornaments. My grandfather had shops and inns even in the city of Aleppo. We had a rich and civilized life. Our barns and cellars were always full of wine, brandy, pastegh; we used to make all that. In summer, we dried every kind of fruit on the roofs to use in winter.

My father, Rafael, had gone to America before the war. Then they gathered soldiers from the Armenians to serve in the Turkish army. They massacred them all.

In 1915, one morning the Kurds took the sheep to the pasture, but in the evening they did not come home. They said: "Come in the morning to the Government House to get your sheep back." The men-folk went to protest, but they gathered all of them and took them away. Then we got news that they had bound them and taken them away: my grandfather was among them. The people from the government house often came to our house to eat and drink. God damn them.

They drove us all: women, girls, and children and forced us into the Armenian Church. They chose the pretty girls and took them away, in spite of the fact that the girls had rubbed mud on their faces. Then they brought petroleum tins and lined them up. My grandmother said: "For your God's sake, don't burn us," but they did not listen to that. We gave money to our Kurdish servant; he took it to the gendarmes, and that night our Kurdish servant put my brothers Matevos and Aram on horseback. I took my mother by the hand, and we went away. Our Kurdish servant took us to their summer pasture on the mountain.

At that time, the Russians were in Erzuka. The Russians took the Armenians by carriages to Erzuka. Mother, with her three orphans, came to Erzuka. The barracks were filled with Armenians. Then we went to Erzuka. The refugees got on the freight wagons of a train, but as the locomotive driver heard that the Turks were coming, he left and ran away. The refugees began crying and wailing. All of a sudden, General Andranik came on his horse with his volunteers. From that station he led us to Gyumri through villages. Whatever we are now, we owe to Andranik. On the roads, many Armenians were hanging from the trees, killed. They had cut their male organs and put them in their mouths. On the way, we lost our grandmother and grandfather. The Turks kidnapped my two aunts; they plundered us, too. The Turks pulled down the walls of the Armenians' houses, looking for gold.

In Gyumri our mother gave us to the orphanage. Soon news spread that the Turks were coming. Mother took us to the station of Ayrum. We sat there; there was no train. The people entered the caves. Somehow we reached Shooshi. There, the Armenians were also fighting the Turks. We fled from there and went to Tiflis. Our mother fell ill with typhoid and died. We were orphans. My two brothers were taken to an orphanage. We lost each other. I came to the village of Ouzounlar.

Later I found my elder brother, Matevos. He was working in Stepanavan on a collective farm. Since he was an orphan, he got married; I got married, too, and had four sons, three daughters. One son and one daughter died. My eldest son's name is Martoon, the second's – Rafael, and the third is Zhora. My daughters' names are Maretta and Gohar.

Years passed. My younger brothers, who had been taken to the orphanage, lost each other. A man named Khachik dayi, had taken one to Yerevan and put him in a Vocational College, where he could learn a trade. At one of the Yerevan cafés, my elder brother met my younger brother, Aram, and recognized him. He had gone up to him and asked: "Have you got a lost brother?" He said: "Yes." Then he gave our mother's name and mine. They embraced each other: they had found each other. Then they came to our house. I did not recognize him. I said: "He had a spot on his belly." I saw the spot; I hugged him. Then we

married him, too. He had two children: Albert and Esma; and my elder brother, Matevos married Aghoun. They had three children: Rafael, Rosa, and Razmik.

Eh, my darling, do you know what we have suffered? I have seen numberless people killed. We have drunk water from under the horse hoofs. We had riches, which remained to the Turks. They have driven us like sheep. How we have slept at the doors of many people, we have remained hungry, how we have been tortured... The Turks wanted to burn us. They have exiled us under the lashes of the whip. May my enemy not see what we have seen. Let General Andranik be bathed (sleep) in light. He came and brought us to Armenia, but we have lost

everything.

I've told you only part of it, darling. If I tell you everything in details, it won't be over in 7 days and 7 nights...

May the Turks die, they brought all this disaster upon us; we were 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 that 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 the aggrieved party is...

## 114 (114).

### YEGHSA ANTON KHAYADJANIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Harpoot, Habousi Village)

I was born in the Habousi Village of Harpoot. On the other side of the bridge was Balou. I was there till 1922. There were many trees and flowers in our village. We were six hundred houses, among them butchers, carpenters, shoemakers, farmers; all of them were Armenians.

We lived in our house with my father, mother, my four uncles – Moushegh, Movses, Tonapet and Poghos, who was shot in Adana and died. Their wives were Eva, Iskouhi, Gohar, Nazik. My brothers were Andranik, Nicoghos, Hovhannes, Harutyun. I have not seen my grandfather and grandmother. By my mothers side I had an aunt, Yeghsa, my father's sister Zardouhi, whose children were slaughtered on her knees.

My mother had many brothers. Our relatives were seven houses: all of them lived in the village. My relatives cultivated the land: they sowed wheat, lentils, beans and other things. They sold them and with that money they bought soap and linen.

There was a church and a school in our village. Our school belonged to the Protestants. The Yeprat College was in Harpoot; the teachers of the college had studied in America. They engaged me to be married at the age of thirteen in order to have a working hand. The Lousavorchakans (Armenian Gregorian Orthodox Church members – Arm.) were numerous, but they attended our school, because we had good teachers. Boys and girls studied together. Mother baked bread. She gave me some to take to my school mistress.

There was a fountain in the village; near it was a pool, where the buffaloes swam and then the water ran to irrigate the orchards. There were many big fish in the waters.

There was a tonir in the house and a stable. It was cold in winter. We gathered cotton, span it and the seeds

were used for feeding the animals. They called me 'clever child.' I did needle-work. The grand daughter of my father's uncle move linen with me from cotton and wool. We had seven cows, one buffalo and many hens. There was an orchard behind the house. We kept silkworms, we used to make silk. My uncle went to America; he used to send us money to live on.

Hurriyet was declared as though the Turks and the Armenians would become brothers. Was it possible? It was all a lie. Can the enemy become a friend? Is there sweet onion?

The massacre of Adana took place in 1909. From our village two hundred young men had gone to Adana to work, to earn money; my mother's brother was among them; all of them were slaughtered.

In 1915 a letter came to the Reverend Father, saying that the below-mentioned people should present themselves. They took them, tied their hands and feet, they struck them against each other to kill them. They took all the men and slaughtered them. One of them came back; his belly was cut open. They took my father too, and he came back half dead. 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.

We had not reaped the wheat yet; in May they took away the men and then the women. I had gone to the field to bring water. I filled my jar; the gendarme came. The Armenian women who were working in the field came to drink water, the gendarme did not allow them. They took away my father and slaughtered him. They had caught my uncle's wife and a Turk had asked her to marry him. She said: "I don't exchange a horse for

a donkey.” In May, 1915, I was married for three days. They had taken me to Mezré as a bride. They took away my husband. I sat by the fountain and began to cry. The Turks entered our houses and started to plunder. They did not kill the Protestants. My husband sent word with a Turk boy to send him a certificate, saying that we were Protestants. I could not send such a paper and the blood flowed like flood. They cut the throat of my sister-in-law like a hen’s. No one remained from my father-in-law’s family. They took away the Armenians and slaughtered them. God protected me. When they were taking away the Armenians, I was near the fountain. Many Armenians had escaped and were hiding in the forests, in the grass, in the wheat fields. I also ran away. I wanted to save myself. Mothers denied their children.

We were in the wheat fields, about one hundred people; there were children, too. We were hungry. We crushed the wheat with stones and ate it. I lost all my kinsfolk: mother, sister, brother, my uncle’s four children. All of them perished; some died of hunger, others were slaughtered. Only I and my uncle’s daughter were rescued, and she died on the way. Now, out of our 7 families, only I have survived. Winter came. I remained in the houses of the Turks. Later the Americans came. I heard about it. I ran naked, barefooted and said to the director: “It’s me, I am Yeghsa.” They opened the door. They put my feet in hot water, since they were frozen.

They asked me: “Haven’t you brought any lice with you?”

In 1917 they admitted me to the orphanage. Mr. Socrat took me on. I began to weave linen. I earned money. I remained in the orphanage for three years. I remember our teacher Vardouhi. Mr. Pix was the principal. He was the father of the Armenians like me. He used to say: “Behave yourselves, be modest. When you see a Turk, close the door and get in.” At school the small ones were together and the big ones together. The Turks wanted to kidnap me, but people rescued me. At the orphanage our bread and food was plenty. Each one did his or her work. On the New Year they gave us presents, they gave us advice. I had five pounds. I went to Aleppo. All my life I have suffered.

Then in 1936 we came to Armenia. The tears of my eyes changed into blood. They did not give us a bread-coupon. In 1937 my husband was imprisoned, because he had been betrayed that he had slaughtered a sheep and had sold the meat. I used to take him bread and tobacco. Then I heard that he was killed in Siberia. I was so poor that I begged. I worked in different houses. I wove linen. My two daughters came to the factory for I had no one at home to take care of them. It’s not only the Turks who have tortured me, the Armenians also have tormented me. My daughters got married; I have six grandchildren now.

## 115 (115).

### **HAKOB MANOUK HOLOBIKIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1902, Harpoot, Charsandjak, Berri)**

The Armenians of the sixty-four villages of our province, with its central town Berri were in a prosperous state when the massacre broke out. Most of the population of Berri were Armenians; out of the seven hundred houses only one hundred were Turks and most of them were newcomers, not natives. The town consisted of several districts – Kaler (Threshing floor – Arm.), Tonaghbyur (Holiday fountain – Arm.), Kamaraghbyur (Arch fountain – Arm.), Turkish district, Bartakhana district, which was the district of the potters’ workshops. Their product answered the demands not only of the whole province, but was also exported to Malatia and Arabkir and were carried by rafts down the Berri River. The rafts were made of ten to twenty sheep-skins filled with air, upon which planks were fastened, and their drivers were called ‘Kyalakdji.’ Berri was a town of craftsmen, where there were more than one hundred shops of manufacturers and artisans; there was only one Turkish shop, which was a barber’s shop. That barber’s shop had a second floor, which served as a hotel for the Kurds and Turks, who came from outside.

Our family consisted of five members – father, mother, I was thirteen, my seven-year old brother, Assatour, and my four-year old sister, Lousiné. I have received my education at my birth-town school, which was included in the system of the United Association.

My father was a blacksmith. He was literate. Our family belonged to the Grigorian Orthodox Church. My father was very particular about the church rituals: if anyone made any mistake in the rites, he corrected it on the spot. He always stood also before the altar. In 1895 father had organized an orphanage for the orphans and he was a trustee. For that reason he was in close relation with the town prelate, Koryun Vardapet. Koryun Vardapet was a great patriot and builder, a courageous and daring personality. His greatest care was how to keep under control the twenty-four Derebeyis (tyrants – Turk.) of Charsandjak, so that they might not harm the Armenians. And he had taken a diplomatic approach: he had sent a letter of condolence to Sultan Hamid on the occasion of one of his son’s death and had received from him a telegram of thankfulness. The local Turks had come and

asked Koryun Vardapet to show them the telegram. By such means he managed to control them. Besides he had received an order of honor from Sultan Hamid.

Once, when he had gone to the prefect of the province, the prefect had got up and greeted a Turk Mehmed bey (who had even an army) with the special Turkish way of greeting and had shaken hands with him, but he had not stood up when Koryun Vardapet entered. The latter had considered it an offence not only towards him, but also towards Sultan Hamid, and he had shown him the order hanging on his breast. The Turk bey had felt his mistake and had asked his pardon. By these means Koryun Vardapet somehow controlled the Derebeyis of Charsandjak, and their violent treatment toward the Armenians had become milder to some extent.

Charsandjak consisted of sixty-four villages, mostly inhabited by Armenians. In each village there were Turk servants in the bey's house. The relations were on the basis of serfdom; the serf 'marabas' labored on the land, and the bey took more than half of the crop. Besides, once or twice a week the women of each house had to go to the bey's palace and render service. And in the religious sense the Armenians were always considered 'gâvurs,' which was humiliating for us, the Armenians.

Thanks to his trade, father had created a prosperous family life. We had two cows and a horse. Father used the dairy products for our household, needs, and mother often gave some milk and madsoun to the poor families.

Father worked at his blacksmith's trade diligently, in the sweat of his brow in spring and in summer. In autumn and in winter the roads were closed and the people could not come from the villages to town to have their tools repaired. Father did not get cash money for his work; he did it on credit. He wrote down in his register what tool he had prepared for whom. All the Turk peasants were illiterate, and they trusted my father. In autumn father went to the villages and received what they owed him according to the register in natural products. What he gathered, he left at the Turks' and Kurds' houses, and they brought them to the town on donkeys – lentils, wheat, barley. Thus, father's financial income was very small. We had a barn in our house next to the fire-room. All the products were gathered there. In the spring months father sold them to his Turk and Kurd customers, who needed them. So, as you can see, it was a close bartering system. For the last time father returned home, bringing with him a few sheep for preparing ghavourma, that we used in winter. We baked bread and kept it. Ninety percent of the Armenians had vineyards and orchards. Our family consisted of four brothers – Petros, who was in America, Kirakos, who died in 1911, and Grigor, who became a protestant at the end of 1890s. He was so literate, that he often took the place of the Protestant preacher. After the Hurriyet a decree came out, according to which in the towns, mostly populated by Armenians an Armenian

should be elected as the town mayor. My uncle Grigor was elected mayor in 1911-1912. So, as you see, our family had such an authority.

Vintage started in autumn. The mulberry was dried in summer; it was the main food for the winter. From grape juice the Armenians prepared 'soudjukh' with walnuts: the grape juice was boiled, mixed with starch, spread on linen sheet and dried. They were kept in pots till the New Year. Such was our family life, which was the same in most Armenians families. I don't remember any Armenian using foul language; they had deep respect towards each other. When father was very angry he used to reprimand us: "Boy, hasn't the sky thundered on you?" Meaning: "Haven't you lived a human life."

Until here I told you briefly about our everyday life, before the Armenian Genocide. It was a day in spring. The wheat fields of our town Berri had already ripened and I, standing on our balcony, was watching the ripple of the wheat-ears and listening to the babble of the river. Mother and our neighbor, Mrs. Vardouhi, were sieving wheat to be sent to the mill as every year. While looking toward the river valley, I noticed that a Turk policeman, a gendarme and a man in civilian clothes got on the roof of a house. They had come out of the house empty-handed, probably there had been no one at home. At that moment father came home from his shop, and these three men entered our house. A few days before, the Turk gendarmes had invaded the prelacy and the school, to disclose forbidden literature and weapons. That had terrified the Armenian inhabitants, who were in nightmarish feelings. They entered the Armenians' houses by day, dragged out the Armenian men, began to beat them and kick them with their boots. I have been an eyewitness of the beating of Yerznkian, of how they knocked down Karapet Terzian on the roof of his house and claimed to hand over weapons. Twenty or twenty-five prominent Armenians had already been imprisoned. Their demand was not the ordinary hunting rifle. Those three men, who came and trampled the wheat, searched our room; they saw the hunting rifle hanging on the wall: they claimed Russian rifles and mausers and so on. Among those three people was the town attorney, who, according to my hearing, was an Albanian Muslim and had a high rank. They were also as cruel as the Turkish policemen. 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.'

His wife Eva took care of us and on the following morning she wrapped in a kerchief some bread, cheese, butter and cream and gave it to me to take them to my

father. We knew under what terrible conditions was father in the prison. I took the food to prison. I stood in front of the window of the prison and saw that it was not empty. It was a café belonging to an Armenian; they had seized it and converted it into a jail. It could hardly hold one hundred people, while they had gathered there three to four hundred people, who were getting suffocated. Some of the prisoners' wives protested to the province prefect, who had succeeded the former, one of the Ittihat executioners; Atan bey had said with an ironic smile: "Don't worry, we'll soon transfer your prisoners," meaning, transfer them to the slaughterhouse.

When I approached the iron bars of the window, I saw my father and somebody else, whom they called fedayi Aveto. He had been in the group of Gevorg chavoush about seventeen years. After the Hurriyet, they had freed, as a sign of liberty and equality, the fedayis from prisons, but now he had fallen on the dry floor of the jail, completely wrecked; so was my father. Those two had remained back from the slaughterhouse, because they had not been able to walk. The 3 to 4 hundred people had been tied to each other by the arms in pairs and had been taken to the river bank and drowned. From that slaughterhouse only one young man was saved – Khosrov Nalbandian, aged eighteen, who was our neighbor. He was tied to his father, when a rescuer had approached him. The slaughter was carried out in a cruel manner. Khosrov's father had already been killed when the rescuer – a man sent by Mehmed bey from the Armenian village of Armik decided to rescue him because Mehmed bey had dozens of mules in his castle and he needed someone to take care of them; he had sent somebody to save one and take him to the castle. And that man was Khosrov. I had been his daughter's godfather. From our family ten men were slaughtered in that group, as well as Aram Holobikian, who had come to my uncle Martiros, as a guest from America. Though he was an American citizen, he was cruelly torn into pieces. He had been in love with a teacher – Miss Rose – teaching at the Protestant School and had been married for a week only.

Father took the food from me and said in a low voice: "Son, get me a fresh sheep skin to put on my back; they have beaten me so, that all my back is covered with bloody wounds." I fulfilled my father's request. On Sunday I went back to my uncle'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, 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 jail. This is my father's narrative.

Two Turk acquaintances of my father could help him to some extent. Father was still in terrible pains; the wounds were purulent, my uncle's wife Eva took care of them, cleaned and changed the bandages, because my mother's heart could not bear it. He was in that state, when one evening after dark, Ahmed efendi, whose house was near my father's shop, came to our house.

The prefect had armed the local Turks, also the Hamidié formations, which consisted of Kurds in civilian clothes, and those beastly people, who had surrounded the town. No one could escape, and the compassionate Turks were in difficulty in approaching the Armenians' houses, whom they knew and wanted to help.

Sargis Chakhmakhchian, the gunsmith, had tried to escape. Ahmed efendi came to help us. My father, lying on his belly, told the tortures he had suffered the night before. Ahmed efendi said (I don't know whether he was sincere or not): "May the house of the author of all this be ruined. May the house of the creator of this massacre be destroyed, because there is no salvation for those who have a moustache [the Armenian male]."

Father besought: "Save at least my family."

I and my brother were present at this conversation. As he could not save my father, he said: "From your family I'll try to save your wife and children; that will be as follows: when deportation begins, let your close acquaintance Ali, the mule-driver, accompany the caravan on his mule and let him commit himself to take your wife and children away to a Turkish village. At this point, I can help you through my son, Shukri. As Shukri is in the army now, I'll have him brought here to save you."

Father agreed and, in order to express his gratitude, he said: "Bring my golden watch and give it to our close friend Ahmed efendi."

My father gave him his gold watch. Besides, mother had a golden necklace with a gold coin on it, and they gave it also for Ahmed efendi's wife. That Turk friend accepted the presents and went away. He presented as if he had been looking for his cow and had come to our house with great difficulty. A few days passed; father said to his apprentice Gevorg: "Call kirva Ali to our house." Father had helped him much. He had a horse. Father said to Ali: "Take my horse and the two cows to your house, on condition that you save us."

After ten or fifteen days the town crier announced on what day the Armenians of such-and-such district should come out of the town.

The head executioner Etem bey had thought something cunning, saying: "Let them get ready those, who are going to America," as if father had a brother in America.

Father joined uncle Grigor's family. The group consisted of about eight hundred people – old people, children and women. A number of Kurds accompanied the caravan with their donkeys to carry the weak people. Fifty to sixty gendarmes under the command of Ahmed agha had surrounded the caravan, which moved westward. The way passed through the orchards of Berri, and we approached our vineyard. Looking at our vines and mulberry trees and shedding bitter tears, we left behind our birthplace, home and vineyards.

After crossing the river, we were climbing the mountain, when we heard people crying. They had kidnapped my uncle's three daughters – Varsenik, Yevginé and Verzhin.

They placed us in sheep-folds for the night. In the evening gun-shots were heard, the people were terribly frightened. At that time the leader of the caravan Corporal Ahmed said: "Don't be afraid, they are Kurds; our gendarmes will protect you."

And he himself began politely to strip and plunder us. He filled all the gold and jewelry in a saddle-bag and rode away. We went a few km; they kidnapped a few more women. After a few hours we began to move eastward, to the valley of Khazandara and reached Upper Khazandara. Then kirava Ali took us to a Kurd's house, where we remained for a few days. In the evening a horseman came to the Kurd's house; he was one of the officers accompanying our caravan, who had heard from Ali about us and had come to take away my sister.

The hostess called mother and said: "He has come to take away your little girl."

He snatched my sister, threw her on the horse and rode away, saying: "I'm taking her to make a future wife for my son."

After a few days kirva Ali came and took my mother to Berri. We remained in that house. She took us to the

Balou River. On the banks of Aradsani they were driving the corpses of the Armenians with the help of long iron bars, and the current was taking them away.

We came back to the house of the Kurd woman. On next day we reached upper Khazandara. Fortunately, Ahmed agha's son, Shukri, came, on the next day, riding his horse. He took me and my brother to Berri. Mother came and found us. It's not possible to describe the cries and laments of that meeting.

Ahmed efendi said: "Send your elder son, Hakob (i.e.: me) to Shukri, to serve in the army. Your younger son will stay with you."

I went. Shukri efendi's wife was an Armenian, named Makrouhi, which had been changed into Makroula. In a few days all the houses had been emptied. I learned that a new caravan had come from Berri, my mother and my brother among them. They had gone till Chmeshkadsag with great difficulties. At a distance of three to four hours, they had killed thirty men in the Bashkala Village, only one man was saved. Then they had gone to Berdak. In Berdak they had collected one hundred and fifty children and had thrown them into the river. On the way to Chmeshkadsag, the Turk gendarmes had killed those who had fallen down with bayonets and that numbered to four hundred, only thirty people had remained alive. A Turk gendarme had placed an old woman, her daughter-in-law and latter's child and had killed all three of them with one bullet, and he had rejoiced with his feat. On the way the Kurds had kidnapped my brother. My mother had gone and begged the Kurd to give her son back. He had not returned him. Mother had given him some money and asked him to keep her son well. Hardly twenty people had reached Chmeshkadsag. Mother had suffered very much. She had asked the high-ranked kheder's wife to tell the Kurd to return her son. Finally they had returned her my brother. Mother and brother had gone to Harpoot. I was unaware of all that. They've told me all about this later.

The Dersim Kurds attacked us. The Turks ran away. I remained with the Kurds for three months. Then I went to Dersim. It was difficult for me, because they were illiterate people. So I decided to return to Seid. I got a letter from Shukri efendi, telling me that my mother was in Medskert. I went to Medskert. The Turkish army counter-attacked. Shukri efendi took me to Berri, which was already in ruins, my lovely birthplace. I got a letter from Harpoot, from my mother. I ran away, went to Harpoot with a Turk acquaintance and found my mother.

In 1918, after the armistice, I got back my mother's house and lived there till 1922. I worked as a shoe-maker and lived, but we, the Armenians, were in fear. So, I fled by another way, with the help of Hakob, an Armenian from Yedessia. I reached Yedessia. We walked at night; by daytime we hid in the wheat fields. We crossed the border. We reached Aleppo, on the Syrian territory. After

a month, my mother and my brother came in a caravan, departed from Harpoot. We lived in Aleppo for four years. There I learned what had happened in the world: about Lenin and the Russian Revolution and more. Finding out, in those years, that Soviet Armenia existed, we left Aleppo with some other Armenians from Arabkir, in two trucks on the 25th of September and reached Kirmanshah, through Tabriz. Driver Gevorg took us. We got visas for twenty people from the Soviet Embassy, and from Tabriz we went to Julfa by train. We passed through Der-Zor. My acquaintance, Hakob from Yedessia, who had helped me to escape, had become a French gendarme in Der-Zor. He took me to the places, where the unburied

bones of the Armenians were still visible. Reaching Julfa we passed over the Arax River and on October 25, 1922, we arrived in Yerevan.

I got acquainted in Yerevan with Vahan Totovents, who helped me to enter the University. As a lawyer I worked in the judicial system for three years and then I began to work in the field of economy. I got married and had a son and a daughter. Both of them got a higher education. Now, my son is in Moscow. I have already a grandchild. Now I'm a Soviet citizen in Armenia. After all those atrocities, this crime committed by the Young Turks will never be forgotten and should never be forgiven!

## 116 (116).

### SARGIS KARAPET KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Harpoot, Khoula Village)

I was born in the village of Khoula, Harpoot region. Our family was quite well-off, their occupation was viticulture. My father had gone to America, Fresno, in the business of raisins and had come back in 1913 to take us to America, but my grandfather had not agreed. My father came back from America, my uncle went there. His wife and daughter lived with us.

The village where I was born was rich in black earth. In the village they were busy in agriculture. We had six kinds of grapes. My grandfather was ninety-four years old; he came to work to the vineyard every day and drank wine. People worked well and lived well. Their standard of living was quite high. Our village was on the west of Harpoot; at an hour's distance on foot. A bit farther there were other villages as well, Houseinik and others. We went to those villages on horse or donkey.

The houses of our village were built of stone and were two-storeyed. On the first floor dinner was prepared; we had a bathroom; we heated water and took our bath in a large tub. The living-room and the bedrooms were on the second floor. We had table and chairs. Mother cooked various dishes, the meat was plenty.

We were nine in the family; father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, my uncle's wife and daughter. I had a younger brother – Hakob, and an older sister – Aghavni. Grandfather was from the town of Mezré, grandmother was from the village.

Only Armenians lived in our village. The Kurds visited us from other villages. In general, the Kurds were busy in plunder. During the church ceremony at the Khoula monastery people came from other villages to pray. Our priest was father Sargis. Our school was very simple. Each pupil took a cushion with him to school to sit on. The Protestant Church was a huge building; the magnificent school was built by the American missionaries. Their school was well equipped; they even

showed mute films.

Our school had only two classes. There were children of different ages. My grandpa had taught me Armenian and arithmetic. And father taught me Turkish and English, when he had returned from America. The girls' school was separate, ours, the boys' was separate. The school had a board of trustees, which took care of the school. We had no doctors in the village; they were sent far from the town. The people were healthy, the water was fresh and the food had good quality. There were few diseases. There were many healers. I remember in 1908 when the Sultan's reign was overthrown, people were singing in the streets.

The Armenians hoped that the new constitution would improve their life-conditions. But on the eve of World War I Turkey joined Germany and attacked Russia. Russia joined all the others to become powerful. The Georgians said, "We're not in a position to enter the war" and got saved. But the Dashnaks said, "Yes, we'll join Russia" and they did.

When the news reached Western Armenia, the elderly people beat their knees and began to cry.

In 1914 Turkey declared a general mobilization and drafted the Armenian young men into the Turkish army. They took them and made them work in the 'Amelé labour' and then they killed them all. Then the women and the children, that is the whole people, were driven to the deserts of Mesopotamia and slaughtered. But there were also kind people among the Turks. It's not right to say that all of them were bad. Many Turk families kept Armenians, some of them kept them for money. My grandma often took me to the house of our acquaintance, the Turk bey. The bey's mother made me recite poetry in Turkish. My grandma took me to their house and said: "Do not come out of here until I come."

The bey's mother began to preach me the Islam. She

gave me the Koran to read. I got bored and ran out. It was already late at night. I came out and saw that our house was destroyed. The landlady of the opposite house was an Armenian, but she had married a Turk. She saw me and began to cry and told me how they had killed our kinsfolk. When they had killed my father, my grandma had wanted to kill the killer with a stone, but they had killed her, too. And my mother Zmroukht had drunk poison in order not to fall into their hands. That neighbor woman took me to the attic and kept me there. Her husband, who was a Turk, was an instructor of the exile. That kind woman kept me one day, then told me: "Times are bad. Your name will henceforth be Mustafa."

I never saw any of my close relatives any more. From our large family of nine people only I have survived. I decided to take revenge. I went to Dersim on foot. I made friends with the Dersim Kurds. They could not come to the town. I told them: "I'll do the work of the town."

I dressed like a Kurd, I hung a box from my neck as if I was a peddler and did my work. I took and brought letters for the Armenians. Or, if anyone wanted to go to Russia through Dersim, I helped those Armenians. I brought the Armenians from Harpoot and Yerznka in women's clothes to Dersim; the Kurds came and took them across the Euphrates River. They tied ten logs to each other; two Kurds rowed and took the people across the river to Russia.

In Dersim I fell ill with typhus. I was a bag of bones. A Kurd woman took care of me: she gave me milk and madsoun. I ate and recovered.

I came to the Russian side. In Yerznka there was an officer, named Tigran Devoyan. The Armenians and the Kurds called him Tigran pash. He ordered me to go to him. I went with my Kurdish clothes on and sandals on my feet. I went in. There were three Russian officers inside; they saw me and were surprised, but they asked: "What do the Turks say about us?"

I answered, "Russ caput," meaning: "The Russians are defeated."

I asked T. Devoyan to send me to a military school. He sent me to the orphanage of Erzroom. When I entered the orphanage, I saw girls and boys dancing merrily. I was astonished how could they be glad after seeing so much suffering? But they were right. As long as a man lives he must live merrily. I felt well in an Armenian orphanage. The conditions were very good. We learned Armenian, Russian, mathematics, science, geography and singing. The Armenian volunteers helped Russia; at the beginning Turkey was being defeated. The Russians had occupied certain territories from the Turks, but Lenin made a revolution, and the world turned upside down. The Russian army was broken up. The Russian soldiers did not fight anymore. They said: "Down with the war, the land belongs to the peasant; the factories belong to the workers. Home, let's go back home!" Before the death

of the Tsar they dismissed scandalously the Armenian volunteers from the Russian army and hanged some of them. When the Tsar was overthrown the Armenians rejoiced, but it was the right time to organize volunteer groups. Had they done so, we might have now a United Armenia. Instead, our Armenian volunteers ran away like rabbits, when the Russian had already left. Even General Andranik was collecting money for the refugees, in Armavir, in 1917, instead of fighting.

The Turks were lucky. They occupied all that territory and reached until Batoumi. All that was Lenin's work. Lenin declared that Western Armenia should join Eastern Armenia, but after three or four months he denied all that and gave the Turks a lot of gold. Lenin helped Ataturk very much. Ataturk was Jew by birth. His mother was a Jew.

Wilson wanted to give Armenia a mandate, but the Turks bribed the American congressmen and senators with the gold received from Lenin to vote against the Wilson plan. And Armenians could not get the American mandate and achieve her aim. The bribed congressmen who had come from America declared: "The First World War is hardly over, if we give Armenia a mandate, a second world war will start." And the Turks occupied a lot of Armenian territories. Wilson was taken ill of despair.

At the end of May 1920 I went to Baku in order to come to Armenia and enter the military school. I reached Tiflis with the help of a sailor. During the Sardarapat Battle (1918) I was in Tiflis. The Armenian refugees of Havlabar used to say: "Ay, we should have fought like that, in order not to be slaughtered." I remained in Tiflis for a month.

In 1921 I went to the northern Caucasus, to Krasnodar. Three hundred Armenians had fled and come to the northern Caucasus, and they were being fed by the Armenian Benevolent Union. I worked there until 1932, I received secondary and higher educations, became a specialist in chemistry and married Aydsemnik from Kars.

In 1939 I came from Krasnodar to Armenia. I began to work at the Oil-Soap Factory. At that time our rubber plant was still being built. In October 1944 I was sent to the USA to study the technology of rubber. We went to Washington and remained there for two weeks. I remained at the Louis Rubber Plant for three months.

I came to Armenia, but we changed our technology only in 1953. In the 1960s I was invited to Sumgayit to found the rubber plant, but I refused to go, because the Azerbaijanis spoke well of the Turks. I've worked at our Yerevan Rubber Plant day and night for long years in the chloroprene section as a manager, and it has affected my health. I have been awarded the title of a merited engineer. Now I live with my two daughters.

Why do the others consider us an intelligent people,

but we are in such a state? Because we are not united, we're not organized. I wish good health to our future

generation, for they will live in hard times. First, let them be qualified, patriotic and humane people.

117 (117).

**SARGIS MARTIROSIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1903, Harpoot)**

I was born in Harpoot. By my mother's side I come of the aristocratic Nazlian family. Harpoot, as an Armenian center, was the most enlightened in Turkey. I got my elementary education there at the Armenian Catholic School.

The 40 to 50 percent of the inhabitants of Harpoot were Armenians, 10 percent were Kurds, and most of them knew Armenian. World War I became the cause of our misfortune. 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.

In April 1915 they gathered the men and threw them into prisons. Women and children were left in the town without any protection. At that time the caravans of the deportees had started coming from the upper parts of Harpoot. From there they were taken either to Der-Zor or Malatia. They took them to Der-Zor through Diarbekir, on the way they threw them into the Euphrates River and drowned them in order to spare bullets.

I was grazing the animals. I saw that the wheat-ears were moving. I went near. I saw a boy who came out. I asked him: "What are you doing here?"

"Yesterday they killed my mother and all our kinsfolk," he said.

I accompanied him to the village.

After a few days Turkish soldiers came. The mullah of the village had given my mother's name as an Armenian. I was with the animals. I saw from afar women standing; the last one was my mother. I wanted to follow her, but they did not let me. I went and asked the mullah: "Where did the women go? My mother was with them."

I ran and reached them. I saw soldiers standing on guard before the khan. I went stealthily in; I saw my mother sitting there in thoughts. She saw me, but she did not open her mouth. I had taken some food for her, but mother did not speak. I went back. For six days I went there and came back. In those days mother did not speak to me at all. I came out of the khan and the guard saw me. I ran away. The next day I went again. The guard said: "Son, go back."

"Why?" I said.

"Yesterday they took them all and killed them."

I came to the village. My sister and two brothers asked me about mother. I said: "We're orphans now, mummy is no more..."

The next day the owner of the house called us and said: "You're Moslems now."

Early in the morning I got up and ran away. I did not know where I would go. There was a river: I crossed it. I walked in the direction of Harpoot. I arrived in the evening hungry and thirsty. I saw a stream and I quenched my thirst. Then I walked until it became dark. I went and saw that our house was full of people. The Turks had come; they saw me and they expelled me. I went to the market. There was a cart there; I lay under it and fell asleep. For six days I lived only on water. There were other boys like me who entered the shops, took something and ate. They told me to do the same, but I replied: "Theft is sinful." I became a porter. One day a policeman caught me and said: "Who are you?"

"I'm an orphan," I said.

He walked along our home-road, and I started to walk with him. On the way I told him that they had killed my mother. He took me to his house, gave me clothes and shoes and said: "If they ask you, you tell them you're Shukri efendi's son."

I worked at his house. He kept me. I ate, drank and cleaned the house. His wife was an Armenian and her father was the only stone-cutter in those parts. I stayed with them, but I was looking for my relatives.

One day I met some boys in the market-place, and they said: "Ask the assistant of the American Ambassador."

I went and introduced myself to the assistant ambassador. He asked my name and I said. He said: "Who are the Nazlians to you?"

"That's my mother's family," I said.

"There's a bishop and he wants news about you," he said.

I told him my story. He said: "Alright, I'll write him a letter. When I get the answer, I'll call you. If you need money, I can give some."

"No," I said.

Bishop Nazlian was my mother's brother and he was the prelate of Trapizon in 1915. They called me in a month and a half. They said: "Let's find a way to bring here your sisters and brother, who are living with Turks under Turkish names."

I went and told everything to Shukri efendi. He said: "I'm an official, I can't. Let's go with the assistant of the American consul, so that they deliver them to us."

I went and entreated the assistant to help us, and we went together. Those people did not resist. But this time the children did not want to come; they were afraid to be killed. We took them to a Danish organization and accommodated them to stay there for a while. Morgenthau sent a message to find means and send the children to Constantinople.

In 1916 I went to Shukri efendi and told him everything. He went and had documents made for us to go from Harpoot to Constantinople. Luckily there was an American woman going to Constantinople. The consul put us under her care and we set off. We traveled for 16 days. Shukri efendi came with us till Malatia for our safety.

We took the train and reached Eskishehir. A gendarme approached us. I was dressed in European style, but not the children. The gendarme said: "Who are you?"

We said: "We are this American woman's children." He took us to the Constantinople police station. They put us in prison, we the three boys together, our sister – in the girl's prison.

Our uncle had applied to the Senate, since he was the President of the Economic Committee of the Senate and Talaat's assistant. He regulated Talaat's budget. By Talaat's order we were taken out of the prison and two or three gendarmes accompanied us to Constantinople, to the central police-station. We entered a room. A young man dressed in civilian clothes led us to the Armenian Prelacy. They took us to the seminary and then sent us to Mr. Stepanian's house because we were dirty and covered with lice. They gave us a bath, dressed and fed us. They sent my sister to the nuns' orphanage, and my two brothers to the seminary. And I was taken to an Austrian boarding school to study. We remained in

Constantinople until November 1918, the end of the war.

In 1919 our uncle put me and my brother on board a ship. My sister remained at the nuns' orphanage. Levon also stayed there. My uncle sent us, two brothers, to Venice, to the Mourad-Rafaelian College. We learned Italian in fifteen days. The superintendent, Father Vardan Hatsuni and many other eminent teachers taught us. I studied there for three years and graduated. I competed with those students who came from Constantinople, and I got a scholarship, 400 Liras. Then, as I knew German well, I went to Vienna. They accepted my diploma, but I took an examination in geometry. I remained there for two years. I had rented a room. I became an engineer in electricity.

In 1920 when the government of Armenia passed to the Bolsheviks, the Dashnak leaders gathered in Europe, in Vienna. We were enthusiastic young people. It was there that I came to know Avetis Aharonian, who had come to a celebration at Mourad-Rafaelian as the President of the Parliament. For the second time I met him in Vienna and then also in Rome. Avetis Aharonian collaborated with my uncle, since he was in Rome and was a political activist.

Later, in Mussolini's days, a bomb fell on one of the Italian islands, where many Armenian girl-orphans died. My uncle protested. Mussolini allotted a big sum, and my uncle had new orphanages built. I left for Milan to master a second specialty. I was the first and the only Armenian who won the second place among thirty people. Later my uncle sent my sister and brother, Levon, to America. They called me and my brother, Victor, to say farewell.

We did not see each other for seventy years. After seventy years we went with my wife to America. I found my sister who had become a grandmother and my brother had become a factory owner. But my mother's loss has affected me greatly. Mother's love is an inexplicable feeling.

## 118 (118).

### GAREGIN TOUROUDJIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Harpoot, Kghi)

The villages near Harpoot were Houseinik, Kessirik, Kherkherik - all three of them were Armenian villages.

In 1915 they declared that the Turkish government had decided to deport all the men on condition that no one would touch a hair of their head. Harpoot was deceived.

They gathered all the men of Harpoot, they took them to Kyurdkhané, on the bank of the Euphrates River, not far from Malatia. Bedri bey, who was a Turk, began to strike and kill the Armenian men. Now it was the turn of the girls and women. They said that they would take them to their husbands, brothers and sons,

and on the road they began to plunder, to strip off their clothes and to rape them. And thus, under the pretence of taking the deportees to Tigranakert, they slaughtered two hundred and fifty thousand people in turn near the lake of Gyoldjik, close to the Mount Devé Boyni (Camel's Neck – Turk.). And they drove away the Armenians of Cilicia to Der-Zor. Turk, Kurd and Chechen robbers and killers, sentenced to one hundred and one years of imprisonment, were set free and armed with axes to slaughter the Armenians. The Armenians were unarmed; they did not even have a knife, since there had been an

order: "Whoever carries an arm will be shot."

Where did Sebastia, Tigranakert, Sassoun and Japaghdjour remain?

"Whoever kills seven gâvurs," sheikh Aref had said, "will go to paradise." Amid cries and commotion, a woman stood on the bales and quilts and began to speak: "They are deceiving us, don't be deceived; they are taking us to slaughter or to turkify us. Don't become Turks, even if not one Armenian remains, and I remain alone, even if I can't have an Armenian husband, I'll remain with an Armenian dog and give birth to the Armenian nation again."

Women and girls thought, "We have a life of fifteen or twenty years, why should we become the wives of Turks?" and holding each other by the hand they threw themselves into the Euphrates River. They threw themselves into the water by the thousand. I remember that a mother gave twenty ghurush to a Turk officer to swim and save her daughter from the river. "Sebebe kalmasin" (Do not remain in need – Turk.), said the officer, took the money, but refused to save the girl, and went away.

My mother was in agony; we felt that she was dying. She called me and said: "May you be blind." I said: "Mother, why do you say so?"

"I say so that you may understand. May your both eyes get blind, may your stomach never gets satisfied if you marry the Turk girl." In fact, I was engaged to a Turk girl. Then she continued: "Let the Turks say that they exterminated all the Armenians. You must give

back that Turk girl's betrothal ring. Even if they give you Kemal pasha's daughter, don't take her; we have our government. I don't know on which side of the world it is. You're an Armenian; you must go to your country. Even though you may not have money, hang a bag from your neck, be a begger, but find the Armenian government. Take an oath!"

I knelt before my mother's bed and took an oath.

Mother continued: "Let my breast milk be to your heart's content, wherever you go, may God protect you. God bless you."

Mother passed away. We buried her. I cancelled my engagement with the Turk girl. I came out of Kghi. I went on foot for forty-five days and reached Aleppo. I came to the goods bazaar and met there Armenians. I was in Turkish clothes. A man by the name of Movses asked me in Turkish: "Sen Ermeni sin?" (Are you an Armenian?).

"Evet" (Yes – Turk.), I said.

"Ben de Ermeni im" (I'm an Armenian, too – Turk.).

"Today it is Sunday; go to the Church."

I did not understand the words 'Sunday' and 'Church.'

"Don't you understand?" asked the man.

"No."

"Aren't you Armenian?"

"I am an Armenian, but I don't know Armenian."

That man took me to his house. Only then I learned that there were Armenians in the world. There I married. Then we came to Armenia from Aleppo.

My house was the first to be built in New Harpoot.

## 119 (119).

### MIKAYEL MKRTICH CHILINGARIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

#### (B. 1904, Harpoot, Chmeshkadsag)

Men are born and live only once this surprising life fallen to their lot and quit this world. Few are those who leave testimonies asserting their being to the coming generations.

My father, Mkrtich Chilingarian (Chilingar in Turkish means blacksmith), lived in the town of Chmeshkadsag, in the Harpoot Vilayet of Turkey. My mother's name was Agapi. They had five children (my sister Zarmandookht had died a long time ago).

I was 11 years old in 1915, my sister Aroussiak was 7, my brother Babken was 5 and Hayk was 3 years old. My father loved me most of all and wanted me to study well at school. Our house was in the district of Shvotik. We lived in a two-storeyed house with my uncle's family and children. My father was strict and exacting. Starting from the second class, my father allowed me to go alone to his forge and blow the bellows after I had prepared

my lessons.

One day in May, 1915, I had gone after my lessons to my father's workshop. A bit later, a Turk gendarme came and announced that my father was summoned to the government house. My father closed the forge, sent me home and went to the government house. He did not come home that night. In the morning, my mother inquired about him and learned that he was imprisoned together with a number of other Armenians. My father remained in the prison for about a month. And one day they let him come home for a night to have a bath and to change his clothes. He was completely changed, he had grown thin and pale; he walked cautiously and slowly, as if he was not walking on his own feet. In the evening when my mother heated some water and was bathing my father crying at the same time, we noticed that beginning from his soles up to his neck the skin had turned black.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1979, was handed to me by his daughter, Doctor Ruzanna Chilingarian, in 2005.

My father told us in a trembling voice: "All this is the result of the terrible daily beating; look carefully and never forget it." Up till now, when I recall my father, I remember with horror that scene and his last words. That night, when my father was at home, his acquaintance the Kurd landowner Bako came to our house and informed my father that the Turks would massacre the Armenians and that he was ready to take my father, his family and his property to Dersim and that he would be responsible for our security. My father declined the offer, arguing that his flight would aggravate the condition of the Armenians in the town.

In the morning they took my father again to the prison. Two days later, Turk gendarmes came to our house and demanded from my mother to hand over my father's hidden arms and began to search the house. Not finding any arms, the gendarmes left. This incident happened at the beginning of June.

On the next day, the gendarmes came anew and took with them my grandfather's brother, Avetis, Marik's husband. They drove us, the children, me, Aroussiak, Babken and Hayk, out of the house and demanded again from my mother to hand over the arms. My mother denied once more. Then they beat my mother with truncheons to such an extent that, freeing herself from the gendarmes, she ran to the river with the intention of throwing herself into the water. But the women of the district, who were crying with us, held her by the arms and did not let her to do that.

The Turkish authorities of the town lost hope to get any arms from the Armenians. One morning, we saw that they were taking the imprisoned Armenians of the town away, in pairs, with their arms tied together. It is impossible to describe, at that hour, the laments of the relatives of those prisoners marching to their death. Up to the present day that scene is in front of my eyes, when dozens of mothers and children ran to and fro, some hurrying home to bring some food for their husbands and fathers, others calling their kinsmen to give them something to eat or bid them adieu in the crowd.

My mother who had fallen ill after her tortures and was lying in bed, got up and ran barefooted to see her husband, but one of the gendarmes hit her with the rifle-butt and she fell down and could not stand up. That terrible event occurred in June. The first group of prisoners was taken out of town, executed and thrown into the Euphrates River. They had torn out also my father's beard in the prison.

After exterminating the prisoners of the first group, the government started to pack the prisons with a new group of people. Among them were both elderly and young people. After a few days of imprisonment, the latter were also taken away and executed in the same manner.

The Armenian Genocide of 1915 has been sig-

nificantly reflected in the following popular mourning song:

"Der Zor çölünde yaralı çoktur,  
Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yoktur..."

*"There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Don't come, doctor, don't come, it's useless..."*

There are lots of such songs...

The hostile attitude of the Turkish government toward the Armenians, the disarmament and the isolation of the Armenian soldiers in the Turkish army had given occasion to my father's brother to escape from the army and to seek refuge in Dersim, in the house of the Kurd landowner Bako. My uncle had sent a message to his wife, to my mother and grandmother, to go and immediately join him in Dersim.

Receiving my uncle's message and considering the atrocities of the Turks with regard to the Armenians in the town, my grandmother, who was 65 years old, agreed with my mother and my uncle's wife and she first took me, Haykaz and Zmroukht out of the town to Dersim, to a Kurd village named Gnelis, where my uncle was waiting for us. My grandmother had returned home to take my mother, my sister Aroussiak, my brothers Babken and Hayk, my uncle's wife and her child to Dersim. They had taken with them our cattle, as if they wanted to put the animals in the field to graze. But the Turks had already surrounded the town. My mother, holding one child in her arms and the two others by the hands, had not been able to walk and had returned home from half the way, thinking that it would be better to die at home with her children. My grandmother and the rest of the family arrived safely to Dersim and joined us. A few days later we heard that the Turks had deported all the Armenians remaining in the town, including my mother and her three children. The Kurd who gave me a job had witnessed all that. I never heard again about my mother and the children. My grandmother and my uncle decided to give me as a farmhand to a Kurd mullah. I was 11 years old then. That mullah had a wife and a great number of animals which had been stolen from the Armenians. My duty was to graze those cows, oxen and sheep. The mullah kept also an Armenian young girl named Aghavni at his house. One day the mullah's wife went to the town and spent the night there. Taking advantage of his wife's absence, the mullah raped the Armenian girl. I will never forget the poor Armenian girl's sobs and moans.

I used to put the cattle to graze barefooted and I got too tired, since the animals ran in different directions. One day I met the son of one of our relatives who had also been my classmate. He had been turkified and lived in the town. He began to persuade me to go also to the town, to become a Turk and to be the son of a Turk. I did not agree and I told him that I would better live in poverty than become a Turk.

Following the massacre of the Armenians, I went to the town for the first time to have a look at our house. Our windows were broken, the outer gate was open. I did not dare to go nearer or to go inside, despite of the fact that I wanted very much to check if the threshold of our stable had not been dug out, where I and my mother had buried my father's belongings and documents.

The Russian soldiers had already occupied Yerznka.

The Armenians living among the Kurds started to look for ways for moving to Yerznka. That was in August-September, 1916, when the Armenian Refugee Committee in Moscow gave one gold coin to the Kurds for taking an Armenian to Yerznka. Thus, the Kurds took me to Yerznka. Then I was sent to the orphanage in Alexandropol. And a life full of hardships started for me at the orphanage...

## 120 (120).

### TRVANDA MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1905, Harpoot)

Moosh, Van, Samsun, Kars, Ardahan, Erzroom, Kghi, Balou, Charsandjak, Erzuka, Sebastia, Yozghat, Arabkir, Malatia, Harpoot, Tigranakert and the other towns constituted our old Armenia. The Persian Kurds had been exiled to ancient Armenia.

I was born in 1905. I remember they had not deported us yet; the Turks came, gathered the youth and took them to the army. They wanted to recruit the husband of my uncle's daughter; he did not surrender, and they killed him. They wanted to take away his wife to marry her; the poor woman began to shout: "Don't approach me; I won't sleep with my enemy..."

At that time the poor woman approached to the chimney; she had kept there a white-colored poison, which was used as a dressing for wounds in sheep. She took a handful of the poison and filled it into her mouth. Instantly blood rushed out of her mouth and she died. They drew her corpse out; maybe the beasts devoured her...

Then the Turks fell on us and began to slaughter us. Mother took us to a Turk's pasture, where my uncle was hidden. Mother said to him: "Run away, Petros; they massacred the whole village."

Then they came and killed my uncle's wife; her child rolled down from a height and died... My mother ran away so that they might not kill her.

They gathered us, the children, together; we were four: a boy and three girls. They brought the axe to slaughter us. They cut the ear of my uncle's son. At that moment a Turk woman had pity on him, she applied curds to his ear and tied it tight.

At night we remained at the Turk's pasture, crying. He had neither father, nor mother. We struck our heads on the stones in order to die, but we did not die.

The Turk woman took us all four to our village, and she had taken my little sister in her arms. We were delighted that we were going to our village, but when we entered the village, we saw that they had killed my uncle Petros near the mill. The Turk woman left us there and went away. We were left alone; we did not know where to go, we were little. We saw from afar a ploughman. We stuck to each other with fear; we were afraid he would

slaughter us. We saw that he was our other uncle. He said: "Go to the Turkish village; your father is working at the village headman."

We went toward the village. The dogs attacked us. Then we saw a young girl who was throwing out some garbage. She saw us and she freed us from the dogs. The Turks had kidnapped that girl and had married her forcibly to their son. The girl said to us: "Your father is there, at the agha's house."

We went and found our father. We were glad. They fed us there... In the evening the Turk said to my father: "Gaspar, take your children and go away from here, if not - they'll harm us, too."

At that moment Said agha from the neighboring village sent his servant to our Ali agha to take Gaspar to their village. You just imagine: my mother and grandmother had been working for Said agha. Father gathered us, and we went to Said agha. There they took my father to cut grass with the scythe. After two days we heard that they had slaughtered my father with the scythe. Said agha said to my mother and grandma: "Get up and go away from here, if not, they'll harm us, too."

Mother and grandmother took us, and we came out of that house. We knew neither the way, nor had any acquaintance. Suddenly we saw an askyar before us. Mother said: "Show us the road."

"You give me what you have, I'll show you the way," said the askyar. Mother had a string of amber beads; she gave it to him to show us the way to our village.

We came to our village. The terrible stink of the corpses had spread everywhere. The Turks had come and entered our house. Mother went and collected the wheat of the Turks, we lived somehow...

At the beginning Kemal had given an order not to touch the Armenians. Later he signed another order saying that those who left that country, had no right to come back.

They took us out of our village, they confined 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 Mourat (Euphrates) River bridge, cut their throats and threw them into the river. Two gendarmes drove 500 people to exile. He whistled his whistle, and the five hundred people sat on the ground like sheep. One day one of the gendarmes went away, the other said, "Let

me lie down and rest a little." He leaned his rifle against a tree, lay down and slept. We took the rifle, killed him, took his cartridge belt, drew away his corpse and threw it into the river. Then every one of us ran in one direction and got saved...

Then we went to Djeziré and lived there. From there we came to Armenia in 1947, but they [the Soviets] exiled us to Siberia in 1949. Now we're getting ready to go to America.

## 121 (121).

### STEPAN ZAKAR STEPANIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Harpoot, Til Village)

The village of Til in the Harpoot Province lay on the bank of the Euphrates River, which flowed before our village; the village had been a town where the Armenian kings lived.

There were ten thousand Armenians in Harpoot. The Yeprat College was a famous educational institution; there were many educated people, scholars, scientists, pedagogues, doctors, etc. Before 1908 the Armenians were poor. The Young Turks overthrew the sultan, and the Armenians got the same rights as the Turks. That was the national constitution.

The Armenians began to breathe, but that liberty brought many troubles: "Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet" (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.). That was the song. Then the Armenians began to liven up. The Turks did not like it. We had members in the Parliament, as Grigor Zohrap, but Talaat was the Minister of Internal Affairs, Enver – Minister of the Military Forces and Djemal pasha – Minister of Navy. They saw that the Armenians would become a peril for them.

In 1914 the I World War began. Germany and Russia were fighting, so was Turkey. If until the Constitution the Armenian youth were not drafted to the army, then they began to recruit them. Many of our youth passed to the Russian side and became volunteers. The Turks did not like it. They went to Kaiser Wilhelm to protest. He said: "Deport the Armenians."

Besides deporting the Armenians the Turks thought also of slaughtering them; the scholars and the intelligent people were thrown into the prisons. They also compelled every Armenian house, to hand over a gun to the government. Even if they did not have any, they should buy one and hand it over.

Thus, they took the Armenian youth to the Army. Instead of guns they were given spades and pickaxes and they made them work in the 'Amelé labour.' They took away and annihilated those valiant youth; among them

was my uncle.

The intellectuals were taken out of prison by night and were annihilated. There remained the ordinary people who had no weapons in their hands. There was no one to give directions. They came with officers and surrounded the village. My father was also taken to prison.

There was a man named, Aslan bey, who was not in good terms with my father. He came and said: "Where's Zakaria?"

We said: "They took him to prison."

"You're lying: take him out of his hiding place."

He went. Then he came again. He searched him for the second time and could not find him.

After two days, in June 1915, there was a strong knock at the door by night. There was no man at home. We were four children, my mother and my uncle's wife. Mother went down and opened the door; they brought into our yard ten to fifteen men with their arms tied, then they brought again fifteen more people in the same state.

We were trembling of fear and crying. Suddenly they began to shoot at them and to kill them. Woe, mummy dear! Their corpses fell one on the other. We went down and saw that their blood was running on the ground and had formed a puddle. They turned the corpses over; if a man was still alive, they struck with axe and killed him. We had a servant who had fought with another Turk servant; the latter had a grudge against him. Our Armenian servant was wounded; the Turk servant followed his blood trails, found him in the barn and cut his head into four with an axe. The corpses remained in our yard for a week; they began to stink. Then they came, gathered them and took them away.

The Turk government issued a law: whoever (Turk) took and kept a twelve-year-old child, from an Armenian family, their property would be his. We were rich, we had many animals. Our neighbor Turk came and entered our house, as though he wanted to take us under his protection. After eight days they came. Whatever jewelry

and gold we had they urged us to take out; they gathered everything and took them away. We, the children, were watching dumbfounded. A Turk man came and told my uncle's wife that he would marry her. She said: "I would not marry a hound like you."

"I'll protect your children," said he, but my uncle's wife refused.

My mother had a little son and my uncle's wife had also a little son; two Turk women took them away, holding them in their arms. We, four children, who were a little older, remained in the house.

They had taken them to the village of Borkné, two or three km away. A man, Mahmed agha, who had been an acquaintance of my father, had taken pity on them and had said: "Sisters, you cannot carry those children so far, leave them here."

As the two women were exhausted, they left the children in that agha's house, before which the Euphrates River was flowing. They gave the children to the servant to take care of them. After a few days, when the children were playing near the river, the servant kicked and threw one of the children into the water. The water took him away. When I heard it, I begged my agha, I cried and implored him to go and bring my other brother who was alive. He agreed. We went and found my brother. He told how the servant had thrown one of the children into the river. My brother hugged and embraced me. Agha threw him into the barn and slapped me twice on the face. My brother was scratching the door, crying, shouting, but no one answered. After a few days they threw him also into the river. The Turks said to the women: "You give us all your gold to keep, so that the Kurds won't plunder you. Sit on the green grass and rest." And the Turks began to shoot them; then they dragged them by the feet and threw them into the Euphrates River; the corpses piled on each other. My uncle's wife got wounded, but remained alive. A Turk said: "Eh, gâvur, you have remained alive, haven't you?" He took a stone and threw it on her head. She fell down. After two days she stood up and, hardly walking, moved forward and saw several tents in a field. There was a fountain there; she washed herself and drank water. There were Turk gypsies living in those tents. One of the gypsies saw her and said: "This is uncle Zakar's daughter-in-law, Sultan," and took her to their tent.

They took her, shaved her hair, cleaned and treated the wound and they take out two bullets from the wound. They said: "We have eaten bread in your house; we can't forget your kindness."

While in prison my father's jailer proved to be an acquaintance of his. He said: "Zakar, it's a pity to keep you here, you go away."

Father came out of the prison. He saw corpses everywhere. He thought to go to Osman bey. Osman bey

said: "Zakar dayi, whoever is doing all this, will pay for it. Since you have come to my house, you will remain alive as long as I and my son are alive."

According to the Turkish law, no one had the right to go to the women's section of the house. Father remained there and was in the agha's service.

Then father began to inquire about us. He asked two Armenian mule-drivers, who were coming to our village, to find out what had happened to his family. The mule-drivers came and began to speak with my agha. I thought they wanted to take me away, so I ran away. They caught me and said: "Come, we'll take you to your father." They bound me to the mule and took me to my father.

On the road, when we came out of the village, they began to talk in Armenian, telling each other: "Here they've killed this one, there they've killed that one."

When father saw me, he fainted. Then he had the other children brought, too. Then they brought a woman in Kurdish clothes, a yashmak on her head. She was my uncle's wife; we hugged each other. The Dersim Kurds had been Armenians before; they were converted into Islam. To say the truth, they pillaged, too, but they did not kill the Armenians. We gathered what we had and set off without knowing where we were going.

It was March 1916. At daybreak, we had hardly entered a forest, when a Kurd bey and a few soldiers surrounded us. It was good he turned out to be one of my father's acquaintances. The Kurds attacked the Turks; they occupied 2 or 3 pieces of land, found some food and shared it with us.

My uncle, his two children, our whole family consisted of fourteen people; there remained only four of us. They killed all the rest of our family. My mother's sister, brother, father's sister – all were slaughtered. Not a single man remained in the village. They exiled the women and killed them on the way and threw them into the river. A revolution took place in Russia. The Russian army drew back. The Turks began to slaughter us. The Dashnaks gave one gold coin for one Armenian, and if they found ten Armenians, they gave them a mauser. When the Russians retreated, we emigrated and came to Yerznka, Kars, Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri). There were corpses all along the road. They massacred two million Armenians, after torturing them.

In 1920 we came to Armenia; we were taken ill with cholera and typhus. We were refugees; we begged for bread and water.

In 1929 we founded the New Harpoot settlement. I became a member of a kolkhoz, built my house, formed my family and had four children: two daughters and two sons.

Thank God, at last we've started to live a peaceful life in our country.

**122 (122).**

**PAYLOUN PETROS TERTERIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Harpoot, Yeghegi Village)**

I was born in the village of Yeghegi in Harpoot. In 1915 my grandfather was the miller of the village. The Turks came, tied him and took him away. They took away everybody. Mother told us that they had given forty-one coins to the Turk chief in order to save us.

He had said: "I cannot do anything now. I can only stick a paper on your house, saying that you have become Turks and no one will touch you."

And so it was done. They did not touch us. Mother wove linen cloth and kept our family, my two sisters and my brother.

At that time father was in America. He had heard that the conditions in Harpoot were bad and he came back. On his way home the Turks had killed him. Thus, we became orphans.

In 1921 the Americans came and started to take the Armenian orphans to America. Mother thought that her children would perish there, so she hired mule-drivers, and we went to Aleppo. There we lived in the district called Gyok Meydan (Square of Heaven – Turk.).

Then we moved to France. In 1936 one thousand two hundred Armenians came to Armenia.

**123 (123).**

**ARAM KYOSSEYAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1908, Harpoot)**

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. There was a girl in Der-Zor. She had seven sisters. They had kidnapped all of them. The Arabs told us in secret: "Those who are

Armenians may not go." And they kept many Armenians and saved them.

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.

**124 (124).**

**YEGHSA ANTONIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1910, Harpoot)**

[The eyewitness survivor was unable to speak for a long time. She was shivering and crying. I, too, was moved and started to cry with her. She came to herself, pulled herself together and began to narrate, the tears flowing down her eyes – V. S.].

My parents were farmers. I remember, in winter the table was covered with a large quilt, a fire was lit in a pot under the table, and we sat all round the table under the quilt. Our house had two floors and the entrance was from the roof. The house next to ours was the prefect's

house. One night the Turk prefect came to our house and said to my father: "Aghabek djan, for so many years we've eaten bread together; I don't want anything bad to happen to you. There is an order from the government that the Armenians should be exiled and slaughtered."

My father was silent; he said nothing. Mother was entertaining the prefect with sudjukh-basturma.

When the prefect was gone, father said to his brother: "Oh, damn! He wants us to go, so that he may occupy our house."

On the next day, at night, the Turk askyars came. They were knocking at the door with such a force, as if they wanted to break it down, and they were shouting: "Gâvurs, we're going to exile you."

Father took off his shoes and hid, out of fear, under the bed-mattresses, which were piled on each other in the recess. The officers came in, saw his shoes and said: "The gâvur is at home..."

They opened the recess, they struck my father with the rifle-butt; they pulled him out of the recess and took him away.

Eh, when I remember the past, I feel that my wounds are reopened. Eh, what tortures we have suffered, what horrible things we have seen!

They took my father away. The next day we heard that they had gathered all the men from their houses, they had packed them into a barn, had poured kerosene on them and had burnt and annihilated them all ...

The following day they came, gathered us and drove us like sheep. Where? We did not know. We were hardly walking on our road, we fell and we got up. The children held their mothers' skirts, they could not walk... There was a fountain with a lion and a tiger were carved on it; we drank water there... The officers threw pieces of black bread under their horses' legs and we snatched them from each other's hand; all of us were hungry... They were taking us to the Der-Zor deserts...

My grandfather has been a very rich man. My grandma has had seven daughters, one of them had died and six were alive. All of them have been very beautiful. At one time my grandpa had sold all his property, had obtained the right of European citizenship for his family and had sent his four daughters to America. The other two daughters, being married, had remained in Harpoot. One of them was my mother; the other was my aunt Anna. When the Turk officers saw that we were European citizens, they freed us; but the others were taken away and annihilated. Grandpa had done that kindness to us. We remained on the way, in a Turkish village. At night the Turks came and showed us a knife; we had no right to utter a word. They plundered what we had, our jewelry, carpets, everything... Mother took me and my sister and gave us to a Turk widow to keep us: at least we might remain alive. In front of every house there were four or five orphans, naked, hungry or dead. They used to beg: "Sister, for God's sake, give me a piece of bread." If the Turks pitied them, they gave them a piece of bread, if not – they fell under the walls and died...

I remained at the house of that Turk khanoum. They laid the table, they ate and finished. My khanoum gathered the bread crumbs in a dish, added some water on them, then she put the dish before me and said: "Eat, daughter of gâvur."

My place in the house was before the door, like a dog tied at the gate. If she gave me something to eat, I ate, if not – I slept on an empty stomach. She did not let me move off from my place, but she sent me for water bare-footed and naked. I drew up one foot; I put the other on the frozen ground ...

My mother worked at the house of another Turk; she did the washing and the cleaning to earn her bread. The Turk master did not want her to take me with her to his house...

My sister remained at the house of another Turk; I did not know whether she was alive or not.

One day my mother came and told me in secret: "The Americans have opened an orphanage, come, let's go."

I said: "Let me go and tell my mistress."

She said: "No, run away with me."

She took me to the American orphanage, left me before the door and she went away, because they did not accept children who had a mother.

It was quite good at the orphanage. They gave us dinner; they gave us bread twice daily; each slice was as big as my palm. I ate one piece and gave the other to my mother secretly, when she came to see me.

They told us that they would take the whole orphanage to America, but later they decided not to. They put us in vans and took us to Aleppo. On the way the Turks threw stones on us; we lay on each other, so that they might not kill us. Then they took us to Beirut, Lebanon. There was a carpet factory there. I was ten years old. I began to weave carpets. All that I had seen came to my mind at night and I could not sleep; I recollected everything... Two women were weaving a big carpet. I asked them to teach me; they did not refuse. I made the heads of the carpets. The manager of the factory came and said to me: "Why don't you go to school?"

I said: "What can I do? I'm an orphan: my mother is far away; she's alone and hungry; I want to earn money and send her."

He saw my tears and took pity on me. He gave me a small weaving-loom to work and earn money. Monthly I wove one carpet in a month. I gathered a lot of money. I wanted to send it to my mother, but I did not know her whereabouts. Until I learned her address, I heard that my mother had died of hunger.

At that time I got news that a French factory owner had come and was in search of carpet weavers, since 'handicraft is a golden bracelet.' He would take us to France at his own expense; then he would keep the amount back. I went and got registered. In a few days news came that we were going. My money remained at the office: I went without money. I said: "Damn it, mother has died, what shall I do with the money?"

France was a nice country, you could find whatever you wanted; we never felt we were foreigners. I worked

the whole day; I came from the work tired. There was a place like a hostel, where the girls lived together: we ate and slept there...

There I married an orphan young man from Harpoot. Everybody tried to find his or her like. The important was that the partner was an Armenian and was from the native country.

In January 1932 we came to Armenia. We came and saw that there were only matches in the shops, no milk, and no bread. My daughter was a year and a half old; she could not stand the shortage of food and she died...

Then my son was born, he grew up. Now I live with his family.

May the end be good...

## 125 (125).

### MARGARIT SARGIS NADJARIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Harpoot)

My father's side had migrated from Kghi, but my mother was from Harpoot. My mother was the daughter of a teacher. They used to call my grandpa Karapet Varzhapet (teacher – Arm.). My grandpa and his son, Kirakos, taught in an Armenian school.

My father's name was Sargis Torossian. My father had been in Cilicia and had fought with the Armenian volunteers against the Turks, hoping that the great powers would give us independence. There were many Armenian farms in our village. There was no other village as rich as ours: we had abundant waters, vast fields, good earnings. There was everything at home: butter, meat, bread; we only brought soap, sugar and cloths from the town. Melons, water-melons, apricots, plums, figs grew on our land. Our mulberry had no seeds, we dried it, ground and mixed it with nuts and kneaded it. We made pastille by spreading the boiled fruit juice on canvas. Among our dishes were kyufta, sarma, madsoun.

Until the massacre of 1915 the Armenians and the Turks lived on good terms with each other. When the war began in 1914, they gathered all the Armenian men and took them away, then we heard that they had shot them all and thrown them into the river. My mother's sister had seen all that with her own eyes; she came and told us about it, then she drank poison and died.

Ours were fighting, but the Catholicos said: "Surrender, don't fight." And our men handed over the arms. Then the Turks gathered us, as a herd of cattle and drove us away. Those who were craftsmen were not taken away.

The Turk officers had bound us, 2 to 3 hundred children, with ropes in order to throw us into the Euphrates River. At that time an order came to stop that action. They took us to Cilicia. After the Armistice many of us were like a bag of bones, wounded or ill when we reached Adana. My mother had also come with us, but in a horrible state! They had hit my mother on her belly with a sword in Der-Zor, and her intestines had come out.

Mother hadn't lost herself; she had tied her belly tightly with her belt. But she was so exhausted, when she found me; she embraced me and said: "Oh, my daughter," and her head bent down and she passed away.

The Turk prefect had taken my brothers to a Turkish school. In 1918 we returned to our house. We saw that our house was not destroyed, but the doors and windows were taken away; nothing was left inside. We began building it. We sowed and reaped again.

In 1922 the Americans brought us to Aleppo. I worked in an embroidery workshop, where we made fancywork for the Americans. They sent our embroidery to America. I got married. We moved to Beirut. We had two daughters and a son: Alice, Armenouhi and Hovhannes. We were not rich, but we lived comfortably.

We repatriated in 1947. We arrived in Batoumi; there they made us throw away all what we had. They brought something as black as coal; I thought it was manure, but it was bread. Famine prevailed. We came to Armenia. They brought us here, to Noubarashen, then they called it Sovetashen (now: again Noubarashen). We began to sell our jewelry and clothes in order to live. I became a cook at an orphanage. My husband joined a kolkhoz. Our newcomers were industrious, they were craftsmen: tailors, goldsmiths, shoemakers. Everything was expensive. I was the cook of the orphanage. I could not steal. According to our opinion, stealing was the most shameful thing. One day my mate said to me: "How do you keep your children? Steal!" But I could not steal. And so all my life we lived from hand to mouth. When we were coming to Armenia, we thought that our lands in Turkey would be given back to us, but nothing of the kind happened. And the land here was stony.

My husband died in 1980.

Now the Armenians are going away; I remained here with my troubles.

As they are struggling for Gharabagh, let them struggle for our lands as well.

**126 (126).**

**ANNMAN TOROS TOUKHMANIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1910, Harpoot, Chnkush Village)**

The village of Chnkush had 8,000 Armenians and 2,000 Turks who spoke Armenian. I remember our stone house, which had all conveniences, was always full and beautiful. My father's name was Toros, mother's – Oghida, my brother's name was Melikset and mine – Annman. My uncle's family lived next to our house. My uncle's wife, Tagouhi, was a daughter of the well-known Poudjikianian family.

When the First World War broke out, all the men of our village were taken to the Turkish army, my father and uncle as well. But in reality, they had taken them out of the village and butchered them. Then the Turkish gendarmes came back and said: "We took your men to a safe place. Now we will take you, too." But our Turkish friend Ali agha said: "Don't believe them." They had taken my father and uncle, as well as all the men to a distance of 40 miles from the village and killed them. When the deportation of our village started, they kept my mother and my aunt Tagouhi, so that could teach their Turkish women sewing and weaving. Thus we remained at the house of our acquaintance Ali agha. My aunt's two married daughters were with us. One of them was pregnant; the other had a son who was one and a half years old. My mother, brother, me, my aunt Tagouhi, her two

daughters and two sons, whom they had freed from the Turkish army with a ransom, were hiding at a Turk's house. We, all of us, were not exiled. We remained at Ali agha's house for three years.

After that we were taken to Mezré. Soon we would reach the place, 2 hours were left, but they stopped us and said: "The animals must rest." They took away our mules under the pretence of watering them, but they took them away, and our entire luggage, and fled. My mother had put her jewels and the gold in the bulghur bag. Everything went away and was lost.

After the armistice, we went to Harpoot. Many Armenians from different places had gathered there. The American missionaries opened an orphanage there. My mother made clothes for the orphans. We remained in Harpoot for two years. Then we came to Beirut. Mother put me and brother in an orphanage and she did the sewing for the orphanage. I went to an American school in Beirut and became a teacher.

In 1932, we came to America. I got married and had a son and a daughter. My son became a lawyer, my daughter has three children. They live here, in America. They are Armenians, but they don't speak Armenian. My grandchildren are married to foreigners. That is also one of the consequences of the Genocide.

**127 (127).**

**ROBER KHOREN GALENIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1912, Harpoot)**

My father, Dr. Khoren, was a physician, who had graduated from the American University, had served in the Turkish army as a military doctor and pharmacist. Consequently he had toured all the regions of the country with the fragments of the Armenian people and had reached Der-Zor. He had seen how they had arranged the people in line in order to slaughter them; many of them had asked the doctor's assistance, and he had helped them as much as he could and had secretly saved people from yataghan.

There was a pretty girl in Harpoot, named Yester. The Turks had caught the mother, had beaten her and demanded to tell them where her daughter was; the mother had died under the blows, but had not said where her daughter was. There was another Armenian girl, married to a Turk, who had forcibly kidnapped her. Her Turk husband had heard that his wife wanted to run away with the Armenians; he had come by night and had cut her mouth from ear to ear.

The Turks apostatized the small children. They made them say: 'Mohamed Rassul Allah (Mohammad is God's Apostle – Turk.),' they circumcised them, they changed their names and forced them to speak Turkish.

My father's father had been a preacher in Harpoot. When the Turks had come and entered Harpoot, they had killed my grandpa on his own roof. His wife, Bambish Almast had been a manly woman. She had started to fight against the Turks, but the Turks had taken her and her son, Khoren, and had turned them into Turks. The name of Khoren was changed into Khayroulla. His mother, Bambish Almast had sixty gold-coins hidden. She had spent it to let her son study medicine. The Turks respected and loved very much their officer, doctor Khayroulla. They had even put a guard on him, lest he helped the Armenians.

One day the Turks took my father to Balou to save a patient's life. Father took out his medicines from his bag, cured the patient and, to thank the doctor, the patient's

family gave him a cow, saying: “Don’t take her through Balou, so that the Armenians won’t see it, because the cow has been stolen from the Armenians.”

One day in Harpoot, a pretty girl named Sirvard ran away from the Turks and came to the Armenian Church. One of the priests took Sirvard to my father and asked him to help the girl and send her to America, where the girl’s father had fled. But the Turks found out about it; they beat the priest and took away the girl again. The girl came to my father and asked him to help her. Father managed to send the girl to Constantinople, from where the girl would go to America.

The prefect of Constantinople learned about it, called my father and said: “Dr. Khayroulla, I’ve heard that you’re converting the Muslim girls into Christianity.” My father felt that his condition was

dangerous. He had already sent his family property to Aleppo by secret roads, through the mountain ranges. He came from Constantinople by night, gathered us immediately, and we left Harpoot. I remember, we passed over Devé Boyni (Camel’s Neck – Turk.) Mount with difficulty and reached Tigranakert, which was a city with high walls, where there were very big watermelons, the Euphrates River flowed through the town. It brought mud and corpses. The gendarme was standing before the town gate. They checked us; we remained in the khan. In the morning we reached Merdin. We were lodged at the house of a Catholic priest, then we took the train and passed the Turkish border. We took a deep breath that we got rid of the Turk gendarmes. Then we went to Aleppo, to Beirut, later to Egypt and ultimately we came to Armenia in 1948.

## 128 (128).

### MARTA DJANIK EOYLENJIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1912, Harpoot)

My mother’s name was Lousin, father’s – Djanik. I had one sister. We were a happy family.

In Harpoot, we had a large farmhouse, with orchards, sheep and cows.

In 1908, when my grand-father, Simon Tarayan, came to America from Harpoot, he became the manager of the “Omar Khayyam Restaurant”; the management of the restaurant subsequently passed to George Martikian.

In 1914, they took my father to the Turkish army. We did not see him any more.

In 1915, one night our Turkish neighbor came to us, took us to his house and hid us. He had heard that they would massacre the Armenians. But in the morning, the Turkish gendarmes came, drove us out with rifle-butts and told us to join the caravan of the exiled. We started walking. We reached Surudj together with mother. Mother was completely exhausted. She felt that she would not stand it any more. She wanted to deliver me to someone, for there was neither food nor drink. She was unable to walk. We sat before the door of a house. It was Chechenoghlu Muhammad’s house. My mother asked him: “Bu kızıma içerie alırsın?” (Will you take my daughter in? – Turk.). Mother gave him some money, too. The man took me in, and then he took me to Yedessia, to his town house. I remained there for several years. One day my agha came and said: “They’re going to slay the Armenians and the Assyrians.” His wife said: “This is also Armenian.” My agha said: “Bu küçük dır” (This is small – Turk.). And really, they massacred all the Armenians and Assyrians of Yedessia and ordered that no one should go out. My agha’s wife was evil-minded. She used to beat me with

her feet, and I cried.

I remained there for some years. They had a bath-house. The Turks had the custom of taking the bridegroom to bathe before the wedding. My agha’s wife was the manager of the bath-house. She had taken me one day together with her. I had fallen asleep and remained there the whole night. Early in the morning my agha came, opened the door of the bath-house and said: “Get up my daughter, they had forgotten you here. If the evil spirits had taken you away, what would we do?” He took me home. He scolded his wife asking why she had forgotten me in the bath-house. His wife was already merciless: she always beat me and left me hungry.

One day, an order came from the Americans that they would collect the Armenians from the houses of the Turks. Two armed men went from house to house and looked for Armenian children. We were taken to an American orphanage. There, we were taken good care of. They brought nice mattresses and we slept on them. There was neither school nor teachers, but they taught us singing and dancing. There was a German, Jakob efendi; we called him Papa Gyunzler. He was a German, but he spoke Turkish with us. He was in charge of us. He brought us books in order to teach us reading. In those books, it was written that in Turkey all women must cover their heads.

In 1922, the German Papa Gyunzler gathered us, put us in vans and took us to Lebanon, to an Arabic village, called Ghazir. They had gathered all the orphans from all places and brought them to that village. I remained there for quite a long time. I was under the care of Americans. They taught us handiwork, knitting socks, and weaving

carpets. I liked reading very much, but they did not teach me to read. Later, the carpet factory was transferred to Beirut. We were also transferred there. Sister Arousiak was in charge of us.

Then benefactors came from Switzerland. They were very pious, kind people. I worked near them about eight years with a monthly pay. On Christmas, Easter, Sundays and on holidays we put on nice dresses and went to church.

I got married in 1938. I had four children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

We had great difficulties during the Lebanon war. In 1976, we came to America. My husband had no work. He and me, we received pensions. My daughters studied. Soon, they began to work. One of my daughters, Alice, is a nurse. She works in Fresno. She takes care of the prisoners in jail. My other daughter, Ovsanna, also works. All of them are married and have children. My son's wife is from Armenia. She works at the Armenian Brotherhood Church in Pasadena. I live in the "Ararat" Home in order not to disturb them. Thank God, now we are pleased of our life.

## 129 (129).

### HAZARKHAN YEGHIAZAR TOROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1902, 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.

Easter of 1915 arrived. We had dyed the Easter eggs, but we did not enjoy them.

Before that the king [sultan] of Turkey called Aghbyur Serob and said: "I'll give you medals; I'll give you the town of Bitlis as well."

He said in answer: "God damn the medals you'll give me; let the town of Bitlis be yours. I want the salvation of my nation."

The king gave the Armenian nation liberty [the Turkish Constitution of 1908]. Then the king came and gathered the arms and loaded them on seven mules.

A week later, at midnight the Kurds invaded our village. The Armenian men escaped to the orchards and the barns...

In the morning we got up; there was a mullah. God damn his race; he would protect us, but all the peasants' properties would belong to him. He took us to his house. We entered the house. He said: "Boys, let me keep you here in my house; I'll go and bring policemen in order that they protect you." He went and brought policemen. They took us all out one by one and tied our hands. My father was the second whom they bound the hands. They took off his woolen trousers; in the trousers five hundred gold coins were sewn. They took them and cut them into pieces and said: "The women are free." The king's servants took the women to reap the wheat and the barley. My brother's child was small; we had pitched a tent, and I was rocking the baby in the tent. The king's servant saw me, he came and said to my mother: "Give me your daughter." Mother did not give her, but they kidnapped my sister. They killed and slaughtered the rest; all the corpses remained unburied under the sun, they got swollen and stunk. There they killed my father, too. A young man came upon me and wanted to kill me;

I put my arms around him and said: "You also have a sister; don't kill me."

They boy said: "For your own sake I'll not kill you."

I ran back towards our orchard, entered our house and saw all my brother's maps were pulled down from the walls and torn into pieces. I sat on the window sill and began to cry. A Turk woman came and said: "Why do you cry?"

"What else can I do, if I don't cry?"

That Turk woman took me to her house. I used to sleep in their stable. The Moslem feast days, Bayram, had come. The Turks had kidnapped my sister and had brought her to that village. There my sister had an acquaintance, Moushlin by name. A Turk showed me Moushlin's house. I knocked at the door. A woman opened the door and said: "I cannot take you in; I'm afraid. But the bird that is only a bird, when it throws itself on the thorn, the thorn spares it. You have come to our door; I won't leave you in the muzzle of the Turk," and she took me in.

I had tied the gold coins of our family under my feet. They had exiled my mother; I did not know where she was. The Turks had kidnapped my sister. One of my uncles was a courageous mule-driver; twelve people had attacked him and killed him. They had taken my aunt's son to the Turkish army together with the other youths to work in the 'Amelé tabour.' They had packed them all in a barn, had poured petroleum and had burned them all. They had burned my elder sister with her two children. I had a blind sister; they had killed her in the fields. All the fields, mountains and valleys were filled with corpses and skulls. All that is before my eyes. We were all destroyed and annihilated.

Early Monday morning a man came to me, he looked like a hunter. He had hung his bag at the end of a stick and he wanted to take me to Harpoot.

"Where are we going?" said I.

“We’ll go to Harpoot, if they let us.”

We reached Ghonaghalmaz. The Turk boys were dressed well. We were looking for our acquaintance, Sedrak’s house. They had killed his elder brother and the Turks had taken away his wife. He asked me: “Who are you?”

And I said: “If you can receive a guest, I’ll tell you who I am. I am Margar’s sister-in-law, his wife’s sister.”

“Oh, come in,” he said.

I remained there for a month. I span a hundred pounds of cotton. They gave it to me to take it to Harpoot. In Harpoot my master made me sift wheat and gave

me twelve ghurush. From there I went to Tigranakert, then to Djarablous and later to Aleppo. I worked as a maid-servant for one year. Then I wanted to go to the camp, there were many Armenians there; those who had remained alive in the deserts had gathered there. I wanted to go to my mother. A woman said: “This is our girl.” I kissed with my sister-in-law’s aunt. And I stayed with them.

During Kemal, I was in Aleppo. In February 1930 I went to France. I got married. We had children. In 1947 we came to Armenia. [After narrating the memoir, the eyewitness survivor fainted – V. S.].

### 130 (130).

#### KARAPET SAHAK FARASHIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1906, Balou)

I was born in Balou in 1906. My father’s (b. 1878) name was Sahak, mother’s – Nardouhi (born: Nadjarian, Harpoot, Elazik Village), my sister’s – Sirarpi (b. 1908, Balou), my second sister’s – Hripsimé (b. 1911, Balou), my brother’s – Grigor (b. 1914, Balou). Father’s elder brother’s name was Hovsep, but they called him Moughsi Hovsep, which is the contracted form of Mahtesi Hovsep, given to him, as he had gone to Jerusalem. The word Moughsi corresponds to the word Hadji in Arabic. The name of father’s elder brother’s wife was Mariam. I don’t know how many younger brothers and sisters father had. They all lived in Tigranakert; they came to us every year a few times with loaded horses and mules. The journey lasted for four days, as Tigranakert was one hundred and fifty kilometers from Balou. All of them were victims in 1915 during the Armenian Genocide.

Uncle Hovsep was a tradesman; he had a shop in the market-place of Balou and another shop in the settlement called Japaghdjour. My uncle’s wife, father, mother, two brothers and I (eight people), lived in the same building; on one side lived my uncle and his wife, on the other side – our family.

Father was a teacher at the boy’s school next to St. Grigor Illuminator Church. The girl’s school and the kindergarten were next to St. Mother of God Church. I remember my going to the kindergarten. I had a red apron, and the teacher sat on a small chair and taught us the Armenian alphabet.

Father and mother had attended the Harpoot Great College. There were several colleges in Harpoot: the Yepnat College, the French college, the German college and the American Great College. We had the habit of going to our summer house in the village. I don’t remember the name of the village; it was called by the name of a water spring. We spent the hot days there and then, after vintage, we gathered the grapes and fruits and came back to Balou. Father pressed the grapes in a

wooden tub with his feet, then gathered the juice in jars and made wine.

In the autumn of 1914, father was taken to the army as a soldier. In the spring of 1915, uncle brought a horse and, taking me on horseback together with him, said: “Let’s go to the vineyard.” When we reached the vineyard, he put aside the earth, which covered the vines to protect them in winter from frost then pruned them while I gathered blue flowers in the fields. When we returned home the women were very sad. The Turkish gendarmes had come and said that uncle had to go to the government house. We did not see him anymore. They recruited father, too. We did not see him anymore. I am sure both of them had been immediately killed by the Turks like the other Armenians. In those days, gendarmes dressed in white, came to Balou. They took the Armenian families to the church-yard and, after keeping them for a few days, they would let them go either to their houses or to someone else’s house. One day, they had gathered us at our neighbor, Barsegh’s house. I remember, mother was suckling my small brother, and she told me to say, if the Turks asked me, that I was six years old. All of a sudden the prefect came smiling, said something that I did not understand. I don’t remember if anyone told me to do so, or whether spontaneously I left and went to market to the shop of an Armenian smithy, where a few craftsmen had gathered: a carpenter, a mason, etc. They told me to go up to the attic and hide there. A little later, a Turk by the name of Mehmet hoja 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 throats, they threw them over the bridge, into the river; thus this place was named “Kanlı

Geçit" (Bloody Pass – Turk.). Mehmet hoja took me to his house in the country, at a place called Gohanam. He introduced me to his wife and said: "I brought you a boy, his name is Hussein." His wife accepted me very well. There was bread on the baking-stone; she gave me some. I ate it with great appetite. She told me to go out into the fields under the trees. There were donkeys, horses that were grazing. I like animals very much and I spent time with the animals with great pleasure. It seemed to me I had gone to a health resort; at the same time I was aware that terrible events were taking place in the town. In a few days I felt that things were completely different and I began looking for my parents. I wanted to go back home, but I did not know the way.

In the village of Gohanam, there was an old Turk, Nouri agha by name, whose son had been an apprentice of an Armenian tailor. The tailor's two daughters lived in his house. The tailor and his wife had already been killed. I used to play with the little girl.

One day I was crying when Nouri agha came near me. I said: "I want to go home."

He said: "Yes, son, yes."

I said to him: "My father had much money; he will give you much money if you take me to our house."

"Yes, son, yes," he said.

Thus, I lived with high hopes, but in a few days I began to understand what was going on. After several months, I understood that everything was over.

One day, I saw that Mehmet hoja was beating his wife. I had not seen such a thing in our house. I was deeply affected, but the beating repeated. I came to the conclusion that it was their custom.

I heard that Mehmet hoja had brought an Armenian boy from Kghi to his house before me. When I went to his house that boy was not there. One day, coming back from the orchard, I saw that boy, whom they had named Hassan. Other people also had come to the house and they were having a feast. Finally, someone asked Mehmet hoja, what he would do with me. At that moment Mehmet hoja's red, wide-opened eyes were spitting fire and he looked at me directly. At that moment, I was frightened of him. Finally, they decided to keep me with them and give Hassan to Mehmet hoja's younger brother, Mustafa. I must say that Mehmet agha and his wife had a few children, but all of them had been stillborn.

When winter drew near, we left the summer house and came to town. There, the Turks settled in the beautiful houses of the Armenians. Mehmet hoja came to live in a house, a street below our house. In order to do that, like many other Turks, he had managed to get documents from the government.

One day I went to our house. It was in a poor state. The small wooden bridge leading to the house was destroyed; all the doors and the windows had been removed and taken away. I looked and began to cry. Then I went back

to Mehmet hoja's house.

Winter passed, and again we went to Gohanam. Mehmet hoja's son, Nouri, being aware that hoja could not keep me anymore, advised me to go to Hadji Keoy, to a widow, who had two or three children about my age. I remained with her until the end of autumn. As she was very poor, she could not keep me. She told me that she knew two brothers, both cobblers, who lived in Balou. So, I went to them. The elder brother, his wife and two children lived in an underground room. On the upper side of the room there was an opening like a window, where I slept. The hay for their donkey was put there and the winter lavash was piled on a wooden shelf.

I was mostly hungry during the day, so I waited for the night to take lavash and eat. One evening, the elder brother's wife noticed from the yard that I was eating bread. I kept the bread under my pillow and pretended to be asleep. The elder brother came, threw open the cover over me, and checked all over me with his hand to find the bread, but, finding nothing, went down. The younger brother's wife had made my bed the following day. She made me understand that she had found bread under my pillow, but she would not say anything to anybody.

An Armenian family, the Tyufenkdjians, had lived in Balou. The husband was a gunsmith. They had taken him to the army, and he was killed. His wife, his fourteen-year-old daughter, and two sons who were ten or twelve years old lived. Mehmet hoja had told the Tyufenkdjian widow that all of them would be exiled and killed. He invited her to come to his house in Gohanam to save them. Thus, the widow and her children, with all their possessions, went to Gohanam, to Mehmet hoja's house. The hoja abused the widow, and his younger brother took her daughter. After a few days, he told the widow that he would take her two sons to town and put them in school. He took them, slaughtered them, and threw them into the Aratsani River. After a few days, he told the widow and her daughter to gather their clothes, put them on a donkey, in order to take them to the river to wash. He, himself, after he had finished his work in town, brought them back to Gohanam. Then he slaughtered them and threw them in the river. Mehmet hoja's wife told me all this, when once I had gone to them while living at the two cobbler brothers' house.

Mehmet hoja brought home animals – sheep, goats, etc., – stolen or abandoned from Armenians and he told me to take them to pasture. One day, after going down into the valley, I climbed up the mountain; left the animals to graze and, lying down, fell asleep. When I opened my eyes, there was not a single animal. I looked here and there, but could not find any. Finally, losing all hope, I sat on a stone and began to cry. I remember the prayers learned from my father and mother; I prayed to the Holy Virgin Mother, to Christ, pleading to help me find the flock. At that time three horsemen, armed to the teeth, passed by. One of them recognized me and said:

“He is Sahak’s son.” He gave me some raisins and chick-peas. Then I looked behind me and saw the flock.

In the spring, I made up my mind to go away from the cobbler brothers’ house. One day, I left and went to town. There I met a group of Armenian women and a boy of my age and stayed with them. I don’t remember where I slept that night. The next day, one of the cobbler brothers came and took me to his house. He took off my neat and clean clothes and made me put on shabby clothes and said: “Now, go where you want.”

I went back to town - to the Turkish street, which was behind the Zova fortress. I met an Armenian woman who had been an acquaintance of ours, who had married a Turk. She told me that there was an Armenian woman called Srbouhi, who lived somewhere nearby. I found her and stayed with her for a few days.

Having heard that the Americans helped the Armenians, I decided to go to Harpoot. I set off with an Armenian cart-driver, who carried wheat to Harpoot. With us were ten-fifteen Armenian women, their sacks on their shoulders. On the way, four-five Turkish soldiers and an officer stopped us. One of them came, took away a seventeen-years-old Armenian girl and, after raping her, let her free. We continued our way. Finally, we entered Harpoot and began to see church belfries. I was very tired and had remained one hundred meters behind the group. There was a lame Turk, who had joined our group, who did something with an Armenian woman. At that time, I did not know what raping was.

This way we entered the Assyrian district. There was an Assyrian Church, where the Armenian women began kissing the stones of the ground and the walls, with the feeling of finding liberty.

They delivered me to the American Center. I rested. They gave us a piece of bread daily. One day, all the Americans disappeared. Those buildings, which had been schools, were settled by the Turks and were turned into hospitals. Harpoot had one hundred and fifty villages, Balou – two hundred villages. From Harpoot to Balou it was sixty kilometers.

At the beginning, the Americans gave us boots. When they went, I was barefoot and naked. Near the hospital, they used to throw torn clothes; I used to wear them. I managed to get fruit from here and there, or waited before the restaurants, where customers would eat meat and toss away the bones. I ate the small pieces of meat, which were left on the bones, and then smashed the bone on a stone with the help of another stone and ate it.

One day, I found a friend from Balou, who gathered nails in the ashes of the burnt-down houses. He said: “In the center of the town on the square there’s a Turkish shopkeeper who buys them. Before, all those shops belonged to Armenians.”

So, I sold nails to the Turk several times. One day, he told me that he did not want nails anymore. If I give him

glass, would he buy? One day when I was walking about, I entered a house, where there was no one. I opened the door and in a small yard I saw glasses in frames. I picked up the glasses with the frames and took them to his shop. He told me to wait. He went and, in a few minutes, returned cursing. Seeing him in that state, I ran away. I think I had taken the framed pieces of glass from his house. So, walking about Harpoot I met an Armenian boy from Balou, Perj by name, whose mother lived in the house of a Turkish high-ranking man and from whom she had had a son. The Turk had occupied the nice house of an Armenian and had settled there.

One day, Perj got lost. I heard that the Turk, who lived with his mother, had gathered ten-twelve Armenian boys, had taken them in a carriage to the river, had slaughtered them and thrown them into the river.

One day in the evening, at twilight I was crouched on the ground and had fallen asleep. Two gendarmes woke me up with a kick. They questioned me and took me to the police station and, from there, to a castle, which had belonged to an Armenian and was called Red Konak. On one side of the yard was the owner’s house and on the three other sides there were stables and barns. There were Turkish and Kurdish deportees, and I remained with them. They gave us loaves of bread. They separated the boys from the girls and placed them in a two-storeyed house. It was impossible to run away from there. They would only allow us to bring water in pots from a stream, which was rather far, but they would take off all our clothes and only then leave us to go for water. They knew: we would run away. I found a pot; they stripped me. I went for water and ran away. I returned to town, took and put on clothes, which were thrown away from the military hospital and began walking in the town. Very often I slept in the ash piled near bath-houses. One day, I found a large piece of wool. I thought that that night I would sleep comfortable, but hardly had I entered in it, lice began stinging me. I ran a few kilometers and entered the river. It was quiet cold, but it saved me from the lice. I went back to Konak; I tried to go out again, but the guards did not allow it. I looked for a place to go out at last; I got out of a stable window. This way, when it was time to give us bread, I went in; after eating my bread I would go out again. I had quite a lot of Armenian friends. All of us were hungry, thirsty; especially in winter when there was nothing to eat. We used to search the garbage cans to find some vegetables; we stole eggs and chickens from henhouses and in fine weather, we ate different kinds of herbs.

One day, I was with one of my friends. He opened his mouth and I saw all his teeth. If you pinched his arm, his flesh would remain in your fingers. One night we slept in a place with a woman and her two sons. Suddenly the boy began crying, “My belly’s aching.” He cried for a long time, and then he stopped. The second

boy and the mother also began crying, “My belly,” and then stopped. In the morning, all three of them were dead. After a while they put us in a house together with other boys. There was an Armenian woman there, whom we called ‘Mother.’ She took care of us and fed us. One day, a young Armenian woman came, a baby in her arms. After a few days, the mother died. Mother said to me: “Karapet, you must feed this baby.” I went to the fields where animals, left by the Armenians, were grazing. I

brought a cow. Mother milked the cow and then she told me to take it back. I thought that we would keep it.

Once, I met an Armenian girl about my age. Her neck was twisted and her head hung to one side. It was cold; in order to get warm we hugged each other and slept. Next morning she was dead.

Wandering from orphanage to orphanage about Balou and Harpoot, then I went to Greece, then – to Italy, finally I settled in France.

### 131 (131).

#### SARGIS GRIGOR SARYAN’S TESTIMONY\*

##### (B. 1911, Balou, Piran Village)

Mainly Kurds lived in our village; there were a few Turks, the rest were Armenians. Our village was far from the place where the Tigris River took its sources. The Tigris takes its sources from Dsovkh Lake. Nerses Shnorhali was born in Dsovkh. Dsovkh was at a distance of a day and a half from us. In the spring, the Tigris River overflowed to such an extent that it swept away tree trunks. I have seen the river bringing several trees as an entangled mass. A few swimmers would enter the water to straighten the direction of the trees and let the water continue its flow. Four-five miles from our village of Piran, there was a red rock, where wild bees made honey and it gathered in a pit. Our peasants went there, filled the honey in pots, and brought it home.

I was born in 1911. My father’s name was Grigor, my uncle’s name was Karo and grandfather’s name was Sargis. Three months before the Genocide, one day, when I woke up, I was on my grandma’s back. They had taken father to the police station with hand-cuffs. I saw him for the last time with hand-cuffs. They took all the men of the village from prisons and drove them north-westwards. Then the Kurds came and said that they had killed them all.

It was a hot day in July 1915. The Kurds had come. Sitting under trees, they were watching out for the order of deportation to come. Confusion reigned everywhere. The Turkish gendarmes shouted to each other: “Ferman geldi, bir gâvurın kafa kalmayacak” (Order has come: not a single gâvur’s head will remain – Turk.).

I was four years old then, but I remember well. I did not want to go to exile. We set forth before noon. The herd went, dust rose, our caravan went. My mother, my elder sister, Haykouhi – 7 years old, my younger sister, Ester – 2 years old, my brother Haykaz – 4 months old. My younger sister and brother got tired on the road to exile and began crying. The gendarme took them both and threw

them in the Tigris River. They took away my mother; they kidnapped my sister, Haykouhi. My uncle’s son was small; they killed his mother, they killed Ghevond, too, for his mother did not obey the askyars. Of our acquaintances, Hermik escaped. She came back to the village and told what had happened to them.

I did not go with our group, for I felt the coming danger; I went and hid in a stable. A military police came, found me, caught me and put me on a donkey. I did not want. I began crying. I got off the donkey; I went to the stable again and hid. The military police came again, found me and put me on the donkey. I got away from him and went to mix with some Kurds sitting under a tree. They belonged to the Zaza race and spoke Kourmandji. They were our acquaintances, they were our kirvas. At that moment, my grandma came for me. She was a popular healer; she used to gather different kinds of wild flowers and made medicines with them and healed people. And they gave grandma tomatoes, paprika, madsoun and such things.

I had a twenty-five year-old uncle, whom they took and cross-examined the whole day. He was the one who shod all the horses of our village. So, they needed such a craftsman in the village. That was why they left him in the village and I stayed with him. The next year they converted us to Islam. We became Zaza and spoke Kourmandji, but at home we spoke Armenian. 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.

We remained with the Kurds for four years, until 1919. In those years, we went on donkeys to the north, south, east and west and alloyed copper pots and pans. I

\* In 1999, I met Sargis Saryan (now living in Boston, USA) by chance in Paris, in one of the halls of the Louvre Museum, where I wrote down, on the spot, his sorrowful recollections and took a photograph of him just there.

pumped the bellows. Hovhannes-Hasso also worked with us. He ground the stones, scraped the copper pots and pans, turning them with his feet. He cleaned them so that the pewter would stick well. Uncle gathered the old nails, put them in the fire, melted them and we made new nails. Once, we made one thousand five hundred nails.

Towards the south-east of our village there were Kurdish villages: Kalbin and Shekhmalan. I've gone to those villages. A young woman who had turned to Islam lived there. Suddenly I heard whispering. The Armenians, who had converted to Islam, were starving and they decided to go to the fields by night and steal wheat. They had grown the wheat in those fields, but the Kurds had become the owners, Next day, the police were very active. It was known that the wheat had been stolen from the field, for the sack had been torn and the wheat had dropped all the way long, leaving traces behind.

To the east of our village there was a Kurdish village called Deyran, where the Kurds lived in cone-shaped barns. I went and saw that the wheat had ripened and we walked through to the Kurdish village of Deyran. The weather was so hot that the wheat got very hot behind us and began scorching. It did not harm us, but the Kurds forfeited their harvest, for it was not their fair earning.

By 1919, the war had ended. My uncle Simon became a volunteer in the French army of the Armenian Legion. The Armenian youth were trained in Cyprus. They went to Adana and fought.

Then we went to Tigranakert and then to Merdin, where there was a railroad. On a high hill there was a

fortress, but the railroad was below, in the valley. The train came once a week. A day earlier, we went to the station and slept there, waiting for the train.

Many Armenians would go to Aleppo and we went with them. Uncle said: "There's nothing to eat." I was ill with a high temperature. My uncle Simon took me on board the train with difficulty, so that I could reach Aleppo as soon as possible. On one side there were French soldiers, on the other – Turkish soldiers. My uncle Simon could not come to Aleppo with me, but he gave me his 'volunteer's cap.' It was the Berlin-Baghdad railroad that took us to Aleppo. When we reached Aleppo I put the hat on my head, and the Armenian volunteers came and took me. We had a relative, Baghdadian, who had reached Aleppo with his teen-age son, but a Turk had struck him on the head, and he had become blind. He kept me till uncle came - a week later.

He was a volunteer, who could travel free of charge. Then he went to America. He sent me money. In 1921, I went to America and studied chemistry. Then I went to Beirut to learn Armenian in the Seminary of Antelias. There my teachers were Levon Shant, Nicole Aghbalian and others. There I met Arminé. We learned singing in Kanachian's Choir. Then we went to America. Now we have two sons and two daughters. My sons are physicians and live in Boston. We have eight grandchildren. The Turks decreased, we increased.

I'm a writer as well. I study the correlation of the Armenian language with the related Indo-European languages. I have published books.

## 132 (132).

### MARIE STEPAN VARDANIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Malatia)

My grandma used to say, "No Turkish in my house." My grandfather had been an official in the government. He had his own village, fields, and so on: that was the reason why the Turks envied him. One day when grandpa was coming home on horse-back, his assistant officers surround him, took him away and the next morning his corpse was brought home. On my father's side, I had three aunts, on mother's – three uncles. In 1915, all of them were killed, slaughtered. We had Turkish companions, who worked for us and loved us very much. They kept us. But there was a law: if an Armenian came out of a Turk's house, the landlord of the house would be hanged before his house.

They had already taken away my father, as if to work, but they had slaughtered him. When that law was issued, we were driven to exile. Because we were walking so much, my grandma's and my feet were so swollen that

we were taken to a Turkish orphanage to become Turks. Mother had been exiled together with other refugees. On the road to exile, the English and the French wanted to protect the Armenians. An order came: those, who were artisans, Protestants and Catholics would be saved and sent back. Mother was among them, so she came back. On her way, she passed by our orphanage. I was standing behind the door and crying, because grandma had died three days earlier. Mother saw a cart-full of children who were being taken away to be buried alive for the Mohammedan Turks said: 'Who kills a gâvur, his soul goes to paradise.'

Mother could prove at the police station that I was her child and took me home. My aunt's son had crawled out from under slaughtered corpses all covered with blood and reached our house. There was absolutely nothing left in our home. The Armenian neighbors who had become

Turks said to him, “Get, gâvur ođlu!” (Go away, son of gâvur! – Turk.). That boy was sixteen years old, naked, crawling and creeping at night-time for eight days, but the poor boy died of the flu.

Every day, they entered a house, kidnapped the girls and plundered whatever was in the house. One day, mother put a big stone behind the door to hinder anyone’s entrance. But they had kidnapped our neighbor, pretty Sandoukht.

My mother-in-law used to say that they had killed all her brothers, leaving alive their mother. A few years passed. She had become a bone healer and setter. They brought her a man with many broken bones. The mother recognized the man – he had killed her sons.

She prayed to God to give her strength and she treated the wounds of the Turk and healed him. One day, that Turk brought a mule loaded with wheat. The woman said: “Go, I don’t want your wheat. May God judge you.”

We had a Turkish neighbor. Her husband was ill for a year and a half and he was lying on our mattresses, while we were lying on the bare floor, for he had carried all we

had to his house. My mother, Satenik, said to the Turk’s wife: “Change his mattress, so that God may know what he’s going to do.” The Turk’s wife changed his mattress and after three days the man died.

A woman had come out of the slaughtered people’s pit, sat on a stone, naked. The place where the axe had wounded her was aching. A man passed by – he was a Kurd. He approached the woman, saw the woman’s state, took off the wrapping from his head, tied her wound and took her to his house and kept her.

A boy, Sargis by name, had run away from the place of slaughter; he came and said: “The Turks are taking off the clothes of every one; they are striking them with an axe and throwing them into a pit. I’m eight years old; the Turk officers entered our house, killed twelve people; they even killed the baby in his cradle. I entered under the cradle’s skirt. Mother had not died yet; she said, ‘Son, you revenge us’.”

In 1946, I came from Aleppo to Armenia. We built a house in the New Malatia District. I worked in the Textile Factory. Now we are pensioners.

### 133 (133).

#### ARSHALOUYS TASHJIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Malatia)

When we were exiled from Malatia I was still a child. The Turks came and entered our house. We were going to bake bread; we had lit the tonir, they came and forced us out of the house and turned everything upside down, began to plunder. While plundering they saw leather in the house, for father was a shoemaker. They spoke among themselves, “Let’s not slaughter this man; he will be useful to us.”

They came near me; I was holding father by the hand. One of them said to father: “Give me this child; let me take her.”

I began crying and shouting: “Daddy, I won’t go.”

Father did not give me.

They drove us to a place called Alma Oghlu Baghcha, but it was not a garden; it was an open wasteland, and we slept on the ground that night, in the open air.

In the morning, as day broke, they came and separated us: Armenian Christians – on one side, Catholics – on the other. They did not exile the Protestants and the Catholics. Only us, the Armenian Christians, they decided to drive to exile like sheep. But because they had seen that father was a shoemaker, they sealed our paper and sent us back to our village. We came, entered our house and lived.

### 134 (134).

#### VERGINÉ ROUBEN NADJARIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Malatia)

I remember my father who was ill. The priest came and said: “Rouben, they want weapons from us, if not, they will kill me.”

Father said: “Go, you become a martyr, but we must not hand over the weapons.” He did not listen. I remember the Turks took away my father, took away all the men – then they began to plunder.

We gave to our Turkish neighbor all we had, and he kept us. We were hidden in the house of the Turk when

the gendarmes came. Mother asked them not to open the door. Our Turkish neighbor gave the gendarmes brandy; they drank and went. He did not open the door, but in the morning he said: “I can’t keep you, go away.”

We came to our house. Then we went to another Turkish neighbor who was a healer. Mother was giving her jewelry to the neighbors to save our lives. Then mother went to her mother’s house. She said: “Why did you come, Ester?”

“If you die, I’ll die with you,” said mother.

Mother, grandma and we – three children went to the Turkish factory-owner’s house. Mother gave him our set of clocks in order to keep us. The Turk said: “When the gendarmes come, you enter the bathroom; it’s a sin, no one has the right to enter there.”

The newborn baby had been sleeping in the cradle. When the gendarmes came, mother took me and my brother, Joseph, and entered the bathroom, but she forgot the baby in the cradle.

The gendarmes said: “What a pretty baby; this can’t be the Turk factory-owner’s child. It seems this is an Armenian’s child.”

Mother felt that danger threatened the baby. She came out of her hiding place and said: “I’m Protestant.” The Protestants were freed from exile.

They took us to the Alma Oghlu Baghcha. They were open fields. Women, children, all who survived were there. They separated the Armenian Church members from the Protestants. Mother and grandmother stood puzzled together with us.

At that time, Shukri bey had been passing by, who was my uncle Garegin’s friend. Mother approached him and said: “Shukri bey, what about our old friendship? I’m Garegin Toutelian’s wife.”

He said: “Go to that side.”

The next day they took away the Armenian Church members and killed them. They checked the Catholics and the Protestants. They saw that mother had one child more. Grandma took the child on her shoulder; the child did not utter a sound. God kept it. And so, as Garegin Toutelian’s family, we were saved. Shukri bey said to the gendarme: “You take them safely to the Protestants, that is: the Germans.”

Mother was sweating heavily because of the emotion. My uncle’s Turkish servant saw that we were saved; he cooked dinner and brought it to us to eat. In our house, we saw that they had ripped up the floor and hammered

at the walls. They had been looking for gold, but we were saved.

There was a German orphanage in Izmir. When she was a young girl, mother had stayed in a German orphanage and so knew German well. She was invited to teach. For all of us they gave us four buns daily. We ate, but the baby died of hunger, for mother’s milk had gone dry because of the troubles.

We saw the Vorberians’ father on the way: they had cut his head and had cut his penis and put it in his mouth; many bodies were hacked to pieces. Mother fell ill in the German orphanage. In our garden we had salsify, mulberries and figs. Mother had prepared doshab with the mulberries and made us drink it with water every day. All those who were left alive were having trouble with their belly and spleen: they were swollen. Mother was crying, for her spleen also had swollen. The German physician prescribed a medicine, but mother said: “I have no money.” The doctor pitied her and gave the medicine himself. Mother drank it and was healed. She gave the remaining medicine to other patients. They also got well. This way, mother survived.

The German orphanage was turned over to the Americans. We were taken to Aleppo; it was in 1922. 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 Der-Zor. Only three of us were left: I, my mother and my brother.

My husband was an Armenian from Hamshen. Their family had escaped (in order not to change their faith) from Ordu in 1895. They had come to Adler along the coast. Then they had come to Yerevan and settled in New Malatia. When he met me, he told me that the Armenians in Adler were from Hamshen, who had left Turkey in order not to change their religion. 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.”

### 135 (135).

#### GRIGOR EKIZIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1921, Malatia)

Until 1915, my father was a blacksmith; he made ploughs, ploughshares, and weapons. One day, the Turks came and searched our house, for the Armenians of Malatia were very organized: they were always ready. There were one or two weapons in each house.

One day two Turkish officers came and said to father: “Give us your rifles.”

For those who had bought guns from father had said where they had bought them from him. Father said: “I have no guns.”

“How is it that you do not have? We know that you have and we know how many you have.”

Father had buried the gun in the garden under a tree; he took them there and showed them the place. They began digging here and there; they did not find any gun.

“All the same, you must give you weapon,” said the Turks.

They continued digging. Finally they dug out the weapon and took father together with the weapon. While coming out of the house, in the dark, one of the Turks

recognized father and said to the other: "It's enough we're taking the gun, why take him too? Let's leave him, let him go."

So they freed father, and he came home.

After a few days, other officers came and took father away. That was the end. They put handcuffs on father's hands and they bound two men to each other with handcuffs, so that they might not run away. The Turks knew well how to do such things. Where did they take them? God knows!

They took them away for a few days. Father, being a craftsman, had a file in his pocket. He began to file away slowly and loosened the handcuffs and began thinking about their flight. By daytime it was impossible; they decided to escape by night. The soldiers took the refugees to an open place for the night and they decided to run away. They came to the guard and said that they had natural needs. The guard permitted them to go, but they did not run away. Was it possible to escape from a serpent? They went again for a second time and said: "We have natural needs." The Turk guard left them again, but they did not dare to run away. They went for a third time and said: "We have needs." The guard, who was an armed soldier, said: "Ne bok yeyeceksin – yein" (What shit you're going to eat, go and eat! – Turk.). They took courage and ran away. After they went a few meters, they shouted after them: "Kaçdılar – vurın!" (They escaped – shoot! – Turk.).

In this way, father ran away and came back to Malatia. He went to his relatives, but they did not accept him, fearing he might harm them. He went to Koroudjoukh Village, on the banks of the Euphrates River, where he had a Turkish acquaintance, Hussein by name. The Turk took in father despite the order: "Whoever keeps an Armenian, will be punished."

The Turk kept father underground, in a special hiding place. At night, they took him out to take air, then, at dawn, again they sent him underground.

When the massacre of the Armenian was over, father wanted to come to Malatia to his house. That Turk Hussein's six brothers asked father to stay there; they promised to arrange for him to marry, for father made ploughs and ploughshares for them. Father did not agree.

The Turks said: "Alright, if you do not agree, then go to your house."

Father came to Malatia and heard that they had killed his wife and child on the road of exile...

He married again (an Armenian) and began to create a new household. I'm my father's first-born son, Grigor, born in 1921. Then, in 1925, my brother was born. Until 1929, my father's family had close relations with Hussein and his six brothers, for they had saved my father's life. Every year they used to bring us a cow, butter, cheese, water-melons and many other things as presents. Those Turks were very good to us. They loved father so much that they brought their gold in a purse and gave it to

father to keep. When they came for shopping, they took father with them to help them and keep their accounts: they had that much trust in father.

In 1929, when we had decided to go from Malatia to Armenia, Hussein came with his six brothers; they lay down in front of the car, asking father not to go, but father said: "No, it's my country, I will go."

They Turkish brothers said: "Go, Hovhannes, see that you may not regret it. If it is good, write to us, we'll come, too."

There are such Turks as well.

In December 1929, our family took the train for Samsun. There, we boarded a ship and came to Trapizon. I was nine years old. We stayed there for fifteen days, got authorization and came to Batoumi. From Batoumi, we came to Armenia in freight-cars as tourists and remained. They brought us to the Malatia district of Yerevan. In those days, there were no houses here. Only the school-lovers union had built fifteen houses: they were half finished. They put us up there. We created our household. Father lay the foundation of the first kolkhoz. There was no tram, no bus, no water fountain, no light, and no food. They brought water in barrels and distributed it. Sometimes, the wheel of the cart would break – so we had no water... We gathered rain-water or snow for our use... Our house was opposite today's Malatia market.

We lived this way and worked in the kolkhoz.

In 1941, as war started, I went to the front as a volunteer. But our family members, as members of the kolkhoz, were not even given ration coupons for bread. They had to sell grapes, apples, pears, and beet roots from our garden to buy bread, paying 100 rubles for one kilogram.

The winters of the 1930s and 1940s were really terrible. They can't be compared with the winters of these last years.

Few people lived in our area: there were many snakes, scorpions, mice and what not...

To cut things short, I went to the front and came back safe and sound...

In 1960, a man came from Malatia and said that there were one hundred and fifty families in Malatia and they wanted to come to Armenia. Armenia did not permit it, saying that the Turks had not allowed them to come. If they were to go to another country, let's say France or Germany, from there we could have them brought here. But that was not an easy thing. So, the Armenians of Malatia, all 150 families, are now scattered all over the world – America, England, and France. In Malatia, few Armenians are left now.

In 1970s I received a letter, where it was written. "I am Riza, the son of Housein from Koroujoukh. Are you Grigor, the son of Hovhannes? I would like to met you. That was my father Housein's last wish." He had found my address with great difficulty and sent that letter.

So, you see, there were good people among the Turks, too. They had kept my father for six-seven years and then they had kept their relationship ...

Now, aren't there good people among the Azerbaijanis, or in Sumgayit?<sup>1</sup> There are, there are good people as well.

### 136 (136).

#### HOVSEP STEPAN BAZOYAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1901, Tigranakert, Tpni Village)

I was born in 1901 in the village of Tpni, Tigranakert region. The inhabitants of our village were only Armenians. My father's name was Stepan, my mother's – Anoush.

Before the World War I, I attended the German Missionary School in Harpoot, and, as Turkey and Germany were allies, I was not exiled. In 1915, the Turks attacked our school, tried to enter it, take out the Armenian children and either kill them or make them change their religion, but the principal of our school who was a pastor – we called him Hayrik (Father – Arm.), did not allow them. But not much later, we were scattered. As I knew Kurdish well, a Kurdish tribe took me, circumcised me and Islamized me. But I knew that

I was Armenian. The Kurds gave me work: I used to cut trees with a saw. I lived with the Kurds until the truce, and when it was permitted to return to our places, I went back to our village. There were many Armenians who had come back from the exile. I learned from them that my father had died in prison under the whip strokes, and my mother, sisters, and brothers were martyred on the roads to exile. Disappointed, bereaved, I left our village for Tigranakert. There I married an orphan girl. But when Kemal Ataturk proclaimed: "Turkey – only for the Turks," we were compelled to move to Syria and then to Lebanon.

Thus the Turks sent us away from our homes, our country, and made us emigrants.

### 137 (137).

#### HOVHANNES KYOROGHLIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1904, Tigranakert)

When I was born, my father, Hovsep, and my mother, Nvard, were very happy. For a long time, they had been childless. Mother went from door to door: she collected silver and had it blessed in the church. She made a cross of it, then had my name and birth date written on the cross. The cross was hung around my neck. Then they put me on the back of a tight-rope walker. They had a rope drawn across the Euphrates, and the acrobat walked over the rope, carrying me on his back. My father, who had been the prosecutor of the village, said: "If God is going to show his miracle, let Him show it now. If my son is going to die, let him die now." And I remained alive by miracle, for I have been God's protégé. Other children were born after me: Verjiné, Diran, Pargev, Sedrak.

When the massacre began, the Turks entered Tigranakert and by night took my father away as one of the distinguished Armenians of the village. Mother used to tell us that they had mercilessly tortured father: they had pulled out his nails, repeating, "You must become a Turk."

Father said: "I won't deny my nationality, my religion. I am born Armenian and I'm going to die Armenian."

The Turks got more furious: they tortured and

tormented him. They put him on a stake; then they skinned him, filled the skin with hay and brought it before his house as an example. If the Armenians of the village refused to become Turks, they would have the same fate as their prosecutor...

The whole village did not convert. Many were tortured and tormented...

Then the Turks came and wanted to root up my father's family: they took away his brother, kidnapped his sisters.

At that time, I was quite old and remember everything well. My youngest brother, Sedrak, was newly born: he was forty days old. He began to cry; mother could not stop him crying, so she gagged his mouth with some cloth and took him to the barn, so the Turks would not hear his voice and come. At least we and those hidden in our house would remain alive. For two days baby Sedrak remained in the barn. After two days, mother said: "Probably that child is already dead." She went and saw Sedrak had remained alive in the barn hungry and thirsty.

Then mother went and became a maidservant at the Turkish bey's house, in order to feed us and the orphans who had found refuge in our house. That was

<sup>1</sup> Sumgayit – city in Azerbaijan, where the Azeri Turks massacred the Armenian ethnic minority in February 1988.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1972, was delivered to me by his son, Daniel Bazoyan, in 2005, living in Canada.

why they would not call mother, Nvard; they called her 'Ana' (Mother – Turk.), for she had saved the lives of many. I remember: one day mother had taken me to the Turk's house; and I saw there the carpets of our house, and many other things that they had plundered. I said to mother: "All these are ours." Mother put her finger on her mouth and said: "Hovhannes, my son, keep silent; if not – they'll kill us, too."

Then I became a fedayi. We remained in the frozen mountains for forty days: hungry, thirsty; we used to melt the snow to drink water. We lived somehow with what we had, but did not surrender. One of us went to the village; he gathered food and brought it to us.

Then, we came down as a group to Tigranakert and attacked the Turks. I went and saved my mother from the Turks' house. She had a little girl together with her, whom she had found among the dead, had cleaned her, dressed her and was keeping her. Then we went to Aleppo, but I could not remain there; I went to France with the intention to have mother brought later. There was a rich woman there; she wanted to give me her daughter in marriage, but she said: "Why call you Hovhannes? After this, we'll call you Jean, and we'll change Kyoroghlian to Kyoroghli."

I could not stand it: I said: "My father died; they skinned him, stuffed his corpse with hay, but he did not become a Turk. Mother lost everything; she did not become a Turk. Shall I become a Frenchman? Damn your money and your daughter."

I came out of the house; a large truck came and ran over me. I was badly injured and taken to hospital. News had reached mother that Hovhannes was overrun by a truck and had died. Mother wore mourning clothes and had a requiem in the church for the deceased.

I remained in hospital for about six months. One day, I opened my eyes: I saw doctors and nurses around me. They said: "Who do you have in this city?"

I said: "Simon and Tigran Kyoroghlian are my cousins." The doctors sent them news telling them that their cousin was alive. They said that their cousin had died. But one day, they came and saw their cousin was alive.

Then I worked in the French hospital for about six months. I learned many medical facts and in 1931, I came to Aleppo. There I opened a small office and married in 1933. Armenians, Kurds, all loved me; they called me 'Dr. Hovhannes.' I specialized in women's illnesses and cured free of charge. My wife often said: "Hovhannes, again you did not take money?"

How could I take money? They were poor people; I pitied them.

In 1952, the Syrian government decided to grant me a doctor's diploma: a certificate. I healed the children of distinguished people; I treated them with herbs: not medicines.

In 1966, we came to America. Thank God, we live comfortably. Thus, I have seen much in my time, but, as I said, God has kept me...

### 138 (138).

#### SATENIK STEPAN TER-SARGISSIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1908, Tigranakert)

I was born on March 10, 1908, to Stepan and Katar Ispirian, in Tigranakert. When the genocide began in 1915, my father was killed and the rest of our family was deported to the Syrian Desert. On the road, I witnessed numerous ghastly scenes, women and children lying here and there in the valleys, either killed or dead from exhaustion. I was taken away from my mother and made a servant in a Turkish home. I was ultimately reunited with my mother, and we made our way to the United

States in August, 1921. I was able to lead a productive and happy life in America, but I never forgot my early childhood. I married Mihran Ter-Sargissian, in 1937, and we were blessed with a daughter, Lucy. I was overjoyed when Lucy married Aram Papazian, and I always treated him as my very own son. Nothing brought me more happiness than doting on my two granddaughters throughout their childhood and then doing it all over again with my two great-grandsons.

### 139 (139).

#### MKRTICH KARAPETIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Tigranakert)

The real Tigranakert (city built by Tigran the Great) is Farghin, which is twenty-five km towards the Ararat Plain. The palace of King Tigran the Great had been

there, but was ruined by earthquakes.

Mount Ararat is visible from Tigranakert. The Tigris River flowed through the town. We were natives

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1982, in New York, was handed to me by Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian, in 2003.

of Tigranakert. I remember everything well: in detail. In 1915 they exiled us all of a sudden. I was very little, but I remember: they drove out all the people of Tigranakert. Mother's brother, who was hardly fifteen, took me on his shoulders. And mother was walking with my little brother in her arms. I remember these well. My elder brother, Nshan, who was six years my senior, walked while holding grandma's hand. While walking they were beating us with sticks, whips, and swords. Finally we came and reached the northern part of the desert of Der-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 did not 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.

For the last time mother came, kissed us, and went away. For each time she came, she had been giving one gold coin to the guard in order to see us: her three little children, and kiss us. At the moment when mother came for a last time to see us, an uproar rose. God saved us. Armed Persians came and began slaughtering the Turkish gendarmes. They saved us all: we, the children, also our mother and a few other adults, whose turn had not come yet.

At that time the Persian shah had issued an order saying: 'Whoever brings an Armenian, be it a child, adult or old, he would get one gold coin for each.' Those Persian soldiers gathered us to take to Persia, to fulfill their shah's order. They came and put us in line. At that moment a magnificent old man came, with a beard that almost reached his knees; his name was Sheikh Abdul Khazer Geylani. He came and said to the Persians: "Isn't there a dressmaker among these women?"

Mother, who was a skilled dressmaker, said: "I'm a dressmaker." That magnificent sheikh said: "Daughter, where are you taking these children? Come to the tents and make dresses for the Arab women living here, about Der-Zor. They'll give you wheat, food." Then he turned to the chief of the Persian soldiers and said: "For each of them you will get one gold coin from the shah. Take." He gave four gold coins to the soldier and freed us.

That magnificent sheikh took us to the tents and said to his men: "If even a hair were to fall from their heads, I'll cut off your heads."

Mother used to make dresses for the Arab women in the tents and brought food. We lived somehow. At nights she slept with us: she lay on her back, put my little brother on her breast, so that he might suck milk. Though there was no milk left, she opened her arms like one who was crucified. On one arm, I put my head, on the other – my elder brother's head, and the baby rested on her, so that nothing should happen. She would trust no one, she was so scared. Mother was a beautiful woman; the sheikh's brother fell in love with her. Mother refused. He said: "If you don't agree, I'll kill your children."

Mother said: "Kill, all the same, I won't marry you."

At that time, a man went and told the sheikh. He came and said: "Scoundrel, what do you want from them? I pitied them. I was good to them. I gave four gold coins, so that you kill them? Isn't there another girl for you to marry?"

He took off his revolver and tack-tack-tack: he killed his brother before our eyes.

Mother had become very thin; she had no milk; my little brother could not stand all that: he died. There was not a sheet to wrap him in for his burial. Mother tore her underwear, wrapped him in it, and we buried him.

We remained there for quite a long time, until 1918, when a decree was issued, saying: "Everyone who wants can return to his land." Mother had bought a camel; she sold it, bought a donkey. We put on it what we had; mother also sat on the donkey, and we set off towards Merdin. On the way to Merdin, mother called us to stand near her, knelt before a pit, where there were many human bones, took one and kissed. We understood nothing and said: "Daye, avci ya?" (Mother, what is it? – Kurd.). We asked in Kurdish, for we had forgotten to speak Armenian.

Mother said: "These are the relics of our brothers and sisters."

Finally we went up to Merdin with the donkey, from where trains went to Aleppo. At that time, we were told that the Americans had come and were helping the

Armenians. We had already lost our human appearance: our hair had become long; we had no normal clothes on us. They asked us if we wanted to go to America.

Mother was an intelligent woman, but in this case she was mistaken: she refused. Had we gone, we would have lived well. But mother had her reason to refuse, for she had found her brother through agents: he was in Tigranakert. He had put our house in order and would come to Merdin to meet us.

Suddenly, we saw that mother was kissing someone. We went beside her and saw that he was our cousin. He had come from Tigranakert, would go to Aleppo and had met us by chance. He went and changed his ticket, took us to Tigranakert on the donkey, and set us up in a khan. Mother gave him two ghurush and said: "Go, Martiros (the Arabs had changed his name to Mohamed), go and tell my brother that his sister has come, let him come."

The boy went and saw uncle sharpening his scythe. We were eating bread and grapes in the khan, when mother's brother came. Our "deceased" uncle had found us. He had run all the way bareheaded and barefoot to find us. My brother recognized our uncle. It isn't possible to describe. He took us together with mother to his house.

Mother died very young. I had been asleep, when they took her and buried her. I did not know about it.

We remained in Tigranakert until 1923. Mother had already passed away. Uncle was at a loss with three children. The Turks had killed his wife during the exile. He had to marry again. He brought a very good wife. She took care of us as her own children...

Kemal's government came to power; we were obliged to leave Turkey. Uncle went secretly to find a way to go to Aleppo. On the way, they saw him and they recognized him, for he was cross-eyed. He was a blacksmith and useful to the country. The commander said: "We need you, where are you going?" They arrested him and brought him back in chains. But uncle would not calm down. He obtained a passport, and we went to Aleppo together with uncle.

In Aleppo someone came and said to uncle: "Give me this boy, let him take care of my pigs." I did not stay there long. Then I heard that they had taken my father's brother to work on the construction of the Baghdad-Berlin railroad and then killed him. My father and mother's elder brother had also been killed there.

I went and found my uncle's widow, but she herself had children to look after, so she gave me to an orphanage. We were eighty children in the orphanage: forty boys and forty girls. I used to wash the floor of the orphanage. One day, my uncle's wife came and said: "Your brother is going to France." I was astonished, and the water pail fell from my hand. Brother went to

France. He made good progress there, for our families were good blacksmiths. He became a foreman there.

Then I became the swineherd of the orphanage. I took care of the pigs. When it was necessary, I rounded them up and took them to the sty. During the day, I used to climb a tree and sing. Black-dressed women used to come, tan-pots on their heads. One day, one of them responded to my song by singing. I got down the tree and asked: "Who are you?"

She said: "I'm Gevorg chavoush's sister."

I ran to Gevorg chavoush to pass the news: "Gevorg chavoush, your sister is here."

He came running, but the black-dressed Arab women had gone. We looked for her in the market, in khans; she wasn't anywhere. I continued minding the swine and climbing the tree and singing there, for I knew that if the woman in the black clothes came, she would answer my song. One day, she came; I shouted out loud: "Gevorg chavoush, this is your sister." Gevorg chavoush came running. He began tugging at the girl's hand; the woman next to her was pulling her other hand. From one side, the Arab woman was pulling, from the other – her brother. Gevorg chavoush took his sister away. He hit the Arab woman, who wanted to marry the Armenian girl to her brother.

The following day the Arabs gathered, but Gevorg chavoush was a military man and served in the Arab soldiers' Kerek khan, he came and said: "Now I'll bring the cannon and kill all of you." They were frightened and ran away. The girl remained with her brother. I returned to Aleppo. I heard that my brother wanted to take me to France. One day, I met my orphanage companions who were going to France to study. I waited for my passport, but my brother did not send it. Those friends of mine went to France, but came back for they had gone illegally. I did not want to go illegally: I remained. Later I went to Beirut. I married in Beirut and in 1947 came to Soviet Armenia with my family. In Yerevan, I built my house in New Kilikia. I was a good, skilled master. The beautiful metal bars of the windows of the Matenadaran, the cellar of the wine factory, the Republic Square and many other great buildings are my creations. I was a very skilled and respected blacksmith master.

One day a black car drove up to my work place. A man came, sat in the director's office, called me and asked: "Have you got a brother in France?"

I said: "Yes."

"You must deny it, otherwise it will be bad. In your documents you must write that you have no relatives abroad."

I began thinking, if my brother hears this, what will he think?

“It’s up to you: either deny or you must get in the black car.”

I looked at my director’s face; he winked at me to deny.

“Alright,” I said. “I have no brother.” The man filled in the form saying that I had no relatives abroad. So, it turned out that I had come down from heaven! As I was working in the workshop of the Council of Ministers, it should be written that way. In 1949, in one night, they exiled thousands of Armenians. My

director’s one wink of the eye saved my family from exile. My skill in handicrafts, I owe to my deceased uncle. He had given me to apprentice with a goldsmith and our family were blacksmiths. I was a good master and I worked till recently. My daughter, Tigranouhi became an accountant, and my grandchildren are very intelligent; one of them is a lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute, and the other is a post-graduate in computing. I live with them, and after the death of my wife I find my consolation in them.

#### 140 (140).

#### **EVA TOPALIAN’S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1909, Merdin, Derik Village)**

In the village of Derik, Merdin region, our family was very large: father was a member of the village council and my uncles – Ghazar, Mourad, Sevan, Mkrtych, were linen merchants – together with my father – and were very rich.

During the massacre, in the confusion, my two-year-old younger sister and I lost our father and mother and went and lived in Turkish villages.

One day, our mother came and found us, but she said that our father had died, rather he had been killed.

Together with mother, we returned to Merdin, but our houses were burnt.

The Turks had already kidnapped our thirteen-year-old sister, for she was an adult girl. Is it a sin before God? I don’t know, but my sister and I married our uncle’s two sons. I was already fourteen years of age, my sister just twelve, but we married in order not to fall in the hands of Turks.

Now we have come to Istanbul from Merdin and live an Armenian life.

#### 141 (141).

#### **MARIAM AKHOYAN’S TESTIMONY\*\*** **(B. 1909, Merdin, Derik Village)**

Before the massacre only Armenians lived in the village of Derik, Merdin region, and they spoke only Armenian. There was a priest, Ter-Petros. The Turks made Isihim go on four feet: they rode him like a donkey; they pierced his back and neck with knives. He cried out: “Christ, save us.”

The Turks became more furious and said: “Call your Christ, let him come and save you.” Our old family name was Papoghlu (Son of Priest – Turk.). We were very religious. That priest Ter-Petros was from our ancestral house. We were a much respected family, but we suffered much.

Our village Derik was in Merdin. There were five churches there – Assyrian, Armenian, Armenian Catholic, Protestant and St. George. There were paintings on the walls of St. George, the bells tolled.

When the massacre started, we were in our neighbor’s house. The askyars came to take father away; mother fell on him and began to cry. The askyars threw mother aside and took father to the army. And there he died.

They took me to a Turkish village. The elders would speak about the fact that the Turks were slaughtering Armenians and abducting girls. I was small, but I was intelligent enough to understand. I was clever; I used to rub mud on my face; I kept my feet and clothes dirty, so that they would not like me and take me. They said that they put stones on the bellies of pregnant women; then they stood on them, so that the child inside would die.

Later, mother came and found me in the Turkish village. Mother lived till the age of one hundred. She always used to say: “If they have had the possibility, they would take out my inner flame and they would hand it to me. That flame has entered our blood and marrow of our children.” My poor mother, up to the end of her life, wore only black. She used to say: “If a Turk comes to your house, wash the steps and the door with soap water. If they give you an apple, make a hole in your pocket and throw it out. If they come, board up your house for they’ll take away either your money or your honor.” Mother always had that fear in her heart; she feared that

\* The survivor speaks Kurdish: she hardly knows Armenian. I have translated with the help of her relatives.

\*\* The survivor speaks Kurdish: she hardly knows Armenian. I have translated with the help of her relatives.

the Turks would kidnap her children.

There were three schools in Derik, but mother did not want her granddaughter to go to school. She had hardly finished her elementary school and had just started the secondary school, when mother took her school-satchel and tore it up. She did that because she was afraid that the Turks would do her harm. At last, we came here. My grandsons, Gevorg and his brother, are choristers in the churches of Samatia and Gnali islands. Here they go to school. The Armenian school here won't accept your child if he isn't baptized.

Every morning, every evening, daily I pray fifty times:

*“Oh, God deliver us completely,  
Lest the Armenian Christian  
Should fall into the hands of Turks.  
Jesus Christ saved us;  
He is our faith.”*

When we came to Istanbul, we began kissing the walls and the ground of the church. As our village was very religious, we fasted at Lent...

Our Derik St. George Church had six keys: three of them turn this way, three of them turned the other way; the church bell used to ring. Now, not a single Armenian Church is left there.

## 142 (142).

### PETROS STEPAN VOSKERICHIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1905, Severeck)

I was born in Severeck/Severak (Black Ruin – Arm.), in 1905. My father was a famous goldsmith in the town. He was known as Stepan agha, “Kuyumcu Başı” (Chief Goldsmith – Turk.). I had four elder sisters and a younger brother. We were a large family. My father had two brothers and three sisters who were elder than him. Each of them had five to six children, even married ones, so we numbered more than a hundred people. These were the paternal side.

I had a grandmother and uncles from the maternal side that lived in Tigranakert (Farghin), because my mother had come from there to Severak as a bride. My uncles there were sericulturists. They raised silkworms in large areas. They also had silk weavers. My eldest sister, Zarouhi, was married and had a boy and a girl. Next came Paydsar, then Yester, then Mariam. They were not married yet. I was the fifth child and I had a younger brother, Hakob. I was very fond of going to school. I attended the primary school in our town. My father promised to send me elsewhere for better education. But the last two years (1913-1915), before we left Severak, were politically turbulent and unstable. I had a well-educated elder cousin who had been taken to prison and was being tortured cruelly. They pulled his mustache in bunches. They pulled out his fingernails. They even put a large beam behind his knees and pushed him backwards shattering his bones. My father kept postponing my going to school out of Severak, and after that I never had a chance.

Few months before the exile, my sister's husband was called for military service. They said they needed soldiers. Then came news that those young soldiers were being killed by the authorities, and that our houses would

be set on fire. My eldest sister died of her sorrow for her husband.

First they gathered the responsables, the chiefs of the town. Then they called on the youngsters and then, when the old and the women were left helpless, they sent the inhabitants out of their houses. There came orders that within a week we had to leave our houses. We could take whatever we wanted. Everybody started preparations to move. Some people rented carts, put their goods on them and paid the owners of the carts to take them till wherever they would be driven. When the exile started as soon as we came out of town; those cart owners took the carts with the goods and ran away. Others threw the goods on the road and left, and, of course, all sorts of robbers would gather on it, on the spot. Robbers were everywhere all through the road. They robbed money, clothes, jewels, belongings. They even took with them beautiful girls or raped them, if they refused to go. I was horrified at the scenes that I saw. These were inhuman acts. They even betted on the sex of the fetus, in the wombs of pregnant women, bringing the babies out of the wombs on their swords. I do not want to remember, but I cannot expel these memories from my mind.

My whole family left their houses thinking that we would come back after the war was over. My father, uncles and elder cousins had already been taken by the authorities and never came back. We knew that they were being killed. They gathered them, tied them up and pushed them down a reef or left them to die that way.

My mother, my eldest sister's two children, my sisters, my aunts with their children, we all left Severak together. There were two thousand people moving. All were Armenians. The Turk neighbors, who were fewer

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1973, was handed to me in 2006, in Cairo (Egypt), by the survivor's daughter, Sonia Voskerichian-Bayramian.

than the Armenians, stayed in their places. My mother had dressed me up, also my younger brother, as girls, because she had heard that they were killing the boys.

We walked for hours and days. We were treated cruelly. I can say, after each two or three kilometers some would die, either because of hard beating, or robbery, or because of daring to try to drink water. They [Turks] would give water if they received money. Sometimes, they would take the money and kill instead. Already, a place that you could reach in one day, it would take us five days, because they took us from awkward, hard and dry places, away from water. We passed by many places and towns. We reached a place called Karadjouroun, then, Yedikouyou. Many, many died meanwhile. We came to a cross road where other groups from other towns were coming. At that point, horsemen harshly ran on us, and a slaughter started. My little brother was so much afraid that he started vomiting blood and fell down dead. Our group was divided; each went into a different direction. My aunts, with their children, went one way, my mother, with her children – another. One of the Kurd soldiers came near my mother and asked her to give her the little girl (which was me). My mother held me back, then recognized the guy and told him that I was not a girl. He knew; he promised my mother that he would take care of me. It was the last time I saw my mother. I walked back with that Kurd soldier. On our way, I never forget the scenes that I came across. Hundreds of people were dead, thrown on top of another. They were naked, because the soldiers robbed the dresses of the dead. There was a slaughtered woman on the ground. Her throat was cut and thrown. She was not dead but was bleeding badly. She was raising her head and falling back, and each time the blood flooded out. There was a new born baby on her, breast feeding. The man accompanying me murmured curses, sent me away and shot the woman to stop her being tortured. Another soldier took the baby and crushed his head on a stone.

That man took me to a house. There were two brothers. One was kind but the other was hysterical. They told me my name was Ali, and that I had to serve in that house crushing wheat. I had no idea where the wheat grew, nor did I know how to do my job. I received a good beating till I got used. One day the lady of the house baked a lot of bread and sent me with one of the members of the house to another town to give the bread to the poor. We went, riding donkeys, away of our place almost forty kilometers. There was a river passing by that place. There were a lot of deported Armenians. I saw, with my own eyes, how they were slaughtering the Armenians and throwing them down to the river. The place was a very high steep hill with a narrow way from where only one cart could pass. The Turks, who lived in that area, complained that the water from which they drank was filled with blood. They started throwing down

the Armenians alive. As I said, the place was so high that they would reach the river breathless. But some fell into the river and could swim away. So, they started tying up their hands and legs before throwing them into the water.

The hysterical brother of the house, where I worked for, was very cruel. He told me that he would take me to the khonakh, a large house in Nadjarout. He wanted to get rid of me. But, there also, I was lucky enough to find somebody who knew my father. We called her “abla.” She took me to her house. She took care of me. I stayed there for a while.

One day, I decided to go back to Severak. I reached there and walked in the town. Passing by a shop, I saw my father’s work table and his little cupboard. I kept watching for minutes. The man working on the table asked me, if he could help me. I told him those belonged to my father. He asked if I was Armenian. I told him my name was Ali. But, that goldsmith turned out to be an Armenian who was brought back from the deported Armenians to produce the beautiful handicrafts that only Armenians could do. All the artisans in the town used to be Armenians. He asked his boss to allow me to work with them. I did. During my stay in my birthplace, I met friends of my father who later sent me by a caravan to Tigranakert, to relatives who were goldsmiths like my father, and who welcomed me as their son. I stayed there six months. I had a dispute, so I decided to leave them. Tigranakert had four main doors. I went out of the door that took me to Merdin.

From Merdin I went down and from there I took a train to Aleppo. Two years had passed since 1915, and Aleppo was now controlled by the English. There was a special place for the deported Armenians. I went and stayed there. I worked near a goldsmith. He loved me like his son. He had no children. I made some friends in Aleppo who told me that they stayed in Reverend Aharon’s orphanage who would help them go to Armenia as volunteer soldiers. Immediately, I signed in at the orphanage.

I met my aunt and her family in Aleppo, just by chance. Apparently, the group to which my aunt belonged arrived there sound, but my mother’s group was driven to Der-Zor. My aunt wanted to keep me next to her, because I was the only survivor from her brothers’ families. But, I had made my decision. Nothing could stop me from fighting for my country.

1919 was the happy date. Forty five volunteers moved from Aleppo to Beirut. We stayed ten days, then, by ship, we arrived to Constantinople. We stayed six days in a special place arranged by the Armenians. From there, we went to Batoumi, then to the Armenian boarder, Sanahin. After four days they sent us to Alexandrapol and from there – directly to Kars. General Nazarbekov found us still young. He sent us to Yerevan to be trained more.

Four months passed. Hunger started. Suddenly, news came that we had to leave for Kars. In the fortress of Kars I

was in Dro's troop. There were well experienced soldiers with us, who could tell from the sound of the bombs how far the enemy was. Some of the horse-riding soldiers, who refused to fight, tried to escape. We were given the order of stopping them. Some returned. We stayed there for months, helpless, waiting for orders to hit the enemy. One day we were told whoever could save his life, let him do so. Almost sixty thousand people would leave the fortress from a door. A Turk had taken position in front of the door with a machinegun, shooting whoever came out. One of my friends called Hakob, put a knife in his mouth and ran directly towards the Turk. Of course, he reached there his body full of holes like a sieve, but he succeeded in killing the enemy and waving us to go out safely. The mob ran to the train station, where, already the inhabitants of the surrounding villages were gathered, trying to get into the train. Whoever could get hold of any part of the train would not leave it; just to save his life. The train moved four stations. The enemy arrived, bombing and

ruining all and killing large numbers of people.

We came to Yerevan. There was famine, poverty and illness. We were four friends, Armenak, Khachik, Artin and me. We stayed in Yerevan for a while.

I can fill books with the stories of my life and with the incidents I came across...

Later, we decided to escape to Tiflis, then – to Batoumi, and from there – to Constantinople. There, at the Samatia's orphans' organization, I received an official paper that I was an orphan and that I was born in 1905, in Severak, goldsmith by occupation; the only official paper that I own from my past life.

After working for a while there, we went to the Korfu orphanage, then to the Syria orphanage, and, finally, in 1923, to Egypt. Of course, as I said, there were no red carpets waiting for us at the ports from where I and my friends went on huge ships to reach those places. We had no passports, no clothes, no money, but we had God with us, helping us to survive.

### 143 (143).

#### **KHACHER HAKOB ABLAPOUTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1893, Yedessia, Kamourdj Village)**

I was born in the village of Kamourdj of Yedessia (Urfa). Our ancestors had been deported from Sassoon.

I heard from my grandfather that when Christ was on earth, king Abgar, who had 40 sons, had leprosy. His sons were also stricken with that illness. No doctor could heal them. King Abgar learned that Christ had come to earth. He healed the blind, and they saw; he healed the crippled, and they walked; he sent his artist, Tadevos, to go and draw Christ's portrait and bring it to him.

Tadevos went to Jerusalem, entered the Temple, and saw Christ preaching at the altar. He wanted to draw his portrait, but the picture became the portrait of an old man. The artist turned his canvas to the other side; the picture became the portrait of a twelve-year-old boy. At that time Christ came to him and said: "What are you doing?"

The painter said: "Lord, I want to make your portrait, but I cannot."

Christ took the canvas, pressed it on his face and gave it to the artist. The painter took the canvas and set off. He hadn't noticed that a light was following him, just like a watchman. Seeing the light, people went to catch it. The artist saw that they were going to catch him. He saw a dry well near some ruins and threw the canvas into a well. Tadevos came to the king and said: "I threw Christ's portrait down a dry well."

Abgar heard this, gathered his forty sons, and told them: "There must be water in that well, we'll wash in it."

Thirty-nine of the sons believed, but not the youngest. The king took his sons there; they drew water from the

well, bathed themselves and were healed. The father cursed the youngest son, saying: "May your children be sick for your lack of faith." Until our days, there always was water in that well. The sick went there to be healed. The place was called St. Sadourak.

There was also Father Abraham's lake in Yedessia, full of fish. It was forbidden to eat those fish. The town was pretty, that was why it was called "the capital". It had a lot of orchards and vineyards around it. The air was fresh, the water wholesome, healing. There were two hospitals – one was the town's, the other was German.

I had five aunts, three uncles and father. We were farmers and gardeners. The Armenian Kamourdj Village was an hour's distance from Yedessia. It had a church and a school. One thousand Armenian Christian families lived there. We had houses, gardens, vineyards, sheep, and horses. We worked and lived an ordinary life.

I was born in 1893. When I was small, they used to tell of the sad events of 1895. My mother would cry and tell about her two uncles who were killed in Yedessia. The elder, Hakob, was married, the younger was single. There came an order from the government to gather the Armenians' weapons. They collected one thousand eight hundred guns from the Armenians. Those who did not have any were forced to buy them to produce them during the search. The sultan had ordered the extermination of the Armenians. As a signal for the attack, a shot would be fired, after which the Turk soldiers and the mob should rush into the Armenian quarters and begin the slaughter. They broke open the doors with axes. They pulled out

the inhabitants from their houses and slaughtered them brutally. This way they killed forty people from our house. A sheikh ordered, "Tie the hands and feet like sheep and bring them to me."

They tied the hands and feet of more than one hundred men and slit their throats like sheep. To save themselves, people would hide in wells, but the Turks would shoot them with pistols from above. The barbarous butchery of December 19, 1895 lasted till noon.

On Saturday night, eight thousand Armenian women and children took refuge in the church. The Turks burnt the church, pouring thirty cans of gasoline while the people were in it. They killed three thousand Armenians with axes.

At that time, the people of Kamourdj held a meeting and decided: those who had weapons should bring them out, to watch over and defend the roads of the village.

The position of our village was very good. Behind us there was a mountain. In front, there was a plain. It was possible to see intruders when they were still at a distance equivalent to a ten hours' walk. The village had one road. Stone barricades were erected on the roofs of the village houses. Certain young men went and occupied positions in the gardens. A big group of the enemy was coming towards us on horses, camels, and on foot – to kill and plunder.

Our boys opened fire from the gardens. We saw from afar that confusion had fallen upon the mob. Then they went away with fear.

We began to think of our lives: sowing wheat and harvesting it. We worked old and young together. I also began working with my parents from an early age in the garden and in the vineyard. I watched over the grazing goats.

We shared one courtyard with my uncles. My elder uncle, Khacher, had four sons and two daughters. My other uncle, Hayrapet, had three daughters and three sons. They had cut his throat with a saw in the fields while he was sowing wheat. My third uncle, Davit, had five daughters. He was very brave. In 1915 the Turks imprisoned, then hanged him.

My father, Hakob, was loved by everybody. When people quarreled in the village father went and reconciled them, so that they should not fall in the hands of the government.

In October, 1915, an order came from the government that all the Armenian families should be deported: both rich and poor. Mother dressed me and my brother like girls: she tied kerchiefs on our heads, so as not to let it be known that we were boys. They told us not to sell the animals; they would move us to Rakka.

We set off. The elderly and the young, a large crowd, all of them were weak, tired; they had worked all through the summer to earn their living – to survive. They had made supplies for winter, and now snow had already

covered the ground. On the way the Turks attacked our caravan; they plundered the animals and took them away. We reached the desert. They had brought exiles from different places; they joined us. They drove us all to Rakka and from there to Sappa. My uncle's wife died on the road. From there, we went to Maghtantpni. Plundering and killing, they took us to Pessera, near the Khabur River. Many women and girls threw themselves into the river and drowned in order not to fall in the hands of the Turks. Father knew Arabic. He promised a man some money and asked him to leave us there. That Arab took us to his yard. In the morning, when the refugees were to set out, they saw that we weren't there; they said: "We won't go till Hakob and his family come with us." So they came and found us. We joined them and continued our way to Suvar.

After Suvar, we crossed the Khabur River and came to Abou-Hamda; the water was salty and bitter. The people fell on the ground like mulberries: the poor people had no more strength. We continued our way and reached Aynelghazal. There my other uncle's wife and daughters died. We went to Telhafat. It was a large village, many Armenians remained there. We continued our road and reached Mosul, the capital of Assyria. When we left that place, my father fell ill.

We crossed over the wooden bridge of the Khabur River and reached Nepieos. They took us to a large khan. I saw with my own eyes a deep pit there. They would drag people by their feet and throw them into the pit.

We remained there for quite a long time. We sent father to Mosul for treatment. There, as father knew Arabic, he had got acquainted with the secretary of a rich man. He had told father to go and bring his family. Father came to Nepieos. There my five-year-old brother fell ill with cholera and died. My uncle's daughter-in-law died, too, leaving her two daughters to my father's care.

They would drive us from Mosul to Karkout, but father promised money to the soldiers to set us free. After two o'clock that night the soldiers came, opened the door and we came out of that disgusting, stinking den.

From that large family the following had remained alive: Davit's three sons and one daughter, Khacher's two sons and two orphan daughters, Hayrapet's two sons and one daughter, my father, his two sons and two daughters. In a word, from our family of thirty-five persons, seventeen remained alive. Uncle Davit's sons, the two sons of Khacher were taken away by an Arab and killed. Of the two girls, the younger one was converted to Islam and became a Turk. The other came and found us after the exile. We were not able to support her. My uncle took her to Baghdad – we haven't seen her to this day.

In this way, the Armenian nation was scattered. The whole nation, like wandering lambs, ran away from the wolves only to fall under the paws of foxes.

The Kurd, who had spoken with father, sent two

deserter soldiers, and together with us, they came to the village. As we approached the village, they showed it to us then left us and went away. It was raining; there was no shelter; we were soaked. My uncle Hayrapet's four children and we – five people, also, father and mother. Father said: "Let me go to the village to bring animals and take you."

Father and my elder brother reached the village. They met Kurds, who had fled from Van, and General Andranik. Killing and plundering the Armenians, they came and asked money from father. They said: "We've killed your friend, we'll kill you, too," and began beating father. They left him half-dead and went away. Father, who knew Arabic, somehow went to the official there, knelt before his wife, and begged. They gave my brother two donkeys, to take us to their house. We went to the official's house; they made a fire; they dried our clothes; our bodies were warmed. They gave us food, we ate. Father said: "We'll go to Narkizli Village." The man took us to Narkizli in a carriage. There they welcomed us. A man gave us work, but we were not able to work. Whoever saw us would say that we would die soon, for we were hungry, thirsty, and exhausted.

That man wrote a letter to the head of the village and sent us on a coach to the Assyrian village of Telhafat. We gave the letter to the head of the village. A book had remained from my grandma; mother gave him the book. He kissed the book, put it on his head. He gave us a place to stay; we lived there; we gained back our strength. We recovered and learned their language. We lived there for two years.

One day father said: "Let's go to Mosul, let's see who survived." We went to Mosul. Someone shouted from the bridge, came, and hugged father. He was our neighbor's son.

My uncle's sons came and took us to Garahoush. We spent the winter there. Four kilometers from Mosul, there was a very rich man, who was called Sapounji bey. He had a wonderful garden full of fruit-trees. He gave us work there; we worked without pay. Father sewed using cotton material. We left there and separated from my uncle's sons, but hunger began to trouble us.

The whole family set off. We were very afraid that they might know that we were Armenians. We thought even the stones on the ground were our enemies. At night we slept in a cave. There was a fountain near the cave. On the fountain there was Armenian writing. My elder sister said: "This was an Armenian village. They killed them all." We went through the mountains and saw a destroyed shop. In the morning, we continued our way to Jizrabodan. On the way, we ate fodder; our stomachs would not function. We approached a village; the church was seen from afar. We reached the village, entered a house, but they did not give us room; they put us up in the barn. There was a ring on my younger sister's finger.

The landlord's daughter wanted it. Sister asked for a little bread. The girl gave a piece of bread and took the ring. We shared that piece of bread among six persons. In the morning, we started walking again: hungry, thirsty, we reached the wide Peshkhabur River. A group of Arab soldiers were going to Jizrabodan. They entered the river; we entered, too. Father entered first, then brother and then me. Sister, mother and my younger sister remained on the other bank of the river. Father got out of the water; my brother also was on the verge of getting out. My elder sister saw that the water was carrying me away; she shouted. Father and brother reached out and caught me by the hand and took me out of the water. They saw that the water would wash away sister, too. Father had a stick in his hand. With the help of the stick he pulled sister out of the water. Father knew the language and their laws, he shouted: "Let those who have honor, help!" The soldiers came to help. They held each other by the hand and took sister out of the river. One of the soldiers wrapped her, so that she would not get cold. He gave a horse to father and said: "Go and bring your wife and daughter." Father got on the horse, went to the other bank of the river and brought mother and sister. Father thanked them.

It was two days that my elder brother had stomach pains: his bowels were not functioning. He said he could not walk anymore. Father remained with him. We went, crossed the Tigris River by boat; on the other side was the town of Jizrabodan. Father brought my brother, and we entered the town. We were six; we had one bed. Winter was cold. It was the month of January. We found a donkey on the road; we loaded our clothes on it and continued our way. We met a woman and asked: "Isn't there a place, a khan, where we could stay?"

The woman said: "Father, don't go to the khan. They killed all the Armenians there and dumped the bodies in the wells."

We knew Kurdish. My elder sister said: "Father, listen to that woman's words."

We went with the woman and entered a large yard. We were the only ones there. That night, we stayed there. Father had a mejitié. Mother sent him to buy some liver. The butcher said: "Don't speak Armenian," for he had also been Armenian. Father brought the liver and mother boiled it. My brother drank the bouillon, and his stomach started to function again.

In the morning, we set off and reached a village. We reached a house; a man's voice said in Kurdish: "Kafer's voice is heard." That means, "There are Armenians". We fled. On the way, we met a camel caravan. The owner of the caravan greeted us, laid a table, butchered a kid, and cooked pilaf with wheat.

In the morning we set off together with them. They protected us: when anyone of us could not walk, they made him or her sit on the camels, so that we should not be on the road. My feet were swollen by walking; they

made me sit on the camel, and we came to Mespetin. Mother and sisters had gone ahead of us and reached a mill and were waiting for us behind it. My younger sister ran to the river; the elder sister called: "Girl, come here, if they know you're Armenian they'll kill you."

A man came out of the mill. Learning that we were Armenians, he took us to his place. Father had changed beyond recognition. A horseman passed by. Father called him by name: "Engineer Movses". The horseman stopped and saw how much handsome Hakob had changed. He gave father a gold coin, and they decided to meet the following day. We began working for the Germans on the railway construction; all of us.

My uncle Davit's five children and uncle Hayrapet's daughter continued to work. An order was issued that the English were to come and the Armenians were to return to their homes. The Germans escaped, pursued by the Arabs. There was rifle fire till the morning, and the Arabs started pillaging.

The English filled one hundred and forty wagons with orphans and widows, gave them dry food and sent them to Aleppo. Later, these people were scattered all over the world. We also came with them to Arabpunar, then to Surudj, and on to Yedessia. One night, we stayed in the house of a Turk. Then we came to Kamourdj. Our houses were all destroyed. Turkish-speaking refugees had come and lived in our houses, also Chechens, Circassians and others. The ceiling logs, doors, windows – they had burned everything. The walls of the rooms were all black.

From our family, nine people were left. A few Armenian families, who had become Turks, had remained in Kamourdj. The Armenian youth, who had finished their military service, had returned to the village and started rebuilding the ruins. We began to work. Everything was very expensive in those years; it was difficult to live. We bought animals. We began plowing the land. The inhabitants of Yedessia had returned from Aleppo to Yedessia, but everything was destroyed. There were days when people really went mad. Sometimes, people entering their destroyed houses, crying and calling out the names of their beloved ones who had fallen victim to the killing. That state lasted for two years. At last, they were obliged to be reconciled to the situation and began rebuilding their houses.

At the beginning of 1919, the English authorities of Iraq gave facilities to the Armenian refugees to return to their places. When the Armenians entered the village, they fell to their knees on seeing the ruins. The criminals had destroyed their houses. Trees that had grown over many years and that had been watered by sweat and blood, had been all rooted up. We were one hundred and seventy families.

At last, the presence of an American girl in Yedessia came as a blessing. In spite of their short activity, they

were revered: the missionaries, Miss Shaddock and Miss Karen Yeppé, who fell ill and went to Denmark for medical treatment - the events of 1915 had affected her health. May light descend on her tomb.

In 1920, the Turks began fighting against the Greeks. They began to take the Armenians into the army. The English had gone, and the French had come. They were six hundred. For four years, the Armenians managed to catch their breath. The shrewd Turks wanted to drive the Armenians out of the city.

In March 9, 1920, it was snowing heavily. On the night of April 6, news came from the French military headquarters that the French were in dire straits, for no one could be certain that the Turks would spare the Armenians after the French left.

On April 10, at midnight, the French soldiers with the guidance of Turkish gendarmes, set off on the road to Akaba and Surudj, to their camps in Telapeati. When they took down the French flag, Captain Sarjou shot himself in the temple and fell. That brave soldier had not been able to endure the dishonor of the French.

The Armenians were in an uncertain situation. When news reached from the Telfutur positions that gunfire was heard from the direction of Akaba, it was clear that fighting was going on. The Turks had caught the French in a trap. After an hour, a large crowd of Turkish outlaws approached the town, using the Aleppo road, with the French soldiers' heads on their bayonets. The French, more than five hundred soldiers, were being led by Turkish gendarmes on horseback and beyond Akaba, in the Shabaké Valley. Then, they had abandoned the French and the Turkish soldiers, who had occupied positions in advance, had attacked the French unexpectedly and had slaughtered them. The besieged French soldiers had fought bravely to the last drop of their blood and fallen. University students from Yedessia: Hovhannes Chalian and Armenak Abadjian had fought like heroes and fallen in that fight.

The presence of American women in Yedessia in those days was a blessing. The American relief continued until 1922. They opened factories for men and handiwork ateliers for women, so that they would work and earn their daily living. The Americans transferred the orphans of Yedessia to Syria and Lebanon.

After the French had left, we sowed wheat, but the crickets came, and ate the wheat. One day, father had gone to town and during a conversation with an acquaintance he had said: "This year our fields were 'bombarded'; what we had has all been lost." In the shop, there was an Armenian, who had been converted to Islam. He heard this and went to the authorities and said: "Hakob agha said that the French had come to Surudj in order to bombard Yedessia." They brought this false testimony against father, arrested him, and threw in prison as a political prisoner.

We, two brothers, supported ourselves and took care of father, so that he should not get weak. After six months, they sent him to Tigranakert to be judged there.

My brother saw people and hired an attorney. An application was sent to Mustafa Kemal in my brother's name, asking him to set our father free. Father remained in prison for three months. After a few months, Adjami pasha came to Kamourdj on Kemal's orders. He said to the people: "Give us your lands." The Armenians did not agree. Kemal ordered that no one had any rights in those places where there was Islam. They began giving us trouble and beat us. We were compelled to leave, so we came out of our homes with seven other families and reached Djarablous. There we sold our animals.

In 1925, we went to Der-Zor by carriage. My aunt's sons lived there together with their families. We began cultivating gardens together with the Arabs. Then we went to Telesoum and began building walls, making bricks. Brother caught malaria and went to Rakka, for our mother's brothers lived there. Then we went to Der-Zor. My brother and I became French soldiers and we went to work at Der-Zor.

In 1931, Armenian monks went to the place of exile and gathered the bones of the Armenians. They bought a patch of land in Der-Zor, laid the foundation on the bones, anointed it, and built a church. That year Gyulbenkian's wife had died and the church was called Mariam Astvadsadsin Church after her.

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### **KHOREN ABLAPOUTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1893, Yedessia, Kamourdj Village)**

I was sixteen years old when we were driven to Der-Zor. They brought us to Besserou. It was a place eight hours from Der-Zor. There was a wooden bridge there, under which passed the Khabur River. We've seen two massacres: one was in 1915, the other was in 1921. In 1915, the Germans were to blame; they were the organizers. During the exile, the Germans ate white bread and threw away the inner part. They saw that we were hungry; they wiped the bread on their behinds and only then threw the pieces away – so that we could not eat the bread. I remember: on the Khabur River, for about two km., corpses of naked Armenian youth were floating from Besserou to Sheddadié. About seventy-five thousand Armenians: the old, the young, girls, and women had gathered at Sheddadié. The wild Turkish gendarmes had surrounded us. They killed twelve people from our family. It was like hell. Der-Zor was the slaughterhouse for the Armenians. Those Armenians who fell on the Der-Zor side were lost and gone forever; those who fell on the Damascus side were saved. The Chechens were taking away our Armenian people, were killing, slaughtering, and asking for gold ...

One day, the gendarmes came and took my father to the Arab, Mesled pasha. The pasha saw that father spoke Arabic well. He said: "Are you Armenian?"

"I'm a native of Yedessia (Urfa) – Kamourdj Village."

"Come, don't go. You stay here with your sons. I'll give you land and you can sow there."

Father said: "No, I'll go with my nation."

Until Mosul, no one gave us trouble, but we were dying of hunger. They were making us walk and then bringing us back to the same place, so that the people would get exhausted.

Around Mosul, there were Assyrian villages. We, the people from Yedessia, remained there for four years. Then the French came, followed by the English. In 1918, the Germans and the Turks were defeated. They filled us into freight wagons and said: "Let everyone go home." We went and saw the same Turks there. Mother did not want to go in. They took away the Chechens, and we entered our house. The Chechens were cutting down the olive trees – just to harm the Armenians. Father went to the chief of the town. He asked father: "Yes Hakob agha, what news from the village?"

"What news? The Chechens are cutting the olive trees."

The chief wrote a letter, which I handed to the Chechens. He had written: "Don't touch the Armenians."

One day, a Turk came and said to father: "You must give me your olive orchards, if not – I'll do away with you."

One day, they came and said that they would take father away and hang him according to Ataturk's order.

I had already grown up; I sold our orchard in order to save father.

I went to the attorney. The attorney opened the door and asked: "Who are you?"

"I'm Abulbut's son."

"Are you Hakob's son?"

"Yes, I am."

So he had been an acquaintance of father.

I told him that father was in prison in Diarbekir. The man gave me gold coins and said: "Go, buy back with this money whatever you have sold. In time your father has done much good to us. I'll write a letter to Mustafa Kemal pasha on behalf of you." He read the letter to me; then sent it immediately.

Ataturk telephoned from Ankara to Diarbekir and said: "Set free Abulbut Abodj and send him home."

The prison-guards said: "Abulbut Abodj, go, pray to Ataturk that he saved you."

They set father free.

In 1921, Adjami pasha came from Saudi Arabia. Ataturk said: "Wherever the Turks are, no other nation has the right to exist." Then they came and exiled us to Syria, for Beirut and Syria were in the hands of the French, and Egypt was in the hands of the British.

## 145 (145).

### NVARD PETROS ABLAPOUTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Yedessia, Kamourdj Village)

I was born in 1903, in Yedessia (Urfa). My mother also was born in Yedessia and had lost her father and mother at the age of ten. Their family consisted of six people. Three girls and one boy survived. Her father, Mkrtich Tadevossian was an educated person – a teacher. When Mkrtich died, his relatives cared for his children. The eldest daughter's name was Lousia, the other, who was to become my mother – Khanoum, and the other sister's name was Yeghsa, the brother's – Karapet. He was taken by his uncle to America, together with his children. Khanoum remained with her mother's brother. He was an officer in the government. Yeghsa was kept by the missionary Mother Karen Yeppé, as her daughter. When she finished her school, she was sent to Ayntap to continue her education. Mother Yeppé married her to a good young man and she had her dowry brought from Germany.

At the age of twelve, they engaged Khanoum to a young man. She remained engaged for seven years, but did not see her fiancé. They only used to come on holidays and brought presents.

My mother said: "It was Easter. My uncle's daughters came to take me to church with them. Uncle's wife was sick, so I went with them. When we approached the church, three young men were walking before us. My uncle's daughters began to laugh. I asked: 'Why do you laugh?' They said: 'Don't you know? He's your fiancé, look.' When we entered the church I thought, 'Was this the one they had considered suitable for me?' We came home and saw that trays of presents had been brought by the kin folk. They said that the kin would come in the evening. Whatever jewelry they had brought, I took them off and said: 'I don't want that boy'."

They sent my mother, Khanoum, to an acquaintance's house and married her to Petros Kiledjian. When a small boy my father had gone to Jerusalem, so they called him 'mghdsi' (mah tesi – Arm., the one who has seen death, since going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem on foot and coming back was equal to seeing death).

In 1900, there was renewed fighting between the Turks and the Armenians. The Armenians living in the Turkish quarters had fled to the Armenian quarter. The food supply in the house having been finished, my

grandma told Petros to go and bring food from their house. Father went. The Turks caught him, struck him on the neck with an axe and ran away. Seeing that her son was late, she went and saw him in blood. She called the doctor. They stitched the wound, and he recovered. He became a well-known merchant of donkeys, horses, wool and butter.

In 1915, our family consisted of father, mother, two sons and a daughter. Then I was born in 1903. We lived a very happy life.

In 1914, my uncle was taken to the Turkish army. They imprisoned my father; we gave four hundred gold coins and freed father. Father's money was finished; day by day the situation in the town became worse and worse. Schools were closed and shops plundered. The men were thrown into prisons. After a few days, they were hanged. From every house they took away a young man – about four hundred people, to work on the construction of the railroad; they took them away and slaughtered them. They attacked unarmed and defenseless people and houses; they plundered what they could; they used knives on adults and children. The wells were filled with corpses. No males were left. The women also began to fight. The Germans brought cannons and began to shell the Armenian quarters day and night. Soon an order came, saying that the remaining Armenians should be exiled. We were in a cellar together with father.

At that time, I was nine years old, my sister Azniv – eleven. Where would we go? We did not know. I was crying. Mother, seeing that I would not stop crying, undid the ribbon, which was tied to my hair, tied it to my neck and began choking me. On hearing my cries, the Turkish soldiers entered our yard. They went in the cellar, found my father, brother and the other ten men. They killed them by torturing them. I stay choked there. Then mother told me that we were driven. Crying, weeping, wailing, and tears: it was as if God had become cross with us. They were taking us to exile. Snow, cold, barefoot, hungry; we had no clothes on. Our clothes, jewelry, and money had been plundered and taken away. We walked for many days. My sister's feet were swollen: she cried; she could not walk. They kidnapped my aunt's adult daughter. My brother was seven years old; he died

under the whip. We reached the villages near Der-Zor. The merciful Arabs brought us water and food. Those who had money – bought food. When the soldiers saw someone had money, they took the money, beat him, and killed him. They took the children and threw them into bonfires. “We won’t leave any Armenian puppies alive,” they would shout. Mother fell ill with typhus. An Arab woman approached mother and asked to let her take my sister to her home. Mother wrote that woman’s name on a sheet of paper, so that when she returned, she would take her back. The exiled reached the bank of the Mourat River. The numbers in the caravans fell daily. On the one hand, there was typhus and cholera, on the other – the fear of death. The young girls threw themselves into the river, so that they would not be victims to the Turks. The Mourat took away many Armenians...

They remained on the bank of the Mourat for three days. The people’s hearts trembled that they would be killed.

The unforgettable story of 1915 will be remembered for centuries, but when I remember what I saw and heard, may even my enemy not see all those things that happened to the Armenians.

The Arabs wanted to help the Armenians: they cooked dinner and brought them food. The Turkish soldiers saw the food, took it, dumped it on the sand, trampled on it, and said: “Now eat.” But the people were hungry; they fell on it and ate it up. Those Armenians, who were able to work, went to Der-Zor, because maidservants at least could get a piece of dry bread to eat; some were taken as wives. Mother also had become a maidservant in the house of a rich man. On the other hand, the town-criers used to proclaim, “We’ll burn the houses of those who have Armenian woman or girl servants.” But the Arabs saved many Armenians. Mother told her master that her daughter, Azniv, was in a nearby village, in the house of an Arab woman; she mentioned her name. That rich man went and brought my sister. Sister came and told mother that the woman who had taken her in, had taken off sister’s clothes, had rubbed her body with oil, and had made her sit in the sun, that was why she had began coughing. She caught pneumonia and died. Mother remained in that rich man’s house. That man wrote a letter to the hospital of Yedessia and found out that my uncle had been recruited and mother’s sister and her daughter worked in the hospital. Mother had tried to choke me and then had left, for she was being exiled. A Muslim military man passed by the road. He saw me on the road, untied the ribbon from my neck and took me to a hospital and said: “This is my child, heal her.” I recovered. He put me on his back and took me to his house. That man was married, but had no children. That was why he lived alone just like a nomad. He took me with him on the back of his horse and went from place to place. He loved me so much that he kept me in his arms.

One day, two armed soldiers came and asked me where my father was. I took them and showed him in the millet field. They took him away. In fact he had been in hiding there so as not to go in the army. I remained alone. Me, God and my hunger and thirst... There wasn’t even a bed for me to sleep. But that father of mine had escaped again. The next day he came and found me. He kissed me and said: “You betrayed me, and they took me away.”

That night he hired a camel, and we came to town. There, an acquaintance of ours saw me. She said she had become pregnant by a Turk: she did not want to have the child. She went to the hospital for a remedy. There, she met mother’s sister. She told her about me. My aunt and that woman came to see me and brought me candies, and chick peas.

At night, when my foster father came, I told him. He thought that these women might be Armenians. He put me on the horse and took me to Surudj. There the children called me *gâvur* and would not let me play with them. There was an old woman there – she took care of me.

Mother wrote from Der-Zor to my uncle in Yedessia. She wrote, “If you find Nvard, bring her to me.” My uncle began looking for me.

In 1917, the English came to Turkey to gather the orphans from among the Turks, the Kurds, and the Arabs. In every family there was at least one with that status. My uncle applied to the English and they began searching for me. Coming to Surudj, news spread that the *gâvurs* were being brought together.

My ‘father’ came from the market; began talking with our neighbor in Kurdish. I understood that they were gathering the orphans. They gave me a bath, wrapped me in the mat on which we slept, leaned it against the wall, saying: “Don’t utter a sound when you hear voices, for the soldiers are going from house to house, taking the children away to slaughter them.”

I stood silently. I heard the soldiers’ voices approaching our house. My uncle said: “She’s here.” The soldiers said that they saw that there was nobody in the house. They left but soon returned. A soldier took hold of the edge of the mat and dropped it. I tumbled out and saw my uncle; I threw my arms about his neck, tears ran down my cheeks. My uncle began kissing me, took me on his back and we went to Aleppo.

Mother had heard that I was alive. At that time, an order was issued that the refugees might go to their places. Mother came to Aleppo and stayed with her uncle’s daughter. Holding my uncle by the hand, we got off the train and took a carriage. We went up the stairs, knocked on the door and entered. A group of women, all in black, were seated. I stood, confused. Uncle said: “Look, who is your mother!”

For a moment I looked silently. My mother opened her arms, hugged me, and kissed me, while her tears fell

on my face. The women sitting there began to cry. All of them had lost their children, husbands, and relatives. None of them had anything to console them.

Mother's brother brought a barber and had my hair razed. They took away my lice-ridden clothes. I fell into the 'arms of Father Abraham.' I had forgotten to speak Armenian. Mother made me wear boys' clothes. We had our photo taken together. I was happy. I was cleanly dressed, ate tasty food, and had a soft bed. Winter passed, spring came, then – summer. They sent me to school and I began speaking Armenian. Mother wanted to go to Yedessia.

In 1918, when the English entered out town, they gathered the orphans, returned them to their parents; families were reforming once more. The people began building their ruined homes and lived there. We went to Surudj together with mother. Finding there our country old acquaintances, we remained there for a few days. There I met my 'Turkish father.' He embraced me, began to kiss me and cried. He started to fill my pockets with dried fruit. He said to the boys: "Take me to my daughter's mother; I have a couple of words to tell her."

We came home. My Turkish foster-father called my mother and began speaking to her in Turkish behind the door: "Do you not fear God. You had almost choked her and left on the road, this girl. I took her to hospital, took care of her, I set everything aside and looked after her. Give her to me."

Mother said: "Whoever did all this, will get his recompense. From our large family, two of us are left."

My Turkish foster-father kissed me again, and we parted.

We went to Yedessia. Mother's uncle's house was in the Turkish district. They had two nice houses. Her uncle's son had come from the army. His sister was found among the Arabs and was brought home. The gypsies had taken off the doors and the windows of those nice houses. Many Armenians were found among the Arabs and returned to start a new life. Mother, dressed in black, was married by a priest. I was astonished; I was surprised why mother was weeping, I said to myself: "It seems she has remembered my father, her old house, and her children, perhaps she wants to make a new home." But mother's tears did not stop. She did not want to be consoled. When there was nobody, she pressed me to her bosom and said: "I married for your sake. If I had gone to work, with whom would you stay?"

After her marriage, mother went to Aleppo and brought her clothes and other things that were necessary for the household. I used to play all alone. They used to take me to the market. My uncle was a coppersmith. He used to take me to his shop together with him and brought me home in the evening.

In 1918, the French war began. All the people, terrified left their houses and regrouped in the Armenian

quarter, which was in the center of town. They manned their positions and began to fight. It was winter; it was cold. People could not stand the hunger. The shops were closed. People began eating horses and donkeys.

In 1919, the French surrendered. The Turks took them out of town: 400 French soldiers were taken to Mount Shapaka and killed. They put the head of the general on a crowbar, brought it to town and showed it to the people. I saw those terrible events with my own eyes. Fear fell upon the Armenians. One day after the French had left, they gathered to take down the French flag. The person who had brought the flag down put an end to his own life.

Father was the chairman of the supply of provisions. It was true, fighting had stopped, but fear had entered in the hearts of the people. Wherever the Armenians wanted to open a school, the Turks came and had it closed. I went to school with the Catholics. There were neither desks, nor tables. They came and closed it. We went to the orphanage yard. They closed it, too. We went to the yard of the Armenian Church. Again they came and closed it.

Soon after the war, my sister Haykanoush was born. I was very glad that we would play together. Then my uncle's wife gave birth to a son. We lived with them in the same yard. Mother was an intelligent woman. Uncle's son often fell ill and one day my uncle said to father: "I'm going to Aleppo. No more bread is left for us here."

A few families gathered and left the town. The Turks wanted us to go again, so that they could take over our houses. A brother was born to us, but he had whooping-cough and died. Mother had a cousin and a sister in Kamourdj. Her sister was married. She took us to their village. Kamourdj had clean fresh air, the water was tasty and it had bountiful orchards full of gorgeous fruit trees.

In 1920, our condition improved. Turkish beggars came to our door. Mother gave them bread, food, clothes.

I used to say: "Give only to Armenians."

"Let them eat, let them put on weight, daughter. I'll give to Armenians as well. God created all people equal," mother used to say. She was a very merciful woman; she liked to help the poor.

My aunt and her daughter, who had survived Der-Zor, worked in the hospital. When the Armenians increased in the town, they rented a small house in the Armenian quarter and remained there. At that time, Miss Karen Yeppé gave work to the Armenian widows, so that they might work at home.

Miss Karen Yeppé was a girl from Denmark. She sacrificed much for us. She took care of the Armenian orphans herself. She opened a handiwork factory and a carpet factory for the Armenian women, who returned from the exile, to earn their daily bread. When we went to Aleppo, I also went to her handiwork house. My aunts and her daughter made handiworks by candlelight,

and mother did housework. My aunt had her daughter engaged, and they went to Rakka.

In 1921, the town's state worsened daily. The schools closed. From the Turkish mosques, the Armenian quarters was seen as plainly as the palm of one's hand. Poor Armenians! They had hardly forgotten their old sorrows, when new ones arrived. In each family, just one or two members were left: it was important at least to protect them.

Father, as an officer, spoke with the prefect of the town and said: "Control your hooligans, the people are not able to go to the market. What will be the end of it?"

The prefect said: "My friend, well said! It's impossible to live with you. We cannot control our people. We give you one month; take your Armenians and get out of the town."

When father came home, he had turned pale. He told the incident. We began to cry, for it was winter, the houses were full of provisions, snow had covered the ground. We lived in the Turkish quarter. We had a secret door to come out. A Turk entered from the secret door and gave father a sheet of paper. Father read twenty names, and the first one was his; the rest were the names of the rich people, who would be killed. Father organized the escape immediately. Early in the morning they ran away, dressed as Kurds and Arabs.

In the morning we heard that Garegin Turkjian was murdered. He was a pharmacist. It was impossible to remain anymore. We hired mules, horses, loaded them and set out. We came and reached the caves of Der-Zor. The caravan stopped there. The ground was all covered with human skulls and bones. The soldiers, who accompanied us, wanted to stay there for the night, but the people were afraid. They said they would not stay there, for it was there that the four hundred French soldiers had been killed by the Turks. (The general's head had been taken to Yedessia and shown to the people, taking it from street to street). Father asked the soldiers at least to reach Surudj. We continued our way, and arrived in Surudj. The town prefect, hearing father had come, came to take us to his house, but father refused, saying: "Where my people remain, there will I be." The prefect ordered to empty all the khans and give us shelter. We remained two-three days. Special food was sent for us

from his house. The prefect dined with us. He loved the Armenians very much. He was very sorry to see the state in which we were. He used to say: "Those who caused this will get their just dues..."

After three days, we were ready, and the caravan moved on. The prefect, riding his horse, came with us to the border of Arabia. Kissing us, he parted. Father left us and went to Djarablous to intervene and pay half the ticket. We were in tents. It was raining day and night. We, five families, came to the Euphrates River bank to cross by boats and go to Djarablous to my father. The water of the Euphrates had risen that night. We stayed there that night. The French army was there. With the help of the soldiers, we filled our luggage in a boat and went to Djarablous. Father came in an hour. They had given us a house and we went there. We remained there for ten days. The second caravan also arrived. We took tickets and arrived in Aleppo. My uncle was in Aleppo with his family. He had come to the station. He put us in a carriage and took us home. We entered the house. Uncle's wife was wearing black. We learned that her twenty-six year-old brother had died. He was also the son of my mother's uncle. He was brought up in their house. After a couple of weeks, we found a separate house. The Protestant School was near our house. I learned there for 5-6 years.

In 1931, I went to Der-Zor to get married. Vazgen Vardapet and other priests were already in Der-Zor to build the church on the bones of the Armenian victims. They were going to bless the foundation of the church. We were married there, but our people lived under very bad conditions. A rug covered the floor, and there was one bed. I asked for a Bible from home, so that I might be consoled by reading.

Then we moved to Mahara and then to Aleppo. In 1943, we went to Arabpunar, then to Aleppo, then to Djarablous, and finally, we came to Armenia. With very many difficulties we were transferred from the country to Yerevan. Whatever food we had brought with us, we were forced to throw into the sea at Batoumi. There was no house, no money, no work, and no bread. Everything was rationed. By night we went and stood in lines in order to buy bread. We were given a patch of land in Arabkir Bandjaranots District, and we built a house. It seems God gave us patience to endure so many difficulties.

**146 (146).**

### **HAYKANOUSH TER-PETROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1910, Yedessia)**

We were deported. We were three sisters and three brothers. My father was a blacksmith, Nerses Demirjian.

As he was a craftsman, they kept him. They kept one blacksmith, one pewter-smith, and took them to a

shed, in something like a courtyard, and changed our names. They made us Turks: father's name became Ahmed, my brothers' – Khalil, Ibrahim, and Mahmed. Mother's – Fatma, elder sister's – Zakia, the other's –

Eminé, mine – Bahiya. We went to live in the Turks' quarter.

The Turks came and asked my eldest sister's hand in marriage, but we refused. Father said we had given her to the blacksmith's son. We did this, so that she would not fall in the hands of the Turks.

During Ramadan, the Turks fasted during daylight hours. They came and made us stick out our tongues to check whether it was white or not. They punished us if we had eaten. When the English came, we became Armenian again. Father went about gathering Armenian orphans – girls, boys, and kept them with us...

**147 (147).  
GEVORG MKRTICH KILEDJIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1912, Yedessia)**

We were natives of Yedessia (Urfa), of the wealthy Hovakim Boyadjian (Nerkararian – Arm.) family. The Boyadjians were dyers; they dyed cloth and carpets and sent their product to Germany and other countries. The names of the family continued from generation to generation, from grandchild to grandchild. The last one had been my grandfather's father – Hovakim.

Hovakim was a rich man. He learnt in an elementary Armenian school, and then continued studying in a Turkish school. Anyone who graduated from it could go to Constantinople and enter university. He studied there, got a high-level job in the government, came to Yedessia, started his office, married, and then went to Jerusalem. There he became a Moukhsi/Mekhs (Mahtesi = Pilgrim – Arm.), then a member of the town council, and had a place built for him. The upper floors were parlors and bedrooms; the lower floor was a shop and a dining-room. Gradually, he became richer and richer, bought estates, villages, and had five sons. Years passed, some of his sons ran the dyeing business, and the others managed the villages and estates. The young sons changed their family name of Boyadjian to Mekhs-Hovakimian. But some of the sons kept the Boyadjian name. About 25 years later, when we went to Aleppo, we found our relatives, among them Grbush Mekhs-Hovakimian and Arshak Mekhs-Hovakimian. We then found my father's cousin: Sargis Boyadjian. He also had retained the Boyadjian name.

The Turks envied him. Why should Mekhs-Hovakim be so rich? Why should he be a member of the town council and govern us? One day they invited him to a feast and poisoned his food. He ate and died 24 hours later.

Mekhs-Hovakim had not left any will. The sons were unable to divide the property among them. A lawsuit started and dragged on for two years. They lost everything and became bankrupt.

At that time, my grandfather, Gevorg, and his brother, Nerses, were very young. They stood aside during these troubles. The whole family scattered; each went his own way. My grandfather and his brother ran their father's dyeing plant. My grandfather married, and soon, my father, Mkrtich, and my aunt were born.

My father went to school and became a choir-boy in church. Years passed. He grew up and married. My father was a pious man; he wanted to have a house near the church. He bought half the house of an old woman, whose name was Khanoum. Our family moved there. My grandfather was already poisoned and dead, so my grandmother lived with us: with my father and mother. My sister, Almast was 8 years old, my brother was 5 and I was just 2½ to 3 years old.

Those who lived well in Yedessia had orchards in the country, as summer-resorts. We also had one, and in the summer we went there for three months and gathered provisions for the winter, for there were plenty of grapes in the vineyards. We squeezed the grapes and prepared different kinds of sweets with the juice-sujukh, pastegh. We prepared raisins. We dried figs. Father went to town every day on horseback, for there were no cars then. In a word, we lived a comfortable life.

In 1915, the Turks started to stir things up. The Armenians were terrified. A year before, the Armenian males had been drafted into the Turkish army by force. My father had paid the ransom and was freed, but he always feared that they might take him to the army. That was why he remained in our country-house in the winter, where Bedouin guards watched the houses.

Yedessia was losing its appearance day by day. One night, at a late hour, mother went downstairs to drink water from the pool. Our landlady, Khanoum, who was a very kind woman, had been standing there and was looking towards the church. She said to my mother:

“Almast, look, St. Astvadsadsin's statue came out of the church and went up and up, ascended into the heaven and was lost in the clouds.”

Mother looked, but saw nothing. My mother came home and told my grandmother that sister Khatoum said so and so. Grandmother said to mother: “May God save us! There's a great danger for the Armenians again.”

Father, who was staying in our country-house, thought: “Let me go and see my children; I may not see them again.”

The Bedouin guards said to my father: “Mkrtich, the situation in town is very bad; don't go, wrap a headband like a Muslim and sit here.”

Father said: "I'll leave under the cover of darkness and return when it's also dark."

Father came home. He embraced all of us fondly; we cried with joy. We were happy. Then father said: "We may not see each other again, that's why I came." He took some money from home and left.

On the way there was a place called Karakyopru. The Turks attacked father, shot him, robbed him and left him on the way. Father had died.

As early as 1914, they had gathered 1,400 Armenian youth and taken them into the Turkish army. But we heard that they had made them work on the railway construction and then killed them all. Some young men in Yedessia had understood that it was not a question of recruiting. Among them were Yotnyeghbayrian, Rastkelenian, Alahaydoyan and others. No man of 60 or 70 should be taken to the army. They went to the prelate and said: "Father Prelate, let the Armenian boys not to go to the Turkish army, we can resist with whatever weapons we have. If we get help, that's good; if not – we'll die with honor. For, they are taking our boys and slaying them after torturing them."

The Prelate said: "I spoke to the government; they say that the country is at war, and you are the sons of this country, so you must go to the army."

"Father Prelate, they are lying, they are taking them away and killing them."

"Boys, you're going to bring peril on these people."

"We have decided to die with honor."

The Armenian quarter was the Upper District, near the mountain-side, a high place. They had made defensive positions with huge stones and began their resistance. They resisted the Turkish soldiers who attacked them. The fedayis began to act.

My mother had lost her sleep. She had become very worried. How would she manage with three orphans and her old mother-in-law, without her husband? She had been sitting up, as she could not sleep. Suddenly she heard sister Khanoum's voice:

"Almast, Almast, look, look, the martyrs are going. They are dressed in white, this one, that one... (giving their names)." Mother looked, but again saw nothing. She thought that she was seeing things. She said:

"Sister Khanoum, are you imagining or do you see visions...?"

The Turks penetrated from the Lower District to the Upper District. The mob came. The Armenians of Yedessia resisted heroically. The Turks took their wounded and dead on their backs and ran away. The Turks attacked again. The Armenian men fought courageously. Mkrtich Yotnyeghbayrian was wounded in the foot. Seriously wounded, he was carried from position to position on a stretcher and encouraged the fighters. The Turkish commander with his army fought

the Armenians of Yedessia for almost a month. The Armenian women and girls saw that few Armenian warriors were left. They put on their men's clothes, covered their heads with the head-wear of the men, took up their weapons, and continued fighting. The Turks said: "We have closed all the roads; where did these men without beards and moustaches come from?" The Turkish commander said: "If they fought everywhere as they're fighting in Yedessia what would our situation be?" Finally the Turks decided to bring cannons and began to bombard the positions. Confusion started. The Turks shouted from the mosque towers: "Mala bakmayın, cana bakın: mal zatı bizim dır" (Don't pay attention to the property, look at the people, kill them; their property is already ours – Turk.). In despair, the people ran to the church, big and small, about 300 people, closed the door and began to pray. The mob came to the church, but was unable to open the door. Towards the top of the church, there were windows; they broke the windows, brought 40 canisters of petroleum and threw burning clothes into the church. The people inside were choked by the smoke. Then the Turks exiled the women and children who had remained alive.

The Armenians of Yedessia were the last to be exiled. The Germans came and drove us out like sheep. We took some bread and water with us. We set off. We were exiled. We started walking. The Turks standing before the doors looked at us. They knew that we were going to die. A Turkish woman said to my mother: "Give me this child. When you come back, I'll give her back to you." My sister was a pretty girl of eight. She took her and went away. A little further, grandmother, who was very fond of us, could not stand all that. She got a heart attack, fell down and died. The people walked right over her. Who cared? My mother used to say: "We walked and walked. We hadn't walked that much in all our life. We were exhausted; we could not walk anymore. We found a shady place and sat down. Nearby, children who were 4 or 5 years' old began to play. Suddenly, we saw that the children were shot and fell to the ground. What was happening? We could not understand. In fact, the gendarmes had been sitting on a high place at a distance and were taking aim at the children like birds. A woman was sitting near me. She saw that they were aiming at her son, she ran, took him under her skirt. The bullet came and hit her. She fell dead. Poor mother! You fell down dead and became free! How will your son stand all those tortures?"

Then my mother contracted typhoid. She needed care; she was exhausted. She had been carrying me. She fell down. A Bedouin was passing by. He picked me up and took me with him. Mother did not have any strength to utter a word. She thought: "I'm dying, at least let my son remain alive."

During those atrocities, out of despair, many women and young girls threw themselves into the Euphrates River or drank poison in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks...

Then a gendarme from Yedessia approached mother and said in Armenian (for the Turks of Yedessia knew Armenian), "Aren't you from Yedessia?"

Mother said, "Yes..."

"Come, let me take you to Yedessia, I'm going to Yedessia."

Mother thought that if she continued towards the desert, the Bedouins would take her. If she were to go to Yedessia, the Turkish gendarme would take her, but she hoped to find her children there. The gendarme put mother on his horse behind him and took mother to Yedessia to his house. He had other women and children, so they all lived together. My mother was a young and beautiful woman. One day she went to the bath-house. There, she met an Armenian woman who was an acquaintance of hers. They embraced each other; they cried and told their sufferings and grief to each other. Mother said to her:

"I'm in a very bad situation: I lost my husband and children. Now I am in a harem."

"There is a Kamil bey here. He is an influential man. We are 18 women working there and we live honorably. You must also come there."

Mother came home, gathered what she had and ran away. That elderly Armenian woman was a cook there. Mother became her assistant. When the situation became a bit better, mother thought of looking for my sister. She searched for her, but could not find her. Then she sat on a stone and began to cry. The Turks saw her. That Turkish woman also saw her, pitied her and brought back my sister. Mother took her and together they went to the place where she lived. She tied a white cloth on her head as though she were a Turkish girl. One day, my sister went shopping where she met my brother. Sister and brother kissed each other. Sister came home and said that she had found her brother. My poor brother had suffered very much. He had been hungry; he had even eaten cotton seeds like a donkey. He had eaten so much grass that his belly was swollen. Mother said to my brother: "You come to my place; I'll give you food secretly. You'll eat." My brother used to come to my mother. She gave him food secretly. Then mother brought my brother also to her place and sent him to a barber as an apprentice.

I was in that Bedouin's house. One day, the Bedouin was going to town to sell wood. He put me on the donkey, and we set off. He brought wood to Yedessia. A family wanted to buy wood. They saw me on the donkey: a golden-haired child. They said: "This child does not look like a Bedouin, sell him to us." They gave

two mejits and bought me. They had had a little boy of my age. He had died. They took me in his place. I was hardly three years old. I was a child. What did I understand? I knew that my new father was Osman, mother, Zelhan, my sister was Ashé, my brother – Arin. I lived with them. They looked after me as their own child...

Mother found me last of all. How? We had an Armenian acquaintance, who knew another family. One day she came to that house, saw me and said: "This is Almast's son."

"How do you know?"

"I know."

"One day, let's go to their house."

My elder sister Ashé, whose husband had died, had a son my age. One day, she and that Armenian woman took me to our house. I was a lively and clever child. As we reached the corner of our street, I began running towards our house. The door was open. I entered the yard, sat over the edge of the pool as if on horseback and said: "This is my horse." I went a little further towards the house and the stable, which was destroyed. I said: "Where is my father's horse?" Those who had brought me there were convinced that I was the child of that house. That Armenian woman went to my mother and said: "Your son is in the house of such a Turk."

My mother came and found me. I'll never forget our meeting...

When the Genocide was over, and peace began to prevail, the English entered Yedessia. The Armenians, who had become Turks, took off their headbands, changed their Turkish names and became Armenians again: Toros, Markos, and Kirakos. The English gave instructions that wherever there were Armenians; they were to come to the American orphanage. The Americans and the English began to do charitable deeds. They distributed food and clothing. My mother went to get relief. The English official asked her how many children she had. Mother said: "Three children."

The Englishman gave mother three packages of relief goods. Mother came home, opened them and saw that there were thirty mejit in the clothes. Mother took a deep breath. She left her working place. Our house had already been pulled down. The jar of gold, which mother had kept in the barn, had been dug out by the Turks and taken away. Mother gave me and my elder sister to the American orphanage. She began arranging things, and in 1918 we came to Aleppo. In Aleppo, we found mother's second brother who was miraculously saved. My mother's brother was also there and had a blacksmith's shop. He used to work during winter. In the spring, the peasants would come and buy spades and pickaxes. When he learnt that my father was killed, he took us up to his house.

Over half a million of survivors had gone to Syria, Aleppo, Damascus, and Hama. Mother was confused. What should she do? She went to the Church of Forty Martyrs' to read the list of survivors, which was stuck on the wall. There, she met Tigran Kiledjian, the son of my father's aunt, who was a good baker. Tigran also had lost his family. Mother told him her story. They got married. Mother gave me and my brother to an orphanage. We remained there for two years.

In 1920, we came to Beirut not as Mekhs-Hovakimian, but as Kiledjian. My father worked in a bakery, my brother, who was 12 years of age then, worked at a photographer's.

In 1921, after the deportation from Cilicia, many Armenians came and settled in Beirut. That poor town started to be built, developed, and flourished.

During the Second World War, the French left Lebanon. When the war was over and repatriation started the Armenians returned to their motherland with zurna and drums. But that joy did not last long. We got news that the repatriates had been deceived.

A group of Jews came from Germany to Beirut. They organized good businesses. They opened large shops. I went and worked for them. Then I opened my own shop. I became a tailor. I had many customers and earned money. I rented a room in the house of an Armenian woman. One night I woke up to the woman's

crying. I went to see. The old woman was sitting on the floor and crying. I said: "Mother, why are you crying? Are you ill? Shall I call the doctor?"

"No, son, I forgot to tell you that during the Genocide I had a seven-year old son. As I did not submit to the Turkish officer, he slaughtered my son on my knees. Look, my knee also was deeply wounded. Now, morning or evening, when I recall all that, I can't control myself; I begin to cry..."

Then I got married. We had three sons. She was a very good wife; we were happy. My sons studied well. Then they continued their studies in America. One of them became a doctor, the other is a dentist. During the fighting in Lebanon they caught and beat my third son and robbed him. He lost his health. He is not the same now. And I had a heart attack.

We came to America. My wife fell ill. We could not cure her. Now she is lying in "Ararat" Home, in the section of the old-aged people. And I live in this modern house of the "Ararat" Home together with my unhealthy son. My other sons take care of us. They have brought me a tape recorder and a video. I write poetry. I sing songs, read books. Every day there is interesting entertainment here. Every Thursday volunteer ladies come to entertain us: we sing, recite poems, and have a good time together. What I told here is only a drop of my sufferings.

## 148 (148).

### MARIAM KARADJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Adiyaman)

I was little when the massacre started. First of all, they gathered the weapons of the Armenians; they sent the youth to the Turkish army and killed them there. Mother's brother was Talaat's secretary; he was their man. But as he knew their secret, they did not spare him either: they took him and killed him. Mother went with grandfather to bring my uncle's corpse and bury him, but when grandpa saw his son killed, he also died on the spot. The Turkish soldiers saw and laughed, "What luck, we saved a bullet!" they said.

Mother left her brother's and father's corpses and ran for her life. Mother came home crying and wailing. That same day, near our stone-house, a grenade exploded and killed my father. My ten-year-old brother had been near father. At the sight of it, all his body broke out in a rash, and he also died the next day.

We remained with mother and my two-year-old brother. They drove us to Surudj. There was no house, no bread, and no water. We were hungry and thirsty.

People were so hungry; they waited for the horses to excrete, so that they might eat the barley in the excrement. They even ate dogs and cats. I remember: they saw a donkey; they killed it. All the people fell on it; they cut it into pieces and ate it raw.

Mother was compelled to leave us under a tree and went to beg in order to feed us. At that time a Turkish gendarme came, lay brother on his face, and put a large stone on him. He stood on it and began stomping on him until the poor child retched, vomited, and died...

A Kurdish woman was passing by. She saw this and pitied me and said: "He will kill the girl also in this way," and she grabbed me and took me away.

When I opened my eyes, I saw that I was in a black tent. They kept me there. As the Turks had thrown me – together with other children – into a fire, my foot was burnt and oozing pus. They put medicine on it. They took good care of me. They cured me. Later when the Americans came, they gathered the Armenian orphans. I was also taken to Aleppo together with other orphans.

**149 (149).**  
**VAHAN GRIGOR DARBINIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1917, Derendé)**

I was born in 1917, in the province of Derendé, Sebastia Region. My father, Grigor agha, was the blacksmith of the town. That was why he and his family were not exiled in 1915. My mother's name was Heghiné and my elder brothers' were – Souren (1908) and Ardsroun (1910). My parents used to tell us that we had many uncles and aunts, but they had been sent to exile. Only my youngest uncle, Zareh, lived with us. He was born in 1905, and soon after his birth, my grandmother had passed away.

Before the Armenian Genocide, 500 Armenian families were living in Derendé, which was divided into two parts by a river. The Armenians lived on one side of the river, and the Turks lived on the other. They cultivated the land and were busy in various trades.

My mother used to say that my brother, Souren, was born in the year of Hurriet. That was why they had called him Souren (sour = sword – Arm.), that is: we were freed from the sword, because the Turkish Constitution of 1908 promised very good things. I was born on the Vardanants Day and I was given the name of Vahan (Shield – Arm.), as a shield of the family, for the name of my aunt's son was Vardan. Then I had a sister Marie, and a brother Assatour (1926) named after my grandfather.

Our birthdays are written in our family Bible, but the days are not mentioned. We did not celebrate our birthdays, but we celebrated the holiday dedicated to the saint whose name we bore, e.g.: St. Grigor (the Enlightener), which was my father's name, St. Khach, Khachik, Harutyun – on Easter, the Resurrection and so on.

When my uncle, Zareh, came of age at 18, my father

sent him, secretly, to Syria in order not to be drafted into the Turkish army. Three years later we sent our brother Souren, when he came of age.

The Armenian Church and school had been pulled down. We did not go to school, but our father taught us the Armenian alphabet whenever he could find time after his work in his smithy. We (the boys) worked there, helping our father. I worked the bellows. In our district of the town, we spoke Armenian.

In 1929, we, together with eleven other families, decided to leave that country, where nothing Armenian was left. About 120 people left by night on horseback and mules towards Aleppo. Our journey lasted about six days. After three days we continued our way by cart.

In Aleppo we began to attend the Kilikian School, which was close to the house we had rented. I was 12 years old, but I was in the 3rd form, for I knew only the Armenian letters. There were other children also like us.

We graduated from school after the 6th form and began working. We had built a three-storeyed nice house, surrounded with a nice garden and began taking an active part in the Armenian public life. We had our organization of the graduates of Kilikian School, Young Armenian Scouts, the APTU (Armenian Physical Training Union), of which I was a member of the board.

In 1947, we repatriated to Soviet Armenia. My elder brothers were married and had children. I am married to an English teacher, translator and poet Anahit Poghikian in 1948, whom I knew from Aleppo. We had three sons. They received a higher education and have their nice families.

**150 (150).**  
**KARAPET HAMBARDZOU AZARIAN'S TESTIMONY\*\***  
**(B. 1884, Sebastia, Gyurin)**

I was born in the town of Gyurin, Sebastia (Svaz) Province, in 1884. Our town had about 7-8 thousand Armenians and other nations.

I remember the awful events of 1894-1896, when Sultan Hamid ordered to slaughter the Armenians, plunder their shops, burn their houses into ashes. They had done the same to my uncle. First they had burnt him in his tonir and then burnt down the house. His

bones and his silver cigarette-case were in the tonir. They had hanged our godfather from a tree and killed his son, Sargis, with an axe before his eyes. I remember all those events very well. They had plundered my father's shop and then burnt it. Our neighbor, Hripsimé, whose husband had been killed, had managed to bury her jewelry in a corner of the barn. When my father and Hripsimé cleared the place from ashes, they dug

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1970, was delivered to me in 2002, by Anahit Poghikian-Darbinian, the widow of the eyewitness survivor. She is the English translator of the *"Historical Memoir-Testimonies"* and *"Historical Narrative-Testimonies"* parts of this book.

\*\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor, in 1960, has been passed to me by the famous artist-painter Valmar (Vladimir Margarian), in 2002, which I present here in an abridged form.

out the jewelry. Hripsimé gave them to my father to sell and start his business again to support the family: my mother, Mariam, my sister, Ester, me and Hripsimé, who had remained all alone.

I remember the Hurriet of 1908 as well, when Sultan Hamid was dethroned and imprisoned, instead, his brother, Reshad, succeeded to the throne. In 1908 all the nations living in Turkey were promised solidarity and brotherhood. Until that time the Armenians were not taken to the army to serve. After the Hurriet the Armenians were taken to the Turkish army as askyars. But I was freed from the military service as I was the hundredth on the list: the 100th used to be freed. I began working in my father's shop, but for a juvenile romance with a newly-married woman, my father admonished me. But I offered resistance. My father expelled me from home. My mother gave me a gold coin. I hired a carriage and went to Amassia where my father's cousin, Tadevos, lived. He found work for me at the Marikian Brothers' shop. But I was taken to the Turkish army to serve. By walking daily 10 hours we reached Tigranakert. Then we crossed the river and reached Mosul. It was very hot there: the men wore long, white robes, covered the head with a white shawl and put on it a ring made of wool or hair. We ran away with Missak, and reached Harpoot, the Manjlouk Village, then Tokat and Samsun. My mother's youngest brother lived in Batoumi. He accepted me and gave me work in a café.

It was the year 1915. The Turkish government declared Seferberlik. It meant: to deport the Armenians and kill them secretly on the way, to exterminate the Armenian nation. I became restless. I thought of going to Gyurin and of saving my parents and Astghik, my sweetheart. So, I left my job in order to set off. The Russo-Turk War was in progress. We, a group of Armenian boys reached Tokat going through the forests. In the forest we

met a man who was cutting wood. He told us: "I was Armenian. My name was Abgar. I was a first-class tailor in Tokat. As I was a craftsman, they did not exile me; I was lucky. Then they circumcised me and called me Hadji Mahmad." He also said that they had exiled all the Armenians of Gyurin. Many girls and women were forced to deny their religion and become Muslims and were taken to harems. They had violated many Armenian women, and the men were taken away, hands tied, and had been shot. Then he began singing the song "In the Desert of Der-Zor."

We went on to Yozghat. A Greek youth, Dimitri, joined our group. Our group freed some Greek girls from a Turkish bey's violence. It was near Samsun, at Charshamba. Then we went to Niksar, where there were Armenian girls in the harem. We freed them as well. We fought against Aslan bey, who was an agent of the Turkish government. We were 44 in our group. We found out that we were surrounded. The fighting started. From our side only one fell victim, Dimitri's brother, Anastas, while the Turks lost hundreds. We left Charshamba. The Armenian and Greek girls were dressed as boys. We reached Platana, on the Black Sea Coast. At last we arrived in Batoumi, where we delivered the girls to the local committee. There I found my mother's brother.

Denikin's Provisional Government had already come to power in Russia. In Batoumi I lived with my uncle, but one day I took some of his money and went to Simferopol. Then I went to Baku. The Soviets had only established. I had no job, there was hunger. I came to Yerevan. I had no job. I was hungry. A man hired me and took me to Noragavit to work as a laborer. I was elected secretary of the labor-committee. I worked well. I got married. But I always remember my father's house, my beloved Astghik and her son. They all fell victim to the Armenian Genocide.

### 151 (151).

#### MARITSA THOMAS OHANIAN-ASTOURIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

##### (B. 1887, Sebastia, Zilleh Village)

I was born on July 15, 1887. My father was Thomas Ohanian and my mother's name was Marta. I was the first daughter of my parents, among 3 daughters and 2 sons – Lousiné, Zarouhi, Mihran and Tigran. I was born in the village of Zilleh, near Svaz, Western Armenia. I was married at 17 to Arakel Ouzounian, a wealthy merchant and had three sons, who were 8, 6 and 3 years of age.

In 1915, the Turk gendarmes came to the Ouzounian house in the middle of the night, looking for men over the age of 9. They took away my brothers, my father and

my husband to the nearest mountain and killed them. In the morning, they came for the rest of the family and exiled all of us to the desert.

On the journey were my three sons, my mother-in-law and two sisters. The Turks and Kurds robbed us of all our belongings on the way. My two sisters and mother-in-law could not endure the journey and perished on the road after three days.

I was very strong physically and emotionally, so I was able to continue the way. My two small sons, 6 and

\* This testimony, written in 1970, has been sent to me by the eyewitness survivor's granddaughter, Anahit Abousefian, in 2003, who is married to the San Francisco Opera violinist, Jirayr Svazlian.

3 years old, died in my arms. I dug their graves with my own bare hands to prevent them being eaten by dogs. Only my 8 year old son, Hovhannes, survived and continued to walk. We walked three days without food and water, being obliged to drink the horse's urine.

In the loneliness of the vast desert we dreamt of finding water, a drop of water at least, to quench our thirst. We were hardly walking and moving forward, thirsty and exhausted, under the scorching sun, when, all of a sudden, we noticed from afar some black objects. We thought that there were some traces of vegetation and consequently there would also be water. We approached somehow and saw corpses of slaughtered young children heaped one upon the other and some others scattered here and there.

That horrifying scene is in front of my tearful eyes up to the present day, and I cannot forget it, as I cannot forget my own children and the rest of my kinsfolk, whom I lost during the deportation...

Finally, we reached Meskené, the place where they gathered all the Armenian exiles to drive them to Der-Zor. I survived by selling water from the Euphrates River to the other exiles in exchange for bread. One day, I asked God to help me drown in the river to save me from my misery, and I actually did fall into the river, but I heard my son's cries, and an Arab jumped to save me. He demanded money for rescuing me, and some people gathered a few coins to pay him for his kindness.

Every day they took groups of people to massacre. One day, a group of Armenian men from various Turkish villages decided to escape to Aleppo. I overheard their conversation and asked to join them. They said that it will be possible in a case I'll left my son, who was sick with dysentery. I somehow convinced them and carried my son on my back on the journey. We hid in the mountains during the day and walked 400 kilometers at night for 40

days without food or water towards Aleppo, Syria.

Arriving in Aleppo, I got sick with typhoid fever and was hospitalized and then sent to the Bab Village for recovery. When I recovered, I returned and heard that Rev. Aharon was helping Armenian refugees and had opened a textile factory for them. I began working at the factory and I worked twice as hard as the other workers. There I met my future husband, Hakob Astourian, who was the manager of the factory. Rev. Aharon told him to pick one of the girls, and he chose me, because I was diligent. We got married and we had a daughter and a son, Lousiné and Mihran.

Afterwards we returned to Marash, where Hakob was from originally. The Turks announced that the Armenians should return to their homes, but after one year, in 1920, they began the massacres again. They tried to burn down the St. Mary's Church in Marash, and all the Armenians gathered to save the church. Hakob was one of those who climbed on the roof to pour water on the church, and only his fez saved him from a bullet to his head. A few months later, the French left the Ottoman Empire, and the Turks attacked again. My husband and I escaped with our one-year-old daughter, Lousiné, to Aleppo, in 1922.

In Aleppo, Hakob helped to build the St. George's Church and helped Armenians in many ways. My son, Mihran, died at the age of 13, by a stone thrown to his head, while trying to save a girl from Arab boys. After this sad event, my husband died at the age of 57, one week before Lousiné's marriage to Poghos Abousefian.

In 1946, we moved to Armenia and lived in Leninakan (now: Gyumri) for 12 years and then moved to Yerevan.

I am fortunate; I lived long. I have seen my five granddaughters, Araxy, Marie Rose, Janna, Anahit and Zabel.

## 152 (152).

### **KHOREN GASPARGYULBENKIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1895, Sebastia, Divrik)**

The Divrik is part of the Sebastia Province. The Halis River flowed on the left of the town. Divrik was surrounded with large orchards and gardens. Upon entering the town no houses were seen, because they were hidden in vegetation. The town had three churches and two schools, one of which was the National or Nersissian School, which had 500 pupils and 14 teachers. In those days the provincial towns of Turkey were very backward and the villages were still worse. There weren't many factories in our town, and many people emigrated in search of employment.

My father also went to Samsun in 1902; he had found a job there. He worked at a copper-smelting workshop.

Samsun was situated on the Black Sea shore, in a bay, but its port was not convenient for ships to approach the moorage. That was the reason why the ships dropped anchor in the open sea, quite far from the shore. The goods were transported in large boats. On the West of the town was Bafra, and to the east was Charshamba. Turks, Armenians and Greeks lived in Samsun. Samsun was known with its fragrant tobacco, canned fish, lemonades and confectionery factories. It had also a well-developed trade. Father rented a house in Samsun, and our family moved there. Our family lived very modestly.

In 1907 I entered the Nersissian Secondary School in Samsun. Besides the Armenian language, the Turkish and

French were compulsory. Since early childhood I liked painting, and at school I liked it even more. Exhibitions were often held at our school, where my paintings were also displayed. At the opening of an exhibition the mayor of Samsun came and he bought two of my paintings. Later this incident played a certain role in my life.

In the spring of 1915, when I came out in the morning to go to school, I saw gendarmes on horseback, who prevented people to come out of their houses. On the door of our house and in many other places leaflets, signed by the mayor, were stuck, which announced: "All the Armenians of the town without any exception should be deported in a week's time and sent to the depths of the country." It was also mentioned that the law would be in force up to the end of the war. That notice turned everything upside down. The Armenians had to leave everything and go away.

Then the usual and the utmost horrible Genocide of the Armenians started.

The rich Armenians used to keep their money in banks, but it was forbidden to come out of the house, therefore they remained only with the money they had with them.

After three days, in the morning two government officials came to our house. They had brought with them a cart and they forced us to gather our things and leave the town. They ordered us to take the necessary things, put them on the cart and leave the house. Our caravan consisted of one hundred families. Our direction was south, to the depths of Anatolia. After going the whole day, we passed the night at the edge of a small forest. Everybody was tired, sad and sorrowful. In the morning we got up and continued our wearisome journey.

Our family consisted of five people: father, mother, my two sisters and me. The government had instigated the Turkish people against the Armenians, saying 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.

My uncle George Gyulbenkian had graduated from the Constantinople University of Medicine with excellent marks in 1914. They had called him to military service and had sent him to Trapizon as a colonel. During his service a Turk had asked him to give him a false certificate, to exempt him from military service. He had refused. The next day that barbarous Turk had killed my uncle with a dagger. His only guilt was to be an Armenian.

After going for 15 days we came across newly killed Armenians everywhere. It's not possible to describe the privations and sufferings we experienced. After seeing those scenes the mood of the people became extremely bad, they were morally depressed, emaciated and in despair, they were waiting for their end. The terrible heat, hunger, thirst and diseases had exhausted the people completely. The women were crying for their lost children and relatives. It's very difficult to describe all that. The

conditions of the children were horrible: one was thirsty, he wanted water, another was hungry – he wanted bread, still another was so exhausted that he could not walk any more and so on. The Turks of the surroundings broke our jars, so that we might not take water. In the villages they did not let us drink water from the fountains. We should reach a rivulet or a stream to quench our thirst with the muddy water. It was a terrible, unbearable situation for those who were still alive, who were waiting for their death, which was the only salvation for them. On our way the Turks, Circassian, Chechens and Kurds were attacking our caravan all the time; they were plundering, killing and those had become ordinary incidents for us. The gendarme, who accompanied us, was unable to render us any assistance, though he had not tried to. On the 19th day of the deportation my younger sister could not endure it anymore and she died. Her death caused a great sorrow to our family.

When our caravan reached Amassia, which is on the Yeshil Ermagh (Green River – Turk.) bank, the local authorities announced that no one was allowed to come out of the row and make purchases. They suggested the men of the caravan to go to the town before us and make the purchases. The men did so, but when we entered Amassia there was not a single man; they had killed them all and thrown the corpses into pits. We learned about it from our cart driver, who had heard it from the local Turks that had been eyewitnesses to all that. All the caravan people began to lament the loss of their relatives. There were left only old men, women and teenagers; among them was me. After going for a few days, we met a group of thieves, robbers and killers. The Russian army was attacking, and the Turks were compelled to use those people as cannon fodder. When that detachment was passing by, the commander asked me why the women and the children were crying. I said that we were too tired, and the cart-men did not stop the carts to give us some rest. The commander ordered the driver to call the gendarme. Before the arrival of the gendarme, he asked where the men of our caravan were. I told him everything that had happened with us. When the gendarme came, he asked him why he did not stop the caravan to rest. The latter answered that soon we would reach the Kyoroghli Valley and there we would rest at night. And to his second question, where they were taking us, he said that he had the order to take the caravan till Shehirgheshla, and then he would go back.

We reached the Kyoroghli Valley. At midnight four officers entered our caravan and, under the threat of weapons, took away from us all that was left; they took with them a few old men and boys, among whom was me. We had gone a certain distance, when we heard the clatter of horses. The officers got off the horses and took up positions. They asked us: "Haven't you seen Mourad pasha's – that is, Hero Mourad from Kovden – armed group on your way?" We answered that we had no idea

about it. They let us go to our relatives.

At last we reached Shehir Gheshla, which was supposed to be the place of our last stay. There was a vast piece of land there, where thousands of Armenians had gathered, deported from various localities. Most of them were women and children. Those miserable people, who were hungry, thirsty and ill-treated, were waiting for their end. Cholera had spread in the camp; some time after our arrival a few officers came and gathered the boys and the girls. The Turks were approaching us and were choosing us as goods and taking the boys to work for them on their fields and the girls – as maids in their houses. They were taking the beautiful girls to their harems. A grocer from Shehir Gheshla took me to work in his shop. This way my life was saved, but I don't know what happened to my sister, for I never saw her again. I used to save part of the food, which was given to me and took it to my mother, who had remained all alone in a tragic state. She entreated me not to go to her and endanger my life. She used to say: "My son, don't think about me, very little is left for me; my hours are counted. You're the only survivor from our family; take care of yourself, you must live and keep the fire of our hearth burning." When, after a few days, I went again to see my mother, she had already died.

After working at the grocer for about a fortnight, he told me that it was not safe for me to remain there, and suggested that I should go with an acquaintance of his to the village. With that person I went to the Bozghut Village. The peasants of that village had come from Kars, years ago. The man, who had brought me there, was the head of the village. He had brought me to work for his brother, who was old and blind. Besides me, he had another laborer. His property was quite large: he had five hundred sheep, cows, horses and vast fields.

The labor in the village was hard, for I was born and brought up in the town. I was not used to the labor in the village, and my master beat me ruthlessly for every mistake I made. One day, as I was grazing the sheep, two of them got lost; he would kill me, if a shepherd had not said that those two sheep had gone and got mixed with his flock. I worked there about four years. While grazing the sheep, I often met corpses of Armenians, which had been killed by the Turks of our surroundings. At night I slept in the barn near the animals. Of course, it was warm there, but the air was very stuffy. I had to endure, since I had no other way out. The only consolation I had was that I was not hungry. But it was very difficult during the Muslim's religious holiday, Ramadan, which lasted a whole month. During that month I should not eat or drink from 6 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock in the evening. Fasting did not bother me much, but the craving for water was very hard to bear. The peasants of the village were all illiterate, so I did the reading and the writing. They treated me well.

Every year, part of the wheat was taken from the village to Sebastia as an annual tax. Once, when I was

returning from Sebastia, I met my best friend, Barsegh. He also, like me, had remained alive working as a laborer. We embraced each other and began to weep with joy. He also, like me, was working at the headman of another village, which was at a walking distance of six hours from our village. We decided to run away and go to Constantinople. A convenient opportunity was offered to me, when the men of our village had gone with carts to bring salt. On that day I had gone, with the women, to work in the fields. At the noon heat the flies did not give rest to the horse. I asked them to let me take the horse home and come back. At home I took a few pieces of lavash, saddled the horse and rode to Sebastia. But soon the men, who had returned from their journey to fetch salt, caught up with me, tied me up and took me back to the village. Two of those, who were coming behind me, wanted to kill me, but the third, who was the son of the village headman, did not allow it. They agreed to take me back to the village, watch me strictly and kill me, whenever they suspected me. Two weeks after the incident I began to work better, but decided to run away by the mountains.

In order to go to Sebastia, I had to cross the bridge of Ghezelermagh (Red River – Turk.). The bridge was watched by soldiers day and night, for there were many deserters from the army in those days. It was dangerous for me to cross over the bridge. I decided to swim across the river. I took off my clothes, tied them on my waist and swam to the other bank, put on my clothes and continued my way. It was not dark yet, when I reached Sebastia. I saw that the shops of the Armenian quarters were destroyed. I did not know where to go, whom to apply. I had no money. For two days I remained hungry and slept in a dilapidated house. As I woke up in the morning my both eyes were swollen and closed. I was burning as if on fire. I came out to the street with difficulty. A Turk approached me, had pity on me and took me to a hospital. They kept me there for four days and then sent me out. After wandering for a long time in the town, I found a job in a small café as a waiter. They did not pay me, they only fed me and sometimes the customers tipped me.

I learned that the Russian army was victoriously approaching from Erzroom to Yerznka. I decided to go to Yerznka, reach the Russian army and ask them to take me with them either to Eastern Armenia or Russia. But the army had received orders to retreat, and I was obliged to come back to Sebastia. I learned that the monastery there had been converted into a state boarding school. But in order to enter that school the mayor's permission was necessary. I wrote an application and went to the mayor's place. The secretary took my application to the mayor; he had said: "Let him come tomorrow." The next day I went at 11 o'clock. The mayor received me cordially, asked my surname and said: "Do you paint?"

"Yes, even the mayor has bought my paintings," I replied.

The mayor took out of his drawer my paintings, which he had bought years ago from our school exhibition. He ordered to his men: "Take him, let him study."

I went to study. There was another Armenian boy there, with whom we slept in the same room. One night I heard someone knocking at my wall. The boy, sleeping next to me, came out and found out that the new comer was Mourad. He had come on his own horse, on the way he had cut the telegraph wires. That Armenian boy was from the birthplace of Mourad, from Kovden. Later I learned that he had known Mourad personally, and that they had met secretly, by night, at our school. According to Mourad's narrative, he even knew that the local Armenians had kept, before being deported, about 300 rifles with bullets and had buried them in the yard of the monastery, where our school was now. Mourad asked us to find the place where the rifles were kept. Of course we could not dig about openly. We searched, but in vain. In a few days Mourad reached Samsun together with his body-guard Yegho. Under the threat of weapons they forced the boatman on the seashore to take them to the open sea till they met a Russian ship. He met a battle-ship and with the help of the Russians he reached Transcaucasia.

During the summer vacations we were to go to the villages and help the peasants to gather the harvest with the help of reaping machines. As I was from Divrik, I asked them to send me to my birthplace – Divrik. Arriving at Divrik, I asked the Turks of our village where our house had been. I went and found it. A Turk family was living there. When I returned, I did not want to go to school any more. I found a job at a large café; it had two rooms for travelers. It was also my duty to clean the rooms and to take care of four horses. The travelers gave me money sometimes. I saved the money they gave me, for I intended to go to Constantinople.

On my way to Constantinople, at a hotel in Samsun, I got acquainted with a rich man from Marzvan. When he learned that I knew a lot about agriculture, he asked me to work as a manager on his estate, and I agreed.

Arriving at Marzvan I began to work in agriculture. I managed to get the seeds of the well-known Diarbekir water-melon; I sowed them, took good care of them and got an excellent crop. I decided to reach Constantinople at any cost. I went to Samsun by my master's carriage and managed to buy a cheap ticket before the arrival of the ship. As my ticket was cheap, I slept on deck in the open air, and the weather was already cold.

Finally my dream came true: I reached Constantinople. Not a single kopeck was left in my pocket. Asking here and there, I learned which part of the city was mostly inhabited by Armenians. It was Ghalatia. I went there. While passing by a shop, I heard an Armenian conversation. I entered the shop. The shopkeeper asked me in Armenian: "Are you Armenian?"

I answered in Turkish, for I had almost forgotten the

Armenian language. I told him that I was coming from Samsun, I was born in Divrik, that I had recently returned from exile. The shopkeeper took me to some people from Divrik. It turned out that one of them was the son of my grandfather's brother. I lived at their place about ten days. They made Turkish fezes. One day a woman came to them and, seeing me, embraced me and began to kiss me, saying that she was my mother's cousin. She took me to their house. That woman's husband had been Sultan Hamid's cook. He was a very good cook and had a small restaurant. Many people wanted to taste his dishes, but as the restaurant was small, all those who wished, could not be served, so many customers wanted to be served at their working places. I was doing that job. I worked about three or four months. During that time I also learned to prepare tasty dishes. I have been to several European and American cities and I think that Turkish cuisine is varied and tasty.

During that time I had the chance to visit the sightseeing places of Constantinople. To my mind Constantinople is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is built on seven hills, and the beauty of the Bosphorus is beyond description. I saw the Aya Sofia; I got acquainted with the big and small islands, where the rich people of Constantinople go to rest in summer. Among the customers I served, I became intimate with Sepouh Stepanian, who was the chairman of the Agronomists' Union. He told me that an agricultural school was being organized on the estate of the Armash Monastery, near Adabazar. With his help I was admitted to that school. It was a boarding school and was supported by the AGBU. About 200 Armenian orphans were admitted to that school. Our teachers were well-trained, and we learned a lot. We had theoretical subjects half of the day and the other half – practical. The living conditions at the school were not good enough: we were almost hungry. Later our school was transferred to Constantinople, where we continued our studies. During that time Mr. Khatissian, the prime minister of the Dashnak government of Armenia, arrived to Constantinople. He wanted to create an Armenian army consisting of fifty thousand soldiers. Taking the opportunity, the direction of our school asked him to transfer the school to Armenia. Four students, including me, refused to go, the rest of the students were transferred to Armenia. Soon we found shelter in the Armenian orphanage of Shishli.

One day I took the tram going from Shishli to Bera. When I wanted to buy my ticket, I saw that the conductor was my friend Barsegh. There was no limit to our joy. It was impossible to believe that there was not the fear of massacres any more. From Barsegh's narrative I knew that he had come to Constantinople with his brother, overcoming great difficulties. He had worked in a bakery as a worker. His brother had gone to Bulgaria. I did not part with Barsegh anymore.

At that time we were four orphan students studying at the Agricultural School. We applied to the AGBU to send us to the USA to continue our studies. Barsegh also joined us. But I had trachoma, and America would not accept me, so I was cured.

At last in June, 1921 we succeeded and left for the USA. There, we went to the AGBU center with our documents, which we had brought from Constantinople, and they admitted us to the Agricultural Boarding School, where we had to learn for three years, but first we learned the language, then we began our studies. We continued our studies later at the Cornwall University of New York State. The AGBU paid each five of us \$500 per year, which was fifty percent of our expenses. We supplied the rest by

working. At the restaurant of the University Barsegh and I washed the dishes and ate free of charge. In summer we went to the farms for practice and we were paid for that.

In 1926 we, six friends, graduated from the University and decided to come to our Motherland and be useful to her. In Yerevan I participated in the foundation of the New Sebastia and New Malatia districts. I worked in Stepanavan. I married Astghik Papayan. In 1928 we went to Yerevan. I began to work. Then I worked at the Biological Institute after Timiryazev, in Moscow. I wrote scientific articles disproving genetics, but I could not maintain my thesis, since my views were against the accepted ones. After staying in Moscow for six years we came and settled in Yerevan.

### 153 (153).

#### HAMBARDZOOM KARAPET SAHAKIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1898, Sebastia)

I was born in Sebastia, forty days after Easter, on Ascension Day. While baptizing me the priest had asked my parents when I was born, and learning about my birthday, he had said: "He has brought his name together with him," and had named me Hambarzoum (Ascension – Arm.).

My father Karapet was a tinsmith; my mother Vosky was a housewife; my elder brother's name was Haykaz, younger brother's – Souren, and my sister's name was Vardanoush. We lived a moderate life. In Sebastia we went to school at the age of 7-8. I have hardly learned the alphabet.

My mother, who was a very kind and gentle woman, died early. I remember that they gave me bread with raisins to eat. I was glad to eat it, but I don't remember anything else from her funeral. My father married for a second time. My elder brother Haykaz had studied engineering; he was a road constructor.

The Turkish government took him to work on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad construction as a specialist, but he never came back. We heard that they had killed him.

When the town crier announced about the Armenians' deportation, the Turk gendarmes began to order: "Men – on one side, women – on the other side." They sent the vigorous men to fight at the Russian-Turkish front.

They drove us like sheep; they expelled us from our houses and our orchards. They drove us to the desert. We were walking in the open air for one hundred and ten days almost without rest. And we slept in the open air. The old and the sick people could not walk, they remained on the road or the gendarmes killed them. They were driving us forward hungry; they did not even allow us to drink water. The Kurds and the Chechens attacked us, plundered and

kidnapped the girls and young women. Many women and girls threw themselves into the water. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers were filled with corpses. I remember, my step-mother was pregnant, they killed her, they thrust the 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. We lost each other. I remained alone. One day I was lying on the sand hungry and naked. An Arab came close, approached the gendarme, gave him some money and said: "Let me take this one to work for me." He took me with him as a servant. I became a shepherd. That Arab saved my life. I always bless him. It is true that I lived in the cowshed; I slept with the animals, but my life was saved.

The Arab had two sons and a daughter. The boys were good-for-nothing in managing the farmstead. The Arab saw that I was diligent and devoted to him, he adopted me and he tattooed my name on my left hand in blue ink and called me Shukri. He used to say to me: "I haven't seen any good from my sons; I'll leave you all my property, and you'll be the owner of the village, if you marry my only daughter." He took me to Aleppo, bought clothes for me, dressed me; he bought shoes for me; I put them on. The shoemaker was an Armenian from Sebastia; he asked me; he said: "Sen kim sım?" (Who are you? – Turk.).

"Ben ermeni im" (I'm an Armenian – Turk.).

The Armenian shoemaker helped me so that I could run away from the Arab and not marry his daughter.

In 1928 I fled to France together with the shoemaker. There I worked as a farmer. One day I met a man by chance, and he said: "Are you Hambarzoum? Aren't you Souren's brother?"

I said: "Yes, I am."

"Do you know that Souren is alive?"

"What! Are you crazy? Are there Armenians left alive on earth? They massacred them all."

"Do you hear me? There are still Armenians living. Your brother Souren lives in Lyon."

That man, whose name was Sargis, took me to Lyon, to my brother. I saw that my brother had become a tinsmith like our father, and I became a farmer. There were a great number of Armenians in Lyon; we gathered together; we held meetings. I became a member of the Armenians Relief Organization in Lyon, then deputy chairman and finally the chairman. Patriotism was like a fire within me and the foreign world was strange to me. I used to say: "It's better to live in obscurity than in bright darkness."

And one day the news of repatriation came to Lyon. There was no limit to our joy. Armenia was calling us.

In 1947 we came to Armenia. I married Tagouhi from Beylan and had my family. We had a son Mkrtich and a daughter Vardanoush by name. I named my daughter Vardanoush out of my grief. One day when I was a

shepherd near the Arabs, I saw they were pulling a dead girl by the hair. I approached and asked the reason of her death. They said that she was hungry when they found her. They had pity on her and gave her some bread; she had eaten it, her stomach had burst and she had died. I went closer to look at her face. I saw that she was my sister Vardanoush. I knelt beside her and said: "She is my sister."

My Arab master organized a decent funeral. That's why I gave my daughter that name, but when every time they call her Vardanoush, I remember my sister.

I became a construction worker in Yerevan. The Cognac Factory, the Wine Factory, the Soundoukian Theater and also the Dvin Hotel have been built with the stones I have hewn. But during the construction of the Dvin Hotel I fell down and broke my arm and after that I could not continue hewing stones. I was a good master of hewing stones and I feel proud that I have taken part in the reconstruction of our Motherland: I have also laid a 'stone' in my Motherland.

Now I work as a night-watchman at the Souvenir Factory.

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### MANVEL SAHAKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Sebastia, Gyurin)

All my relatives were martyred during the years of the Great Genocide. At that time father was forty-two years old, mother thirty-four, my elder sister was fifteen years old, my brother was twelve and my younger sister was ten. From our large family only I survived. My grandfather, Manouk Panian, was a stone-mason, he built churches and houses. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man. Our house was in the center of the city. My grandpa had two brothers: Hakob and Hovhannes. Hakob had gone to America and Hovhannes had three sons: Khachik, Sedrak and Hakob. They were sent to the Balkan War as private soldiers.

Mother and grandmother cultivated our vegetable garden. We had mulberry, pear and nut trees.

Father had studied theology. He was ordained priest taking the clerical name Ter-Ignatios, by the Sebastia prelate. He had a good voice and conducted the church choir.

Father told us that during the massacres of 1895-1896 he had been twenty-two years old. He was hidden in a cave together with his friends. The next day a Kurd woman, passing by, had seen them and immediately had informed the Turks. Soon the Turks had come and had shot them all. Father was crafty; he had fallen down when the shot was fired. He had remained there among the corpses till evening and then he had come out and returned home.

After a year of that event father had married Gohar and we were born. We, the boys, went to school. The Turk boys of our age also went to school. Very often they waited for us on the wooden bridge of the Tokhma River, in order to beat us. That day the son of my mother's brother, Toros, was with us. He saw that the Turks began to beat us; he assaulted them and knocked them all down.

In the town of Gyurin there was a general custom: every Sunday harrissa was cooked with turkey meat; they never ate harrissa alone in the family, they always invited relatives. Father had the privilege of sitting at the head of the table. He blessed the table, raised the wine glass and drank it, after which we began to eat.

I loved my mother very much. She was of an average build; she was a modest and intelligent woman. She was literate: she had gone to school, but had left soon. Every Sunday she gathered the women of our neighborhood; they sat in the garden under a tree and read the Bible. After reading she closed the book wrapped it in a cloth and put it on the bookshelf. Besides religious books we had also many fiction books, which father received from Constantinople. As you see, the members of such an intelligent and pious family were all massacred by the Turks.

**SOUREN SARGSIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1902, Sebastia, Khochhissar Village)**

Our Khochhissar Village lay 25 km east of the town of Sebastia (Svaz). The Sebastia-Erzroom road passed through the village. Guests often visited my grandpa at his house. As far as I remember my grandfathers were influential people. We had a two-storeyed large house, a summer resort, grazing pastures in the valley of Mount Sakhar 15-20 km from our village. When the First World War broke out on the 1st of August, 1914, the peasants of our village were busy in harvesting, although bad news had reached our village by some Armenian newspapers. On the 2nd of August criers came to our village, and the village headman began crying from the roofs: "Hey, it's Seferberlik: men from 18 to 45-50 years of age must come to Khochhissar to enlist." I remember well that the people got mixed up, they cried and shouted everywhere. The same day the sun eclipsed completely, the sky darkened for half an hour. That horrified the people still more.

Everybody was seized by the feeling of pessimism. The road of our village became more active on both sides. At times, the Turk gendarmes began to act willfully, the soldiers passing by demanded food from the peasants; they entered the village in broad daylight and did not return to their centers by night, but stayed in our houses. Our peasants applied to the primacy, four gendarmes were posted to guard our village.

After a training period of two months, the Turkish army passed before our village in regular lines, with a brass-band. The Turk guests appreciated the Armenian soldiers telling that they learned well, mastered the technique of weapons soon and that their commanders praised them. The days passed, the November-December cold weather and rains caused the soldiers to lose their discipline; many began to escape from the army, many had come to the village and were hiding in barns or in the caves near the village; nobody inquired about them.

Thus, 3-4 months passed. In December 1914 news spread that Enver pasha was coming; the roads should be brought into order about 4 km all along our village. After a few days Enver's retinue came and stopped at the western end of the village: three carriages were drawn by four horses each, surrounded by six horsemen in the rear and six horsemen in the front and taking the lead was Mourad of Sebastia with his group of 12 horsemen. The peasants surrounded the retinue. I also went especially to see Enver pasha. The peasants brought salt and bread, as they were instructed by Mourad. Enver pasha stood up in the carriage, accepted the salt and bread on a tray and thanked the people with a nod of his head. I saw how Enver pasha took the tray and served the members of his retinue without exception. In honor of Enver

pasha a horserace was organized on the field road. I was watching how the horsemen were galloping towards the Alice River. Suddenly the people roared: "Mourad, Mourad's horse, Pegasus, won the race!" The racing horse-men returned. Mourad approached Enver, who stood in the carriage, smiled, arranged his moustaches, shook Mourad by the hand and patted his back. I was standing on a high mound ten steps from Enver pasha and was staring at him out of curiosity. I remember every thing so well, as if it were now. The weather was fine. Enver pasha had put on semi-military clothes, he had a fez on his head; he had long shining boots on his feet; his face was round, broad, handsome, with regular features; he was a bit taller than average height, a bit longer moustaches, thick eye-brows and black eyes. Vehib pasha was seated in the first carriage together with his assistants.

After the horse-race Enver pasha stood up in the carriage and spoke to the people for ten minutes. I remember his words so well: "The Armenian soldiers are fighting bravely for their Ottoman Fatherland, for their 'Vatan.' At all the fronts the Armenian doctors and nurses are treating our wounded soldiers. Most of the Armenian soldiers master the military techniques, for that I'm very thankful to you. And you, in your turn, work well at the rear to supply our army with food." When he finished his speech, Mourad approached him on horseback and shook hands with him. Enver pasha patted Mourad on the back and told him something in a low voice. The whistle gave the signal and the carriage moved. Enver pasha disappeared waving his hand.

Thus, days and months passed, nothing exceptional occurred in the village; only our villagers were filled with enthusiasm to meet the Russian army in Sebastia, but all that was in vain: the Russian army did not come. Only war prisoners came. Our people were disappointed with their vain, senseless hopes and feelings.

One day we were playing together with the children in the village center, when suddenly, from the eastern side, from Kapan, four carriages came swiftly and stopped in the center of the village on the road. The people rushed forth to find out what it was. I ran, too. This time again the four carriages were drawn by four horses each. Mourad's group was standing far from the carriages, silent and sad. The coachmen were arranging the harnesses of the horses and feeding them. Enver pasha was returning from Erzroom. He had a very angry appearance; he was looking at the people with fury and did not speak to the people next to him.

I passed to the left side of the carriages and, standing on a mound, was watching Enver pasha on. He was

making nervous movements while sitting in his place. He turned his eyes on the people about and his glance fell on me. His eyes were filled with hatred. I was horrified by his black eyes. He wrapped himself in a felt coat and threw a beastlike glance on the standing people. Enver pasha neither greeted, nor said good-bye to the people, as he had done the previous time, and left. They stopped at the Seyfe Khan to rest. He called Mourad and said in an extremely furious manner: "What are your people doing in the Caucasus, on the Russian side? What did we sign with you in 1908 and 1914 in Erzroom? You'll pay through your nose for it." Mourad left the group very offended and sad. He said that Enver had protested about some volunteers. As our village was on the way from Sebastia to Erzroom, the news reached fast. On his way to Constantinople, in Sebastia, Enver pasha invited the governors of the six provinces and gave them instructions about how to massacre the Armenians, to annihilate all the men by slaughtering them on the spot and to drive the women and children towards the Taurus Mountains and beyond, to the Arabian deserts, to annihilate them with famine, thirst and exhaustion. At the end of March 1915 the governor of Sebastia summoned Mourad. The latter did not go; he fled to the mountains, for he knew the governor's intention.

One morning I woke up and saw Mourad with his twelve companions sitting in our summer hall and having dinner; mother was serving them. They stayed in our house about 10-12 days and then went toward the Khorokhon Village.

On April 11th (24th) mother put a few calves and two colts before me and told me to take them to the pasture. Suddenly a gendarme, a youth of 20-21 years old, a rifle bigger than himself in hand, came towards me and took aim towards my belly. I was stunned with fear and began to cry. I returned home and told mother what had happened. I don't know if it was on the same day or on the next, 10-12 gendarmes of the village brought the priest of the village, Ter-Youstos (his religious name) – Sargis Mazmanian, to our house, seated on a donkey, his face toward the animal's rump. They put our people rudely out of the house, but I didn't go, and they paid no attention to me, I saw how they had shoed the priest's feet, they had put a hot iron plate on his head, which had burned his hair and the skin of his head; his beard had been plucked and his teeth pulled out. The gendarmes were beating the priest brutally. Thrashing, they brought also my mother, they piled wood under the pillars of the house. "We're going to burn this house," they yelled. "You've fed Mourad in this house; you've kept his group for days. The landlord of this house Aram Sargsian and his friends have gone to the mountains with mauser. Go, bring the mauser and tell us where they are."

Mother was swearing that she hadn't seen Mourad and she knew nothing about the mauser. The gendarmes

were beating mother incessantly. Mother was crying and saying: "Aram Sargsian has given 44 gold coins as a ransom and he has gone to the mountains to keep our cattle, the sheep."

My uncle Abig Sargsian, the elder of the village, was running here and there, he did not allow the gendarmes to light the match and set fire to our house: he did not allow them to beat my mother. Finally, they took some money and did not burn the house, but they took my poor mother with them. They had raped her all night and the following day they brought her home on the verge of death. We, the children, were crying around mother. The following day they took my sister, Knarik, who was very pretty and newly married: they had treated her in the same manner...

In the village the gendarmes had gathered 10-12 distinguished people of the village together. For 10 days, those scoundrels beat them, burned the various parts of their body with hot iron, pulled out their finger-nails, put hot eggs in their armpits and committed a series of unheard-of atrocities. Finally they took those men, tortured them in prison for months, then brought them to the village and shot them, when they were already dying. At the end of May all the roads were closed, they marked all the cattle of the Armenians with hot branding-irons in order to recognize them that they belonged to Armenians. There came a strict order not to touch the property of the Armenians, but to kill the Armenian males on the spot without sparing.

Gradually they changed the local gendarmes, replacing them by gendarmes brought from Albania, who looked like wild beasts. News was spread that a special authorized man had come from Constantinople, Sidki bey, who had been sent only to slaughter the Armenians. One day the gendarmes, under the leadership of Arnavoud Hassan, gathered 50-60 men, tied their arms and took them away in the evening and killed them brutally. The next morning they came to the village to take their clothes, they ate and drank and went away. The following day the peasants went and found their corpses, torn to pieces, disfigured and unrecognizable. No one found his man or recognized him. The Turks came again for the second time and called very politely, according to a list they had in hand, the notables of the village, saying: "Come, we're going to build bridges and roads, it's alright." In the evening they took them away; they had killed them all in the Purnaz Valley and had thrown their corpses into the river. There were no more males left in our village. Next, they brought the prisoners of the central prison. None of them had a normal face: one's nose had been broken, the other's eye had been put out, another's teeth had been pulled out, people with broken legs and swollen heads, they had lost their normal human face after being beaten for days and months; they had shoed their feet with horse-shoes, they burned their flesh

with a hot iron, had pulled out their nails and teeth. They brought those half-dead ghosts before our village. In the evening, at sunset, they made them sit, for half an hour, before the village, expecting to earn money... The people of our village rushed toward them, every one looking for her next of kin. Whoever found him, embraced him and wails and laments were heard all around. The prisoners, who had even no force to sit upright, and their folks were wiping their tears. I was looking at them and could not understand if they were alive or dead? Then they went away driven by whip-strokes of the gendarmes and under the lamentations and sobs of the women. They went to be slaughtered like animals in the dark valley, under the bonfire lights. They were walking silently, their heads lowered. The village became a dark grave-yard. Old people, women and children were crying and sobbing. In the morning the gendarmes came to the village, loaded the new clothes of the martyrs on horseback, ordered the villagers to slaughter and roast chickens and sheep for them to eat, they ate and drank and went away.

Only a few old men and boys below 16 were left in the village. After 5 or 10 days they came and brought a cart front of each house and they ordered the women: "Load on the carts whatever you want; you're going to Arabia to live there." We left everything: our house, orchards, animals, property and we set off. Dante's hell had descended on the village, an unprecedented tragedy was taking place. When we reached the main road, we saw carriages, carts, horses, caravans coming from the city; they had reached us and the end of the line was near the town. From our height the town was seen, and the stone bridge on the Alice River, built by King Senekerim. The mountain-side was covered with a flood of people mixed with carriages and carts. The people did not know why all this chaos was, where they were going and why. The cries and laments of the women and children were mixed with the shouting and the impudent blasphemies of the gendarmes and soldiers. They were striking the women and children, right and left. Suddenly we saw a group of horsemen about 15-20 in number who came and ordered all the caravans to gather on top of the Ghardashlar Mountain, on a plateau. They made the people spread the carpets and rugs and began to collect money from the people: "Hey," shouted a horseman. "Whoever has a prisoner in town, let him bring one or two gold coin for everyone, and tomorrow you man will be here with you."

Women began to bring money, giving the names of their husbands. A gendarme, a huge notebook in his hand, was supposedly writing down the name of the prisoner, his address, his age and so on. In a few hours the saddle-bag was almost filled with money. In the evening they put he saddle-bag on a horse and went away. The following day they brought a group of men about 20-30 people, surrounded with 10 gendarmes. They brought also the

well-known rich man in town, Khelkhlik. He was very fat and was seated on a big, white donkey. The people ran forward, expecting to find their relatives. The gendarmes drew them back and told them to form a circle. In the center of the circle, the chief of the gendarmes fired at Khelkhlik behind his ear. The man fell down bleeding severely, grunting and shuddering. The gendarmes were laughed whole-heartedly, and the people were silent, horror-stricken. Then they brought forward the others, every five-six men hugging each other and they fired at them, then they struck them on the head with clubs until they lay dead, then they threw them into the torrent and went away.

The next morning, before sunrise, they drove us southward; we crossed the mountain. Good-bye Motherland, we're going towards torture, toward torment and death, to face more monstrous, more inhuman ordeals. Before our death we're going to death, towards crucifixion. Good-bye my native village. My eyes of childish eyes saw your mountains from afar. I saw the high Mountain Sakhar, in whose valleys I've passed my sweet days of childhood. I won't see any more the magnificent, clear, blue streams, the rustling evergreen oak forests, I won't hear my mother's sacred call, I won't hear my playmates' delightful cries and shouts... Good-bye, you, unburied, lacerated human corpses; you've remained in the open air and the beasts are devouring your corpses. The sweet melodies of the church-bells won't ring anymore. The school doors won't open anymore, no more weddings and feasts will be held. Death, death is awaiting us all: the old, the child, the newly wed and the baby in his swaddling clothes. What is our sin? Whom had we done anything wrong...? Cursed childhood, cursed world! May you be ruined, may you be destroyed! What's happening to us? They flung the newly born babies to the ground; they made the mothers cry bitterly. What was the newborn to be blamed for? He did not know yet the existence of the prophet, or Christ, or of God. What was their sin? I did not understand.

For two days we were kept on the mountain top of Ghardashlar; they gathered a lot of money from the people. Early in the morning, before sunrise, our carts and carriages began to move forward, in turn, to the south, down the mountain. The carts and the carriages were going down like a flood and their rattle was mixed with the people's cries, wails and sobs. Women, old people, children and babies in their mothers' arms were walking on the two sides of the carts and carriages silently, their heads hung down. The furious gendarmes did not allow anyone to get on the carriages or carts. They were shouting all the time: "That is state property, and you're undesirable people, you're going to die, to be annihilated." After walking a certain distance the young girls began to cry and to grumble. The July sun was

burning mercilessly. They wanted water to drink, they wanted bread, they were exhausted. The people were going their heads bent down, sad. They did not know why they were going, where they were going, what their guilt was, what they had done. After going for a long time, at last we were stopped before a khan, which was called Tejiri khan. There was water in the nearby valley. Women began to cook food with the little supply, which was left. That day nothing particular happened with the caravan. The oxen and the horses grazed and were satisfied. From there we continued our way. Before the sunset we reached Ghandal (a central town) where the Armenians had not been deported yet and they brought us food. They met us with tears and wails, waiting for their evil luck. Our next stay was at Kherkhi khan, which was on a river. On one side there was a Turkish village and on the other was the well-known Armenian Ulash Village, which was famous with its abundant crop and its wheat.

There the people rested, the oxen grazed, they somewhat recovered their forces. On the fourth day we reached the Armenian village of Manjelek, which was deserted. The windows of the abandoned houses were looking at us like the devils of hell. The following day we passed before Kyotu Khan and on the fifth day we reached the human slaughterhouse, a small town, which was called Hassan Chelebi. That was a place where crime had reached its culmination. We had crossed the border of Sebastia and now we were between the Harpoot Province and the Kurdish border. There was a strict order: not a single male should cross that border alive. They had gathered and killed them all. That was the reason why the valleys were full of corpses. Our carts stopped before the village in disorder. It was surrounded with forests and a stream flowed through it, the air was cool and pleasant. Suddenly we noticed corpses on the other bank of the river, which were scattered here and there, among them young and old people, children and women. My uncle's wife wanted to go there and see; two officers did not allow her and they began to yell: "Hey, old bone gâvur, what are you looking at? Soon you'll be in the same state."

In the evening, a few gendarmes and a few Kurds came, gathered the males of our caravan, the boys and the old men and took those 200 men to an old dilapidated building, where there were no sitting places, not even places to stand. At midnight they took them by groups to the mountains. On the next morning, a young boy, half-naked and bleeding, came and sat near his acquaintances. I approached him; I was looking at him and recalled the men of our village. They had taken them, by night, to the top of a mountain, had cut their heads with axes and had thrown them into the valley. That boy's neck had not been cut deep, so he had remained in the corpses till morning. I don't know what happened to him later. We came out

of Hassan Chelebi. Soon we saw corpses of men, women and children, especially women, who were naked and swollen. We noticed a bridge from afar and whispers were spread that they would slaughter us all over that bridge. Some Kurds began to appear, armed with axes, knives and rifles. My uncle's wife ran, panting, to a gendarme, put two gold coins in his hand and said that we wanted to become Turks and asked him to take us to the village. The gendarmes said calmly: "Don't be afraid, you should have become Turks six months ago; but don't worry, I'll pass your caravan safely over the bridge." We reached the bridge; below it corpses were piled on each other; corpses in hundreds, naked corpses spread in the water of the river. The Kurds attacked us secretly, threatened us with their knives, took off our clothes and ran away. The gendarmes accompanying us, went forward and backward and fired at random. In the evening we reached Hekimkhan. It was a marvelously beautiful valley lost in green. All of a sudden we noticed on the other bank of the river a woman's corpse, which was naked and extremely swollen. The women were crying and cursing those who had caused all that butchery, those who had brought that woman and myriads of others like her to that state.

In the morning we left Hekimkhan and continued our way as the previous day. Kurds were everywhere, they tried to rob, plunder and kill the people. The gendarmes were firing, the women were screaming for help, the carts were going, once going down and then climbing up. An old woman fell off the cart, the following carts ran over her; her daughter was crying and shouting: "Oh, dear mother. Would your life end this way?" She was kissing her mother in agony and was scratching herself.

The mountains and the forests remained behind us.

In the evening our caravan turned to the right where two rivers joined. There was no clear water to drink, because the streams were full of putrid and decayed corpses. Darkness fell and we slept thirsty, longing for water. Suddenly several gendarmes came, gathered a few men and took them away; in the morning they brought them back and shot them before our eyes. That day we arrived at an arid plain near Malatia, called Soussouzova. The next morning the number of the gendarmes increased, they hurried the carts to move on faster and in a disorderly manner and they themselves defended us from the swarming Kurds. The heat was unbearable. The people were parched with thirst. On the two sides of the road there were rivulets and puddles, but there were rotten, stinking corpses, heaped on each other, in them. Finally the caravan reached the bridge of the Kherkhyoz River, where Turks were crowded. One of them got on the first cart and shouted: "Hey, gâvurs, who doesn't bring one gold coin for each cart, we'll throw that cart into the water." Uproar and clamor were heard everywhere... At last the caravan passed and stopped in front of a khan, where the caravan preceding us had

stopped. Here they had massacred the Khotordjrets from Erzroom. They did not give us trouble. 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. Here we were dispossessed of our carts and carriages. According to the governmental plan, the people had to climb, on foot, up the Taurus Mountains and surmount a height of 3,900 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. One morning the gendarmes came with the Kurd crowd to deport our caravan. The people were complaining; they did not want to be deported. The gendarmes started to beat them, cursing and swearing, the children screamed on their mother's back. The women had taken their children on their back. We reached the foot of the mountain, the sun was burning. There was no water. The people were exhausted. A woman next to us threw her child on the ground and went away; the child was moving to-and-fro and crying. I looked at him for a few minutes and continued my way. After climbing a certain height, we saw in a valley children's and old women's bodies, completely nude, some of them alive, the others – dead. The ones, who were still alive, were looking at us in agony, with dim eyes; they had taken off their clothes entirely. We continued to climb up. There was a cold fountain under a huge rock; the people drank the water greedily and recovered to a certain extent. My mother could not endure all this; she fell exhausted and died. Women fell on her, took the gold from her and went away. We were crying and crying incessantly. When we reached the summit of the mountain, there was a rumor among the women that they were collecting the boys and killing them. A sixteen year old boy ran away from our group, his sister ran after him and asked her brother to give her money. The boy gave the money and went away. The sister was crying and wailing: "They slaughtered our father and mother in the village, now our only brother is gone. Be cursed, world, be cursed you, people, be cursed all of you!"

Near a river the caravan halted again – everybody was weary and exhausted. That evening nothing happened to us. Those, who had left their relatives on the road, were crying and sobbing...

We slept at night. 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 – Turk.). Our people had kept me under rags and were seated on me; I was not able to breathe; I was almost fainting. I had a narrow escape; they did not find me. It was a cool, wonderful night. The moon was shining like a sun in the sky and the stars were twinkling. In that beautiful scene an awful tragedy was taking place. Women were crying and lamenting over their children, screaming and cursing their fate and their luck in hoarse voices: "May your eyes become blind, where have you gone, why don't you come to help us. God, moon, stars, don't you see what's going on? Where are our God and Jesus Christ, whom we have worshiped? Where are those boastful loathsome men? Where did our fedayis go? May you tumble down, Earth..." I could not sleep in that noise; I was thinking to myself and recalling everything... We went from there and reached Zeynal bey's mansion and settled down on a green field. The Kurds did not trouble us anymore. The next morning, when we were setting off, I noticed that women held their little children by the hand and took them by force towards the fenced building; the children did not want to go, the mothers were almost dragging them, crying at the same time; a child was shrieking and rolling on the ground, his mother embraced him and carried him by force. The child was screaming: "I won't go!" The mother, in bitter despair, said: "What can I do, darling? I have no money; I have no strength to carry you any more. Everything is lost, may you be destroyed, Earth," and, hugging the child at the waist, took him and threw him over the wall to the inner side, into the garden. From outside the wall was low; from inside it was quite high. I ran near the fence and looked down – on the green grass lay one to two hundred children, some of them dead, others alive, there were women with their children, a few of them dead, the others still alive or in agony. Their sucklings in their arms, these exhausted women were waiting for their death. A baby was still sucking his dead mother's breast; he turned and looked at me, what a glance it was! Some of the newly thrown children saw me and ran towards me in the hope of being rescued... Half mad, I got down the wall and ran after our caravan. Up to this day I remember that heartbreaking sight.

The next day we passed, with great difficulty, through narrow rocky paths. Many people rolled down the precipice, especially the old women, who had no strength to walk. We went down the valley; there was a swift river, which was impossible to cross. The gendarmes ordered us to cross the river. We were extremely tired; all of us were exhausted. A few tried to enter the water and they were drifted away by the current. Some hired horses, while others paid the Kurds to help them cross the river.

On the other bank of the river we sat down at the foot of a sandy hill. The following day we set off again, but the people could not climb the sandy mountain, they slipped back. The Kurd women showed us a path through the forest, which we followed without fear. In the forest a Kurd wanted to snatch my cousin's belt from his waist and he drew his sword on him. My uncle's son, Jirayr screamed painfully and gave him his belt. But the following day he died of fear. Finally we reached the Adiyaman Fortress. I approached a fountain and wanted to drink. A Kurd came up, struck me on the head with a stick, took the clothes from over my shoulder and went away. At last the refugees settled somehow in the fortress, which was partially ruined due to an earthquake. They drove us into the fortress and put guards at the gate. All of a sudden the women noticed corpses heaped on each other on the right wing of the fortress. There were corpses in the valley, on the river bank. After two days they took us out of the fortress. The Kurds were busy in harvest; they hadn't come to slaughter us. So, we were rescued from the slaughter by chance. The blow, which I had received on my head near the fountain, made my eyes ache. I could not sleep the whole night: something hard was touching my eyes. I could not close them. They dropped donkey milk into my eyes and tied ground raisin on them. The pain abated, but I could not see well.

After the fortress, we passed over an ancient bridge and began to climb a steep mountain. Many remained on the way; they were not able to climb the steep mountain. Finally we reached the top. We slept that day on a grassy hill. In the evening they began to cry: "Let the town people be separated from the villagers." The citizens went down the hill. In the evening they checked their tents; they were searching money. Then they took away the young women and the girls to a remote building. Crying and wailing started again; they had taken and raped them till morning. The next day they brought them back to their mothers.

This was our last mountain; from this height the distant desert was seen and was rippling below like the waters of the ocean. Towns and villages were seen in the distance. After walking a day's distance we came to Adiyaman, Missak Manoushian's birthplace, which was lost in orchards and vineyards. We rested for a while in the green orchards of Adiyaman. The local Armenians brought some bread for us. After staying for two days, we were driven again and all the Armenians of Adiyaman with us. The beautiful and cruel mountain range of Taurus ended. We were getting down from the cool mountains, and the heat was suffocating us. The 30 days of sufferings, torture and death remained behind us. 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. The people washed themselves in the Euphrates River. Whatever food they had managed to get, they ate and lay down on the soft sand and silently fell asleep. The faint sobs of grief gradually died out; it seemed that everything had calmed down; the moon disappeared behind the mountains. The people were tired to death. All of a sudden several gendarmes and a few Kurds, entered, in the dark, in the rows of deportees, treading roughly on the sleeping people, the dead and the sick; they began to search right and left and gather the small children. The people woke up in horror. Suddenly a Kurd giant noticed me under the rags; he dragged me out, threw his arm round my waist and was about to take me away. Terrified, our people began to scream and cry; my uncle's daughter tried to save me from the grip of the Kurd, but in vain: the Kurd dropped me down; pushed her and threw her on the ground, picked me up again and carried me away. He had gripped me so strongly that I felt my ribs on the point of breaking; I could not breathe. After carrying me for a while, he got tired, threw me wildly onto the ground and ordered me to walk before him. On the way other Kurds also were bringing children. They took us around the burning fires, where about 150-200 children had gathered and four old men. I could not understand how those old people had been able to reach so far.

Eight to ten gendarmes armed with bayonets and fifteen to twenty Kurds surrounded us, made us sit on a sandy mound in rows, according to age and height. A woman came to save her little boy. One of the gendarmes cursed and pushed her roughly into a pit. She got up screaming plaintively: "Help, they're slaughtering the children!" Suddenly voices of thousands of women rose in the darkness to heaven. The chief of the gendarmes ordered to open fire towards the people. They took the rifles and fired towards the people: no more voices were heard, only the moan of the wounded women. They made a bonfire and ordered the four old men to stand up, leaning one against the other.

A gendarme took the rifle and wanted to fire; the last old man pushed away the rifle and began to implore: "We are old, we have done nothing, for God's sake, don't kill us."

The gendarme shouted: "You are old, you've done nothing, but you have prayed your God that the Russians come and destroy Turkey, that Andranik's sword be sharp to slaughter the Turks," and he fired. The four old men fell down to the ground. The Kurds, standing around, began to strike them on the nose, mouth, and head with clubs till they stopped breathing. The Kurds tied ropes around their necks and dragged them to the

nearby Euphrates River. It was the children's turn. They brought a child from the first row, the Kurds stabbed him with knives on the back and the belly till the child stopped breathing and then they dragged him away with ropes to the river, and thus during 3 or 4 hours. It was the turn of our row. The Kurds watched standing behind us. They had already killed about 200 children. A gendarme came up slowly to us and said: "Get away, go!"

We ran in group and join our people. My uncle's wife woke up and put me down to sleep. At midnight, a boy came suddenly in wet clothes repeating all the time: "Thank God, I didn't die, thank God, I didn't die." In the morning I saw that his body was all riddled; his wounds inflamed, and he died in tortures.

I hadn't slept and I heard a woman with a strange voice crying above my head. On a high place, two women embraced each other and were crying bitterly. I hardly noticed a giant Kurd who was watching them a big knife in his hand. I learned later that they were mother and daughter. The women was groaning and cursing the Turks who had caused all that. I was told later that the police chief had come and taken away the mother and daughter on the next morning.

My uncle's twin grandchildren and his son, Smbat, aged 5, whom I loved very much, died on the bank of the Euphrates. We approached the bank of the Euphrates River. There were boats covered with rags; the people went on board the boat with great difficulty. The Kurds were examining the women from head to foot; they were looking for money. The boat went down the river current. It took us hours till we got to the other bank. The Kurds were turning the boats upside down; women and children were falling into the water. An incident happened, which I will never forget till my death: two giant Kurds attacked a tall beautiful woman and wanted to take her purse. The woman resisted them with all her strength, knocking them down, but they got up and attacked the woman over and over again. I don't know how long the struggle lasted. They tore off the woman's clothes and soon she was left completely naked; they grabbed her purse and went away. Suddenly I noticed near her a girl, 7-8 years of age, who was following her mother's struggle with wide-opened eyes, trembling, crying and screaming. I hadn't seen such eyes either in paintings, or in life. The woman got up, embraced her daughter and said in a shaky voice: "We have died, daughter, we have neither money, nor clothes," and with one leap she threw herself into the river together with her daughter.

We had been walking for a whole day that again; the sun was scorching, there was no water. We left my uncle's daughter Haykanoush on the road, under a tree; she was alive and was following us with her eyes. Somewhere below, a water pond was noticed. People took vessels and began to run. A gendarme said: "You can't drink it; the water is full of corpses." After going for two or three

days, they again gathered the children; they shot two or three elderly people, they demanded money and they let us free.

Finally, after passing a long, wearisome road, we reached the Surudj desert. That was a real slaughterhouse: everyday hundreds of people died. Seventy per cent of our peasants died there. The hardest and most unbearable grief for me was that we left my 5-year old brother, Yeram, under a tree; he was crying after us. Oh, I cannot forget that day until now. After suffering for 15 days, according to the last comers, he had died of hunger and thirst. We moved toward the Surudj railway station. On the way a Kurd woman held my sister (7-year old) Elmon by the hand and took her away. We were lodged in a khan near the railway station; then they drove us towards Aleppo; then they divided our group into two: one half went to Der-Zor, the other returned again to Surudj. They distributed us lavash bread and ordered to shout, "Long live the King!" (It was a comedy). News spread that Enver pasha had passed by and gone with his wife to Diarbekir. From there they drove us along the railway to Ras-ul-Ayn, toward the east. We reached the station of Ras-ul-Ayn. They took us to a paved road about 2-3 km long and made us stand in a row on both sides of it. They began to make raised platforms at a certain distance from each other and erected stakes on them. At midnight they brought people and arranged them under the stakes: from one end of the road to the other, by eight people on each side. They had cut many heads and made square heaps of them. From the East they had brought refugees like us and arranged them on the other side of the road. From above the sun was burning, from beneath – the hot stones. We were almost dying, people were crying, begging for water, there was no one to bring water; there was no water.

Soldiers, gendarmes and Kurds were going and coming, they were getting ready for something. All of a sudden, a long train came and stood before us. People got off, and the train went back. They were from Tekerdagh, Rodosto, Edirné, Malkara: the people of Thrace. The people composed of women, children, old men and girls stood in astonishment. They had deceived them and brought them saying that they would settle in a new place. They noticed us from afar and began to move right and left, screaming and crying for their goods. The gendarmes ran toward them, calmed them down and made them sit along the railroad. We could see them from our place: they had their Sunday clothes on; they were white dresses. In the evening they slaughtered the men and arranged the corpses before the stages. Then they brought the girls in white clothes. In the darkness of the night, they impaled them all with the sharp stakes. Our ears became deaf to their and their mothers' screams, cries and heart-rending clamors. I learned that those people had carried General Andranik

on their shoulders, and the girls had sung the song “Like an Eagle,” dedicated to him and had presented Andranik with bouquets of flowers in the street, in the presence of Turks. This way they were avenging them.

In the morning the reddish sun was sifting gold from the blue firmament and its golden rays were spread everywhere. That was the desert sun, which was the only witness of our cruel sufferings. Finally they drove the people from Thrace; they brought and arranged them before the stakes: some of them were looking for their husbands and the others – their daughters on the stakes. The white dressed girls, who had been put on the stakes, had already died; their heads hung on one side... There was confusion, wailing and clamor among the refugees.

Suddenly a new uproar rose; four carriages full of people came and stopped twenty steps away from us. Two of the carriages stopped on a height, the other two – at the edge of the road. We heard that they were our intellectuals, brought from Aleppo; in each cart there were four of them. An order was given, and the two carriages moved forward, first slowly and then faster. The gendarmes on the carriages began to whip our intellectuals. They were striking on their head, body and face. The carriages appeared again; the gendarmes were shouting and whipping: “Hey, gâvurs, look right (they were showing us, the girls on the stakes and the beheaded men), see, the English battleships are entering Constantinople!” The carriages went and came back; we heard the shouting again: “Gâvurs, look to the left, the Russian army is entering Sebastia; Turkey is being annihilated.” And so, without end, after going and coming more than ten times they went towards Yedessia.

The following day they drove us after them towards the main road of Tigranakert and the Thracian people came after us. They made us sit in a semi-circle on a stony dry land. A little farther from us, in a green garden near the bridge, there was a large construction, something like an inn. People went in and out there. Suddenly they brought boards and stakes, erected them in the middle of the semi-circle and went away. In half an hour they brought our eight intellectuals, headed by Zohrap, beating and dragging them. They made them sit, then they came and made speeches; they spat on our intellectuals and went away.

Then eight gendarmes came armed with bayonets and with them a giant man in half military clothes. He looked like a wild man. He ordered to take off the clothes of our intellectuals; then they made them lie down on the boards face down, on their bellies, heads up, buttocks – height. An order was heard, “Stab bayonets.” The gendarmes stabbed our intellectuals in the buttocks, and they died; they were already half-dead after their beating. They buried their corpses till the waist, their heads out. They were repeating to us: “Look at them: they are thinking of you and you pray for their souls, they brought you to

this state.” The people were crying and were suffering, the people were in torture; they were dying of hunger and thirst. Who would think about them? Who would save them? I don’t know. It was said that Enver pasha had especially come from Constantinople to be present at the execution of the Armenian intellectuals; it was said that Enver pasha had personally organized that butchery. I saw a group of people sitting in the balcony of the garden. After the slaughter they came down, got on the carriages and went towards Tigranakert. The following day the gendarmes drove us to the place, from where we had come, and the people of Thrace – towards the south, where the men and girls were executed. A man, Grigor Ishkalian from Malkara, has told me about the events of Thrace, where he himself had been a witness of all those events, when he was 9-10 years old. So, they had announced to the people of Thrace: “You’ll go with your property to Jezayir; after the war you’ll come back.” And they brought us here, to this hell. The girls on the stakes were from Rodosto, who had presented Andranik with bouquets of flowers, and the young men were those, who had carried Andranik on their shoulders and some of them were workers working on the Osmanié Tunnel. They took us to Yedessia 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. I brought them water with a dirty vessel; it was rain water gathered in pits. They drank the water greedily and died instantly. And one day I had gone for water and on the road I met two old men with their donkeys in front of them. One of them looked at me and approached me. I got frightened and was looking at him in horror. He said: “Don’t be afraid, son, come, let me take you to our village.” The other old man came near and they spoke to each other. The other old man came near and they spoke to each other. This old man said to the other: “Listen, my sons and your son are fighting at the Baghdad front. I’ll take this Armenian boy, rescue him from death, and Allah will save our sons from the enemy’s bullet.” They put me on a donkey.

After going for two days we reached a village called Hyulumen, near Ayntap. We hadn’t reached the village yet, when the peasants and the relatives of the old men ran towards us in group. When they saw me on the donkey, they were surprised and they ran away in horror. The peasants were divided into two groups. One

group said: "Throw this gâvur into the pit; he will infect us all." The others said: "Let Bessé do as he wants; it's none of your business." During this clamor a respectable bearded man came, looked at me, looked at the mob, took the stick from the old man, struck them at random, and they all dispersed. We reached the old man's house: his daughter-in-law and grandchildren ran away from the house. The old man's wife came forward, took me by the arm, led me to the barn, put me down on the hay and said: "Lie down here, don't come out."

As I lay on the soft hay, I took a deep breath. After a while the landlady brought me a little lentil soup, which I ate immediately, and so, every day. After some time she began to give me more soup and then some pilaw with it and later – some bread. I began to recover; I began to walk in the barn. My blood began to move, I began to feel strong, and my face became round. The woman gave me a bath, together with her daughter, and gave me new clothes to put on. Her daughter-in-law, hearing that a new Armenian boy had appeared in the house, came panting, entered the kitchen, where I was having my dinner, and said furiously: "Ay ana, isn't it enough you're keeping a stinking gâvur boy, you've brought also a second one, eh?"

I had become a round-faced, blond, curly-haired, blue-eyed boy; I wasn't the former stinking, thin and disgusting lad. She looked at me and then ran with joy to the barn to find the old, stinking boy. She came back and said: "Ay ana, this boy is nice; he is so pretty; let's keep him."

The old woman said: "Go away, whore, you wanted to throw away my boy, you wanted to kill him, you ran away from the house because of him, now you want to own my boy."

The daughter-in-law ran and brought her children home, they became intimate with me and loved me very much; so did their mother. It was already spring. I began to help them in the house work and to graze the sheep. I lived there as one of the family. They had warned the people of the village not to touch me. One or two years passed and one day news was spread about the sons of Bessé, "His sons are coming; the two brothers, Sayat and Hussein are coming." They ran like fools to meet the two brothers and brought them home shouting and rejoicing. They sat down and had their dinner and suddenly noticed me. In the evening, when I was going and coming in the house, Sayat asked his mother: "Who's this boy?"

The mother said: "He's also our son. Your father has found him among the refugees, while returning from your place and has thought, 'If I take this boy and save him from death, God also will keep my sons from the enemy's bullets.' And now your father's dream has come true."

The boys were glad and told their story: "We were fighting at the Baghdad front for already more than two

months, and our commander sent us to the Osmanié hospital to recover, for we were disciplined soldiers." We remained there for a whole month. One day, an Armenian doctor came and said: "You are being sent to Baghdad, to the front again. Come, leave your military clothes here and put on civil clothes; I'll give you documents, and you'll rest for a whole year." We agreed, took the paper from the doctor and thanked him. Later we learned that after finishing the construction of the tunnel of the Osmanié railway, the Armenian workers would be killed. That Armenian doctor had dressed the workers with our military clothes and sent them to Baghdad, where the Armenians were not being slaughtered. He had done the same to many others.

After that, the whole family began to pay much attention to me, they loved me very much, and the peasants were looking at me as a miracle maker. Their father Bessé often said to his sons: "I've become young; what a good deed I did to bring this Armenian boy here and I became happy."

After that they would not let me do any work; they used to say: "eat, drink and live at your pleasure. You're our own son."

I remained in the village of Hyulumen until 1919: the war was over. I came to Ayntap. For months I went about hungry, naked. There were many refugees; there was neither work, nor money. After 4-5 months the Americans came and opened an orphanage, the Haladjian Orphanage. I applied there and was accepted. After a year the English went and the French came instead and after that the Kemalist movement began. Life became unbearable. The Americans transferred the orphanage to Beirut. Our orphanage was taken to Jibeyl, where I remained till 1924. I received an invitation from America and went to America. The ship sailed via Greece, Italy and France – Marseille. I went to Paris. I went to Stepan Dardouni, who had been my teacher at the orphanage. He took me to the café, where the Dashnaks used to frequent; he was a fanatic Dashnak. At the café I saw Armen Garo (Garegin Bastermadjian), who had participated in the Bank Ottoman seizure in 1896. In 1914 during World War I, he fought together with three thousand volunteers at the Sarighamish front against Enver pasha and had even fired at him. He had been a member of the Turkish Parliament; Enver pasha had permitted him to go to the Caucasus, to bring to an end his business of factories, houses and other properties and return to Constantinople.

We got on board the ship, passed by the Azores Island and reached New York. In America I lived in Watertown; a small town near Boston. I saw Hamastegh, Soghomon Tehlirian, Rouben Darbinian, the Ramkavar A. Nazar and the editor of the "Paykar" (Struggle – Arm.) newspaper, Arsen Mikayelian – he was a poet and a fanatic communist, Snar Snarian, the editor of the "Banvor" (Worker – Arm.) newspaper. I worked at the

Hood Rubber Factory and at the Crawford Factory of furnaces.

From there I went to Detroit. For 3 or 4 years, I worked at the Ford Motor Factory. There I met the founder of the Hnchak Party, Nazarbek. I got acquainted with General Sepouh. Then I went to Chicago, where I worked at the carpet shop of Gabikian Karapet from Sebastia. After a year I went to Minneapolis and St. Paul (those two towns were joined with a bridge), and there were many Armenians, who had cafés there. That state was America's storehouse of wheat. The town was very beautiful and the people were very kind. I remained there for a few months with a carpet merchant from Sebastia, whose name I don't remember. That poor man was ill with tuberculosis; he had an order for one of the Denver (Colorado, USA) sanatoriums and he believed that he would be cured there. In two months we got news that he had died. The shop passed to another man. There was a time when I distributed ice-cream to the shops. From there I went to the small town called Montana-Whitefish, where I wanted to work on the railway, but I did not succeed. I went to Spoken, a small town in Washington State. A young man from our Sebastia had a carpet store there. There were also many Armenians at such a distant place. Then I went to the town of Portland, Oregon. This town also was very clean and tidy; I liked it very much. Here on the central street there was a small factory for repairing and washing carpets, and on the main street there was a small factory for new carpets, "Aram, Tadevos and Tigran Brothers." The Kartouzian brothers were also well-known in the town and state. They were very attentive to me as a countryman, a man who had suffered a lot and was homeless; and they promised to give me the job of a supplier. I did not agree; I don't know why. There I met a famous doctor, who had married a German lady. At the hotel I met Michael Arlen. There I found, by chance, a family from our village, a remote relative, Stepan Papazian, who had two daughters and two sons. He worked at the Kartouzian workshop. He was the brother-in-law of Tadevos Kartouzian; for that reason he had reached that remote town. I remained at his house for two months. He loved me like a parent and he did not let me pay for my nourishment. His wife was also very attentive and friendly to me. They wanted me to marry their daughter, but I did not have any feelings towards her. From there I came to San Francisco, the city of beautiful gardens. I worked for a time at the restaurant of an Armenian from Van, but I don't know why, Fresno attracted me. I went to Fresno and got acquainted with the editor of "Nor Or" (New Day – Arm.), Andranik Andreassian, who later became a well-known writer. Andranik was then replacing his uncle Armenak Amirkhanian, who had fallen ill. One day, at the publishing house I got acquainted with the well-known Armenian painter Panos Terlemezian.

The last days of his life General Andranik lived in Fresno. I saw him emaciated and in despair, leaning on his walking-stick, he used to come to the central park. Then he died. I was introduced to Vahé Hayk; he was the son-in-law of Grigor Arakelian, the wealthy raisin merchant. He often visited Fedayi Smbat's café, which was frequented by the Ramkavar Hrach Yervand and the Dashnak Arsen Mikayelian. Three newspapers were published: "Nor Or" (New Day – Arm.), "Mshak" (Cultivator – Arm.), "Asparez" (Arena – Arm.). Levon Lyuledjian edited the "Mshak." Fresno had lost its former glory because of the 'dry law.' The price of grapes and raisins had fallen. The Armenians had left their vineyards and had gone to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Hayk Bonapartian had a chemist's shop there, but he could not keep it; he went bankrupt. The Armenians had two churches: the Apostolic – Gregorian Orthodox and the Protestant Chapel. William Saroyan had just graduated from school and was appointed teacher of physical training there. I found a job; I was working on the high mountains, on railway construction. We had organized a working group together with the Armenian boys. On the mountains I saw the places described in Jack London's book "Green Valley." After working for three years I went to Los Angeles. The population of the city hadn't reached one million then. In Los Angeles I began to work as an attendant to the actors during the film-shootings. I received five dollars daily. For a few months I worked with the actors Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford husbands. I took part in the film: "The thief of Baghdad." Then I went to work with Jackie Coogan. That was a twelve-year-old actor; he played the role of orphans and loved the Armenians very much. Once he took a whole ship-load of food to Greece for the Armenian orphans. The Armenian intellectuals had gathered in Los Angeles. I saw Armenak Shahmouradian, Alexander Melik, actor Harout, producer Rouben Mamoulian, an opera singer, who had a great fame, but I don't remember his name. There were no Armenian rich people yet, only one Armenian had an iron factory. There was a family of actors; they had been shot in a film called "The Persian Moon." Most of the Armenians were workers cleaning the city; mainly people from Moosh and Leninakan (now: Gyumri), who did not enjoy a high reputation.

One day I got acquainted with a young man from Ayntap in a café, and he took me to a tourist office and found a job on a ship for me. I was very glad, for I liked a wanderer's life. At last we set off on a rich luxurious tourist ship around South America. We sailed to Chile, passed through the Magellan Strait; we visited Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Montevideo. There I found two of my orphanage friends, Souren Boyadjian and Sargis Altounian, who had a shoe-shop in the center of the city. In Buenos Aires I met Tonik Terterian from our village; he was a barber. In San Diego (Chile) I

met an old man from Constantinople, who told many interesting things about his life, many funny stories about the activities of Armenian revolutionary parties and so on and so forth. The ship sailed up the Amazon River. The ship was covered with glass to protect the people from poisonous ants, insects and even wild beasts. There were free-watching towers to watch the two sides of the Amazon. I, too, often watched with a pair of big field-glasses. Finally we reached the capital of Venezuela, Caracas, and via the Panama Strait we sailed back to Los Angeles. My voyage lasted more than two months. In Los Angeles I met representatives of Armenia, who took Andranik's sword to Armenia. I was always thinking about going to Armenia, to study at the Armenian University and marry a girl from Armenia.

Then I traveled again. I visited many places in New York. I lived in my uncle's house; I visited Boston, Watertown, where my sister lived and from where I had started my wanderer's life.

In New York an Armenian doctor gave me a passport to the Republic of Armenia, with which I came to France and applied to the Soviet Ambassador Lounacharski, to go to Soviet Armenia. There I met Poghos Makintsian, Drastamat Ter-Simonian, Yeghia Choubar, who told me that because of Kirov's assassination no foreigners were allowed to enter the Soviet Union. They told me to wait for a while. I remained in Marseille, at our countrymen's places.

As a foreigner I had no documents to get a job in Marseille. I worked as a translator in a first class hotel, translating English, Turkish and Arabic. Every day I went to the sea-port and brought travelers to the hotel; I was paid well, especially for my English.

During the free months I went to Paris. In the cafés I used to meet Armenian intellectuals, and we discussed political questions. The cafés of the Ramkavars and the Dashnaks were separate. There I met famous personalities: Avetis Aharonian, Mickael Varandian, Simon Vratsian, Arshak Djamalian and Shavarsh Missakian – with his ear-phones (as he was deaf). In the Ramkavar's café I met Levon Bashalian, Rouben Vorberian, Aghaton Beyli, Arshak Chopanian, Vahan Malezian, the Secretary of AGBU, rich people, owners of jewelry and fur shops, etc.

At the café of the Relief Committee of Armenia I usually met Gourgen Tahmazian, Dr. Minassian, Galjian, the Chairman of the Relief Committee of Armenia, A. Issahakian, the Secretary of the Relief Committee, Zabel Yessayan, Tigran Zaven, Zareh Vorbouni and many others. I was on very close terms with Missak Manoushian; we were together during the Genocide in the Turkish village and in many orphanages. Outside I often saw Zareh Vorbouni, Vazgen Shoushanian and Shahan Shahnour. Armen Garo and Alexander Khatissian sat always separately in the café; they did not mix with the others. I often saw Shahkhatouni; he used to walk

with his mistress; it was said he was working as an actor. Once I saw Minas Cheraz and Poghos Noubar, who were in their old age. On the anniversary of the Republic of Armenia, Dro had come to Paris from Rumania, Bucharest, Nzhdeh from Bulgaria, Levon Shant – from Beirut. I saw them during the celebration, on the stage, sitting around a table.

The Ramkavars had their embassy office, headed by Zatik Khanzadian, with their flag hanging; the Dashnaks had theirs, headed by Avetis Aharonian, and their flag – the tri-color. Each of them represented the republic, which did not exist. The members of these three parties did not want to see each other and treated one another like enemies. I was astonished at the attitude of the Armenians, which was the same everywhere – in America, Lebanon and France, wherever there were Armenians.

In Paris the Dashnaks published the "Haradj" (Forward – Arm.) newspaper, edited by Shavarsh Missakain, the Ramkavars published the "Apage" (Future – Arm.), edited by Terzibashian, the Hnchaks published the "Yerevan," "Mer Oughin" (Our Path – Arm.). Later Missak Manoushian began to publish the "Zangou."

I often climbed the summit of the Eiffel Tower and watched the panorama of Paris. The squares and the streets are beautiful, the people warm-blooded and vivacious. I thought about the past of France, particularly, about her Great Revolution.

Economic crisis started in France and all over Europe. The first victims were the thousands of Armenian workers. The Armenian workers were even deprived of the right of getting relief. The principle of reciprocal payment was put forward. They said to the Armenians, "You have no country; you aren't related with France in trade." The conditions were worse in Marseille. According to the indication of the Communist Party, a committee of the unemployed Armenians was formed, and I was elected chairman. Together with Missak Manoushian we sent a telegram to Soviet Armenia, to Sahak Ter-Gabrielian and to Aghassi Khandjian, asking them to organize repatriation. The Secretary of the Relief Committee of Armenia, Dr. Galjian sent a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, Lounacharski. After a while, Shahverdian came from Armenia. The AGBU, under the leadership of Malemezian, undertook the expenses of the repatriating families until Batoumi. Thus, on May 22nd, 1936 about five-six thousand people were repatriated from France. Finally I achieved my aim: I wished to come to Armenia. We brought with us the ashes of Komitas and Minas Cheraz. Avetik Issahakian and his family, Arman Kotikian, the conductor Gevorg Yaghoubian and many others were with us. This repatriation gave a great impetus to the foundation and

development of the new settlement in the outskirts of Yerevan, among them Kharbert, Sebastia, Malatia, Arabkir, Nor Geghi (Kghi) and others.

After coming to Armenia I went to Moscow. I remained there for two years, at the Center of the Military Investigations, after which I returned to Yerevan and became a teacher. In 1941 I was recruited to serve in the Red Army. After a year and a half they freed me from the

army as a person, who had come from abroad. I returned and started studying English and French at the Institute of Foreign Languages, concurrently with my work. I have worked at various schools in Stepanavan, Maralik (Ani Region) and Yerevan. From 1948 until 1955 I worked at the Ministry of Education as an inspector of foreign languages. I have corresponded with many newspapers published abroad.

## 156 (156).

### SATENIK NSHAN DOGHRAMADJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Sebastia)

In Sebastia we had a nice three-storeyed house, and father filled it with everything. We were very happy. My father's name was Nshan, mother's – Nektariné, my brothers were: Hamazasp and Ghevond. We attended school. My brother went to Aramian School, and had been Daniel Varouzhan's pupil. The later often came to us for dinner. Later I also began to attend Aramian Secondary School. Every year we used to go to the hot spas and the monasteries. But that year in June, when mother got ready for the trip, father came and said: "A secret letter has come from Enver pasha. The government has secret purposes. Life isn't good at all."

One day, suddenly, two gendarmes came to our house, they took everything we possessed – furniture, carpets, all our property, carried away; they put us out of our house with the clothes we had on and locked the door.

Before that my brother had written praises to the pasha, and he had promised to free him from military service, but he was called up all the same. Father was scared that they might send him to the front; he got a document from a carpenter, certifying that he was a craftsman, but it didn't help. Brother recruited as a soldier. So they came and exiled us; father was with us. We hadn't reached Malatia; at a place called "Kanlı Dere" (Valley of Blood – Turk.), 3 to 4 men came and took my father away. I shall never forget that day. Where was God? Why didn't He hear us? They gathered hundreds of men and took them away. What an uproar, what a clamor there was! One was crying for his father, the other – for her brother. There were no men left. They took us to Malatia. Father was no more with us. They took away our beds; there was no donkey either, because father was gone, so there was no one to hire one. We walked, passed by Yedessia. Then we passed by other places, I don't remember the names now. They gathered us all in a field and they would take away all the girls. Something like a quilt was left; mother covered me with it and sat on it. I was crying: "Mother, I'm dying." "If you're going to die, die here," said my mother and sat on me.

At last they went away.

We came to a field: they brought tin-cans full of

kerosene and they said that they would burn all the little boys of my younger ten-year-old brother's age. Mother had a lot of red gold coins and her wedding jewelries, which she had taken with her. They said: "Whoever gives money, we'll free her son." Next to us there was a peasant woman, who was crying and saying: "They will burn my son, for I have no money." Mother gave half of her riches to that woman and saved that boy as well. Mother was a very charitable woman. We were in a desert, near the Mourat River, and they [the Turks] were gathering the girls again; my mother cut my hair to the root.

Everyday we were walking through thorny paths; our feet were bleeding. Mother had sewn something like a jacket, and I was wearing it. We were going to cross the river when two men came, held mother by the shoulders, undid her belt, which was filled with gold coins and took it away. It was good that they didn't throw her into the river.

We hadn't reached the Mourat River yet. I had an aunt, Shamiram by name, who was very beautiful; she had six children; the gendarmes wanted to take her away, but she resisted; they beheaded her right away: her head fell on one side, her body – on the other. The children came and hugged my mother, who was also wounded. We continued our way. Then we reached a place like a field; everybody was thirsty; they were dying of thirst; mother couldn't endure and she fell down. In the distance, there was something like a lake; my brother went there; he had drunk it and was lying there. I also wanted to bring water for mother, but we didn't have a water jug. I saw a peasant woman and asked her: "Mother, give me your jug to bring water; my mother is dying."

"No, I won't give," she said.

Another woman had made a water vessel out of a pumpkin rind; she gave it to me and said: "If you don't bring it back, I'll kill you." I began to run; it was quite far, it was hot, mother was dying. Finally I reached there, brought the water; mother drank it and blessed me. Then she said: "Where is my son?"

"I don't know," said I.

Two or three people put mother on her feet, and she began to walk slowly. Then I found my brother. "Where's

mother?" He said and began to cry. Then two or three Kurds came: one of them caught me, the other caught my brother. They began to drag me; mother came and caught my arm. One of the Kurds took out something like a knife and stabbed mother on her flank; blood began to flow, and they took me away. We were going on the road; it was around nine o'clock. I started to recite "In faith I confess," which my father had taught me. A Turk came at that moment and said: "Where are you taking this little girl." Then he told me: "Go that way."

I began to run; I was bare-footed, I thought they were following me. Do you know what my brother had done? He had said to them: "Don't take me by force, I'll follow you, I'm hungry and you'll feed me. They had trusted him. After going for a while, he had gone back running, and as he remembered the way, he had come and found mother."

I was walking and saying to myself: "Oh! God, isn't this the way they brought me?" I went back, but my tongue was tied; I saw mother, she began to ask me questions, but I could not speak. Mother lamented painfully: "Woe, my daughter's tongue is tied."

An old peasant man gave me two cups of tea and made me lie on a heap of straw. On the one hand mother looked after her wound and on the other she took care of me. On the third night my tongue was untied. I shouted: "Mother, they're taking me away."

My mother was glad; she said: "Thank you, God, her tongue was untied."

They brought us to Surudj, near Aleppo. There was prefect there; an Armenian boy stood near him. He said: "Mothers and sisters, those who can weave carpets, won't be sent to Der-Zor; they'll be sent to Aleppo." I got registered: my aunt had taught me a little. They brought us to the village of Bab. We hadn't left yet when we saw Armenian young men digging pits. Later they would throw them into those pits. We could not repress our tears. A young man came (my aunt was alive yet), stood before my aunt and said: "They will send you to Der-Zor; come, give me this girl."

My aunt asked me: "Do you want to go, Satenik?"

"No, I don't want, I said and began to cry."

The boy had brought grapes and lavash in a box; he left them to us and said: "No, no, no, if she's going to cry, I don't want her."

We came to Homs. If you saw that scene, would you believe that we've remained alive? At night they gathered us in a khan, the floor of which was stony and dirty. People were dying of hunger, some people had diarrhea, they were dying; my hands and feet were cramped. A woman came, looked around and then came and stood before my mother. "Sister, they'll take you to Der-Zor and slaughter you there," she said. "I'm the wife of a major; I've a daughter, but do you know who I am?" She opened her breast; a cross was hanging on her neck. "I'm a Greek, my husband has kidnapped me. When I see the sufferings of

the Christians, I can't sleep at night. I like your daughter very much; give me your daughter as a foster child."

My mother asked: "Do you want to go?"

"The Kurds wanted to kidnap me. I better go with her: she looks like a nice woman."

The woman gave mother some money and took me to her house. In an hour the maidservant came, gave me tenderly a nice bath, kissed me on the cheeks and dressed me. Her husband, the major came home; if you saw him, you would get frightened: "Did you bring her? We must take her to the doctor immediately," he said.

They took me to Dr. Armenak. He examined me from head to feet. I had grown so lean, that they thought I was ill. There were wounds on my feet, because we had been walking on thorns all the time, bare-footed. The doctor said: "This girl is very healthy. You should feed her well with meat and wine. She hasn't got any illness."

"Is she a virgin? Maybe I'll marry her to a Turk, so that I won't be ashamed," said the major.

I remembered my father's words: "It's better to die, than become a Turk," he had said once to my brother. They took me to their house. They used to feed me in silver plates, five times a day, they made me drink wine, but every night I dreamed of my father, and he said to me: "My daughter, I did not want to see you here."

This family had a servant, Hassan by name, about twenty or twenty-two years old. That young man had sold me to someone for forty mejits. He had taken 20 and had deceived the man telling him: "I'll bring the girl here then you'll give me the rest."

Then he had gone to my mother and said: "Your daughter is crying everyday, do you want me to bring her back?"

"Bring her, what can I do? Let her have the same fate as all of us. I'll come and take my daughter back."

My mother came. My Greek foster mother told her: "She is already my daughter." My mother said: "They say that she has been crying all the time."

"If you're going to curse me, take your daughter. You should always keep together. I'll go and bring another girl, who has no mother. I have made up my mind to take a Christian girl." She fed my mother well. "Oh, they're sending you to Der-Zor, you'll die there. I wish I had not seen Satenik. I loved her very much." We parted from each other crying. We were just getting out of the house when Hassan stopped us: "Where are you taking this girl? I have sold her; I have taken half of the sum."

"What? You have sold my daughter? You told me a lie saying that she was crying." Mother replied pulling me by the hand. Suddenly the major came riding a horse: "What's the matter?" He said.

"I did not leave my daughter at a house like yours, efendi, now shall I give my daughter to him?" My mother answered.

The major slapped Hassan on both cheeks and said:

“By what right do you sell this girl? You shall go to jail!”  
The major accompanied us to the khan.

Then we were taken to Aleppo. There was a man called Armenak, who had been a school director. He told us: “Look here, now they’ll take you to Der-Zor; let’s save at least these children; the AGBU has opened an orphanage here, they’re going to build a new one, too. Come on, leave your children here and you go. Those who want to leave their children must be registered.”

Mother registered me and my brother. That night we remained there. All of us suffered with diarrhea. They gave us boiled rice with sumac. On the floor there was something like a mattress, and we slept on it. I and my brother cried till morning. News came to Aleppo that the Germans did not want the Armenians to be exiled: they stopped exiling the Armenians to Der-Zor; that was our luck. The mothers came and said: “We want our children back.”

News came that girls over twelve would draw water from the well; they would work as maidservants. In those days there was no water in Aleppo. Our mother came to take us back. They said: “As you like, you may take you children back.”

We went with our mother. But we were all naked and bare-footed in Aleppo; we slept in the khan like camels, putting our head on each other. The rich women of Aleppo, AGBU members, had sewn about 500 clothes for the Sebastia children. At night, when we were asleep, they had brought and put them over us. We opened our eyes and saw that we had new clothes to wear. We were so glad, but we were so thirsty. The boys from Aleppo brought us fresh water and said: “Mothers and sisters, don’t drink that dirty water.” The hearts of the Armenians ached for us. Those little boys brought buckets of water for us to drink, and we drank. At night they brought blankets and covered us.

On the second day kindhearted sheikhs came; one of them had brought a sack of money to distribute to the Armenians. Those, who were smart, began to snatch the money. The sheikh threw the sack on the ground and went away. Every day different kinds of food were sent to us, even lahmadjoun. Everyday the sheikhs brought dinner. They were God-fearing people. In Aleppo I became a maidservant to a Jew.

Later news came that we would move to Damascus. They took us by carriages. In Damascus the English gave us food; there were Negroes to watch us; their faces were tattooed, they swept before our doors. The state of the Armenians was very distressing there; the women went to the rubbish dumps to gather small pieces of cloth and make quilt covers. In Damascus all of us were infected with scabies. Dr. Altounian came and gave us all medicines. Only I didn’t have scabies. They used to take us to the bathhouse. Dr. Altounian gave us a special kind of soap: which healed the people.

From Damascus we were sent to the village of Nebik; the Christians there were very stingy. We were hungry, most of us were begging for food; my brother was ashamed to go begging. One day we were going to the church, when my brother felt the smell of lentil-pilaw. He said: “Oh, how nice it smells.” I went and said: “My brother is hungry, will you give him some?”

The woman put a ladleful of hot lentil-pilaw right in my hands. I blew on it and put it into my brother’s mouth; I was satiated with the smell.

A prefect had said to an Armenian girl: “Will you marry me?”

The girl had replied: “I will, but you should swear that you won’t be against if I help the Armenians.” The girl had married him and she had taken many women to work and eat with them.

One day my brother had lain down and put a stone on his belly: you just imagine the poor boy was so hungry that his intestines were coiling, he was ashamed to beg.

That Armenian woman had seen him and had sent one of her maidservants saying: “Go and see why that boy has put a stone on his belly.”

She had come and asked my brother: “Why, sonny, why have you put the stone on your belly?”

My brother had said: “I’m hungry, what can I do? Everybody went to beg, I can’t beg, I better die.”

The woman had gone and told her. That Armenian girl had said: “Come, my boy, come every day and take our lambs to graze; I’ll give you daily two or three loaves of bread, you can eat and take to your mother and sister.”

So brother took care of the sheep for a month and a half and we were fed. Then we were taken to Haybi, which was a Bedouin village. 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.’

There was an officer there, Mohamed by name, who had come from Damascus; they had threatened to dismiss him from his office if he did not apostatize the Armenians. The village was inhabited with Bedouins. We were 30 refugees; they gave us a large place to live in; we were all women and only three boys: my brother, who was twelve years old, a boy from Amassia and another one from Gyurin. They were not beggars, they worked. The sheikhs told us: “Each of us will take ten people and keep them, if you agree to part with each other.” They kept us for a whole month; they fed us very well, we had meat, pilaw, lavash every day.

One day the daughter of the village chief came and brought some colored woolen yarn to my mother. Mother began immediately to knit long socks, with nice designs on them, like flowers and birds. The whole village came to my mother in order to learn the art of knitting. There they used to slaughter camels once a week and they gave us some meat.

We did not go to the houses of the sheikhs; we remained with each other. One day Mohamed efendi came and said: "Who is the chief maidservant here, let her come to me; I have something to tell her."

Mother was about forty, she went, for she knew good Turkish. The village headman had said: "I have received an order that all of you must become Muslims, if not, we'll kill you and we'll burn you. This is the pasha's order; what do you say?"

Mother had said: "They have already beheaded my father, my husband died. I'm not alone, let me go and ask my people."

Mother came and told everything about it. All the people said in one voice: "We won't become Muslims, let them come and kill us."

Mohamed efendi had a twenty-year-old son, who was ill with tuberculosis. 'His wife said to her husband: "Husband, please, don't do it. We'll fall under their curse."

"What can I do?" Said the husband.

"Go and give them a Turkish name each, they will pray for you."

The man came and gave each of us a Turkish name; my brother also was given a Turkish name. My mother prayed for his son and the boy was healed.

Then they took us to the Yeproust Village. It was a clean village. Once I was sweeping a man's stable, when I felt that I could not see; something obscured my sight. Mother took me to a doctor. He was an Armenian physician. He said: "This girl hasn't been nourished well; she has become very weak."

There, in the village of Yeproust our life was very hard. They said: "Can you reap wheat?"

They took us to a Kurdish village. We went there, brother and me, we began to reap by hand; we gathered wheat. We could not do it with a sickle. They came and saw that some of the wheat remained in the field. They

said: "Let it be yours." The Arab head man, Mohamed efendi said: "Take your wheat to the market and sell it." We used to knit socks for the people and they gave us money, wheat, food and fruits instead.

Then they took us to Adana. It was so hot there that people could not live. First they put us under tents, but later they took us to a special place for widows. At that time Adana was under French protection. The French had started the wool business and they took the Armenian widows to work. There were different colors of wool; we had to separate them. One day a man from Sebastia, Tigran by name, came (he was a designer) and said: "Whoever can make carpet designs let her come to me."

I and two other girls went; we used to put the design before us and work accordingly. We chose the colors. We worked. They took to work those who could count. Three or four women were under the tents. Mother gave out the dinner. They had made me the group leader. One day Mr. Tigran, who was the manager of the widows' house, came. The girls, who had been kidnapped by the Turks and brought back, were paid special attention. I went and said to him: "Pay us special attention, too."

"Oh, my girl, have patience," he said.

The French went away. We were still in the widows' house. At that time my brother was fifteen years old. He went to fight to avenge the Turks. When we lived in the tents my aunt's daughter married an elderly man, but mother did not go to the wedding. She came to be reconciled with mother. She said: "Aunty, there's such a nice boy; he wants your daughter, they'll come and ask for Satenik's hand. She took me to her house to show me to the boy's relatives. The boy sang well."

Finally I married Armenak Terterian from Shapin-Garahissar, under the tents. Then we came to Beirut by ship, first to Tripoli, then to Beirut. They put us in quarantine. Later we came to Armenia.

## 157 (157).

### IMASTOUHI STEPAN GALADJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1904, Sebastia)

I was born in Sebastia. My father's name was Stepan, mother's – Haykanoush, sister's – Makrouhi, my name is Imastouhi. My grandma – the pastor's wife, was Trfanda, my grandfather, a priest, was called Father Petros Ter-Abrahamian, my elder uncle – Hakob, my aunt – Manoushak, my elder aunt – Gohar, my brother, who was 7 years my junior, was called Jirayr, whom I have brought up, my younger uncle (father's brother) – Abraham and my aunt's daughter – Azniv, all of us lived together.

My grandfather's father, Ter Abraham, was a very intelligent man. He had been the Armenians' spiritual leader. Whenever there was a lawsuit or quarrel the

people applied to him as a lawyer.

In 1895, during the Hamidian massacres, orders had come that my grandfather's father, Ter Abraham should be killed. Some Turks had said, "He is a very useful man." They came and told my grandmother, the pastor's wife, about it. My grandfather's father was hidden for months, in caves; his wife had taken food to him in secret. Then he had concealed himself in a Turk's house, for there was order that he should be killed. A Turk pasha had learned where he was concealed, he beheaded my grandfather's father and went to the Sultan and said, "I cut off the priest's head, he leapt three times."

My grandfather was also a priest – Father Petros.

When my father was married in 1900, he had not seen his bride's face. In St. Sargis Church, 40 weddings had been held at the same time. They made the bride-grooms stand on one side and the brides on the other. My grandfather, who was the priest, Father Petros, had recognized the bride's dress, and had taken her home for his son. My mother married and began to work by making cloth on a weaving machine. She had worked on four machines at a time. She took work from others as well. My mother had compelled my father to go to America, to make money and come back home.

So, in 1909, my father Stepan and my uncles, Mkrtych and Ghevond were in America. I remember, when my father gathered his tools and came out of the house my grandma tossed her slippers behind him, so that we might go after him to America. And it was very good, for they were saved; otherwise, in 1915 they would also be drafted and massacred.

In 1915 we were sent into exile. I was attending a French school; it was vacation time. We were sent into exile without our father. We were – mother, grandmother, grandfather, sister, my aunt, me, my brother and my youngest uncle, Abraham, we were eight. My mother's mother and brother, Martiros, joined us. The entire Armenian inhabitants of Sebastia were sent into exile. The first day they made us walk. The second day, as we reached a place, the Turk officers lined us up and began gathering the males; they took my grandfather and uncle Martiros to a place like a prison and said, "He who gives us much money will be saved," but it was a lie. My grandmother, the pastor's wife had met Father Tatoul, the priest, who had said, "I saw Father Petros killed on the river bank."

When we reached Malatia on foot, hungry, thirsty, the Turkish officers, who were guarding us, changed and were replaced by new ones. Their chief was Ali pasha, who turned out to be an acquaintance of my father. He ordered, "Don't put them up front or at the back, danger always comes either from the front or the rear; place them in the middle." Then he said to us, "If you pass over the Kessik bridge, there won't be any salvation for you." That meant he would think of rescuing us. Although there was an order that if any Turk kept an Armenian he would be hanged before his door. That Turk Ali pasha came and said to my mother, "I will save you." He had said to his officers, "When you reach Hekimkhané, give this woman with her family to the head of the village."

When we reached Hekimkhané, we were taken to the house of the agha of the village, who was Ali pasha's nephew. My grandmother tore a bed-sheet, covered her head with it and went to ask the agha to rescue us. Two horsemen came to free us. We didn't believe it, but our grandma was a clever woman: she had filled her apron with fruits and sent it to us with the horsemen, so that we trusted them. We set off. My younger brother, Jirayr,

was three years old; we put him on the horse and we walked until the village of Gharamahmoud, where my grandmother stayed at the house of Ali pasha's relative. Those two horsemen took us safely to that place. We, nine people in all, were saved, but my grandfather, Father Petros, was already slain.

There a mullah came and wrote down our names. We remained there for two years under Turkish names: my name was Hyusne, my sister's – Zeinab, my brother was Ibrahim, my uncle was Hussein... The males were circumcised.

They brought a weaving machine in the house and we began to work: they brought us work.

In 1917, there was a rise in prices in Turkey, it was difficult to get bread, but the peasants brought us goods for the cloth we wove, they did not give us money. So we had an easy life. I also worked with my mother. She used to tell me, "You're my right hand." When mother went to town to bring work, I replaced her; I was very lively. Everybody respected and loved us. I was already 15 years old; mother began to fear I might be kidnapped by the Turks, so she did not want to stay there any more. Mother sometimes went to town; letters used to come from her uncle in Constantinople. Mother had met an Armenian coachman and he had told her that an Armenian school, an American college, and a church were opened in Sebastia. When mother learned about that, she gave the coachman two gold coins to take us to Sebastia.

It was spring, the hens were hatching chickens, and the flowers were in bloom. Mother took us to town so that the coachman would take us to Sebastia. We set off the next day. The Turks were in the month of Ramadan. We arrived in Sebastia. The charity organization received us: money was sent from America to look after the people who returned from the exile and help them.

A cloth weaving factory was opened in Sebastia; mother was appointed manager there and accepted to run the factory. I was 15; I wove at home.

The roads were closed then, they were opened in 1922. We sailed for Constantinople, but we were not allowed to enter the city, for several Greek women on board had fallen ill with smallpox; we were put under quarantine.

In Constantinople, we went to the Ghalatia Church; they did not want to let us in, but since uncle Ghevond had been a member of the church council, we were admitted for his sake. In Constantinople, we found our relatives; we had our house, and things went well. We had completely lost our father's address. Some countrymen had come with us to Constantinople; they had written to their relatives that we did not have our father's address. Father sent his regards through their letter. When we received father's greetings, I immediately wrote a letter. Father answered that he worked in New York Grand Central Train Station as a cleaner, and lived at his sister's

house, who had married in America in 1913. Father kept us in Constantinople for five years; he used to send \$50 monthly for us to live. He wanted us to go to Armenia and wanted mother to work there because he was afraid that he would not be able to support our family.

We, me and my sister, did needlework. We made aprons, slippers and hats for my aunt's newborn baby and sent them to my aunt: they were Ayntap needlework; when my aunt saw them she was delighted and said to father, "You are mad, if these girls come to America, they'll have very good jobs, don't send them to Armenia." Hearing these words, father had gone and prepared our visas. I was already 23 years old. We – me, my sister, mother and my husband, Mkrtich Galadjian from Tomarza, came to America. I worked in an overcoat

factory; I sewed linings for coats. I had two wonderful children, four grandchildren, now I have three great grandchildren.

Three weeks ago my niece came here, to "Ararat" Home, and brought a large cake on my birthday. I distributed it to everybody.

Now I am retired. I bought a house in an airy place, for my husband had pneumonia, but he passed away after we had lived together for twenty-eight years.

I have been to Armenia, Hawaii and South America. I have lived a good life. When my four grandchildren graduated from school I gave all four of them check-books.

It's the fourth year I'm at "Ararat" Home. I'm very pleased, there is good care, medical help and everything is perfect.

### 158 (158).

#### ANDRANIK MINAS GAVOUKDJIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1905, Sebastia)

On the 21st of June, 1915, 36,000 Armenians from Sebastia were deported from our native land and were driven to the Syrian deserts, where most of them perished.

On 29th of April, 1915, the notable Armenians of Sebastia had already been exiled, among them was Daniel Varouzhan.

There was an order for us to get ready to leave our houses in three days because we were in the war zone and it was necessary to secure our safety, and after the war we would come back to our houses again.

We did not expect anything good, for they had already arrested the prominent Armenians by night in Constantinople and had exiled them.

The Armenian young men were being recruited to the Turkish army. Those, who were not in the Turkish army and were not taking part in the war, had to pay fifty gold coins (1000 German marks) to work in special labor battalions, to build roads and bridges, or to work on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad construction.

One thousand marks in those days was an enormous sum and many Armenians had to borrow it later to pay it back throughout their lives.

The time had come for us to get ready to the long journey; beds, clothes and foodstuff were put on horse-carts. My father and my three uncles had been drafted to the army. My grandma died of grief. My pockets were filled with gold coins; I was riding a donkey, the others were on the carts. Accompanied by gendarmes, we came out of the town. From Malatia to the Euphrates River, we passed with great difficulties. When we reached the Euphrates, they ordered us to get on boats to cross the

river; the animals and the carts were put in separate boats. We crossed the river, but they did not bring the carts and the animals. 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. When we were passing by a village, we tried to exchange with food whatever we had with us – money, jewelry, clothes. The caravans, which were quite large at the beginning, were getting thinner and thinner: some people died, some were cruelly killed in an indescribable manner. Children up to the age of four were mostly kidnapped to be brought up as Turks, as the sultans did. The young girls were also separated from their relatives and their fate was still crueler. Many of them tried to throw themselves into the Euphrates to get drowned in order to get rid of infamy. Thrice we crossed the Euphrates, which had become a grave for many people. Our family also was greatly reduced. Pardon me if I keep silence about how the others died.

We had reached Surudj. We had wandered all over the Syrian desert; we had probably passed on foot two thousand km. When we reached a fountain, a man came, held me by the hair and took me away. He brought me to a house, where they gave me food and drink. That man said: "Can you speak and read Turkish?" When I gave a positive answer, he said that he was the mayor and I would remain at his place. I asked him if I could take my younger sister with me. He agreed and allowed me to go with a gendarme and fetch my sister. The caravan wasn't there,

\* The survivor has written his testimony in German. Senior Researcher at the Institute of History, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Doctor of History, Vahram Martirosian, has translated it into Armenian, in parts.

but my sister, Verzhin, who was the only one to be left alive from our family, was there. Probably she had been kept back by someone. Meanwhile, it became known that the mayor had kept an Armenian, who could read and write and could correspond. That fact might have unpleasant consequences. So, the mayor sent me to Aleppo. They put me in a wooden chest and put the chest on a camel. One day the chief of the caravan told me that he could not take me with him to the city; it would be very dangerous, if it was found out that he had brought an Armenian to the city.

I walked and reached Aleppo naked and barefooted and went to the Armenian Church. The people got interested in me, who I was and where I came from. There they found Benjamin, my mother's brother, who took me to his home, fed me and put me to bed. He took

me to a hospital to clean my feet from the tiny stones and thorns, which had penetrated my soles, because my health condition was serious. I was unconscious for three whole days. Thus, about one and a half million Armenians were massacred. Only very few survivors were collected, after the war, from the Syrian deserts.

After graduating from school the German consul took me to work in the consulate.

Later the Armenian community of Aleppo invited me to work at the Armenian orphanage as a teacher and director. It wasn't an easy job to reeducate the orphans and make them civilized citizens. After some years those orphans were sent to Armenia.

I understood that Germany had been an accomplice to all those tragic events.

### 159 (159).

#### ARSHALOUYS TINGURIAN-CHOOKASEZIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1906, Sebastia)

My Christian birth name is Arshalouys Tingurian, I was born on September 15, 1906, in the province of Sebastia (Svaz), the historic Western Armenian homeland. Our family home was located in Svaz. I was one of seven children who crossed the desert of Der-Zor and survived. From Syria, I traveled to Istanbul and later went to New York City. I was married in New York City to a distant cousin, Manasé Chookasezian, also a genocide survivor and we had four children.

My husband, Manasé Chookasezian, was born in Svaz, on August 1, 1891. He was also a member of our very large Chookasezian family. Manasé survived the horrors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide and immigrated to New York.

My mother, Mariam Chookasezian-Tingurian, was born around 1881, in Svaz; she was married to Yezek Tingurian in Svaz, and had 7 children. During 1915, she crossed the desert of Der-Zor and survived. From Syria she traveled to Istanbul and on to New York City to live. She was the wonderful matriarch of our family who kept all of our Armenian customs and traditions. She always sacrificed herself for the betterment of her family, friends and church. Mother died in Queens, New York, in 1975,

at the age of 94.

My father, Yezek Tingurian, was born in Svaz. He was murdered by the Turks in Svaz, during 1915 Genocide of the Armenians. His date of birth is not known. I knew my dear father and experienced his love only for the first 9 years of my life.

One of my brothers, Hmayak Tingurian, that was born in Sebastia, was my only sibling to survive the Genocide. The exact date of his birth is not known, but it was sometime around the early 1900's. He was younger than I. Hmayak managed to survive the death march across the desert of Der-Zor and, later, he went to Marseilles, France. However, during the frightening march across the desert, Hmayak was constantly and repeatedly terrorized. As a result of unspeakable experiences, he lost his health and became quite sickly, and developed a heart condition.

After the last Ottoman Sultan of Turkey was deposed, the prejudicial, intolerant and bigoted Moslem Young Turkish revolutionary party came into power. The Young Turk party decided to meet in Salonica, Greece, in 1908, where they planned the total, systematic eradication and annihilation of all the Armenians and Christian

\* This testimony, written in English by the eyewitness in 1980, was handed to me by the son of the survivor, John Chookasian (Chookasezian), in Fresno, California, in 2006. He completed high school and went on to earn a B.A. and M.A. in Music-Education from New York University, later earned another Master Degree in the field of Special Education at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His wife, Barbara Mary Papazian, has been a musician, Armenian folk dance instructor and is the Principal vocalist of the "Chookasian Armenian Concert Ensemble," since 1994. John has worked as an Armenian & Middle Eastern musician for the past 40 years and has worked in 42 major films as an actor and musician. He has been a school teacher of Music and Special Education for over 30 years and taught music and ethnic studies courses at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for 3 years. Lastly, he is the Director and Clarinetist of the "Chookasian Armenian Concert Ensemble," since 1994. The Chookasian Ensemble has recorded 4 live concert CD's of traditional folk songs and dances of Eastern and Western Armenia. They came to America with their ensemble and gave charity concerts in the various regions of the country in favor of the victims of the 1988 earthquake, winning the high award of the President of the Republic of Armenia. Their ensemble successfully performed also in the various cities of the USA and the world. John and Barbara Chookasians' ensemble took the first "Armenian Oscar" in the folklore festival of ethnic minorities, organized in 2009 by the US government.

populations of Turkey. This strategy was put into full force from 1915 to 1923. This planned bloodthirsty, inhuman blueprint of extermination was perpetrated and acted on by the ruling Turks, their henchmen, the Kurds, incited against the Armenians of Turkey.

The tragic events of our family unfolded in the following way. It was Sunday afternoon. Many of my family members and I had come back from church to our family home. We were eating and talking to each other in the house, when we heard a very loud knock on our front door. I went to open the door to see who it was. I was pushed aside by Turkish soldiers as they entered our family home. The soldiers told all of us in the house: "All of you have to leave Svaz right now!" "Take only your immediate belongings; you are going to be re-located to another area to help save you from the invading Russians." The Turks then began telling us that when the war was over, all of us will be able to come back to our home again. One of the soldiers said: "You have one hour to get ready to leave Svaz! Hurry up!"

Meanwhile, the Turks exited our house and took my father, Yezek Tingurian, his brother and all of the older males of the family and put them into a separate line in the street, where other Armenian men were lined up waiting to depart Svaz. Weeks later, I learned that the Turkish soldiers and Kurds marched all of the males of our family to the outskirts of Svaz, where they murdered all of them.

Those who were left were our mother, Mariam Chookasezian-Tingurian and her seven children, including me, (Arshalouys), my aunt, Elmas Chookasezian, her sister, daughter, Verginé, my uncle, Hovsep Chookasezian and my aunt, Siranoush Chookasezian. My relatives, who were left in the house at that time, collected as many of our belongings and jewelry (as much as we could carry) and put them on shoulders and on our backs. We locked the front door of our house, and the women began to cry as we left (we were to never see our home again). We lined up in the street with the other poor women and girls and the young boys from our village. The soldiers began marching us out of Svaz. We walked southward towards the desert of Der-Zor.

Before we reached the desert, the cruel fiendish Turkish soldiers of the march took all of our possessions and left us with only the clothing on our backs. During the deportation trek, the soldiers would curse us, push us and kick us. They called us pigs and gâvurs. They did not care at all about how miserable we were. It was so hot... and I was so thirsty! They forced us on and on... Whenever they felt like it (which was very seldom), the soldiers gave us a crust of spoiled, hard bread and sometimes, water. But it was not enough. We walked and walked..., my feet were burning and my whole body hurt from the sun. The girls and boys and grandmothers and

grandfathers and mothers and aunties and uncles died miserably in the desert from thirst and starvation and sun exposure and from the horrible experiences they endured as they were forced on through the desert.

Day after day, we marched across the desert of Der-Zor. My brothers and sisters, who were all younger than I, just could not withstand this torture! Their bodies were too small to survive this pitiful misery. I could not believe how such a thing could be happening. Mother pleaded with the soldiers countless times, for water for her children. The heartless Turkish soldiers ignored her cries. They jeered and used foul language Turkish towards her and they called her gâvur over and over. And one by one, five of my brothers and sisters died of thirst, starvation and exposure to the desert sun. It was shocking for me to see these tragic things happening around me. I felt so powerless and sad. My weakened and grief-stricken mother, Mariam, had to bury each one of her five young children in the desert sands with her own hands. The soldiers (and Kurds) moved on without the slightest bit of pity! We had to walk past all the people who had died... The soldiers were trying constantly to dehumanize us and treated us like animals or worse!

The soldiers took some of my women cousins, young boys and other young Armenian girls out of the marching lines. At night time, the Turks and the Kurds raped them with such great brutality that many of them were killed or died. Many of the surviving girls were left alone to die on the side of the road. This happened time and time again.

I cannot account for the unfortunate, grim plight of the other women of my family, who were part of this agonizing and painful forced march through the Der-Zor desert. As a result of this death march, I never again saw most of my relatives, including the many poor Armenian girls that began the march with us. Some of the Kurdish men removed the Armenian women and some of the young boys out of the marching lines in the desert and they took them to their Kurdish homes and camps. These Armenians were never to be seen again.

At various times during our march, I saw the Turkish soldiers cut off the heads of Armenians for religious persecution and for their sport. Some of the Turkish soldiers on horse back would spit on us and with their swords and rifles they would kill any of us that they wanted. Sometimes they would take a whole group of Armenians out of a line, torture them and relentlessly murder them on the spot in front of all of us! There were so many other forms of cruel brutal acts and undeserved punishments that were committed by the depraved vicious Turkish soldiers and Kurds towards all of the Armenians that were walking through Der-Zor desert. The other horrible stories that I witnessed which befell the Armenians are too painful and numerous for me to mention.

Another means used by the Turkish soldiers to make us more miserable was that, after a number of days in the Der-Zor desert, the soldiers forced any of the survivors left into separate lines. I was separated from my mother Mariam and put into another line of female Armenian deportees. I pleaded with the Turkish soldiers not to force me to leave my mother. My heart-wrenching pleas were totally ignored, as I was taken away from her. All of those who had survived to this point were separated from each other. My brother, Hmayak was now pulled away from our mother and me. The other relatives who were left were: my aunt, Elmas Chookasezian and her daughter, cousin, Verginé Chookasezian, my mother's brother, Hovsep Chookasezian and my aunt Siranoush. They were all put into separate lines. If there were any family members who had survived, the Turkish soldiers made sure to break them up. We no longer even had the comfort of being together. We were still alive, but we were now alone, so afraid and miserable...

I cannot tell you how many days and nights it took for me and the other Armenian survivors to walk across the hot sands of the desert of Der-Zor. It seemed like an eternity. At last, we reached the border of Syria, and on to Aleppo. We, survivors, could not have finished our desert crossing without the guiding hand of God, who sent to us the people from the Near East Relief, which was a charitable, American foundation to aid the victims of the 1915 Genocide. The blessed people from the Near East Relief immediately took me and the other Armenians coming out of the desert into their tents; they gave us water, food and a resting place. We were so, so grateful to them, beyond imagination! I still am amazed that I did not die in the desert, as had so many thousands of other unfortunate Armenians.

I was placed in an orphanage in Aleppo, Syria. I was quite troubled. Over and over, I had intense, frightening nightmares about the torture and suffering we endured during those many sad days in the desert. I still gave thanks to God each evening for allowing me to have the strength and fortitude to cross the desert and survive the beastly wrath of the Turks, and reach my present destination in Syria.

One day, many months later, a rich Syrian Arab man came to our orphanage and made arrangements with the head-master of the orphanage to buy me and some of the other Armenian boys and girls. We were to be used as servants for his household. He was fair with all of the children and did not abuse any of us, but he demanded hard work from all of us, with no exceptions. I thanked God over and over again that I finally had a clean bed and food to eat on a daily basis. I spent years working in this household as a servant.

One of my duties was to go to the near-by well, draw water into a large clay jar and bring it back to the house. One day, while I was drawing water at the well, I saw

an old, tired-looking woman, with tattered, disheveled clothing, resting by the well. She had a torn scarf covering her head and part of her face. My face was covered with a heavy veil, so that it could not be seen (as was the rule for the girls in the Arab society). The only part of my face that was visible was my eyes. As I leaned down to draw the water I looked directly at the partially covered face of this poor, weary traveler. I did not recognize her face; I had no idea who she was. The next day, I saw her at the well again, watching me draw water.

On the third day, I went back to the well, again to fetch water. As I bent over to draw the water, the old looking woman, with a quivering voice said to me: "Arshalouys, is that you!" I dropped the jar. I was in shock. Who was this lady that knew my name? I stared at her face. The voice was familiar, but not the face. I could not speak. The old looking lady said again: "Arshalouys, is that you, my daughter?!" It was my mother. Her beautiful face had changed so drastically; it had become leathery and drawn from her exposure and deprivation over the many years. She had become so worn and thin. At that moment, I said: "Mayrik (Mother – Arm.), is that you? I cannot believe it's you; I did not think you were alive!" We ran to each other. We hugged each other for a very long time crying, kissing each other and sobbing in one another's arms. I could not fathom in my wildest dreams that this was happening to me. My mother was alive, and she found me.

I said to my mother, Mariam: "How did you know it was me?" She said: "When I looked into your eyes, I felt something! ... I don't know what! I had to find out who you were!" I thanked God again, for sparing my dear mother from death and bringing her to my side. It was an unbelievable miracle for the two of us. But she looked so old, tired and sick. Later on, I learned that mother's emaciated appearance was due to her pain and suffering during her many years of nomadic travel since 1915. She had endured tremendous trials and tribulations after she was forced from Svaz. She had not only survived the death march, she had also lived through years of wandering in the deserts and towns of Syria, constantly searching for my brother, Hmayak, my uncle, Hovsep, any other family members, and me.

I asked my mother how she knew that I was alive. She told me that one of our neighbors from Svaz had seen me coming out of the desert of Der-Zor with other Armenian children; this neighbor told mother that she saw me alive. The neighbor did not know my destination or even if I was in Syria. But, just hearing that I had been seen was enough to keep my mother going on in her search for me and the rest of our family. Mother told me that she went to the Red Cross many times to see if our names were listed among the Armenian survivors. Unfortunately, our names were not on their list. By the time mother's search led her to the Armenian orphanage

in Aleppo; I had already gone away to work in the home of my Syrian master.

Mother said to me: “Arshalouys, I decided that I would spend the rest of my life looking for you in each Syrian village, until I found you, even if I had to die along the way doing so.” My mother’s deep, meaningful words reached into my inner soul. I was so moved by her undying love and dedication to find me. She also expressed many thanks to God for helping her find me well and alive. This was the most emotional, happy and inconceivable day for both of us.

I questioned: “Mother, over these past many years, where did you sleep? What did you eat and how did you survive?” She said to me: “Arshalouys, please don’t ask. There are too many painful and demeaning experiences that I endured. I still am haunted by many horrible memories of what I encountered over these past years looking for you.” She began to choke on her words, and I brought her water from the well. She said: “Arshalouys, since I last saw you at the edge of the desert several years ago, I cannot tell you of the terrifying, horrific, despicable days that I experienced. It is too painful for me to tell you! I don’t want to talk about it!” We hugged again and began crying again... We held each other for a very long time.

We sat near the well, and I told my mother the story of how I survived walking through Der-Zor desert after we were separated and of how I witnessed numerous savage and ghastly atrocities being inflicted against the innocent Armenians during the desert march. I told her the personal details of my sadness and of my difficult and lonely life in the Armenian orphanage in Aleppo, Syria. Finally, I told mother how I was sold as a servant girl to a rich man of a Syrian Arab family. By this time, we were both spent from our out-pouring of emotions... and from the shock of our encounter... and from the recollecting and talking about the deplorable, grief-filled experiences we had both endured.

After many hours, mother and I finally got up and began walking towards the Arab master’s home. When we arrived at the household, we met the master and his lovely wife, who were standing at the entrance of the door. He said to me: “What happened to you? You have been gone for a long time!” I told them that I was very sorry for being late. They said to me: “Who is this poor woman with you?” I said: “God has brought back to me my dear, long-lost mother!” The master told us both to come in and he immediately had one of the servant girls bring us tea and food. After seeing my mother’s frail, sickly, tattered appearance, he sent one of the servant girls to fetch the local Arab doctor. The master said to me: “Your mother does not look well to me, please, have her sit down and rest. She is welcome to stay in my house until she gets well or for as long as she wishes!” I was quite overjoyed and filled with disbelief at hearing my

master’s surprisingly kind response. I told him: “May God continue to bless you and your family for your benevolence.” Finally, the master told one of the servant girls to bathe my mother and have her rest until the doctor arrived.

It was six hours before the doctor came. Reluctantly, mother allowed him to examine her. The doctor told us that mother was in very bad physical and mental health. He said: “She needs long-term bed rest, peaceful surroundings, good food and herbs and medicines to help heal her body and mind during her recovery period.” My master told the doctor that he would be very happy to accommodate my mother’s every need, until her recovery was complete. These words spoken by my master to his doctor were golden words for both my mother and me to hear. After all the years of torture and agony, my mother could not comprehend, nor could she believe that there was someone still existing who was kind and good and who had such a compassionate nature. She began praying to God to bring the master and his family good health and to fill their years with life’s many wonderful bounties. This was my mother’s prayer each and every night that she lived in the master’s household.

As time went by, the master and my mother developed a very close relationship. It almost seemed that he had become her adopted son. They began to have long, in-depth conversations about mother’s past life and family in Sebastia and about life in general. They also shared talk about the master’s business relations, projections and ideas. He developed an implicit trust and respect for my mother and for her impressions and opinions. He began to secretly consult with my mother, almost on a daily basis, on how to proceed in any specific business venture in which he was involved. She began advising him as he continually sought her opinions. There were many positive results that came from her advice and her wonderful intuition, during these meaningful consultations. This was a very unusual phenomenon; Arab men, as a rule, did not consult with or discuss their business life or ventures with women!

The master always brought his business associates to his home on specific occasions to discuss business. He would always introduce my mother to his businessmen, then he would have her sit nearby, behind a screen, unnoticed, listening to their in-depth conversations. When the businessmen left the master’s home, he would immediately ask my mother’s impression and opinion of the men and of what they had to say. My mother would either say to the master: “I don’t get a good feeling from this man. I feel he may be dishonest; don’t do business with him.” Or: “This man would be a good person to do business with; he seems quite honest and is offering you a good profitable venture.” On many occasions, my mother’s words proved to be true.

It took all of 10 months for my mother to regain her

strength and composure.

As she felt better and stronger, we began going to the Red Cross and Near East Relief offices to see if any of our family members were reported to be alive. One day, when we were at the Red Cross, we were told that my mother's cousin, Abraham Ter-Grigorian, was alive and was living in Istanbul. We immediately wrote a letter to him, telling him that we were alive and living in Aleppo, Syria.

Months later, a letter arrived from Istanbul. Our cousin, Abraham, stated that, much to our surprise, my mother's brother, Hovsep Chookasezian, was alive and living with him and some of his family members, in Istanbul. Mother and I were elated at the wonderful news that we had just learned. We held each other close, smiling, turning and dancing together, as we laughed and cried for a long while. It was an unforgettable moment for the two of us. This was the second time since we found each other that I saw a true smile on my mother's face. It was another miracle God had provided for us both to delight in and share. The master was also quite happy for us and our good news.

In the next few months, my mother tried to persuade the master to free me from my bondage and allow us to go to Istanbul and then on to America. He just refused to acknowledge her constant requests and kept saying, "No!"

After a time, the master became quite ill and his personal doctor was not able to restore his health. My mother asked the master if she could begin caring for him. He agreed to her request. She went to the local market and brought many herbs, garlic, yogurt and teas to help cure the master's ailment. In two weeks time, through my mother's methods of healing, the master became well again. He told my mother that he was very grateful to her for her medical treatments and for her advice and care.

My mother felt that this was the best opportunity to ask the master again to release me from his household. This time he reluctantly acquiesced and granted her request for my freedom. My mother asked the master how much money she would need to buy me back from him. The price was agreed upon between them.

The very next day, another letter was written to the Kuroghlian cousins in New York, asking them to provide us with money to pay the master for my release from bondage. Mother also requested enough money for the two of us to travel to Istanbul to meet her brother. She also requested enough funds to purchase three one-way ship tickets from Istanbul to New York City. Yeranos and Zumrout sent all the necessary traveling money to us.

Upon learning of our impending voyage to the United States, the master was quite disappointed that we were leaving his home and care. He kept trying to dissuade us. He told my mother that he was going to miss her and her intuitive advices and their wonderful conversations. She responded that she felt the same. However, she kept

reminding the master that we had become exiles, and that our large family and friends from Sebastia had been murdered by the Turks and Kurds. The Chookasezian-Tingurian family members were reduced to only a few individuals, who would never again see their home and businesses, nor would they ever again set foot on the land of their birth. All we wanted was to pick up the shattered pieces of our lives and start anew with the few family members who were still alive.

As we prepared to pack our few belongings and depart for Istanbul, the master and his family members came over to us with tears in their eyes. The master kissed the hand of my mother and wished her God's care and a good new life. He thanked me for all of my years of hard work and dedication. I thanked him and his family over and over, with tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat, for their continued respect, care and kindness over the years. My mother broke down and began crying and giving compliments and praise to all of the members of the Arab family. We departed from this safe and wonderful haven and started our journey to Istanbul and America.

The year was now 1923. Eight years of despair and uncertainty had passed after the Genocide of the Armenians of Turkey, and we were leaving Syria for Istanbul and then on to the United States of America.

And here is the story of survival and escape of my husband, Manasé Chookasezian. Manasé told me the story of the horrible barbarism that resulted in the demise of his family (which he witnessed), perpetrated on them by the ruthless, inhumane and bloodthirsty Turks and Kurds in Svaz, during the Genocide of 1915.

One Sunday afternoon, after attending Armenian Church services, a large gathering of the Chookasezian family had returned to the home of Manasé's parents for lunch and conversation. A few hours had passed, when the violent Turkish troops and the armed Kurdish men broke into the house without warning. They began attacking and killing all of his immediate family members and relatives by clubbing them to death, stabbing, chasing and shooting anyone who may have remained. The screams were anguishing, and the blood of the unfortunate, defenseless victims of Manasé's house was being splattered everywhere; the family just could not escape the merciless killers. When Manasé saw his family members being butchered by these intruders, he fainted. When he woke up hours later, his father was lying on top of him, and the blood from his father's body had completely soaked into Manasé's clothes. This was why Manasé had been taken for dead by the Turkish soldiers. Sometime later, when his senses returned, Manasé looked around and saw the frightful, grisly carnage. His parents and 26 other members of his family had been killed. He was the only person alive after the horror of the merciless demise of his entire family at the

hands of the Turks and Kurds. That night and for the next week, while he was experiencing the shock and deep inner pain of what had happened, Manasé had to quietly remove each of his family members from the house. One by one, as he mourned sorrowfully, Manasé buried the family in back of their ancestral home, in Svaz. After he had interred all of his family members, Manasé left Svaz and began the long saga of escape towards Istanbul and later immigrated to New York.

There is a branch of my family currently living in Yerevan, Armenia. The patriarch of the family, originally from Sebastia (Svaz), Babken Chookasezian (b. 1923), is a cousin to me. Babken was the Associate Director of the Armenian Mashtots Museum of Manuscripts in Yerevan, known as Matenadaran, for 35 years. He married Venera (Vera) Manukian. They had two sons: Levon Chookasezian, now: Professor of Arts, and Garegin Chookasezian, who is a specialist in Computer Sciences.

## 160 (160).

### HOVHANNES ARAM CHADRDJIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1908, Sebastia, Khochhissar Village)

The ancestors of our family had migrated from Van and had settled down in the village of Kyaghkyik, in Western Armenia. They had come and pitched their tent near Sebastia, so they had been called Chadrdjian (chadr = tent – Turk.).

In 1913 my uncle lived in the Khochhissar Village, near Sebastia, which meant big mountain. My uncle called my father to move there with his family and work. In that village father opened a carpenter shop. The Turk notables became very intimate with my father. One of them asked my father to make a machine to reap the crop of wheat in the fields. Father made the machine. So, when the deportation started they kept father saying: "We haven't got such a skilled craftsman." That same Turk said to my father: "Go and enter the mosque, you pray your prayer, change your name and get by." Mother did not agree. That Turk said: "Sister, this is also a storm; it will pass. One must have patience."

My mother's brother was Mourad of Sebastia's godson; that was the reason that they forced him to sit on a hot iron slab, pricked his body with needles, after a few days they brought him home on a horse to make him say the place where the arms were hidden. He did not say. They slaughtered him before our eyes together with his three children. My mother's younger brother ran away from his group on the way to exile and joined another group. My other male relatives were taken to the labor battalion as they were craftsmen, but they annihilated their families. They took away my grandfather and his youngest son and shot them. It was good that we were in Khochhissar, otherwise they would have taken us away, too, and killed us. They had poured boiling water on my grandma's back and killed her that way.

They kept my father in the village as he was a builder: when they had gathered the Armenian males and were taking them away to slaughter them, that same Turk said

to father: "Choose fifty men among these to help you in building houses." Father saw those Armenians with arms tied, who were being taken away to be slaughtered. Father chose 60 of them, saved their lives and they worked with him to build houses. After many years when my son went to Bulgaria, he met an old man, who told him about my father: "Your grandfather has saved my life and the life of other 60 men."

In 1918 my elder uncle came and took us to Sebastia. Armistice had already been declared. They had slaughtered fifteen people from our family. Many Armenian girls were brought back from the Turks, and Armenian boys married them. The Armenian Church and school were reopened, and we began to study.

All the Armenians had gathered in Sebastia. An order came to transfer all the Armenians to Greece, to the Sira Island. There my sister and I entered the American orphanage. I learned a trade as well.

When in 1922 Kemal Ataturk came to power, he punished all those who were guilty; he hanged the merciless leaders and said: "What a wild party that Ittihat Party was; they were the enemies of the Armenians." Ataturk was a very civilized person.

We remained at the orphanage for five years. Then father wrote a letter telling that they were going to Armenia, and suggested us to go with them. I went and told the orphanage director about it. He said: "Armenia is a backward country, come, let me send you to America."

"No," said I. "We'll go and join our parents and we'll go to our Motherland."

We came to Armenia. I participated in the 1941 war. I built many bridges. I was wounded twice. I was given a vacation. I came home and went to the front and fought again. I reached Sevastopol, Czechoslovakia. I returned home in triumph. I worked. Now I'm a pensioner.

**161 (161).**  
**MELINÉ KHANZADIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1908, Sebastia)**

The well-known geographer Zatik Khanzadian is a relative of ours. I have grown as an orphan. My grandmother has brought me up. They have exiled us to Afion-Garahissar. My grandma has taken me on her back and fled to Konia. Grandma got up early one morning – they were under police surveillance – and said to the gendarme: “Let me go to the church just to light a candle; I won’t run away.” The gendarme allowed her.

She went to the governor and said: “We don’t want to go to Der-Zor, we want to stay here, because beyond Konia is the road to Der-Zor.”

The governor permitted, and we remained there for three years. Grandma cooked dinner for the four-hundred Armenian orphans in the American College. Eight Armenian rich men were trustees of those orphans. Grandma also made the ironing and the starching at the college. Then my grandma rented a house, brought an orphan boy and took care of him; that orphan later became my husband, Aghassi. In Selanic (Salonica) my grandma worked as a cook at the orphanage. There they called her ‘mother.’ Later we came from Greece to Armenia.

**162 (162).**  
**HAYKOUSH MIRIDJAN OHANIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1908, Sebastia)**

In 1915 they first gathered the men, tied their hands and took them away. Only women and children were left. And they drove them to the mountains and deserts. They plundered everything we had taken with us; they left nothing to us. They took us to Der-Zor, to Surudj. My mother’s feet were swollen from walking for so long a time; she sat under the bridge and could not walk anymore. Those who were persecuting us came on horses; we could hardly flee. They wanted to take me away, but mother cut my hair and made me bald-headed.

Sister and brother, young women and girls took each by the hand and threw themselves into the Euphrates. They used to hide among the reeds in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks. We also fled, brother and sister hand in hand.

There were a military barracks there, in which there were Armenian soldiers. They brought us wheat and a pair of mill-stones and told us to grind it.

They wanted to prepare our documents and take us to the orphanage.

Two Arab girls took us to their tent, gave us some food and said: “Take the lambs to graze.” We took the lambs to graze in the wilderness. There was not a single soul about. Darkness fell. We did not know the way. I lit the flint-lighter to frighten the wolves. My feet were aching of exhaustion. We could hardly find the tent of the Arabs. The Arab woman said: “Go, you and the

shepherd, put the milk on the fire.”

I was exhausted; we had been under the sun the whole day. My head was aching. All of a sudden the Arab woman kicked me; my head touched the iron lid and cut the flesh. It began to bleed.

Half of the tents of the Arabs were for men and the other – for women. Brother took me by the hand and led me to the chief of the Arabs. He struck his wife and said: “I got rich thanks to these poor people, why did you kick her?”

The Arabs held me, put me down on the ground and put a mill-stone on my breast. I was kicking my feet saying: “I don’t want,” and they wanted to tattoo my face, to make me look like an Arab girl.

My brother was four years older than me; we ran away together. We went and went. Suddenly we saw Armenian soldiers. They took us to Grigor efendi, who was a high officer of Der-Zor and was organizing the gathering of the Armenian orphans. They took us to Miss Yeppé Mother’s orphanage. In the orphanage we used to do needlework ‘Yedessia design,’ which was taken to America and was sold there. I remained there for a long time, but my brother stayed there only for 6 months. Then I saw that it was difficult for brother to live alone, so I also left the orphanage.

I married in Syria; I had two sons. In 1946 we came to Armenia.

**163 (163).**

**AZNIV GRIGOR SIRADEGHIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1909, Sebastia)**

In 1914, my father, Grigor, was already serving in the Turkish army, but he did not return, for he was taken to build roads. They had made them work while hungry and thirsty, giving them only bread and onions. Finally, they had killed them and thrown them into the pits that the road-builders themselves had dug.

In 1915, Turkish gendarmes came and said: "If you become Turks, you may stay here, if not you will be exiled." My mother asked her elder sister, what they should do.

We were given three days to think and to decide. We preferred to be exiled rather than become Turks.

My mother's name was Mariam, mine is Azniv. I was the eldest. My sister's name was Victoria and my three brothers' names were: Hayk, Matheos and Hrach. We set off all together. All of them died on the road of hunger and exhaustion. For we walked and walked up one mountain, then the next, we went up and down seven mountains. Mother was carrying her baby; she was so exhausted that she could not walk anymore; she fell down. A group of men attacked us, began to plunder and to take away what we had. My sister came and crouched fear-stricken, by my side. I said: "Get up, Victoria, get up let's go to our mother." She did not move from her place. I went to mother, she said: "Where is Victoria?"

"I spoke to her; she did not answer," I said.

I shouted again: "Victoria." She said in a faint voice: "I won't be able to walk anymore." She was younger and weaker than I. And there she remained.

We walked every day, we walked among corpses.

We dragged our guts. The baby was in my arms. All of a sudden a Turk came, snatched the baby from my hands and ran away. Then they came and said: "There are two roads: one to Der-Zor, the other to Homs, Hama."

We went to Homs, Hama, but we were so exhausted that we lay down wherever we could find a place. Mother couldn't stand it anymore. She said to the woman next to us: "Wherever you go, take my daughter with you." Mother said so and died. Wherever they went, I went with them. We walked every day. There was no food, no drink. Our state was very lamentable. An Arab woman came back in the evening and gave me a piece of bread. I remained there for quite a long time. Later, when truce was declared, they came and gathered the Armenian orphans, and took me to Aleppo and put me in an orphanage. Like other girls they gave me a bath, dressed me, and gave me food and drink. We began to learn. One day, a woman from Sebastia came and took me to a family from Sebastia. That family had two daughters. I told them about our family. On the road of exile, our family of seven had died: they were lost. That family's father gave me some money and said: "Go to the boys' orphanage and see if any of the three brothers are there." I went. I searched, but couldn't find any of my three brothers. Thus, I remained all through my life without my brothers. From Aleppo, I went to Marseilles and worked there, too. Then I moved to Philadelphia. There also I worked. Now I live in the "Ararat" Home. Thank God, I'm well. It's comfortable here; everything is OK, only I cannot forget the past.

**164 (164).**

**ARAXY ONBASHIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1909, Sebastia)**

I was born in Sebastia (Svaz). During the deportation, in 1915, I was six years old. They exiled us towards the Surudj desert. I don't remember how it happened, but I got lost. I looked all round, it was a desert; there was no one around. I started to cry... All of a sudden I saw from afar a man on a camel which approached me. Probably he guessed that I was lost, he took me to his tent. He gave me some bread and milk; then he showed me a corner, where I fell asleep. I remained there. During the day I swept the tent, I cleaned it and I brought water from the well. My master was an Arab Bedouin. He loved me very much; he always said: "Ya, bent, enta heloua awi" (Girl, you are very pretty – Arab.). He waited for me to grow up, so that he married me to his son, because I was white-

colored. It seemed that he wanted to lighten the color of his generation.

One day, I had gone to the well for water barefooted and all my clothes in tatters. When I was drawing the full bucket up, somebody threw suddenly something like a belt around my waist, pulled me up on his horse and whipped the horse and ran away. I did not know where we were going.

My Bedouin master probably saw in the open desert that a horseman was taking me away, rode, together with some other Bedouins, their camels and began to pursue us. But we were already quite far...

I looked and saw that my kidnapper was a very handsome European military man. Embracing me like

his own child, he took me somewhere, which looked like a village. There, he gave some money to a kind Kurd woman, who took us in her hut and hid us. That Kurd woman thought that he was my father; she used to say: "Papa, papa?" I didn't say anything, for I didn't know what to say...

We stayed there hidden for a few days. One day this Kurd woman knelt on the floor, put her ear on the ground and listened; when she was sure that there was no one about, she took us carefully out and saw us off..

The horse of the European military man went in the darkness; suddenly we heard the howling of wolves. We saw they had already surrounded us. In the darkness the eyes of each wolf shone like a pair of lamps. Of fear, I had hugged the military man out of fear. It seemed that he had some experience; he immediately took the torch and lit it. As the wolves saw the light they ran away. We took a deep breath and continued our way. The day was dawning when we reached Constantinople (now: Istanbul). We approached a nice house and our horse stopped. When we entered the house, there was a great commotion inside. It turned out that the owner of the house was a Greek doctor. The Turks had kidnapped his 8 year-old-daughter. The Greek doctor had given the military man his lost daughter's picture and had asked him to look for her, since, as a European officer, he had the right to go freely through all the provinces of Turkey, and if he found his daughter and brought her to him, he would get his reward. The officer had searched the doctor's daughter, but could not find her. When he had seen me barefooted by the well, he thought, "Let me take this little girl to the doctor instead of his daughter..." That way he had taken me and brought to Constantinople. When we approached the house, the Greek doctor's wife had heard the sound of the horse's hoofs, she had rushed to the window and had seen the officer taking a girl down the horse. She had thought that the little girl was her own daughter, she got so much upset that her heart had stopped beating, and she had fallen down dead. So, that was the reason of the confusion when we entered the house... But the Greek doctor told the maidservant to give me a bath, because the Bedouins had no habit of washing, they used to rub butter all over

their body, they sat in the sun, their body absorbed the oil, then they bathed in the river and thus they cleaned themselves. That was why I had such a dirty look. They took me to the bathroom and gave me a nice bath. Then they brought new clothes for me. While dressing me, one of the maids saw on my arm the Armenian letters: 'A. O.,' that mother had tattooed in order to find me in a case I was lost. They called the Greek doctor and showed him the letters on my arm. He was a very kind man; he put on his eye-glasses, looked at the letters and said: "Armenikos," that means: "She's Armenian." He took me, in his sorrow, and delivered me to the Armenian orphanage.

I remained at the orphanage for a while. One day a man came. He was looking for a girl, who had the letters 'A. O.' tattooed on her arm. The Armenian orphans began to ask each other: "Whose luck is smiling?"

He was my mother's brother. He saw the letters on my arm and began to kiss me. He took me out of the orphanage and brought me to a house. A grey-haired woman opened the door. As she saw me, she exclaimed with deep emotion: "She is mine!"

My poor mother had cried so much after losing me that her hair had turned grey. She had also changed a lot. She had been a maidservant to a Turk pasha. The Arab pasha wanted to marry mother to his blind son, but on the wedding day mother had run away from that house. She had walked and walked and reached Constantinople. There, she had found her brother. And he, in his turn found me in the orphanage and took me to his sister Poupoul...

Later mother married a kind Armenian man. We went to Rumania to live there. During Hitler's war the poor man was killed during the bombardment. I had already married an Armenian youth. He wanted very much to go and live in America. At last we came to New York. Now my husband works at the 'car grave-yard.' He takes out certain parts from old cars and buses and delivers them to the factory to make new cars...

This is life; we live somehow. My dear, if a man puts his foot out of his house, he encounters thousands of perils. What shall I say to those, who caused that calamity: Kurbet ıcat eden görmesin Cennet! (May those who organized our deportation, not see Paradise! – Turk.).

## 165 (165).

### TOROS PETROS TERDJANIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1912, Sebastia, Gyurin)

I was the youngest child among the 7 children of a devout Armenian Catholic family. My father, Petros Terdjanian (Derdjanian) was a school teacher in the Dominican School in Sebastia (now: Svaz). My

mother, Anna Gyurounlian, was the daughter of a well-to-do merchant in Gyurin. The Armenians of Derdjan had been forced to migrate out of the town. When the Czarist Russians conquered Kars, the Turks forced the

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1975, has been handed to me by the survivor's son, Antoine Stépane Terdjanian, in 2005, in Ottawa, Canada, through attorney-at-law, Harry Tigranian.

Armenians near the border to move away. Some of the Derdjan people came to Gyurin and are known to have built the “Eski Köprü” (Old Bridge – Turk.), which still stands there. My elder brother, Michel, had turned 18 at the start of the First World War. He was to be drafted, and my parents thought it best to have him married. They picked a 14 year-old orphan girl, Rosa Gulesserian, to be his bride. Rosa had lost her father a few years earlier, and her mother had sent her to learn some good skills and manners with the Catholic Sisters in Sebastia, near the Dominican Fathers’ School. They were soon married, and Michel was drafted. Our neighbor, a Turkish army officer, promised to keep my brother under his protection, and he did, for my brother and I were the only ones to survive the calamity that was to unfold on the Armenians of Anatolia.

In the beginning of May, 1915, it was announced in Sebastia that the Armenians had to move south with whatever they could carry of their belongings on their persons. We had two days to prepare. My father used these to convert our belongings into small gold coins, and my mother sewed these inside the lining of our coats. We then presented ourselves at the central square, near Sebastia’s Seljuk Mosque, from where we were led out of town in a caravan accompanied by a few gendarmes. We reached the branch road to Gyurin a few days later, and my mother lamented about not seeing her birthplace. We were, however, fortunate for we were joined by a caravan from Gyurin, in which we found my uncle Artine’s (my father’s youngest brother) wife, Satenik doudou. Artine had recently married Satenik, and she had given birth to twin boys and was having trouble carrying them, while Artine had been drafted into the army. Satenik was alone with the babies; she was so happy to see her brother-in-law Petros (my father), who, with my brother Hakob, were able to carry the babies on the long march south. However, soon afterwards when we reached a place named Shargheshla, we were told that all males aged 13 and over had to be taken away. Fearing the worse, my mother Anna tried to disguise my brother Hakob as a girl, to avoid him being taken away. He refused, however, and he proudly went with my father. They were never seen again.

Satenik doudou worked hard at protecting her virtue; she made herself look old, dirty and unattractive, so that no one would want to kidnap her. It was soon after that my sister Noemi, who was hardly 15 at the time, got grabbed by the hair by galloping horsemen and was never seen again. It was said that some Armenian men went round the deportation routes after the war ended, in 1918, looking for their loved ones. One of them, Manuel Vardanian, told me later that he had recognized Noemi. He had asked her, and she had said yes. He had told her that I and Rosa had survived and were in Aleppo. He had offered to take her away and had given her an

appointment near the fountain at sunset. They had waited for her that night at the fountain, but she had never showed up. Perhaps she had children and she had chosen not to separate them from their other roots, or perhaps she had been discovered fleeing... Who knows!

The boatmen demanded gold pieces to make us cross the Euphrates. We met also some kind Kurdish people who gave us yoghurt when we had run out of gold pieces. One old Kurdish woman was lamenting on the poor Armenians and predicting that one day it would be the Kurdish people’s turn to suffer a similar fate. My elder brother and sister, Hrayr and Hripsimé, became ill from eating wild herbs and died. Satenik doudou could no longer carry her twin babies and ‘tore herself apart’ from them under the shade of a tree by the side of the road for someone to find and adopt them. Fifty years later, Satenik doudou told us how she still had nightmares about her babies crying for her. On the deportation trek we were frequently robbed of our belongings and we learned to beg. We learned also to swallow the remaining gold pieces and then we looked for them in our diarrhea prone bowel movements to swallow them back again... The saddest part for me was when I lost my brother Stépane, two years older than I, with whom we went begging, every time we reached a Turkish, Kurdish or Arab village. Stépane, at his very young age, had become my tutor and mentor. He had taught me how to sing for money or bread. At some point, Stépane thought that I had enough experience to go on my own. To maximize our chance of getting enough bread to eat and to feed our mother, we started splitting and meeting at sunset, usually at the fountain. One day Stépane did not return. I was never able to get over the loss of my brother.

At some point I could not walk anymore. My bare feet were swollen and full of wounds. My sister-in-law, Rosa, carried me the rest of the way on her back. At one point she could not carry me anymore. She got me off her shoulders and got me to walk a bit. I was exhausted and lay down to sleep on the road. Rosa told me later that she had bitten my finger to wake me up, but I would not. She just could not leave me there, she said. In a superhuman effort she had carried me the rest of the way to Aleppo, where we had arrived in October, 1915. The Ottoman government of Aleppo had delayed the implementation of orders concerning the deportation of the local Armenian population, and many local Christians and Armenians came to the refugee camps around Aleppo to try and save some of the people in the caravans. My sister-in-law, Rosa, young, educated and with good broidery and house-keeping skills, was soon picked-up by the family of Aris. My mother, Anna, in her thirties, sick, with a toddler, was not of interest to anyone. We were therefore forced to continue on towards Der-Zor (the Armenian Auschwitz). We were, however, stuck in a camp in Biredjik, on the Euphrates, where we spent a few

months. One day my mother Anna was trying to push her way through a crowd trying to get water from a fountain, when a Turkish soldier struck her over the head with his rifle butt. A few days later she died. I hugged my dear mother's body tightly and did not want to leave her for several days. People came and tried hard to tear me away from her in order to bury her. It was around February, 1916, and Rosa, my sister-in-law, had somehow learned about my mother's death. I learned later that it was a young Armenian male, Karapet Terdjian, who had taken the news to Rosa and had volunteered to risk his life and go from Aleppo to Biredjik at night and take me back to Aleppo. He needed a donkey for that, which cost five Turkish golden sovereigns, which neither of them had. Rosa was then constantly crying. Mr. Aris had asked her, why she was crying. She had told him, and Aris had advanced the five gold pieces. This is how I was saved. I was covered with wounds and skin infections, and Rosa managed to get me admitted in a Turkish hospital. I used

to charm Turkish soldiers by singing and dancing to get a piece of bread from them.

After the war, a Dominican priest had recognized my brother Michel in Turkey. He had taken a Moslem name and was an orderly in a military hospital, doing the dirtiest tasks. The Dominican priest had told him that his wife, Rosa, and his youngest brother, Toros (I), had survived and were in Aleppo. Michel had then walked at night to avoid detection and had made it to Aleppo, where he found me and his wife Rosa.

Rosa found also her own brother, who had joined the Armenian Legion. He had come to Aleppo, and Rosa was so proud to see him in his uniform. He managed to find their mother Satenik doudou, still alive in Turkey and paid someone to bring her to Aleppo with Grigor and Arousyak (the two surviving children of Satenik doudou's other two daughters). These joined us, as survived members of the Michel Terdjian household, in the single room we occupied in an old house in Aleppo.

#### 166 (166).

#### ANNIK MARIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1892, Tokat)

Until 1915 we lived in Tokat. We had a house, orchards and gardens – everything. The Turks came and deported us. First they gathered all the men, took them away and killed them. They came and became masters of what we had. I was driven to the Der-Zor deserts with my three little children, hungry and thirsty, under the scorching sun... Every day hundreds of people died of illnesses. They used to gather from among us people in groups and took them down to the valleys and killed them with axes. They took my sister, too, with her two children, they had struck them all with axes and thrown them into a pit, but my sister had only been wounded; from under the corpses of her children and other corpses she had crept out, had come

and found us. We did not know whether to rejoice that we had found our sister, or to grieve over the loss of her two children...

We lived in a cave of Der-Zor for three years with sister and my three children. I was able at least to save them from the massacre. Thank God, I had taken with me needles and threads. I used to do needlework for the wives of the Turk officers, I made dresses for them, and we lived somehow. Then I gave an Arab a piece of embroidery; he put us in an araba and took us to Constantinople, and from there we went to Egypt in an English battle-ship.

We came to Armenia in 1947, but in 1949 we were exiled to the Altai Region in Siberia...

#### 167 (167).

#### NVARD SHIRINOGLHI'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Tokat)

Before the massacre, we lived in Tokat. We were very rich; we had everything. First, they took away the men, they did not bring them back. We heard that they had slaughtered them.

I was five or six years old when we were exiled. We went on foot across mountains and valleys. I was often exhausted. We passed by Kerkez, Malatia, and Biredjik and reached Djarablous. Then we reached Aleppo.

There my uncle's two sons died. They had plundered us completely. In 1918, after the Armistice, we came to Constantinople. I was then nine years old. Here, too, we had many difficulties.

I married Hrant from Samsun.

By and by everything changed. Now, thank God, we live comfortably in Istanbul, but I never forget all that happened. I remember them always.

## ENDSA NSHAN JEMPERJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1898, Amassia)

I was born in 1898 in Amassia. Until the great Genocide of 1915, our family consisting of six people lived in peace and harmony in the beautiful area of Amassia. I had my mother, father, two sisters, and a little brother.

Before the deportations, they came and enlisted all the men of all the families, but on the road, they slaughtered them all.

I was married and had two children: a daughter and a son in my arms. Then I was eighteen years old.

One day, two Turkish officers came and began to persuade us that it would be better if we became Turks, accept their belief in Islam, because after that, we could live freely and no one would have the right to bother us. As my mother was a very strong believer, however, we refused and we were also added to the black list.

In early April of 1915, Turkish military officers came and deported everybody. We could take with us only hand baggage, our jewelry and gold coins.

That deportation was an exile that lasted six months. We reached the desert called Der-Zor on foot. I always remember with bitter tears how they treated us with bestial cruelty. They drove us as if we were sheep, in the hot sun, on burning sands, subjected us to thousands of tortures. After walking for quite long, when we were already far from our village the Turks organized confusion, turmoil and, using the opportunity, kidnapped the pretty girls and the children. They stole my two-year-old very pretty, fair-haired daughter while my son was in my arms. You just imagine, what crying, lamentation, and uproar – but nothing could help except whip strokes to silence the miserable mothers and force them to continue on their way. After a while, I was exhausted by carrying my little son in my arms. My fourteen-year-old brother, seeing my state (as I was not able to walk fast and the officers were whipping me frequently), took the baby from my hands and we continued our way. For a while, my brother carried my baby in his arms. We arrived at a place where those Turks delivered us to other Turks. These were even more ferocious. They started to plunder and pillage by beating and brutality. At that time, two officers began to compete with each other. One of them had a small kidnapped child in his hand; the other had snatched my son from my brother's arms. They were competing as to who would throw what they had in hand the furthest. They flung my small son so forcefully on hot sands and stones that my poor baby was all shattered.

I saw all that. It seemed to me that I was going mad. I began crying, lamenting but they seized me and began taking off my clothes looking for gold as they were doing

to the others. My mother was only forty; they stripped her too. They saw there was no gold; they threw her into the Euphrates River. My sisters and I were crying and wailing. But a wild beast is a wild beast: it devours its prey the way it wants to. One of my sisters could not stand this last blow; she threw herself into the Euphrates, following mother. I remained together with my other sister, Rebecca, and we continued carrying our cross. By the way, I later called my daughter after my sister Rebecca, who later died of cholera. On the way, I would always say to my daughter, "You're my sister." In the turmoil, it seemed to me that I had become insane for I did not feel what was happening to me. I only prayed to God to save us from the suffering, and a miracle happened. In a vision, the Virgin Mary descended before me with a large luminous wreath on her head and said to me, "Daughter, your name is Endsa; it means you're a gift given by God. Do not deny your faith; salvation is near. Gather your strength, be brave." The vision disappeared. After that vision, I received a new strength and continued on the way. How miserable we were! I remember that by walking on hot sand and stones, the skins of my soles peeled off three times. What could be done? We were going and going along the Euphrates until we reached an open space and stopped as if we were to rest. But what happened? Suddenly I heard crying and wailing: an uproar started. What was the matter? The children who did not know who they were, did not know their names, did not know they were Armenians and did not know what religion was, were gathered to be taken to a Turkish orphanage to become Turks, to be circumcised and those who were older were thrown into the Euphrates before their mothers' eyes. How could one endure so much torture and torment? I endured every kind of suffering with the help of the words of the Holy Virgin, until we reached Der-Zor. There we noticed that our group had become much depleted because many had remained behind on the wayside. The air was full of the stench of corpses. From the filth and germs, cholera spread among us: many people died. As I have already said, my sister Rebecca also became infected and died within twenty-four hours.

Then the Americans came to the desert of Der-Zor and gathered all the survivors. They took them to Aleppo. They took me as well. They bathed us; they dressed us. There was a place like an orphanage where widows were given shelter; we did needlework, which was sent to different countries to be sold.

At that time, I met Rouben from Bitlis; we got married. We had a son and five daughters. Then we

moved to Rumania, where my children went to school.

In 1946, we repatriated to come to Armenia: Hayastan (Armenia – Arm.) or Vayastan (Vay! = an exclamation of despair, stan = country – Arm.)? – we could not understand. In 1948, my son was arrested for a political offence: he had told his friends that he was not satisfied with three hundred grams of bread. His friend had betrayed him. After remaining in prison for a few months, he was sentenced to exile to Karaganda to work in the coalmines. He remained as a prisoner for seven years: four daughters, and we, the spouses were exiled to

the Altai Region.

I live cursing my destiny that after the Turkish exile, I endured an Armenian exile as well. For seven years, our family suffered in the cruel forests of the steppes. Stalin's death gave grief to many people, but for us it was a salvation. We were acquitted. We returned. We were given a house but we had already lost our health; my husband died. The poor one had fought in General Andranik's army. He had always dreamed to see Armenia free and independent; to see our tricolor floating on the government building. He did not live to see this.

### 169 (169).

#### MARITSA PAPAZIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1874, Samsun)

I was born in Samsun. I got married at the age of 16 and went to live with my husband in the village of Padra, in a large family of 15-20 souls. I lived quietly and happily until that unlucky day. My husband, Karapet Chakerian, owned tobacco fields. He used to travel here and there as a tobacco merchant. One day he left home and did not come back. A few days later his horse was found tied to a tree on the bank of a stream. His body was never found. After a short while, the Turks deported us and forcibly drove us out of our house and we started to go on foot for days on end without knowing where they were taking us. My shoes wore out, my feet were bleeding. I tied rags to my feet and continued to walk

hungry and thirsty. We picked wild grasses on the road and ate them. Then I met a high-ranking Turkish officer, who wanted to take my eldest daughter, Arsiné. I refused. The officer told me: "You are free, of course, but I want you to know that tomorrow or the day after, another man will rape her. I promise to keep all your family members on condition that you give me your daughter as a lawful wife." I was obliged to accept.

Niazi (that was the officer's name) gave us a house guarded by a watchman, so that we could live there safely. I kept in that house my three other younger children and about 30 other Armenian young girls in safety. I sacrificed one to save the others...

### 170 (170).

#### MESROP HAKOB MINASSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Samsun)

In 1914, when the First World War started, the Turks came, gathered all the Armenian men to take them into the Turkish army. Then news spread that they had all been slaughtered with axes on the way. My father was among them.

Then our turn came. They came and forced us all out of our homes. Girls, women, children – all were driven to the deserts. As a goat-kid is separated from its goat-mother in a flock, so did they separate me from my mother. They buried me in the earth, leaving my head out saying, "We'll kill him tomorrow," and went to select the pretty girls and killed or threw the ugly ones into the river. They cut open the bellies of pregnant women to see whether the fetus was a boy or a girl. They cut the nipples of the virgins, cut the breasts of women, and threw them over their shoulders.

I saw all this from my buried position with my own eyes. As darkness fell those murderers left me there and went away. I began crying out of fear. A Turk passing by heard my sobbing. He came; pulled me out and took me to his house. That Turk took me to the Mullah; they circumcised me. They made me lie in the middle of the village to show the passers-by that the number of Muslims had increased by one. There was another Armenian boy like me there. His Turkish master had forced him to change his name and religion. He was older than I was. He did not want to be converted. The Turks said, "Gâvur dir, vurun" (He's a gâvur, strike him – Turk.). And the gathered Turks hit him with stones until he was smashed; his blood flowed. I remained near that Turk and grazed his sheep.

My mother, Aregnaz, was a very pretty woman. Another Turk had taken her away. One day my master

\* Maritsa Papazian (b. 1874, Samsun) is the eldest eyewitness survivor I have interviewed.

sent me to my mother's place to see her. I went and saw three or four Turkish women, who were the Turk's other wives. My mother was sitting and stuffing vine leaves. My mother saw me; she said nothing and gave me nothing. She only dipped a leaf in water and gave it to me to eat. I came back to my master very sad. My master sent me to a Mullah to learn Turkish. The Mullah, when reaching us, used to say, "He who kills a gâvur, his soul goes to Paradise." I was very much afraid they would kill me, but I was circumcised so they considered me a Muslim. My Master treated me as a servant. Every day, he used to say, "Gâvur, şu koyunları sür, getir" (Gâvur, drive these sheep and bring them back – Turk.). They made me to do the meanest tasks. He used to sit for his natural needs and said to me, "Gâvur, bring a stone, clean

my arse." One day I was slow in getting a stone, my master became angry, picked up a large stone and was going to strike it on my head, but his daughter-in-law intervened, and I was saved. He did not kill me.

One day, some people came, gathered us, and took us to Constantinople, Kadekeoy. There, I went to the Aramian School. I remained in Constantinople for three to four years. There was a special office in Constantinople that assisted homeless, deprived children.

While coming to Armenia we were singing and dancing happily, but here also we encountered many hardships. Eh, I have witnessed too many difficulties... too many... My heart burns when I recall them, and often I am amazed: after all those things, how is it that I have survived.

### 171 (171).

#### MISSAK HAKOB DEROUNIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1907, Marzvan)

Our nuclear family consisted of my parents, Iskuhi Zhamkochian (mother), Hakob Derounian (father), and us, three brothers: Stepan – the eldest, myself and the youngest, a toddler Benjamin. I also had three sisters, Hripsimé the eldest, married, with a newborn, my senior, Yepraxé, and my junior, Araxy.

My father Hakob was a renowned merchant in Marzvan, Amassia and Sebastia (Svaz). My brother Stepan was a handsome youth. I guess he was educated at Marzvan's Anatolia College. My brother-in-law was a fine gentleman as well. The three of them were called upon one night by a group of gendarmes carrying rifles and guns, and we never saw our father and our adult male siblings again.

Mother and all of us, who were left at home, her five children (my three sisters, brother and me) and her first baby grand-daughter, Anginé, were forced to be deported soon after with the rest of the Armenian inhabitants of Marzvan, mainly women and children. The men had already disappeared under similar conditions as our male siblings. We looked at our three-story house and garden in Marzvan in despair, packed whatever we could carry, made the sign of the cross on our faces and started our Calvary. It is always in front of my eyes the last scene of our mother, going towards a well in the middle of the desert during the deportation to draw water to quench our thirst. Some gendarmes stabbed her on the head, and she fell down immediately and was surrounded by a sea of her own blood. We screamed, shouted and cried. We did not know what to do. We were in the greatest panic and sorrow, and felt distracted, deserted, abandoned and

frustrated.

My sister Hripsimé gathered her strength and took over, and we continued to follow the orders of the gendarmes, fatherless and motherless, with no provisions or protection, in misery, under persecution and hearing all sorts of insults and facing all kinds of threats from theft to slaughter, to being sent to Der-Zor, the graveyard of millions of victims.

At some point our toddler brother, Benjamin, disappeared for good. At another point Araxy was singled out by some strangers and stolen. We screamed, shouted, cried and ran after the thieves, but nobody listened to us. One day, sister Hripsimé found her baby Anginé lifeless in her lap, after years of deportation, homelessness, sufferings, threats and grief, during which we almost walked the distance from Marzvan to Homs in Syria on foot.

We returned to Marzvan during the Armistice, but we were disappointed, none of the promises were kept. My poor desperate sister was obliged to hand me to an orphanage where I obtained an education and found shelter and food and made friends with boys of my age, as we shared a common past and present.

My sisters, Hripsimé and Yepraxé, joined a group of Armenian refugees heading for France. They disembarked in Marseille and stayed in quarantine for some time. Yepraxé died soon after, but Hripsimé got married to one of the soldiers of Commander Andranik. The refugee ladies arranged that marriage in the camp for their lonely compatriot. My brother-in-law was a very brave and patriotic person; his name was Arsen

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1977, was handed to me in 2006, in Cairo (Egypt), by his daughter, Araxy Derounian-Khacherian.

Keshishian. I met him and my sister Hripsimé in Paris, in 1929, on my way to the US.

Hripsimé and Arsen repatriated to Armenia in 1947, but Hripsimé could never again bear another child. One morning my brother-in-law in Shahumian district, Yerevan, went to work to his factory, but before the end of the day he was brought home dead. What a destiny...

I was taken with the orphanage to Oropos, in Greece. I was one of the older boys in charge of the dining room. The children always stole bread from each other. I suggested that they put the bread on the dining tables and let the children take as much as they wanted. In a month's time the problem was solved, stealing stopped. Piles of bread were gathered from the tables after every meal.

In 1923 we were brought to Egypt by cargo ships and were settled in special houses for girls and boys in the Shoubra district.

In 1929 I was given a scholarship to study agriculture at the State Institute of Applied Agriculture at Long Island, New York. The day of my graduation from the institute was the last of the sorrowful days of my life. All the graduates had parents and a family who surrounded them. I had none. I went to my room in the dormitory and cried for the whole afternoon and night.

I returned to Egypt in 1933, with the hope of repatriating to Armenia and serving my folks with my expertise in agriculture, but the procedures did not allow me to realize my dream.

In Cairo, in 1947, I married Arminé Chorbadjian, whose family came from Marash, Cilicia, in 1923. We lived with her family in Heliopolis where every member worked real hard and excelled in her/his profession to make the ends meet. I was happy that I had found a family of my own at last. My mother-in-law Ovsanna was a mother to me. I had two sisters-in-law, Arpiné and Araxy, who were sisters to me and two brothers-in-law, Andranik and Zaven, who were brothers to me. They have all felt the bitterness of deportation twice: once in 1915, and the next time – after the armistice, during the banishment of Cilicia. Their father, my father-in-law, Tigran Chorbadjian, was clever enough to divide the family during the deportations into three different groups, and prayed that at least one of the groups survived. With all sorts of hardships, threats, thefts during the deportation each group faced, God protected the family by miracle, and they united in Heliopolis, Cairo, in 1923, with the loss of a toddler sister, Anahit, who died in Palestine and who was always remembered.

When Arminé and I got married my father-in-law had already died, in 1942, from a stroke in his bed. Prior to his stroke, he was day and night closely following on the radio the news of the Armenian Divisions of the Red Army fighting at Stalingrad and praying for their success. He encouraged his daughters to weave, along with their work, woolen clothes for the fighting soldiers.

Although I did not have the chance to meet my father-in-law, Tigran, I felt he was a fine and brave man. The names he gave his children told much of the caliber of his patriotism.

Having married Arminé, I said to myself, we have not succeeded to take Cilicia, but at least I succeeded to take in wedlock an Armenian lady from Cilicia. This fact was a great satisfaction for my heart, for which I am grateful to God.

When a baby was born to us, I asked Ovsanna Mama, if I could name the baby Araxy in memory of my sister, who was stolen in the desert from us. "Certainly," answered Ovsanna Mama, "Let's have two Araxys in the family: Araxy Sr. and Araxy Jr., like Meds (Great – Arm.) Massis and Pokr (Small – Arm.) Massis mountains [Mountain Ararat], after all the Arax River runs in Western and Eastern Armenia, an Araxy for the Chorbadjian home and another for the Derounian home."

Whenever my daughter asked for water in the middle of the night, I jumped up from the bed spontaneously and fetched the eternal drink for her from the faucet. The scene of my mother stabbed while drawing water from the well to quench our thirst always follows me to this day. I feel like quenching the thirst of the whole mankind.

When Araxy Jr. graduated from the American University in Cairo, in 1979, involuntarily I found myself walking to the podium and kissing her forehead at the foot of the stairs in front of an audience of a thousand and a half. Subconsciously, I wanted to give her what I had missed.

In 1969, Arminé and I visited our motherland and united with my sister Hripsimé in Yerevan. I had not seen her for forty years, and it was the first time for Arminé and Hripsimé to meet each other. The chemistry worked perfectly well and they integrated nicely. Hripsimé's husband had already died and she was surrounded by all her neighbors, the old as well as the young ones.

She visited us in Cairo, in 1974, and we extended her stay till 1975. My brother-in-law, (Hripsimé's brother) Andranik, passes away on his 60th birthday, while his wife was in Cairo. The situation was grave, but the presence of my only surviving sister from the Genocide Hripsimé with my in-laws, in this difficult situation was a blessing from God. We asked her to stay with us in Cairo for good, but she said: "No. No one from our family died in the motherland, I want to die there and be buried in the soil of the motherland."

Our daughter Araxy visited Armenia and her aunt, Hripsimé, in the summer of 1975 with a group of youth from Cairo upon the invitation of the Committee of Cultural Relations with the Diaspora Armenians (Yerevan) and organized by the Armenian Artistic Club in Cairo. My sister was very proud and happy with the visit of her niece and called her Anginé.

Hripsimé's life on earth came to a halt in 1977, at the

age of 77 in Shahumian district, Yerevan, surrounded by all her neighbors of thirty years. She died at immature age and joined her parents, Iskuhi and Hakob, brothers, Stepan and Benjamin, and sisters, Yepraxé and Araxy,

dear husband, darling daughter, Anginé, in Heaven. Because of the first genocide of the 20th century (1915-1923) the Hakob Derounian family of Marzvan gave eight victims. Incense and prayed to their memory...

## 172 (172).

### MESROP MANVEL MESROPIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

#### (B. 1900, Yozghat)

The town of Yozghat lies in the central part of Asia Minor forming the Ankara-Kayseri-Yozghat triangle. In those places, it's possible to find remnants of Hittite culture, which the Turks called Djinivizian. Yozghat was founded about 1750 by Chapanoghlu, the feudal family. Chapanoghlu had a well-known clown by the name of Deli (mad – Turk.) Karapet, whose sharp-witted jokes have reached us. Chapanoghlu built his first construction near the roads to Kayseri-Ankara, which became a huge fortress. He invited many Armenian craftsmen to embellish it. Among them was Nakhshkar (painter – Arm.) Simon, whose beautiful carvings of art are still seen on the walls of the rooms. Later it was bought by Ohan Chorbadiji (Ohan amira Arslanian) and formed the center of the Armenian quarters.

Nakhshkar Simon's son, Hadji Arslan, had a large family. He assisted in the establishment of 48 Armenian villages surrounding the town. In 1908, the prelate of Yozghat, Khoren Vardapet Dimaksian organized the construction of the 9-year school of Yozghat. There was also the 4-year Khorenian School, the Girl's 5-year school, and the Protestant school where foreign languages were taught.

In the morning of June 15, 1915, a group of gendarmes, headed by a policeman, began to walk along the streets of the Armenian quarters and the market place. At 10 A.M. they invited the prominent Armenians to the police station and at 11 A.M. they blocked all the crossroads and cut the communication between the Armenian quarters and the market place. Whoever had gone to the market was arrested and imprisoned by commissaries organized beforehand. The Armenians' workshops and shops were closed and sealed. The gendarmes rushed into the Prelacy and arrested Bishop Nerses Danielian and 3 members: the musician Hrant Kocharian, the teacher, Tadeos Terterian and the sexton.

My father, the bookshop owner Manvel Mesropian, had left the shop to me and gone home. I was only 15 then. I saw that they were arresting even the boys of my age. I left the shop open and ran away. By the end of the day they had arrested 650 people. The next day all of them were driven to Tashpounar, hands bound.

From there, they were sent to Sebastia, "Kanlı Dere" (Valley of Blood – Turk.) where there were writings left on the walls of the prison in blood, which were still there until the Armistice. This was the first funeral procession of Yozghat. The second took place after 15 days, in the beginning of August. As during the previous time, tens of armed gendarmes entered the houses, the searches started, and men were dragged to prison. 500 men were imprisoned in the town of Keohné; 300 of them were from Yozghat. They were driven to Der-Zor under the pretence of sending them to a labor battalion. The Armenian population of the town of Chorum and Aladja were also driven to Der-Zor. First, the Armenian population of Indjirli was deported, then 5,000 people from Keohné. Two large caravans set off on foot. The first caravan was divided in groups. Some of them reached the south, but half of the second caravan was slaughtered in the valley of Yoghun Hissar. Part of them was massacred in Hedsan Deresi, and the rest – near the villages of Tepekhan and Erkilet, Kayseri region.

The annihilation of the 25 Armenian villages was organized by the chief killer of the Armenians, Ali Kemal. The village crier announced: "Those families who become Muslim in 24 hours, will not be deported." By August 15, 1915, they gathered nearly 10,000 Armenians in the Yarali Valley, which was at a distance of 10 hours from the town, near Keller Village, inhabited by Armenians. The district chief, Ali Kemal, had already become mayor and he ordered: "Bashı – beylik, malı yağma, ermeni!" (The Armenians' heads to the state, their property is to be plundered! – Turk.). They declared Djihad, which was dictated by the Germans, targeting the Armenians. The Armenians were to be sacrificed to the accumulated hatred towards the Christian world. As they were gâvurs, they should be sacrificed to open the door of Paradise with their own hands. In order to be worthy of the bliss of that Paradise promised by Mohamed, the Turks crowded before the prison, in the square, armed with axes, hatchets, adzes, daggers, clubs, shearing scissors and other weapons. The imprisoned Armenians were brought out five by five, hands tied to each other, under showers of ridicule, insults, and beatings. Before

\* This voluminous testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1970, has been handed to me by Mesrop Mesropian's widow, Anahit Mesropian, in 2002. I present it here in an abridged form.

our Armenian Church a 70-year old man, Hambardzoum Papazian, fell under the blows struck to his head. They dragged him on the paving-stones: one grabbed his foot, another – his hand. In agony, the man opened and shut his mouth. The Turkish mob laughed at him shouting: “The gâvur opened his mouth, shit in it.”

Oh, you, chief ghost of Evil, Kaiser Wilhelm, you, ambassador Wangenheim and you, mercenary European Christians, ruthless, inhuman diplomats, old and new hypocritical friends: Disraeli, Carson, Clemenceau, Poincaré and others; may you be cursed forever!

As soon as the caravan of offerings came out of the town, the Turks found a motive to separate them from each other in order to torture and kill. Between Yozghat and the village of Tekké, 549 people were killed by sunset. There was a young man from Chat, Rouben Torossian, who cut his bonds with a knife he had and freed 20 Armenian youths. Then he joined Samvel Injeyan’s<sup>1</sup> group in Akdagh and fought bravely against Turkish tyranny.

Those who had not been deported yet, did not know the conditions of the deportees. According to the order, all the Armenians of the town were to be deported with the exception of the military physician Dr. Mkrtich Kecheyan’s family, the watch-maker, who was the master of the town’s big clock on the tower of the municipality, Ghazaros Yosmanian, the night-lamp lighter of the cross-roads, Paghdjeyan’s family, the chemist Daniel and 15 blacksmiths – on condition that all of them adopted Islam. All those who were being deported left their jewelry and extra money with the Armenians who remained. The Armenian quarters, Douzkaya, Demirjilik, Choukour-Mahalé, Kara Chamour, Ahmed Kehia, were all vacated. Only Bazareri and Istanbul Oghlu streets were left.

On August 15th, 1915, the vice-mayor of Yozghat, Ali Kemal, and the Turkish population of Yozghat competed with each other in terms of their cruelties: the government tried to excel the people, and the people tried to outdo the government. They did everything inhuman to torture our poor people, who were condemned to death. Every kind of brutality that the Touranian criminal mind could think of was done to torture, kill, plunder, and exterminate the natives of the land, the industrious, clever, intelligent Armenian people, whose contribution to the civilization of mankind had been highly appreciated by the civilized world. Having the Germans as an ally during the war was the best opportunity to realize their racial and religious hatred, which was ordered by Germany for its expansionism at the expense of the Armenian citizens. Germany chose us as a sacrifice in order to have Ittihatist Turkey as its ally.

The deportees reached Elekjiler, where an

investigation commission searched them through: their clothes, belongings, and even their food. They confiscated their silver, gold, and jewelry. The second place for the search, Keller, was not far away. There, also after being still further impoverished, the carts, covered with white sheets as protection from the burning sun, were driven to the Yarash Valley. The first caravans had already arrived in the valley of death and the last ones were still in front of the Keller post-guards. The length of the caravan reached 4-5 km. The fact that the caravan was not led by a straight road had already discouraged and terrified our poor people, who could not understand the seriousness of the moment. They were such pure-spirited victims. Under these horrifying conditions, the naïve Armenian people still could not believe that they would be massacred. Whatever was taking place, they thought, was the usual way of Turkish plunder, and in order to have enough to survive, those who could, swallowed their gold coins.

On August 15th, 1915, on the holiday of St. Astvadsadsin, in the morning, the active members of the Ittihat Party, the well-known lawyer, Hodja Zade Hamdi, Tefvic Zade Ahmed, Bakerje Mahmoud, the mayor of the town Nafiz agha Zade Ahmed, the president of the Ittihat, Feyaz Ali, arrived at the Yarash Valley to organize the slaughter. The captain of the old generation of Zaptiés, called Captain Ghanara (Bulldog – Turk.) Shyukri, who is also mentioned in Grigoris Archimandrite Palakian’s book\*, immediately seized uncle Ohan’s 20-year-old Ludvik Torossian from the caravan, tied him up despite his mother’s entreaties, had him slaughtered before the feet of the guests as an offering ram. That was the sign to start the slaughter. Soon, there arrived at Keller, the official representative of the state, the vice-mayor Ali Kemal. He demanded a human-offering as it was done in the Yarash Valley. He did not come down from the carriage until they sacrificed at his feet two angelic children who were 4-5 years old, a boy and a girl.

To cause this kind of pleasure to many Muslims, telegrams had been sent beforehand to Chorum, Kayseri, Boghazlian, Avanez, even to the Kurds of Haymana. The dregs of humanity, criminals, robbers, pillagers, kidnapers, killers were freed from the prisons and brought to the slopes of the Yarash Valley. The rabble, smelling the blood of poor Lyudvik and the angelic children, rushed to Yarash, axes on their shoulder, daggers in hand, to kill Armenians in order to get the key to the door of Paradise – according to the khalif’s precept, to be satisfied spiritually and materially, to fulfill their duty for the nation.

Abandoned by God and friends, unprotected in the open field, the wide-spread horror of death waved like

<sup>1</sup> See the story about “Samvel Injeyan from Chat Village” in the “*Historical Narrative-Testimony*” part of this book [T. 350].

\* Palakian, Grigoris Archbishop. *Hay Goghgotan: Drvagner Hay Martirosagrutyan [The Armenian Golgotha: Episodes of the Armenian Martyrdom] (1914-1920)*. Yerevan, 1991.

a huge flame driven by a terrific blast over the heads of 10,000 innocent, sacrificial Armenians. Thousands were martyred for the love of their nation; thousands yearned for life with crying eyes and looked for an outcome, as if the Biblical Day of Judgment had become a reality, with the Yarash Valley as its altar. A month ago this valley had already been the place of martyrdom for 800 secretly enlisted young Kellertsies, organized by sergeant Omar from Yozghat and the human-butcher Hassan, a wild beast from Kaya. Everybody saw before him this armed angel of death threatening with different tools of death. The stench saturated the air from the opposite valley, where 6,000 people from Keller had been turned into corpses, now rotting. That changed the Day of Judgment to Hell.

They started to do away with the rich, well-known families, leaving them with their underwear only, in groups of 50, under the lashes of their whips. They drove them to be sacrificed brutally with axes and daggers. The ones who fell were rolled down into the valley.

The terrified children's screams, the wail of the mothers whose children had been relentlessly grasped from them, the heart-rending cries of the children who were being taken away from their mothers, the moans and groans of those in agony blended into an awful funeral dirge, which joined the curses and clamors of those who were waiting for their turn to be martyred. Thunderbolts were sent to heaven: "God, smell our innocent blood and take vengeance. May the Turks and their ally, the Germans, be worthy of the same fate as ours."

Young and old, men and women, boys and girls, babies, children – were slaughtered incessantly. An old man from Daghestan, an old emigrant, the chief of the village of Akboudjakh, Shah Ismayil, had enjoyed the assistance and friendship of an Armenian rich man, Adamian, and he had also prospered. Seeing all those atrocities, Shah Ismayil, who had been sitting at a feast table together with the chief killers, protested, saying: "Bey, where this degree of criminality is written in our Holy Book? Haven't you got a conscience?" The mayor replied: "Just tell me where that thing called conscience is, so that I may cut it and throw away. This is a festival for us. Do you want to have slaves? Alright, let it be so. From this moment take the pretty girls to your harem and annihilate the rest." And he, himself took part in the slaughter.

In 1915, during the complete deportation of the Yozghat Armenians, one of the wildest gendarmes of the police of Keller, a beast, set aside a 5-year-old angelic girl to give satisfaction to his criminal sexual purposes and to complete his crimes committed during the day. He had ravished the poor child, who had died soon after. Holding her by the foot, he had thrown her like a dead chicken into the garbage of the village. And imagine, who told about all this. He, himself – the performer.

Among the deportees, there was a pregnant young woman who could not move forward as her pains of childbirth had started. One of the gendarmes, Deli Durakh, came up to the woman, made her lie on the ground, putting a stone under her head. Those who saw this thought that he wanted to help her. But soon he picked up a large paving-stone and struck it on the woman's head. Immediately the child spurted out of the dying woman's womb and remained there, stirring in the sun until darkness fell.

Father Hakob also shared a most dreadful death. As he was a gâvur keshish, they first burned his beard and then, excuse me, I cannot put it down in words... Five days before the massacre of Yarash Valley they had taken Father Hakob to the deserted Armenian village of Indjirli and showed him the death field where the corpses of the massacred inhabitants of the village lay and told him that in a few days they would suffer the same fate. They compelled Father Hakob to bless the dead and bring them to life again... Father Hakob's inner world was already ruined. He had become silent and thoughtful, for he knew what awaited him and his parish. And so it happened ... Armenians, bear in mind that in this valley of death, where 10,000 Armenians were sacrificed, the Turkish gendarmes used only 2 bullets: one for the teacher of Sanassarian School, Avetis Gouyoumjian, who had tried to run away, but they shot him, and the other was the fez-fitter, Dion Khanlian, who using the opportunity of his Circassian guard's inattention, had snatched the dagger from his guard's waist belt to kill him, but he was shot.

The Circassians in their turn killed a Turk. A Turk, hatchet in hand, was pursuing a 13-year-old boy, Khoren Arslanian, who had tried to flee in order not to be slaughtered. The Turk caught him and began to torture him to find out where his gold coins were hidden. At that moment, a group of Circassian horsemen arrive. The chief asked the boy whose son he was. The boy said that his father had been the chief of Uzunlu; his name was Manvel efendi, who had assisted the Circassians during their immigration. The Circassian killed the Turk with his own axe on the spot and took Khoren with them. The latter died recently in Yerevan.

The slaughter, which had started at sunrise, ended at sunset. The field was covered with corpses of every age: males and females. They were scattered all over the field, and the field moaned and groaned with the people in agony, who were begging for a 'drop of water,' but gradually the voices became weaker and weaker and died away. Under the cover of darkness a few wounded people tried to get out of their place and creep out of the death field and to survive. Among them were Arous Papazian who is still alive in Yerevan, though she had lost an eye from the axe-blow she had received on her head, and Olimpy Paghdjian. Another unfortunate teenager, Levon Daldabanian, tried to creep away, but a new blow

of a pickaxe put an end to his life.

The next day of the massacre, a terrible scene opened up before the observer. The vice-mutasarrif, Ali Kemal's faithful assistant, the captain of gendarmes Khoulisi, sent out a group of gendarmes headed by the same beast, Deli Durakh, to check up if anyone was still alive and to do away with any survivors. Suddenly they saw a 5-6 months old baby on its mother's corpse. They took aim at him with a mauser from a distance of 100 m, but missed. A shepherd, called Mehmetjik, who worked for the Circassian Hadji Aslan, one of the leaders of the slaughter, saw the miracle and took the baby to his house. The Circassian mistress said: "You Turkish shepherd, how can you bring up a baby?" She took the child from him. Later the child was brought to the Yozghat orphanage.

The Imam of Battal had a string of 100 beads, which was made of the nipples of murdered Armenian women and girls. The sick Turks, praying for health, passed it from hand to hand, begging for the mediation of the founder of the Islam. That Imam lined up 20 Armenian orphans, saying: "You like physical training, so line up," and he shot them at the back to the heart with a mauser.

On the day following the massacre, early in the morning, about 400-500 men, who had specialized in Armenocide, and – Turkish women from Arpa Keoy, rushed over the dead bodies like vultures to grab their bloody underwear. They snatched the booty from each others' hands, which soon turned into a beastly fight. The

fighting was not only for the clothes, but for the corpses as well. Something unseen and unheard of was taking place: marauding of corpses, for which according to international law capital punishment is defined. These Turkish women cut open the digestive organs of the dead, to find the gold coins they had swallowed, from the stomach to the large intestine.

Of course, having such people as gold explorers in the corpses, Mustafa Kemal had the right to say at the 10th Anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, when he boasted: "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!" (Happy is the man who says, I'm a Turk! – Turk.).

...Mustafa Kemal's government had permitted, on the one hand, the Armenians' exodus abroad and, on the other hand, had forbidden the return of the deported and exiled Armenians to their homes. The aim of these permissions and prohibitions was obvious: the Armenians' property should belong to the Turks. It was under the light of these events that the new motto was declared: "Turkey is for the Turks."

...Let our new generation understand well what kind of hypocritical, bestial, criminal, plundering, ruthless, unjust, perfidious enemy we lived with in order to keep our existence. We took on such heavy sacrifices and worked under such hellish conditions, which don't sound human; nevertheless we created all over the world and, according to our genetic heritage, we left everywhere the honorable name of Armenian, except in the country named Turkey.

### 173 (173).

#### HOVHANNES VARZHAPETIAN'S TESTIMONY

##### (B. 1901, Yozghat, Hadji Village)

At the end of July, 1915, the grapes had not ripened yet. After gathering all the Armenian men of Hadji Village, belonging to Chorum, they imprisoned them. I was about fourteen then. My elder brother was two years my senior and they left me free. My father was fifty-five when he was imprisoned; my uncle was forty-five. They were taken to Chorakh to work in the fields. We were told that we would be set free in a few days. There were two hundred and forty families in the village of Hadji. Our family consisted of thirteen people: my grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, my uncle, his wife, and the children of the two families.

The government allotted three carts to us. My father's and uncle's necks were tied together. When we reached Chorum, the ties were removed. This way we traveled to Messitoz – 31 km, Chorum – 50 km, Aladja – 53 km, Yozghat – 31 km, Osmanpasha – 63 km, Tozuyesseri – 242 km, Boghazlian – 53 km, Erikiet – 11 km, Kayseri. In Yozghat, our carts were changed.

The first carts belonged to the cart-men of Hadji Village; they returned home. There we met about one hundred Armenians deported from Sonkourlyu, of whom two were priests and the rest persons of every age. In the evening, the gendarmes borrowed from us the ropes tied to the oxen. The next morning they returned the ropes that were bloodstained. All of us guessed that the exiled Armenians had been hanged or strangled with those ropes. Our driver, learning what had happened, began to repeat, "God won't be pleased with this."

Outside the town of Boghazlian, we met the prefect and the deputy governor who signed the paper in the gendarme's hand. When we passed over the Ghezelermagh bridge, a gendarme shot lame Gaspar from behind. He fell off his horse. The gendarme took the horse. From the start, he had wanted the horse but Gaspar would not give it saying that he was lame and could not walk. The same evening, when the caravan stopped before the khan of Hon Depé, some of our guardian gendarmes came and

took the men to the khan. There they made them take off their clothes and left them naked. After a while, we heard rifle shots. Then a gendarme came and told us not to be afraid: the following day they would all come back.

The next morning we set off. It turned out that all the men had been killed. By the way, Mr. Ekmekjian Karapet and Mr. Papazian Karapet had been killed with a sword before my father's and uncle's eyes on the road. A little further, we met peasants who said, "If you continue on your way, you'll be killed."

Someone wanted to take me away. I asked my mother. She said, "You are free to decide. Only if God puts an end to these black days. I have two brothers and a sister in America; I'd like to go to them." In this way, I remained with a small fabric merchant. My master's aim was to make me a Muslim and then marry me to his daughter.

In the summer, when we went to the gardens, I used to climb onto a large stone and shouted out the call to Muslim prayer. They asked me to pray for them as well. If a Christian became a Mohammedan, his prayers were considered more powerful. I remained there for a year. Then my master gave me thirty-five ghurush and I myself had saved some money. Together with my brother and cousins, we returned home on foot. We reached there

in two weeks. It seemed to us that our parents would be waiting for us there and would meet us with open arms. There were Turk emigrants who had come from Erzroom. There was neither house, nor parents. We felt our sorrow again. We watched our house from outside. Our former Turk neighbors looked after us for a week. One week later, we, my brother and cousin, went to Marzvan on foot.

My cousin, brother, and I found a job in a dye-works. We remained alive because we managed to survive until the truce in 1918. Afterwards, we returned to our Hadji Village and took back our house and orchard. We remained there until Kemal came to power.

After getting my house and a job, I got married. After a year my son Abraham was born. I became a blacksmith. Our Turkish deputy would not allow any Armenian to go and work in the villages. So only the pewter-smith Onnik and the cabman worked in our village, and this was not enough.

They did not ask for any tax from me for three years but then they demanded eighteen banknotes. I sold my house and left twenty-two pieces of arable land to move to Constantinople. There I worked in a mill, the owner of which was a Greek and the director was an Armenian. On the 12th of July 1925, we sailed from Constantinople to Marseilles.

#### 174 (174).

#### **SRBOUHI DANIEL GALTAKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1902, Yozghat, Menteshé Village)**

Menteshé was an Armenian village in Yozghat. My father's name was Daniel, and mother's was Varvara. I had two brothers: Arshak and Tigran, and two sisters. Father died early. As for my brothers, at the beginning of 1915, the gendarmes surrounded the village, attacked it, gathered the men and took them from the village. Soon gunshots were heard, people were crying and wailing. We, the peasants, went to the valley, brought their corpses and buried them. One of my sisters, Ester, was married and had a five-year-old son. A Turk gendarme killed my sister's husband, kidnapped my sister, made her his wife, circumcised the boy and converted him to Islam. My other sister, Alice, who was not married yet, was taken by another Turkish gendarme. I was the youngest of the family. Alice took me to her place and kept me. So, I was

not deported or exiled, but my mother was taken to exile and probably she was martyred on the road, for we got no news from her.

After the truce, when the Armenian volunteers began collecting the Armenian orphans from the houses of the Turks and the deserts, one day, without telling my sister anything, I ran away with the orphan-collectors, for I knew that I was Armenian. They took me to an American orphanage, which was under the sponsorship of Near East Relief. First, we were taken to Mersin and then to the Beirut American Orphanage where I learned textile weaving. In our orphanage, there was an elderly person, who loved me as a daughter. He introduced me to Hovsep who had lost his wife during the deportation. We married and had Daniel and Ester.

#### 175 (175).

#### **ARSHAKOUHI PETROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Yozghat)**

I was young then. I remember one day a crier came and called out, "Those who have fifteen to sixteen year-old children let them get ready."

Confusion started. People prepared themselves, made arrangements, and got together. My mother's sister lived next door; she also joined us together with her children.

We closed the doors, came out of the house dressed smartly as if we were going to have a barbecue. They brought carriages and we got on.

For six days, we climbed the Yozghat Mountains. There was no water, no bread. Our mouths had dried up... Suddenly a horseman came and said, "Gâvurlar, af geldi size" (You are forgiven – Turk.).

Our naive Armenian women rejoiced that they had been forgiven. But news spread among the people that we were being taken to be slaughtered: a group of men were taken before us. We were waiting for our turn. In the darkness, they kidnapped the girls; the boys were taken to the army... Who cared for whom?

In fact, they had orders to take us to remote places, far from eyewitnesses, to be slaughtered.

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 others were in a worse condition than we were, thirsty, hungry, and wounded. During this commotion, a dark cloud unexpectedly came and covered us in darkness. 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 up our garments and bound up their wounds. We did not know that those ruthless, ungodly Turks would soon leave us 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 down the doors, and 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... Dsiadsan, Shamrik, Ossanna, and I, a small girl, all of us went to beg. If they had not stolen what we had, we could have sold these and lived somehow... Shamrik was very hungry, as she had not put anything in her mouth for days. She went to a house where a Turkish woman had been baking *yukha*. She had asked for some. They gave her; she ate it hot; her chest swelled up and she fell dead on the spot...

A crier came on the following day and began to shout, "Haydi, gâvur 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 – Turk.).

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 the 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...

There was an Armenian girl; her name was Arshalouys. She had long plaited hair. She was very pretty. They took her also and cut off her head. The gendarme came with her hair wrapped round his hand, brought Arshalouys's head, threw it before us, and said, "Either you become Turks or you shall become like this."

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 who 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! – Turk.).

Then, several high-ranking officers came and began to talk with us gently, "Sisters, mothers, we ask you to think properly. 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 also shall be butchered."

"Alas, Imam efendi," said my aunt. "Do you know what difficult a thing you are telling us?"

"Eh, mother, the rest is your business."

My aunt held us by the hands and led us to a mountain to pray there: "Oh, our God, save us..."

My aunt started talking again: "Is it easy to change one's religion?"

"It's not easy but for the sake of saving one's life, it's easy."

My aunt was very courageous. She was not ashamed; she said, "We ask you to give us a few more days."

It seemed the Imam liked my aunt's courage and her way of speaking in pure, correct Turkish. He said, "Alright, I'll give you again some more time. It seems you love your belief very much. I pardon you: it is difficult to deny one's belief, certainly it is."

"We thank you very much."

My aunt spoke and at the same time cried with joy. [The narrator also started crying - V. S.].

In this way, we remained there for two or three more months. Then we heard that all the Armenian girls left alive would be taken away.

My father and uncle had been taken into the Turkish army. My father had been wounded and taken to a hospital. Then he had left the hospital and together with my uncle had set out to find us.

But on the way, being too emaciated, father could not endure anymore and died, giving his bag to his brother and

saying, "Take and give this bag to my family: let them sell my watch and live on the money."

My uncle brought my father's watch and gave it to my mother. We learnt that our father had died: we began crying, lamenting. My aunt composed a dirge; she began singing it, piercing the heart of the hearer. We would listen to it and cry.

Then there came an order: girls and boys who lived in the houses of Turks had to be handed over.

There was a pastor's wife; she had a seventeen-year-old son. She had kept him in secret up until then. The Turks found him, took him away, and slaughtered him. A Turkish officer kidnapped the pastor's daughter and made her his wife. The pastor's wife cried, lamented; she wanted at least to free her daughter from the Turk's hands...

And one day we saw a girl we knew, Filor, who came to us covered with blood from head to foot; all her clothes were in rags. She told us that they had butchered all the girls of their group. She had emerged from under the corpses, wounded, had looked for us and found us. She said crying, "I beg you: let's all run away; they will slaughter you, too..."

And then they started to take away the girls, they slaughtered the women; they decapitated the children and kicked their heads back and forth like balls... They also took away Filor's mother and killed her. They beheaded another woman breastfeeding her child. The child was still sucking his dead mother's nipple, but they cut the child's head, to, and used it as a football. There was a fat Assanet, who was the sabab of the hamam. They put her on a stake. How she bellowed; and that way she died...

At the end, again my aunt rescued us. She was a very good dressmaker. She sewed the clothes of the gendarme's wife. My aunt asked her to tell her husband whose name was Shyukri efendi, to spare us... suddenly we saw a gendarme come on horseback and said, "There were gâvurs here: where are they?"

We were afraid to respond.

"Don't be afraid," he said.

My mother and aunt could hardly utter, "Biz ik" (We are – Turk.).

"Korkmayınız (Don't be afraid – Turk.)," said the gendarme. "Sahat birde bekleiniz beni (Wait for me at one o'clock – Turk.)."

In fact, it was Shyukri efendi, the gendarme husband of the Turkish woman.

At one o'clock at night, all of us: my aunt, mother, my aunt's son, I, my younger sister got dressed and waited for the gendarme's arrival.

He came, stopped his horse: "Are you ready?"

"We're ready."

Seated on horseback, he led us and we followed in the darkness, but we were afraid that we might be captured. Suddenly a dog started barking.

"Oh God, protect us." We went on and on. The gendarme took us to a village, before a house, knocked at the door. A woman came out: "Bunlar kim?" (Who are these? – Turk.).

"Benim adamlar dır" (They are my people – Turk.).

We were given a little space; we crouched next to each other in order to sleep but who could sleep? We rose up in the morning. We set out again. On foot, we went, and went, there was no end...

Finally, the gendarme said to my mother, "You'll stay here."

"Thank you, Shyukri efendi, we're very thankful," said my mother...

Six months had passed since we had left our home. We came back to see that the doors and windows were broken, the glasses were broken into pieces, only the house stood. That was something good. Of our mother's twelve children, only two of us came back; the others died on the road due to hunger. There was no water; her mouth foamed and mother died. Then back at home, we recalled what we had seen: we were terrified...

Years passed; we grew up, married, set up our home. In 1921, Turkish outlaws came to Yozghat. My husband was taken into the army. I tied my little boy's clothes on me; we went to Mutania. My sister went to Bursa ahead of us. I received a letter from my husband. He wrote, "Arshakouhi, remain there." My mother's and father's sisters were already there. We had money. People had come to Izmir from Afion, Konia and from many other places. The church was fully packed.

The prelate had shaved off his beard and run away. Turkish officers stood in front of the five doors of the prelacy. The bells of the church rang; 'Help,' people shouted from every side. Five girls: English, French, Italian, American, Danish, Red Cross signs on their foreheads, helped the wounded, the mothers, the children. The people did not know what to do.

Izmir was on fire... The seashore was in flames... The people were at a loss... They put the girls in sacks in order not to be kidnapped... Confusion, uproar, chaos... When the Turks saw something they wanted, they snatched it from you. Someone came and wanted to steal my ring. I immediately took up the bulghur sack on to my back, and my mother lifted up the child, Mihran. We hurried to the French school, entered it, and got back our breath... They had driven the people to the seaport. Near the seaport some people jumped into the sea, swam towards foreign ships, somehow got on board a ship to save their lives, to go to another country...

And those who fell into the water and were swimming, boiling water was poured on them from the land. The fire consumed the French school where we were staying. We ran out of it ... but where should we run...? Everywhere was on fire... Those who had money and

those who managed, entered the English hotel. The hotel was so full up that the watchman would not allow anyone else in and told 'No' to everyone, that son of a bitch. He would not open the door. We started asking, pleading with the English, which we did not know, we showed baby Mihranik and asked to take pity on us, to get in. Finally, we gave the watchman five gold coins. We were taken in, but all the rooms were occupied. Never mind, we did not want a room; we only wanted to save our lives... Anyhow, we did save our lives. They took the gold coins we had given to the American Embassy. They brought a special boat. We were seated in it and the boat sailed to Midilli. We were waiting for the ship to arrive. Suddenly we heard the Greeks shouting, "Erketé" (It came – Greek).

The steamship came. The others had tickets; we had not... An order came out, "Those who have no tickets stand aside..." We stood aside. The American gendarmes put up a chain and would not allow anyone on... I went to their chief and asked him. I was young; the baby was in my arms. He saw and pitied us. He took ten gold coins from me and gave us tickets. We got on board the ship. We arrived in Pirea.

We had nothing to wear ... the baby in my arms. Mother went and began to sweep the streets of Pirea. We slept on straw in tents.

We lived somehow for three years without our men. Then we began searching our relatives through the newspapers. In the church, during the mass, the priest announced who was where, in what country. We learned that our man was in Syria...

He came and found us... What things he had seen, what days he had lived! He reached the Euphrates together with the other exiles. He had seen very many heart-breaking things. He told us. A mother on the way to Der-Zor had left her child on the bank of the Euphrates River for someone to take away but her heart could not withstand it. She had come back and seen the child playing with the sand: hungry and thirsty, she had picked it up and taken with her to Der-Zor – to let the child die with her. And there were many other such things...

Then we moved to Athens. There was an Armenian district there. We lived in Fix. My son grew up. We came to Armenia in 1947. We had just married our son. We were going to settle down in our dear Motherland when one night, in 1949, they came and took us away... We, unaware of things, did not understand where they were taking us, why they were taking us. In fact, they took us to Siberia...

And we remained there for seven years. My grandchildren were born there. Then we returned. We were given a patch of land in New Marash. Out of nothing, we built a house and lived in it...

My aunt had a son. He had escaped from Izmir and went to America. Now he is doing well. He has written to my son; he's calling us over...

Every day there are disagreements in our house about going to America...

Alas, my child, what should I tell you, which one should I disclose to you? I have suffered so many misfortunes.

## 176 (176).

### **BAROUNAK HOVHANNES PAPAZIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1906, Yozghat, Boghazlian Village)**

Our family consisted of fourteen people. My grandfather was the head of the village. My baptism was held in the local Armenian Apostolic Church. Our Turkish friends had been invited to my baptism. My Christian name is Barounak but later the Turks called me Ibrahim.

I had one sister. Her name was Filor, and Moushegh was my brother. I had four aunts on my father's side: Paydsar, Sandoukht, Hina, and Verzhin. My grandmother's name was Narzad, grandfather's name was Hayrapet, my father was called Hovhannes and my mother Hnazand. My mother came from the same village. Our occupation was agriculture: we grew grapes and other fruits. They deported us from our village and instead they brought Turks from Greece to inhabit there.

Our village had ninety Armenian families. One church was of red stone. The Armenians had built it but it had not been completed. In 1975, that church was

turned into a mosque: a minaret was erected next to it. My aunt's room served as a school where thirty-forty children gathered and learnt the alphabet and prayers. I also studied there for a year. There were only Armenians in our villages and we spoke Armenian. But very few were literate: on my mother's side, my grandfather and two uncles were literate.

We had a tonir in our house. We did not have special bedrooms or bedsteads; we slept on the floor. The local women wove clothes from cotton and wool. Every house had a weaving loom. My mother and aunt used to weave. Men wore coats with khondjan. The Armenian women used to wear long vartiks and covered their heads with a kerchief. The girls braided their hair thin, as thin as a pencil. The girls' clothes were of light color. The boys did not have the right to choose a girl: the parents chose for them. The boys did not see the girls before the marriage.

The roofs of the houses were covered with earth.

We kept cows, buffaloes, and sheep. Our holidays were: Christmas, New Year, Terendez/Tiarnendaradj, Ascension Day, and Easter. On holidays, you could not be cross with anyone. If you were well off and there were others who were not, you had to give to those who did not have so that they would not envy you for the things you had. At weddings and during holidays, the music of the zurna and drum sounded out merrily, and they would sing and dance in a circle. There were dances with spoons or they would dance the Zeybek, that is: like the Zeybeks, with daggers in their belts. If they made a sacrifice, the animal to be sacrificed was blessed by the priest; it was cooked; they made pilaf or bulghur. They put these in earthen pots and left them on the roadside so that those who passed by could eat. The music and the dancing during the weddings were Turkish. There was a fountain in the middle of the village with much water: it was called Toros Efendi's Fountain. We had a water mill. The government collected taxes according to one's wealth: how many beehives you had, how many sheep, how large was your field. Seven parts of the crop were left to the owner; one part was taken by the state.

In 1915, they gathered the men and put them into the church. They did not allow them to be free anymore; they tied them with ropes. They also took away the boys above twelve. They tied the hands of two men to each other, took them out of the village, and led them to Gâvur Deressi near Boghazlian. It was said that many Armenians were slaughtered there and the name remained Gâvur Deressi. We heard that the Turks called Samo, Shapa, Toroun had killed the Armenians with axes, and Hashim, Deli Shakir, and other five Turks had sat and watched.

There was a Shekhé agha, who often ate at our house. My grandma went, asked him to save my grandpa, but he refused, saying, "The earth will let you know, but not me."

They took away all of them and killed them. No one was saved from that slaughter. The order was from Talaat. My grandpa and his brother's son were the victims from our family. My father was already in the Turkish army. On the third day the gendarmes came and said, "Take two days' food; you don't need to take anything else. Each Armenian family will move to Kayseri in their cart."

They drove us. My mother had fallen ill two years ago. She had suffered a wound on her neck. She had been taken to Kayseri. So she knew the road to Kayseri. But they took us through the fields. My mother felt that they were taking us to some other place. An order came: "Get off, go down into the valley."

The people were confused. Crying, lamenting, uproar... The gendarmes saw that the people would not calm down and they began striking them. When an Armenian village was emptied from its inhabitants, news was sent to the mob around to come and plunder it. All of

a sudden, we saw people, like ants, armed with daggers, axes, and knives attacking and beginning to butcher us: old, young – it made no difference to them. My grandma had a red apron on; they quarreled even over the apron as to who would take it. All around – corpses: babies on the breasts of their slaughtered mothers. I was stupefied by the scene. I had red shoes from my father. My father had brought them from the town. A boy saw my shoes; he struck me on the head with his dagger. I fell down and lost consciousness. The boy had taken off my shoes...

I came round at midnight; opened my eyes, but one of my eyes would not open: it was shut; the blood from my head had dried in it. I heard the voices of the children who were sucking blood on their butchered mothers' breasts instead of milk. Before morning, they had died. I got up to look for my folks. I saw on the ground corpses: in blood, naked, without clothes. They were deformed and lay on the ground, swollen; the flies were flying around...

I was looking for my mother among the corpses. I remembered: there was a birthmark on my mother's arm. But mother was not there. I saw my sister Hina dead. I did not find my mother and brothers. My mother was very beautiful. A Turk who often came to our house, had recognized mother and said to her, "I'll save you. Do you know the place of your gold coins?"

Mother had answered, "Yes, they are buried under the earth in purses."

The Turk had taken my mother to his house. They had gone. Mother had shown him the place of the jewels. They had dug the ground, taken out the purses full of jewelry. Mother asked the Turk to take her to the place of massacre to find her children.

Mother had given the Turk a bed sheet to wrap me with; we were naked. The Turk came. I, a boy, and two girls – all of us were wounded. The blood had dried on our faces. We were in the valley. Suddenly we saw a Turk coming on horseback. I went up to him.

The Turk asked, "Whose son are you?"

"I'm Kyokhva Hayrapet's son," said I.

At that time, three other wounded came near us. The Turk showed the sheet and said, "Whose is it?"

I said, "It's my grandfather's," for the edge had been needle-worked with red thread.

The Turk laughed and said, "I'll take you to your mother"

On the way, we saw a spring. I washed my wounds. He took me to my mother. My mother saw me; she was glad. She washed my wounds, applied some medicine on them, and put me to bed.

That Turk had already two wives; he married my mother as well. He named my mother Fatma and me Ibrahim. They circumcised me. From our family only my mother and I survived, and she had become the wife of a Turk.

Mother gave birth to a daughter by that Turk. My Turkish foster-father brought another Armenian wife, Trvanda by name. That Trvanda was jealous of mother because she already had children. She gave ten gold coins to the Turkish boys and said, "Take this boy away and kill him."

Mother heard about this.

One day I went with my mother to milk the sheep. We came back and saw mother's newborn baby's nails had become black. In fact, she had been poisoned. She died. Mother had another daughter from the Turk, and they called her Nadié. That girl was nearly forty days old when mother heard that Trvanda had given ten gold coins to the Turkish boys to kill me. Mother heard about it and said to me, "Go to Turk Hashim agha. He is an acquaintance of ours. He's keeping eleven Armenians in his house. Go and tell him to keep us, too."

I went to Hashim agha and said, "My mother sends you her best greetings and asks if you'll take us in us. Let us come and live in your house; we are in a very bad state."

Hashim agha agreed. I was eleven years old then. I came and told my mother. She put some sugar beet into the mouth of the forty-day-old girl from the Turk for her to suck, and we ran away. In the evening, the Turk had come back and found out that the gâvur's daughter had run away together with her son. Trvanda had said that she would look after the baby. We remained in the house of our Turkish acquaintance. There was a Turk among those men who wanted to marry my mother. Hashim agha said that he was a good man. Mother went and became his wife; she took me with her. In 1920, my mother gave birth to a boy from that Turkish man. I was already fourteen years old then.

My mother's brothers had gone to serve in the Turkish army. The Armenians and the Turks wore the same uniform: they had been able to run away. But my father, who had been serving in Erzroom, was killed there. My uncles had heard that their sister, that is my mother, had been kidnapped by the Turks. They came and found us. Mother was already pregnant with the second child. She said to me, "I'll send you to your uncle."

My uncle had had nine children; all nine had been butchered. I went and lived with my uncle.

In 1925, I went to Constantinople together with my uncle – as the Armenians in provinces were moving to Constantinople. After me, my mother had two daughters by the Turk but she corresponded with me because she missed me. Mother had written down all her life story in a thick copybook but it was lost.

After my mother's and my flight, Nadié had been brought up by Trvanda. Years passed by. That Turk had become very rich; he had moved to Boghazlian. He had become the owner of a twelve-roomed house with many servants. His two Turkish wives died, the Turkish man

had also died. Trvanda and my sister remained. A Turk agha was engaged to my sister Nadié. On the day of the wedding, my mother heard that her daughter would be taken to the village of Uzunlu and would pass in front of our house. When the wedding people came by with drums and zurna, my poor mother went, opened her arms, stood in the middle of the road and begged them: "Stop, reveal the face of the bride, at least, let me see her face."

But Trvanda, that wicked woman, did not allow this. They drove away the cart. They took her to Uzunlu Village. Nadié had three children. The Turkish father died. Nadié came to her father's house to get possession of her father's property in Boghazlian.

Trvanda was already quite old; she had fallen ill. She was lying down in a room. In wintertime, they had an electric heater near the bed. The quilt caught fire and began to burn. Old Trvanda did not have strength to get out of the bed. The servants were confused: they wanted to help. Nadié had arrived and said, "Close the door to the room: let her burn. She did not allow my own mother to see my face; she deserves such a death."

In 1925, I was called up into the Turkish army. I thought: after seeing so many things, how could I serve in the Turkish army? But they would not give me a passport. Mr. Mourad from Svaz helped me and I was given a Persian passport. In 1927, I came to Armenia but the repatriation committee would not approve me. They said, "You must go to Persia."

I insisted, saying, "I have just come from an Islamic country."

They conditionally gave me a six months stay. I went to the village of Alapars and worked the land. We planted pumpkin and eggplants for the first time in Armenia. Here, the local people did not know of sudjukh, olives, or coffee. I remember: our neighbor had once bought coffee beans, boiled them, then ground them, and then boiled them in water and sugar.

Six months later, they compelled me again to go to Persia. I did not want to. They added one more year until 1934. I was called by the military commissar of Hrazdan and told, "You're a single boy; go and serve in the army."

They selected me to serve in the artillery of the Kanaker division. I did my service and returned. I became engaged and then got married. In 1936, we moved to Yerevan. I built a house in Sari Tagh. I became a mason; I became a craftsman: a skilled worker. I have worked with thirty-six types of Armenian tuff.

During the Patriotic War [1941-1945], I was in the cavalry. We were sent to Persia, Tabriz. In 1945, orders came that we should enter Turkey but soon after, the Japan Hiroshima disaster occurred: we stopped. As I know Turkish well, I worked in the secret service. My name was Rahim.

In 1980, my mother's Turkish husband died. My mother wrote me to bring her to Armenia: at least she

might be with me during the last days of her life. I went to the repatriation committee. I applied on behalf of my mother, but I was refused. I applied again, saying, "Either let me go and bring my tortured mother to the Motherland or you bring her; I'll pay all the expenses." But they refused to assist.

In 1951, my poor mother fell ill in Kayseri and my sister born from the Turkish father took her to hospital. After two days, my mother died with a longing in her heart. The Turks dug a pit and buried her there. They did not bury her in their graveyard so that she would

not profane it. My poor mother was a stranger, and she left this world as a stranger. My mother died that way, without having seen me again.

I did not see my own mother but in 1970 and 1975, my sister invited my wife and me. We went to my sister's house in Kayseri. Albanians had come and occupied our family home. The old Turks of the village remembered me because we had lived in harmony and in peace before the Genocide. They slaughtered goats, they sacrificed lambs, they entertained us, and they showed us around. We had a good time together.

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### VERONIKA GASPAR BERBERIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Yozghat, Boghazlian Village\*)

I was born in 1907 in the village of Boghazlian, Yozghat Province, Anatolia, in the family of an intellectual. My father, Gaspar Berberian, had completed his schooling: he knew French and Turkish well and worked in the government. Father's uncle was a lawyer. My father worked with him as an interpreter-secretary to the Turkish governmental advocate. In 1912, my father Gaspar was recruited into the Turkish army to fight in the Balkan War. In the army, he acted as an interpreter and, as he was a useful person, they had not killed him. Father served in the Turkish army and in 1920, as a soldier in Karabekir's army, reached Nakhidjevan. There, he did not want to participate in the slaughter of Armenians, so he escaped from the army. Later, when we came to Armenia where we found each other.

As father was not with us, my grandfather had taken me into their house and I stayed there as the eldest grandchild. My grandpa, Hakob Berberian, was the priest of the local church, St. Astvadsadsin Church. He was a handsome man, well educated. Through his position, he became one of the distinguished figures of the town. His hearth was the most enlightened home of the place. Almost every evening, intellectuals gathered there and talked about interesting subjects in my grandpa's room. They spoke about political affairs and sang patriotic songs in a very low voice. As I was young, they sent me to bed early. Though I had been sleeping, I woke up, as I was interested in their talk. I slipped out of bed, went into the guests' room and, crouching in a corner, I listened to their conversations and songs – trying to memorize them.

I was closer to my grandfather. My grandma's name was Yeritskin Narik. Her daughters' names were Mariam and Sima. I had two uncles: one was twenty years old, the other fifteen. Their names were Harutyun and Khacher.

Uncle Harutyun was the father of Barouhi Berberian. He also acted as our father, because our own father was in the army. Uncle Harutyun was a barber; the other uncle was young: he was still a pupil. I had two aunts, Nazeli and Sandoukht. Our people worked in agriculture.

Our Boghazlian Village was flat. There were almost no trees as there were salt mines underground, but wheat did grow well. I have heard that 700 families lived in Boghazlian, Armenians and Turks, together in harmony. The shopkeepers and craftsmen were Armenians. Most of the houses were two-storeyed stone houses. We had two houses. One was my grandpa's house, the other my father's and mother's. Our house was on the road to the market. We had buffaloes, cows, horses, and sheep. In 1915, however, when the massacres started, our buffaloes came from the pasture and bellowed before the door to be taken in, but we had shut the door because we were afraid that the askyars might rush in. So the poor animals remained outside; the Turks took them away.

The doors of our house were double doors. For security, there was a bolt behind the door. The person, who came, used the doorknocker. We always had guests at home to whom we offered coffee. Besides the guest-room, we had two more rooms. We had a special room where there was a tonir. Next to, it was the cowshed for the animals, the poultry. All these went to the Turks.

Our district was called Kilisé Mahale, meaning the Church District. All the Armenians worked; they were respectable people. My grandpa had returned from the army and taught the boys at school. My grandpa taught me the alphabet. I had a doll. During the massacre, it fell down and broke into pieces. I remember we played a game: on two sides, we held each other by the waist, whoever called out an Armenian name went to the Armenian side, those who gave a Turkish name went to

\* Boghazlian – village in historical Lesser Hayk, Sebastia State, Yozghat Province. Until 1915, there were 400 houses of Armenians who worked in agriculture. They had their St. Minas Church. The Armenian Khorenian School had 60 pupils. Boghazlian has been completely destroyed, its Armenian inhabitants deported and annihilated.

the other side; and then they pulled each other by their hands. The side that had more members would win.

During weddings in our village, people had started to sing Turkish songs. The fields of the Armenians and the Turks were separate but we were on friendly terms with each other. The district of the Armenians was in a better condition: it was clean and tidy; but the district of the Turks was untidy: its streets were crooked. Every day lavash was baked at home. We kneaded the dough, rubbed the surface, crossed it, covered it, and left it to rise. We lit the tonir. The tonir was high; it was made of clay. In that room, there was also a hearth, and the hole was in the roof. There was not much wood; we burned manure. For New Year, we cooked Mariam porridge made of cracked wheat and dried apricots. It was called 'sweet porridge.' On New Year's Day, we baked pastry in the shape of farming tools and baked bread containing a small coin; whoever found it went to the shop and bought different sweets, which we ate together.

My mother had a Singer sewing machine. My grandpa had brought it when mother had just married. My mother was very skilful and graceful. She sewed my grandpa's clerical clothes.

We used the meat of our animals. We boiled the wheat a little, dried it, and thrashed it in a mortar. The bran was removed by holding it to the wind, and bulgur was thus prepared. Drinking water was scarce. It was brought on asses over a short distance. There was a harness on the ass to hold four jugs. We had a filter of red stone in our house in which the water was filtered to be purified. Many people came to our house and took water for the sick people. To bathe, we filled the tondir with water; it became hot, and we took a bath in it; we did not have to go to the bathhouse. In our area, there was a green clay mine. We washed our heads with the clay: it cleaned well. Every house had its toilet. Every Saturday evening my grandpa used to take a bath in order to offer the Holy Mass the next day on Sunday. Every Saturday evening, consecrated bread was baked in our house. The consecrated breadboard was kept separate from the daily bread board. The consecrated bread was taken to church every Sunday morning and distributed to the people. My grandpa had a prayer book on which was the crucified Christ made of silver.

Most of the trades were in the hands of the Armenians. There were many shoemakers and barbers; they had shops in the covered market. My uncle Harutyun also had a barber's shop. Food and fruits were sold in the market. There were many beggars. At carnival time, pastry was made. It was first given to the poor, only then did we eat some.

The largest house belonged to a wealthy Arab, Oghlu Gevorg agha's. He was a merchant. There were Armenian goldsmiths. They made every type of ornaments: rings, bracelets, chains. The Armenians led an easy life. The

Turks were poor with patched up, ragged clothes. There were men who were rich; they had estates, laborers worked on them.

The fabric for clothing came from Europe and various towns.

Our old church in Boghazlian had been destroyed by the Turks. The new church was the Holy Enlightener. I always went to church together with my grandpa.

During Lent, divine service was held three times a day. My younger uncle sang with his friends in the church choir as a choirboy. Our church was large: it had altars; there were separate sections for the Holy Mass and for baptism. The choir had a special place: on top, like a balcony. Every person provided his or her cushion, which was left there. Those who loved the church very much sat in front. There were many icons in the church: my grandpa had brought one of them from Holy Edjmiadsin. There was a bell outside. On Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Easter everybody went to the church, and afterwards played with colored eggs and rejoiced. The ood, violin, kanon, and duduk, were played. During a wedding, the bride was taken to the church for the marriage ceremony and then taken home. All holidays were celebrated, people visited each other, and guests were entertained with coffee and sweets.

The carnival took place in winter before Christmas. People fasted for 7 days. They did not eat meat or fish. During Lent, we fasted for fifty days. The children would fast till noon. The day before Easter was Easter Eve; we ate fish. The day before Christmas was Khtoum (Holy day – Arm.). Good Thursday was the day when Christ washed his disciples' feet; the people went to church; the priest washed the feet of the acolytes like Christ had done. Good Friday was the day of Christ's crucifixion: Christ's blood was shed on that day. That was why we colored eggs red with onionskin on that same day.

On Easter Day, a special Holy Mass was celebrated with joyous feasting. The following Sunday after Easter was named Red Sunday. It was permitted to have weddings; no weddings took place during the 50 days of Lent. On the 15th of August, we celebrated the holiday of St. Astvadsadsin. Again joy, music, singing, dancing; as the Armenian district was separate, there were no Turks present, the people sang freely. They were good holidays; we had good customs. Even the Turks came to our festivities; they liked to eat red Easter eggs with us.

The marriages took place after falling in love, but there were cases when the parents married their children without each seeing the other's face. They married my youngest aunt without the couple first seeing each other. I remember: my aunt did not want to; she cried. Then they beat her and made her get married. Later he turned out to be a very good man; my aunt regretted her behavior. There was no divorce. There was also the custom of kidnapping a girl, but they had to obtain the priest's

marriage blessing. Before the Genocide, two Armenians had married Turks. If a Turk had two wives, one Turkish and an Armenian, he spoke to the Armenian with a frown on his face, but when speaking to his Turkish wife, he always smiled.

To ask a girl's hand in marriage, the parents would go to the girl's house. If they agreed, the boy's parents put a ring on the girl's finger. On the eve of the wedding, on a Friday, a tray-full of presents would be brought to the bride. The girl, the bride to be, was taken to the bathhouse. On Sunday, the Godfather and Godmother came to take the bride to church. The Godmother dressed the bride. The father-in-law and the mother-in-law did not go. While dressing the bride, the guests made merry: singing, dancing, and then, the bride was taken to the church. The bride's face was covered with a veil. The bride's dress was either in white, or in pink. At the engagement, the girl's father purchased the dress and the shoes but on the wedding day, the boy's side of the family brought them. The bride was dressed like a queen: a crown on her head, a veil on her face. The women's clothes were already in European style since 1900.

Married brothers, sisters, daughters-in-law, grandchildren all lived together in love and in harmony. The bridegroom almost never went to live in the house of his wife's parents; otherwise, they would call him a 'bride-child' in irony. The daughter-in-law had to be obedient in her husband's house. If the mother-in-law was ill or old, the daughter-in-law managed the house. The newly married woman would not talk to her elders; she 'kept her tongue.'

When the sick were close to death, the priest gave communion. The deceased was dressed in black. The children were not taken to the ceremony. Armenian graves were flat meaning that we, the Armenians were prisoners in the Turk's hands and had no right to erect gravestones, while with the Turks, the upper stone was erect. The worthy deceased person's clothes were taken off and they wept and lamented over them. No food was cooked in the house where there was a deceased person. The neighbors, the friends, relatives brought dinner to the house of the deceased so that the family could eat. On Sunday, the family of the deceased offered matagh: they invited everyone to eat together.

In our area, people who fell ill with typhoid died. When that disease entered a house, it would 'clean' out the house, that is, everybody in the house died. Smallpox also was common and it left its traces on the face. Children fell ill with scarlet fever. We had only one doctor; he had studied in Constantinople. His name was Dr. Grigor efendi Rakhedjian. He was from Kayseri. He had come to our area, built a house, and lived there. There was also a pharmacist.

During childbirth, there were mid-wives, but some women died during childbirth and left orphans behind.

The orphan was brought up by the girl's or the boy's mother. The husband married again to raise the children.

The Armenians had differed from the Turks by their headwear. The Turks used a green turban, the Armenians white. The Armenians dressed more decently. Turkish women wore yashmaks; the Armenian young women of Kayseri covered their heads with shawls. They wore the yashmak on their shoulders like a mantilla, covered their face with veils, and the peasants put on ordinary clothes to work easily. Kemal Ataturk ordered to take off the yashmaks and the head turbans.

Turks came to visit us. One day, we went to the Turkish bey's house; we saw them lying on satin. My grandma asked, "Isn't anything bad to be expected?" And I asked interrupting them, "Will anything bad happen to us?" The bey's wife frowned at me and said, "If it happens, first of all we must send away this puppy." That was the only bad talk I have heard from them; otherwise, the Turks were on good terms with us.

There were no fedayis in our area because there were no forests for them to take refuge in. We had two teachers who sang fedayi songs but they were not themselves fedayis. From Cilicia, fedayis had come to the village of Chat. One of them was from Deurtyol; the other – I do not know where he was from, but they called him Kor (Blind – Arm.) Manouk as he had one eye. They had gone to the village of Chat. The Turkish gendarmes had found out about them: they surrounded the village and pulled out the priest's beard to make him confess. Under torture, he had told them where the fedayis were. They were captured and beaten up so much that they could move only on hands and feet. They brought them to our place and killed them. The fedayis were defending the Armenians' honor. There had been a fedayi in our parts who had gone about in disguise; he was then captured in Kayseri.

Before the Genocide, an Armenian was captured and hanged from a tree near the government house because he had given a state secret to the Armenians.

Such things were spoken of in secret. The pictures of Vardan Mamikonian and Tigran the Great hung on our wall but when the war started, we removed these pictures.

There was a prison under the government building. Before the massacre, Armenian men were taken there. If an Armenian and a Turk had any problems, they would apply to my uncle because he was a lawyer. And my grandfather was the representative of the Armenians. If an Armenian and a Turk happened to quarrel and if the Armenian was in the right, he would win. Disputes between Armenians, however, were settled by the priest. Our birth certificates were provided by the church. We had documents for our houses. They even burnt all our certificates and documents. We had many books. We had the book "Haysmavourk" (the Book of Holy Days and

the Testimonies of the Saints – Arm.), which had a leather cover. We had a Turkish Bible with Armenian letters, because many Armenians did not know Armenian. We burnt many prayer books and other books as well. We also burnt Armenian newspapers received from Constantinople. We learnt from the newspapers that a war had started in 1914.

Until the Hurriyet of 1908, the Armenians did not go into the army but did so after that – as if Armenians were also brothers and equal to the Turks. In 1912, my father was taken into the army to fight in the Balkan War.

Before the Genocide, Turkish policemen came to collect arms. The son of the rich Karapet agha had said, “We have no arms.” The policemen searched and found a weapon. They pulled out his fingernails, placed hot boiled eggs in his armpits, and tied him up. After that, they did not leave even a simple kitchen knife behind.

Before the Genocide, at the beginning of July 1915, when we had just started to reap the wheat crop, the governor of our town, Kemal bey, came. The Armenians and the Turks went to meet him. After three days, Kemal bey came to our house and we offered him coffee. The Governor asked my uncle questions and left.

On Saturday, towards 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 as to why the Armenians had been separated from the Turk recruits.

The Turkish major answered, “Papaz 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 arrived 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 with horror, he had run home breathing heavily 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.

Artin agha went to present his protest to the Kaymakam but he did not return 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! – Turk.).

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.

We opened the door and saw that they were gathering Armenians from the fields and shops, tied in twos by each other’s hands and taking them to prison. If the women raised their voices, they beat them and said, “Tomorrow you’ll get a letter.” They had already freed the criminals from the prisons. The Turkish government had given orders that whoever kept an Armenian in his house would be punished.

The Turks from the surrounding area stood and watched. Suddenly my school-pupil uncle fell down breathless, beating his head from wall to wall: “They are saving bullets worth twenty ghurush; they are slaughtering everybody with axes.”

We dug a passage from the cowshed to the yard where my uncle hid during the day. We opened it by night to get air. For fifty days, they were looking for men to slaughter. Then the Turkish government became crafty and said, “Armenians, come out of your hiding places, go to your work.” The Armenians came out of their hiding places, but they seized them.

After fifty days, in March 1916, the governor ordered, “Not a kilogram of Armenian flesh will remain alive: you will butcher all of them.”

Up to that time, many Armenians in all the Armenian villages had been slaughtered; those who had remained alive had come and were hidden next to us. The government arranged that in order to go to an Armenian village one had to pass through a Turkish village. Before the Genocide, they had forced the second son of our Gevorg agha to reveal the place of weapons. The father had given the gendarmes many gold coins in order to be saved, but they were butchered first. Not even one soul survived from their family. They slaughtered them all. A well-known Turk later came and told my uncle.

They were driving away all the families who were now without men: the women, the cradle babies, the old people – all were driven away. At that time, many people were thinking of giving to the Turk their possessions or their daughters, as wives – just to save their children’s lives. There were mothers who gave their two or three children to Arab families to keep, as the Turks kidnapped the pretty children, raped them, then forced them to change their faith,

A large stone in one of our house walls had been removed, and my uncle, Harutyun Berberian, crept up, entered in it, and hid himself. When the gendarmes came, they could not find him.

One day my grandma, who had kept my uncle Harutyun, went to the Major Selami bey who had married an acquaintance of ours, an Armenian girl, and said,

“Selami bey, Harutyun is at home, what can be done?”

Major Selami bey cut off a button from his uniform and said, “When I send a gendarme with this button, let Harutyun come.”

In the morning, a gendarme came, knocked at the door, and said, “Let Harutyun come to the governor together with his barber’s instruments.”

My uncle gathered his barber’s instruments and went out with the gendarmes. At that time, a Turkish barber had been shaving the governor. As he had been shaving for the first time, he had bled the governor’s face. Selami bey had said, “Let Harutyun shave me.”

Uncle Harutyun used his instruments and shaved the governor wonderfully. He went out in order to return home. He saw people were being taken to exile in families. All were bound to each other. The governor ordered, “Let a gendarme escort Harutyun to his house.”

Harutyun came home. He was twenty years old but he looked like eighty. My uncle Harutyun saw that there was no way out, he said, “I won’t believe the Turks any more.” And he took opium oil, mixed it with blue vitriol and said, “I’ll make a drink for my wife then I’ll drink it. You do what you want.”

My uncle Harutyun made his wife drink the poison. After three minutes, a pardon arrived for the family. Twenty-five people were saved because of my uncle. My uncle immediately mixed up fifteen egg-yolks and made his wife drink this. She vomited, was saved, and recovered.

Our house was very large. Many of the family worked in the government; they were officers. For example, my father was an interpreter; Karapet agha’s elder brother was a lawyer who prepared petitions. But before the Genocide, while gathering the Armenians’ weapons, they had taken away Karapet. He was in a terrible state. Karapet agha’s wife, their three sons, grandsons, daughter-in-law, daughter, son-in-law, their grandchildren, also Karapet’s brother, Soukias, his wife, and son – all of them were victims in the first massacre. When the Turkish bey gave the order that ‘not a kilo of Armenian flesh will be left alive,’ his wife took Ester and Prlant to keep in her house. Out of despair, the girls took poison and died. The bey’s wife knocked on their door; the girls did not open. The bey’s wife kicked the door open and saw that Soukias’ daughters were lying on the ground with foaming mouths. She said coldly, “They were tough gâvurs: they did not accept to become Turks; they died. Take them away, throw them to the dogs, let them be devoured.”

The bey’s wife placed ropes around their necks. They were pulled out, given to the dogs to eat. Later, we went to gather plants from places where their corpses were thrown. We were told that Ester and Prlant had been thrown there.

In our family, there were many other uncles – both

on my father’s and mother’s sides. My grandma’s cousin was a state employee in Ankara. His name was Barsegh agha. He had a two-story hotel. One day, during a session the bey said: “Barsegh agha, he converted into a Turk, wear a turban, change your name. The problem of the Armenians is that they are different...”

“No,” Barsegh agha had said. “I won’t become a Turk.”

That had been his last meeting; he was also killed.

Then the Turks entered and occupied the hotel.

Then an Armenian had a land problem with a Turk. That Turk had gone with a gendarme; taken a chair and sat down. He had the tongue and the ears of the Armenian cut and then said, “Take him away and kill him.”

They came to take our Dr. Grigor Rakhedjian away. I remember, he was lying ill with rheumatism. They came at night and took him away. There, Ibrahim bey’s daughter said to her father, “If not for this doctor, I would have been dead by now.”

The girl’s father, the bey, sent a horseman for the doctor and took him to the governor. The governor said, “Write a prescription for me.” The doctor’s hands began to tremble. The governor said, “He’s a good-for-nothing, take him away and slaughter him.”

That Armenian doctor had a daughter named Mayreni. She was about my age. Ibrahim bey had sent that girl to the fields to plough. Poor girl, she had been brought up so delicately. Could she plough the field? The doctor’s wife had gone and asked Ibrahim bey to free her daughter from this slavery. Ibrahim bey ordered his servant to bring the girl back. The servant made the girl’s mother sit on a donkey and the girl on a horse. On the way, he killed the mother with a rifle and raped the girl. The doctor’s daughter went mad. That villain servant’s name was Simsar. Later we took the doctor’s daughter to our house and kept her. My uncle found an Armenian coachman and said, “Take this girl to Kayseri to her remote relative’s house.”

When my father was a Turkish soldier, one night, my iritskin grandma dreamt a vision that my father had brought home many skulls, bones, and filled them in the recess. My grandma had said, “Gaspar, my son, why did you bring them and dump them here?” My father had answered, “One day a museum will be built, and all these will be put there for the world to see.”

In 1918, the Genocide had already stopped. There was a truce. Turkish immigrants had come and occupied the Armenians’ houses. The Russians occupied a lot of Turkish territory. One day, some Turkish women came, knocked at our door, and asked for some water. Mother said to me, “Veronika, bring water.”

One of those women in yashmak approached my mother and said, “Mother, you’re Armenian. For the sake of the Armenians, free me from their hands. My name is Annik. They kidnapped me.”

My mother said, "You go today. I'll speak to my son-in-law; let's see what we can do."

In the evening, the son-in-law came home. Mother told him. He said, "Let's send a child; let him bring Annik here."

We sent the ten-year-old Hakobik. He went and brought back Annik. The Turks noticed that Annik was missing. They came to our house and said, "Give us our daughter."

My grandma shouted for help. A gendarme was passing by; he came in. My grandma said, "These Turks have come and want a girl. We have no idea who."

The gendarme took these women out of the house and Annik remained with us. She was freed. Then we gave Annik to an orphanage. From there they had taken the orphans to Beirut. In a word, Annik remained an Armenian.

I remember, it was the third day of the massacres when my mother, covered with a Turkish yashmak, took with my four-year-old sister and went to her mother's house. While mother and sister had been talking together, they had seen carts full of deportees being brought, people shouting and wailing. Mother had said that she did not want to live there any more. A gendarme had told her, "Go to your house by the side of the market." Mother was so confused that she lost my four-year-old sister.

Somehow, mother arrived home. And then, we saw my little sister came all alone and found our house. We were glad that we found each other, but my mother said that they had taken away my grandma by cart.

I ran out faltering and got to my grandma's house. I saw the doors were open, the house was empty. My grandma Mariam had fallen amongst the corpses. The gendarmes had butchered them all.

There was a Sardalay Anna. She had crawled beneath the corpses, had held her breath, and remained there. When the gendarmes had gone away, Anna, creeping slowly, had reached our village. But she was wounded, swollen and naked. They had not left even a handkerchief to cover her parts. The Turkish boys in the village had seen her and run away out of fear saying, "Oh! A devil is coming."

Anna had gone to her home. She had seen that the door of the house was open. She had given up her only fourteen-year-old son to the Turkish neighbor. She went round to this Turkish neighbor. The Turk slaughtered a sheep, skinned it, and wrapped Anna with it. Her wounds healed. But she had lost one eye. She said that they had slaughtered my grandma on the road to exile.

During the Genocide, there was a rich man in our village: Gevorg agha Arab Oghli. During the deportation, Arab Oghli Gevorg had said, "I'll give you what you want, only save my family." Gevorg agha had given the Turks many gold coins, but they seized him and imprisoned him. And his whole family was deported and

taken for slaughter. There, Gevorg agha's four-year-old grandson recognized one of the gendarmes who was his father's acquaintance. He went and clung to his feet. The Turk gendarme took pity on the child and took him to his house. The news reached the governor that a gendarme had taken a four-year-old child to his house. At night, they came, took away the child, and butchered him at the same spot where his family had been butchered. The gold that poor Gevorg agha had given the Turks was all in vain.

Before the massacre of the women started, a family from Ighdely Village escaped and came to our village. When they arrested our men, they had taken away their men as well and killed them. The woman agreed with the gendarme: if he saved her and her four children, she would marry him. The massacre had continued. The woman, in despair, had drunk poison and had died. A truce was announced in the morning. Her four children came to rescue their mother. They made her drink a mixture of fifteen egg-yolks but it did not effect. The Turkish gendarme saw that the woman, Loussaber, had died, he began to plunder her house. Rouleaux of velvet cloth, different valuables; he gathered them all and went away.

It is right that many people were officially converted to Turks: they changed their names. They were taken to the government house: "You're denying your filthy religion and accepting our religion, is this so?" And the Armenians said, "Yes," signed and were sent home. There was nothing written, no documents.

Many Armenian women were compelled to become the Turks' wives but then many of them came back. The governor bey took an Armenian wife. He had a son by her. That Armenian woman's brother sent her an invitation from America. The wife left her husband and son and went to America.

In 1924, after the Armistice, when Kemal Ataturk came to power, the Armenians protested saying: "The Turks caused us much harm; they butchered our relatives." A court action was brought against many high-ranking Turkish officials, and they were punished.

An Armenian girl was hidden in a Turkish house. That Turkish husband and wife kept the Armenian girl in order to marry her to their son, but the girl fell in love with my uncle Khacher. One day, she sent word saying that she wanted to marry Khacher. The Armenians gave a telegram as though that girl's uncle was calling her from a distant country. The girl fled from the house and came to our house. The Turk, who had been keeping the girl, said, "I took care of her: how can she betray us?" Their son graduated from the military college and came to our house. He begged and pleaded. My uncle thought that if matters took a bad turn, they would kidnap the girl again. He said to the cab-driver Yeprem, "At night feed your horses well and take our bride to Kayseri."

We covered her head with a yashmak and sent her to Kayseri. But the Turkish officer sent news to the government there to search his Armenian fiancée. There was a Turkish captain's wife who was Armenian. She went and asked the officer's family to forget about the girl as she had already married an Armenian; she was pregnant and was soon to give birth to her child.

In this way, the Turks became our enemies. That Turk came and said, "In two hours you must leave your house."

We had to leave our house. We went to another Turk's house with whom we were on good terms. They took us in and fed us.

In 1924, we moved to Constantinople. We remained at an emigrant's house for a year. A ship came from Russia and took us, seven people, to Batoumi. There was not a single male among us. We came to Batoumi where poverty reigned. My uncle came to meet us. We took the train, which used black oil. We were taken off the train at the Davalou station and lived in tents; they distributed bread to us. My uncle took us to Nakhidjevan, to our father. We just lived together for a year and a half when my father died. Then we came to Yerevan. There was a boy, born in Sivrihissar, Alexan Mkrtchian, who had

come from Greece; all his relatives had been slaughtered on the road to exile; only he and his sister had survived. They went to cut grass. There, the Turks had killed an Armenian boy by disemboweling him. This girl had lost her speech out of shock. Then a boy had taken them to his house. They had given him the money they had, but a few days later, he had evicted them. That girl was given work by a butcher: she carried water for a while, and then fell ill. An order came for Armenians to return; they all regrouped, but the girl eventually fell ill with cholera and died. The brother buried his angelic sister. He heard that his aunt lived in Eskishehir, and as her husband was a carpenter, they had not been deported. He went to them. He learnt the trade. I pay homage to their memory. They had gone from Constantinople to Greece in 1924, and from there to Armenia.

In 1927, Alexan had already built a small house in Yerevan. He was an orphan; he was a good boy. We got married; we were happy; we were happy that we were freed from the claws of the Turk. But this Sumgayit\* was exactly what we had seen during the Genocide. The Turk has remained the same. Our lives have been sad. There is already sorrow in our hearts...

## 178 (178).

### **HOVAKIM TIGRAN KARAKEDJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Yozghat, Boghazlian Borough, Ighdeli Village)**

Our village, Ighdeli, was founded around 1650 by Armenians. Our extended family had been forcibly driven from the borough of Divrik, near Sebastia, to the Alagyoz Village, near Kayseri. There were a lot of mosquitoes there. We continued our way till Boghazlian. There we started to engage in farming. We built 7 or 8 fountains in our village to provide the population with water. The village was surrounded by four hills: Garayaz, Geché, Chanderdeli and Kefenjik. In the village of Ighdeli, my ancestors were engaged for the first time in vine-growing. They had built a church and a school. Our village shoemaker was Hadji Harutyun, and tailor Mihran's son later became the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Archbishop Shnork Galoustian.

We lived peacefully with the Turks till 1914. But when the government started to collect the arms from the Armenians, everything changed. Those who did not hand over their arms were beaten and tortured. They found a rusty revolver and four shotguns in Khachatour Kokedjian's house and they beat him so much that he died.

One day, when we were coming home, my grandfather, my grandmother and I, from the neighboring village called Yonjalek, we met Hadji Avetis, who told

us that an Armenian from the village of Menteshé had confided to him that all the males of their village had been killed and that only he had remained alive under the corpses. Many did not believe the alarming news, but the same thing happened in our village. The Turkish soldiers came and gathered all the males and took them away. Those, who got tired on the way, could not walk and fell down received a heavy blow on their head with the rifle-butt and were killed on the spot. Then they made them sit on the ground, collected the money remaining in their pockets and shot them. The Turk peasants watching the scene from afar approached then the dead bodies and plundered their clothes and shoes. One of these martyrs was the shoemaker Hadji Harutyun Kokedjian. His wife found her husband's corpse in the brook. The Turk gendarme wanted to marry his widow, Pirouz, but did not want his two daughters. The gendarme deceived them saying: "I'll take you home." On the way he killed all three of them. On these days, the Turks killed also the priests of our church, Father Vahan, Father Yezekel, Father Hakop, as well as Manouk efendi and Samvel agha. Mikayel agha and Galoust efendi ran away. On the way, deaf Khalil's son, shepherd Rfat, saw them; he immediately reported the soldiers, who shot the fugitives

\* Sumgayit – city in Azerbaijan, where the Azeri Turks massacred the Armenian ethnic minority in February 1988.

on the spot.

The tortures continued in our village. They killed Abisoghom Galoustian, who had hid himself in the ears of wheat. I saw that with my eyes.

Then they gathered all the women and girls; they took them away and raped them. Those who did not submit were taken to the Turkish cemetery and were shot.

Patriarch Shnork's mother, Gyulkeze, was abducted by the Turks, and she bore two children. She abandoned, later, her Turkish children and came to live at his son's, Shnork Galoustian's place and was buried at the Armenian cemetery, after her death.

One day, when an old woman, called Grandma Marinos, was on her way home, a Turkish soldier took aim at her nape and killed her on the spot. They murdered also my paternal uncle Arakel and my maternal uncle Abraham Pilipossian, who had come home, on leave, with four other youths serving in the Turkish army. They shot these six young men in front of our eyes. I will never forget that moment till the end of my life. We heard later that there were in their documents secret instructions to the local police to kill them as soon as they reached the village, near Tashle Tarla.

The government ordered us to move to the village of Yenigheshla. Meanwhile, they circumcised all the boys above the age of eight, thus making us Moslems. Before our wounds were healed, they made us sit in carts; they took us near the brook where the shot corpses of our villagers lay and told us: "See, you will suffer the same fate." They took us then and packed us in stables.

Then we came back once more to our village. One day a soldier insulted my mother for letting us return to our village: he beat her brutally and drove us out of the village. We went to my uncle Zatik's place in the neighboring village. In despair, my mother drank poison

there to put an end to her life, but they saved her life with yoghurt, which a kind Turk named Hanefi had provided.

One day, in 1920, some adults and children had gone by cart to Ankara to sell their wheat. On their way back, the Turks attacked them; they killed the adults, robbed their money and sold the children at the Ankara market as servants.

At that time, Turkey was in a very bad situation, famine prevailed. Mother, grandmother, sister and I had come to the village of Chander. We had nothing, no clothes and no food. The fields were fertile, but the crop had already been gathered. We went to the field to gather the last grains of wheat. My mother and grandmother worked sometimes in houses as housemaids. I worked at Halil agha's place as a shepherd.

My paternal aunt Ester had searched and found her first Armenian husband, Grigor, in Aleppo, and she fled from her Turk husband and went to Aleppo to join Grigor.

After these deplorable events and massacres only 40 Armenian houses had remained out of the 250 houses in our beautiful village. The houses, lands, cattle and jewels of the massacred Armenians were left to the Turks. Subsequently, by the governmental decree issued in 1923, our houses and belongings were confiscated and given to the Turks immigrated from abroad. We were compelled to move to Kayseri. My paternal uncle Abraham's family also moved with us to Kayseri. There I studied at the religious school of the monastery. I had as a classmate Shnork from the Galoustian family, whose father had been martyred and who later became the Patriarch of Constantinople.

All that I have related is about the massacre of only one village, but how many villages have suffered the same fate. It is a great sorrow for me that the Turkish government does not admit its sin, the Armenian Genocide.

### 179 (179).

#### ANOUSH TOPALIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Yozghat, Eylendjé Village)

They took all the men in groups, packed them in the Armenian Church, butchered them, killed them, and threw them into the water.

We are from Eylendjé Village of Yozghat.

I was five years old. I was beside my mother, I remember.

We remained in our old house because my father had gone to serve in the Turkish army.

### 180 (180).

#### HERMINÉ TER VOGHORMIAJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1912, Yozghat)

All my family was butchered with knives. My mother-in-law cried every day; they had slaughtered her sons with knives. My mother-in-law was from Kayseri.

She married and came to Yozghat. A Turk had said to her, "Give us this one and a half-year-old boy."

"I can't give him up," my mother-in-law said, and

she had not given him away. She used to tremble over her only son. She would often say, “Göreceim gün senden dir” (If I see the daylight, it will be thanks to you – Turk.). My mother-in-law was a very clean woman. We used to clean the house every Friday. We had a Hadji Mayrik. One day she said, “Herminé, don’t conceal it, you’re pregnant.”

One night, St. Astvadsadsin came to me in my dream and said, “Herminé, God will grant you a son by the intercession of St. Hakob and Christ.” I also saw that three stars shone. That meant that the birth would be difficult, but it would be successful. My martyred father had no grave. I would have a son who would bear his name. I took a vow and said, “Oh, St. Astvadsadsin, Christ, and St. Hakob, for the sake of my victims: my father, my uncle, my mother’s brother, God will give me a son, Hakob.”

St. Astvadsadsin said, “If God does not fulfill your vow, whose vow will He accept then?” I told my mother about my dream.

On Christmas day, painfully, but with the help of St. Astvadsadsin, I delivered. The doctor came and said, “He’ll be a very talented boy.”

My Hakob grew up and became a choirboy in the church.

I remember my childhood. I was four to five years old when they took away all the males in our family, they took them to Keskin Madeni near Ankara. They intended to kill my father in order to own my mother, Tirouhi. My mother was the priest’s daughter-in-law. Our priest had been a very great believer. It was said that during the Holy Mass his feet would rise in the air. He, Grigor Ter-Grigorian was buried in the garden of the church of Keskin Madeni. After his death, a light shone on his tomb for three days.

The priest’s daughter-in-law was very pretty and very rich. On her head and arms, she wore much gold and silver. A corporal came to our village and said to my mother, “Papazin gelini (You, the priest’s daughter-in-law – Turk.), you are too pretty; come with me and I’ll save you.”

Mother refused saying, “I want neither your gold nor you.”

That corporal sent eleven thieves to steal our property. They butchered my brother’s three sons on his knees. Then they found the silver and the gold and took them away. With what torture and the shedding of bitter tears did we go into town! Mother went on foot with my forty-day-old sister in her arms. We remained in a village called Saghchale for one year. My grandmother, the iritskin, prayed. We were freed from that place. We left and returned home. My mother used to cry all the time. She told me what she had seen, then cried and cried. I was young, but I was anxious about my mother’s health. I thought, “What could I do?” Then a feeling came to me. I said, “As there is God, I must pray so that mother won’t cry; let God protect her.” At that time, in the place where we lived, a kindergarten school had opened. My teacher was a pretty girl whose name was Gyulli. She said, “I’ll teach you a prayer but I have no book. During the Genocide, my mother burnt them all.” All of us were orphans in the school; there was no book, but my teacher said, “May I confess in faith and worship God.” I learnt that by heart. A room full of orphans! One day, I came from school in a good mood, for we had learned a prayer. We were orphans; there was not any money, there was no father, there were not any relatives. I said, “I’ve learned a prayer.”

My mother had found some bulghur and had cooked pilaf in a pan. My sister and brother were young; my mother was twenty-two years old. I said, “This food can’t be eaten without prayer.”

My sister and brother did not utter a word. They did not say, “We’re hungry.” I turned my face to the wall. Mother had spread a rug on the floor; I knelt and began praying, “May I confess in faith.” Then we ate the pilaf. I prayed, “Glory to God in the highest. Lord have mercy on us.” I begged St. Astvadsadsin for help: for there was no bread, there was no father, there was no brother. Now I forget everything but I do remember my childhood prayers. God helped us, but all of them died; they died young.

I say to others, “You continue to mourn the 24th of April, but they mourned all three hundred and sixty-five days. They died for you. Why don’t you speak Armenian? Why aren’t you close to your Church?”

## 181 (181).

### PAYDSAR YERKAT’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1887, Kayseri)

I was born in 1887 in Chomakhlu, a village near Kayseri. My mother was married at the age of fourteen; she gave birth to two babies but they died. So my parents fussed over me. My mother hung talismans and amulets on my neck so that I would not die. That was why when my father Hakob Galfa emigrated on a twenty-five day

journey on foot and horseback, they took me, then a nine-month-old, with them as well.

The massacre of the Armenians of Constantinople in 1896 was horrific. They slaughtered all the Armenians from top to down. There was a hill within the national cemetery; it consisted of corpses of the slaughtered. The

dead and the murdered were thrown there. We had a relative, who emerged from under the dead. He came and told us about it. What hell haven't I seen with these eyes! What nightmare tales haven't I heard with these ears!

I was married in 1907, and went to Adabazar. There, a girl came to see me and said that she would take me to the Krtasirats (Educational – Arm.) Union. I dressed well and went. I was elected chairman as Mrs. Zabel Karagian had already been elected president. There, they asked me to write sketches and stage them.

During the World War, my brother was drafted into the Turkish army, and my twenty-four-year old doctor brother fell ill with typhoid and died. The world was ruined for me. I lost my brother and I lost my mind.

My father had a faithful Turkish worker. He came and said: "Gidejksiniz" (You have to go – Turk.).

One morning in 1914, I was woken up from a deep sleep by the ringing of the twin bells. I was surprised to hear them. From the window of my room could be seen the alley to the local church, St. Karapet. I saw the men hurrying to the church silently and thoughtfully. The church was filled up, the doors closed. The private meeting lasted until midnight. No one was allowed to come out. The women took food to the prisoners in the church, moaning and crying. Though they were called to a meeting, the attendees only came out after three days. It was the order of Chété Ibrahim. The Armenian men came out from there covered in blood, with beaten mouths and noses, wounded, with extracted toe nails, some of them half dead, others on stretchers, breathless. The whole town was horrified and in terror. The order was given to hand in weapons to the government within eight days. The bomb-maker was Khoren Yeremian. Woe to him, who had a weapon! The carts moved along filled with the weapons. The market was closed down.

My husband was also called to the church. Chété Ibrahim, sitting before the altar, asked if we had a weapon. We had buried our weapon under ground. I had slowly dug it out of the ground, placed it in the box and it was taken away. I also went to Chété Ibrahim together with my mother. He struck mother with a cane. I spread myself on mother so the blow would fall on me. We came home. The deportation had already started. They started deporting the Armenians from the Anatolia villages. We hoped they would not reach us.

In August 1915, we left everything: our houses and orchards and were driven to the arid deserts. The horsemen drove the poor, homeless Armenians with whips.

Adabazar was emptied in eight days. The Turkish mob came down from the villages and began to plunder; they took away the property of the Armenians. They grabbed everything from each other: food, clothes, ornaments, pots and pans, benches, floors, ceilings. They snatched what they saw from each other's hands. A Turk

lived opposite our house. One day he came to us and said: "You'll stay; you won't be deported as you have a serving soldier who died in the Turkish army. I have a friend: let him come and help you."

"Alright," we said.

Suddenly we saw that the same Turk and another had raped an Armenian girl outside. There was noise and clamor. I poked my head out of the door. The Turk saw me, was ashamed and said: "Come to my house, I'll rescue you." But his eyes were wild. I was scared. I didn't go: my husband wasn't there.

During eight days, we prepared to move. The carriage that would take us over-turned, mother was trapped underneath and broke her arm. With her arm in pain, rain falling, we reached Arifié. Those who had gone before us had already settled down; we remained outside in the rain. I pleaded: "At least take in my mother: her arm is broken." It was in vain.

Then we were taken to Eskishehir where many Armenians had gathered with different national costumes and various dialects. They took us from Eskishehir to Konia. We handed our baggage over. There we met Soukiassian's son who was an official on the railroad. He knew me from Adabazar. He used to come to our meetings. That boy said to us: "Take your baggage back."

A woman also came there and said: "The soldiers' families will remain, they won't be exiled."

I asked my mother: "Mother, get up, go, and plead." She was lying on her face in pain. She said: "I don't want: all of them are dogs. Whom shall I ask?"

I was clever enough to throw our luggage down the wagon. Mother went and asked Djemal bey. He said: "I rank your son who has fallen on the battle-field higher than a living soldier. Go and take a room near the gendarmes' headquarters so that they won't torment you as your son has served in the Turkish army."

We rented a room there. I remember that house well. The ceiling was low, but the square could be seen from the window. Sitting at the window, I watched how they brought the Armenian intellectuals: Zohrap, Varouzhan, Siamanto, and others, from Constantinople to Eskishehir. They would be taken to Der-Zor.

All of them were in white collars and ties but their clothes were just rags. Every night, we could hear their screams for they were beaten mercilessly. I did not go to Der-Zor but I saw everything. I saw it all, those who came and passed through Eskishehir, and those who were brought from Constantinople: exhausted, barefoot, with bleeding feet, in ragged clothes. After a few days, they were driven, taken away...

The following day mother brought grapes from the market and took to them to eat. There was a khan near our house. All the refugees, who came, filled this place up. It was a small place with a low ceiling, full of flies. They had filled it with the children who cried behind the

iron bars, tortured and tormented, pale, naked and hungry children with stretched hands for a piece of bread... I cannot forget that khan up to this day. My poor darlings; how could a human being deal with you in that way! After two days, they drove them away. Where? God knows. Those little ones were driven and taken away like lambs. Later, elderly ones were brought, eighteen-twenty-year old Armenian boys were brought; new refugees, new caravans. They kept them as prisoners for four days, no bread, and no water. They had no right to come out. A boy tried somehow to come out to drink water. The guard officer caught him and began shouting at him: "Infidel, why are you here?" And they began whipping him. The boy, hungry, thirsty, yelled with pain: there was no one to help...

One day, they brought a group of thirsty people from Constantinople led by two gendarmes. They were deformed: any minute they could fall down. They wanted to say something to the passers-by but the whips prevented them. Among them was our Armenian composer Komitas...

In front of the khan, there were women and children exiled from Ankara, and there, where the horses were tied, piled with the excretion of the horses, people crouched: one was sobbing, the other was wailing... Those were the people we met... Those were the hopeless people who had walked for three days. They were begging for a bit of bread and water with their glances; they were wobbling in painful motions in the Khodjabeyekh khan. In the morning my mother took them two bags of food for the requiem of her son. It is impossible to describe the lament and wailing of those mothers who had lost their children and the writhing of those people in pain...

After two days, the caravan of these women and children set off. They had killed their husbands and sons in Ankara. There was a time when they cut the tongues of those who spoke Armenian. That was the reason why the Armenians of Kyotahia, Bursa, Adana, Kayseri, Eskişehir spoke the cursed language. They would go to Konia, Erayli, Bozanti, until Der-Zor.

*"The caravan of pain goes and goes,  
The Turk derides the Armenians' pain,  
It goes, it goes lamenting silently,  
Nameless pains full of tortures,  
With bleeding feet they pass mountains,  
Hungry and thirsty they descend dark valleys,  
Mountains and dales echo their pains,  
And the victim's sorrowful moaning,  
But all the same – the caravan goes and goes..."*

As our house was near the gendarme headquarters, we saw them all. That was the reason why we changed our house. We rented a house near the bridge. My husband worked at the hospital. His bag hung on his shoulder: he distributed medicine to the sick people in the tents so as

not to be taken to exile.

One day, when I had gone to the Armenian quarter, I saw that everybody was gloomy. The people sat at home and were whispering to each other. It was noticeable that they were scared. Tadevos efendi was no longer an efendi: he had become a coachman and overheard Ibrahim efendi in the carriage saying to his friend, "Tomorrow they'll kill the Armenians; there will be a slaughter."

At midnight we heard pistols firing: pat-pat. With two children in my arms and my brother's violin as a remembrance, I ran out of the house. In fact, there had been a fire; the shops were on fire. The Turks had gone there for plunder.

All of a sudden, I received the news that my husband Armenak had been arrested. They had taken him from the apothecary to the station together with others. I prepared a package: clothes and pastry, and went to the station. I saw they were held behind barbed wire. The gendarmes were watching and they did not allow anyone to approach, smiling coyly I said: "I want to speak with my husband."

The gendarme said: "Don't pay attention to my shouting. When I get to the other side, go up to him and speak. I am also a father, I also have children. My heart bleeds when I see your situation."

So you see, there are good people among the Turks, too. What has being a real man have to do with the nation?

We approached Armenak. He even smiled at the children even though he knew they were taking him for slaughter.

The gendarme came up to me and said: "Go, please, they may be freed."

"Mother, be quick. Go to Djemal bey and ask him, maybe we can save Armenak."

Mother again went to Djemal bey who already knew about the death of my soldier brother.

Djemal bey listened to my mother's explanation that her son-in-law worked at the hospital. He was a chemist, a man useful to the population.

Djemal bey said: "We're sending away everyone but we do need a pharmacist." And he gave her a paper to free him.

Armenak came, but he was infected with typhus. He took to bed. We put cold things around his head; we made him drink plenty of milk; we kept on bathing him. He recovered.

Two years passed. Khoren Yeremian had already been hanged as a bomb maker. Everybody had escaped to different places. The mothers were left in Eskişehir. The Turks had taken away their daughters. Everyone was trying to find his lost beloved ones by asking here and there. Our family was transferred to Constantinople and in 1923 to Egypt on board a cruiser. There I carried out social activities

on a large scale staging several plays and publishing my own poetry. In 1948, we repatriated to Armenia. My son, Mihran Yerkat, became one of the best opera singers. He is a People's Artist of Armenia. My daughter, Marie, became

a needle-worker and sewing teacher. Her exhibitions have been displayed not only in Armenia but in other countries as well. Now I'm one hundred and two years old. Thank God, my memory is sound.

### 182 (182).

#### HARUTYUN TIGRAN TSULIKIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1896, Kayseri)

During the massacres organized by Sultan Hamid in 1896 in the town of Kayseri, my father, Tigran Tsulikian (Zulukian or Zulukhian), who died at a young age, was married to my mother Gyulinia Balamoutian. My mother, newly married, had for six months been pregnant with her first child when the Turks entered their house and before my mother's eyes killed her husband, my father, with an axe. In order to eliminate the clamor and the wailing caused by the horrific act, the Turks dealt a blow with the axe on my mother's nape, which started to bleed. Mother ran away and went up to the attic of the house. From outside, the women neighbors called on her to flee, and she jumped from the attic, joined these female neighbors, and they ran away together to a safe place.

In the absence of medical help, blood flowed from her neck for three days. After three days with the assistance of the neighbor women, medical help was found and the wound stitched up. The scar left by the axe was with her for the rest of her life.

After three months, I was born. Years passed. We lived in Kayseri until 1914 and then, with the help of my mother's brothers, I went to Cairo, Egypt.

In 1915, during the Armenian Genocide, my poor mother was left completely alone and helpless in Kayseri. She was deported and went along the roads of exile,

suffering, and faced all the privations and hardships until she arrived in Cairo and lived with us till her death in 1953.

My wife Angel's father, Andreas Tekeyan, was also killed at the hands of Turks in 1915, when his elder daughter, Satenik, was ten and Angel was eight years old. Angel's mother, that is my mother-in-law, Naringyul Mkhchavagian-Tekeyan, had eleven children, of whom nine died on the roads of exile and only two daughters survived. She took her two daughters and also her brother-in-law's daughter, Mariné, and with great difficulties and torture, four of them passed through the desert of Der-Zor. On the way, they managed to find a donkey, and the three young girls had crouched within the box strapped to the donkey. Naringyul walked beside them, watching them. In this way, they arrived in the town of Hama in Syria, and my mother-in-law supported them by carding and combing wool. Then, Naringyul sent news to her brothers-in-law, Tiran and Byuzand, living in the town of Fayoum in Egypt that they were alive. They were transferred to Egypt with their help.

In 1930, I met Naringyul's younger daughter, Angel, in Cairo, and we got married and had three sons, Tigran, Andranik, and Hakob.

In 1963 all of us came together to Armenia.

### 183 (183).

#### ANNA NADJARIAN'S TESTIMONY\*\* (B. 1900, Kayseri)

I was fifteen years old when they sent us into exile. We walked all the way. We became refugees; we came to Mouhatta. I remember: I was with my father. They threw all the men into the water. Father said: "Don't go with the others; I'll come and take you."

We remained there. A man came and said: "Let me take you away."

We said: "No, our father will come and take us." He took away my sister. We slept in the open air. During the

day, we walked and walked. On the way, our numbers got reduced. Many died, or were killed or remained behind along the way.

In the morning, my mother brought us food. Father did not want to eat as he knew that they would kill him. They came, gathered all the men, took them away and killed many of them. Those were black days. Then they gathered together the money and the jewelry we had. My heart can't stand to tell all this. They killed my father in

\* This testimony was delivered to me by the son of the eyewitness survivor, Tigran Tsulikian, in 1999, who is the English translator of the "Historical Study," "Historical Song-Testimonies" parts and some of the "Historical Memoirs-Testimonies" of this book.

\*\* The survivor had told her testimony in Turkish. I present it in translation.

the morning. At night, they drove us on again. A man emerged from the Euphrates River. We saw this. There was noise, clamor. This man came, kissed his wife and child and, holding his wife, he threw himself into the water so that his wife should not fall into the hands of the Turks. But they killed all three of them in the water. We walked along the Euphrates. We were walking and crying. Mother took me and my brother Grigor to the water-side and said: "We'll throw ourselves into the water."

My mother threw us into the river to drown and to free ourselves from these sufferings, but her heart could not stand this. She began crying and took us out of the water.

There was a bracelet on my arm. An Arab woman came and said to mother: "Give me this bracelet and your daughter."

My mother said: "She is married, her husband is a soldier."

The Arab woman began pulling me by the hand. My mother was pulling from the other side. I lost consciousness. A horseman came towards us. My mother asked some water from the horseman to give to me so that I might regain consciousness. She poured the water on me. I came round. I drank. I continued to walk. We arrived at a place where there was water. We had a pail; we drank water using it.

Night fell. During the day we had walked so much

that we were exhausted; thorns had pricked our feet. Later, we remained for three days in a khan in Yedessia. There I became ill with measles. We had to sell our donkey. We remained without anything. I was ill but mother took me with her. We stayed in Mumboudj for three days. There was no bed, there was no food. There was a market but there was no money. My feet were aching; I was crying with pain. We saw a wheat threshing floor. We remained there for three days. We started to gather wheat grains from the ground and chewed them. This way at least we ate something. Our face and eyes were covered with straw. Our feet were completely exhausted. Mother took us onwards and we reached Aleppo. There was a school there. We remained in that school.

An Arab woman came and wanted to take me. Mother said: "Go, my daughter. I'll stay here with your brother, Grigor."

The Arab woman took me and kept me. I remained there for a year. There already was a truce. My mother and the other refugees came back. Suddenly I saw my brother, Grigor who had come to drink water from the tap near our house. My brother said: "Get up, come with us."

I went and said to my Arab mother: "Can I go to my mother?"

She permitted me. I went with Grigor; I found mother, and we hugged each other. Mother said: "I won't let you stay with them anymore."

## 184 (184).

### ARSEN SVADJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Kayseri)

They took my father into the army. They deported us: women and children, to the villages because our father was a soldier. They took us and stuffed us into a mosque, saying that they would take us to school. But they killed many and circumcised the rest of us: they made us Turks. It so happened that my brother ran away from the army, came, found us, and took us away. But he was killed on the way to Svaz. They hanged twelve people from our family. I don't know how old my brother was but my sister was two years old. I raised her. Then Armenians came and took us away; they were from Shapin-Garahissar. Whoever approached us, we became afraid and would shout: "We are Turks."

Those boys from Shapin-Garahissar helped us to survive. They said: "They are Armenians." They took us to the orphanage of Kayseri and then to Izmir. We were

all four hundred people. Four rich Armenians supported us. One day, General Andranik came to see us. He asked several questions; he saw that dinner was being cooked for four hundred orphans. He took a wooden spoon and said: "Wait a minute, let me taste it." He found out that it was tastier than food at home. He was delighted. He turned and said to us: "Boys, eat well, stand straight, grow up, and liberate Armenia."

In 1922, during the disaster of Izmir, my uncle was killed. They threw the people into the sea. We were at the American College. They took us all to the Corfu Island. There, I learned the trade of shoemaking. Then the cook ("Mother" to our orphanage) adopted me, took me to her house and I married her granddaughter, Meliné. Then we set up house and home in Greece. Then, we uprooted it again, and moved to Armenia.

### 185 (185).

#### BYUZAND LEVON MOROUKIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1904, Kayseri)

My name is Byuzand Levon Moroukian. I was born in 1904, in the town of Kayseri. My father, Levon Moroukian, owned, with his father Hakob, a rug-weaving work-shop. Our family was quite large. I had 4 paternal aunts and 1 paternal uncle. We, my parents, I and my 2 sisters were well-off until our deportation. In August 1915, we left our place and home and arrived to the town of Hama through the grievous roads of exile. We stayed in Hama for several years. I was an adolescent then. When I grew up a little, I started to mend the peasants' shoes and sandals in order to earn my family's living. When armistice was proclaimed, my father went to Izmir and there he opened a shop with another Armenian and invited us also to move to Izmir. We were barely settled when the deportation from Izmir began in 1922 and the great fire broke out. I was eighteen then and I was taken prisoner (I have kept up to the present day the only memento from the period of my captivity, a metallic numbered tag, which was attached to my wrist, as well as the order of my liberation from captivity), and we set out on foot with a large group and moved forward in an unknown direction during 12 days. Elderly men fell exhausted on the road. Those who were not able to proceed were shot on the spot by the Turkish gendarmes. My captivity lasted for 15 months, after which I was set free. During that period, my father had fallen ill and had died; my mother and my two sisters had succeeded in taking a boat and

in getting on a ship, which had taken them to Greece. During my captivity I had kept in mind the address of my uncle who lived in the United States. I wrote him and informed him about my being alive. My mother, too, after losing me and reaching Greece, had written to my uncle. In this way, I could make contact with my mother and sisters and I went to Greece to join them. In the course of this tragic period, 12 men from our large family had perished and only 2 had been saved, my paternal aunt's husband and me.

From Greece we went to Egypt, to Alexandria, where I worked as a tradesman in textile goods and I married Marie Mkrtichian, a girl also exiled from Kayseri and miraculously rescued from the hands of the Turkish slaughterers. My wife's father had been killed by the Turks, and her mother had a hairbreadth escape with her 4 children and had arrived to Egypt after similar sufferings. We lived in Alexandria till 1962. My only dream was to return to my homeland. In 1947 my sister Arshakouhi had been repatriated with her family to Armenia. At that time, I could not be repatriated since the number of admitted people was limited. I became very sad then, but I did not lose hope and I waited with faith that one day I, too, would be able to see the Motherland and live there. This happy day came in October 1962, and I, with my wife, daughter, Sona, mother and mother-in-law came to Armenia. And now we live in the town of Kirovakan (later: Vanadzor).

### 186 (186).

#### GRIGOR ARMENIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Kayseri, Talas)

My father was a very intelligent person and an eloquent speaker. He knew four languages, English, French, Greek, and Turkish. He had studied at the Talas Protestant School. When I was asked what riches my father had left me, I said: "Intellectual riches, that is – my mind."

I was born in Talas, and we had moved to Selevkia. Some of the Turkish notables of our town were kind people. When a telegram came from the Turkish government announcing that the Armenians should be exiled, the local authorities did not agree with it. In answer they sent a telegram saying that the Armenians were craftsmen, they were hard-working people and

that they needed them. At first, they did not touch the Armenians. Then the local governor was changed, and a new one was appointed; the old one had said to the new one, "I ask you not to exile the Armenians; they are good people." But the new governor, who was a Circassian, had not been on good terms with the Armenians. He gave an order, "You must obey us or you must leave." Our family fled to a Greek village in the mountains of Cyprus. We returned to Selevkia in 1918.

My mother's sister was in Damascus; her sons were working in road-building. We had many difficulties in Cyprus. We went to Lebanon – Beirut, by ship. We found our father on board the ship. They did not permit my

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1972, has been delivered to me by his daughter, Sona Tsulikian, in 2001, who is the wife of Tigran Tsulikian, the English translator of the "Historical Study," "Historical Song-Testimonies" parts and some of the "Historical Memoir-Testimonies" of this book.

father to land. A Greek boy met me and said: "My uncle is here; his name is Socrat." My mother went to Socrat and requested that they permitted my father to disembark. We stayed in Beirut and then went to Damascus. In those days the roads were very bad. Where would we find our aunt? We went to the Armenian Church. They saw that we were emigrants. There was a nurse, Shoushanik, who helped us to find our aunt and her family. My father did not know Arabic; he could not find a job. They suggested to my father that I should work as a shoe-polisher. But we had no money to buy a box to polish the shoe. Someone gave us four mejits. I bought a box and began polishing shoes. I worked as a shoe-polisher for one year. Then I learned the tailor's craft. I was apprenticed to a master. Later I opened my own shop. I learned the secrets of a tailor's cutter and had a lot of success. I grew rich after two years in Damascus. I got married. I had two sons, both of them learned in the Beirut Hamazgayin Nshan Palandjian College. Then my elder son, Karo, received

a scholarship from the Galoust Gyulbenkian Fund; he studied in the daytime and worked at night. My son, Karo, lives now in Washington, he is the Chairman of the Electronic Society and also a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party Bureau; he is a devoted defender of the Armenian Cause.

My younger son, Harutyun, has a doctor's degree. He works six months in Baltimore and six months in Yerevan. He is the Head of the American University of Armenia in Yerevan.

Life has enriched me with good children, good daughter-in-law, good grandchildren. That is also a good fortune, which God granted me. But one must use the good fortune correctly. As the great Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill has said: "Good fortune has enriched me."

Thus, one should be fortunate to have good children. And indeed, I am a lucky father. Now, people are very considerate and attentive toward me here at the "Ararat" old-age nursing home. I am very content with my life.

187 (187).

**KHOREN HOVHANNES GLEDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Kayseri, Everek)**

*Childhood dominates over man till a venerable old age.*

The town of Everek-Fenessé is in the Develu Province of Turkey, at the foot of the Mount Argeos, at an altitude of 2,000 feet above sea level, on the south-eastern side of Kayseri, right on the border of Cilicia.

Everek was founded in the 13th-14th centuries. There are ancient fortresses and ruins remaining from the Byzantine period. The Armenian population of Everek numbered 200 families, all of them Armenian-speaking.

The First World War broke out on the 2nd of August, 1914. Turkey, on Germany's side, fought against the Allies: England, France, Italy and Japan. With that war, Turkey realized its plan, namely, to banish all the Armenians living on its territory, to drive them to the scorching deserts of Syria and to exterminate them. That plan had been premeditated for a long time.

In 1915, a notice was posted in the market-place of Everek, according to which the Armenians had to leave the town within three days.

The exile of the Armenians of Everek started on August 19, 1915. I was then in the first year of the kindergarten. My father passed away. The gendarmes came and ordered us to come out of our house and to seal the outer door with sealing-wax. We went and joined our compatriots. Those families, who had a soldier serving in the army, were not exiled. Some of the party-men were sent to the gallows.

We set out on foot; we reached Kerek-khan, then

Bozanti and the Tarson plain, where thousands of Armenian exiles were gathered. The Turk gendarmes became more and more cruel.

We, my elder brother, Levon, mother, my elder sister, my younger sister, Makrouhi and I were tramping over the road of Golgotha, exhausted, under the whip lashes of the gendarmes. We reached Gâvur Dag; we passed through interminable and impassable roads and after a few days we reached Katma, where hundred of thousands of deportees were gathered from all directions. There my elder brother, Levon, was taken ill and died. They drove us to Bab, Boum-Boush or Meskené. Others were driven to Ras-ul-Ayn, while we, the Everek people, were driven toward Rakka and Der-Zor. Exhausted, worn out, hungry and thirsty, we walked for weeks on end and reached the bank of the Euphrates River, which was bloody. The tents of the desert-Arabs were seen in the distance. Their sheikh saw our condition from afar and ordered his servants to prepare a hot meal for us in a large cauldron. He was a very pious, noble and kind man. He had on his head the traditional white head-dress.

An order came that we should set off at night and cross the Euphrates, which was deep and wide. We entered the river with our clothes. The sheikh's servant took me in his arms and crossed the river. All of a sudden, evil Bedouin brigands appeared and abducted my sister, Makrouhi. She probably became a desert Bedouin.

We reached Rakka on the bank of the Euphrates. They did not let us enter the town. Our Everek notables collected some money and took it to the Arab governor of Rakka, requesting him to let us enter the town, and he permitted us to do so. Those who had given money entered the town. We, too, rented a room, while those who had no money were driven to Der-Zor. The Turkish government ordered the governor of the town to expel all the Armenians from the town, but he refused saying that the latter were his citizens. And thus we survived thanks to that kind man.

We stayed in Rakka for 18 months, then I and my mother went to Aleppo with the other survivors. We went on foot, weary and exhausted, and reached the village of Abou-Arar, then Hama.

The kind Arabs helped us; they often gave us food, saying, “Ya haram!” (What a pity! – Arab.). Thus we reached Meskené and ultimately Aleppo. We all appealed to the Armenian Church, which admitted us temporarily and gave us every day a piece of bread and a plate of soup.

My mother started to work in a spinning-mill in Aleppo, while I remained in the Armenian Apostolic Church. But after a few days a Turk gendarme came, gathered all the orphans and me, too, and took us by train to Constantinople, to a military school called Harbié. There they changed my name into Ali-Oghlu Islam. There were more than 2,000 Armenian orphans who were going to be Turkified.

One day in 1917 Talaat pasha and Enver pasha came to visit our orphanage. We, the orphans, stood in row waiting for their arrival.

Our orphanage was then transferred to the Buyuk Ada (Large Island – Turk.). Though we were being gradually Turkified by learning to write and read, by singing and speaking Turkish, nevertheless the feeling of being genuine Armenians continued to persist in our juvenile soul.

They circumcised us.

The First World War, which had started in 1914, ended on November 11, 1918, by the victory of the Allied countries, England, France, Italy and Japan, while Germany and its ally, Turkey, were defeated. England and its allies entered Constantinople with their fleets. By a special edict, the British government reclaimed from the Turkish government all the Turkified Armenian orphans found in the Turkish orphanages. In those days, the Armenian Catholic Archimandrite Hovhannes Nalbandian presented himself at our Turkish orphanage having in hand the edict of the British government. A great number of Armenian orphans approached the Armenian clergyman, looking at each other in surprise. The

very little ones remained at the Turkish orphanage and got lost. We went to the director’s office and were registered with our old Armenian names.

The Very Reverend Father Nalbandian took us to a confectioner’s shop and said: “Eat and drink to your heart’s content, because today is a happy historic day. Be happy, be proud and love our nation.” We were indeed very happy.

Father Nalbandian put us ashore and led us to the Catholic Armenian Sisters’ School of Immaculate Conception in the Beyoghlu Sakiz Aghach district in Constantinople, and we were entrusted to the care of those kind-hearted sisters.

On Sunday November 24, 1918, we, the rescued Armenian orphans, entered the church for the first time and devotedly prayed to God with Christian faith and piety. We all received the Holy Communion. I was barely eight years old then. They gave us new clothes and shoes and burnt our old clothes. We had a hot bath every week, Armenian food and lessons in Armenian...

Families who had no children came to adopt one of the orphans. But I did not want to go since I remembered that I had a mother.

Then we were transferred to the orphanage of Mrs. Hakobian in the village of Arnavoud, near Constantinople, which was under the surveillance of the Patriarchate. We had excellent teachers, caring “mothers” and a cook. They gave us again new clothes, shoes, socks and a hat decorated with a red, blue and orange pompon, which reminded us that we were Armenians.

There I was tempered with the Armenian spirit; we learned Armenian songs, our faces began to color, we frequented already the Armenian Gregorian Church and recited the Lord’s Prayer.

Then part of our orphans was transferred to the American orphanage. In those years, Constantinople was a world of orphans. A branch of the American orphanage in the Near East was found in Izmit, where about three thousand Armenian orphans lived. The vast field of the Derinjé Village, near Izmit, was covered with rows of tents for orphans. We had a dining-hall, a hall, where films were shown by means of an electric generator. In the middle of the field the American and Armenian flags fluttered on two iron poles. The responsables of the orphanage were two Americans, whom we called “papa.” Later we were transferred to the American orphanage in Partizak. There I got infected with leper. When I was healed I was transferred with some other orphans to Constantinople, to the British orphanage of the Lord Meyers Fund, which was a benevolent relief union. It was known as the Kennedy orphanage. In 1922, the orphanage moved to Corfu, Greece, by the Italian ship “Grasse.”

188 (188).

**LOUSABER DEMIRJIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1913, Kayseri)**

I don't remember my real name. "Lousaber" (Light-bringer – Arm.) was given later to me. I don't remember my parents.

In 1915, during the exile my mother died. A Turk took me in and kept me. Later, when the Armenian orphans were gathered, they found me and took me to the American orphanage. Then our orphanage was transferred to Beirut. I remained in Miss Davis's orphanage. That orphanage was dispersed as well. At that time someone came and took me to his house. I remained

there for ten years and brought up his son. I did not know what money was. Then I went and worked for the nuns in their orphanage. During the Second World War, that orphanage was also closed. I married and had a son. My husband died in an accident. My son studied at the Frères School. He became a TV repairer. He also married. He has three children. I am old now. It's already nine years I live in the "Ararat" Home. Thanks to the help of the Lord and the care of the nurses I live here, remembering the old days.

189 (189).

**KARAPET TIGRAN KELEKIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1904, Everek)**

One day in 1915, the town crier came to say that we had twenty-four hours to get ready for departure. We thought it would be for two or three months. We left Everek together with about one hundred families. Our family consisted of my father Tigran, mother Tagouhi, my brothers: Grigor, Sedrak, Karapet, Harutyun and Andranik. We had four donkeys for transport. The day after our departure, women were kidnapped and we were robbed by Turks and Kurdish peasants with the help of the gendarmes who pretended to protect us. Walking daily eight hours, in two months we reached Katma, which is near Aleppo.

From Everek to Nidé it was 101 km, Ereyli – 99 km, Ouloukeshla – 44 km, Bozanti – 43 km, Garahissar – 40 km, Adana – 42 km, Seyhan – 48 km, Toprakkalé – 33 km, Osmanié – 10 km, Deurtyol – 37 km, Kerek-khan – 65 km, Mouslimia – 100 km, Katma – 15 km. The length of our route was 677 km. But it was planned so that we shouldn't use built roads, so the route must have been at least 800 km long.

In order to protect the women from being kidnapped and mass plunder, the older men generally guarded us by nights. To make sure that we were not asleep, we used to call each other – "Karakol," which means "Gendarme" (Turk.), and the other responded – "Hazır ol," meaning "Be ready" (Turk.).

In Katma, there was a sea of white sheet tents. The people bought and sold, or bartered and managed to find a sort of living. The most difficult problem was to find drinking water. There was no hope of getting washed. There was a water-well at a distance of one hour walking where one had to stand in a line for three or four hours. Now and then, the authorities decided which families would go from the camp either to Der-Zor or

to Damascus. Those who took the road to Damascus had a better chance to survive. We were ordered to go to Der-Zor. It was 330 km from Aleppo to Der-Zor. The massacres started there. The Turkish gendarmes, who according to regulations should have been protecting us, asked for money from us every night. They allowed the Bedouins to rape or kidnap our women. Those who resisted were beheaded. There was no end to robbing and killing. When we set off, we were six or seven hundred people. Every morning, we left the dead and dying behind. The Turkish gendarmes wouldn't let us look after the wounded or bury the dead.

It is 95 km from Aleppo to Meskené. There, we were settled in a khan and suddenly we saw Armenians come running. They had no clothes on; they were almost naked. They made signs not to continue our way as a short distance away large-scale slaughters were taking place. The gendarme asked for new forces to take us to Rakka. From Meskené to Rakka it's 95 km. Many had committed suicide by throwing themselves into the Euphrates River. Their swollen corpses could be seen from the riverside. At last we arrived. From Aleppo to Rakka it's 190 km. In order to enter the city we had to pass to the other bank of the river. They did not permit this so we remained on the same bank for two months. There were many snakes and ebem geomedj, a plant that grows on the land.

At Rakka, there was an Armenian from Diarbekir, whose head was bent forward because he had been struck on the nape with an axe.

One day, a Bedouin came looking for craftsmen: carpenters, masons, and blacksmiths, to do the construction work for his house in the village. This gave us some hope. But I don't know why it didn't have any outcome.

Somehow, the people began to organize a more tolerable life. Our camp was situated at an hour's walk from the Euphrates. My two brothers used to go to the river to bring water with four donkeys, each carrying a twenty liter canister. Each tin of water was sold for half a ghurush. The water had to be left in pots for the mud to settle after which it became drinkable. Thus we remained there for a year and a half. But after some time, two of our donkeys died and the other two were stolen.

I've seen with my own eyes dogs that ate the corpses of Armenian children.

My father was a blacksmith. He was known as a good craftsman and he worked for the city council in Everek. People came from there and proposed that he should stay on condition that he converted to Islam and in that way save his own and his family's lives. Father's refusal resulted in our deportation. People came from Yedessia to take craftsmen to their town without insisting on our becoming a Mohammedan. In this way, we went to Yedessia. There were two other blacksmiths there: one was a native of Yedessia, the other was from Biledjik. They both had returned from the deportation. Religion was not discussed which made it possible for the Armenians to live there. On the other hand, the town was beginning to be rebuilt but conflict started between Turks, Kurds, and Armenians, as a result of which my father and elder brother were imprisoned. As I was young, I used to take them dinner every day.

One day, a dog bit my knee. At that time, I was working for a Turk called Mohamed agha. He took me to a Kurdish village. There the mullah put me in a completely dark room and prayed on my wound. After remaining in that dark room for two days, I returned home with a bandage on my knee. After a few days, my wound was completely cured. At that time my brother, Andranik, died, weakened by the hardships of the deportation. We remained in Yedessia for two and a half years. We heard that the refugees could return to their houses. My parents decided to return to Everek. So, we went to Aleppo but once were informed that our information was wrong and we were forbidden to return home.

We remained in Aleppo almost a year. My father and elder brother found work as mechanics. I was very

interested in locomotives. Every morning I used to go to the station to watch them. One day, I was watching attentively the bridge which turned the wagons round. For this change, the wagons were stopped with special wooden supports.

One of them fell down into the pit. As I was small, I dropped down into the pit and brought out the wood. The German overseer appreciated my action and asked me who I was. I replied that I was an Armenian refugee. Though the Armenians were not allowed to work at the station, he took me on to work for payment. Thus I became an engine driver's assistant. We drove from Aleppo to Adana and back in twenty-four hours and rested for twenty-four hours.

After remaining there for a year, father decided to return to Everek. We left for Sis (Gozan) where father expected to receive repayment from Turks who owed him money. He got nothing. After staying there for a week, we went to Adana with the intention of going to Everek by horse carriage. We were forbidden to go and we remained in Adana. In 1921, father rented a shop near the government house and a room near the Armenian Church. Each time Turkish and Kurdish outlaws attacked the Armenians, the latter took refuge in the church district. Each time, there were three or four families in our house.

One day, General Andranik came to Adana. Great receptions were organized for him. The Armenian flag – the tricolor – floated from windows, Armenian songs were sung in the streets. The Armenian soldiers serving in the French army went to the government house together with Mr. Tamatian and raised the Armenian tricolor there. That day became the happiest day for the Armenians. For a time, they forgot all the atrocities they had endured. Unfortunately, the following day the French army arrested all those responsible, and, prodded with bayonets, were led to their barracks. The Armenian flag was taken down from the government house.

When in 1921, the French forces withdrew from Cilicia, all the Armenians left Cilicia in a single day. I also went first to Aleppo, Syria, then to Lebanon, and finally I came to France and settled down. I raised my family and remained there.

**190 (190).**

### **KARAPET YEGHYAYAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1898, Nidé)**

Our family lived in Nidé. When my father felt himself close to death, he called me to his side and said: "Come here, Karapet, my son. After today, you will be the elder of the house. If they deport you, you take out the gold coins from your sister's plaits and keep them

on you."

When news about the deportations arrived, I gathered the gold coins and tied them to my waist. They took me into the Turkish army and my sisters were taken to Der-Zor. In the army, I noticed that day by day the Armenians

in the army were being reduced in number: they were doing away with them. I said to my friend: "Armenak, let's run away." One night, we crawled out into the darkness and reached the water. I said: "Armenak, come let's drink some water, let's wash and get cool." Armenak came and we washed. Meanwhile Armenak was singing to himself in a low voice:

*"I'm covered with wounds; I'm a djan fedayi,  
I'm a wanderer; I have no home..."*

Suddenly a woman came to take some water. She heard the song; she said: "Are you Armenian? Run away, be quick: now my husband may come. He's an Arab outlaw; he may come and kill you. I'm the daughter of a certain rich Armenian. I am their only daughter. Go, tell my parents, let them come and free me."

We saw that the girl's face and breast were all tattooed with blue ink. Hardly had the girl gone away when a man came, a club in his hand. He came and began striking us on the head with his club. He took off our clothes, together with my gold coins in my belt, gathered them and went away. He left us in our underwear. I said to Armenak: "Probably they have a chief. Let's go, find him and protest."

We went and saw a tent from afar. We approached it. The dogs surrounded us. It was the Arab sheikh's tent. They took us in. We told the sheikh everything. The people sitting were agitated. They brought us soup and bread. We ate. We were tired, so we fell asleep. In the morning, we got up and saw our clothes hanging there and the gold coins in them. The sheikh had searched them. He had found them. He had taken pity on us. I remained there and started working. I swept the tent and brought water on camels from afar. I made footwear for them.

One day a Turkish car arrived: a Turk came out and said: "Infidel, what are you doing here?"

The sheikh asked him not to touch me. One day, he made me put on Arab clothes and sent me to his sister. On the way, they caught me and began asking questions: "Have you got a vesika?"

"No."

"Your name."

"Karapet Yeghyayan."

"You'll be Mustafa after this."

"I won't be."

"Bring the stick."

They began beating me on the soles of the feet: sixty-six blows. Then they asked again: "What's your name?"

"Karapet Yeghyayan."

"No, you must be Mustafa."

"I won't be."

A further sixty-six bastinados. Then he became annoyed and ordered: "Throw this infidel in jail."

I remained in prison for a while. One day, I spoke

to the jailer and asked him whether if I were to give him one gold coin he would look away for me to escape. I paid. I ran away. From behind, I could hear the warning that someone was running away. On the ground, there was a pipe in a pit. I entered it into its dirty water. I thought that dirty water would flow out somewhere. I went on. All my clothes were filthy. I saw some stones. Holding the slippery stones, I descended. At a distance a man was plowing with an ox. He saw me covered in dirt, he thought I was a specter. He became frightened, left everything and ran away. I went to the plow, opened the sack hanging it. I ate the bread in it; I satisfied my hunger and walked away. I went for quite some distance. I saw a Turkish graveyard. Their graveyards are like rooms. I was dirty and wet from head to foot; I entered and fell asleep. In the morning, I was woken up by some bell-like noise: jingle! Jingle! A man was coming on a donkey. I came out of the grave. As the man saw me, he jumped off the donkey and ran away. I ate his bread as well. Then I thought that the man might come to look for the donkey.

I left that place. I went to the Euphrates. I swam there and cleaned myself. My drawers were filled up with water. They swelled up like balloons and floated me to the other side of the river.

By inquiring, I found my folks. One of my sisters was dead. Her husband had been killed: their two children had become orphans.

When the Armenians were granted 'aflik,' I felt that I was free and went to Aleppo. On the way, my other sister also died. Times were bad. Bread was by vesika. One day, I saw an Armenian man standing in a bread queue and the people around him were making him nervous. He was cursing, swearing. Out of hunger and nervousness, the man fainted and fell down. I took pity on the man; I helped him, then I took him to a restaurant. He ate and felt better. I said: "Who are you?"

"They called me Farmaçon Vahan. I'm from Izmir. I was a respectable person. Now, don't look at me: I'm in an awful condition. I have no money, no health. I'm a shoemaker; I'm a good master."

I said: "The money will be from me, the mastership will be from you."

I took this poor-looking man to my house; I gave him a bath; I dressed him. He turned into a good-looking man. I rented a shop on one of the best streets of Aleppo, and we started to work... French officers came to our shop to buy shoes for their wives. If you lifted them, they had no weight, so light were our shoes.

One day a Turkish officer came, alleging that the shop signboard was not straight. He said so, took a bribe and went away. He had learned a lesson: he came every day, took more money and departed. One day, he came again and I became very angry. At that moment General Gorot's daughter came to our shop to buy shoes. She said: "Why are you sad?"

I told her what the officer had been doing.

She said: "When he comes next time, turn his collar, look at his number, and tell me, my father will give him the sack."

One day as an apprentice, I made a mistake, and Vahan slapped me on the face. I was very offended and said: "Oh, master, how is this: I pay money and I get a slap?"

"Karapet, my son," he said. "This is an art, you

should not make mistakes."

One day Vahan said: "I'm going to America. Come, let's go there together."

"No, I won't come," said I.

He went. He sent me a photo; on the reverse side he had written: "Karapet, I'm doing well here. You should come, too."

Again I didn't go. I got married; I took my family and came to Armenia.

191 (191).

### SATENIK GOUYOUMDJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1902, Konia)

The Konia Vilayet had a village called Elmalu. I was born there. It was said that its inhabitants had come from Gharabagh in ancient times.

During the days of Shah-Abbas, the Gharabagh people had suffered at the hands of the authorities, and some ten-fifteen families said: "This isn't a place to live in anymore." They had hung their sacks on their shoulders, filled them with their gold coins, gone west, and reached Turkey. A few families had remained in Bourdour after they arrived there. Some others reached and stayed in Sparta, and the rest reached Elmalu and stayed there. Hence, our Elmalu speech is just the same as the Gharabagh language. Do you know why our place was called Elmalu? The refugee Armenians had turned up the soil, planted trees, and they had grown very tasty apples. That was the reason why the place was called Elmalu kazası; it means 'a place of apples' (Turk.).

In 1915, the Turks came, took away the men to the army and told the women that they would deport them. They gave each family a donkey. My mother had four children. Two of us were older; one of them was in her arms, she held the other by her hand. Her mother-in-law was elderly. They made her sit on the donkey and the two-year-old child was put on her lap. The rest of us started walking. Our feet began to bleed; our clothes were torn; we were exhausted. We went to the outskirts of Aleppo...

Our little child could not walk. The Turkish gendarme said: "This little child is not able to walk." He picked him up and dashed him against the stones...

The refugees wailed and cried. Mother went and saw that the child was in agony and died soon after...

We reached a village called Pap. The child and the mother-in-law died of hunger.

Mother started to do some washing in order to keep us. Father had escaped from the Turkish army; he had come, searched for us, and found us. The Turks discovered that he had run away from the Turkish army. They came and killed him before our eyes.

Then mother also died. I became an orphan...

As my parents were victims during the Great Armenian Massacre of 1915, I remained in the Izmir Armenian orphanage from 1918 to 1922. There, Armenian orphan girls taught me to weave carpets. I worked with them. We sing together sad songs; we wept together while we wove...

The Armenians in the orphanage used to remember that in the past, when Khrimian Father came to Izmir, he saw that the Armenians were in a good state, because the gold market and many other things were in the hands of the Armenians. He had delivered a sermon and said: "My dear country-men, you live on the soil of Turkey, so you must be very careful to keep your beliefs and language, to keep your possessions and property, so that the strangers do not confiscate them. So this is my advice to you: 'Don't open up like a lettuce, but close up like a cabbage.' It means don't show what you have to the Turks."

The Armenians of Izmir were doing well: they lived in luxury. The Turks envied what the Armenians had and wanted to possess these jewels, lands, houses, everything...

I have been to many cities but I have not seen such ornaments anywhere as there were in Izmir. The majority of the Armenians were goldsmiths. They used to make beautiful ornaments, amazingly beautiful.

The luxury and the riches of that place, I have not seen anywhere else. When we were at the orphanage, they used to take us for a walk, and for the first time in my life I saw Charlie Chaplin's film there. We used to sit silently. At the end, they gave us a piece of chocolate; we ate it and we walked along the pavement in pairs looking at the luxurious shop-windows. But when Kemal came, our orphanage also was dispersed. For several days, we remained on the side-walks, homeless, and hopeless. They used to pump up water: we took this in jugs for the elders to drink. When Kemal came, he drove all the Armenians, Greeks, and all the other Christians to the sea. He forced them violently towards the sea and set Izmir on fire. The fire consumed the population. Babes in swaths were thrown on the ground and the Turks

trampled on them, or they were thrown into the sea and floated on the waves...

Then, we were transferred to Greece. There I worked in a carpet factory. There were many orphan girls in the factory. We worked, we wove carpets, meanwhile we sang; we remember our past days and wept...

“The threshold of the factory is stony, stony,

The Armenian orphans’ hearts long for their mothers’ love.

‘Armenian girls, Armenian girls, why are you so pale?’

‘We get up early with the break of the day,  
Dear mother that’s why we are so pale’.”

Then I was married. I had my home and family. I had a daughter and a son. We came to Armenia.

I live with my son’s family in the Hrazdan Region. My daughter, Yeranouhi, lives in Yerevan together with her family.

## 192 (192).

### NERSES MOVSES GALBAKIAN’S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1902, Konia, Elmalu Village)

Elmalu is near Antalia. In the 17th century, during the migration to Nakhidjevan organized by Shah-Abbas, our ancestors, about three hundred families, escaped from Shoushi. Part of them remained in the town of Bolu. Thirty families continued their way towards Bourdour and Sparta to reach the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. There are some islands near the seaport of Finiki. They settled there.

It was in the days of Sultan Mahmoud. The Armenians went to Omar agha with great gifts and asked him to give them a place to live in. In those days, there were few Armenians in Turkey. Omar agha had asked: “What is your occupation?”

The Armenians had said: “We are shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons.”

Those seven families were called the Ispirs, the Yorghandjis, the Kalbakdjis, the Adamians and others. Omar pasha listened to them, agreed with them and said: “Go, search, and find a place you like; I’ll give that place to you.”

In those days, there weren’t many craftsmen in Turkey. Elmalu was called Ghaplan Deresi (Valley of Tigers – Turk.). On the northern part was a high mountain. There were esplanades on both sides and between them flowed a stream which had abundant water. The top of the mountain was flat. The Armenians decided to live there. They thought of asking for the western side. Omar pasha gave them one square kilometer of land only – where no Turks lived. Those seven families built their houses, opened a shop and workshops. They made a bed for the stream. They built a wall round the stream and the water went through the tunnel. They founded a water-mill. The soil there was black earth; there were no stones. They cut stones in quarries for the mill. The stones were brought by buffaloes. The Armenians were hardworking and creative people. The local people began to like and respect them. Then they built a church. They invited a priest from Constantinople. They built a school. The lower part of the building was made into a school and the upper part an inn for visitors. The children attended

school starting from the age of four or five. Teachers were invited from Constantinople. The number of shops increased; a market was set up. They began to trade. Thus the Armenians lived their peaceful life.

In 1908, when Hurriet was declared, Turkey promised freedom to the Armenians. They only pretended to give freedom to the Armenians. Sultan Hamid was dethroned. Talaat pasha, who was appointed Minister of Turkey, said that the Armenians would always have demands unless they were exterminated. There was a king but he was only symbolic.

Beginning from 1914, the Armenians were taken into the army. The first time, they enlisted seventy men from the Armenians. The second time, they recruited forty people. Very few men were left. I had three uncles; all of them were in the army. No one returned.

On the 6th of January, they took my father too. My cousin had given one hundred gold coins and was freed from the army. I was working with him as an apprentice. A year passed and they took him also to the army. I remained alone. There was a seventy-year-old man who said: “I won’t give you money. What you earn, we’ll share in halves. Will you be a cobbler in the village?”

I went to the village; I worked there. I received one hundred measures of wheat. My mother was ill; she could not work.

In the autumn of 1915, in September, I came back from the village. I saw Turkish gendarmes standing around the Armenian quarters. They would let nobody either in or out. They took the wheat I had brought. I went to my uncle’s son and said: “They have surrounded the Armenian quarters. They’ve killed the Greek sexton.”

He said: “Let’s go.”

We went and saw they had opened the Armenian Church and searched for weapons but had not found any. After three days, they called the eighty-year-old priest and said: “This is a government order: we will deport the Armenians. The Armenians of Bourdour have already been deported.”

They exiled eight people over forty. They sent us to

Stanoz. My aunt's son, Papazian Hakob, was joking on the way. The gendarme struck him on the neck, saying: "Infidel, don't joke." We reached Stanoz. The gendarme said to us: "Tomorrow we are going to build a road. Bring your money, give it to me: I'll keep it." He collected our money.

We reached Bourdour. The gendarme took us and delivered us to the headquarters. The chief of the headquarters asked: "Who are you?"

I told him my uncle's name. He knew him. I said: "The gendarme took our money."

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" he said and called the gendarme. "Have you taken their money?"

"I should have killed you on the way," said the gendarme. Then we were taken to Akshehir. There was a lake there. We got on boats; they had taken away the Armenian women, old people and children from Akshehir, Afion-Garahissar, Azizié. The next day they set us off. There was a special group of outlaws. When we were at a certain distance from the shore, they began to hit, beat, and kill. Those who were wounded started crying.

We could hardly walk for four or five kilometers: there was no bread, no water. We were hungry, thirsty.

One day we were going by a hillside. It was wilderness all around. There was no-one. Suddenly we saw the Kurds descending down the mountain like a flood with knives, swords, axes in their hands. They came, began searching, robbing, plundering. We continued our way. Probably it was already fifteen-twenty days that we had been walking. We were young: we were able to walk, but the elders were not able: they were exhausted.

We reached Haymana. The Kurds came there about four o'clock, and a fire began to flare up. People said: "There's a fire." The gendarme said: "They're burning people. I didn't take you there so that they would burn you."

The next morning, we went and saw that it was an open place surrounded with a wall. They had filled the Armenians there and had burnt them. Every day new people were brought, mixed with the previous people and slaughtered. They killed every day. We were hungry; there was no food. We were looking for barley grains in the excrement of horses in order to eat. They stripped the women; they were looking for money or they cut open their bellies and looked for gold in their intestines. They were making the pregnant women stand and asked what was in the womb. Then they cut it open to see whether it was a boy or a girl as they had taken bets on this.

We reached a place where there was a salty lake. They divided us into two. We remained with the women. We did not know when that hell would come to an end. Every God's day – massacre. They slaughtered the adults; the children remained without anyone to look after them.

We went and reached Nemshehir. It was a place near

Kayseri, called Indje-Sou (Thin Water – Turk.). Then we entered Kayseri. There were Armenians there. The Armenian town council came, opened the church doors and said: "Here, let's give you candles."

The next day they came and began to shout: "Are there people from Akshehir? Is there anyone from Elmalu...?"

I saw he was our countryman Levon. He came, hugged me and said: "Where is my family?"

They had remained at home.

Levon said: "Let me find someone to take you."

His cousin Hovhannes came and took us to the work battalion.

In 1922, Adamian Nikoghos took us to Indje-Sou. We went to Oulou-Gheshla. There was a station there. They put us in open wagons and took us to Mersin. We saw the Turks were killing the Arabs. We reached Tashlahan. They took us on board a ship.

Ataturk began slaughtering the Armenians and the Greeks. There were outlaws then. They slaughtered men with axes. I have seen a man, whose neck was cut. I thought he was dead but he had remained alive. They killed the mother, and the child remained on the mother's corpse. If there were relatives, they took the child and kept him, if not, the child was taken to a Turkish orphanage. He was circumcised and became a Turk. A Turkish gendarme had said to a two-year-old boy: "Who knows tomorrow what a misfortune you'll be for us," and had picked up and thrown away the child. The mother had attacked the gendarme who killed the mother, too.

In 1922, the Turks massacred the Armenians up to Bursa. Those who fell down could not stand up. Then they took us from Dedé Aghadj to Greece. The Greek Church was full of Armenian refugees. Greece also was in war. It was difficult for them too. I was hungry; I stretched my hand, and they gave me a piece of bread. It was about New Year. We were hungry, naked, wrapped in blankets. Together with another boy, we went to the port of Pirea but our people were not there. It was the 25th of December; it was cold; we were shivering. We were covered with lice: we were running a temperature; we were sick. They did not let us stay at the harbor as we were covered with lice and ill. We went and slept in wine barrels. The other boy died. They took him away and buried him. I remained in Pirea for a month. Then my mother came. I had no money. My mother took me to a place for bread and said: "Look, my son has grown up." We remained there for five or six months. There were a few families from Elmalu. My mother's brother came and took his family away. We were left there. Together with mother, we went to Lipazma: my uncle had a shop there. We hoped that he would help us, but he didn't accept us. Mother tied a rag on two sticks; it acted like a tent and we lived in it.

I started working. I dug pits for toilets. They gave

me money. I supported my mother and my brother and my brothers. One day I came from work, our tent was no longer there. I went to my uncle and asked: "Where's mother? Where are my brothers?"

"They've gone to Kokinia."

"I don't know where it is."

In fact there were Old and New Kokinias. Night fell. I remained under a wall till dawn. A man came and said: "Let's go to the bridge." We went. I saw my brother Nicoghos. We went to Kokinia and found our folk. We slept five people in one bed: head to foot. We had nothing else. In 1925, Mkrtich was born there. I became blind because of lack of food: I could see nothing. Mother and I began crying. Mother's brother did not support us for one day.

I did odd jobs. One day, a Greek came, saw me and said that he would pay forty drachmas. I went with him. I built a new house and I cleaned out the piled up garbage.

I worked till four o'clock. The man was pleased and gave one hundred drachmas. That day was Easter. I went and bought meat and many other things and took them home. I worked there for fourteen months. Mother furnished our house. We could look after ourselves.

In 1927, my uncle came and said: "Haven't you saved money?"

"I've saved one thousand seven hundred drachmas," said I.

"Convert it to gold," said he. He took the money to change it into gold but he did not give this to us; he took it.

My uncle's children came to Armenia with us. After the 1988 earthquake, I supported their family for two and a half years but they did not say 'thank you.'

For long years, I worked at the Kanaker and Gumush Power Stations. I received several medals. Now I am old and have retired with a pension.

### 193 (193).

#### MARIE MANOUKIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1912, Konia)

In 1914, my father was taken to the Turkish army. We heard that they had killed him on the way. My poor father was only 30 years old.

In 1915, the rest were sent into exile. We were exiled. On foot, walking, what roads did we pass! Hungry, thirsty, exhausted and ill... I was small, but I remember. My mother was pregnant; she could not stand the tortures, had a hemorrhage and died on the road of exile. We, three girls, remained orphans. Louise was one year old, I was three, and Siran was six years old. My uncle, who was only 28 years old and had already three children, together with his wife took up our care as well. He put all six children in a carriage, and giving money to the police, took us to Kirkook, in Iraq. It was a Turkish village, but the Turks of that village were kind. My uncle and his wife took care of us. Later, our uncle took us to the Gildanies', i.e.: the Christian Assyrians' Church and gave us to their orphanage. We grew up there. Then the English came, gathered the orphanage in trucks and took us to Baghdad. Bishop Moushegh Serobian was there. He saw us and said: "They are Armenians." He took us to his place and delivered us to the Armenian General

Benevolent Union's care. In 1928, we were brought to Port-Saïd. Mambré Srbazan Sirounian was there. He was yet 20-22 years old. He was not a Bishop yet. He was the supervisor of the orphans. He took us to Alexandria. We studied at Poghossian School.

My elder sister married Artin Keshishian, my younger sister, Louis, married Sargis Yazedjian, who was the arithmetic teacher of the Poghossian School. I remained in the 'Free of Charge' section of our school. Alex Manoukian, who was the head of the Benevolent Union, was very attentive towards us. He often came to see us. Then I became a dress-maker. The Armenian community of Egypt was well-to-do and progressive. But in 1956, Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power, but the Armenian community of Egypt had already diminished due to repatriation and the rest started to move to Canada. I also moved to Montreal together with Louis' family. We worked there and established ourselves. Siran came to America with her family. Now, together with my sister, we have a very comfortable life in the "Ararat" Home, in the old-aged people's section. To tell the truth, everything is excellent: the food, care, attention. Thank God.

### 194 (194).

#### ISKOUHI HETOUMIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1915, Stanoz)

My dad Poghos went into the Turkish army and did not return; I have not seen him. It is said that they had

killed all the fathers, "Babalar gitdi, babalar!" (Fathers have gone, the fathers! – Turk.).

My father's Turkish friends took care of us.

Ataturk entered Ankara; he reached Haridj. He said to the Greeks and Armenians, "Get out of here."

In 1922, during the second Seferberlik, all my aunts died. They threw all the Armenians of Kastemouni into the sea. Then they put us into a ship: we were homeless girls. As we had no one to support us, Father Galoust came from Constantinople and became our guardian. He said, "I'm responsible; I'll take care of you."

You know the station here; we lived there for years. One of us worked as a housemaid, the other worked in a factory. We have grown up in this way. I worked in

a Protestant orphanage as a teacher. I had forty orphan girls. I married them all off, but I remained single. Mr. Gyozejian went, gathered them, and brought them from Anatolia. Now, there is still one who comes to the chapel; we meet. It was a good school. On one floor, there were thirteen girls close to me. I became their mother. I used to teach them their lessons. I kissed them four times a day. I kissed the one who got the mark '10' for her answers to the lesson. I never beat anyone. For that, my heart is at peace. Our male teacher used to say, "Don't spoil them."

God helped: I brought them up.

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**ARPINÉ BARTIKIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1903, Afion-Garahissar)**

We were very well in Afion-Garahissar. We lived in peace. We were on good terms with the Turks and they also treated us very well.

It was a spring day in 1915. They came and gathered all the Armenian men, saying that they would deport them and asked whether they wanted to go with their families or alone. Of course, our men said with their families.

The people began to sell whatever they had at home.

My uncle's wife, Sheker hanem with her family and my mother's sister with her family, came to join us. We set off. The people were numerous, as if like a sea. We started on foot. They drove us like a flock of sheep. We had to obey. Wherever night fell, there we slept. We walked for many days till we reached the station of Konia. Our group was made up of eight girls and women as well as seven men. My uncle's daughter was younger than me. A whisper started to pass round: whoever went over to the Konia side could escape. There we met an acquaintance, Markos by name. He said to me: "Take this package in your hand and follow me without speaking. He took me to the living area of the rich and left me there. He went back to bring our folk. Suddenly he returned and said, "Hurry up, follow me." He took me to the house of a man called Grigor Zopian. At last, we got our breath back: we were comfortable. We remained there some three-four months. My uncle had a naughty boy. One day he had beaten a Turkish boy, and his parents had informed the police-station. They came, filled all of us into a cart and took us to the station of Konia where many Armenians were gathered from every area: Armenian speaking and Turkish speaking...

One day, the order came that we would move. All those who had money could travel by train. Those who did not – would go on foot. Those who had money filled the wagons. The train went and stopped at Bozanti. On one side was the railroad track, on the other the forest.

We were made to get off the train. They told us that we would pass the night in the open. The night was cold; people would sit close to each other to keep warm...

The next day, the order came that we would walk. We were to go on foot. It was a sea of people. Our feet ached from walking. Hungry, thirsty; there was no water. We used to drink the water gathered in the footprints of the camels...

Suddenly, there was confusion: people began to run on one side. What did we see? It was a well, and there was water in it. We went and drank; we felt a little cooler.

There was a Turkish village in the distance and we saw a cart-driver driving his cart towards us. Father gave him some money and we placed our luggage on it. We breathed easier. At least the burden from our hands was gone...

Walking in this way, we reached Moussa Dagh. Not a single Armenian was left there: all the villages, the houses were empty; all the population had climbed to the top of the mountain and from there were fighting against the Turks. Under the trees we saw the head of a very good-looking youth, and a bit farther away lay his body. The Turks had killed the poor one. From his clothes we could tell that he was Armenian. Our men dug the earth, put his body and head together and buried him.

Night fell. We spread a rag on the ground together with my uncle's daughter and lay down. The elders made a fire, sat around it and began talking to while away the night ...

The next day order came again to walk. After walking and walking, we reached Katma. It was already autumn: it was cold. The people wanted to get to the place early to pitch up the tent and to enter as the rains had already started. I called my brother saying: "Come to me," but in the confusion I did not see him come. That was the last time I saw my brother. I do not know what happened to him. Did he get lost? Was he kidnapped?

What happened?

We were hungry: we had nothing to eat. We ate grass and the undigested wheat grains from horse droppings. Then, we became ill. We had pains in the intestines; we had diarrhea. In reality it was either typhoid or dysentery: blood and pus flowed from our bowels. We had distributed the medicines we had to different people, and there was no medication left for us. People were dying all around. We used to repeat: "Oh, we wish it were our home, we wish we had our toilet." Everything was in the open air: deprivation, poverty, need; we were in intolerable conditions... It was at that time that the Turkish women wanted to kidnap my seventeen-year-old sister, Ilmonik. My aunt drove them away, but at night they had come in stealth, covered her head with a sack and took her away. They kidnapped her...

My aunt Agnes also was in a terrible state. She had fallen somewhere and remained there. She had a suckling babe in her arms. She was ill with typhoid; days had passed, and she had remained unconscious. When she did come round, she saw that the baby had died; it was even eaten by worms, she had not felt a thing. Then she had pulled herself together, looked for us, and found us.

The order came from the Turkish government that those who had soldiers in the Turkish army were to be freed from exile. Many people were saved this way. But they gathered the boys above fifteen and took them into the army. One day, we saw on our way that many young boys had fallen one after the other. It was obvious that they had been made to stand in line to be killed...

Days and months passed in this way. A man came from Aleppo. He brought bread in a cart and distributed it. My uncle went up to him and said: "I'll give you what you want, only take us to Aleppo."

First, the man was afraid to take us but then he said: "I'll take you, but if they catch you, say that you are going to Damascus to sew clothes for the Turkish soldiers..."

He took us to Aleppo. My uncle went to a man called Manouk Karachay and said: "I beg you, help us; we need a house. All our people are sick. Since spring, they have been in the open, on roads: no house, no bed, no toilet; everywhere is infested with microbes. Many have died; we are sick. At least you can save us."

That Manouk Karachay had ordered his washerwoman to find a house for us.

She found a house for us. We went and entered the house. We had agreed with the landlord that we would not leave the house so that no one would see us and catch us. Our host brought us food. He had a son and a daughter. The daughter was married to a Turkish officer. That Turk officer was angered that so many people had come into their house: all sick, the toilet pit would fill up: who would empty it? He wanted to evict us from that place.

The washerwoman found another house for us. We

moved to the house of a Greek. This was a better house. The floor was mosaic. The landlord was Greek, but spoke Arabic. They had three sons and two daughters. We had already learned our 'lesson.' We were Hadji Mother, daughter-in-law, my uncle's daughter and me. Whoever asked us, we would say: "My parents are lost. This khavadja is taking care of me until my parents are found." They came to search. My uncle who was at the age to be a soldier used to hide in a recess where beds were piled one on top of the other. One day again the officers came to search for deserters. My uncle's wife again hid her husband in the recess. The officer said: "Look here. Do not try to fool me. You are hiding someone."

My uncle's wife had a drawer where she kept her jewelry: silver spoons, ornaments. She gave them presents from there.

The officer said: "Every month, we shall come to check; we won't come in.", that is we'll take our bribes and leave.

After that, we were taken to Meskené. My aunt Agnes, who was already with us, had a fur coat on in which gold coins were sewn. They were very rich in Afion-Garahissar: they had wheat fields. They sold them and the innumerable gold coins were sewn into her fur coat. One day, my aunt Agnes went to the toilet in the garden where the Turks had caught her and taken her away. She was absent for a week; then they brought her back. Her clothes had been taken off; she was naked, disheveled. Who knows what they had done to her that made my poor aunt Agnes go mad...

My aunt's husband, an educated, intellectual person, seeing his wife's state was deeply upset and also took to his bed... He was already very old; he was in agony when they gathered us together again to move on. From all sides, they began shouting: "Yalla, yalla" (Come on, come on – Turk.) and drove us forward. We put him on a camel and moved but he could not stand it, fell off and died...

My uncle's and Hadji Mother's families all perished, no one survived.

My sister, Ilmonik, who had been kidnapped by the Turks, was married to their good-for-nothing son, and she had given birth to two children. Their names were Hadjié and Chichek. That husband of hers used to say to her: "If you run away, I'll slaughter you and your children." That terrible husband of hers killed a man and was imprisoned. At that time, my sister Ilmonik saw some Armenians washing their cart. She approached them, spoke in Armenian and the Armenians took pity on her, put her and her children secretly in the cart and brought them to Aleppo. When Ilmonik arrived, all of us were very delighted. We christened the children and called them Alice and Vehanoush.

A long time passed. The war was coming to an end. The gendarmes were leaving. We received the order that everyone could return back to their place.

We started to go back. We went to Adana by train. We stayed there for ten days. There were Indian soldiers there. They brought us pilaw with hot pepper and meat so that we might get strength: we were so emaciated. Then we went to Konia. There we stayed at that same Grigor Zopian's house. Then we went to Afion-Garahissar. There our Turkish acquaintances greeted us very well. They had already received the news of our return. They opened up our houses and had cleaned them. They had prepared milk, cream and other kinds of food for us to eat. We could not remain long in Afion-Garahissar. My uncle went to Izmir for work. Then, he took us all to Izmir. And then the Milli movement started. Izmir was consumed by flames. They burned down the Armenian quarter, Haynots, first and then set fire to the St. Stepanos Church where all the Armenians had taken shelter; we fled and ran to the seashore. There were many boats in the sea but the Turks had drilled holes in all the boats 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 filled with water and sank. The swollen bodies of the drowned people floated on the sea surface. 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 others' 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 – Turk.). A little farther away, we overheard 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 back after a few days in an unrecognizable state.

All those who had money managed to get away. I said to Hadji Mother: "Give money to Aram; let him save himself." But she was very tight, she did not give anything. Aram, who looked so much like my brother, had swum out and reached a ship. He got on board but he

had fallen down; blood gushed out of his nose and mouth and thus he died...

The Americans brought ships to transfer us to Greece because Kemal had said: "Turkey belongs to the Turks, not a single Christian will remain here." Turkish soldiers were standing on both sides. They were pulling, pushing us. In the turmoil, we lost my uncle's son, who was with us. We got on board the ship...

The ship took us to Greece. We worked there. In 1924, I married Michael Bartikian. In Athens, he was a well-known public activist, a recognized journalist. He published the "Amrots" (Citadel – Arm.) newspaper. Then he published the "Hellen Dik" (The Hellenic Gods – Greek). Our three sons were born in Athens: Vahé, Hrach, and Partev. When the Second World War started, we experienced quite difficult days as Greece was under a Fascist regime and my husband was a man with a communist ideology. Once, I was wounded in the foot; the bullet entered my foot. I was taken to a clinic and the bullet removed. My folks did not know about this. It was lucky that I saw our neighbor grocer's wife from the window. I told her to let my husband and sons know about it. They came and took me home.

During the war, Vahé studied in Cyprus at the Melkonian Educational Institute. Hrach learned at a Greek school. Partev attended an Italian school where they had free dinners.

In 1946, we came to Armenia. At the beginning, they had placed us in a very remote village. Then we moved to Yerevan, and we were given a patch of land on the first row of New Cilicia where we built our house. My husband began working at the library of the Academy of Sciences. My sons began to study. Vahé and Hrach became historians, Partev became a geologist. Vahé is the head of a section at the Matenadaran. Hrach is a Doctor of History and works at the Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. He is the Head of the History of the Middle Ages Department. Recently he was elected Correspondent Academician to the Academies of Armenia, Athens, and Rome. He comes to see me almost everyday; he won't leave me on my own.

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**SARGIS YETARIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Afion-Garahissar)**

In 1915, most of the Armenians living in Afion-Garahissar, Ushak, Eskishehir, Akshehir, Bursa, Biledjik, Kyotahia, Adana, Marash, and Ayntap were Turkish-speakers. All of them were deported. What they were guilty of, they did not know.

I remember the Armenians went to church, knelt, bowed to the ground and prayed in the form of namaz.

After Mass, the sermon was delivered in Turkish. The priest told the people to obey the government, assist the Ottoman Empire to persevere, and not to spare any effort and muscle to fulfill their duty towards the country. We, the Armenian women, were considered Ottomans, our Armenian women wore chadras, like Turkish women, the only difference being that the Armenians' were white

mahrana, and the Turkish was black chadra, in order to tell one from the other.

When I was born, my mother had fallen ill and she had not been able to breastfeed me. In those days, there was no alternative food for babies. Our people did not pay any attention to me: they tried to cure my mother. My great aunt had taken me to a Turkish woman and asked her to feed me together with her son.

The mass deportation started at the beginning of 1915. Then, certain people were given some privileges. For instance, the families of the soldiers serving in the Turkish army, the families of those fallen on the battlefields, and those who had become Turks were not taken to exile. We had not been deported yet when caravans of refugees came to our town. Our Afion-Garahissar was connected to the Izmir station and Constantinople station, from where the railroad went into the depths of the country.

The exile started later from our area. There were Seljuks in our town. Their mosque was called tyulbé. The Seljuk's tyulbé was in the Armenian district. One day, there was a fire there. The Armenians had assisted and the tyulbé was not burned down. That was why the Seljuks liked the Armenians. The Armenian women had gone and asked them for help. The Seljuk sheikh had died. His son had succeeded him. The Seljuk sheikh's mother had said to her son: "I'll curse my milk to you if you don't help these people. The Armenians have been entrusted to us. If we harm them, God will punish us."

The Armenian women said: "They have taken away our men. Where shall we go with the children?"

During the First World War, soldiers were taken both from the Turks and Armenians. So, during Hurriet, all men were drafted into the army. My father was also taken into the Turkish army: that was the reason why they did not deport us. And many people were rescued by the Seljuks: they were not exiled. But others were. The Turks and the Chechens plundered them. They robbed them of their jewelry. That was why the Armenian

women swallowed their gold coins in order that these would not be found. But the Turks cut open their bellies, even pregnant women's, to find gold.

When there was a truce, our father took us, three brothers and a sister, to Izmir, to the American orphanage. In 1922, the Kemalists came there and occupied the city. Mrs. Vanet was our mistress. She was a very good woman. She adopted an Armenian girl and went to America. Rich Armenians supported us. We were fifteen thousand Armenian orphans. In Izmir, there was the Mesropian School and its director was Andranik Karapetian.

The disaster in Izmir took place in 1922. The Kemalists came from Anatolia to Izmir; the mob filled in the town. First they surrounded Haynots – the Armenian quarter. We constructed barricades in front of the orphanage. Izmir was burning in flames when we, five orphans, escaped, threw ourselves into the sea and swam towards an Italian ship which took us to Pirea. Thousands of orphans were brought out and joined us. They took us all to the Isle of Corfu near the Adriatic Sea.

In 1923, the Italians began to bombard our orphanage; many were wounded. We were already grown boys, so they sent us to Cavala and Drama. I started to work as a shoemaker.

In 1932, a man by the name of Shahverdian came from Armenia and took us to Armenia. We were about five-six thousand Armenians. The ship sailed to Batoumi. At the beginning, I was in Stepanavan, Gyulagarak, and then I moved to Yerevan.

Later, after many years I found out that they had killed all our relatives. They did not even reach Der-Zor. My father had fallen victim near the Dardanelles, and my uncle was killed in an 'Amelé tabour.' My sister had died of typhoid. The Turks had wanted to kidnap the two pretty daughters of our priest, Father Sahak. The priest had resisted. When he had seen that there was no way out, he had drunk the Afion-Garahissar poison, which he had about him and had given the same to his daughters to drink: they died of the poison on the spot.

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**ASSATOUR HOVSEP MENEDJIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Afion-Garahissar)**

In 1914, my father was taken into the Turkish army. He did not return. We lived in the Turkish district. In previous years, my mother had fed our Turkish neighbor's child with her own breast milk. So when the massacre of 1915 was about to start, that neighbor of ours came and said to my mother: "You leave your door open and come to our house."

Mother gathered us all and we went to the Turkish neighbor's house.

At night, at about two o'clock, the Turks came and

knocked on the door. Our Turkish neighbor got up and said: "A high ranking officer lives here."

They believed her and went away.

There was an Armenian grocer's family in our street. The Turks slaughtered the father, the mother and the son. Then, they raped the daughter.

Our neighbor, the kind Turk, took pity on the girl, took her in and kept her together with us.

So, there are good people amongst the Turks as well.

**198 (198).**  
**SMBYUL BERBERIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1909, Afion-Garahissar)**

I do not remember my father. The Turks killed my father, and tortured and killed my mother's brother. They drafted my elder brother into the Turkish army. Later, they also drafted my younger brother. We heard afterwards that together with seventeen other Armenian young men, they had massacred them in the night and had thrown them over the bridge. Thus, when we were deported, there were no males left in our family. They took away my five aunts in Der-Zor, later cut off 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. Then we were given the order to return to where we had come from...

We were fine during the days of the Greek rule. But then the Greek-Turkish conflict started... The Turks began to massacre the Christians.

It was the Holy Virgin Mary's Day. I went to church to bring blessed grapes. The priest was delivering his sermon: "Armenians come and bandage the wounded." I told my mother I would go and give water to the wounded. Mother did not allow me.

At that time, the Greeks withdrew. We also started to run away with the fighting Greek soldiers. 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. At that time, I lost my sister, too. I remained all alone on the field. At night, I dug the ground, covered the earth on me and fell asleep. In the morning, I saw soldiers had come, were standing by me and said: "Daughter, come with us."

I was afraid and said: "You're Turks. I won't come with you."

They said: "No, we're Greeks, come. Alright, you go. There were three tunnels there. Where there is no light, you enter that one and shout: 'Muhacirlar' (Refugees – Turk.)."

And so I did. A woman caught hold of me, looked at me and said: "Oh, damn you, I thought you were my lost daughter."

A Greek soldier came and said to that woman: "Why don't you take this girl: she's to be pitied. Take her and be consoled. She has just run away and arrived here."

"No, I can't. I'm not even able to support my own children. How can I keep her?"

The Greek soldier saw that I was crying and began to comfort me: "Don't cry, girl. Maybe your mother is alive, and she's absent. She'll come back; you'll find

your sister as well. Don't cry."

But I couldn't believe his words; I kept on crying.

The Greek soldier gave me some crackers, some water from his water kit. I drank, then he gave me to another woman to take care of me, but that woman did not keep me either.

I walked with the people. I saw a woman sitting and grinding flour with grinding stones. I went up to that woman and asked for some bread. She said to me: "There is no bread, walk a little further: gilgil grows there. Pick it and eat it."

I was so exhausted. I could not stand it anymore. I fainted because of hunger. When I woke up, I saw I was lying on the ground and some voices were coming to my ears. I told the Greek soldiers that there was a well there, and there were people in it. The Greek soldiers came and pulled the grinding stones aside. They saw there was a carpet on the ground and under it were Turkish outlaws in the well waiting to kill us. The Greek soldiers killed them. Then other Turkish soldiers arrived 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 in pain. In the end, they skinned them completely and said: "As you, infidels, have found the place of the Turkish outlaws, this is the punishment you deserve."

We all cried, lamented; we trembled in fear. I ran away; I began walking with some others. We were taken prisoner; they would not let us go anywhere. A twelve year old boy was sitting on the road-side. There was a tank nearby. It exploded and the boy disappeared before my eyes.

When the Turks saw their tank began to burn, they ran away saying: "The infidels have come." A Turkish soldier wanted to take me with him but the Greek soldier did not allow him saying, "Don't go; they will burn you like your mother."

At that time I understood that the Greek soldier had seen my mother burning and he was deceiving me, saying that my mother would come. He was simply trying to console me. And I still had hope.

Then a train arrived: it was full of people; there was no place to sit. I was alone; I had no one. There were so many people that they were hanging from the doors like clusters of grapes. They tied me also to the door so that I would not fall off the stairs. And they gave me a sheet of paper and said: "You take this paper to the Armenian Church, and they'll take you to your mother." The open air train went, the wind blew and it seemed I would fall

off. On the bridge, our train was blown up but as I was tied to the door, I remained alive by a miracle. The people inside were all killed. We started walking again with the few people who were left alive. We walked along the railroad and finally reached Izmir. I was walking about in the Izmir market so someone took pity on me and gave me a piece of bread or something. Suddenly what did I see! I could not believe my eyes. I saw my sister together with a woman coming towards me. I said, 'Sister,' and hugged her.

"Go away, you're not my sister. My sister was pretty like a deer. Her name was Smbyul," she said, disgusted.

"Oh, sister; it's me; I'm Smbyul. The Turks burnt our mother in a fire. I have been walking for such a long way hungry, thirsty, that's why I am in this state," I said.

At this time, my sister did recognize me and took me to St. Stepanos Church. There, a man gave me moldy bread. I ate. I was hungry. That was all they had.

There, we were told that they should go and try to find bread. My sister said: "Take my sister with you." They all got bread; I did not get any. I waited for them to bake bread again. My friend went away; I remained. I began to cry. And I lost my sister whom I had just found. Then a woman took pity on me and gave me a dress to wear, otherwise I was almost naked. That woman took me to the St. Stepanos Church. While I was away, the Turks had blown up the church. I found my sister again in the ruins. We hid the jewelry she had on in her underwear because the Turks were taking away what they found. They would say: "Gâvur, nerde götürüyorsın?" (Infidel, where are you taking it? – Turk.). 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. In Izmir, the Turks gathered one thousand five hundred Armenian children, poured petrol on them and burned them. The Americans saw this, but did not help. That is why I hate the Americans. That is why I won't go to America. I came to Greece in 1924. I have seen many difficulties. I have loaded tar at a factory; I have picked cotton in the fields. I have done every kind of odd jobs. Even if they give me one hundred rubles a day, all the same I won't go to America... They caught us and took us prisoners. It was a place that preserved fruit, vegetables. We remained there. There was no water. Every day they gave us water with a small tin and a little bread. The new born children died of starvation: the mothers had no

milk. Poverty everywhere...

The Turkish soldiers, bayonets in hand, came and said to us: "Gâvurlar, ne ediyorsın?" (Infidels, what are you doing? – Turk.). When they came and saw a pretty girl, they took her away. Kim-kime (Who-whom – Turk.). There was a small window and we could see a fountain in the distance. But whoever went there was killed. A Turkish soldier stood behind a tree, whoever approached the water was killed and fell to the ground. My sister said to me: "Don't go to the fountain: they'll kill you."

Then the Turkish soldiers came and said: "We'll take you to the seashore." There were many people on the seashore. The area was covered with people – like ants. A man came up to us and said: "I'm ready to save you with money. I'll put you on board the ship. Only take my daughter with you."

In fact, the man had already sent his family. The daughter had remained behind. Now he wanted to send her with us. He prepared our documents, came and said: "There you won't be hungry; my wife will help you over there."

But they would not allow us near the ship; they were checking the papers. An acquaintance of ours, a man, had dressed as a woman but they killed his wife. Her corpse remained on the ground. The man pretended to be a mad woman and was biting this one and that one. The Turks said: "Bu gâvur deli dir" (This infidel is mad – Turk.). And they let us go up on board the ship and that man was with us. The ship set sail. We did not know where we were going. The ship dropped anchor at Salonica. The Greeks greeted us very well. They gave us food made with leeks as our intestines were all dried up. It is said that leek rebuilds the inner parts of the body. They kept us for a few days; they fed us well; we gathered some strength. My sister's husband, together with his children, was in that town. He came and found us. They took me to the house of a Jew. They were very rich. They had a baby. I used to take the baby for a walk in its pram. I washed the dishes, dusted the house. One day my Jewish mistress said to me: "We'll send you to our Jewish school. Will you go?"

I said: "No, I'm Armenian."

At night, I ran away from them...

I went and worked at a factory.

Then I came to Armenia. I married; had four children. They received an education; they married. Now, I have seven grandchildren. But my health is failing me. I have seen too much hardship: I have worked hard; I have been tortured till I've reached this day. Glory be to God...

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**GEGHAM KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1909, Afion-Garahissar)**

We were sent into exile in 1915. We walked from Afion to Konia... Then we went on to Izmir. I remember

the disaster of 1922. They poured boiling water onto the Armenians to kill them when they were in the water.

Those who had lots of money gave it to the boatmen and said, "Take these gold coins and take us to the French and English ships." They took the money and put the

people onto the boats, sailed forward a short distance then overturned the boats to drown the Armenians and not to let them reach the ships and be rescued.

**200 (200).**

### **HAKOB KARAPET PAPAŽIAN'S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1891, Sivrihissar)**

I was born in 1891, in Sivrihissar, a town near Ankara. I received my primary education at Nersissian School and graduated with excellent marks and a Golden Cross. Then I went to Eskishehir and entered the French Frères School, after which I entered the Medical University of Istanbul and graduated in 1916. Therefore I was old enough to understand things and remember the details well.

In 1912, the Ittihat ve Terakki Party leaders: Talaat, Enver, Djemal pashas, Dr. Nazim and Behaeddin Shakir (the latter was my lecturer at the Medical University) took a resolution and oath at their party meeting to solve the Armenian problem once and for all, to annihilate the Western Armenians: from the babies in their cradle to the oldest man, indiscriminately, and so to put an end to the Armenian Question.

The Ittihat ve Terraki Party's plan was put to action during the First World War, when, after the unfortunate event of Sarajevo, the German emperor Wilhelm, together with Austria, Hungary and Italy declared war against Yugoslavia. The Entente – Great Britain, France and Tsarist Russia allied with Yugoslavia; later Greece joined them.

When Turkey created an alliance with Kaiser Wilhelm, he agreed to declare war against the Entente. After some time, Bulgaria also joined Germany.

During the First World War, Turkey drafted all men from 18-45 to the Turkish army. Those who paid 45 gold coins bedel were freed from military service. A lot of Armenians paid it, but later, all of them were exiled and fell victim.

In July 1915, that Sunday was the festival of Vardavar, and the local authorities gave orders to the Armenians to leave Sivrihissar in ten days. The town was emptied of its Armenian inhabitants, and all their properties, cattle, orchards, fields and houses were left to the Turks.

In spite of the fact that I was still a student, I had an officer's rank, according to the Turkish government's law, as the family of a Turkish soldier, our family should not have been exiled, but the governor of Sivrihissar had exiled them all without exception.

In 1916, I graduated from the Medical University and began serving as a doctor-captain. I got orders

from the military commissariat of Constantinople on the following day to be at the Haydar Pasha railway station in order to leave for Baghdad by train, together with the soldiers accompanying me to serve in the 6th army. We passed Izmir, Butania, Biledjik, Sabanji, Adabazar, Eskishehir. We did not meet any Armenians in those towns. Eskishehir had become a gathering place for all the exiled Armenians. From there, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were being driven forcibly under the whips and blood-stained bayonets of cruel and ruthless gendarmes in different unknown directions; most of them – on foot, their children on their backs and some of them loaded with their belongings. Then we passed the towns – Kyotahia, Afion-Garahissar, Konia, Ulu-Gheshla, Bozanti, the station of Intilli, then Islahié, which was the first station of Cilicia. There also we did not meet any Armenians. At the station of Islahié, there were a great number of Armenian soldiers from whom the government had taken the rifles, and they were working on the railway construction as laborers. Then we passed Hassanbeyli, Osmanié, Katma, Tarsus, Mersin, Adana, which had been the capital of the kings of the Armenian Cilicia's Roubinian Dynasty. All through the territory, we did not meet a single Armenian. They had been expelled and exiled from their ancestral Lands, and Circassians, Turks and Kurds had occupied their lands. The sight of it was sorrowful, but it was a fact. Then the train arrived in Aleppo. The rest of the way towards Baghdad we had to pass over the Euphrates River in shakhtours. So, we continued the way towards Djarablous. Djarablous was a village on the bank of the Euphrates, inhabited by Arabs. There, on the roads, disarmed Armenian soldiers were also working under the supervision of Turk gendarmes.

Suddenly a skeleton-like human figure approached me. I did not recognize her, but she had recognized me and said that she was Mrs. Katariné, a teacher of the Sivrihissar Girl's School. She was hardly 30-32 years of age. The Turks had killed her husband in their house and exiled her together with all the Armenian inhabitants of the town. Her hair had become completely gray, her face was dark, the body – a real skeleton. She had almost nothing on; she was barefooted; she did not even have a handkerchief to wipe her tears. In a word: a miserable

\* The President of the Artists' Union of the Republic of Armenia, Professor Karen Aghamian, in 2002, has delivered me his grandfather's, doctor of the Turkish army, Hakob Papazian's handwritten bulk testimony, which I present here in an abridged form.

life. She looked as though she were a ghost. She said that when their caravan had set off my mother, Vardouhi, my two brothers, Karapet and Avetis, my two sisters, Nargiz and Shaké, also my brother-in-law, with his two sisters and 3-month-old baby, were all together. Our folk had in their hand a document, according to which their son, i.e.: me, was a soldier in the Turkish army, so the family was not to be exiled. But the governor of Sivrihissar had exiled them all without exception, and their Golgotha had started. The vandals, who were called Turks, have tortured and killed about one million innocent Armenians in beastly ways, which hadn't been heard in the world or written in history. How many of our folks have fallen victim is not possible to count. All the Armenians were exiled, without putting any difference whether old, sick or children; even women in labor were ruthlessly driven forward on foot. Our folks, together with our kin had reached Konia and then Bayalkhan. There, crouched by each other, they had tried to stay the night in a khan, but armed bandits had attacked them, had plundered, beaten and dragged away a group of boys and killed them...

Then the flood of the Armenian exiles reached Ulu-Gheshla, Bozanti, Intilli and finally Islahié, almost naked, barefoot, walking for days without rest. The mothers, their children on their backs, wet from rain, hungry, thirsty and exhausted, losing each other, leaving on the road those in agony, dead and not buried, had reached Hassanbeyli and then Katma and Akderé, where Mohammed's faithful followers had attacked the Armenian exiles on the road with clubs, whips and beaten them ruthlessly without sparing the old or the young. They had plundered them all, violated the mothers, sisters; they had done every kind of evil to the unarmed Armenians...

After that, they continued their way towards Pap. The Armenian exiles left their kin on the road again, they were forced to move forward despite their hunger, thirst, and the whippings of the gendarmes, all of them mourned the loss of their relatives, cursed the violence and inhumanity, and finally reached Meskené. The exiles were hardly able to rest under the open sky when they were again attacked at night. Everywhere the moans and groans of the wounded, the dying, and those being kidnapped were heard. That infernal Meskené, where I was with the soldiers accompanying me, was typical with its desert climate, and was situated on the banks of the life-giving Euphrates, which ran from the Armenian Highlands...

The government office was on a height with several mud-built parts. Drought, sand, an immense expanse, had become the gathering center of hundreds of Armenian exile caravans. The deafening howling of the jackals accompanied the night attacks and plunders of the soldiers, who were armed with yataghans... As Mrs. Katariné, our school teacher, had told me in tears, it was here that our whole family had drowned in the

waves of the Euphrates, when the bandits had attacked their shakhtour, plundered them and then drowned them... When I recall all that I think to myself: none of the civilized countries took any step towards humanity. 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 captive, 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 young virgins, 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, with 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.

Then we arrived in Der-Zor. It was there that the Turks had slaughtered the helpless Armenians: they had killed them with axes, daggers, and then thrown in the waters of the Euphrates. They had gathered the small children in a khan. I went and asked the guard, whose name was Ahmed, to let me in. When I entered the room, I saw a pitiful scene. There were more than 60 children rescued from the massacre. They were almost naked: they had no underwear; their faces were pale, their bodies scraggy as skeletons, their hands were dirty, feet, face, hair disheveled. Some of them lay on the floor either sleeping or dead, some of them were crying. It was an awful scene.

After staying in Der-Zor for one day, we continued our way towards Baghdad. Baghdad is a large and rich city situated on the two banks of the Tigris River. Most of the inhabitants were Arabs. It was said that about 70-75 thousand Jews lived there, also Assyrians, Gildanies and only 70 Armenian families. I presented myself to the head-doctor of the 6th Turkish army Osman Nouri

bey and delivered to him the recommendation from Constantinople. Osman bey was very pleased for he was in great need of doctors. He sent me to Kermanshah as head-doctor of the Turkish army hospital. I served there for 19 days. I got infected with typhus from the patients; therefore they put me on a horse and sent me back to Constantinople, overcoming great difficulties on the road.

After recovering I continued my service in the Turkish army as a doctor and healed thousands of Turkish soldiers...

After the Kemalists' victory against the Greek army, I was obliged to move to Salonica and worked there as a doctor treating the Armenian and Greek refugees, at the same time I was a member of the Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA).

In 1924, I repatriated to Soviet Armenia with the first Caravan and settled in Leninakan (now: Gyumri).

In 1931, I moved to Yerevan and continued working, always occupying responsible positions in the sphere of health, devoting my energy to my tortured and tormented Armenian people.

## **201 (201).**

### **HAYKOUHI BOGHCHADJIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1910, Kastemouni, Yayla Village)**

Our village had fifty Armenian houses. My father ran away from the house at midnight.

The Turks came at night at 3 A.M. They had filled kerosene in cans. They came and set the village on fire. Only one man survived. He had dug the earth and

entered under the ground. Mother cried all the time, "My eight-soul family was burnt," she said. I was saved by a miracle. Mother had thrown me from the third floor. I had fallen and was injured. Later father had come and found me. My lip, look, was deformed.

## **202 (202).**

### **GALOUST GEVORG SOGHOMONIAN'S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1905, Bolou, Nalloukhan)**

I should say, first, that my father and Komitas Vardapet were second cousins. They lived in Kyotahia. Soghomon – Komitas, had the same family name and his father's name was also Gevorg.

My father Gevorg was a rich merchant. He traveled to various places during the greatest part of the year and when he returned home he brought a large quantity of goods loaded on mules.

Father had a number of Turkish assistants, whose families were on good terms with us. The goods, which were brought, were immediately carried to the shops belonging to my father; the assistant-salesmen working in these shops always rendered an account to my father. They called my father Gevorg efendi.

My mother's name was Nourani. She was held in high respect in the neighborhood. She was a very compassionate person and always lent a helpful hand to the poor.

We were three boys in the family: I, Soghomon and Karapet. We had no grandparents. We had a large house. We entered through the main entrance to the balcony, then to the guest-room and thence to the bedrooms. We had spare rooms in the cellar. In short, we lived in peaceful conditions.

The school was not far from our house. The year 1915 was the most fatal for us. The streets were swarming with Turk gendarmes. They started to draft compulsorily the Armenian males into the army. They even entered into the houses and forcibly took the males away. One day, our neighbor, a Turkish woman secretly told my mother that the gendarmes would drive all the Armenian families out of their houses and exile them. My father and mother decided to come out of the house with all the family when darkness fell and to go and find shelter at the cemetery. We all went and hid ourselves between the gravestones. The whispers heard in the darkness testified that other Armenians were also hidden there. We passed an uneasy night. Nobody could go to sleep. At daybreak, several dozens of mounted Turkish gendarmes, armed with whips and swords, invaded the cemetery and started to beat and kill the people using offensive language. Shrieks and screams were heard from everywhere. One of the Turkish gendarmes on horseback raised his sword and wanted to hit my father on the head, but father implored him in Turkish: "Vurma oğlum, Allah aşkına, vurma; çocuklarım öksüz kalmasın!" (Do not strike, son, for God's sake, do not strike; don't let my children become orphans!). The Turk held his sword

\* This touching testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1981, was handed to me, in 2006, by his son, Gevorg Soghomonian.

in the air for a moment and thought, then he put it in its sheath and said: “Bağışladım, gâvur, haydi çık mezardan yolun üstüne” (I’ll spare you life, gâvur, go out of the cemetery and stand on the road). A large number of Armenian exiles were gathered outside the cemetery and the Turkish gendarmes started to drive them forward with whip strokes like sheep. Soon we were forced to join the multitude of Armenian exiles, of which no beginning and no end were visible. We started to move forward under the whip strokes. It was rumored that they were going to take us to the Der-Zor desert. Cries and wails were heard from everywhere, since the Turkish gendarmes on horseback did not take into consideration the elderly, the sick or the children. They whipped those who fell behind, and if that did not help, they either shot or pierced them with a bayonet, saying: “Geber, gâvur!” (Die, gâvur! – Turk.).

Mother and father were firmly holding our hands, so that we would not come out of the file, because the Turks did not spare anybody and whipped all those who came out of the row. We were all tired, old and young, and we dragged ourselves with difficulty. It so happened that my younger brother, Karapet, freed himself for a moment from my father’s grip and ran out of the file, but after receiving a whip-stroke, returned and held my mother’s hand. The red mark of the whip remained for several days and caused him severe pain. We all waked hungry and thirsty, and nobody cared to give us bread or water. In the evening we were allowed to sit somewhere and rest until dawn. Father and mother sat on a mat and leaned on each other and made us, the children, lie on their knees to sleep, while the mounted soldiers kept watch on us.

My father had sewn his gold coins in his sleeveless jacket and never took it off. The yells of the Turkish gendarmes woke up the sleepy and exhausted people in the morning, who gathered their mats and continued their agonizing march under the whip strokes. I was, at that time, ten years old and I clung, terrified, to my parents. I felt very anxious on hearing the loud shouts of the Turkish gendarmes, the cries and moans of the hardly moving people, the gun-shots resounding from all directions. I wanted to be near those sounds and see with my eyes everything going on around me; I wanted to help those poor people, but the horror I felt as a child made me cling more and more to my parents’ hands. I felt that every gun-shot took a human life away. Those who did not obey orders were pierced with a bayonet or had their head cut with a sword. I could not understand why the Turks were slaughtering the Armenians, but it was a fact that I saw all that with my own eyes. If the dead person had a relative, they did not allow the latter to take care of the dead. If the relative clung to the dead person, he was also killed by the Turks on the spot, then they drove the rest forward with whip strokes. I looked fearfully out of the corner of my eye and saw how they

dragged the murdered people out of the file and left them on the roadside to the mercy of fate.

I do not remember how long we went on foot; we were walking in the daytime and resting at night on the road. If, on the first day when we joined the large group of exiles, neither its beginning, nor its end was visible, then, after our long march, I could see both its beginning and its end. That was horrible, and no one knew what would happen to him at the next moment. Who was able, walked obediently somehow as a slave, who could not, died or was killed and was dragged out of the file. The number of the mounted Turkish gendarmes also diminished gradually. Only bayonet-bearing Turkish gendarmes were accompanying us. My father explained in a whisper to the people surrounding him that we were approaching the town of Aleppo, since he was a merchant and he was well acquainted with those roads.

It was midnight. My father and mother urged us to follow them in silence. I noticed that the Turkish watchman-soldier held firmly his rifle and was snoring. When we slid silently, we saw that many people followed our example. My father counted them, and they were 39 in number.

The barking of dogs was heard from afar. A door was opened. The voice of an Armenian woman invited us inside. It turned out that the landlady was an Armenian woman, while her husband was an Arab. There were, besides us, other children in our group. The landlady kissed us one by one, laid the table and fed us. That Armenian lady accommodated us all in the various families living in Aleppo; she even found jobs for our people. I remember my father and mother used to spin wool all day long, since there were many sheep in the landlady’s yard.

It seemed to me that we would have a quiet life thereafter. But the scorching sun of Aleppo and the widespread contagious eye-disease of trachoma infected us, and I and my two brothers became blind. Taking into account that we needed treatment and care, the landlady helped us to be admitted to the American orphanage of Aleppo. Our life became a nightmare. The world was darkened for us. On the one hand, the loss of our eyesight and, on the other hand, the strong desire to see our parents drove us to despair. Sometimes we could not distinguish daytime from night. I do not remember how long we stayed at the orphanage, but one day we decided: the three of us, to run away.

I do not know what time of the night it was, but the street was deserted. We noticed that the watchman of the orphanage was snoring on a chair, and the door was open because of the hot weather. The three of us slipped out, hand in hand, through the gate. We roamed the town and then lay bunched up under a wall. In the morning a tender voice woke me up. I opened my eyes, but, all the same, I could not see; I only felt that that kind

woman was an Arab and was asking me questions, to which I answered either in Turkish or in Armenian. I felt that she departed soon, but, after some time, her voice brought me again to my senses. Once more, she told me something, and I did not understand her. Probably she did not think that we were blind. Then she put some food in my mouth. I understood that she wanted to feed us. The food was placed on the ground, and we ate it greedily, while she was stroking our heads. Then she went away. The street was very noisy, and the passers-by were numerous. The wandering children pinched us or pulled our hair and then stole our food. That Arab lady felt that and one day she brought a bag and hung it from my neck. I understood that that was for our safety, so that we could keep our food in it. After that our food began to increase in quantity, and I started to share it with the children who used to tease us.

It was boring to stay unmoving under the same wall. One day, when the street became noisy again, we decided to cross the street and sit on the opposite sidewalk. We started to cross the street, holding hands, thinking that people would understand that we were blind and would make way for us. But suddenly we found ourselves between the hoofs of the horses of a carriage. Fortunately, the horses stopped without trampling us. The cabman got off the carriage cursing, pulled us out and, probably understanding our condition, led us to the opposite sidewalk and put a few coins in my palm. After a few minutes the street urchins assaulted me and took by force the few coins the cabman had given me. We settled under the wall as if we had found a new apartment. Our days were monotonous. It is true that we were not starving; I always had food in my bag. But the yearning for our parents tormented us.

One day, when we were begging for food or money in the street, we heard unexpectedly our mother's sweet voice who shouted to our father: "Oh! Gevorg, look at my dear children sitting under the wall!" And so, our parents took us home, and our begging came to an end. Our parents' endearment and care started gradually to improve our health. Mother prayed every day to God saying: "Oh my Lord, I implore you, return my children their eyesight, even if I lose one of my eyes." Mother wept for us day and night. Time went by, and our eyesight was gradually restored, and one day mother told us that one of her eyes had gone blind and was watering.

I do not remember how much time went by, and one day my father informed us that the Turkish government had allowed the exiled Armenians to return to their homes. We started on our journey to our native place. Our Turkish neighbors met us and gave us the key to our house. It seemed that everything was in order. In the evening, when darkness fell, my mother looked for the tin of gold coins she had hidden in the garden, but she did not find it. Undoubtedly, it was the work of our Turkish

neighbors, but since many of our fellow-countrymen had not returned home, we were consoled that, at least, we were still alive.

Soon we had a sister named Haykouhi. Father restarted his trade. In winter and in summer, he did not take off his sleeveless jacket, in which all his belongings were sewn, as if it were his friend.

In 1922, the Turks started again to force the Armenians out of their houses and to drive them to the seaside. The Turkish soldiers treated the Armenians like slaves. They took away any girl or women they chose, and the one whom they forcibly dragged away either came back or not. Those who disobeyed were shot on the spot and thrown into the sea. Countless of corpses floated on the surface of the sea.

And one day the Turkish soldiers disappeared. A little later, the sea-coast was filled with the Greek soldiers. It turned out that, as a result of the armed conflict between the Greek and Turkish forces, the Greeks had emerged victorious. The Armenian people gave every support to the Greek soldiers. The government of Greece was aware of the tragedy of the Armenian people and of the present state of the crowd gathered on the seashore. However, after a short time, the Greek government called its army back and gave up the territories occupied by the Greek soldiers. It was announced, at the same time, that the government of Greece would willingly welcome all the Armenians spread on the sea-coast in Greece as refugees.

The Armenians fully realized that, after the departure of the Greek forces, tens of thousands of Armenians gathered on the sea-coast would be annihilated by the Turkish soldiers. Consequently, thousands of Armenians went on board the Greek ships and sailed to Greece escorted by the Greek army units. The Greek government accommodated the Armenians in various towns. We settled in a borough not far from Athens. My two brothers were apprenticed to a shoemaker, while I was put in the care of a tailor. I learned from my master not only the trade, but also the Greek language. The condition of our family improved gradually. I got married to a decent girl, named Zarouhi, who was a remote relative of ours. But my mother passed away in 1928. My sister Haykouhi was then 14 years old. She attracted everybody's attention, because she was very beautiful.

My father bought for me a German "Singer" sewing-machine, which served me till the end. I started to work on my own and I gained a good reputation. My sister Haykouhi got married to Kghmes.

One day, in 1931, my father came to my workshop. He was very pale. He asked me to take him home, but I was very busy, so I hired a cab and sent him home. He had gotten off the cab and had fallen to the ground, dead. Our neighbors had carried him home and had put him on the couch. When I arrived home, my father's sleeveless jacket had disappeared with its valuable contents. After a

short while, my sister Haykouhi also passed away during childbirth, together with her child.

In 1932, Soviet Armenia organized a repatriation for the Armenian refugees groping in foreign lands. In the beginning we were accommodated in Leninakan (now: Gyumri). I was entrusted the job of a tailor's cutter at the clothes factory. But Leninakan was not to my liking. One rainy day, I was hurrying to work holding an umbrella above my head. Several local inhabitants standing under a wall started to laugh at me and shout after me, "Look at that new-comer, look at his umbrella; he looks as if he were a woman!" As soon as I reached the factory, I immediately settled down to work being completely dry, while the other local workers, dripping wet, were thinking of how to dry their clothes in order to

start working. After two months, we moved to Yerevan, and I started to work at the "Krasni Shveynik" factory, again as a tailor's cutter. In 1937, I built my own house in the district of Arabkir, and we moved to live there. For my conscientious work, I was awarded the "Stakhanov" honorary order.

In 1941, they did not draft me and my brothers to the Soviet army, because we had been infected earlier with trachoma, but we sewed summer and winter uniforms for the army officers at the workshop allotted to me. I worked as a tailor's cutter till 1954.

I wrote this testimony of mine, so that the coming generations could read and know the sufferings we have endured as a result of the Genocide of the Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks.

### 203 (203).

#### HOVHANNES PARONIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1890, Eskishehir)

In 1915, days before the Armenians of Chalgharan were to be sent into exile; they came and read the names of about one hundred Armenian youths. I was among them. However, my father gave forty gold coins to the officers and saved me. "Haydi bakalım" (Let's go – Turk.), they said to the rest and drove them to Banderma on foot. After a few days, they came, surrounded the village, and deported the inhabitants. They took my parents and beheaded them with axes. I remained alone with my two sisters and an aunt. I tied my father's gold coins to their waists. We set out. On the way, the Turks kidnapped my elder sister. My younger sister, who was thirteen years old, held my young aunt by the hand, and they threw themselves into the Euphrates River in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks. Every day they hanged ten to fifteen people from the trees. The rest were driven to Der-Zor on foot. On the way, I ran away. I said, "I'm Armenian," and the Greeks took me in and hid me. Then I made close friends with the Greek boys. We ran to the forest and became partisans. We were four hundred. We fought against the Turks. Those taken prisoner were sent to Ankara and hanged. They hanged fourteen of us. Their crime was that they had run away.

The Turkish government issued an order to kill the Armenians within one year. The Chechens took their arms and came to slaughter us. At that time, three million Armenians were killed. It is said that one and a half million was massacred; that is a lie. Three million people were massacred; only half a million died in Der-Zor. Three hundred thousand perished in Ras-ul-Ayn in the Arabian deserts. Daily ten to fifteen people dug up the ground and buried hundreds of dead and dying from cholera. Who knows the exact number? A boy, Minas

by name, was wounded. He had come out from under the corpses and escaped. On the banks of the Euphrates River, he had seen the corpses of my younger sister Shnorhik and my younger aunt – naked on the riverbank. In fact, the water had piled the corpses up on the banks; the Arabs had taken off their clothes and left the naked corpses on the bank for the wild beasts and crows to eat. Minas told me all about that many years later...

The Armenians were well off in our area.

The best houses and the best shops belonged to the Armenians. The Turks wanted to deport the Armenians in order to take over their property. They succeeded with this plan. Before going to exile, the Armenians sewed their money and gold coins on their clothes or in their belts to use them when needed. The Turks had horsemen to accompany the Armenians as though to protect them, but the Armenians were left hungry and thirsty in the deserts to perish. The Turks took us on longer and longer detours: we were taken far from water-sources to remain thirsty in order to become weaker, become exhausted, and to die. After the living people moved on, a group of Turks would come in to strip the fallen and the dead – to plunder and pillage them. Some of those who had fallen had somehow come off the road; by creeping and crawling, they reached some water sources, drank, recovered and were saved. Our Hadji Gabriel was saved in that way... He also came to Armenia and was buried here. He also came from Eskishehir.

The Greeks occupied Eskishehir but the Bolshevik Russians gave weapons and gold to the Turks. What could the Greeks do; they were massacred. Those who escaped and reached Greece were saved. Izmir was occupied by the Greeks, but the Turks set it on fire. Rumania would

not accept us. They said, “We don’t want workers. If they are traders – we want them.”

Bulgaria said that the Armenians should leave their

territory. There was a rich Armenian merchant there. He went, pleaded with the king, and he accepted us. Then, in 1932, we came to Armenia. Now we live in Nor Boutania.

## 204 (204).

### YEGHISSABET GAVGAVIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Eskishehir)

We were deported from Chalgharan to Rassoulia (Ras-ul-Ayn). My mother carried water for the Turks. They gave her a bit of bread in return. She brought it to me to eat so that I would not die of hunger. Mother had dressed me in a boy’s ragged clothes because they kidnapped girls. I went out secretly and gathered cigarette butts for my uncles. They filled cellars with many Armenians, poured lime into them, set them on fire, and burned the people.

The Turks had wooden clubs; they would strike people on the heads with the clubs and kill them. Our Margarit came out from underneath the corpses, looked around, saw there was no one, came, and found us.

The Armenian women hid under the bushes. Someone’s baby began to cry; the mother said, “This child will be the cause of our death.” She pressed the child to her breast, in order to silence it and killed the child in her arms. Many people threw themselves into the Euphrates. Its waters are deep, I remember. And they died. They drowned in the Euphrates. My mother’s sister,

mother, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law threw themselves into the water so as not to fall into the hands of the Turks. The Turks severely tortured us. They put tin plates on the fire to become red-hot; they made people walk on these, their soles were burnt, or they nailed these plates onto their soles and killed people by torture.

We became very weak. The soles of our feet were covered with wounds. There was no food to eat. I thought of selling my shoes in order to buy bread. A Turkish boy bought my shoes. That same night my three-year-old sister, after remaining hungry for a long time, ate some food, swelled up, and died. We buried her under a tree. At night, the hungry jackals came, dug up our pretty Haykoush from under the ground, tore her to pieces and ate her...

We went until Ras-ul-Ayn beyond Aleppo. They were massacring us but an order arrived, “The families that have soldiers in the Turkish army are to be excluded from the slaughter.”

In this way, we remained alive...

## 205 (205).

### SAMVEL PATRIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Eskishehir, Chalgharan Village)

I was born in Chalgharan. When the Turks deported us in 1915, I remember how they led us on foot, from Eskishehir to Sivrihissar, then to Haymana, Ghershehir, and finally to Kayseri. What we have seen and suffered on the roads is unspeakable.

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 placed much value on honor and loyalty. I remember one day two Turkish officers who made a bet on an Armenian pregnant woman:

“Şu karının karnında nesi var?” (What is in this woman’s belly? – Turk.).

“Gâvurdur: kız olur” (She is a gâvur: it is a girl – Turk.).

“Yok, oğlan olur” (No, it is a boy – Turk.).

They made bets 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 bacılar (sisters – Turk.), 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, taken away the Armenian girls and brides and had brought them back in the morning exhausted.

The governor became angry and said, “Shame on them. And these are the sons of our nation.” And he ordered his gendarmes, “Take these gendarmes and throw them into jail... Did you forget when Andranik came how you used to hide? ...Ermeniler (Armenians – Turk.), don’t be afraid; there are many rich Armenians in Kayseri, they will keep you well...”

And they began to distribute us among Armenians. My young mother and one brother had died on the road from exhaustion and hunger, and my other brother had died of typhoid. Only I was left alive from our family.

And all the boys, who were left alone like me, were sent to the orphanage of St. Karapet, where I studied. Then, we were taken to the American orphanage where I continued my studies. Then in Ankara, I served in the Turkish army for seven years as an officer. I went to Jerusalem from Ankara. I worked with an Arab. That kind man adopted me. Arabic was spoken in his house. Then in 1925, I went from Jerusalem to Greece. In 1932, joining the caravan, I came from Greece to Armenia all alone. I had almost forgotten the Armenian I once knew. Here, little by little I began to recall... I married in 1935. In 1942, I was recruited and sent to the front. I was wounded in three or four places but I continued to fight in the Armenian 89th division. In 1945, we reached Berlin. It was the 9th of May. The Germans gathered around us near the Reichstag. A German old man, about eighty years old, asked in Turkish, "İcinizde Türkçe bilen yok mı?" (Isn't there anyone among you who knows Turkish? – Turk.).

Our soldiers could not understand him. I approached him and said, "Ben bilirim" (I know – Turk.).

"Oğlum sen ne millet sin?" (Son, what nation are you from? – Turk.).

"Ermeni im" (I'm an Armenian – Turk.).

"Ne diorsin, canım, bu ordu Ermeni dir?" (What do you say? Dear, is this an Armenian division? – Turk.).

"He, Ermeni ordusu dir, Tamanian 89th divizia" (Yes, it's an Armenian regiment – Tamanian 89th division – Turk.).

"Gelmeniz nerden?" (Where have you come from? – Turk.).

"Ermenistan" (Armenia – Turk.).

"Ermenistan var mı? Hep Ermenileri kesmediler?" (Is there Armenia? Weren't all the Armenians slaughtered? – Turk.).

"Ermenistan helbet de var" (Certainly, there is Armenia – Turk.).

"Sen Türkçe nasıl bilirsin?" (How is it that you know Turkish? – Turk.).

"Ben Ankarada yedi sene zabıt olmuşım Turk ordusunda" (I have been an officer of the Turkish army in Ankara for seven years – Turk.).

"So, you have come to take revenge on the Germans, because we caused that massacre, that bloodshed. At that time, I was also a German soldier in Turkey. There I

learned Turkish..."

Eh, which one to remember, which one to tell? I do not know, really. We were walking in the streets of Berlin gloriously, proudly. A girl was talking to an old woman. When she saw me, she said to the old woman with a smile on her face, "Look, this young man rescued me."

I remembered the face of that angelic girl. A few days earlier, I entered a building my automatic rifle in my hand. The building was ruined and deserted. I entered a house. A carpet was hanging on the wall; I thought to take it down... in fact, it was a door... I opened it. An angelic girl (it was that girl) was trembling with fear. When she saw me, she was even more frightened, thinking I would kill her. She said, "Nicht, Kamarad, nicht, Kamarad" (No, comrade, no, comrade – Germ.). That is, do not kill me, comrade. I took pity on her. I put her on my back and carried her downstairs. So, that was the girl who pointed me out as her savior to the old woman. Eh, we had many hard days, months, years, here and there, hungry, thirsty, wounded, sick, but we returned home safe and sound. The Azerbaijanis used to eat soap in order to pretend to be ill and not to go the army.

Many fell among the soldiers of our Armenian division. When we had reached the Frankfurt River, Stalin gave an order for us to rest. Our Commander Nver Safarian said, "What is this: to reach here and rest? Why shouldn't I enter? Come on, boys, forward..."

Safarian was a kind man. When one of the boys began to grumble that the war had lasted too long, Safarian, instead of giving a harsh command, would say, "That's right my dear boys, you're tired, but the key to the door of Armenia has been lost; the doors are locked; they won't let us in..."

And when we won, he said, "Rejoice, boys, the key to the door of Armenia has been found; they're calling us home..."

One day my grandson, Hakobik, came to my room and saw me crying. He said, "Grandpa, why are you crying...?"

I said, "Eh, my dear, I have recalled my past, that's why I'm crying..."

Eh, what things we did see, what days we lived through. This is not only my life; this is the fate of the Armenian people...

## 206 (206).

### HOVHANNES STEPAN GASPARIAN'S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1902, Eskishehir, Yayla Village)

My father was an agriculturist and a silkworm cultivator. At that time, it was during the reign of Sultan Hamid whose monarchy lasted for nearly thirty years. They oppressed and slaughtered the Armenians of Western Armenia in the states of Moosh, Van, Erzroum,

Yerznka, Anatolia, and within Cilicia: Hadjn, Zeytoun and other places, especially in the years 1894-1896, 1909.

In those years, the Armenians formed illegal parties in order to organize the defense of the Armenians but

these organizations had no resources; they were scattered and also there was no Armenian leadership.

In 1908, when the new constitution was proclaimed, the party of the Young Turks was headed by Talaat, Enver, Djemal, Dr. Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir and thousands of young Turks became government members in 1908. They organized a Parliament. Sultan Reshad was the ruler, but he was deprived of any royal rights.

The motto of that new party was, "Long live the constitution; justice, equality; may all the nations be equal and happy." That motto encouraged the Armenians as well and the Armenians assisted the leaders of the Ittihat ve Terakki Party, who promised the Armenians liberty, and freedom to the Dashnak and Hnchak parties. But a year hadn't passed when they organized the slaughter of Adana in 1909. In 1912 and 1913, they started to arrest and imprison the members of the Dashnak and Hnchak parties.

I remember, on a spring Sunday in 1913, in the morning, armed soldiers and their commander surrounded our village. The governor was also with them surrounded by gendarmes. They gathered all the men of the village and imprisoned them in the church. Our village consisted of one hundred and twenty families; they searched the houses thoroughly, the school, the church, the Protestant chapel – but found nothing. They called some of the well-known people of the village, talked to them, questioned them, and were convinced that there weren't any Dashnaks or Hnchaks in our village. Then they set the prisoners free; they ordered that the soldiers should be fed, and went away.

In 1913, the committee of Ittihat ve Terakki Party held a secret meeting presided by Talaat attended by Enver, Dr. Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir and others that made a decision to exterminate all the Armenians living in Turkey. And at that meeting, they made the plan of the extermination: not to leave a single Armenian alive – from the newborn child up to the oldest man. The speaker of that committee session was Dr. Nazim. He mentioned in his report, "In order that Turkey may rise, I became your friend, your brother. Only the Turks will live on this land: independent, self-governing. Let all those who are not Turks be annihilated. Not a single Armenian; they all must be exterminated." In a similar speech, Dr. Behaeddin Shakir proposed the same, "To exterminate all the Armenians from the newborn to the oldest." That decision had to be signed by Sultan Reshad, but, as Talaat doubted whether Reshad would sign it, he got in contact with the German ambassador and asked him to go to the king a few minutes earlier. Talaat pasha took the decision of this secret meeting to be signed in the presence and under the influence of the German ambassador, according to which the Armenian Genocide would start on the 24th of April, 1915.

I was studying then at the seminary of our village in the fourth form when in 1914 sealed letters were delivered by the Turkish party to the chiefs of all the

villages. My uncle was the chief of our village. He also received such a sealed letter. It was strictly ordered to keep it under lock and not to open it.

In May 1914, the chief of the gendarmes came with four gendarmes from Eskishehir and requested the letter, which my uncle had kept securely. They checked the corners of the letter to make sure it hadn't been opened. The size of the letter was fifty by seventy centimeters. They took my uncle together with them and went near the church. Our church was in the middle of the village and all around was an open square. They gathered the people of the village and played the zurna and drum; the gendarme-chief opened the closed letter and stuck it on the wall of the church. It was red in color, in the middle was the Turkish emblem surrounded by weapons below which was written in big letters 'Seferberlik,' announcing that the country was under martial law. As Turkey was to enter World War 1, a draft was declared for all men from twenty to forty-five years of age. At that time, the Armenians were taken on as soldiers. My father also became a soldier.

On the 24th of April, 1915, the extermination of the Armenians was put into action. On the 3rd of July, one hundred and fifty gendarmes came from Eskishehir, and our village population was deported, old and young. The gendarmes and the Turkish peasants in the vicinity plundered the Armenians' properties. The women, children, old people – crying and lamenting – reached a Turkish village called Idé on the right bank of the Sakaria River. Most of the people crossed the river and reached Mayislou Village.

I was then thirteen years old and remember it well. There were eleven families of Protestants in our village who had been sent into exile on that same day. An order came for those Protestant families to return to their homes and get back their possessions. The next day, ten Protestant families returned to the village and we continued our road. We arrived in Eskishehir, and the others were taken to Arabia and from there to Der-Zor to be massacred. They were one hundred families, of whom only four or five people had survived. We remained in Eskishehir. They sent us to Konia, which was a large town. We remained there for a month in an open field. I always used to go to the railway station.

One day, at the railway-station, I heard a voice calling me from the car window. It was my father. He just asked me where to find us. I said that we were all in Konia. The train started off. I never saw my father again.

A few days later, about noon, a group of gendarmes on horses came to the place where we lived and detached out about three-four hundred families, nearly one thousand two hundred people, and drove us forward. In the evening, darkness fell but they did not allow us to rest. We reached the bank of a river but they did not permit us to drink the water. Little children and the old people could not walk; they were exhausted, dying.

We left them on the ground and we moved on. The gendarmes waited near them for some time; those who had some strength, were driven forward by the whip, and rejoined the caravan. In order to find a way out of the situation, some people gathered money from the people, gave this to the chief of the gendarmes so that he would give us permission to rest. Then we continued our way for nine days and reached the little town of Bozkir, which was situated in a valley. Of course, some people died and got lost on the way but I can't give you the number.

We did not know what fate awaited us. The next day they came, separated the fifty-sixty-year-old men who were with us, and said they would send us to the villages. There was a family with us whose son's name was Rouben. They ordered us to clean the cowsheds. And my mother did their housework. Then I became the shepherd of the village and later the village Mullah's laborer.

At the Mullah's house, in winter I fed the animals, gave them water, cleaned the cowsheds, and took care of the oxen, but in spring and in autumn, I ploughed the fields with oxen. I was up at dawn, fed the oxen, went to the fields to plough, and in the summer, at harvest time I had no rest. I reaped the wheat and barley with a hand scythe from early morning until late evening until it got dark. We threshed the wheat and barley with an ox-thresher. I worked day and night. Those were the heaviest months.

At the end of the summer 1917, the King of Turkey, Sultan Ahmed Reshad died. In the spring of 1918, Germany and Turkey were defeated. I left the Mullah's place, so did my mother. We hired an ox cart, loaded it with the wheat sacks we had earned and moved towards Garaman. There was a truce; we were allowed to go back to our villages. We reached Eskishehir by train. Out of the one hundred and twenty families of our village, forty were left. From our four families, only three people had survived.

In 1919, a new government was organized; Kemal was elected. He took weapons, horses, clothes, and food from the population. He oppressed his opponents and declared Ankara the capital.

The Kemalist authorities took over the ammunition left by the allied powers: England, France, and Italy.

At the end of 1920, the Greek War started against Kemal, and they moved forward on the Izmir and Bursa fronts. Mustafa Kemal, as soon as he took power in his hands, organized 'outlaw' groups and, in 1919, organized an army with formal military service.

The Greek soldiers on the front of Bursa reached Biledjik, and on the Izmir side reached Afion-Garahissar. All the Armenians and Greeks living in these areas were transported to the deep east of the country, Harpoot and Diarbekir.

At the end of February 1921, gendarmes came to our village from Eskishehir to deport the men of our village. I and some other men, our neighbor, a boy called

Martiros who was the same age as me, ran away into the forest. In the morning when dawn had not been broken yet, they gathered the men from their houses and took them to Eskishehir. There were many who had run away into the forest like us. But after a few days, my mother and our neighbor Martiros' mother came and said that if we did not give ourselves up, they would deport us. We went and gave ourselves up. They drove us to Sivrihissar. We were taken to the government house. They searched us, and then took us to the Armenian Church. We, the Armenians, were about sixty to seventy people, but in the church, there were about five hundred exiles: Armenians and Greeks. The same day, they separated out two hundred people and took them away. After two days, they took us out and drove us east. We were about two hundred people. In two days, we reached the military barracks in Hamona, where they imprisoned us for two or three days. Then they chose sixty people and took them to the cowsheds. The chief of the gendarmes took us to build a house for him.

When the Greek soldiers attacked Afion-Garahissar, we were deported to the town of Bayrou. Suddenly they began to fire from the forest; these were outlaws who attacked the gendarmes. They spread a blanket on the ground and told us to put there all that we had. They would shoot those who kept any gold coins. Then we passed the town of Yenikhan, Svaz. There was an Armenian Church in Svaz, where there was a two-storeyed building with separate rooms. They placed 8 to 10 people in each room. The local prelate, Sargis Vardapet, gathered the Armenian inhabitants of the town and told them to give us work so that we might get money. The Armenians fed us. We were sixty-two. But then they took us to Tokat where there were many deported Greeks. We were taken to build the roads in the vicinity.

One day in October, twenty to thirty horse-drawn vans came from Svaz, on board were Armenian student boys of the American College of Svaz. They said that the Turkish government had given permission for all Armenian orphans to be taken to America. I went to Svaz and was admitted to the orphanage. I immediately wrote to my friends: Hovsep, Martiros, and Hakob that I was a student of the Armenian orphanage at Svaz. They also came.

At the end of the summer and the beginning of the autumn of 1922, the Turkish army split the Greek front, annihilated sixty thousand Greek soldiers, and captured many prisoners who were marched through the streets of Ankara to show off their victory. The Greek soldiers were driven outside the Turkish borders; some of them were thrown into the sea on the shores of Izmir, Balikkeseer, and Mutania. We were allowed to go abroad. We reached Samsun and taken by boat to the ship of the British Red Cross. Then we were transferred to a Greek ship that took us to Pirea. They put us up in tents. There I fell ill with typhoid. I was taken to hospital. I

recovered. I began working for a farmer. Then I went to Salonica. I learnt that my grandma, sister, and brother were in the town of Gavalá. I went to Gavalá. I found my grandmother, sister, brother, and my uncle who had been in Syria. I started working in the tobacco factory. I built a wooden two-roomed house. I brought my sister and brother-in-law into our house.

In 1925, Danush Shahverdian came to Athens and we were registered to go to Soviet Armenia. We came first to Davalou, then to the Yerevan Boutania district. We began to work in the tobacco factory. I married in 1930 and had four children. All of them studied and received a higher

education. In 1931, I was elected Deputy to the City Council and appointed plenipotentiary to the District of Boutania. There were no water taps, electricity, or radios in the new district. By my efforts and the help of Aghassi Khandjian, the district was put in order in twenty days. In 1940, I was invited to Leningrad (now: St. Petersburg) for courses for three months. I returned. I was appointed the head of one of the tobacco factory shops, and chairman of the trade union. In 1967, the factory received new machinery that produced new types of cigarettes. I am retired on pension since 1973. I have received several orders of honor and medals.

## 207 (207).

### SARA BERBERIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Eskishehir)

Our family was very large; we lived in Eskishehir. When we sat at table to eat, we were forty people. Now I am all on my own today. What we saw and lived through can't be found even in tales. They kicked us out of our house and home. They took away our fathers and exiled us. Hungry and thirsty, we walked and walked; it had no end... If you fell back a little, the officers struck you. There were dead people that had fallen on both sides of the roads. We trampled on them and walked on. It was a sin, but what could we do? There was no place to put our feet; the corpses of those who had gone before us were spread out. And we were not strong enough to go forward or stay back: they would strike us. We used to go forward a little – they hit again... They exiled us in this way. On the route, they came and stripped us down; we were completely naked. My mother tied a piece of cloth before herself to cover herself. When we asked a cup of water, they used to say, "Give a gold coin, we'll give you water..." As we had no other way, we drank muddy water, urine, whatever we could find to drink. How is it that we did not die? They killed the children

before their mothers' eyes they killed the mothers before the children's eyes... I remember all that as in a dream, but I do remember.

Then we went to Izmir. My mother was a graceful woman; she began working for a doctor. She cleaned the rooms, tied wounds, and supported us. Suddenly we received news that my mother's brother had come. Mother went with happiness to meet her brother. She saw that they had brought his corpse. My poor mother was in mourning again. We were young yet, hungry, thirsty, infested with lice... Mother began to work in construction and carried earth; she used to carry it in a small basket and supported us with the money she earned.

Then we got news that my father had been brought to our town with prisoners. We went to the door of the prison. There was a small window. We put a small piece of bread in but thousands of hands stretched out to take it. They were so hungry. Later when the Greeks came, father was freed and he found us. Then we came to Armenia from Greece. Here, also we saw many difficulties – war and famine. Eh, which one to say, which one to tell...

## 208 (208).

### FARNEM BURSALIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Eskishehir)

When we were taken into exile, I was a child: I started off with my doll in my hand. The Turks drove us to Konia. They had separated those who would be sent to Der-Zor. My mother was ill. My father delivered bread to the refugees. My father went and said, "My wife is ill: she can't walk."

They had said, "Alright, take her to the other side of the water."

I remember, my father took my plump mother on his back and swam across the river. From here and there,

voices were heard: "Eh, it's shameful..."

Father said, "There is no shame; we must save our souls."

I was eight years old then.

My brother was taken as a soldier; he went and did not return. All of them were driven to Der-Zor.

We were saved. Then the Greeks fought against the Turks. The Turks said, "The Greeks and the Armenians are dangerous," and they gathered to kill them. They took away my father. They asked, "Who has any money?"

After father took out the money from his pocket, they killed him.

All of a sudden, the Turks drove the Armenians from Bursa to Endja. The bullets flew over our heads; they were shooting; they would not allow the people to board the ship. The anchor had not been dropped so that the ship could sail immediately in case of necessity. Those who wanted to board the ship, jumped into the water, swam towards the ship, and got on it. The stairs of the ship were made of rope. I was afraid to climb up: they

helped me. Those who climbed up were saved. The Turks fired; the ship left.

So many animals and property, everything was left to the Turks... Naked, without anything we saved our lives. I shit into your mouth, Turk!

Then we came to Armenia in order to have our own ruler. Here we were afraid to speak. There was nothing to eat. We perished because of the famine. I had a three-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son; they died. My husband died, too. I remained alone.

## 209 (209).

### HAYKANOUSH CHESHMEDJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Eskishehir)

During the Izmir disaster, the Turks drove away the Greek soldiers. We remained at the mercy of the Turks. At the seashore, millions of people jumped into the water in order to be saved. My mother had four daughters. She threw all of us onto an American ship. The ship brought

us to Constantinople but we had nothing on; we were bare and naked. We had to go to school; we had no shoes. Our mother did needle work and brought us to Aleppo. In Aleppo, we found our father. He had been deported and imprisoned for several years.

## 210 (210).

### SINAN SINANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1912, Eskishehir, Mouratchay Village)

I remember the second exile. They deported us for a second time and took us to Eskishehir. They drove us: my mother, grandmother, two sisters, and my aunt's daughters. We were walking at the end of the caravan. I had taken grandma by the hand. A Turk gendarme approached and said, "Leave his hand!"

My grandma said, "How can I leave my grandson's hand?"

We reached Sebastia on foot. They allowed us to rest on the banks of the Alice River. My mother took my two sisters and me to a charity orphanage. There were twelve orphans there from our village. We did not understand why we were in the orphanage. We learned to draw Mount Ararat under the care of Miss Ashkhen, but there was no food. One day my friend said, "Come, let's

pretend to be ill: let them give us good food."

They called the doctor. He examined us and took us into a separate room. There was a bag there; in it – crumbs of dry bread. In the orphanage, I got scabies. They took off my clothes; they gave me a bath; they applied sulphur to me: it dried up. They gave me a bath again.

We were taken to Samsun. The elder boys found out that the Turks had placed Armenian books into the porch of the church to burn them but they had not had the time to do this. I found a small Bible and took it for myself.

Then we were transferred to Greece, the Edipos Island. We were at a high place. There were barrels; we used to gather olives.

Then father searched, and found us and our mother in Bulgaria. We were reunited and came to Armenia.

## 211 (211).

### GRIGOR SUTJIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1901, Bursa)

I was born in Bursa, in 1901. I was a teenager when the exile started. The deportation of 1915 brought me to Kutinia, Komitas Vardapet's birthplace. My whole family was with me: my father, mother, my brother, my

married sister with her four children, the eldest 13-year-old and the youngest still a suckling. We passed on foot through Konia, Afion-Garahissar, Karaman and Ereyli. An order came in Ereyli saying that all families who had

\* This type-written testimony of the eyewitness survivor was written in 1985, in Beirut, by Betty Gevorg Khachatrian. It was handed to me by the Diasporan Doctor of History, Gevorg Yazejian, in 2001. It is presented here in an abridged form.

a member serving in the Turkish army were permitted to stay in the town. Thus, my sister stayed in Ereyli with her children. But we never saw them again.

We continued our Golgotha on foot; we passed through the ravines of Bozanti toward Tarson, Adana, Osmanié, Hassanbeyli, Keller, Ayran, Intirli and Islahiyé. Our group included also well-known intellectuals, as Grigor Zohrap and Vardges, who were marching under the supervision of special gendarmes. The young men of our group wanted to organize their escape, but they did not want to endanger the life of the innocent people of the group and rejected the proposal. We reached Takhdali Kyopru, Meydan Ekbez, Katma. A great number of people died from hunger, thirst and sunstroke and remained unburied on the road. An order came that we were granted freedom and that we could either go to any Arab state, or return back. We did not know a word of Arabic, so we decided to return.

We reached Meydan Ekbez. It was the month of January 1916. A 50-60 centimeter thick layer of snow covered the road. We were bare-footed. The Turkish officer ordered us to clean the snow with our hands and feet. It was freezing cold. The Armenians were crying, praying and imploring God to spare them. We spent the night in the open air. In the morning, many of us were frozen and petrified. The gendarmes forced us to carry their inanimate bodies on our backs and to throw them in the pits, which we had dug, saying: "You will also die tomorrow."

The rest of us came to Takhdali Kyopru. The Turkish government had planned to construct the Aleppo-Adana railway, and we, the Armenian exiles, should realize it in return for half a kilogram of bread a day for every one of us.

Our family was sheltered under a tent. One day, at night, three Kurds attacked us and wanted to take away our only possessions, the quilts we used to cover our bodies at night. They folded them and were ready to run away when my mother knelt before them and began to entreat them saying: "We have no money, no other belongings. We only have those quilts, leave us at least one of them." They flung one of the quilts to my mother's face, took the others and quickly departed. That night we all bunched together under that quilt warming each other with our breath.

Then we passed on foot through Islahiyé, Hassanbeyli, Bakhcha and the Taurus mountains. While climbing those mountains we witnessed indescribably harrowing scenes, corpses lying on the road, skeleton-like dead bodies...

They forced us to ascend the summit of those mountains. Our group, initially composed of 2500

people, had already diminished considerably. Many fell on the road exhausted. We were ordered to walk to Marash. All of a sudden, fanatic Islamic armed peasants attacked us; they abducted women and girls, killed some others, took off their garments and fled. We continued our way near Ayntap toward Nizip. A spring of pure water was flowing there, but they did not allow us to go near it. They did not even allow us to drink the stagnant water of the well. Many remained on the road, breathless and starving and became a feed for wild animals. I fell down exhausted and had no strength to get up. At night, a scorpion stung my foot, but there was no blood left in my veins to poison me. I do not know how long I remained lying on the ground, then I felt that some people took me by the arms and helped me to stand up and walk. Those were the members of the Ayntap Committee, led by the pharmacist Hakob Mouradian. They helped me with food and care, and I recovered little by little...

I started to carve the natural friable stones and make certain articles, which I exchanged with bread, clothes or money. My brother, whom I had lost as my other kinsfolk, found me after a lot of inquiries. A Kurd saw my talent and gave me a vacant shop, where I and my brother lived and worked. Seeing our sculptures, we received an offer from the Kurdish orphanage to give lessons of sculpture to the Kurd orphans. We led our existence with difficulty, but with willpower, until 1918. The Allied forces occupied Kilis and Katma. Armistice was proclaimed on November 11, 1918. The Turkish and German armies admitted their defeat. The British and French forces entered Ayntap together with the victorious Armenian volunteers. They began to gather the Armenian orphans and the abducted women from the deserts; about 300 girls and women were thus rescued.

In 1919-1920, the Kemalist movement started, which included also in its ranks Turk bandits. They were fighting against the Franco-Armenian forces.

In April, our National Union began to conduct negotiations with the representatives of the French government. I worked as a messenger during the self-defensive battle of Ayntap and I carried weapons, letters and medicines. The Protestants' Church, situated right in the center of the town, was the ammunition dump, while the grain store was in the Armenian Church. The Armenian cannon called "Revenge" started to throw panic among the Turks and the Kurds. It should be mentioned that the fighting Armenians on all the fronts came from all the Armenian-inhabited regions, from Svaz, Gyurin, Zeytoun, Yedessia, Bursa, Tigranakert, etc., and they all struggled unanimously under the leadership of the National Union and fully performed their duty during the heroic self-defensive battle of Ayntap.

**ASHOT HOVHANNES OHANIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1905, Bursa, Meds Nor Village)**

I was born in Bursa, Meds Nor (Great New – Arm.) Village.

In 1914, the Turkish government collected all our adult males and drafted them into 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 had not came on foot. We were young children then; we held our mother’s skirt and went on foot for a great distance. Our first stop was Konia. Instead of entering the town, they kept us, hungry and thirsty, in the nearby mountains under the surveillance of gendarmes. The following morning, they took us to Bozgun and still further. We were walking on foot for days and weeks. Our feet were bleeding. The policemen beat us with whips and said: ‘Hurry up! Chetehs are coming.’

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 as 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! – Turk.). While saying so, they tore away the wretched people’s clothes. After walking for a long time, our feet began again to bleed.

We reached Shirk. We paused to rest a little. In the morning, we heard, “Muharebe bitdi!” (War is over! – Turk.).

Thus, we did not reach Der-Zor.

The American Near East Relief gathered the orphans and the widows and brought them to Constantinople by train.

On the Asian side of Constantinople by the Bosphorus, Chengelkeoy Kuleli, was Kemal pasha’s barracks. The Dashnaks purchased it and the Armenian orphans were kept there, the Armenian tricolor – red, blue, orange waved on the building. We were educated in that orphanage; we used to sing “Aravot Louso” (The Morning Light – Arm.). We were given a good education. Even Hovhannes Toumanian came to our orphanage. He collected money in Constantinople saying, “There isn’t a piece of bread in Armenia. If you want the Armenian people to live, eat less and help the Armenian people.” The women took off their jewels and rings and donated them.

In 1922, the Greek Government lost the Izmir War, Kemal’s army entered Izmir, singing:

“Izmir dağlarında  
Çicekler açar,

Kyafir yunan  
Yel gibi kaçır.”

*“On the mountains of Izmir  
Flowers bloom,  
The godless Greek soldiers  
Run away like winds.”*

While singing this song, they started to plunder Izmir.

At the beginning, we were in the American orphanage and then the Dashnaks took charge of the orphanage. But the Turks burned our orphanage with petroleum; we threw stones to put out the fire. The Dashnaks saw that it was not possible; they brought soldiers from Andranik’s army to defend us.

The Americans saw that the situation was serious. They brought a boat, filled it with the orphans, and took us to the Mother Church of Kumkapou. The Turks came and attacked the Mother Church as well. This time the Americans brought the Rumanian “Datsia” Steamship. They put us on it, and we were taken to a Greek island across the Mediterranean Sea. There was a storm at sea during that night. In the morning, our ship continued its way; we arrived at Corfu. We lived there in the American orphanage. Then the Americans built a huge orphanage on the Greek island of Sera and we lived there for some years.

One day, we were told we were to go to Egypt. The American embassy gave us papers, and some of us went to Egypt. I lived there until 1947 and then came to Armenia. My dream was to receive a parcel of land, to build a house of my own and settle in Yerevan. But my dream did not come true, because I was arrested for no reason in 1949. Those who had come from Egypt suffered much because Egypt was a British colony; we knew English; we used to go to “Kamk” (Will – Arm.) [Dashnak Club] and play football. We were guilty of these things and we did not know about this. They arrested and packed us in the state security building cellars. The people were crushed together there. There was no place to sleep; all passed the night standing up.

Satenik Mkhitarian was my judge together with two other magistrates. I was astonished that they could sentence us in two or three minutes and send us into the depths of Siberia. I was with Garegin Nzhdeh for three or four days in the prison of Rostov Region. Then, I was sent to the Krasnoyarsk Kray. I was also at Krasnotourinsk in the camp for German prisoners. I was tortured and tormented for years...

At last, in 1956, I returned thanks to Khrushchev. My

wife was also tortured together with our three children. They called her a Dashnak's wife and had not given her any jobs. After being acquitted and after returning to Yerevan, they did not give me a house; they deceived me. And this was how my life passed.

Despite all these difficulties, it is comforting to know that my three children received a sound education.

Aram Ohanian (b. 1945) obtained a University Degree in Geography. He was the only officially certified mountaineering expert in Soviet Armenia. In

1982, he led the "Sassoun" expedition in the Central Pamir Range. This mountain pass was named the "Sassoun Pass."

Vrezh Ohanian (b. 1946) studied at the State Pedagogical Institute in the Department of Music. He works as a music teacher.

Emilya Ohanian (b. 1948) studied at the State Pedagogical Institute's Department of Fine Arts. She works as an art teacher and produces each month drawing booklets for children.

## 213 (213).

### ANGEL SRAPIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1905, Bursa)

At that time, I was ten years old. My sister was six months old when we were deported from Bursa. On the way, we lost our relatives. Mother used to tell me, crying, "Look at the road, the dogs are eating the Armenians' corpses, some of them are not even dead yet..."

On the road, my six-month-old sister fell ill. The women walking with us said to my mother, "You have neither milk nor bread to feed the child, put her by the road-side and let's go on..."

Mother said, "No, I won't." She tied the baby with a sheet to her back, and we continued our way. On the way whether of hunger or fatigue, my mother lost her eyesight. Near Konia, we were robbed of our property. My mother cried with her blind eyes and said, "For God's sake, at least leave us a quilt."

"We are God," they said and began beating my mother.

On the road, we saw a cart. I begged, "Please, let my blind mother and the baby sit on this." The driver took pity on my mother and took us on the cart. We had hardly gone a short distance when another cart came from the opposite side, they met on the narrow bridge, and our cart fell into the water. I caught the baby's swaddles but I was in the water.

"Alas!" screamed my mother. "I have lost everything; my children also are gone."

It was lucky that there were Armenian boys there. They said, "Don't be afraid." They jumped into the water and rescued us...

We got out of the water; we were walking all wet. The officers gave orders from behind and from the front. Finally, we arrived at a station...

We had a relative who worked at the train station. We inquired after him. They said, "He will be here soon."

The man came. In fact, he was the mudur of the place. He told us to pass the night there.

We remained there until morning so as not to be driven on again. Mother's eyes had started to see little by little. She cut my hair, blackened my face with charcoal because the Arabs and Turks kidnapped girls. She cut my

hair like a boy's. She took off my earrings; she dressed me like a boy.

That Armenian mudur helped us a lot. He sent us to Ereyli, far from Konia. It took us nine days on foot. Mother worked here and there. From the railroad tracks, we gathered pieces of coal to burn as at that time locomotives ran by coal. Pieces of coal that did not burn were thrown out and I gathered these with my brother. One day my brother fell into a sewage-pit... I saw that sewage was drawing him down; only his arms could be seen... I cried for help. People came and got him out. While taking him out, they injured his chin. I took my brother for a wash in the water. There was neither soap nor anything...

We remained in Ereyli for three and a half years. Mother sewed sacks; somehow we survived...

After the exile, the Armenians came and gathered children from the Turks' houses. They had opened separate orphanages: one for the very young, another for girls, and one for boys.

The Armenian boys came from the army or the orphanages, chose a girl, married, and formed their families. The Americans opened factories. They ran weaving machines. The Armenian orphans worked there, or were sent to America. They took good care of the Armenian orphans.

My mother's eldest brother had a small shop. He was a tailor and gave us a little help. One day, a Turk took possession of the shop and evicted my uncle. So, we were left completely helpless...

My husband, may God rest his soul, had been a soldier with General Andranik. My husband had six brothers and two sisters. The Turks had taken all the seven brothers to the army. All of them ran away, went to Erzroom, and joined Andranik's army...

My husband told us that when Andranik was a small boy, the Turks had slaughtered his father on the grass and the boy had seen his father dead in a pool of blood. Andranik had gone to Poghos Noubar and said, "Noubar, please take me on as a soldier."

Poghos Noubar had said, "What can you do? You're young..."

"I'll clean the horses' stables, but I will have my revenge."

Andranik became a soldier. He experienced many difficulties. He went with the other volunteers and saw ten or fifteen Armenian girls who had been tortured, raped; they were crying out, "For God's sake, save us."

Andranik said to his soldiers, "Give them clothes."

He who had two jackets, gave one, he who had two trousers, gave one, they gave the girls hats and shoes and so that they could look like boys and soldiers. General Andranik looked out and said, "My soldiers have increased in number. It seems the Turks have infiltrated our ranks and have mixed up with us. I must check up everyone."

They had given the girls boys' names: one was Poghos; the other was Martiros.

Andranik asked, "Where are you from?"

The soldiers said, "We saved them, we are taking them with us to deliver them from the Turks."

One of the girls dressed as a boy came forward and said, "General Andranik, let me wash your feet and drink the water, take us with you..."

Then my husband continued: they joined us. We ascended the mountain; we began eating grass. For six months, we used to fill our stomachs with grass. We had a Kurdish worker that the Turks had caught and said, "If you don't bring Andranik's head, we'll cut off your own head." For that reason, Andranik did not send that Kurd

out for food anymore. He kept him near us to be safe from danger.

Andranik's army performed many heroic deeds. Later on, Andranik went to Bulgaria before the King Simeon, shook hands with him, and saw that the King was very sad and deep in thought. He said, "What are you thinking of?"

"Ah, the Turks are coming. The Russians are our godfathers; they help us but until they come, it will be too late. The Turks will be here, and my soldiers are few."

"Give me those soldiers," said Andranik. "I'll place them on the right and left as if they are firing from different sides. As they fire from the right and left, the Turks will be frightened and say there are too many soldiers."

And so he did. Andranik became a hero of Bulgaria. That country was liberated from the Turks. That was why the King took us in, the Armenians, for Andranik's sake, and he gave Andranik a large palace. In 1922, in Paris, General Andranik got married to Nvard Kyurkdjian from Bulgaria.

Later, Andranik fell ill. Before dying, he had said, "Cut my thumb off, take it to Armenia, and bury it there. I tried very hard, but they did not understand me in Armenia."

Our landlord, a Bulgarian, used to say, "During parades, Andranik's portrait was carried after the King's. There will come a time when your Armenia's doors will open, at that time they will recognize Andranik." What my Bulgarian landlord said did come true.

## 214 (214).

### DAVIT DAVTIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Bursa)

In 1915, during the general deportation, they [the Turks] took away the people from our village. We did not know where we were being taken. Though I was young, even so, I remember our tragic situation until today.

Our large family consisted of sixty-two people, only four survived. Some were drafted into the Turkish army and were massacred there. Others died, or were killed, on the roads of deportation. My uncle, who escaped with great difficulty from the Turkish army, was pursued and killed. My father also escaped from the Turkish army and hid in a farm in Konia until the armistice. My mother, my sister, and my grandfather fell ill with typhus – they were infested with lice. We were walking along the arid steppes of Konia, thirsty and hungry. There, the Turks produced opium, which comes from poppy seeds. Our Armenian women began helping with the harvest and got a little money for bread. Every day, both adults and children would sit and picked out their lice. Grown up persons sat under the walls and crushed very large lice, many became infected with typhus through them.

My grandpa took us to a place called Chay-Station.

There was an oven there. My grandma worked there for four years until the truce and took care of us.

One day five or six Turkish boys caught me and said that I must teach them Armenian obscene words. I said, "I won't."

They said, "If you don't teach us, you will have to carry this stone backwards and forwards five times."

They began to torture me until an Armenian, Hovsep by name, came and freed me. I returned. I saw mother had died from typhoid in the tent, and my grandpa was in agony. I was young: I could do nothing. Their corpses remained there for days.

By chance, our village priest came and said, "Grigoris, should I see you in this state?" He took and buried them.

I remained with my grandma. My toenails were broken; I could not walk. One day, we entered the open market where there were all kinds of things, but I had not seen fruits. I asked, "Granny, what are these?"

"My dear, these are medicines," said my poor grandma, for she had no money for purchases. At this, a

kind man overheard our talk. He brought a bag of pears, apples, and other fruit for me to eat.

Packed into freight wagons, we reached Eskishehir. There, we found my father. He recognized me. Then he asked, "Where's my father?"

"He was an old man. He died," he was told.

Then, father noticed that neither his wife nor his daughter was there. He fell down in the wagon and began crying. We arrived in our village. We saw that our house was demolished. We went to grandma's house. And there, everything had been plundered. We remained there for four years. Then during the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1920, the Greeks occupied Bursa. During the retreats and advances, the Armenians fled to town. Grandma did not want to leave her house. I also fled with the Armenians, but I could see that I could not live without my grandmother, and I came back together with a group of Armenians. On the way, the chetehs began to invade the houses, plundering and murdering. They entered our house as well. We spun silk thread. There was a woman working with us. She hid her gold immediately under the cocoons. The chetehs came but found nothing.

When Greece was defeated, they withdrew and the

Armenians began to migrate again. On the way, at the seaport of Mutania, the French fleet came and opened fire on the retreating Greeks. We remained defenseless. We remained there for weeks. They slaughtered many people there, especially the men. They would call out, "Ermeni, gel! (Armenian, come! – Turk.). There is some work to do." They would take them away, and the men did not return.

There we kept my father in a bag for weeks. One day we went to the woods where olive trees grew. The Armenians' corpses had fallen there: they had taken the Armenians there and killed them. They took away my uncle and he never came back.

I remember, in order to get on board the ship, the people jostled each other; many were knocked down and died. We saw many such cases.

All our possessions remained on the seashore for the Turks. With only one quilt and one mattress, we got on the American Red Cross ship that took us to the seaport of Silivri. From there via Chorlu, we passed on to Bulgaria.

We believed in the Kemalist movement, but we were deceived.

In 1946, we came to Armenia from Bulgaria.

## 215 (215).

### AVETIS NORIK NORIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Bursa, Yenidjé Village)

In our village of Yenidjé near Bursa, there was a silk factory.

Our ancestral home housed three brothers who lived separately with their families. We were ten in our family: four brothers, three sisters, father, mother and grandmother.

The Turks came and drove us out – a group at a time. We went on foot over mountains and through valleys supervised by the gendarmes, hungry and thirsty. We walked day and night until we reached a place called Chay-Station. It was an open place. We would stay there, before continuing on our road.

One morning the Turks came, pulled our tents down and began to drive us on again, but our people took their jewelry and gave them to the Turkish chief. He took us and distributed us in the surrounding villages. In this way, we did not go to Der-Zor. We, together with twenty families, were taken to the village of Deve Dere. There was a fountain in that village from which animals and people drank water. There were no adult men. All of them were women and children. They gave us room in the cowsheds. The inhabitants, who were Turks, would not approach us for some time. Then our elders gathered together and went to the hoja of the village. It turned out that the peasants had been told that the gâvurs who would come were Turk-killing people. That was the reason why the peasants feared us. There, many of our people

died of disease and famine. My brothers were older, my sisters also were older; somehow they survived. But my grandmother died on the road. We stayed there for four years. We gathered grass as well as the last grains of wheat in the fields and ate them.

My three uncles and their families were exiled to Der-Zor, and all of them were massacred. They checked the birth certificates: those who were Protestants were not deported. In this way, the years passed by.

After the truce, we returned to Yenidjé Village. My little brother was ill with typhus. Our house was half destroyed, and the Boshnaks (an ethnic group) had come to live in there. They were Muslim immigrants who had come from Bosnia. All the houses were ravaged and empty.

Later, when the Turkish-Greek War began, Yenidjé Village was between the fronts. The Greeks had occupied Izmir, the Turks were under siege, but the Great Powers helped the Turks, and the Greeks were defeated. We fled and left everything: our orchard, property, and house. When the Greeks were defeated, we went to Bursa, we should have gone to a seaport, either to Mutania or to Gemlik, but our passage was barred.

While we proceeded, the Turks fired at us. The seashore was full of refugees. All of them were waiting to get on board a ship. At this time, the Greek army surrendered. The people gathered on the seashore and

suffered many casualties. We were seven. Each was running for his or her life. On one side was the sea, on the other, the forest. At that time, I was ill, hungry, and tired. But by dragging myself along with the others, I went from the seaport of Gemlike to Mutania by foot. We went through villages. The Turks pursued us and killed those they managed to catch. Those with young children, whom they were not able to carry, left the children to die on the road. Those who had gone before us had left the babies on the ground, covered with hampers so that they could breathe. The poor babies were crying motherless and helpless. We heard them crying, but could not help them, because we were climbing rocks just as children

do. Whoever stumbled fell into the sea. There was no other route.

Finally, we reached the seaport of Mutania. Many people had lost each other. I was with my father. The entire Armenian population of Bursa had gathered there. Those who could – fled. Those who remained after the Greek army retreated were massacred when the Turks came. We hid my brothers. We left all our riches at the seaport and got on board the ship. The ship took us through the Marmara Sea to Silivri. There were many refugees there as well. We landed and went to the town of Chorlu. The Greek army was still there.

In 1946, we came to Armenia from Bulgaria.

## 216 (216).

### KARAPET POPONIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1911, Bursa, Meds Nor Village)

When the First World War broke out, all the Armenian males were taken into the Turkish army. We were told: "We'll take you to a place that is seven hours' distant and then you will come back." But the 7 hours became 7 days; we were hungry and thirsty. Whoever had a razor with him was condemned to death. My father was taken to the Dardanelles Straits. They had made him work on the railroad, hungry and thirsty. He had fallen ill and died.

Partizak was a very beautiful small town. It was surrounded with trees and gardens. It was inhabited by both Armenians and Turks.

In 1915 the Turks came and said: "What you have, leave everything here. We'll take you away and then bring you back." They exiled all the Armenians of Partizak. Vidin Gaben, who was an Armenian of Partizak, did not go to exile, but, as a Turk, together with his friend, they disguised themselves and climbed the mountains of Partizak. They gave word to each other that they would not speak Armenian; they would speak only Turkish and Boshnagh (language of an ethnic group).

When the war was over, one day Vidin Gaben saw seven Turks coming towards him. He heard them telling each other in a high and merry voice how, on the way of exile they had tortured, plundered and then killed

Armenians, how they had raped the Armenian girls this way and that way... He looked at them and said:

"Now I'll kill you all as you have done such things..."

One of the Turks says: "Aman, canım, çocukluk dir!" (Oh, dear, it was a child's game! – Turk.).

Vidin Gaben said: "What! Was that a child's game? You're grown up people."

One of the Turks drew up his skirt and took out some gold coins in order to bribe Vidin Gaben, but he did not agree. He drew out his revolver and killed all of them and dragged their corpses to the river and threw them into it. Thus, he settled their accounts.

One day Lame Osman, while passing by the American orphanage of Partizak, wanted to set fire to the building. One hundred Turks, all armed, gathered and attacked the orphanage. First, they began beating Vidin Gaben, who was the guard of the orphanage. One of the Turks entered the building, went under the staircase and wanted to set it on fire. Vidin Gaben killed him. The principal of the orphanage put his head out of the window and said:

"What's going on?"

"Nothing; a dog died," said Vidin Gaben.

At that time I was at the American Orphanage of Partizak and saw everything. Thus Vidin Gaben avenged his people, because that was the last straw.\*

## 217 (217).

### MELINÉ TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1905, Biledjik)

Until the disaster of Izmir, we lived in Biledjik. The Turks came and wanted to drive the Greeks from Izmir. The Greeks said, "We have made great sacrifices,

whatever we occupied we will set on fire." They connected the electric wires and set the city on fire. At that time, I was sixteen years old. The Greeks wanted to

\* The 82-year-old eyewitness survivor, inhabitant of the "Ararat" Armenian national old-age nursing home in Los Angeles, Karapet Poponian had kept Vidin Gaben's photograph as a sacred relic, which he showed to me, in 2001.

destroy all that they had built.

Then we came to Banderma. For one night, we stayed on the seashore in the open air. Then a charity organization sent a special ship to free the Armenians. The ship came on the second day. The Armenians got on. The ship weighed anchor; the seashore was still full of Armenians.

Kemal caught the Armenians, filled up a tunnel with

them, had kerosene poured on both sides, and burnt up all the Armenians. I saw it with my own eyes. Those young people, who could swim, began to swim. Our ship sailed, the young people approached another ship by swimming up to it, to be taken on board – but boiling water was poured on them from the ship. The steam was rising, all the Armenian young boys died in the water. I will never forget that scene...

## 218 (218).

### GAREGIN ABRAHAM HISHEYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1896, Adabazar)

Adabazar was captured by Lenk Timour, in 1399, when he invaded Western Armenia and put to fire and sword the whole province of Sebastia (Svaz), in 1400, carrying out a mass massacre. Only 400 Armenians escaped the carnage and, fleeing day and night through the mountains, settled down on a marshy and humid area. They engaged in agriculture, partly in handicrafts, and they named the locality Tonikavan after their leader, but later the Turkish government changed it to Adabazar.

In 1915, Adabazar had a purely Armenian population of 30,000, which had a high cultural-illuminative level, second only to Constantinople.

Our family consisted of 8 people: my father, Abraham, my mother, Aghavni, myself, my four sisters and brother, Arshalouys, Nver, Harginé, Mariam and Hakob, besides there were also my grandmother, Mariam and my two bachelor paternal uncles.

Before the war, they [Turks] collected all the Armenian males and sent them to build roads. The party-activists were sent to the gallows under the pretense of hiding arms. The Armenians had a private bank. In general, trade and medicine were under the control of the Armenians. They had 10 doctors and 4 pharmacies. One daily newspaper was published. They were engaged also in farming, silkworm-breeding and silk-spinning. The Armenians owned three spinning-mills where Armenian women and young girls worked, and the manufactured goods were sent to Europe.

The order of the government was to deport all the Armenians. They packed us in cattle-wagons and took us to the small town of Ereyli, near Konia. Before reaching there, they detained us in the locality called Karaman, so that the Turkish rabble could rob and plunder us, beat us, disgrace

and abduct our women and girls, since the right to do anything with the Armenians had been given to every Turk. We then reached Ereyli and later Bozanti, which was on the border of Cilicia at the beginning of the Taurus mountains.

In Ereyli they ordered us to get off the wagons and to rest in the open field or to pitch tents until a new order came. Those who had money moved to the town of Ereyli, those who had no money were obliged to continue on foot to Der-Zor.

In Ereyli Plain it happened that a gendarme on horseback appeared from nowhere and attacked the people sheltered under the tents and massacred them or drove them forcibly, where to? Nobody knew. You had only to go on foot, hungry and thirsty, until you fell down on the road; and thus till Der-Zor. Those who were able to reach there fell into the clutches of the Kurds and were slain or, if they had some money left, they bribed the murderers and somehow saved their lives. We came back again to our house in Ereyli, but we hid in the stable. Little by little, I started to work, first as a coachman, then as a baker.

Then I was drafted into the army. They took me to Constantinople, Bozanti, Intilli and later to Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo, where I met my paternal uncle and wanted to escape, but they found me. Then I fled again. I reached Adabazar and found my relatives. In 1921, when they definitely drove the Armenians out of Turkey, I went to Rumania, to Constantza and thence to Hungary, to Budapest. Later I went to Greece, to Salonica, where my relatives had moved. On December 14, 1924, we came from Salonica to Soviet Armenia by ship. I have worked with the repatriate sculptor Ara Sargsian. I have engraved on wood and have been honored with diplomas.

## 219 (219).

### ARTAVAZD KARAPET KTRADSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Adabazar)

A man should be a man, whether he is an Armenian or a Turk.

I was born in 1901, in Adabazar. In 1913 in a betrayal, Germany became on good terms with Turkey

and the Armenian youth were taken to work in the 'Amelé tabour.' Those who were taken there were made to work on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad. The Armenians built that railroad.

The emperor of Germany, Wilhelm, gathered the Kurds in his country and sent them to Turkey. The Turkish government also left us in their hands. The Turks took away Grigor Zohrap and killed him; and they crushed the heads of many others with stones. Only Komitas was left alive. They took the Armenians to Der-Zor. There were corpses on the two sides of the roads. People died, their relatives were not allowed to bury them, so they had to leave them in the open air and continue onwards. The jackals came and devoured their corpses. On all sides, gendarmes surrounded us. Along the way, we drank muddy water. In the desert of Pap, the gendarmes were going around with flaming torches and burning people. They burnt my father and his brother Karapet. We went by unknown roads; those who stayed behind were made to catch up under the strokes of the whip. People fell ill with typhoid and cholera. From starvation, we lost our eyesight. I walked holding my mother by the skirt because I could not see. I used to say to my mother, "Throw me into the Euphrates. I'd rather die than live blind."

Mother did not throw me into the river. On the way, a gendarme came up to my mother and said, "Valide, nereye gidiyorsınız?" (Mother, where are you going? – Turk.).

"Allah biliyor (God knows – Turk.). Wherever God will take up my soul."

"We're taking you to slaughter like sheep."

My mother said, "Slaughter this one and that one, then butcher the other one, butcher me, too. I'll pray for you."

The gendarme said to my mother, "Mother, gather your people. I'll drive the horse forward, as if I don't see you. Run away."

Mother gave him a few gold coins and, looking, for our people, called, "Vardouhi, Siroush, Arshalouys, Haykanoush, Sirvard, walk close to me."

To run away, but where to? We lay down on the ground in the mud, between the corpses, among bloodstained people so that nobody would see us. When the footsteps stopped, we stood up and went back. There was a commercial khan called Hamam. We entered there. I did not see, but it was as though we slept there.

The next day, the Turks surrounded us again. Mother also gave money. They sailed us across the Euphrates and told us to go to Rakka. I was walking, holding mother by her skirt. We arrived at a place. It was a house that only had walls; there was no roof. Mother hid the girls there. She went to sweep before the shops. By begging, she managed to bring us something to eat so as not to die of hunger. There were some people from Sassoun there. They gave mother some bread and some food. Mother

brought these to the girls and me to eat.

Almost all the time, I walked holding mother by the skirt. One day a man asked my mother, "What has happened to the eyes of this child? Go and buy nabat-sugar for forty paras."

Mother said, "We don't know what a para is. We have forgotten paras."

That man said, "You wait here."

He went and brought a piece of nabat-sugar and said, "Take it and crush it into powder. Boil the water, cover it well, and keep the boy's face on the steam. Then put the sugar powder in his eyes, close them and put him into bed."

Mother did as she was told. In the morning, she did the same again. Suddenly I felt that I was beginning to see. I was seventeen years old then. We remained in Rakka. Arabs lived there. When my eyes opened, I began killing cats and dogs and took them to our people to eat. We were hungry. We had no money. We had no job. I asked the Arabs for alms.

And suddenly the locusts came. The sky could not be seen. A boy came up to me saying, "Brother are you Armenian? Where are you from?"

"I'm from Partizak. My name is Karapet Ktradsian"

I became friends with that boy. Later, he also came to Armenia; he became a lecturer at the University.

Then there was the truce. We were taken to Aleppo. In Aleppo, from Bab-el-Faradj, we came to the station of Constantinople, again to Adabazar. Mother went to our village with her two brothers. I was sent to Skyutar to study. My feet were covered with wounds by walking on the roads of exile. We went to the Constantinople National Custody to be sent to an orphanage. But we were told that the orphanage kept only children who had lost both of their parents. I had to return. Suddenly I heard a girl call, "Artavazd, what are you doing here?"

"I have come to be admitted to the orphanage but they won't take me as I've got an aunt."

She was one of the girls who had escaped with us. She went and asked on my behalf; in this way, I was admitted. I was taken to Yedikulé to the hospital of the Holy Savior built by Ghazar Artin. The wounds of my feet were cured; they treated me.

Then my mother called me over to Greece. It was already 1921. I remained in the Midili Island for two years, and then we went to Drama.

In 1924, we came to Armenia. We were brought to Leninakan (now: Gyumri). Winter came; the place was covered in ice. We were not accustomed to this kind of cold; bit by bit, we got used to it.

In 1941, I went to take part in the Great Patriotic War. I reached Germany. I was wounded three times. My family had received the 'black paper' notifying them of my death; they had cried and lamented. Then I returned home with medals.

**220 (220).**

**VAZGEN HOVSEP SADATIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Adabazar)**

In 1915, they deported our family to the deserts. We were two rich families, and our parents agreed with a Greek, who owned a hotel, to keep us in his cellar. In this way, we were saved, but the rest were exiled to Der-Zor.

We remained in that cellar for more than a year. For every day, we paid one gold coin. When our money finished, this Greek, with the help of his Turkish acquaintances, organized us to be the washers of Turkish soldier's clothes. In that way, we remained free until the truce of 1918. Then we returned to our house. The Turks had occupied our house.

Later we heard that my uncle, Bishop Smbat Sadatian had also been deported together with the other Armenian intellectuals on April 24, 1915 to the deserts. They had taken him, forced him to dig his grave with his own hands, they had killed him, and thrown him into the pit.

In 1920, the Greeks came and occupied our town, but in 1922 they fled. We also fled together with them to Izmir. Christians had assembled there in great numbers. Several thousand Armenians had gathered in the main Armenian Church. All of us were waiting for the time when the Turks would come and slaughter us. We collected money, wrote a letter in French saying that a

massacre awaited us. A boy, speaking Turkish, reached the French Embassy. The Ambassador came under the French flag with his group, and took the Armenians who were in the church to the seaport, where there were many Armenians and Greeks. French, Italian, British cruisers had dropped anchor at a distance. One by one, soldiers came out of the ships to watch so that the Turks would not butcher us. But the Turks came by night to kidnap girls: turmoil and confusion started. Flares were lit by those on the ships so that the Turks became scared and ran away.

We remained in the open air for about a month. At last, we were transported to Greece by Greek ships. They did not ask if we were Armenians or Greeks. The people rushed; many were trampled down. Everyone wanted to save his own life. They accepted us very well in Greece and kept us there.

In 1932, we came to Armenia as repatriated people.

In 1949, we were exiled to the Altay territory as Dashnaks. We remained there for six years. I worked as a tailor.

At last, in 1956, we were declared innocent and came back to Armenia.

**221 (221).**

**HAYKOUHI AZARIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1908, Adabazar)**

In Adabazar, even the Turks spoke Armenian. When World War I started, they filled the church up with the well-known men in the town and, by beating them, forced them to hand over their weapons. They closed the doors of the church. Everything had to be done inside – eating, drinking, sleeping, and even natural needs. You can just imagine how the church was desecrated. For ten to fifteen days, the males remained in the church. The Turks started searching for weapons in every house. In the gardens, they even turned up the trees, the flowers looking for hidden weapons under the ground. Many people handed over their weapons to be freed. Many came out of the church so beaten, tortured, their feet, nose and mouths swollen, that they could not endure it and died.

Our house, which was high and built of stone, had a section beside it where silkworms were cultivated. At that time, it was occupied by the Turk askyars and the officer, together with his assistant, remained in a room in our house. Every morning they came out for their morning exercises in our garden.

They had beaten up my father but he had not confessed that he had a weapon buried in the garden.

The Turk officer, who lived in our house, called my grandmother one day and said, "Mariam Hanem, we're going to deport you. Come; let me send your family to my family in Constantinople."

The exile started. They drove the Armenians out of their houses shouting, "Kalkın, çıkın, yıkın, gidin!" (Get up, get out, pull it down, go away! – Turk.). We heard those words right up to Ereyli. That was their slogan.

The gendarmes came and forced us out of our houses. Where could we go? There were gypsies in the mountains. Everybody put his goods out in order to sell. Who would buy? They began taking everything away: the plunder began. The gypsies came, whatever they saw in the streets, they took away.

The whole town was deserted. Where should we go? The order came, "Go to the station."

We had a Turkish neighbor. He was a peasant. He brought his cart and told us to put on it what we wanted to; he would take us to the station. The station

of Adabazar was called Arifié. We went to the station. We saw everybody had gathered there with his or her relatives, uncles, and aunts. There would not be enough room in the train to carry so many people. Finally, a train arrived. Orders came to leave our possessions and get on the wagons. Everyone got on, leaving everything in the station. Crushed against each other, we arrived in Eskishehir.

As soon as we got off the train, a heavy rain started. The people became wet, whatever was on the ground floated on the water's surface. It was a terrible rain. Probably it was the first caravan. There were three hundred thousand Armenians in Adabazar.

The following day was sunny. The people began drying their wet things in the sun. We sat in the station, and the gendarme stood behind us. My mother asked the gendarme to let us go and sit in the shade for the sun was burning. The gendarme said, "You have so many girls, give one of them to me, and I'll let you go and sit in the shade."

My mother said, "I won't give you any and I'll sit in the sun." I remember this well. We stayed there for a few days. We saw that they began gathering the Armenians of Eskishehir as well, and put them on board the train with us.

My uncle's son, Vagharshak Azarian, was an officer at the Eskishehir railway station. The two brothers worked there. They saw us and said, "They're going to deport you. At least leave one of your daughters here."

But my mother would not leave any of us.

Later Vagharshak offered to send Grigor Zohrap back to Constantinople but he had refused.

We reached Konia. We stayed there for a while. Then they gathered the Armenians of Konia, those from Adabazar, Eskishehir and other places, and put us again on board a train and we reached Ereyli. They gathered the people from there as well and deported us all together...

They filled the Armenians in immense, endless deserts.

They set us off on foot until Bozanti, an ancient Byzantine town. We remained there for quite a long time.

News arrived that if we went forward, they would slaughter us. That was why father lingered, delayed; he did not want to move forwards...

On an open vast patch of land, the Armenians, who had gathered from different places, had pitched tents with rugs, colorful cloths, swarming with flies. There was neither water nor bread.

The Turks came and asked, "Ne var satılık?" (What do you have to sell? – Turk.).

The mothers would say, "Bit var satılık, alırsınız?" (There are lice to sell, will you buy? – Turk.), as we had already become infested with lice.

The Turks with gendarme uniforms on and with criminal faces came and pulled down our tents, saying,

"Kalkın, çıkın, yıkın, gidin!" (Get up, get out, pull it down, go away! – Turk.).

Many people went. We lingered, we erected the tents again, entered inside so as not to go. My father used to say, "Let's not move on. Let's stay here as long as we can."

Mother and my sisters had already fallen ill with typhoid, only father and I did not fall ill, but later I fell ill with a fever.

My father thought of renting a house to look after the sick.

The gendarme said, "Where are you going?"

Father explained, "I want to rent a house and look after the sick."

"They are sick; let them die," said the hard-hearted gendarme and struck father on the neck with the whip. Blood burst out...

Our guilt was that we were Armenians and wanted to rent a house for ourselves. The sick ones were already lying down, and so was I. Father alone looked after us. But there was an order that there should not be males in houses. During the day, father wandered in the forest. At night, he came home secretly; he used to bring raisins. Then we heard that bakers and the families of soldiers would not be taken to exile. That was why every day father bought some dough for five paras, rubbed it on his clothes as if he were a baker...

The sick with typhoid ate raisins and bread. Each night that father came home safe and sound, we rejoiced. I do not know whether raisins and bread helped us or God did, because little by little, my mother and sisters began to recover though they were still in bed. I could just look after the sick and cleaned out the chamber pots.

One night I dreamt that a bearded man near the toilet said, "My daughter, don't worry, you will be saved." I recognized him from the picture on the church dome. As he said this, I became glad, came, and told my mother, "I've dreamt such and such a dream."

Mother said, "He is Father God; the sick recover by God's wish." And actually, they recovered without any medicines.

One day from the upper part of the balcony of the toilet, my aunt's daughter shouted, "Haykouhi, where do you live?"

"We live in the attic."

"I'll come to see you."

She came but it was impossible to help each other. At least we found each other in that turmoil... My aunt's husband and my father considered where to take these sick people.

My aunt's husband, my father, and Souren Fesdjian's father, Tigran efendi, were the sons of two sisters. They met each other and said that a Greek would take us, with a bribe, through the Taurus Mountains under Greek names to where workers were sought to work on the

Berlin-Baghdad railway, to work as blacksmiths, but they had demanded three hundred gold coins. Out of all of our large and small families, we had only three men. These three tradesmen would pretend to go to open up a tunnel for the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Tigran efendi had some money. He gave two hundred gold coins and the rest of us one hundred, divided half by half between my aunt's husband and us. We emptied our belts and sat on donkeys. That Greek would take us out of Bozanti with passes. By night, we set off on mules with what remained of our property: pots, pans, and a wool-comb, there was nothing else. We were sick; we could not walk. How could we climb the Taurus Mountains? Tigran's family had four members; we were ten to twelve persons. The mules and the donkeys would climb up the Tash Durmaz (Stones would not stand – Turk.) to the top of the mountain, which was in the middle of the Taurus Mountains. Teodik also was with us. He, as an educated person, had given money to come with us. There were no villages around. There were only the workers working on the tunnel. All of them were deserters who had run away from the 'Amelé tabour.' We were to ascend to Ghoushchoular Village. They placed us in military barracks. We were three families: the family of my mother's sister, the Fesdjians, and ourselves. We were all in one room but we had freed ourselves from exile. Fesdjian would say, "This isn't tolerable; we need hammers to crush the lice." The barracks swarmed with lice left by the soldiers. In the morning, our three males got up and went to work as blacksmiths.

My father, a tailor, who had never worked with a hammer, struck his fingers with the hammer causing severe pain. You can imagine: in that way they were to dig a tunnel for the Berlin-Baghdad railroad! All the engineers were Germans. For the first time, I saw an electric bulb there. They dug the tunnel until the end of the war, and the railroads were joined together.

Souren's mother had two uncles: Nerses and Petros. They acted as German officers; they went to remote places, brought Armenian orphans, and gave them to my grandma to keep until they found some way of helping them.

One day, Petros and Nerses, who had received their education in Germany and were good officers, came to take Souren's father and mother to the railroad and then organize their passage to Constantinople. First, they took the two children, then their father and mother, until Khachkeren (the name of that place was from the Armenian word Khach = Cross, Crusaders), and we remained there until the truce. All of us were forgiven. But we did not understand what wrong we had committed. We came back but our number was greatly reduced. One had lost a mother, the other a sister, someone a father, brother... And so, crying and lamenting, we went back to Adabazar.

Our house was destroyed, but Turks lived there. My grandmother evicted them; they went away. Our honest, laborious and creative people began to build their houses again. The houses of my uncles remained empty. My father bought a sewing machine and opened a shop.

We had hardly returned to our former selves, when the millidjis arrived. The millidjis were nationalists; they were armed. We were astonished. They were not the poor Turks defeated in the war. The millidjis, armed to the teeth, came and started doing their job. Kemal had organized them to drive out the Armenians, Greeks – all those who were not Mohammedans...

Again my cousin Nerses came and said, "Be quick, run away, the millidjis have come; they'll slaughter us."

We left the house, all what we had and the shop, father had just opened, and we went to Izmir. That was good: the Greeks brought steamships and helped the Armenians and the Greeks to flee to Greece. The Kemalists soldiers were burning the villages they came across...

We came to Greece; we were saved. The Greek government sheltered the Armenian immigrants from Adabazar, Eskishehir, Izmir; even schools were closed to accommodate us. Daily, each person was given two drakhmis. The immigrants were given houses. We remained in Drama, Kavalla, and then Salonica...

In 1925, we were repatriated and came to Armenia.

"Come on, let's go" said my father. "Let's become free from the Turks' hands." We came here, to Yerevan. I received an education. I studied in an evening school. I joined the Comsomol then I went to study in Tbilisi: on Sundays, I went to political courses, studied at the ZKU University. There, I was admitted into the Communist Party. I met Matsak. I was an energetic, clever girl. We had just obtained our freedom. I got married. We lived in a hostel. I became a mother in Tbilisi. I became a party activist. First, I worked at the Comsomol Central Committee. I took part in the reforms of villages by organizing kolkhozes. Then came 1937. People were arrested. I was the head of the propaganda of Comsomol Central Committee. I was accused of having links with foreigners. At that time, Anastas Mikoyan came to Yerevan. [Communists] Amatouni, Yengibarian, Abouljian had already been arrested. Mikoyan said, "What's this? You have arrested only scholars. Aren't there people's enemies in the Comsomol, too?" My husband also was arrested as a people's enemy. They put a sheet of paper before my husband to sign. My husband would not sign, Shaghbatian did sign. He also was an orphan. They sent him to exile in Siberia to cut trees in the forests and marshes. His wife got boots for her husband, took them to Siberia, to put on while working in the marshes. The wife went and reached the camp door with great difficulties but the guard would not let her in. He had said, "Come be with me, then go in to see your husband." The woman had not consented: she came

back with the boots still in her hands without seeing her husband.

So they arrested my husband, too. I was dismissed from the party in a meeting as a people's enemy. I heard from outside that the meeting was to take a decision on me and I was crying. An acquaintance of mine, a boy, came, held me by the hand, and offered to take me home. I told him to have nothing to do with me for he also might be blamed as a people's enemy. Do you know what pain this is? After so much respect, to be given the label of a people's enemy, my husband imprisoned, and

I, dismissed from the party. I became unemployed. We had many hungry, difficult days with my children. Then, I was obliged to learn photography. I began to work; my children were young; they became very weak. The war started. The men went to the front. I worked, supported my family. Then my husband returned. We were both reinstated. I began working at the state archives as a photographer. My husband could not endure all these emotional disturbances: he passed away.

Now I'm a retired pensioner. I am a Labor and Party Veteran. I live with my son's family.

## 222 (222).

### SIRVARD ANDREASSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1908, Adabazar)

We were driven on foot from Adabazar to Afion-Garahissar. They said, "Kalkın, çıkın!" (Get up, get out! – Turk.). We reached Konia in two days. There, the Armenians pitched tents. We entered the town. Mother, mother's sister, and I were together. My father was a soldier in the Turkish army. Father had written to my uncle, Dr. Tiriakian, "Set our family free."

In this way, my mother's brother learnt that we were in Konia. On a Friday, when Enver pasha went to the mosque, uncle, a well-known doctor in the Turkish army, saluted the soldiers, knelt before Enver and said, "Efendim, I have come to beseech you. I have no father, no mother. I have two sisters who are in exile. Give an order to free them."

Enver pasha highly respected my uncle. He ordered that Dr. Tiriakian's family be sent back.

The gendarmes came and executed Enver's order. On a Sunday, we were told, "You'll go." We were taken back to Adabazar by train.

Then the Kemalists drafted my uncle to the army and took him from Bursa to Eskişehir.

In 1921, we escaped from Adabazar to Midilli, facing Izmir. There I learnt dressmaking. It was a rich town, but there was no work. First the Greeks were freed, then the Armenians.

We went to Macedonia by ship, and from there we came to Armenia.

## 223 (223).

### LOUSIK BODOURIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Adabazar)

I was very young, but I remember it as in a haze. We lived in Adabazar when they came and drove us into exile. They took us to Konia on foot, then to Karapınar, and from there to Eskişehir. They slaughtered all the Armenians on the road, and my mother's brother Harut, who had run away from the Turkish army, was placed on pine branches and burned before our eyes. The fat that melted from his body dripped just like gum. My mother composed the following song for her brother, Harut. She

used to sing and cry:

"Çamdan sakız akıyor,  
Harut bana bakıyor,  
Bakma, Harut, kardaşım!  
Ciyerimi yakıyor."

*"Gum is dropping from the pine,  
Harut is looking at me,  
Don't look, Harut, my brother!  
You're burning my soul and heart."*

## 224 (224).

### MARY YERKAT'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Adabazar)

Mihran Khalfa, my mother's brother, who was a Turkish army doctor of a high rank in Ankara, had

become a victim only six months earlier, when in 1915, they [the Turks] came and deported us. Every person left

his property, home, and hearth and went on exile.

I was young, but I remember it well. Mother took all the china, porcelain, whatever valuable vases we had, antique mirrors hanging from the walls and, filled with anger, shattered them on the floor saying, "They won't remain for the Turks; I'd rather smash them." I filled my toy dolls in a tin box. Mother put some food in it, took it to the cart, and placed it there. We were just going to get on the cart, when it overturned. My grandma fell off onto the cobblestones and broke her arm. There was neither doctor nor facilities. And we set off towards Eskişehir.

They took us to Eskişehir and we were housed in an overcrowded inn. The neighboring inn, which was dark and dirty as ours, sheltered all the intellectuals deported from Istanbul. All of them wore suits, starched collars and ties but these were in tatters. Every night we heard their lamentations and sighs because the Turkish officers and policemen beat them ruthlessly. After a few days, they took them all away. We heard that they had killed them after severe tortures.

They did not exile us because my uncle Mihran, who had been a doctor in the Turkish army, had recently fallen in battle. We remained there. My mother always used to cry, recalling her brother who had died so young.

Mother really loved the arts. While leaving the house, she remembered to take her favorite violin with her. During these sad moments, mother picked up her violin, played some sad music, and cried.

In that khan, we had neither table nor chair. Mother painted kneeling on the floor. I remember, one day she painted a lion that was devouring a small lamb. She had in mind her innocent, young brother who had fallen a victim in the Turkish army.

One day, Turkish officers came again. They wanted to deport us again, this time towards Baghdad. Mother, however, spoke to them again, told them about her brother, showed documents and again because of my uncle being a victim in the Turkish army, we were saved.

After the truce, we were taken to Constantinople by ship. From Constantinople, we went to Egypt. And from Egypt, we came to Armenia in 1947.

Here I began working at the Pioneer Palace as a handicraft and needlework teacher.

My work has been highly appreciated: several times, they have been exhibited both in our country and abroad. Many times, I have had private exhibitions where my needlework, dolls with Armenian customs, and flowers have been displayed.

My dream is to have these printed in a color book.

## 225 (225).

### SIRENA ARAM ALAJAJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Adabazar)

Once we were in paradise – we then fell into hell. How many times did they change my name, how many times my family has been changed!

In 1915, I was five years old when the people of Anatolia were exiled. I was among them.

I am not happy that I survived and my heart bleeds when I remember my parents. We were silkworm cultivators. Martin Hakobian, together with my father, Aram Alajajian, cultivated silkworm cocoons, filled them in boxes, and sent them to Arabia. They destroyed all, spoilt what we had. Now when I go to Adabazar and see our house, I cry remembering our past life. Do you see my face? The Arabs have tattooed my face, pricking with pins and pouring blue ink in order to make me a fellah Arab.

During World War I, the Turks were with the Germans. America, France, England, and Italy were allies against them.

The war broke out. All the foreign consuls had to leave the country. For the first time, they gathered our fathers, brothers, and brothers-in-law, who were over twenty, and said that they would become Turkish soldiers.

They called my father from the Russian consulate

and said, "Leave the country immediately; your life is in danger."

My father and mother were busy with their silkworms and I was at my grandma, who was a hadji. So my father and mother immediately left the country for Russia. The war started, the roads were closed. There was no permission to leave the country. They hired a Turkish man and sent him to find us, but he had not been able to find us because the Turkish gendarmes had surrounded the village. No one could go out; whoever tried was killed on the spot.

My father had buried twelve tins of gold coins, but I was deported with my hadji grandma – taking nothing with us. We had only the clothes we wore. At night, we became wet under the rain; in the morning, we dried out with vapor steaming from us.

For four years during the war, we wandered in the mountains, hungry and thirsty. The Turks sold bulghur. Hadji grandma bought it. We filled it in our pockets and ate it like hens. Wherever we went, there were dead people on the ground. They were those who had gone before us. They had become all black; they had fallen one on top of the other. The war ended after we reached

Der-Zor. The Europeans defeated the enemy. The roads opened.

On the road of exile, my grandma died beside me. She was old; she could not stand the hunger and exhaustion. Well, everything happened. The gendarmes on horseback used to whip us and shout, “Yorum” (Walk – Turk.).

Der-Zor was the worst place: the heat dried up your breath. There was no grass on the ground to eat. I remained a solitary orphan. I was wallowing in the sands when they found me. An Arab husband and wife took me to their tent. My new Arab mother sat and began clearing lice from my head. She gave me a bath. She burnt my dirty clothes, made me put on her clothes; I looked neat and tidy. I must say that they very much loved me. They had no child; they took me as their own child. I used to sing for them, acted plays. My Arab father would give me forty paras to buy candies. They put golden bracelets on my hands and feet, and I had a wonderful golden necklace. But afraid of losing me, one day they seized me by my hands and feet and began to prick my face with blue ink down to my breast. I shouted from the pain but there was no one to hear me. In fact, this was their custom; they had made me into an Arab.

Throughout the war, I remained with them in the desert. When truce came, the Americans came to gather the Armenian orphans. They asked me, “Eshou esmak?” (What is your name? – Arab.).

I said, “Meyram.”

“Your father’s name?”

“Abou Emin,” - I gave my Arab father’s name.

“Your mother’s name?”

“Hadji Essum,” - I gave my Arab mother’s name.

The Arab policeman, who had been promised one gold coin for each Armenian orphan he found, said to me, “Daughter, you can’t be an Arab.”

Actually my hair was blond, my eyes were blue; they used to call me ‘Moscov’ as my hair was also slightly curly. The Arab policeman said, “You’re Armenian, your father and mother are in Aleppo; they are waiting for you.”

I was frightened; I shouted and cried, “Emmi, don’t let them take me.”

The policeman said to me, “Daughter, what town are you from?”

I was looking at my mother’s face: what should I say?

They understood that I was afraid. The American said to my mother, “Hanem, this child is afraid of you, please, go out.”

My Arab mother went out of the room.

The American put me on his lap, gave me some candy-chocolate. I thought that they were kind people. The American said, “Child, how do people make the cross on their face?” And he started to put his three

fingers from his forehead to his breast, as if he was crossing his face.

When I saw this, I said, “Lé (No – Arab.), not that way but this way.” And I began crossing my face with my right hand and three fingers joined.

As the Americans saw this, they clapped gladly and said, “Bravo, she is Armenian.”

In this way, they understood that I was an Armenian. The Arab woman ran in and said, “What did you say that these people laughed and clapped?”

I said in surprise, “I said nothing.” It never occurred to me that crossing my face was proof of my being a Christian.

The Arab policeman said, “Let’s take her to Aleppo. Let them decide there what she is.”

They put me on horseback and took me away. My Arab mother walked behind us. At a distance, she saw a donkey in the water; she rode it and followed us. When we came out of the village, I saw my Arab father had also come, he opened his arms, embraced me, and said, “Meyram, even if they take you to the king’s palace, come back to our house.”

I was taken to Aleppo. We entered a large building. There were two Indian soldiers standing on both sides of the door. They kept my Arab mother outside. She stood there alone together with her donkey. They took me in. The secretaries were sitting at tables and typing. They said to me, “Taali” (Come here – Arab.).

They asked for my father’s and my mother’s names again. I gave my Arab father’s and mother’s names. I was already nine year’s old then. The American said, “No, you’re the daughter of an Armenian. You must tell us the truth so that we may free you from them.” Whatever they did, I would not tell.

“But you crossed your face,” said the American.

There, for the first time, I saw a man who was talking to a piece of wood in his hand. I thought to myself, “Medjnun” (He’s mad – Arab.). In fact, it was a telephone. We came out of the building. I saw my Arab mother waiting with the donkey. I hugged her; both of us began to cry. An Arab pasha came up to us, saw us and said, “Woman, I had taken in and kept twenty-five [children],” and he began to cry for he had been keeping them in order to have children from them.

The Americans took me and put me in a car. I had not seen any cars before. I thought it would fly. They took me to Rev. Aharon’s orphanage. After a few days, Miss Mary Kinn, the principle of Adabazar American orphanage, wrote to Rev. Aharon to send her fifteen Armenian girls, who were good students. The school manager Karpis took me with the other girls, and we set off. All at once, I heard someone behind me calling; a woman wrapped in a yashmak. She opened her yashmak to show her face. I saw that she was my Arab mother. The poor woman had been waiting in front of our orphanage,

hoping to take me back. But they put us on board a train and took us to Adabazar. In the orphanage, we were put to bed each of us next to another girl. Under Miss Mary Kinn's leadership, all of us got a higher education. I spoke English like a 'nightingale.'

One day, Miss Mary said, "Here you'll forget your English. Come, let me send you to Constantinople, there you'll become a governess in a rich house."

I began crying: I had no mother, no father; I had taken Miss Mary as my own mother; we loved each other so much. And she respected me highly as an intelligent, conscious and active person. She gave me a letter of recommendation to take to a certain family in Constantinople.

I went to Constantinople. Many, many people would look at me and say, "She is my daughter." I did not say anything.

Martin Hakobian was still alive; he saw me, recognized me, and said, "Do you know that your mother and father are no longer alive?"

I began to cry.

"Never worry; I'm here, I will stand by you."

The Greek war started. They went to England. Violet and Edwin Lafontaine took me to their house. They brought me up; their children grew up with me. They loved me very much. They called me, "Sini, Sini." I remained all the time with them. I educated their children's children, too. I taught them English, I taught them manners. They became good people. Before Hitler's war, they decided to go to England and took their children together with them.

Later, I remained in the houses of Indian and Egyptian princesses. I brought up and educated their children.

In this way, my life passed. During my youth, a very polite Armenian youth met me. He admired my looks and knowledge of languages, but he said that without the blue tattoos on my pretty face, we might have gotten married. So, what the Arabs did with my face was the reason for me to remain all alone in my old age...

## 226 (226).

### KARPIS SAHAK TASHJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1914, Adabazar)

I was one year old at the time of the Armenian Genocide, in my mother's arms. So, I do not remember. But I remember my mother's narratives about the innumerable sufferings they had endured on the roads of the exile, walking with bleeding feet on the desert tracks, about how many times she had been rescued from death,

and I in her arms. My mother always told me: "It was a miracle that we were rescued from that hell!"

I live now at the "Aydsemmik" Armenian old-age nursing home, in Cairo. Thank God! Mrs. Diana Simonian is the chairwoman of this nursing home. I pray day and night for her, since she is our Sun!

## 227 (227).

### HAMBARDZOOM HARUTYUN MARKOSSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1915, Adabazar)

My father Harutyun was drafted in 1914 into the Turkish army and he died there. I was very little when the deportation began. I found myself at the Canadian Hospital in Constantinople where they operated my leg. Then I was transferred, together with other Armenian orphans, to Greece to the Near East Relief orphanage in Corinth. I do not remember how many years I remained there, but I remember that I was always sad – the sadness of an orphan is very distressing. Then I was sent to Switzerland, where I remained for eleven years. They took us, the very young children, to Geneva where there was an Armenian elementary school.

In Switzerland, I found my two brothers, Yervand and Hayk. They were older than I, and when they got a higher education, Yervand became an architect, and Hayk became a mechanical engineer. In 1932 they both moved to Egypt. I studied to be a tradesman and, in

1935, I joined my brothers in Egypt. My eldest brother, Hrant, had gone with other orphans to Egypt at a much earlier period and had invited my mother, Haykanoush, and my sister, Haykouhi, from Constantinople to come and join him in Egypt, and they corresponded with me in Switzerland. However, I did not know my next of kin personally; I knew them only by photographs. My mother and sister had suffered much when they had been forcibly deported. They had witnessed a lot of heart-breaking scenes on the road of exile, and my sister had frequently nightmarish dreams at night and wept in her sleep. It is true that eventually we gathered together, but our childhood was shattered. Then we opened a store in Cairo, but, after a short while, all of them passed away, and I remained alone, once more, as an orphan. For two and a half years I lived, free of charge, at the Indian old-age nursing home. And one day the auditor of

the “Aydsemmik” Armenian old-age nursing home, Mr. Karo Neredian, came and saw me in the crowded room, where 8 people were living, and brought me here, to the Armenian old-age nursing home, where I live better and

more comfortably. I make cups from the dried rinds of oranges and tangerines; I color them and keep myself busy. But I always remember my mournful past...

This is my destiny...

## 228 (228).

### MOUSHEGH SARGIS HAKOBIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1890, Nicomedia, Armash, Khaskal)

We were twelve people in our house. My grandfather, Father Hakob, was the priest of our village St. Hakob Church. My father and my uncle were in the Turkish army. They wanted to take me too. They took me to Constantinople for the medical examination but my height was too short. I was shorter than the line drawn on the wall. They delayed my going to the army for two years. I went to a village and saw the people who prepared linseed oil. I began working for them. All of a sudden, Turkish officers came; they were looking for deserted soldiers. I ran away, entered a Turk's cowshed, and hid. A girl came and asked, “Where is the boy who makes oil?”

The Turkish woman said, “I don't know. Maybe he is in the village.” Then when the girl had gone, she said to me, “Son, go away. If they catch you, they'll kill you and me as well.”

“Oh, God,” I said and came out.

They demolished our house, plundered what was inside, and took away all the animals. On the road of exile, our guards were Chechens without any conscience. While on the road, there came an order to collect a gold coin from each one of us. They were so pitiless that they made us return and walk the same road through hills and valleys again to exhaust us completely. We already had no bread and no water.

My aunt's husband and young daughter died; there was no food, no drink. 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, so that they did not grow up to become mature people. The worst was that my poor grandpa, who was already old, perspired from walking and had to

change his clothes. At that time, his gold watch was lost.

As my father and uncle were in the Turkish army, we were permitted to return. We went back on foot but already few people were left. In this way, we did not reach Der-Zor. We were forced to go to a Turkish village. We settled there. My mother, sisters, grandpa, grandma remained there for three to four years until the end of the war. We worked for the Turks. There was an Armenian woman with us called Yeghissabet. She had told the Turks that the priest's money was hidden in a tin container. The next day the thieves came in the dark and searched for the gold. They did not find any gold. They filled our clothes into sacks, took them on their backs, and went away.

My grandpa, Father Hakob, died from poverty in that Turkish village. He, who as a priest, had buried hundreds of deceased, was buried without anyone to say the Lord's Prayer for him.

In 1918, when truce was declared, we went to our village: Khaskal. We saw our house was empty. Then the Greek-Turk War began. The Greeks came with government soldiers over Izmir, attacked Bursa, and marched forward. With the Greeks were Armenian volunteers under the leadership of Torgom. Kemal entered Izmir and massacred numerous Greeks and Armenians. During Kemal's time, I was taken into the Turkish army. It was very strict in the army. I served in Constantinople.

Ten thousand Armenians were taken to Greece by ships. It included my mother, my grandmother, three sisters, my brother, and me. First, we were taken to Midilli Island. Then we went to Salonica; my uncles were there. We began to work. I became a tanner.

In 1947, we were repatriated to Armenia.

## 229 (229).

### BAROUHI CHOREKIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Nicomedia)

When they sent us into exile, we remained in the desert for twelve months. My three sisters and I fled to the forests. Swimming across the Khabur River (river flowing near Der-Zor), we reached near the Arab

Bedouins. They sheared off our lice-infested hair; they tattooed our face with ink in order to hide our Armenian origin. They gave us their sheep to graze.

There was a military place near Sham (now:

Damascus). It was declared: "All those who have Armenians in their houses, let them bring and deliver them." Our Arab was kind: he did not deliver us.

Later we ran away and entered an Armenian orphanage. From there we went to Greece. And from Greece, we came to Armenia.

### 230 (230).

#### BAROUHI SILIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Nicomedia)

I was born in 1900, in the Ovajak Village, Nicomedia region.

We lived well; we had a nice house. In Istanbul, the Armenian pashas occupied high posts. The Turks feared the Armenians, since trade and everything was in the Armenians' hands. If they wanted, they could even take the government into their hands... That was the reason why the Turks drove us out of our houses and our places and put us on the roads to exile.

We remained in the desert for twelve months. We had no bread, no water, no dwelling place, 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 was lost; we could not find each other. The gendarmes caught my sister-in-law who was pregnant, and made a bet: "What is – girl or boy – inside this gâvur's 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 do not have the same 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.

One day that Arab brought an Armenian boy on a donkey. They called him Abdullah but the boy told me in secret that his real name was Avetis. Our master gave him his sheep to graze.

Near the town of Sham (now: Damascus), there was a military place. It was declared that those who had Armenians in their houses should bring them and hand them over. Our master did not take us there. One day we ran away with Avetis and entered an Armenian orphanage.

From there, we were taken to Greece. There, I worked in the fig plant. Later, in 1928, we came to Armenia.

### 231 (231).

#### EGGHETSİK KARAPET YESSAYAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1901, Nicomedia)

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, Kanli Gechit (Bloody Pass – Turk.), Aleppo, Bab, Meskené, Dipsi, Abou-Arar, Der-Zor. Thus, I have passed through all the towns and localities until Der-Zor.

My mother passed away in Tigranakert. When she was about to die, she said, "My son, Geghetsik, take good care of your sister, I'm dying."

In Meskené, my sister died of hunger and infections. They had dug large pits in which they threw the deceased and the diseased. My father remained on the road, exhausted. I was left alone. I continued the road on foot with the other deportees under the scorching sun. Everywhere on the road were swollen, decayed, naked

and disfigured corpses.

The tortures and torments we endured were countless. Exhausted from walking, we arrived somewhere to rest. The Chechens came and attacked us. They plundered us of what we had. They took off our clothes and took them away. They kidnapped the pretty children. They took away the young women and girls; they raped them, then killed them and threw them into pits. They used to come, take away three to four hundred people, slaughter them, and throw them either into the valley or into the Euphrates River.

The Chechens came to kill the Armenians. The Arabs treated us kindly. Whereas, the Turks and the Chechens took the Armenians; they tortured them, killed and plundered them and ran away. The Chechens wanted to take me and kill me but I ran away and rejoined my people. In Der-Zor, I remained among the Arabs. I was going along the Euphrates. All of a sudden, I heard a voice. I saw two children: a boy and a girl, hardly eight

years old. Opposite me, an Arab woman was watering the donkey. When she saw me, she caught the children. She took them and went away. I remained alone. I went to Tigranakert. There I became friends with a boy, Sargis by name. We both remained with an Arab.

What I want to say is that the Turks: Talaat, Enver, Djemal, deported the Armenian people. The Turks harmed the Armenian people very much. I have suffered immensely. That is why I cannot tell all this without shedding tears. In Der-Zor everybody was looking for their brother, sister and relatives. I lost all of them. I remained all alone. All my people perished with the knife.

I remained with the Arabs. I learned how they cooked, did different things, I learnt everything. They named me Hassan. I used to bring water from a remote

place. Then I ran away from them. The Euphrates had a narrow place. I swam and crossed it. An Arab woman stretched her hand and called, "Taala!" That is, "Come!" And she saved me.

I have very much suffered from the Turk. From Darabasa I went to Djarablous. I wanted to go to Nizip in order to go to Ayntap, Kilis, Katma, and Diarbekir. Finally, I went to Izmit (Nicomedia) from Diarbekir.

At that time, many songs were sung, sad songs, but I do not remember them, I have forgotten them.

Now I am in Armenia. I have fourteen grandchildren. They are married; they have children. Here I have my Nvard, Anoushik, Ashot, and Karapet. They look after me. They are my strength. I have also a son; he is in Arzni. I live with him. His name is Vagharshak. I have lived in Armenia since 1946.

### 232 (232).

#### YEVNIKÉ PAPAŽIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1908, Nicomedia, Armash)

We reached Der-Zor exhausted. Seventeen people lived in one tent. Every morning, one of them was found dead; they were infected by cholera; they died one by one.

One morning, my father woke up, moved someone lying next to him. She was like a log of wood: "Get up, boys. Simit has died." They buried her.

My uncle was an outlaw. One day, he was lost in the mountains. Then he saw some sheep going by themselves. He said to himself, probably they have an owner. He followed them and reached a rich Arab. The Arab kept

my father. He had to carry six large tins of water from the well each day. To obtain the water from the well was difficult: with the tin in his hand, he descended the well, filled water into the tin with a smaller vessel and then took the heavy tin out. In this way, he had remained alive. Thus, we were saved by miracle.

We went to Greece in 1920. I worked in the fig plant together with the other girls, who were rescued from the Genocide as I was.

Then we came to Armenia.

### 233 (233).

#### HAKOB TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1910, Nicomedia, Armash)

In 1915, we were taken to a big valley on Easter Sunday. There were many corpses there. All of them were naked. They were arranged one on top of the other in the shape of a cross, as if they were wooden beams arranged on each other. They had stripped them all, slaughtered them, and then heaped them on each other. Then there came an order from the Ottoman

government that there were all to be buried to prevent cholera. Thousands of people had gathered near the Euphrates. We were in tents. Orders came; the Turks attacked us and began to slaughter the Armenians in order to avoid an international trial for having organized the Genocide. They [Turks] said that they had just "deported" us.

### 234 (234).

#### DOLORES GRIGOR ZOHRAPI-LIEBMANN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1892, Istanbul)

I remember everything. I remember each second of the last night. My father, Grigor Zohrap, came to dinner. We were having dinner. We had hardly finished eating

when there was a knock on the door; two or three men entered the room and took father away. I do not know what they spoke in Turkish; I was a young girl. I knew

two or three words of Turkish, but I have forgotten them and I do not want to remember.

At that time, my mother, Clara, and my sister, Herminé, were at home. My brothers were in Europe: they were studying there. We were two sisters and two brothers. Fortunately, one of my brothers was in Germany, the other in Switzerland. All of us spoke French very well. When I spoke French, they thought that I was French. I have not attended any French school. I have gone to a German school, but we had very good teachers, and also we traveled considerably. Mother used to take us to Europe, to Switzerland. In Constantinople, we lived in Ayaz pasha. It was a European district near the German Embassy where the Azarian's house was. We knew the inhabitants of the building. One of them was a diplomat, the other apartment Azarian had given to his two daughters and sons-in-law, so the house was full of friends.

Many friends came to our house. Father had an office. He was a lawyer, but people came to our house as well. Many times, they would come and say, "Efendi, I have a friend. He has come from Van. Could you spare him a few minutes?" In the next room, father received a most renowned person or a modest person from Van. They would come to see father, receive the advice given them, the small sum of money that father gave, and leave.

My mother was Armenian. Her name was Clara Yazedjian from Constantinople. When our father was taken away, my mother went to the Russian Embassy and told them what had happened. Mother would take my hand and we would go to the houses of Turks we knew. Mother would say, "I entreat you, help us. You don't have the right to treat a person such as Grigor Zohrap in this way. He is a member of the Parliament." No one would listen to her.

Talaat used to come to our house up to that time, I remember him very well. After they had taken father away, Talaat saw me one day in the street. He recognized me, waved his hand, but I turned my head. He always came to our place. Many people came to our house; Talaat would come and play cards with my father. They met in the club. They were close friends, but the Turk's friendship is worth nothing; it's not to be relied on.

After that, they wanted to drive us away too: my mother, sister and our puppy that my brother had brought from Germany. However, we were well known by all the embassies. The ambassadors came together and said, "We cannot allow this family to be driven away. One thing we can do: we must send them out of the country." And they did what was required: they gave us documents to leave the country. We came to Europe. We went to Austria. When we arrived at the border, I spoke German like a German. A German asked, "Why are you leaving?" I said, "If you allow us to pass though the border, then I'll tell you." But I spoke very good German; I spoke

like a German. Our parents had taken care of us in every way. I was a little girl, and played the piano very well. When my father's friends came, they used to say, "Come, play the piano for us." Very often, our father would occupy himself with us. He had a wonderful bedroom, the windows with panes looking onto the Bosphorus. Father went to bed early; he did not like to go out. In the evenings, I used to tell him about the Armenian books I had been reading then, the next evening, my sister would do the same. We read many books. Our father did not give us money. There was a good German library. Mother had gone and said, "If my daughters come here after school for books, give them what they want and send me the bill." But I had no money in my pocket. Here, in America, they put money in the newborn baby's pocket. I did not know of such a thing. From time to time, I hung my wallet on my father's bedroom door; father understood that it was empty and put a gold coin in it.

He felt that during the war, the country's condition was bad, but we did not speak about politics. We saw our father when we sat at table for meals. Whatever father said is in my mind. I used to ask his advice. He said, "You must work hard, you must learn languages well." At home, we spoke Armenian, but when father traveled, he wrote his letters in French because we did not know how to read and write in Armenian. He used to go to Paris, to Austria.

Father loved us very much, but at the same time was very strict with us: he wanted us to work hard. He even gave us a beating if we deserved it. One day he had come to his study. The furniture there was of red leather. The room was closed to us.

"Come in" said father to us. That day my brothers were at home. They went in and each received his share of beating. Sister went in; she also got her share. I was standing in front of the door.

"Come here" he said to me.

"How can I come," said I. "You'll give me a beating" said I and did not get the beating. He loved us very much, but he was very strict.

Of my brothers: Aram, was the younger, Levon was the elder. My elder brother studied to become an engineer-electrician, the younger attended a school in Switzerland. My sister's name was Herminé.

During the war, we remained in Switzerland. Then we went to Constantinople together with mother to see what had happened to our apartment. We had a very well equipped apartment. My sister said, "I won't go to Constantinople. Instead, I can made good friends here." I knew a correspondent of the Swiss paper "Le Temps." He wrote an article about music. I told him about my sister. He said, "Let her not go; I'll take her to Paris." He took my sister to Paris. His wife was a native of France. The Ter-Nersessians were there. Do you know Sirarpi

Ter-Nersessian who became a historian-scholar? She became a professor. They were there, too. Mother sent word to them, saying, "Herminé is coming, take care of her." So, if sister had any difficulty in French, mother would go and ask Sirarpi and Araxy: "What could be done for this girl, so that she could speak French easily?"

We received a few letters from father but they did not come by post. They used to send oil in tins. One of the letters was hidden in the tin otherwise, it would not reach us. A letter came: "Pray for me, may God have mercy on me" were the last words in his letter, and he also disappeared. No more letters came.

We paid rent for the apartment. Its owner, Azarian's children were in our building. We lived on the fourth floor. We have kept up our friendly relations until this day, even with their next generation, with their daughters and grandchildren. I invited her to America. I have seen many places. I have been to many countries. I lost my mother and married in Paris. My brother was in Bucharest, my sister and I went there. My brother had a very good job. Even if they had given me his driver's house, I would have been happy. It was very nice with a garden around it, with everything.

I became acquainted with my husband, Henry, on the Riviera. He had come there with his sister. After that, my brother said to my sister and me, "Come and live with me in Rumania." We went. Of course, life was completely different with him. He had a beautiful house, servants, and a car: he was very successful. It took time for my documents to be prepared to travel to America. My husband produced beer; he had the second largest American beer factory. He was born in America. His family had a beer factory. They had come here, to New York and they had succeeded in that country. He had relatives there. They were not friendly towards me. One of them, my husband's nephew, was a professor of philosophy at the Columbia University. He liked me; his wife also liked me. He passed away last year.

My brother, Aram took to bed with a heart disease. I got news that his condition was serious. I wanted to go and see my brother. I set off on Monday, but Aram did not recognize me; he was in agony.

They wanted dollars to get my brother, Levon, out of Rumania. A great banker came from Vienna. He liked

me as I spoke very good German. He saw that I was in difficulty. He said to me, "You must give money out here and there."

"I'll give," I said. I gave many people money in Rumania. I got my brother out of that country but he was a broken man by then. I was well known in diplomatic circles. One day, I became acquainted with a Dutchman and said, "Let's go and find a job for my brother."

He understood me and said, "I'll find him a job in the Netherlands."

Three weeks later, he called me and said, "I have found a job for your brother; they'll take him."

My brother went to the Netherlands. He did not know Dutch but spoke excellent German: that was why he had gone to Vienna. Then my sister died in New York.

Then I got news that my brother was ill. I went to Vienna; I went to the hospital but my brother had already died.

I took my mother and brought her to Paris. I remember her looks in her final days. My mother was a very beautiful, elegant, and intelligent woman.

After the First World War, we went to Constantinople and sold all that we had. Later, we learned that my father's bank accounts were taken over by the Turks, as well as the money at home. After taking father away, they had come in with the pretext of searching for papers. They had found money and taken it away. What can you expect from the Turks? We left our library in Constantinople. We brought only this carpet. If the memory is not in one's heart, other things can't help.

I had considerable funds. I wanted to found an information center for the church. I wanted to give money for the maintenance of books.\*

A few years ago, I was going along the 3rd Avenue. There was a small shop. I saw through the glass: a man was making shoes. I entered the shop and asked, "Are you Armenian?"

"Sure, I am Armenian," he said.

"If you're Armenian, I am Armenian, too. I am Grigor Zohrap's daughter," I said.

He dropped the hammer from his hand, seized my two hands, and embraced me. That much moved me, even more when scholars would come and tell me more about my father.

All these memories are etched in my heart...

## 235 (235).

### GEVORG ZOULALIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1907, Chanak-Kalé)

Before the mass deportation of the Armenians in 1915, the Turkish authorities enlisted all Armenian males without giving a weapon to any, and massacred them in

different ways and at different locations.

In some places, such as our own town, where there had not been any armed rebellion against the Turkish

\* In 1987, in New York next to the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, the Grigor and Clara Zohrap Information Center started its activities.

government, they trained the Armenian recruits that were to join the Turkish army, but later they took away the weapons from their hands, retaining very few in the army. Those who knew languages were made into good artillery soldiers, engineers, or doctors. The rest were organized into work brigades. All this, for sure, was done with the Germans' advice and before the eyes of the Christian Armenians. The Armenian Christians, unarmed people, were made to work, under whip strokes, in quarries and on road construction. They fell ill, emaciated, and crippled. These were taken away and killed.

It was at this time that my father also was taken to work in a work brigade, together with other Armenians. He was given a wheel-barrow; the others would fill it with earth and he would take this away and dump it. "They made us work with so much cruelty," told my father, "that we were exhausted." One day, the supervisor noticed that he was not able to work fast enough. He ordered him to leave the wheelbarrow behind. Instead, he gave him a pickaxe, but his hands were already swollen. While working, the supervisor noticed that father spoilt what the others did; this time he became even angrier and gave him a spade. Father was very upset, but what could he do? One day, while working with the spade, the construction engineer captain came to check up. While throwing the earth away with the spade, it fell on the captain. In a terrible anger, he came towards father to strike him with the whip. Father immediately took him by the arm and said that he was a tailor, a tradesman, that he had no idea of how to do such tasks, and that he could sew clothes for soldiers and sailors.

Hearing this, the captain immediately changed his mind, lowered the whip, and said, "Leave that spade and come with me."

All the workers were astonished by my father's courageous action and thought that he would be severely punished, but what happened was unexpected. Taking father to a store, he brought out a roll of cloth and said, "Can you make a nice suit for me?" Probably at the same time, he wanted to check whether father was lying, to be given lighter work. Father rejoiced that he would be saved from the working brigade. He said, "With great pleasure, my bey, but with what shall I measure, cut, and sew? Tools are needed."

"You'll be given everything," he said and took father to the inner part of the store.

What does father see! Sewing machines of different kinds, all abandoned by the Armenians.

"Choose a suitable place for yourself and begin working."

Father chose a suitable place and made the suit. The captain put it on. At this time, father understood that he was the chief of the Armenian work brigade.

Father began to make suits and uniforms for the military men throughout the war. It goes without saying

that he was not paid, but sometimes he was given tips.

Father used to tell me that there was a German pilot, Manik by name. Each time he flew, he destroyed an English or a French airplane and each time received a great sum of prize-money. Each time he received the prize, he came to father to have a suit made and he paid well. Father said that when Germany was losing the war, Manik came to say, "Germany kaput (capitulated – German)." There was no hope left for the Turkish soldiers to win. Hungry and emaciated, the army started to break up, and soldiers deserted in groups.

During the First World War, the Armenians lost everything. Terribly aggrieved, the distressed, afflicted survivors scattered all over the world. With no state and no government, having no hope to get any compensation for their losses from the slaughtering and plundering Turkish government, what could be done? How could the suffering people live? No one cared for them. But the Armenian people did not lose hope; they began to look after themselves.

The First World War was ending; the survivors of the Armenian people found refuge in different countries. How would these people live? How would they keep their existence if most of them were not craftsmen? In 1915, during the exile, out of our relatives, my uncle's and aunt's families, were separated from our caravan and driven towards Syria to the vicinity of Damascus. At that time, the Turks and the Germans needed craftsmen. A new order said, "Let all the craftsmen of the caravan be separated with their families and brought to Sham (now: Damascus), in Syria." Those craftsmen survived with their families. Those who were not craftsmen were driven to Rakka and from there, they were taken by other caravans to the deserts of Der-Zor. Thus, a trade saved lives.

Since ancient times people have said about craftsmen: "A craft is a golden bracelet on a person's arm," or, "A craftsman never remains hungry: if he does not get bread till noon, in the afternoon he'll get some for sure." A man is grateful that if a robber has only stolen his money when he has a golden bracelet on his arm. The robber would be surprised as to how it was that he had a golden bracelet on his arm yet he did not see it. The man would say that it is his craft, and that this can never be stolen.

Thus, in a few hours, my father was freed from the 'Amelé tabour' and we could just about escape from the Turkish mob. We remained there for a while. What school? What studies? He who had a craft, worked, he who did not have any craft, idled about until the Greek ships came and took us to the Greek island of Kefalonia. Armenian orphans also were brought there. In September 1922, I had become quite skilled in sewing. My father opened a shop and I began to work with him to keep body and soul together. The Greek State saved us from physical extermination. Those who had a craft worked,

those who did not suffer very much: they sold what they had brought with them to eat. And finally, they became emaciated and died because there was no means on that island to find a job for those who did not have a craft. Even the local people were poor. That island is close to Italy, especially to Sicily, and earthquakes are frequent there. After several years, we learned that a violent earthquake had greatly damaged the island.

In 1922, my father went first to Egypt. Many months passed by. He sent two gold coins and an entry visa in my mother's name. At that time, no state gave the Armenians passports. Father Nansen took the responsibility for our nation, and I with a Nansen "laissez-passer" moved to Egypt in 1924. My father made me an apprentice to someone more skilful than me because the shop belonged to us. And I, for almost a year and a half without father's help, supported our family: mother, father, and brother – as I was not of age yet. All the Armenians had greatly suffered because of the Armenian Genocide and the Izmir disaster.

My wife Shaké's father, Kerobé Agha-Chrakian, a goldsmith, had rendered great help to the Armenian orphans and orphanages in Constantinople. Although he had, as family, three daughters: Sirarpi, Shaké, Adriné, he spent the larger part of his earnings on his 'children,' the orphans. He bought food, clothes, and different things for them. He was so devoted to them that he married many of them with each other, supplying them with a house and a dowry. And the grateful people respected him very highly: he was given the title 'Orphans' father' and was awarded a gold medal.

And my wife's sister, Sirarpi's husband, Garnik Svazlian, at the age of eighteen narrowly escaped the Izmir disaster, throwing himself into the sea and, by

swimming, reached a Greek ship that had taken him first to Greece and then to Egypt. From the 1930s, he wrote many articles in newspapers so that the Armenians dispersed in different countries could be inspired and gather in their Motherland. I remember his play "Nergaghte" (The Repatriation – Arm.), which was staged with great success and enthusiasm in Alexandria, Cairo and other places, and the income was transferred to the repatriation and house-building fund in Armenia.

In fact, people were in an indescribable excitement on the eve of the repatriation. I remember they gave gold coins, so that their number should be drawn out for them to come to Armenia, as soon as possible.

From Egypt, many well-known families came to Armenia with us. For instance, the editor of the newspaper "Arev" (Sun – Arm.), Hakob Aramian, singers Gohar Gasparian and Arminé Toutoundjian, her husband, the psychologist Hovsep Toutoundjian, the singer Mihran Yerkat, his mother, poetess Mari Yerkat, the leader of the Van heroic self-defense struggle, Armenak Yekarian's son and daughter, the historian-writer Smbat Byurat's son, physician-intellectuals such as Garegin Amadian and Shamlian, the cardiologist Zaven Dolabdjian, the writer Perj Zeytounsian, the sculptor Arto Chakmakchian, the artists Hakob Hakobian and Aida Boyadjian, the photographer Andranik Kochar, musician Karo Chalikian, the historians Hakob Nalbandian, Arakel Patrik, Aram Ter-Ghevondian and many-many other well-known families not only from Egypt, but also from France, Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Balkan countries, even from America... From all sides of the world, repatriates came to develop their country. Many brought their wealth and factories and many others – the skill of their hands and brains...

## 236 (236).

### MARIE MIHRAN VOSKERCHIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1913, Izmir)

In 1922, during the Izmir disaster, I was over ten so I can remember it well. That day we were at home. All of a sudden, we heard crying and lamenting from outside. We ran out and saw that our Haynots (Armenian quarter – Arm.) was on fire. The people had left their houses and were running towards the seashore. We, holding mother by her skirt, ran off to the seashore. All the Armenians and the Greeks had gathered there. Crying, lamenting and confusion...; behind us was the fire; in front of us was water. We did not know what to do. There were many boats in the harbor that could take us to the ships which had dropped anchor out at sea but the Turk boatmen understood our difficult state and demanded only gold coins.

Whatever the people had, jewelry, gold ornaments, they took off and gave them up to save their lives.

And many boatmen were mean; after taking the gold and jewelry of the Armenians, they took them on their boat. They rowed the boat out a little, from a hole made beforehand, water would fill the boat. It would turn over and those who could not swim drowned. There were many corpses in the sea. A few young men threw themselves into the water, but those who could not swim swallowed water and got drowned.

My aunt Dsaghik's son, Garnik, who was hardly seventeen, jumped into the sea and began to swim. We all watched him with fear – how would he swim in the deep sea but he swam well. Swimming he reached the Greek ship, which had laid anchor at a distance, got hold of the rope hanging from the ship, climbed up into the ship, and rescued himself.

We, who were standing on the seashore, saw this and were glad that our Garnik had escaped. We remained there for a few days in the open air in despair. After some days, a Greek ship arrived and took us to Greece, Pirea. There we met our Garnik. He said that he had hidden in the funnel of the steamship, had put his straw hat under his head, and had reached Pirea that way. As he was clever, he found a job selling quluria in the streets. Then he went to Egypt and settled there. As he was skilled, he became a goldsmith, opened a small shop, and began working. He also had the ability to write. He wrote a

play “Nergaghte” (The Repatriation – Arm.), which was staged during the years of repatriation, and the income was provided to the fund for house building in Armenia and for repatriation.

We came to Armenia in the 1930’s. In 1947, Garnik Svazlian came to Armenia with his family. We found each other, but he died soon after.

We built our house in the Arabkir district of Yerevan. I married; I had children and grandchildren. I started to breathe freely and now my eyes do not see, but my relatives take very good care of me, thank God.

**237 (237).**

**SOGHOMON ROUBEN YETENEKIAN’S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1900, Mersin)**

...I do not wish my enemy to see what we have seen on our way to Der-Zor. My heart stops beating when I remember all that... Girls and women, three to four hundred in number, untied their belts, fastened themselves together and, one after the other, jumped

into the Euphrates River, in order not to fall into the Turks’ hands. 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...

**238 (238).**

**PETROS KESHISHIAN’S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1909, Tarson)**

Tarson is in Cilicia near Adana, next to Mersin on the Mediterranean coast. The deportation hadn’t started yet. Father had a Turkish friend. He came and said: “Tonight they are going to deport you. You must go

away with your family.”

Father listened to his friend’s words, and we set out immediately.

In this way, we were saved...

**239 (239).**

**GHAZAROS KHRIMIAN’S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1911, Tarson)**

My father was a copper-tinsmith. He also worked as a gunsmith. In 1915, father was already in the Turkish army. Once, by chance, he came to see us and then went away. He had gone, that was all. That was why they did not deport us because we had someone serving in the Turkish army, though we did get news that he had died.

orphanage, Maameltein, where there were one hundred and ten orphans like me. Then they transferred us to an American orphanage.

In 1923, all of us lost our sight because of lack of nourishment. Almost all the orphans of the orphanage caught malaria: one died after the other.

In 1921, I was nine and a half years old when we went to the Syrian sea-port, Latakia. Then we went to Beirut. There, mother placed me in the national

They distributed pencils and paper to write to our relatives in order to come and take us. After that, I was sent to the Antelias Orphanage of Lebanon...

**240 (240).**

**SRBOUHI MAKARIAN’S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1903, Adana)**

I was about twelve years old when the Turkish government brought nearly three thousand soldiers to

organize the deportation of the Armenians of Adana. At the beginning, the Turkish soldiers entered Adana in fear

for they were afraid that the people might rebel.

They drove us on foot: walk and walk... hungry, thirsty, sick and exhausted. There was a place near Der-Zor called Meskené. The Armenians pitched tents and entered them to rest a bit. Daily, they took away about two hundred half dead people to bury. Typhoid decimated the population. One day, they came and wanted to take away my aunt and grandpa who were suffering with the disease. My father asked, entreated, gave his last gold coins so that they would not take away his sister...

That aunt of mine had a thirteen-year-old pretty daughter called Arousyak. One day, we got up and found out that, at night when we were asleep, they had kidnapped her. We looked for her but how would we find her?

Finally, to cut it short, years passed and we were returning to Adana. We were walking with father hand in hand, when we heard that the Armenians had collected and brought back the kidnapped Armenian girls and had gathered them in a house. We also went to have a look.

A stout woman approached us saying, 'Uncle.' Father looked at her, did not recognize her. The Armenian officer who was watching forbade us to approach. Suddenly that woman fell on the ground

crying and said: "Uncle, uncle, I'm Arousyak, don't you recognize me?"

My father heard, ran to her; they stopped us again. "Uncle, help me..."

There was a priest there. My father approached the priest and said: "Isn't there a bathroom here?"

"No, but I'll have her cleaned..."

Father gave some money in order to bathe and clean Arousyak. They bathed and cleaned her and brought to us. We talked till evening. It was evening, we had to part. Next day we would come and arrange it formally. Arousyak said: "Uncle, tell them to change my bed."

Father arranged that as well.

In fact, our pretty Arousyak's Turkish husband had come to Adana, found her place and said, "I'll give you a great sum of money; only give me back my wife."

They came to negotiate with my father. Father wanted time to think it over. He had his other sister's daughter brought in to consider with him. Through her, they asked Arousyak about it. "No, he is a very good man; he treated me very well but I won't be a Turk's wife. I am pregnant but I will strangle my baby."

And so she did. During childbirth she solved all her problems: she killed both the newborn child and herself.

## 241 (241).

### MIKAYEL KESHISHIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1904, Adana)

In 1909, at the time of the massacre of Adana, I was five years old. That horrible night was called in Turkish "Camuz dellendi" (The buffalo went mad). And indeed, the Sultan had gone mad. Following his orders, people were slain, about thirty thousand Armenians were killed, and their houses were demolished and burnt to ashes. ...They gathered all the remaining people and took them to the banks 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 forced us to shout "Padişahım çok yaşa!" (Long live the King! – Turk.). We returned home, but it was too late for those who had already been killed.

After that act of forgiveness a school was opened, the Abgarian School. My father said: "My son, before there was no Armenian school, now they have opened an Armenian school: learn Armenian." I was so happy.

We went to school, but we knew neither the letters nor anything else. It was already forbidden to speak or

to study Armenian and those found guilty not only had their tongue cut, but had hot eggs placed in the armpits to make them confess that they were teaching Armenian to others. And if they confessed, they were sent to the gallows or killed. They brought books for us from Constantinople. We had not learned the letters yet when the sheets of the book were torn. We were uncivilized people; we had seen neither books nor paper. Then the teacher saw that the sheets of the book were torn out. They stuck the letters on boards: A, B, G... We learnt until ...O, F [the first three and the last two letters of the Armenian alphabet – V. S.]. We went to school that year but which year, I cannot remember. In 1915, we learnt addition and subtraction.

In 1915, an edict came that the Armenians should be deported. The order was implemented. Those who remained were those whose relatives had gone into the army as soldiers; their families were not deported.

"Türk dini kabul eder sen: kalın" (If you accept the Turkish religion, remain, if not: go – Turk.). They drove away the people in buffalo carts, on donkeys, some on foot, until Katma. They took us to the same place again so as to exhaust us. They deported us bit by bit to Der-Zor. Our group with many Armenians was driven to

Ras-ul-Ayn, which means in Arabic: Ras – head, Ayn – spring. From there they took us to the desert and killed people, a few at a time. How they did this, I do not know. Our family remained in Ras-ul-Ayn. My father was a carpenter. He used to build military barracks: thanks to this, we remained there. There were many people in this place. Typhus spread. People began to fall ill with typhus. In the desert, the Armenians lay on the ground like sheep. My mother also died of typhus. They got up in the morning. As typhus caused death among those who were so weak that they lay motionless, they chose the dead and took them away. They dug a pit, filled it with the dead and closed it up. This way, the number of people dwindled. Either they took and slaughtered them, or people died on their own. We were at a place where craftsmen lived. There were Turkish Circassians there. They took away the Armenian girls, raped them, and then brought them back.

Then the Turks and the Germans were defeated. They began to escape. The Germans were constructing a railroad. We worked on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad. I was fourteen. The English emerged as the more powerful: the Germans and the Turks began to run away. I also went to Mosul with my friends. We lived there in great poverty. I sold water in a pitcher. One gave a piece of bread; the other gave a bit of cheese or a few olives. I put them in my bag. There, the English gathered the orphaned Armenians, fed them, and sent to Baakuba near Baghdad. Assyrians also lived there. There, they fed us and we lived in tents. We, four friends, decided to run away. We escaped and went to Baghdad. There were two Armenian churches there. One of them was old and not used as a church. We slept there. We began searching for work. I became a servant to an ice-cream seller. People would sit as if in a café, and eat ice-cream. I took the ice-cream to the customers, took the money, and gave it to my master. A very rich Jew saw me. I was fourteen then. The Jew asked the ice-cream seller to give me to him. Who knows whether he paid for me: I do not know, but he was very rich. He said to me, “I’ll take you to my house; you’ll live comfortably there.” I went to his house with him. The house was like a palace. He had a wife, and I became a servant there. There was a cellar. On top of it there was something like a fan. When the lady slept, I had to pull it to cool her as there was no electricity then. In summer they took me to the country together with them. They had four servants. I was the fifth. One was a cook, the second was a wash-woman, the third a nanny, the fifth cleaned the house, and I set the table and cleared it. Some time passed. The Armenians of Baakuba had been scattered. A family who were my relatives came by. They were going to Adana. They said to me: “Your father is alive. He is in Adana. We are going. If you want come with us.”

I went and said to my Jewish master: “My father is alive; I’ll go to Adana and find him.”

The Jew gave me money in order to travel on a buffalo cart. We reached Aleppo from Baghdad in fifteen days. We arrived in Aleppo. There was a train from Aleppo to Adana. I went and found my father. We began living together. I was already sixteen. I wanted to go to school but could not study. All the time I was thinking of killing Turks. After all, I had seen so many horrible scenes. There was a man – Eloyan. I said to him: “Enlist me as a volunteer in the Armenian army.”

Not just me, even Armenian girls became volunteers. Many soldiers were gathered. We wore caps with our tricolor in front. We fought for quite a long time but the Armenian government of Adana was dissolved. The French abandoned the Armenians. They did not want to defend the Armenians. About seventy of us were sent to Beirut. We wanted to go to Armenia, but it had become a Bolshevik country. We were sent to Constantinople. Winter came. It was cold, we were cold. We asked for blankets from the National Relief to keep us warm. They took care of us.

When we came to Constantinople, the Greeks were recruiting soldiers for their army. There was Torgom there. The Armenians fought for the Greeks, so that later we would fight for Armenia. We went. There were about three hundred Armenians. We began our service. Later, together with some friends, we left the army and joined the partisans. Our captain, Anastas, was Greek. We went and became partisans under the leadership of Captain Anastas. He took us but we did not meet other Armenians as yet. Then order came for the Greeks to withdraw. Captain Anastas left us. We were armed at that time. There, we waited for the Turks. Then the firing began. Whoever was hit by a bullet fell dead. If the bullets ran out, who would give us new ones? It was better to go to Izmir to have knives made in order to kill the Turks, to drink their blood, to eat their flesh, to erase the name of the Turks. From Manassa to Izmir, the train wagons were packed with people as if in a bee-hive, hanging on. As the train moved, those hanging people fell off and died.

We arrived in Izmir, found my cousin Missak Chaoush Keshishian who had been one of Andranik’s soldiers and an assistant to the prelate. They said that Mustafa Kemal was occupying the whole of Turkey; one had to escape from that country. How to escape? There was no ship: they poured hot water onto those who tried to swim and drowned them. The Turks arrived. They began firing, killing everybody. Missak Chaoush came and said: “In order to defend our home, we’ll remain in this building till we die.” He brought two chests of grenades and two chests of bullets. “We’ll fight till we die,” he said. Then he went to the prelacy, came back and said to us: “They have raised the Turkish flag; the

Turkish soldiers have begun to walk along the streets: this is not a place to remain anymore.”

As we got this news, we hurried to the sea-shore. The Khedevi, an Egyptian ship, was there. I threw myself into a boat. Aram Kaydsak had left the day before. I also set off. We had to pay two gold coins to the boatman in order to take us to the ship. The ship would not accept us: the captain was against us. We gave two gold coins: they made us stand in the gangway. As soon as the captain retired, each of us gave two more gold and got on board the ship. My cousin, Missak Chaoush, was also there. He went to Constantinople; from there he moved on to Bulgaria and became Andranik’s body-guard. We went to Greece, Sakhez Ada. I remained there. We were five hundred people fighting against the Turks. Then they captured me and wanted to send me to Crete to freedom in exile. The ship came and I managed to flee to Athens. I had friends; I went to Vahan Dagessian’s house. I was eighteen; I was dressed like a robber. After staying there for two months, I went to Macedonia.

Then I went to Bulgaria. I could not stay there either. I went to Beirut. I had neither special skills nor a rich father. I found my father. There, childhood friends taught me shoemaking. In 1924, I became a party member together with Harutyun Madoyan. I became a well-known, active communist. My name is mentioned in Madoyan’s book. We organized a trade-

union. We were imprisoned. I have been a well-known communist. I have distributed illegal newspapers. Once a month, they came and searched our house; three times daily they took my name down to check whether I was considered a dangerous man in the town or not. There, the chief of the security service (his name was Bouchet) suggested that I go to France. There were many Communists there. I did not go. Bouchet said: “We’ll beat you up. Who are you after all?”

I said to the chief: “You are Frenchmen. I live in an Arab country and I am content. You’re French – you go to your country.”

There they attacked me with twelve gendarmes and beat me up. When I was a party member, I used to take leaflets to Damascus, Aleppo and other places without any fear. I served the party until 1946, when we came to Armenia. I worked here as well. In Leninakan (now: Gyumri) I worked as a leather-cutter with a press machine. I came to Yerevan on business. When I went back, I saw they had exiled my family saying: “Your party is a bourgeois party.” My wife had said: “Wait till my husband returned: take us then only.” They would not listen to her. They gathered everything. They plundered, spoiled. They exiled them with five children. They suffered very much. Then we became rehabilitated. We returned. In Leninakan and in Yerevan, I have certificates of honor for my good work. Now I am a private pensioner.

## 242 (242).

### AROUSYAK NEFERIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1906, Adana)

At that time, I was nine years old. My mother’s sister said to my mother: “Where are you taking these children? They’ll die on the road to exile. There was an order that those whose husbands were serving in the Turkish army would not be exiled.” But we had already sold

everything, so we remained in Adana bare and naked. Later, in 1921, when the French went away, the Turks entered again and began slaughtering the Armenians and Greeks. We left everything in Adana: our house and all, and went to Greece. And in 1946, we came to Armenia.

## 243 (243).

### VREZH EDYURIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1906, Adana)

In 1909, during the Adana massacre, I was three years old when I lost my parents. During the deportation, I remember, a train came; we were packed in it like animals: they were hitting us on the head, pushing, and beating. We were taken to Aleppo. I had no one to take care of me. We were taken to the Armenian Church. There were so many miserable people there; they gave us a piece of bread and two olives. And one day I found myself in the desert of Tel-Aviv together with a boy

called Ghoukas (Luke). Suddenly a khamsin rose up. Ghoukas and I clutched each other and got buried under the sand. A captain was passing by. He saw two heads sticking out and said to his soldiers: “See who they are.”

The captain’s soldiers came, dug us out of the sand, put us in a truck and took us to a military hospital. There was a German doctor there; he treated us but Ghoukas did not survive: he died; I lived on.

The captain’s name was Salaheddin. He said to

me: "We're not fighting against Armenian boys." He took me to Constantinople and put me in an orphanage. A government high officer, a foreigner, took me as a foster-son and named me Mouzaffer Hidayet.

Years passed; the war was over. The truce was declared in 1918. The man, who had adopted me, said: "Look, your people have come to the seashore."

"I don't know who my people are," I said. I went to have a look. The Turks drove me away but the Armenian organization was so strong that someone came, held me by the ear and took me away. The General of Skyutar had made a list: wherever the Armenians were, they gathered them and took them to Skyutar. But the Armenians withdrew as the government changed every two days.

A Turk called Pirre Mehmed took me to his place and I remained there up to the end of the war. Then the Armenian Committee took me to Skyutar, to the

Ouzounian Orphanage, which was opposite the St. Khach Church. There were many Armenian boys and girls there. I became an apprentice in a café. I settled in Skyutar.

Then a man put me under the protection of the organization for Armenian refugee orphans. The director's name was Toumanian. But the Turks spread the news that if we went over to the Armenians, they would torture us: they would do this and that...

Then a high state official adopted me. They had no children. As if buying water-melons, they came and took me to their home. The lady of that house looked after me very well. My name became Karabash Miharany. After coming out of there, I rented a shop. Little by little, I saved up money and became the owner of these shops. I married in 1928. My wife also is from Adana. Now I am retired.

244 (244).

### AROUSYAK STEPAN VANESSION'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Adana)

I had been baptized for eighteen days when the massacre of Adana started. The Turks, axes in hand, attacked the houses and the shops of the Armenians. My father and mother had taken refuge in an Armenian Church. His Excellency, the Prelate of Tokat came, bringing with him a purse full of gold. He had saved people, paying one gold coin for each Armenian.

My father and mother with two children and myself in their arms had come out of the church and had witnessed the streets filled with corpses: mothers' bellies cut open, children killed on their mothers' breasts and other atrocities. My grandfather also had been killed, my mother's brother, Rouben, had fled on horseback. This had occurred in 1909.

Our folks moved to the gardens. Three days later the town-crier announced: "Those who have a house let them go to their houses." But in three days thirty thousand Armenians had been slaughtered. They had burned our house too. My parents had an Alevi acquaintance; he took us into their house. There were no clothes. The Alevi's wife wrapped me in her old clothes. Father had built a shed on their land and we lived there with my elder brother, Nikoghos and sister, Azniv. Then we went to Izmir; we lived in Manissa.

In 1915, the Armenians of Manissa were not deported because the prelate of Izmir had been a classmate to the pasha. The Armenians of Izmir were not exiled. Neither did we get exiled. But I have heard that during the deportation, my mother's sister

had not been able to walk: her feet were swollen. They had given a gold coin to an Arab and he had allowed her to sit on a donkey. There were dates on the donkey; she had eaten them but, all the same, she had died in the Der-Zor desert. My other aunt had been sent into exile with her four daughters. The men and boys had been taken away and slaughtered. When the women had been left without men, the Arabs had kidnapped their daughters. Nobody came back from their families. When, after the war, the English entered Adana, we returned there. After the English, the French came. In 1919, many volunteers had come to Adana. Many of them made the Turks withdraw and they took the Armenian girls back as wives. My sister had been doing Ayntap needlework. One day a volunteer, called Karapet, had come up and said: "The lining of my jacket had come loose: who will sew it up?"

My sister did the sewing. Three women came to my sister and wanted to buy the Ayntap needlework my sister had shown. They asked sister: "Where are you from?"

"I'm from Adana; I'm Stepan Msrlan's daughter."

Those women had taken down my sister's name, went away, and enquired about her. When sister returned from work, she said: "They asked my name and surname. It seems this evening they'll come to our house."

I was nine years old. I sprayed water in front of our house and swept it. Mother prepared chikyofte. We

ate. She was just going to wash up when these persons arrived and said: "Today we have come to ask for your daughter's hand."

My father said: "My daughter is not a virgin. She was married in Izmir. Her husband died when we came to Adana; we brought her with us."

"That doesn't matter," said the women.

In this way, my sister went to America and got married.

In 1920, when the French left Adana, we went to Latakia because there was no ship bound for Izmir. We went to Latakia. The Arabs said: "If there is a tailor, let

him disembark".

Father was allowed to land with his family. They gave us a room where there were already three families living. They took father to a tailor. They give father a sleeve and said: "Fix this sleeve." Father fixed it. There was a journalist present who had said: "I'll do you a favor. I'll buy a tailor's shop for you. You open a tailor's shop in the front of the house and live there."

Later we moved to France. In Nice, we found mother's cousin whose brothers had fallen victim in Der-Zor. Mother's two uncles had also been killed in Der-Zor.

### 245 (245).

#### HARUTYUN SARGIS ADAMIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Adana)

During the massacre of Adana, in 1909, I was an 18-day old infant. When I grew up, my father and mother told me, that the Turks had attacked the houses of the Armenians, armed with axes and knives, and had started to massacre them. My parents had sought refuge in the church. The Armenian Catholic bishop had filled a bag with gold coins and had distributed them to the Turk gendarmes imploring them not to harm the Armenians. The latter had come out of the church and had seen corpses of people and blood everywhere, the abdomen of the pregnant women cut open... These events had occurred in 1909. Then the town-criers had announced: "Those who have a home may go home."

My parents had gone home and had found my grandfather killed in the garden together with 80 other Armenians who had taken refuge in our garden. The

Turks had taken my three brothers: Artashes, Tigran and Vahram to the Abgarian School and had packed them along with a great number of other boys inside the school building. Then they had poured a canister of kerosene and had burned all those boys alive.

A couple from America had witnessed that dreadful scene from the roof of the adjacent house and had shouted, terror-stricken: "What are you doing over there?" Two gun-shots had instantly been heard and they [the Turks] had killed those eyewitnesses on the spot.

My father and mother always remembered with tearful eyes those horrible events. Thirty thousand Armenians had been slaughtered during the Adana massacres. The people used to say: "The buffalo went mad," namely, Sultan Hamid went crazy, since all that tragedy was inconceivable.

### 246 (246).

#### ESTER HARUTYUN STEPANIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1913, Adana)

My mother Makrouhi was from Marash, my father, Harutyun, was from Adana. He was a very kind man. Every day, as he came home from his work, he stood in the doorway, keeping candies in each of his palms: one for me and one for my brother. We opened his fists, took out the candy and ate it. There wasn't a trade, which father did not understand.

In 1915, they sent us to exile from Adana. I was very small, so I remember only vaguely. Mother used to say that they had suffered very much on the roads to exile. As my father was a craftsman, they had returned us from half the way to Adana. Then our family went to Mersin, then to Izmir. In 1922, during the disaster

of Izmir, I was already a big girl, so I remember. Izmir was burning behind us. Before us was the sea. The Turks had driven all the Christians to the seashore. My father threw himself into the sea and swam towards the French and English ships, which had anchored at some distance, but they began pouring boiling water on him and cut the rope not to let him climb up into the ship. Disappointed, father swam back. Then we went to Greece and then came to Los Angeles. Here mother became a 'Bible woman': she used to visit the sick people, read the Bible for them, and console them.

It's already several years I live in the "Ararat" Home. I am very pleased. Glory to Lord.

## HARUTYUN ALBOYADJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1904, Fendedjak)

Fendedjak is very near Zeytoun. In 1915, they exiled us from Fendedjak. The end of the caravan could not be seen – it was so long. I don't remember my father. They had taken him to the Turkish army; he never came back. I remember mother was tired of walking. She held my younger brother in her arms. An Arab came, grabbed the child from her hands and disappeared. Then a doctor came; he wanted to take me away. I remember some of us were driven towards the desert of Havran, the other part to Der-Zor. They drove us to the Havran Desert. They killed people before our eyes. I lost my relatives. I remained with my sister Ovsanna and my uncle's wife. They took us to Homs and from there to Mismia. A train came; they said relief would be given, for we were starving. We gathered the wheat grains from the excretion of the horses, washed them then ate them. There was nothing else to do. They gave us a handful of flour. It was as much as a bag of gold. Those who received it were sent to the other side of the train. I got some and called from under the train, "Ovsanna, Ovsanna." I thought that they would give her some as well; I passed beneath the train, but that train moved, another train came and stopped. I jumped to the other side. I looked for my sister; Ovsanna was nowhere. I asked my uncle's wife: "Where's Ovsanna?"

She said: "Someone from the train wanted a child. I gave her to that person."

I cried very much, for they had taken Ester, my little sister from my mother's arms, and now Ovsanna also was gone. When they killed my parents, they took me and other under-age children to Djemal pasha's 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 hiding their Armenian origin. If the gendarmes knew about it, they would beat them with 'falakhas.' The punishment consisted of twenty, thirty or fifty strokes on the soles of the feet, or being forced to look 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! – Turk.). We were clothed in the Turkish manner, a white robe and a long black, buttonless coat. We had a mudur and several khojkanhums. 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.

Towards that aim Djemal pasha had teachers brought from Constantinople; he had brought doctors, because most of the orphans fell ill with scurvy and died. I was a very feeble, small child.

Our orphanage was about seven miles from Beirut towards Cilicia. It was at the foot of Djyuni – a huge mountain, and it stretched until the building of Antoura, which had a French, semi-independent status. That was why the French, the English, and the Germans had their colleges separate from each other. But each one had already retreated.

We were given little food at our Turkish orphanage. Our gharavanadjis were on duty in the dining-room. One day one of the gharavanadjis, an Armenian boy from Gyurin, saw me while entering the dining-room, held me by the arm and said in Turkish: "Shukri, will you make a belt for me?" I thought – he was a gharavanadji; he might help me in return and give me some more dinner.

The building of our orphanage had been a French college, and the French had left it after the war started. There were monasteries surrounding it. Statues, mummies and velvet clothes were found there. That boy from Gyurin brought me some clothes, to make a belt for him with pockets, where he could keep money, for he sold small loaves of bread to the Arabs and received money. One day, at night I thought of climbing to the roof of the building, where a few things might be left by the French, for my father was a blacksmith, and I had taken after him in crafts. I went to the roof. There I found some steel wire. I had no instruments: my instruments were stones. I had neither needle, nor anything. I cut some wire, rubbed it on a stone; the edge became sharp. Then I thought to flatten the other edge with a stone, to butt it, then fold it and then rub it with a piece of glass. I fashioned a hole. I searched and found a broken nib, which was hard and had a sharp point. With it I opened a hole. Now I had a needle. So, I could sew. But there was no thread. I thought of undoing the cloth and spin the thread. I looked through the garbage; I found something like leather. I made a belt with pockets for that Armenian boy. He liked it very much. Now other boys also began asking me to make belts for them. By and by, I began earning money.

One day, Djemal pasha came to the orphanage to see the state of his Armenian boys, who had become Turks. It was one of the Muslim religious holidays. I do not remember – it was either Ghurban Bayram or Ramadan. On those days, they gave us good food with meat. Once, when Djemal pasha came, they called me: "'535' – Are you Shukri?"

I said: "I am."

My friend held me and took me to the guests. Djemal pasha asked me: "My son, Shukri, what have you made?"

I had a drawer made by hand and a belt. I showed them to him.

He said: "With what instruments are you making them?"

I said: "I have no instruments."

Djemal pasha was astonished. He said with regret: "It's a pity, pay attention to him; he's a gifted child."

It seemed he wanted to transfer me somewhere else, but the Arab Sheriff came.

One day, we woke up without the bell ringing; the doors were not opened. When we opened the doors and went down, we saw there were no Turkish guards or soldiers, no officers, inspectors or teachers; there was no one. There was no one to ring the bell for us to go to the dining-room. Our big boys who had become Turks: our chiefs, had attacked the Kurd Silo and were beating him, and Silo was bellowing like a buffalo. He could hardly free himself from the boys and found refuge in the forest nearby. This was that same Silo, who had said to Khoren over and over: "I have killed ninety-nine Armenians. If I kill you too, that will be one hundred." This was that scoundrel Silo, whom the Armenian orphans had taught a good lesson, feeling free to do so, because not a Turkish officer was left, for they had heard that Beirut would be liberated.

As our orphanage was a military orphanage, we had special rules. Each class had to stand around its table, but there was neither chief, nor corporal or sergeant. All of us were standing and waiting, and there was no bread on the table. Our Erza bey, the pharmacist, came. He had the military rank of major, and three Armenian orphans (Ariph and others) helped him. That doctor of ours came. He was walking between the tables up and down. He gave the order, 'Sit down.' We all sat down. He continued going and coming up and down, in deep thought. He came up to our corporal Enver, who was Armenian but he was circumcised and said: "Oglum Enver, senin ermeni ismin ne idi?" (My son, Enver, what was your Armenian name? – Turk.).

"Toros idi, efendim" (It was Toros, Sir – Turk.), said the boy saluting.

Then he went to the corporal of the next class: "My son, Djemal, what was your Armenian name?"

"Vardan idi, efendim" (It was Vardan, Sir – Turk.).

Then he came to the others. All the corporals were on foot and said their names. One minute of silence reigned. All of us were waiting...

He said: "Bu günden sonra hepiniz de gene ermenisiniz" (Beginning from this day all of you are Armenians again – Turk.). And continued in a sorrowful mood: "As you see there's no one today of

our officers; they are absent. Had I wanted, I might be absent, too. I could go with them, but I decided not to go, not to leave you. It may so happen that they come in a few minutes, put handcuff on my hands and take me prisoner. But I remained, I didn't leave you. I beg you don't give trouble to the Kurds around you. Continue to live in peace as you have done so. If I were not here; you would not be here either..."

He did not continue, but later we learned that they had asked the pharmacist to poison our last supper, but he had refused to obey their order.

And really, soon they came with the Arab Sheriff, put handcuffs on his hands and took him away. We all were sad and silent. When they were taking him out, he said:

"It's a pity that God did not return to me all the kindness I have done. God blinded my only son, Nedjatli, and I treated you as my own son."

After the glorious victory at the battle of Arara, when Turkey and Germany were defeated, the Armenian volunteers entered Beirut and, together with the French and the English, said, 'Vive la France!' (Long live France! – French). Then the American Red Cross took over our orphanage. After 1919, the American Near East Relief cared for the orphans. There were thirty thousand orphans only in Alexandropol. How many were there in Greece, in Beirut? They sent food to all of them.

When we stopped being Turks, when we became Armenian again, our teacher was an Arab woman, but our head-mistress was Miss Morney. Armenian teachers also came, such as Vahan Kehyayan and Alanakian, who worked for no pay. Young Armenian teachers also came from Zmmara and other places.

We had a very good life during Miss Morney's time. She was a very lovely, a very attractive American lady, who had devoted her youth to the care of Armenian orphans. She separated the girls from the boys. She became a mother to all of us and all of us will be grateful to her to the end of our lives...

Miss Morney made our orphans' sad life so interesting and so beautiful: it's beyond words. She said: "Each of you make what you can and we'll send them to America to exhibit."

Then, they sent Miss Morney to Aleppo.

One day, they called me to the office and said: "Miss Morney has sent news and asks to send you and four boys to Aleppo. She is calling you to send to Marzvan to study." I was surprised. So, because of my skill, Miss Morney had remembered me and was asking for me.

We set off and reached Aleppo. We went and found Miss Morney. She was going to send us to Marzvan, but the Kemalist movement had begun. The roads were closed. We went to Beirut together with the refugees. Then we went to Adana and Samsun. Then we went

to Greece. There, I graduated from the Agricultural and Technological Institute of Salonica. In 1925, as a specialist, I came to Armenia bringing with me pure-bred cows, oxen, sheep, pigs, and hens to develop agriculture in Armenia. But our Soviet government not only did not appreciate my devotion, but plundered me of what I had brought and exiled me to Siberia. After suffering there for five years I returned, but participated

in the Patriotic war and was a prisoner in France. There, I found my brother. He said: "Don't go back, stay here." But I did not stay and came back to my country. I worked as an electrician and created my family. I have three daughters, the eldest works at the watch factory, the second is a lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute, and the youngest is a teacher of music. She teaches the violin. Now, I am a pensioner.

**248 (248).**

**AHARON MELIKSET MANKRIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1903, Hadjn)**

When we were exiled, we experienced many difficulties on our way. We were hungry and thirsty for days and weeks, walking under the sun. One day, some Germans came and had their dinner on the banks of the Euphrates River. We had already reached Rakka. We stood there, barefoot; we were hungry and were looking at them. We crossed our faces, so that they should pity us. Suddenly we saw that they threw the box of food into the river. Together with some boys we jumped into the water; two of us got drowned...

The water of the Euphrates was bloody, it was impossible to drink it; the corpses floated down the current and we dived to the bottom of the river in order to drink clear water...

Those who could no longer walk, sat on the ground or lay down whispering 'water-water' and died. There were dried corpses all around...

We saw the atrocities of Der-Zor. When we resisted and fought in Hadjn we wanted to avenge our sufferings in Der-Zor.<sup>1</sup>

An eighty-year-old Turk pasha had taken an Armenian young orphan girl from Berzn as his wife; we went and rescued the girl...

Kemal wanted to wipe the name of Hadjn off the map. He burned Hadjn; most of the people of Hadjn were burned, but we did not die... Then I went to Greece; then we came to Armenia. Now in the settlement of New Hadjn we have our monument and the museum...

**249 (249).**

**YERVAND KARAMIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1903, Hadjn)**

In 1915, Talaat, Djemal and Enver pashas had come to an agreement and had made their plans together. Thus, 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. In Meskené my aunt and my uncle were victims of an

epidemic and they were thrown half dead into the valley. We lamented all those who did not have a grave.

In 1920, during the self-defense of Hadjn, I was seventeen years old. I was rescued from among the fighters and from the flames of the burning town. Which episode should I say? I do not know!

**250 (250).**

**YEBROUHI SARGIS DJRTEKHIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1906, Hadjn)**

My father's house consisted of forty members. After the Genocide only seven of us survived.

My father, Sargis agha, was a much respected person.

The Turks had said to my father: "Sargis agha, Hadjn is dangerous. In a certain village, they have slaughtered the Armenians."

On the very same day, father took us away. My sister Haykouhi was a baby. I was crying, wrapped on mother's laps and repeating: "Mummy, will they slaughter us?"

"No darling, don't be afraid."

We came out of the house. We had no food with us. We were hungry. Mother thought: "Let me go and buy

<sup>1</sup> He meant the heroic defense of 1920, which lasted eight months, and in which he participated.

some ham, sausages and pastry for my children.”

We reached the railway station. We saw many Armenians there. The train was full. People wanted to get on it. They were getting on board through the windows. Suddenly, someone grabbed me and threw me into the train. I fell on the lap of a woman. I was small; I was crying. I asked the woman: “Will you slaughter me? Are you a Turk?”

The Armenian woman said: “Oh, darling, don’t be afraid.”

All of a sudden we heard that a woman, a child in her arms, had been run over by the train. I thought it was mother with my sister. I started crying louder.

“Don’t cry,” they said to me.

We came and reached Iskenderun (Alexandrette). The woman, who had carried me, got off. In fact, mother’s sister, Yeranouhi lived there. She had come together with her son to find us and take us to their tent on the sea-shore.

I recognized my aunt’s son. They found me. They were asking that woman: “Where is my sister Mariam?” She meant my mother.

The woman said: “Take your sister’s daughter; your sister will come.” I remained with my aunt in the tents. Everyday we went to the station to meet my mother. One week passed, two weeks passed. One day my aunt said: “I dreamt today.”

All of a sudden, a boy came and said: “Mariam Markossian is coming; the train brought her.”

My aunt said to me: “You hide yourself.”

I entered under the bed. My mother came and began looking for me. I came out and embraced mother.

The next day, news came that they were bringing my father, Sargis agha. In fact, his Turkish friends had given money to the police to sit next to father and bring him safely to Alexandrette.

Of our family of forty, only six of us survived; the rest were killed by the Turks. They had been thrown down the pits, or a couple of Turk officers standing by the pit had pushed and thrown them down alive. Then they drove us to the deserts of Arabia. Father hired a camel for us to sit on. They had put me in a saddle-bag. Arabs came and were searching for gold. Mother had put the kettle to boil. The Arab came and asked me where our money was. I was small and I could not understand. I pointed to the cushion. The Arab took the cushion and escaped. In fact, all my father’s riches – 800 gold coins, had been hidden in that cushion, so it went.

That desert was so hot that people were burnt. My little brother wanted water. There was no water. Mother gathered the urine of the camel and gave it to brother to drink. Brother drank it and died. We remained in the deserts of Der-Zor for a whole year. Father made footwear for the Arabs and sold them. We were hungry and thirsty, but we did not die. We heard that the Englishmen had

entered Sham (now: Damascus). We came back. We saw our houses and shops had been destroyed by the Turks.

During the heroic self-defense of Hadjn, we were in Adana. Father had rented a small house. Mother was pregnant; she gave birth in that house. The midwife came, cut the navel of the child, and my sister was born. Just at that time the Hadjn self-defense started. The bullets were flying over us. Mother held me by the hand, and we ran out of the house together with father. Three days passed. Suddenly, mother started crying. She remembered that she had left the new-born baby all alone. The English soldiers helped mother and took her home. The baby was alive: she had survived by sucking the edge of her kerchief. The English soldiers brought warm water; put the child in it, and the baby began to move. The English brought clothes and food, and then they brought mother and baby to us.

Wounded people were brought to Adana from Hadjn. There, we had many relatives. Mother’s sister, Tirouhi, had given birth to a child in the mountains. The poor one had died homeless and helpless.

During the eight-month heroic self-defense of Hadjn, many of our relatives died; mother’s cousin fell. All the people of Hadjn, whom we knew, were killed. My husband Sargis’ relatives were killed.

My husband’s grandmother dreamt that all of them had been in a church. The bees entered and alighted on everybody, except my husband. They left Sargis alone. Grandmother said: “Sargis, you’ll remain alive.” And really, only he survived from their relatives. They slaughtered his father and mother before his eyes; he always grieved for them. As nobody had survived from his family, he used to sing:

*“The mountains of Hadjn were filled with blood,  
Our courageous Jebejian was sacrificed...”*

The Turks had surrounded Hadjn and cut the water supply. Hungry and thirsty: the people were just like buzzing bees. Seven soldiers, among them my husband, had escaped to Adana. Aram Kaydsak, who was their commander, had said: “Let those who can flee, do so, for our situation is hopeless. If they fall in the hands of the Turks, they’ll be killed.”

During the fight, on his way, my husband saw his fourteen-year-old sister, Nazeli, naked. Her brother, who was disguised as a Turkish soldier, took off his jacket, removed the lining, and dressed his sister with the lining, with his belt around her waist. He took those seven girls and women to hide among the trees and told them: “Do not make a sound, sit here. Let’s go and see if the Turks are coming.”

Suddenly they saw that the Turks had surrounded them. The Turks came and dragged the girls away. My husband’s sister, pretty Nazeli, embraced her brother saying: “Dear brother, kill me; look, they took away those girls.”

“Sister, how can I kill you?” said my husband Sargis. “You have a bullet in your gun.”

He saw that his sister had no way out and she did not want to fall in the hands of the Turks. She wanted to die as a righteous soul. He shot his sister. As he was dressed like a Turk, he escaped, but was wounded. Manouk from Hadjn had carried him on his back to Adana and taken him to the British hospital. After his recovery he went to Greece. We were already in Greece. I was already thirteen when I became engaged to Sargis, a participant of the Hadjn heroic self-defense, a soldier of Aram Kaydsak. He was an orphan and very sad. But Sargis fought against the Turks who had entered the Greek villages. He liberated seven Greek villages. He participated in the Greek battles around Salonica and had received a “Sargis, Brave Officer” medal from the Greek command.

When I had my daughter, Sargis wanted to give her Nazeli’s name, that beautiful sister of his. He was very moved when the child cried and he used to say to

me: “My soul, I respect you, because you also are from Hadjn. I won’t ask anything else from you, only, please, take good care of this child, so that I may not hear her cry, because she reminds me of my martyred sister.”

In 1932, we came to Armenia. My husband caught pneumonia and died in three days. After three months my son was born; we called him Sargis, after his father. I have brought up three children all alone. I used to put on a dress made of sack-cloth and worked to build Noubarashen. We planted the trees of Noubarashen. I worked and brought up my children with the sweat of my brow. Now I have thirty grandchildren. All of them are Hadjnites.

Recently I was very ill: my blood pressure was high. Whatever medicine I took – would not help. One day, I prayed before going to bed. Christ came before my eyes and pressed my eyes with His thumbs. In the morning, I was fine.

Now many people say to me: “Granny Yebrouhi, put your hand on me, so that I may be healed.”

## 251 (251).

### MISSAK MATEVOS HEROUNI’S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1906, Hadjn)

I am one of the survivors of the thousands of Armenian families, who were subjected to the cruel life calamities. I was born in 1906, in the Cilician town of Hadjn. My father’s name was Matevos, my mother’s name was Satenik. They had seven children. My father worked in Hadjn as tinsmith. He had a house, an orchard and a pasture.

Before the Genocide, Hadjn and the surrounding villages had an Armenian population of 35,000. In 1915, by order of the leaders of the Young Turk government, Talaat, Enver and Djemal, the forcible deportation of the Armenians of historic Western Armenia and of Cilicia began. They exiled us toward the uninhabited deserts of the Near East.

When we were coming out of the town and near our two-storeyed bridge, they wanted to make me sit on a camel. I was frightened and I ran away. My father ran after me, slapped by face, held me in his arms, made me sit on the camel and bound me tightly to prevent me from falling. That was the first and the last slap I received from my kind-hearted father. I was small then,

how could I understand his emotional state? They made my younger brother, Yeghia, sit on a mule. On the road, he got sunstroke and became seriously ill. My elder brother, Hakob, was among another group of deportees. We had not yet come out of the Cilician borders when my sister died on the road near Osmaniyé. Our situation was horrible. They took away our pack animals. We started to go on foot, hungry and thirsty, along those vast deserts. The epidemics of cholera and malaria and the mass slaughters of the Turkish gendarmes had greatly reduced our caravans. I fell ill with malaria on the road. My father nursed me and my brother Yeghia with deep endearment. We reached Hama, where we were ordered to stop and to rest a little. I remember my mother grieving inconsolably for my younger brother’s death. It was a heartbreaking scene. Even now, when I remember it, my eyes are filled with tears. A dark-skinned Bedouin Arab woman sat beside my mother and tried to comfort her. We could not understand her language but we felt that she deeply condoled with us.

The Turkish gendarmes drove the people in our

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor, in 1975, in Yerevan, was handed to me in 2006, by his son, Paris Herouni, who is an Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia and a member of other foreign academies, also an Academician of the International Academy of Ecological and Security Sciences, the General Director of the Research Institute of Radio-Physics and the author of numerous inventions. He has invented a high-capacity solar power station of a new type [“Arev” (Sun – Arm.) – 1992]; he has investigated and proved (1994) that the ancient stone monument, situated not far from the town of Sissian, Armenia, was the world’s oldest, great and well-developed observatory called “Karahoundj,” which actively functioned 7,500 years ago. Among his numerous books, the volume about astronomy, linguistics and ancient history, entitled “*Armenians and Old Armenia*” (Yerevan, 2004), is noteworthy.

caravan with whips from Hama to Homs. There they set us free. Of course, less than one quarter of our caravan had remained since many were massacred, plundered, kidnapped or died from starvation and diseases on the road. The premeditated plan of the Young Turk murderers had been accomplished.

Unable to bear the severe conditions, my father fell ill and passed away in the village of Sakharja before a week had elapsed. I do not know whether they buried him or not. We had already lost nearly all the members of our family. Only I and my mother were alive. She tried to look for a job in the village of El-Kousser, but the Turk gendarme hit her fiercely on the head with the butt of his rifle. It was meaningless to ask for help from the enemy, since he wanted to exterminate us by starvation. My mother, too, could not endure starvation and closed her eyes for good. I was left all alone. I sat under a wall and started to cry bitterly...

Then I became the shepherd of the Christian Arab, Ibrahim Ghanim and began to graze his sheep. Ibrahim Ghanim had two big sons, who had a shop in the town. He had also two twin daughters. I lived with that kind-hearted family until the armistice of 1919, when the agents of the Armenian General Benevolent Union started to go round the villages and deserts of Syria to recruit the unsheltered Armenian children. They found me and took me to the small assembly place in the town of Homs. All the Armenian children brought there had already forgotten their mother tongue and spoke Turkish or Arabic. They took us, the big and small children, by train to the assembly place in Aleppo.

Following the First World War, the former colonies of Turkey, Cilicia, Syria and Lebanon, had passed under French Protectorate, consequently those who were miraculously rescued from the Armenian Genocide returned, after the armistice, to their towns and villages to restore the demolished houses and to start a new life. The Armenian General Benevolent Union transferred, at its expense, tens of thousands of parentless Armenian children to the orphanages found under its patronage to provide care and education to these orphans.

They transferred us, 300 boys, by train from Aleppo to the Cilician town of Chok-Marzvan (Deurtyol) to the Tigran Kelekian Armenian Orphanage. That comfortable building was constructed in 1912 and was renovated in 1919.

When we came out of Aleppo by train we passed through the tunnel, which was built at the beginning of the war by the Germans and by the labor and under the leadership of twenty-five Armenian engineers, who were all executed when the construction was over, since they always made the Armenians work and then they killed them. We reached Ayntap by train. Thence, after traveling by cart for these days and nights escorted by Armenian volunteers, we arrived at our place...

The nice-looking building allotted to us was constructed at the foot of the Amanos mountain-range in Cilicia amid the luxuriant vegetation and situated at a distance of seven kilometers from the Mediterranean Sea and formerly called "Armenian bay." The building was two-storeyed. Below were the classrooms and the kitchen and above were the bedrooms. It was forbidden to speak other languages than French.

Arshak Chohanian from Paris visited us in 1921. He presented us in a popular manner the current international relations...

There were comfortable conditions and good care for the 300 orphan children at the orphanage. My serial number was 64. They gave us clothes; we were subjected to medical check-ups, we were invigorated by good food and good care. Physical training and the teaching of various subjects and foreign languages were on a high level.

However, the Kemalist movement broke out. The Turks attacked the localities of Cilicia where the Armenians had returned; the inhabitants of Zeytoun, Hadjn, Mersin, Ayntap, Marash, Adana and Moussa Dagh had recourse to self-defense.

France, which had assumed the mandate of the Cilician Armenians, did not want to interfere and did not even let the Armenians help one another. For example, the town of Hadjn, which with its population of 8 thousand had offered a heroic resistance to the Turkish forces during 8 months, not only did not get any assistance from the French troops, but the latter did not even permit the Armenians from Adana to help their compatriots in Hadjn.

Before the war, the Armenian population of Cilicia numbered 407,000 souls, of which only 125,000 had returned. The French delivered the Armenian population of Cilicia to the Kemalists.

On October 15, 1920, the Kemalists slaughtered thousands of inhabitants of Hadjn and set the eagle-nest Hadjn on fire.

In 1920, they transferred us, the 1,800 orphans, to the Zmmar Monastery in Beirut by the steamship "Viola." The girls lived in a separate building. We used to watch at night the illuminated brilliant panorama of Beirut from the height of the Lebanese mountains.

At the sight of these historical events, I naturally started to consciously approach both to the past of my Armenian nation and to my personal life. I was filled with hatred toward our enemies who had seized our beautiful cradle, Cilicia. I thought of throwing off the Turkish form of my family name, since our family was named "Sachian" in Hadjn, and a whole district existed after their name. "Sach" means hair in Turkish, and I learned the poem dedicated to the pagan god, "The Birth of Vahagn," where it was said that he had fiery hair. An idea flashed across my mind to change my surname into

“Herouni,” namely “Hairy.” My teachers encouraged me. Many of our orphans followed my example and changed their surnames into Armenian equivalents.

In 1924, 250 orphans, including myself, were allowed to be repatriated to Soviet Armenia by the steamship “Kerch.”

In 1925, I began to attend a school-workshop in Yerevan and, for the second shift, to attend also the graphic faculty of Artistic-Industrial Technical College, since I learned to carve fine engravings on metals at the workshop, which amazed the people who saw them.

I was admitted also to the Faculty of History of the Yerevan State University. After graduation, I was appointed at the Shahumian School, in Yerevan, as a teacher of history and painting.

I served in the Red [Soviet] Army and received the rank of lieutenant. Then I married the painter Seda, who had migrated from Iğdir. We had a son, Paris, in 1933, and then Mary was born.

Later, I was entrusted the post of the director of the Yerevan Artistic Technical College. I have taken part in the Great Patriotic War and I have returned victoriously.

## 252 (252).

### GYURDJI HARUTYUN KESHISHIAN’S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1900, Zeytoun)

I was born in the village of Dash-Oluk, Zeytoun region. My father’s name was Artin, mother’s – Trfanda. We were four sisters and two brothers.

What we saw is not possible to tell; one should see them with one’s own eyes, to understand what the Armenian people endured.

First of all, the Turkish soldiers came to Zeytoun and began to gather the weapons of the Armenians: they did not leave even a small knife in the house.

Then they came and took away the males to make them work. They took them to kill, slaughter, and annihilate. We did not see this, but someone, who was saved by a miracle, came and told us.

After eight days, they exiled us to Marash. We had nothing with us: no clothes, no bed, and no food. We remained in Marash for one day. Then the soldiers came and said, ‘yalla’ (let’s go – Turk.) and drove us again to Ayntap. Misery, poverty, hunger; we had no clothes: we were naked and barefoot. They drove us like sheep; they took us to the deserts: women, children, there was no male among us; they had already taken away the men and killed them. They slaughtered my twenty-year-old brother, Missak, together with father. They kidnapped my three sisters. A man on horseback pulled and dragged one on them. He saw mother would not give my sister. He threw a piece of bread before my mother. Mother bent to take the bread; he kidnapped my sister. The other two were taken away at night while sleeping. They made us walk. On the way, they killed women, too, for our turn had come. And do you know what they did? There was a big pit in the desert; they were cutting the heads of women and children and throwing them into the pit. The poor children were dying like lambs. They stabbed me, too, and threw me in the pit, but I was alive. Under the corpses, drenched in blood, the smell of blood had

spread all about. When the gendarmes finished their work, they poured petrol in the pit to burn the corpses. The dead did not feel, but the voices of those alive would tear your heart into pieces. I was under the dead and I felt someone holding my hand tightly. I remained there in the pit a whole day, among the dead. I was hungry. Soil filled my mouth. Finally, there was a brave woman. She somehow put her head out, saw that the gendarmes had gone and began shouting: “Whoever is alive, come out, let’s run away.”

Those who were alive came out of the pit. We were about twenty women and children. One was wounded, all in blood, the other’s hair was burnt and her face blackened. All were hungry and thirsty. There was neither water, nor food. There was grass on the ground; mother picked them; she ate the leaves, gave me the root to eat. All of us were hungry. But worst of all was that we feared the Turks would see us and slaughter us. We were going this way, that way, where were we going? We did not know. That was the reason why we hid in the caves at day-time and walked by night.

This way: hungry and thirsty we walked a day or two. Exhausted we fell down in a place and slept: me, mother, and in mother’s arms was my three-year-old brother... We opened our eyes and saw that a few women had made a fire and were roasting meat. They called me and mother, too. I went to eat, but mother was running here and there worried. She was looking for my three-year-old brother. In reality, when we were asleep, those women of our group had thought about what they could do to overcome hunger. While mother was sleeping, they had taken away the three-year-old boy, had roasted him on a fire, and now were eating him. They also gave me a piece of the meat. I was a child; I did not know what it was; I began to eat. Mother came near me like a mad

\* The ninety-seven year-old survivor, Gyurdji Keshishian, told her testimony in a Turkish-mixed Armenian, which I represent in Armenian and in English translation.

woman. She saw that I was eating meat, did not say anything, but pulled me by the hand and took me away. We went far from those women. Later, many years had passed. Mother told me that what I was eating was my brother's heel. Do not write it; it is shameful, but it is the truth... [Added the survivor – V. S.].

My mother took me away from that place, for the following day they could roast me on a fire and eat me too; they were so hungry...

We began to walk. Darkness fell. We reached the tents of the Arabs. The Arabs were very kind, good people; they are not like the Turks. They took us in and kept. They asked me: "What's your name?"

"Gyurdji," I said.

"After this, let it be Farida," they said.

We remained there for two years. Then peace came everywhere – Armistice. The Americans came, gathered the Armenians: women, men and took them to Aleppo in carriages. They put the children in orphanages. An Armenian woman from Marash, Natalie by name, came and took me to her house. I remained there for eight years.

One day a woman saw me, recognized me and said:

"Your mother is here."

Through the Armenian Church I found my two sisters, too. One had gone to Jerusalem, the other – to Jordan, the rest were killed by the Turks.

And my husband, Manouk Keshishian, is the only survivor of his large family consisting of twenty-five people. I met his niece, Elmast. She is from Zeytoun as well. She told me that when they had been gathering the men and taking them away in groups, she had been seven, and she had run away with father to hide in the fields. At nights, when they had been sleeping in the open, all the other members of their group had been slaughtered. Her father used to take her in his arms and they slept. One morning she woke up; she wanted to come out of her father's arms. She saw that her father's arms were stiff; he had died and his body had turned cold. Somehow, she opened his arms and came out. She dug the ground all alone with her hands, put her father's corpse in it, and covered it with earth and stones, but his body was still visible. At night, she climbed up a tree and slept there. In the morning, she saw that the jackals had come and eaten her father's body.

## 253 (253).

### HOVSEP BSHTIKIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Zeytoun)

*If a man's fate is to survive, he shall...*

Until 1915, there were thirty thousand Armenians in Zeytoun. In all of Turkey, Zeytoun was the only place where only Armenians lived.

Zeytoun was divided into four quarters: Yaghoubian, Sourenian, Norashkharian, Shovroyan, according to the names of the principedoms' dynasties.

In Zeytoun, my father and uncle were bricklayers; they worked together and lived together with their families. When the exile began, we were three brothers and two sisters. Our family was large. The orchards of all our cousins were next to each other. In 1915, they exiled the inhabitants of Zeytoun first. I was eleven-twelve years old. Our people fought under the leadership of Norashkharian. For four-five days the fedayis had been fighting in St. Karassoun Mankants Monastery. Every year, on the holiday of Holy Virgin we used to go there for pilgrimage. We ate, drank, danced, sang, played games; tight-rope walkers came – it was a tradition.

At that place, in 1915, our young men fought. They killed many Turks, but they saw that they would not be able to win. The Turks had already taken well-known persons to the military barracks: about three hundred men. Then they took them to Marash, hanged them, and exiled their families. About one hundred young people, however, had gone to the mountains to fight. At that time, the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahak Khabayan, sent

a papal bull, saying: "Do not do such things. Do not rise up in arms. Surrender!" He even came to Zeytoun. We were school-children; they took us to meet him. He preached, calmed the people down, persuaded them that everything would be alright. He became the reason that the people of Zeytoun did not fight. Before, the people of Zeytoun had already fought about sixty times. They had resisted the Turkish government's despotism and had always won. That was the reason why the Turks feared the people of Zeytoun and did not collect any taxes from them. This time they were also ready to resist and die: for they knew that, in any case, they would die in exile, in the deserts of Der-Zor. I was in the third form. They came and closed the schools in Marash. They deported us. The Turks came, gave us donkeys; we loaded them and went to Marash. And from there they exiled part of the people to the vicinity of Konia and the other – to Der-Zor. They took us to Konia.

I was small; I could not walk. On the way my mother asked in Turkish: "Put this child on a camel." There were already a few children sitting on the camels. They raised me on a camel, too. The camels were walking slowly. Ours went forward; we remained behind. I had slept on the camel and remained there. Darkness fell; we began crying; we wanted our parents. On the way, they took us to the village of Ulghushla. They took us off the animals

and we remained there three-four days. There, the Turks beat us and did not leave us in peace. They took whatever we had from us. I caught dysentery and its effects were with me until I came to Armenia in 1946. Only the water of Armenia healed me. Then they took us to Suleimanié. There we saw our scholars from Constantinople: Zohrap, Varoujan and others. They were dressed in collar and tie, stick in hand and hat. Thus, smartly dressed, they were talking to each other. Then they were taken to some other place. I don't know what happened to them...

Then they brought us back to Bozanti, near Adana. From there they put us on donkeys and mules. The Turkish soldiers were walking by us. All of a sudden a Turk saw, hanging from the saddle of our donkey, my three or four-year-old brother and sister, seated in the saddle-bags, each on one side. The Turk took a handful of earth from the ground and threw it at my brother's face. My brother became blind, and then died of fear. On the way, we buried my brother and went forward...

From there we came to Katma. We saw that they had started deportations from everywhere: Adana and Mersin among others. From all sides of Turkey they brought Armenians in carts and exiled them to Katma, Aleppo...

We remained in Katma for three months. Disease and dirt: we were dressed in rags and lived in tents. People were hungry and thirsty. No one took care of us. There were outbreaks of typhus, cholera... Half of the people died of disease and the rest was killed – slaughtered...

By the time we reached there, the rains had started. It was already the last month of autumn. Half of the people, including us, were taken to Ras-ul-Ayn. The other half went to Der-Zor...

In Ras-ul-Ayn, we pitched tents made of tree branches and rags. The Khabur River flowed by. There was a hill; they had placed the refugees on the hill, and the soldiers surrounded them. The guards were Chechens. They were wild people: they liked to plunder and kill.

Before the exile, my uncle, being a mason, used to build houses for the Chechens. Every year, he used to go there and work. They came to our house, stayed with us. They used to eat, drink and sleep... When we were on the hill, uncle saw that one of the guards was his Chechen acquaintance: Hassan Ibrahim from the village of Chardakh. Uncle began to talk with his Chechen acquaintance.

At Ras-ul-Ayn, there was no food; there was just a plant called 'sous.' We ate it and burned the roots.

One day, three of us went for wood. We were returning with the wood on our back. We encountered two Arabs. They had sticks with iron tips in their hand. They said: "Hayde, ishla" (Come on, take off your clothes – Turk.).

Out of fear we took off our clothes, remaining in our underwear. Our brother-in-law refused. They struck him and broke his arm. We came back to our tents, naked and frightened, with the wood on our backs, frightened.

Every day, on the banks of the Khabur, a pit was filled with the sick and the dead. At night the jackals came, tore them to pieces and ate them... We were in the tents. One day they came and said: "These (and they showed with their hand about three-four hundred tents) we'll take away." We were in about twenty-five thousand tents from Constantinople. From all parts of Turkey they had brought us to Ras-ul-Ayn.

Our acquaintance, Hassan Ibrahim, came and said that some of us would be taken away. They drew a line on the ground, saying: "These will be taken to Mosul."

The first day they took them away.

The second day they came again. Again they drew a line, and took away the other part.

In the morning, the women had gone to gather grass; they had seen that the Armenians were being killed in the valley. Frightened, terrified they came back and told us what they had seen. They were killing them in turns, one by one, and they were arranging the corpses on each other cross-like. Now we learned that they were taking them – a few at a time – not to Mosul, but to be slaughtered in the valley... When our turn came, our acquaintance Hassan Ibrahim said: "We'll take them in three days, let them stay now..."

At night, Hassan Ibrahim secretly came to us and said: "Get ready. I'll bring the cart. You come near Khabur; I'll take you to my house."

Actually, his wife was a young Armenian girl, kidnapped from Erzroom. He brought the cart at night and took us to his house. His wife, as I said, had been kidnapped by him during the slaughter at Erzroom. Tigranouhi was hardly sixteen, while he was fifty. Tigranouhi used to tell how they were brought from Erzroom. They passed Moosh, Diarbekir and what things they saw... Her story was heart-breaking, and she cried, cried...

Hassan Ibrahim said to us: "Begin building a house for me." We were four men, a few women. My mother died there. We remained. He used to give us a piece of bread and made us work. We began building a house. Hassan Ibrahim had two brothers. The prefect's house was nearby. The prefect said: "We'll take away all the Armenians from the village."

Hassan Ibrahim said: "They're building my house, let them build and finish it, then we'll take them away. Aren't we the killers?"

We built a large house for them in the yard. Next to them, was an Arab from Merdin. He also wanted us to build a house for him. We went and built his house, too. He also used to give us a piece of bread... Bedouins lived nearby. They used to bring milk in pots. I used to put the pots on either sides of the donkey's saddle-bag and brought the milk...

One day I went for milk. There was a man and a woman there from Hadjn, who worked in the Bedouins' house, and they gave me the milk. By the time I reached

home, darkness had fallen. I saw that they had taken away my kin. What should I do? I took my pillow and went back to the husband and wife from Hadjn, who lived in the Arab officer's house. They kept me in spite of the fact that they were hiding, too. Then, came the order from Talaat: "Kill the Armenians who are one meter tall." Those people from Hadjn took me in and kept me.

At night, we slept on the ground. My uncle's wife had put my nice clothes made of velvet and silk in my pillow so that they would not be found and stolen. They were expensive clothes. The Arab officer, however, took them from me and expelled me from his house, saying: "Go away, there's no work."

Downcast, sad, and alone, I went away. One day I was all alone, exhausted. I was gathering manure on the banks of the Khabur in order to burn it. I sat on the banks, my feet in the water. Suddenly I saw a Chechen coming on horseback. I wanted to run away. Then I thought: why run away? What will be – will be. He approached. It was my father's acquaintance Hassan Ibrahim. He came and recognized me. "Boy, what are you doing here?"

"What shall I do? They took away everyone. I'm all alone.

"Will you come with me?"

"I will."

"Tomorrow, early in the morning come here. I'll take you." Hassan Ibrahim came on horseback and took me to his pasture. His Armenian wife gave me bread and said: "Go, bring water."

I went for water. I came home. I saw two-three gendarmes there. I was afraid. I hid myself. I heard them call: "Yusuf, Yusuf." I did not come out. When the gendarmes left, I came out. My master said: "Why didn't you come?"

"I was afraid."

"Don't be afraid."

He dressed me like a Chechen, hung a dagger by my side; I became a real Chechen.

He said: "Whoever asks you, say you're Hassan's son. I am the chief of this village. Don't be afraid!"

I remained in that village. I took the horse to water, kept the cows; I was a servant. They took away the Armenians, only I remained. About one hundred Armenians built houses, but they were taken away as well. The houses remained for the Turks. No Armenian was left in the village. A few Armenian boys were left with the Chechens, but they were also disguised – as I was – under Turkish names...

One day, the Chechens gathered in our house. Beyond Ras-ul-Ayn there was a village called Safa. The Chechens from that village had also come. They were seated and were sharpening their weapons and saying to each other: "We'll go to Der-Zor to slaughter the Armenians."

I remained there in spring, then until autumn.

In autumn, those same Chechens came loaded with

goods – from Constantinople and from Konia. From all parts of the country, they had brought the riches of the Armenians: clothes, ornaments, gold, gold coins, all in abundance. Whatever you wanted, whatever crossed your mind – they had them. What goods! I glanced at them out of the corner of my eye. They measured the gold coins with a dish and divided it: it was so much! As my master was the chief of the Chechens, he had his share. After dividing the spoils, they left...

One day, my Chechen master went to the village of Safa. He came and said: "Do you know, Yusuf, I saw your father and mother. Here, they've written you a letter."

He gave me the letter; it was in my brother's hand. He wrote that they were in Safa. I learned of their place.

The Chechens had kidnapped Armenian girls from Ras-ul-Ayn and taken them to Safa. They were going to have weddings. There was a carriage-full of plundered goods, which was to be taken to Safa.

My master said: "Yusuf, will you go to the wedding instead of me?"

I took the carriage and went. I did not stay long at the wedding; I went to see my parents. They had built a house in the village. I went and found it, for my master had explained it in detail. I went. There was a dog tied before the door. I wanted to enter, but could not. I waited till someone passed by and took me in. Whoever came and saw me in Chechen clothes thought I was a Chechen. All at once a man came and approached me. I saw he was my father; I remembered his face. I shouted. He came to me and hugged me. We kissed each other, and he took me home...

My kin told me that they had come from Ras-ul-Ayn to Safa. On the way, at night, they had been robbed of all their possessions: mother's jewelry, her silver headwear, her belt... But the three robbers had not been able to share their loot and had started to fight each other. Our people, using the opportunity, escaped, and seeing a house, entered it, naked, wet and plundered. They entered the yard, went inside the barn and crouched in one corner. There was a dog there, but the dog did not bark. That house had been the village chief's house. The chief's wife came and saw them. My uncle told the chief what had happened to them on the way, how they had not seen them, how they had fled, how their dog had not barked. The Chechen chief had said: "So, this is God's miracle that the dog did not bark, when so many people came into the yard."

Thus they remained there. As they were craftsmen, they began working. "Master," said the chief, "build a house for me." They built a house there as well. One day, my master went there, met my people, came and told me. But I was not ungrateful. I went back to my master. When his Armenian wife gave birth to a child, I went to my parents...

In 1918, when the war ended and the armistice was declared, the Armenians began to go back to their place.

We came from Safa to the station. There we remained two-three days, and then the train came from Mosul. Turkish soldiers were in the wagons and on the wagons. They were running away. There was no place in the train, but we got on somehow and came.

There was a bridge in Jarablous; there was no fuel for the train to move. We got off the train, gathered hay and branches to burn in the locomotive, so that the train could move. We arrived in Jarablous. The English had already occupied Syria. The Turkish soldiers were running away. We came to Aleppo. There were Turkish military barracks, and the Armenians were sent there. We remained there. From there, we intended to go to Zeytoun. We hired a cart. On the way, near Ayntap, Turkish deserters robbed us and took away the horse of our carriage. Then we bought another horse. We went to Marash. In Marash we remained in the Karassoun Mankants Church and in the school, where Armenians from different places had gathered: Fernouz, Fendedjak, Zeytoun, and Marash... (Later, that church, where there were many Armenians, was set to fire\*). We fled. We remained alive, but father died. Mother had already died in Ras-ul-Ayn.

We came out of there and went towards Zeytoun. All of us were ill, exhausted. On the way, in Katma, my brother died. We were taking with us my uncle's wife, who was seriously ill. We went to Zeytoun.

The next day we reached Zeytoun. What did we see? They had burned Zeytoun, had turned it all to ashes, so that the people could not come back and live there. Luckily, that the fire had not reached our house as it was on the edge of the town, but a Turk was living there. He was a communication officer. We waited. The man came out and saw our state. It was good that the man left our house to us. Most of the Armenians, who had remained without houses, went and lived in the military barracks. In the old days, we had occupied the barracks from the Turks.

We remained there for quite a long time: from 1918 till 1920. Then the Turks began to give us trouble again. We left our house and went to live in the camp, so that we could all be together if the Turks attacked us. The conditions of the Armenians worsened. We had many difficulties. When they saw an Armenian alone, they killed him. So we went together three or four people, armed, for instance, to bring salt. We were aware that one day the Turks would attack us. That was why we were so busy, we made cartridges, bullets, and we hid them. In 1921, Kemal Atatürk gave the order: "Let the Armenians surrender." We thought: what should we do? They had already killed many Armenians. Some people said: "How can we surrender? We have hardly been liberated from the Turks' hands. Shall we surrender again?"

I said to my brother: "You're married: you take your wife, go, surrender. I'm going to fight." We, the Zeytoun

people, were all in all one thousand two hundred people. Six or seven hundred old people, women, girls, and children surrendered and became prisoners. An Armenian from Marash and an English missionary, (the director of the orphanage, Mr. Liman) came and said: "For those, who surrender, their lives are guaranteed."

Those, who surrendered, were taken away. But those whose men had resisted and had become outlaws, were taken away to be slaughtered. The rest were driven far away.

At the St. Karassoun Mankants Monastery of Zeytoun about 80 young men were having physical training. Aram Cholakian had been with them when the Turks came and surrounded the monastery. Our boys decided to defend themselves under the leadership of Aram. The Turks began to shoot, then began firing their cannons. The boys of the monastery responded with fire. They hoped that the youth of Zeytoun would come to help them and Aram was getting ready to attack the enemy with his brave boys. But at night, the town crier, lantern in hand, came out into the streets of Zeytoun and declared the order from Catholicos Sahak Khabayan: "By no means should the inhabitants of Zeytoun fight against the Turks, no one must go to help the youth of the monastery. If not – a big battle may begin." So, the boys of the monastery got no help, although the people of Zeytoun were ready to go and help the boys. But by night, when they went about with lanterns and said that it was the order of the Catholicos, the people obeyed and ruined their own homes...

The Turks began to fire. We were 450-500 people by now. We began the resistance against the regular army of the Turkish government. We fought for 3-4 days.

The Turks surrounded our barracks and began bombarding the monastery with German cannons. They set fire to the monastery. They stopped the water, which ran near the monastery. I was seventeen then. Our arms supply was getting lower and lower. At night, we jumped out of the back windows of the monastery. In the morning, we saw that we were all surrounded. There was no way out. By fighting, we could somehow open a passage for us and got out of the siege. We lost track of each other. On the way, near the river of Zeytoun two-three Turks saw me. They were hooligans. They said: "Tut gâvur" (Catch the infidel – Turk.). A few Turkish boys from Zeytoun were coming behind me. I struck them...

The village of Abakol was quite far from Zeytoun. There, some of us were caught, some of us were killed, and the rest of us remained in the mountains...

Those who had surrendered were filled in the military barracks of Zeytoun: old people, women, and girls. The Turks had killed them all; they had burned the children alive... They had set fire to the military barracks. We heard their screams from the mountains. It was terrible...

Our sentries had caught Turkish deserters. They

\* See Verginé Mayikian's (b. 1898, Marash) testimony [T. 259].

were going to kill them. They gave them to Nazareth to kill, for the Turks had killed Nazareth's relatives all. We said: "Nazareth, take them, kill them. Avenge yourself."

We went to the Djihan River. It was our border. If we passed it, on the Adana side were the French. But Turkish soldiers came and pursued us from Fernouz to Anderen. There we were going to cross the river, when the Turkish soldiers surrounded us again. "Who are you?" we asked.

"We're pursuing the people from Zeytoun," was their answer. The Turks threw some of us into the river. They killed about fifty people in the river. My wife's cousins were killed there...

When dawn broke, we had lost each other. I hid in the woods among the thorns. I barely got out and went to join our group from Zeytoun. Aram Cholakian's group had been reduced to thirty. The Turks had surrounded us. There was no hope of crossing the river. There was no way to go ahead: mountains were all around us. After fighting in Anderen, we decided to go back in the evening. We wanted to cross the mountains. All of a sudden, the Turks opened fire on us. We fought until morning. There, too, we lost three-four of our men.

We went back towards Zeytoun again. We were surrounded. If we could pass on the Adana side, we would be saved: the French were there. But we could not.

Suddenly our guard came and said that there was a group at a certain distance. The Turks approached us. We fled again. We were twenty or twenty five people including women and children. We had remained in the impassible mountains of the Taurus, around Amanos. The Turks were following us with dogs. In caves, in the snow, we were hungry and thirsty. Darkness had fallen. We saw plants that looked like lentils; we ate them – we were hungry...

Dawn came. We were planning to go to Zeytoun, to Fernouz. We saw that the Turks' pursuit continued. They reached us in pursuit. We were on a high mountain peak on the side of Fernouz. We climbed the high rocks. Two-three women threw themselves from the rocks so as not to fall in the hands of the Turks. The Turks came nearer. We took positions. The gang of Turks began to fire.

Aram ordered: "Scatter and shoot from different places, so that the enemy thinks we are many." He picked up a bullet and his rifle and went ahead, sword in hand. He put one bullet in his mouth to have it ready. He was a man of great experience. On the Gâvur Dagh he had fought against the Turks for 3-4 years. His brother was killed, but he had lived on; he was very brave. His heroism is great...

We fought until night. Norashkharian said: "Go to Aram." We, two boys, went. The Turks' circle was getting tighter. The bullets came and hit the rocks beside us. Fate rescued me: the bullet passed just over my head. My friend was shot. His blood flowed over me. His father also was dead. I ran and reached Aram. We wanted to escape, but we were surrounded on all sides. There was

only one open place, but it was a rock. Either we had to throw ourselves down or die. It was night. Nothing was seen. One of us said: "I'll throw myself down. If I remain alive, I'll call you: you come, too."

He threw himself. But where? Nothing was to be seen. It was so dark. He shouted: "Come, I'm alive."

We followed him, throwing ourselves down, but the Turks' voices were heard nearby. In fact they had been close at hand. Crouching we moved forward and broke through the enemy's circle. We reached Fernouz, which was a small town near Zeytoun. There was nobody there. It had been deserted. We stayed there a couple of days. We ate fruits and herbs from the mountains and were invigorated. We wanted to go at least to our Zeytoun. We knew its roads, its waters. We came. We saw foot-prints. In reality, one hundred-one hundred and fifty inhabitants of Zeytoun had passed by that road before us. They were going to Zeytoun. We followed their traces and found the group. We joined them and became a group of about three hundred people. Then, I was wounded in the eye, and a fragment of a shell wounded my foot. There were three-four boys like me, about fifteen-sixteen years old, and some women. Aram Cholakian said: "Let's go towards Fernouz. Let's enter a Turkish village and get something to eat."

A few of us were left there; the others went towards Anderen. They had found oxen; they had driven them out of the village, had made ghavourma; they brought us some to eat.

One day, a Turkish caravan was passing by. We, the youth, held them up and we saw – guess what? Boxes of bullets. We were delighted. Soon our bullets would have finished. So, already, the Russian government who had become Soviet, had given them to the Turks to massacre us, the Armenians. We filled them into our pockets, our saddle-bags, we carried them on our shoulders, for we would need them while fighting, but, alas, our rifles were not Russian. Ours were either German or Greek. So, we shouldered those Russian heavy bullets and carried them for months with us, from place to place, hoping to get or find a Russian rifle and use them while fighting. There was a sack of salt in that caravan and it rescued us. People die without salt. We ate the herbs with salt, it gave us strength. We lived somehow.

One day we lost the group; we hid by day and ate grass by night. We had a friend, whose jaw was wounded. The bullet had gone through it. The flesh was hanging loosely and the wound was inflamed. I washed it, applied herbs on it, and tied it with a handkerchief. Then, when we came to Aleppo, we took him to Dr. Altounian's hospital. The doctor asked in surprise: "How did you cure it?"

"With herbs," said I.

Later that man married and went to America.

Our group had dispersed. I used to gather mulberries to feed the boy whose jaw was wounded. One of my eyes also was wounded and bandaged. We lost our group. We

saw a cave and went in it to rest. We saw that our group was there. We had found each other and were so happy...

One day, we had gathered near the fountain and were waiting for our boys, about ten in number, to come. Aram saw that they were late. He took up his field-glasses and stood up, to look and see where the boys remained. All of a sudden we heard the voices of Turks: "Hey, Aram bey, surrender! Where is Aram bey? Yesterday we killed his mother, sister, and wife and now we're looking for his head." They opened fire on us from afar.

Aram Cholakian was a brave and intelligent man, like Andranik. He was good-natured and noble. When Aram saw that the Turks had blocked our way, he said: "Take positions far from each other, let them think that we're many," and, taking his gun (which took ten bullets at a time), began to fire. They were shooting and we were shooting. Aram was encouraging us: "The fedayi must never lose hope; he must fight to his last breath..." While looking through the field-glasses he had taken his head out and they shot him from behind... At the beginning they would not tell us; they had kept his corpse in the grass, in order not to let it fall in the hands of the Turks. Later his brother-in-law came and told us the news, saying: "No one should leave his position; we will gather in the evening..." I was the youngest among them. I saw that Aram had died with his gun in hand... We placed his corpse to the earth. We all were silent; we had become orphans: our leader – he was no more... His cousin said: "Boys, we must keep our wits about us..."

We felt that our brave leader was no more. Desperate, forlorn I had remained hidden in the rocks, when suddenly I noticed that my friends had gone; I was left alone. I did not know the place, I did not know anyone. Where to go? What to do? I saw from afar a green line that seemed to move; it was water. I said to myself, 'Let me drink some water. Crouching and crawling I approached the water. I saw from afar that someone was approaching; he was Manouk of the Ala Manouks'. I reached my group...

Aram was no more. Hovhannes Simonian had taken his place. He also had fought at Gâvur Dagh in his time. He said: "Boys, at Gâvur Dagh, I have Kurdish acquaintances, let's go."

It was winter; it was cold. We wanted to cross the border. Wherever we went, the Turks pursued us keeping us under pressure. Thus, fighting all the way, we approached Gâvur Dagh. We wanted to go back; it was impossible. Some of us were shot and died. We lost all hope. We went forward and entered a cane-field. There was millet there; we gathered it and filled our bags. Nazareth Zeytountsian said: "I'm exhausted." Really, all of us were very tired. We entered the cane-field to rest a little. There, we remained for two days. Then the Turks came and surrounded us; they saw we would not come out – they set the field on fire. God helped us, as if it was an atomic bomb – the earth was burning, crackle-crackle... Jackals, foxes, and other animals were running

away. Our leader, Hovhannes Simonian said: "Dig the ground, enter in it like a grave and cover the earth over yourselves. The fire will come, pass over you and go away."

And so we did. We dug the ground. The fire came and passed over us and later extinguished itself. We stood up: we were saved. We regrouped in a safe place. Simonian said: "There's a village here; there's a man there by the name of Hassan bey. He knew Aram. Let's go, maybe that man will help us."

We went. As the Kurds saw us they were frightened and ran away. We had seen no house, no bed, and had not bathed for about four or five months. Our beards had grown, so was our hair; we were covered with lice. We had become wild men: barefoot and covered with wounds. Everyday we tore our clothes and tied our wounds. My eye was wounded and tied with a handkerchief: pus was oozing from it. Up to this day, I can't see out of this eye. We said to them: "We won't hurt you, we want Hassan bey. We are Aram's group, you only show us the road, guide us and we'll pay you."

Hassan bey said: "How can we show you the way? If our government hears, they will pull up our roots."

Finally, Hassan bey saw Simonian and remembered their acquaintance. He gave us two Kurds – dependable people. We walked for twelve hours; we had neither footwear nor trousers on. I used to tear the edges of my trousers and bind the wounds of my feet. There were holes on my shoes, my feet often bled, my trousers had become very short, above my knees. We went over rocks and mountains. They were guiding us by secret ways, so that the Turks should not know.

It was dawn. The Kurds said: "We can't come with you anymore. If they see us, they will kill us, too. Don't speak to anyone, just go ahead..."

We gave them five gold coins and two mausers; they went away. We continued on our way. We would go until Kilis.

We were tired and hungry. We had lost our human appearance: long beard and hair and no clothes. Kilis was already quite near. We noticed a village from afar. We saw a mill; people were coming out of it. Suddenly we heard someone calling in Armenian: "Who are you?"

There was a husband and a wife in our group; they went first. "Let your leader come," said the members of that group. The husband and wife returned and said: "Let our leader go; they're Armenians."

Simonian took off his rifle, put it aside and went forward. In fact they were Turks from Yedessia: the Turks of Yedessia know Armenian. They all took off their swords, attacked Simonian and killed him on the spot. We began running back; they cut off our retreat and killed eleven people from our group. There was a woman. She threw herself down the rocks, in order not to fall in the hands of the Turks. There was another woman. She asked her husband to kill her. The husband killed his

wife and then shot himself. There was one more woman among us; they took her prisoner...

Those who had somehow escaped reached the hill and sent a man to Kilis. We sent news to the Armenians of Kilis to come and help us. And suddenly a group of soldiers, about one hundred, stood before us. We defended our positions again. They surrounded us. They took us to a mosque and wanted to collect our guns. In reality, these were French soldiers from Algeria, as France had occupied Algeria and enlisted Algerians.

Soon French gendarmes came. They took us to their general. The general saw us. Then they took us to the church and school of the Armenian National Union. All the Armenians there had been exiled then had returned. They kept us there. We had a bath, a haircut, and shaved. We were like human beings; but we were wounded and sick. They burned our clothes and gave us new clothes to wear. They sent news to Aleppo, to the outside world that one hundred and thirty people from Zeytoun had arrived. The leader of the Kilis Hnchak Party organization was

Vardmekhak Kharanfilian. He came; the Americans came. They brought blankets and other things. We remained there for fifteen days. They bought us food, but we were not able to eat. Having been hungry for so long, our insides could not take it... They took the sick to hospital. Later, the French brought us from Kilis to Aleppo. They photographed us; then they took our rifles and put them in stores. It was 1921, the 1st of September.

The Armenians had returned from their places of exile to Aleppo. There were thousand of orphans in the orphanages of Aleppo. I found my relatives there. My mother's brother rented a house there. I stayed with him for a while. My eye and foot were operated. Then I went to an orphanage. Over two years, I learned a trade there and ... found my lost brother. I saw that things were not doing so well. I went to Beirut and got married. In 1933, I became a member of the communist party. I was imprisoned for my ideas. In 1946, I came to Soviet Armenia with my family and we founded New Zeytoun.

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### KARAPET TOZLIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Zeytoun)

Our village was called Kyuchuk Zeytoun, that is, Small Zeytoun. The air and the water are unique – the people brave and hard-working.

We are from the Tozlian family. We had two uncles. My father and uncle were gunsmiths, so that when the enemy came we would be ready, and would not bow our heads before the Turks. Our mistress of the house used to store provisions day and night. That was why each time the Turks came and attacked us we were always victorious. Zeytoun had an iron ore. I remember: we used to melt the ore in father's shop; we took it to town, and the blacksmiths made bullets and cartridges.

The monastery was just opposite the town of Zeytoun and we, the Zeytounis, were alert and watchful. Suddenly we saw a few policemen who were carrying gazyagh in tin containers to burn the monastery, but the eshkies fired at them from inside the monastery and killed them.

When the fedayis were fighting in St. Karassoun Mankants Monastery, father went to help. He was shot there. Ever since, I have been an orphan. I had a mother, three sisters and a brother.

We were exiled in 1915. They took us to the deserts of Damascus. We went on foot; we went ... it had no end. We caught typhoid. We were hungry and thirsty; everything was very expensive; there was no food...

We (about fifteen families from Zeytoun) ran away from the vicinity of Damascus. We journeyed until we reached a Circassian village; they called us muhadjir, in a way, wanderers. We remained outside the village,

in the open air. It was fine, for it was summer. A wolf had entered the barn of the Circassian bey of the village to devour the ox. It had hit the wolf with its horns and the wolf had bitten the snout of the ox. The enraged ox bolted to the fields and had not returned by night. The Circassian bey asked us to help him to catch the animal. We helped and caught the ox and took it to the bey's house.

The Circassian bey said: "I'm selling the ox – take it."

Our people said: "We have no money to buy the ox; we are hungry."

The bey said: "Take it; I don't want money. Take it to that valley, slaughter it, and eat it."

All of us, big and small, were hungry; we had been eating only a grass (called kemedj) for days. We boiled it and ate it with some salt. Who had seen meat during that exile? We went to the valley, we slaughtered the ox, cooked it, and we made foot wear out of its hide. There was no wood to cook the meat. We burned dry dung and barely cooked it. We thought that we might get sick with rabies, but we were starving. We boiled and ate it. As it had been boiled, the poison had been neutralized and we did not get sick.

After two-three days the man came again. His two oxen and two cows also had caught the disease. He gave us those animals as well. We cooked them and ate them. Soon the cows of the Arabs of the village were also rabid. They said to us: "Armenians, come, take our rabid

animals to the valley, slaughter and eat them.”

The cows, sick with rabies, raised their ears and tails and attacked people. Every animal that smelt the blood of the sick animal caught the disease. This way many animals in the village were rabid. The Arabs gave them to us. We took them to the valley, slaughtered and ate them. The Arabs used to give us flour and bulghur. But we were victims of a typhoid epidemic. Many of us fell ill and died: our son-in-law, Nazareth, his daughter, Nouritsa, and others. Our exile lasted four years – from 1915 to 1918.

We ran away from that Circassian bey’s village towards the deserts of Jerusalem. We went in a group. Wherever we went, they called us muhadjir. We were all hungry, naked, exhausted, and sick; both the young and the old, the big and the small...

What was the reason that they exiled us and massacred us? The reason was that the Germans and the Turks had become brothers in 1914; they had become allies against England and France. They were fighting them. In reality, Germany became the cause of our exile. Germany told the Turk pashas that we were fighting in the Nablous position with the English and the French. I do not know how long they fought, no one won. At that time, there were one thousand five hundred Armenian volunteers in the French army; they called them the Armenian Legion. They had come from all over – Moussa Dagh, Kessab, Houseinik, and Adana and from other places. Fedayis had gone to help the French, because they had promised the Armenians to give them Cilicia. Our Armenian fedayis had said to the French general: “We will occupy that Nablous<sup>1</sup> position.”

The general had said: “How can you occupy it?”

The Armenians had said: “That’s not your business. We will avenge the Turks, we will win.”

The Armenian volunteers, with blood-shot eyes, crying ‘Hurrah, hurrah,’ attacked and occupied the position. They won...

The Germans and the Turks got on trains and fled towards Egypt. The Arabs also had a grudge against the Turks and the Germans, so they also began slaughtering them. When the Turks and the Germans were escaping, the Arabs gave them such a blow. They had derailed the trains. They took revenge because the Turks and the Germans had occupied the Arabs’ land. The Turks and the Germans withdrew from Cilicia. Cilicia was left to the French and the English. Liberty arrived. At that time, Aram Cholakian was still in the mountains. It was in 1918 that freedom came. Aram’s fedayis, who were fighting in the mountains, heard that Germany and Turkey were defeated, and Cilicia was liberated. They came, crossed the Djihan River and entered Syria. Only twenty Armenian fedayis were left alive.

When the French brought liberty, American

missionaries came to Syria. They went to the deserts of Der-Zor and gathered all the Armenian women, girls, and boys from Arab homes. The Arabs betrayed each other, telling where there were Armenians, and those who did not want to give them up, were sent to prison. They filled the orphanage of Aleppo with these people. Those who had lost each other – father, mother, relatives, came and found each other...

During the exile they had separated us into two parts; they took us around Konia, and then brought us to Aleppo. Many were taken to Der-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, and many others to the deserts of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Havran. We found ourselves near Damascus. They did not slaughter us. That was why many Armenians remained alive. Those taken to Der-Zor were all massacred.

We were still in exile. We had not gone to our country yet... I am going to say something. I am going to tell you what I have seen. At that time, when we were in exile near Damascus, we were all together: my mother, sisters, and many other Armenians. Talaat, Enver, Djemal pashas were still exiled. Orders came to the Great Djemal pasha to go to Damascus and massacre the Armenians there. He was given that right. They had given him sealed orders to go and slaughter the Armenians...

The Great Djemal pasha took that letter and came to Damascus.

At that time, we had an Armenian Church in Damascus and we had a prelate there. Djemal pasha came to the prelate and said to the Armenian prelate: “Here, I have a letter and I’m going to massacre the Armenians...”

During the exile, they took many Armenians from Arabkir to Der-Zor and slaughtered them. At the time of the deportations, an Armenian family from Arabkir had a very beautiful daughter, so beautiful that she could have said to the sun: “Don’t rise; I’m going to rise instead of you.” Djemal pasha had seen that beautiful girl and had taken her to his harem. Djemal pasha loved her very much. One day that girl said to Djemal pasha: “Pasha, I beg you, these Armenians are innocent people, think of something and don’t let them be slaughtered. Let it be your kindness to the Armenians.”

At that time I was in Arabia, in a village near Damascus, when Djemal pasha came, the order in his hand, to slaughter the Armenians. That Djemal pasha thought to change the names of the Armenians, so that he might send a telegram saying that no Armenians were left there; all of them had changed their religion, no Armenian has been left to kill.

I was then sixteen years old. Djemal pasha said to the Armenians: “You remain Armenian, only change your names. Just call yourselves any other name, and I’m going to send a telegram saying that no Armenians are left here; all of them have already changed their

<sup>1</sup> Nablous – He means the Armenian volunteers’ victory in 1918 near Palestine where the German-Turkish soldiers were defeated at the battle of Arara.

religion...”

I remember: they named me Hussein. They changed the names of all the Armenians. Every one was given a false name to save the Armenians. Djemal pasha had said: “When I die, the Armenians will write my name in golden letters.”

In this way, many Armenians survived. Many caught typhoid and died. Hungry and thirsty, they could not withstand the disease and died...

After that exile, when our volunteers were victorious at the Nablous Battle in 1918, and when freedom prevailed, we also, together with the survivors, came to Aleppo. We came to Aleppo, but there was no place to live, they gathered the orphans from the Arabs and placed them in orphanages. The children used to speak Arabic. The Arabs had tattooed the Armenian girls’ and women’s faces with blue ink, but our Armenian youth said: “Never mind, we’ll marry our unfortunate girls. What then, if the Arabs have made them work...”

Then an order came saying: “Everyone can go to his country freely.” But we, the Zeytoun people gathered and found out that of forty-five thousand, only one thousand fifty-eight people had survived. Many inhabitants of Zeytoun had been slaughtered in Der-Zor. The slaughterers were the Caucasian Circassians. On the bank of the Khabur there were three Chechen villages. Earlier, Tsar Nicolay had exiled those Chechens. They had massacred the Armenians, not the Arabs.

In fact, in 1918, from each village of Zeytoun only two or three people had survived. Altogether: one thousand fifty-eight people. We came together and set off. To go from Syria to Cilicia, we had to pass through the towns of Kilis, Ayntap, and Marash. The French had occupied these places – until Marash...

Aram Cholakian had already come down from the mountains, had come to Aleppo and found our fellow countrymen from Zeytoun, and was the chairman of our Compatriotic Union. He led us to Zeytoun. We went, reached Zeytoun; we saw that all our houses were burnt down. When they had exiled us, they brought Lazes from Salonica and had them live in our houses. They were Muslims; they used to say, “Allah ou akbar” and they sang and prayed. Aram, who had escaped to the mountains of Zeytoun, heard that Lazes had come and were living in our houses. He thought: “Let me go and burn our houses. Let those living there burn too.” Our houses in Zeytoun were built of good wood; all the houses were burned down to ashes. Only some ten-fifteen houses on the edge of the village had not burned. For the first days, we settled in those houses, later we began building by and by and repaired our destroyed houses. We had orchards; we began working again, plowed the land, and sowed. What should I say? What should I confess...?

For those two years, we lived comfortably. We began to trade. The grapes ripened and we had good crops. We made raisins, we sold them, we lived...

At that time, the fighting of Marash had not started yet. Hassan ghade, the head Turk of Marash, called the leader of the Armenians Khrlakian Hakob, and said: “Hakob agha, we’re going to fight against the French. We will draw them out of our country. Do not meddle. We will give you provisions. Don’t interfere, we’re compatriots.”

Hakob agha had said: “You Turks, what did you do to the Armenians? You exiled them. You massacred them. We have not forgotten. We’re with the French. If I were able to, I would make you polish my shoes...”

Thus boldly spoke Hakob agha and insulted Hassan ghade.

The Turk Hassan ghade answered: “Hakob agha, I will have my mustache shaved; if I do not have you bound at the back of a truck and cut off your head...”

Hassan ghade gathered all the Turks and said: “What is dearer: your money or your honor?”

All those present said: “Of course – our honor!”

“If honor is dearer for you, bring the gold that you have, I’ll go to the depths of Turkey; I’ll collect an army and fight the French...”

Hassan ghade went to lead the Turks to drive away the gâvurs (infidels – Turk.) – the French.

It was in 1920. At that time, we were in Zeytoun. The Turks began slaughtering the Armenians in Marash, because Hakob agha had said such things to the ghade.

It was a cold winter. It was very cold. Hakob agha had sensed the danger menacing him. He filled a saddlebag with gold, got on his horse and tried to run away. While escaping, the Turks caught him, cut off his head, tied it to the back of a truck and took it to Ankara. Hassan ghade had said: “This is gâvur Hakob agha’s head, who told me he would have me polish his shoes...”

It was already 1921. The Turks had come with thirty thousand soldiers to fight the French. For three days we heard the sounds of cannon. All of a sudden the cannon sounds stopped. From Marash to Zeytoun it is 12 hours on foot, but there was no sound. Our Chairman of the Compatriotic Union, Aram Cholakian, wanted to know in what state were the Armenian volunteers. He wanted to send someone, but the road had been covered with snow; there was no road. The French had fled during the night. The volunteers, who had gone with the French, were frozen. We had someone called Mihran from Marash, whose fingers had been frozen. The rest of the Armenians...

We remained in Zeytoun from 1918 to 1921. It was the spring of 1921. We were still in Zeytoun. The French had fled having tied felts to the hoofs of their horses in order not to make any noise while escaping. Marash was defeated. The French ran away. It was our turn. At that time all of us, during the French and Turkish battles, had entered the military barracks and gathered there. The Armenians had occupied that military barracks from the Turks in 1895. Five hundred Turkish soldiers had

lived there. It was a Monday in 1921 when the soldiers of Kemal Ataturk came and surrounded the barracks. I also was in the barracks and I was hardly seventeen. My father had died long ago. We were together: mother, my three sisters and my brother's wife.

The soldiers of Kemal came to the summit of the mountain opposite and directed the German cannons towards us. A soldier on horseback, a white flag in hand, came and brought us a letter, which read as follows: "Zeytoun people, surrender or we're going to bombard you. You have three hours to decide." That was Kemal's order.

We, the Zeytoun people, were only one thousand fifty-eight souls. The Compatriotic Union held a meeting and decided that the Armenian youth cannot surrender. They would fight to the last drop of their blood. Missionaries came from Marash and said to us: "If you surrender, they won't kill you."

We, the Zeytoun youth, said: "We won't surrender; we'll fight until the last drop of our blood."

Aram said: "Whoever wants to surrender let him surrender."

As though a ship was sinking; the people of the barracks all got worried ... hugging each other, kissing, crying, all of them were troubled... We were two brothers.

My elder brother, Nshan, who worked in Aram's arsenal, was newly married. He also remained with the fighters. He said to me: "Karapet, we are two brothers; you surrender and take care of our mother, sisters, and my wife. Maybe you'll survive and continue the blood of our family. I must be together with Aram's fighters."

I, who was only seventeen, had taken a rifle on my shoulder in order to fight with them. I obeyed my elder brother. I took down the rifle from my shoulder and looked after my mother, sisters and brother's wife. I, together with mother, sister and sister-in-law, went to the mountain peak and surrendered. There was a woman, who was pregnant. She said to her husband: "Ohannes, may my sins fall on you, if you do not shoot me." The husband, before our eyes, turned his face aside, shot his wife in order not to let her fall into the hands of the Turks together with his unborn child. Then the husband went and joined Aram's group. They fought for three days like heroes. It was a fight like no other. The bullets flew through the air. For three days, the German cannons destroyed the walls of our barracks. Seeing that their bullets were finishing and the barracks was surrounded, Aram ordered: "Attach your bayonets to your rifles. We're going to attack the enemy."

At midnight they attacked the enemy. How many of them fell there... About one hundred fifty or two hundred climbed the mountain; they began to fight.

Now, let me tell you about us. They took us to the Turkish center, to the officers. They put the responsibility on three old men from Zeytoun to betray those whose

husbands and brothers were fedayis; those who were fighting and defending their positions. They were to tell their names. If not, they would cut off their heads. The old men, one by one betrayed those whose relatives were fighting with Aram.

At that time we – me, mother, sisters and my sister-in-law – had crouched like hedgehogs behind trees and bushes, so that they might not see us. They came and took away one of my sisters whose husband was among the fighters. My other two sisters, sister-in-law, and mother, we remained together. Our luck did not betray us, we were together. Those, whose husbands and brothers were fighting, were taken separately to be slaughtered. Two-three women, luckily, had managed to run away by hiding in the caves. Later they had gone and joined the fighters and had fought with them. One of those women, many years later, told me about it.

From there, they drove us to the Vardapet Bridge. That was our land border with the Turks. Beneath it, a river flowed with a strong current. They made us stand on the bridge with guards on both sides. We thought they would throw us into the river. They ordered us not to try to escape, otherwise they would fire.

I was seventeen years old. There were many boys like me. They drove us forward from over that bridge. We were going on foot, exhausted, many lay on the ground, could not walk: sick people, old people... At night we remained in a field in the open air. In this way, we walked for days. Finally, they took us to Marash. We walked three days and nights: hungry, thirsty, exhausted, and weary. We reached Marash. We saw that many people were missing. They had died. They kept us there for twenty days. They filled us in the Armenian Church. The Americans came and gave us plenty of food. The Turkish soldiers stood before the door with bayonets. Among us were a vardapet and a priest. They offered Holy Mass. There were many people; they all were crying and sobbing. There, in that church, they kept us for twenty days; they would not let us out. Inside – confusion, disorder, something indescribable. My mother said to me: "Karapet, my son, your brother is already shot in the mountains. If you can, run away; they may slaughter us, too. At least, you save your own life."

In front of the church, the Turkish guard was talking with a woman. I saw there was an open space behind the soldier. I came running from afar. I jumped over the fence. I ran away. I went to Kubetly quarter, which is one of the Armenian quarters and there hid in a house. They said to me: "There are other boys, who have fled like you."

I said to someone from the house: "Go, see, what has happened to them."

They went, and on returning said that there was nobody; they had driven them to the depths of Turkey, to exile. I wept, I thought I would never see them again, especially my intelligent, far-sighted mother, who

wanted to rescue me.

In fact, they had taken our girls and women to work for Turks and Arabs under very harsh conditions. They were hungry and thirsty. Some of them survived, others died. I had no news from my relatives.

I remained in Marash for four months, together with twelve other boys. We lived somehow. All of a sudden, an order came from the Turkish government: "The Armenians of Marash, all those who leave their houses and properties, can get passports and go to Syria. No one will kill you on the way. You can go to Arabia." All the Armenians, leaving houses and property, leaving everything, set off in trucks, by night, towards Syria, Aleppo. I was then together with those twelve boys. There was an Armenian engineer, who was building the state palace of Marash. His name was Tajat. We went to him and said: "Mister Tajat, we also want to go to Syria, Aleppo, but we are orphans, we have no one."

Mister Tajat said: "Go, get photographed, bring your photos, I'll get passports for you, go to Aleppo."

Together with the boys we went, got our photos and took them to him. Mister Tajat got our passports for us and gave them to us.

We set out. We walked seven days and seven nights; our feet were swollen. We were hungry and thirsty. At last we reached Aleppo. Those Armenians, who had remained in the church of Marash: my mother, sisters, and sister-in-law, had been taken to the depths of Turkey and many of them were slaughtered...

The Armenian Benevolent Union had erected white tents in Aleppo, so that when the refugee Armenians came, they might settle there. We went and entered a tent. All the boys ran away: went to the town. Only I remained there, in the tent.

Four months had passed, and I had no news from my kin. Many of the fedayis, fighting in the mountains, were

killed. The Turks had killed Aram Cholakian. Hovsep Bshtikian<sup>1</sup> from Zeytoun had been with them; he knows their battles well. A few of these fighters came to Aleppo. I went and saw them; my brother-in-law was among them, but not my brother. I went away. For ten days, I did not eat and drink. There was a mat on the floor of the tent; I sat on it and cried and cried. I felt I was dying of hunger; no strength was left in me. What should I do? I went to the American office and said: "I am an orphan from Zeytoun."

They sent me to the American orphanage of Lebanon. They were constructing a new building there. I also began to work. I remained there for three months; then they chose the adult boys, thirty in number, and sent us to the Arab villages together with food and bedding for the Americans to keep us. We remained there in Hamana for six months. One day, we went to church and prayed. We saw that they were also Christians like us. They liked me. I began working with them in the silk factory as a regular worker. I earned some money. I took off my Turkish zebe with three skirts. I went to the tailor and had clothes made for me. I wore them and went to work.

Then a letter came from Aleppo: "Karapet, my son. We have come from exile; come to Aleppo, Zeytoun khané." Mother had written it! So, they were alive! The refugees had come. I went and found them. I was already an adult young man when I found my mother and sisters. We rented a house. I began working in order to support them. I worked as a mechanic in the Italian garage. I was a driver of Italian cars. Mother could not stand the sufferings she had seen and died soon. My sister married. I also married in 1930, and had children – Ovsanna, Aghavni, Minas, Nshan.

In 1946, we went from Aleppo to Armenia. In Yerevan, I became one of the founders of New Zeytoun district; we built our house, worked, and lived there.

## 255 (255).

### EVA MANOUK CHOULIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Zeytoun)

During the 1915 massacre and deportation, I was a child, but I remember: we left Zeytoun. Our village was Ayketsa in the district of Zeytoun. My mother was a very pretty woman. She had five children; she lost them all and then she died. Only I remained alive in our village. The Turks came and drove us all out of the village. They were forcing us to march under whiplashes. They tied our hands behind us and gathered us in a high place resembling a 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 from the blow of an axe. That place was Der-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 us and throw the corpses in the water. Below the cave, the Khabur River 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 screaming. There was the odor of blood on the one hand and pangs

<sup>1</sup> See Hovsep Bshtikian's testimony (b. 1903, Zeytoun) [T. 253].

of hunger on the other. Those who were alive, started to eat the flesh of the dead. Those who had remained alive by miracle had come out from under the corpses, from under people who were cut up. They staggered out of the pools of blood. Those who had drunk the dirty water of the cave's well, soon had swollen bellies and died quickly. Then I came out of the cave into the light and began to walk. There was no one about me. Then I

saw an Arab shepherd. I approached him. He pitied me, gave me milk. I drank. Then he took me to his tent and gave me food. I ate. I felt a little better. Then he took me to Marash and gave me to the German orphanage of Marash, where I studied. During the confusion of 1921, we came to Aleppo. In 1946, we came to Armenia. What things have these eyes seen ... How come they haven't become blind, these eyes?...

**256 (256).**

**SEDRAK GAYBAKIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1903, Zeytoun)**

When we were sent to exile, I was twelve years old, so, I remember quite well. They drove us out of Zeytoun. Our house, the barns, and the orchards were heavy with fruit. We left everything and crying, lamenting set out. They drove us to the edges of Konia and from there to the desert of Der-Zor. There, it was something awful, a real hell: people dying one after the other, diseases, hunger, misery, which one to mention?...

One day, an Arab saw me. He probably pitied me, took me with him and made me his son. I became a camel-driver. Barefoot, with long hair, there was no water to wash. When the camel urinated, I put my head under it and washed...

When I felt pain somewhere on my body, my Arab father used to say: "Satan has entered there," and put

burning charcoal on my flesh, so that the devil would get out of there. I would almost die of pain. I smelt my flesh burning, but they used to hold my hands and feet tightly... There are 20-25 scars of those places on my body with the burn marks...

The neighboring Arab clans attacked our tents and plundered us. They took away the women and killed the men. These new masters, with the camels and women, took me too. We reached the north of Iraq (Mosul), near the historical Nineveh, from where the Baghdad-Berlin railway passed. Secretly, I ran away from those Arabs, went to the market and found Armenians. A kind man took me to his shop. I worked for him.

Then I got married, had my family, and in 1946, came to Armenia.

**257 (257).**

**SAMVEL SARGIS ARDJIKIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1907, Zeytoun)**

Talaat, Djemal and Enver pashas organized that all the Armenians should be slain with daggers. I was seven years old when we left Zeytoun. The Ottoman government deported the Armenians. They had no shoes and no bread. A Greek took me and kept me like a son. He took me to Sham (now: Damascus). There I lived by the Greek Christian Church for six years. In Sham, they

began slaughtering the Arabs on the Merdji Square. In Sham, there were many Arabs from Lebanon; they killed them, also the pregnant women. No men were left; all were mobilized.

It was a murdering, robbing, and plundering government. They plundered us, they exiled us, we were scattered all over the world.

**258 (258).**

**GAYANÉ ADOURIAN'S\* TESTIMONY  
(B. 1909, Zeytoun)**

Our family, the Adourians' was well-known in Zeytoun as master millstone makers. In 1915, when the Zeytoun people were exiled, I was only five years old. I had four sisters. The yataghan of the Turk deprived us

not only of our ancestral home; it also drove thousands of us to the deserts of Arabia. On the intolerably difficult road of exile, my four sisters died in a week – one after the other. I do not know whether it was of hunger or

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\* When I met this well-bred woman with pretty features, her cheeks, forehead and chin had traces of a blue tattoo.

illness. I only know that I was rescued miraculously and survived. Our father also died: the man who made millstones and was built like a giant. My grandma used to say: "He could not withstand these sufferings; his gall-bladder cracked and he died." I remained with my thin, frail mother Zarouhi and my grandmother, who had lost her son. I remember walking while hungry, and so thirsty that my mouth foamed. We reached a place where my grandmother said: "I can't walk anymore." The poor woman's feet were swollen; she could not walk anymore and said: "Leave me. You go, catch up with the group." I began to cry for I loved granny very much. Seeing my tears, she tried to get up, hardly had taken one or two steps, when she fell down again and sat on the ground. My poor mother lost her head; she did not know what to do. She left her, took me by the hand and began walking forward. I began again to cry, shriek, and scream: "You're a bad mother, why did you leave grandma there?" But then, I could not understand what was happening in my poor mother's soul. We reached our group. Two days later, the people of the next caravan came and told that they had seen the corpse of an old woman; the jackals had torn it to pieces.

After having walked quite a distance, evening fell. An order came to sit in an open place on the banks of the Euphrates. But there was no bread, nothing to eat. We were hungry. There a few people came and began to speak to mother, saying that she had already lost her husband, the other children also had died: she could not keep the child, that one also might die of hunger: "Give her to us and let us take her to an orphanage. They'll feed her there." Mother, probably thought that as her four daughters had died of hunger, at least the youngest would live. So she gave me to these men, filled a handful of raisins in my hand and said: "Take, eat on the way..."

Those people took me and, together with some other children, delivered me to the Kurds. I saw a large room, like a stable, and it was filled with a pile of straw. On that straw were two-three hundred children, from three to seven years of age. They were asleep; one child's hip was another's pillow. They took me and gave me to those Kurds. They were our supervisors. I also, with an empty stomach, lay down and fell asleep on the straw. In the morning, I opened my eyes because of some noise. One of those Kurdish women supervisors had a loaf of bread in her hand. She cut pieces of bread from the loaf and threw it to the children – as people throw food to dogs. Those who were able – grabbed the bread and ate. Those who could not – remained hungry. Then they came, separated thirty-fourty children, put them in a truck and took them away. Where? Who knows? There was a boy there, a little older than I. He came and whispered to my ear: "Do you know: they took them to kill. On the bank of the Euphrates, there is a pot of boiling water. They take these children there, hold them by the feet, plunge

them in the boiling water and kill them in that way. Then they throw them into the Euphrates. I was among them. I saw this and ran away. If you can, try to run away..."

Although I was small, I was also smart. When darkness fell, I went to the door. I held in my hand the raisins my mother had given me. I went to the woman standing as guard near the door and showed her the raisins and said: "Take, open the door; let me go out."

She took the raisins, opened the door. She slapped me on the head and said: "Go, get away."

I came out of that house. I knew neither the road nor the place. It was already getting dark. I began to walk till I came to a bridge. I remembered that those men had brought me there over the bridge. I thought I should cross it, but I saw that the entrance of the bridge was closed with a wooden door. Near it, was a sentry; he was seated and leaning on his rifle. He was asleep. I approached carefully and thrust my head through the openings of the wooden planks. I had heard that if the head entered an opening, the body would also enter. My head entered, then my body, and slowly I crossed over the bridge.

I saw a woman, probably she remembered me, for she was from our caravan. She took me by the hand and led me to my mother. It was by the grace of God that our people had not moved from their place yet. As mother saw me, she was delighted, began weeping and said: "This is God's miracle, because when I gave you to those Germans to take to the orphanage, I regretted it afterwards. God worked a miracle so that you would come back on your own feet. I found you for a second time."

The next morning they started our caravan to foot again, shouting, yelling: "Get up, walk."

They began cracking their whips on someone's head, on another's back; wherever the whip happened to fall. They drove us like sheep. We were walking on the hot sands of the desert, hungry and thirsty. People fainted, fell on the ground and could not walk anymore. In fact, those who walked at the tail end of the group might often come to danger. Chechens used to come, plunder, and kidnap girls and children. So, I should not have stayed at the end. But who knew such things? Suddenly we saw a wild Chechen on horseback attacking us, spear in hand. He bent on his horse, caught me, and began pulling me, trying to get me out of my mother's hand. I was only five; I began to shout, not to let him carry me off. Finally, the Chechen won, for he was strong. He pulled me from my mother, put me on his horse and in return, threw five pieces of dry bread under the horse's hoofs. That was my price. The Chechen took me to his tent. I was crying and crying. An Arab woman came and said: "Why do you cry, you must be glad that you're alive, for the Chechen could kill you like many others. He could thrust his spear into your breast and kill you."

The Chechen took me to Telhafar – a town in Iraq

– and sold me to my new Turkmen ‘father.’ I remained with him for five years. He used to feed me and I worked all day long. I used to sweep the house, the yard, carried water, and fed the animals and similar chores. They tattooed my face with blue ink to give me the appearance of an Arab, and they gave me the name Nouriya. Under such conditions, I lived for five years. One day, people came and began looking for Armenian children, to collect them and take them to the orphanage, or return them to their parents. They came and took me to a place. Whether he was an Englishman or what, I do not know, but he was a kind man. He asked: “Are you Armenian?”

I said: “No.” Because for five years they had trained us so much that we also believed that we were not Armenians.

He said: “What relatives do you have?”

I said: “I have no one; only I had a small, thin mother. It seems she’s dead.”

At that time they took me to another room, where a small, thin woman was sitting and they asked her: “Is this your daughter?” They had already shown her three other girls and she had said that they were not her daughters. But as she saw me, her lips began to tremble, and she began to cry, she could not speak. She only said, “Gyané.”

I remembered my mother’s voice. I said, “Mummy,” and we hugged each other and began crying both of us. But I had forgotten to speak Armenian. It was already 1920-1921. The English had already come. They gathered all the Armenian refugees from Zeytoun and other places from under the Arab tents and took them to Nahr Omar, near the town of Basra, Iraq. They placed them in the English camp; they gave us rations and we ate. Somehow

we recovered. But they used to laugh at me. I did not know Armenian. There were blue tattoos on my face. My poor mother tried to remove them with nitric acid, but it burnt my skin. It corroded my skin and left scars up to this day. Anyhow, we somehow settled down. I had already become a tall, well-built girl. Suddenly we heard that the Djelo, a wild tribe of the Assyrians, who had emigrated from Urmia, a province in Persia, would come and kidnap girls. My mother was scared that they might kidnap me again, and though I was only twelve years old, married me to Sedrak of Gaybaks from Zeytoun, a pious man, who was twelve years older.

The English said to us: “Those who want, we’ll take to London. Those who want, we’ll give them money, to manage for themselves.”

We already had several children. We went to Gelany Camp of Baghdad. The camp was in an Armenian district. My husband began repairing shoes. We had four children. I named them after those relatives who had fallen victim in Der-Zor – Manvel, Daniel, Pepron, and Zvart. I began to do washing in several people’s houses. Later, we built a house for ourselves in the Selekh district. In 1947, we came to Armenia and we were taken to the village of Maghard near Alaverdi. They gave us a barn near the ruins of a church, with a ground floor and it was very cold in winter. With great difficulties, we moved to Yerevan and began building our house in New Zeytoun. My children did not know a single word of Armenian, but they were intelligent. In a few years, they not only learned Armenian, but all four of them became chemists; and my Daniel defended his doctorate thesis. He is a lecturer at the University and is working on his doctor’s. He is also a poet; his literary name is Zeytouns.

259 (259).

**VERGINÉ TOROS MAYIKIAN’S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1898, Marash)**

Marash is my whole family’s and my birthplace. My father Toros, who was a teacher, was also involved with law and national-political activities. He was one of the known personalities of the town. Often, when a dispute arose between the Armenians and the Turks, they consulted my father.

We were proud of our little town, where every stone was familiar to us. Marash had about seventy thousand inhabitants, of which forty thousand were Armenians, the rest were Turks, Persians, Arabs, Greeks and Assyrians. The Apostolic Armenians had several churches: St. Sargis, St. George, St. Karassoun Mankants Church, and the largest was the Karassoun Mankants. There were also Catholics and Protestants. We led a comparatively peaceful life until 1915-1920, when the French authorities were still in Cilicia. The

French and Armenian newspapers always wrote that the French forces would always remain in Cilicia, because the prestige of France had grown after the First World War, while that of Turkey, on the contrary, had decreased. But that peace, alas, did not last long. We gradually felt that the Turks began to hate us. One day, we woke up and realized that the French had covered the hoofs of their horses and had abandoned 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 by September 1920. It seemed that the Turks knew about it beforehand. At night, we heard gun-shots here and there. It frightened us.

My husband, seeing that conditions were getting worse and worse, exchanged his diamond ring for two rifles: one for himself and the other for his brother, Gevorg. But when the event at our neighbor Karapet agha took place, everybody came round. Karapet agha was very rich, he was a very skilled shoemaker. He made the shoes of the Turkish leader of Marash, Jutki efendi and felt very safe. As he had no weapons, however, he could not defend himself. One night, breaking the gate of the garden, the Turkish rabble rushed in, entered his house, killed every member of his family, both the old and the infants and 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 their self-defense. They transferred, for safety, the women and children to the church of Karassoun Mankants. The Karassoun Mankants Church was the largest and safest church, since it was surrounded by ramparts. They transferred all the women there, the young brides and the children of our region: in all, 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 did not 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. 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 garbage everywhere. One cried, another wailed, still another prayed. In a word: 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 the depths of the earth. They were lamenting and moaning so loudly 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 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 centimeters thick, which had flowed out 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 could not 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, why didn't you take a sieve with you?"

Without getting confused, I said: "I'll go 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 red 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 terrible to see how those monstrous-looking women rejoiced when they found a molten piece of gold in the sifted ashes...

## 260 (260).

### MAKROUHI HALADJIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Marash)

The Turkish gendarmes, after raping the girls, made strings of beads out of their nipples and put the heads of

young women on stakes. Those young women, who were left alive, threw their new dowries in the wells in order not

to fall into the hands of the Turks; they threw their children into the wells in order that they did not end up on a stake.

“Mummy,” said my little brother to my mother. “Will you also throw me into the well?”

“No, sonny, I’ll take you with me.”

Then she took us to the place where the French were. Hardly had we sat on the ground when the Turks opened the dirty water of the toilet over us ...

## 261 (261).

### LEVON SARGIS EVRENGEDJIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1908, Marash)

In Marash, they gathered all the adult males, took them away, and massacred them. And we, the women and children, were driven away like sheep to the deserts. We reached Der-Zor on foot. We walked day and night. Several dozen gendarmes had surrounded the Armenians, so that no one could escape. We walked and walked hungry, thirsty. We had neither shoes nor clothes. On the way, they kidnapped the children; they kidnapped pretty girls, young women, and used them as servants. Along the way, everywhere, there were swollen corpses, severed heads, and other terrible sights. In this way, on foot, we reached the Khabur River. The Turks massacred, slaughtered everyone and threw them into the river to float away. There also were large abysses beside the roads; they threw thousands of people alive into them. Then they took us to Ras-ul-Ayn. There also, they took away the women, the children and threw them into the water. There the Chechens slaughtered the Armenians to the last soul. They threw people alive into the Euphrates and Khabur Rivers. Other corpses were devoured by the jackals at night. The corpses stunk, and the stench filled the air. They killed everybody. Who died? Who survived? I do not know.

An Arab came, snatched me from my mother’s arms and took me away. I do not know what happened to my mother. I was then seven years old. That Arab took me to his tent, kept me for a year, then took me out and said: “Go.” I went into the desert – naked and hungry. Another Arab saw me, pitied me and took me to his house. There, I kept sheep and lambs. I remained with that Arab for seven years. He gave me some food and nothing else. I grazed the sheep, then I brought them home from the fields; the Arabs milked them. He gave the milk to his grandson, and gave me buttermilk. They named me Ali. But I remembered that my name was Levon and that I was an Armenian from Marash.

I was offended, left them, and went to the Bedouins. There, again, I kept sheep. The man, with whom I had worked for seven years, came and took me back, together with the sheep.

At that time, a man came and said to me: “Are you Armenian?”

I was afraid and said: “No.”

I ran away from there and went to Baghdad on foot. I began to work. I collected thirty dinars. An Arab boy came, found me and said: “You know, your Arab master

died; his wife also died. They have three daughters, who are orphans now.”

I pitied them. With the money I had gathered, I bought clothes and food and took them as presents, in return for their father’s kindness. In 1935, I went to Telbrak. I used to graze flocks of sheep and at the same time, I looked out for Armenians. But I did not know Armenian. I did not remember my family name to find my relatives. I asked, but could not find anyone, for no one understood me. I came back to Telbrak. I had already thirty sheep of my own, and came and found the mukhtar of our village Barounak Shishikian. He was a healer, a psychologist. I settled down in his house, as an Armenian. He placed his sheep with mine, and I grazed them.

Through Barounak, in 1945, I met Gyulen in Telbrak. I fell in love with her, and we got married. We stayed there two years and have a son.

In 1947, we came to Beirut in order to come to Armenia. We were waiting for the “Pobeda” (Victory – Russ.) ship, in quarantine. My uncle’s wife saw me. She had come from Aleppo. She recognized me and she said to everyone: “I’m an Armenian. I want to find a boy from Djeziré. He has a sign on his back: a scar left by a dog’s bite.”

She saw it – on my back. She sent a telegram to my brother in Aleppo. He was the owner of a café. He had heard that his brother was alive. He had closed his café; he had not even returned home: he had come to Beirut to see me.

I had already dreamt about mother. She said to me: “My son, you don’t remember my name: it is Khatoun. You had four brothers.”

And really, my brother came and asked me: “Was our mother’s name Khatoun?” We embraced each other; we kissed each other. I found my brother Tiran.

My brother, Tiran, said that they had taken them to the deserts of Der-Zor. They had thrown them alive into pits and had set them on fire. They had burnt our mother there. Then the English had taken my brother, Tiran, to an orphanage. So, of our four brothers, Tiran and I had survived. The English rescued him; I was rescued by the Arabs. Then my brother Tiran took us to our relatives living in Beirut. We feasted there and made merry. We saw each other for just fifteen days. He went back to Aleppo, and we came to Armenia. So, again we parted from each other. This is the fate of the Armenians.

**ARAM MOMDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1909, Marash)**

In 1915, I was six years old when they came and drove us to exile. I hardly remember my father who worked on the railway of Marash. In the evening, he came home, a loaf of bread under his arm. I remember my mother also quite dimly: only her words are in my ears: "They're taking us to Der-Zor to kill us. At least, let our children live."

The corpses of my poor parents became food for the birds in the deserts of Der-Zor. We were three brothers – Tigran, Vahan, and I. Vahan was a suckling. My mother's milk dried up because of her grief and our baby died of starvation. We remained – Tigran and I. A Turkish boy named Dourdou, miraculously saved us. He was the servant of my uncle's son, Dr. Harutyun Ter-Ghazarian, who was the head doctor of the Marash German Hospital. That Turk Dourdou, pretending he was driving his donkey, put us in the saddle-bags: one on each side, in order to take us back to Marash and deliver us to our uncle's son, the doctor. On the way, my brother Tigran, who was younger than I, began to cry. A Turkish gendarme heard the crying child's voice, approached us, saw the crying child, and took him away. I remained on the other side of the saddle-bag. The Turk Dourdou took me back to Marash and delivered me to the doctor's sister Haykouhi. At the hospital, they gave us breakfast. There were many other children like me there. They cut our hair.

On January 21, 1920, when the Turkish-French war began, the Armenian volunteers also took part. Those who had a hunting gun, fought against the Turks. In Marash, we had the St. Sargis Church, which was situated between the Gyumbeth and Ghuyjakh districts. The people of our district gathered there. But thinking that the old church might not be safe, at one o'clock in the morning, I moved to a safer place, and the nearest one was Beychalem Orphanage. Those who had died in the church were buried immediately by digging up the grounds of the church, so that they would not fall in the hands of the Turks. By opening holes in the walls of the houses, and going from one house to the other, we reached Beychalem safely. The Turks thought of cutting off the water to Beychalem from the outside, so that we would die of thirst. Also, if they set the houses on fire, we would not be able to extinguish them. We remained inside without water. There were some among us who knew that the water to the mosque passed through Beychalem Orphanage. They dug in the middle of the yard, found the water-pipe and cut through it. They dug a large pit and placed a large pot in it. They left half the water to flow towards the mosque. The other half was

led through canvas pipes and pumps towards a large basin in the orphanage, which, in case of necessity, could help extinguish the fire. The Beychalem oven's door faced the road. The Turks poured petroleum on the door and burnt it. They were sure we had no water and the flames would spread. We immediately carried the stones in the yard towards the oven, however, while the door was burning. The masons used the stones to build a wall from the inside, and closed the opening. The Turks did not achieve their aim. They saw the newly-built wall from inside and were astonished at the miracle...

We remained in the Beychalem Orphanage of Marash under the leadership of Mr. Lieman. When I was at the Beychalem Orphanage, the small children used to play, but the grown ups learned various trades such as tailoring. We sewed trousers, shirts, and zebens, which we sewed by hand. We also spun wool and knitted socks with five knitting needles.

One day, two Turkish gendarmes came to our orphanage. On the second floor of the orphanage, we used to have our Armenian lessons. The news reached us and we fell silent all at once. Mr. Yerdjanik began speaking to us in Turkish and, waving the pointer in his hand, remarked: "Ne için yokarda oynuyorsınız, enin havliya oynayınız" (Why do you play upstairs? Go down and play in the yard – Turk.). So, when the Turks entered, they saw we were talking Turkish.

Later the Turks turned the Beychalem Orphanage into a military barracks. In 1922, we were transferred to Ebcorn Orphanage. Then the English came and gathered the Armenian orphans. They brought us out. We gathered before the German hospital. They made us sit in horse-drawn carriages. I remember some one asked the other: "What day is it today?" The other answered: "It's the 12th of May." They took us to Kilis, then to Aleppo, and then to Homs. We remained there for six months in tents and afterwards they took the orphans to Beirut to Djebel Antelias. One thousand five hundred and fifty orphans had gathered there from different places. My number was 1387. So, as of 1924, I was at the Antelias Orphanage. There I learned to be a tailor. Later I married an orphaned Armenian girl, Tagouhi. We founded our home and had children.

In 1946, we came to Armenia. In 1949, they exiled us – though we were innocent. Then we were acquitted and we came back. Now my boys have grown up. One of them came from the army in a seriously-ill state. We are thinking to take him to America, to care for him and to live a little more comfortable life...

263 (263).

**ESTER SEROB ANTONIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1916, Marash)**

My grandmother, Hadji Mariam Shamlian had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and therefore they called her Hadji. She had four children: two sons, Hovsep and Poghos, and two daughters, Loussik and Yughaber. They had in Marash a large beautiful house and they lived together with their children and grandchildren happily and prosperously.

In 1915, the Turkish slaughterers inhumanely attacked the Armenians' houses and plundered and slaughtered them brutally.

The Turks seized Hadji Mariam and dragged her forcibly to the stable; they made her lie on the dung and wanted to rape her, but she resisted. Filled with revenge, the Turks pierced her two cheeks with a dagger and killed her two sons, Poshos and Hovsep, on her knees. They took away Poghos's beautiful daughter, Zarouhi, to the nearby valley; they raped her there and then killed her. They ruthlessly killed also her brother, Stepan and their mother, Feridé, Hadji Mariam's daughter-in-law, Hovsep's wife, Haykanoush, the latter's children,

Mihran, Tigran and Stepan, as well as Hadji Mariam's daughter, Loussik, and her husband, Poghos Ter-Poghossian, and their children, Khanoum and Levon. They massacred also Hadji Mariam's younger daughter, Yughaber, the latter's husband, Avetis Eskidjian. Khatoun and Avetis had three sons, Hakob, Hovsep and Serob. The Turks killed Hakob; Hovsep tried to escape from the house on fire, but was shot on the spot. Serob ran away, unconsciously trod upon his brother, Hovsep's corpse, but managed to flee and was saved.

Thus, from this extended family only Serob survived.

The lonely Serob got married, started a family, and I was born. They named me Ester. When I grew up, I married Partamian and named my daughter Zarouhi, in memory of our prematurely deceased, innocent martyr.

Wasn't all that a real genocide?

My mother always narrated us about her martyred kinsfolk and wanted someone to come and record all these events and people, name by name, and to publish them in a book, so that the whole world would know the truth.

264 (264).

**TIGRAN GEVORG JEBEJIAN'S TESTIMONY\*\***  
**(B. 1888, Ayntap)**

In August 1915, we left Ayntap together with fifty families, under the guard of two gendarmes. After walking for two days, we reached Pap, a small town, where thousands of Armenian deportees lived in tents in an extreme misery. After 20 days, we were taken to the bank of the Euphrates River, near a hill called Tel-Ahmad. In 10 days, we reached Der-Zor by boats. There were many exiled Armenians there from Izmir, Tekerdagh, Bursa, and from all parts of Constantinople. Among them there were many merchants and educated people. Typhus was added to the horrible misery. Beginning from Rakka, the banks of the Euphrates were filled with Armenians. Many Chechens, who had come from the Caucasus, lived there. About 100,000 Armenians were under the supervision of a brute, Zeki pasha. One day, he caught a child and taking her by the two feet tore her into two parts, showing his soldiers that they ought to put aside pity and do everything in order to kill the serpent

when it was small, otherwise it would sting when it grew up. Zeki pasha sent the Armenian young men, who had remained alive, including me, to construct roads, to cut stones. And one day, an order came that we should all cross over the Euphrates bridge and go to Djeziré. We took what we had on our backs and set off. There were thousands of Armenian refugees there, but they had driven away the Armenians in groups and annihilated them. The same day six gendarmes came to Djeziré. They had a list of ten Armenian youth, among whom were my sister and brother. They took them to Zeki pasha. One day, the crier announced that no one would remain there; everybody should be deported. They set us off along the bank of the Euphrates, and walking daily for 6 hours in the desert, we reached the cursed place called Suvar, neat the bank of the Khabur River. There were non Armenians there, only Chechens lived there, and new Armenian refugees were brought to Djeziré. All

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness, in 1990, was handed to me, in 2001, at the "Ararat" Armenian national old-age nursing home in Los Angeles by the survivor's daughter, **Zarouhi Partamian** (b. 1929, Aleppo), endowed with poetical talent. She wanted very much that her mother's testimony found its place in this collection. Zarouhi's poem "Our Ancestral Lands" also is included in this book, in the section of "*Songs of the Occupied Homeland and of the Rightful Claim*" [T. 676].

\*\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor, in 1955, was passed to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia by the writer and public man, ophthalmologist **Dr. Robert Jbejian** (b. 1909, Aleppo). See his testimony in this book [T. 382].

of a sudden 8-10 Chechens came and said that 500 strong youths were needed to work on the road of Ras-ul-Ayn to construct the railroad. The Armenian youth did not agree to go. The fighting started. Zeki pasha, who had been watching with a field-glass, ordered 200 horsemen to surround the Armenians and start shooting, which lasted till evening. The corpses fell in blood in the desert. The ruthless Zeki pasha then came to the place where the corpses lay and said: "My lambs, I'm very sorry that this peril fell on your heads. Just now a telegram came from Constantinople telling that you were forgiven. Those who are alive let them get up." Some of them, who were still alive and were hidden under the corpses, got up and at the very moment they were shot. Not being satisfied with that, Zeki pasha ordered the horsemen to trample on the corpses 3-4 times, so that if anyone was still left alive they would perish. Only 4 young men hadn't believed his words and had remained hidden under the corpses. By night, they got up and escaped to Suvar. They came to us and told everything. On the other hand, the pasha was so vengeful that he did not trust the Armenian refugees to the Chechens and he personally went to slaughter them. We got all these information from those who managed to escape from the caravans. In spite of the strictness of the guards 2 or 3 people took flight from each caravan. Finally, about 100,000 Armenians had been massacred and only about 200 rich families were left. Order came that we would remain in Suvar and build houses for ourselves. The following day, Chechens came and asked for ropes and water bags of hides. They took them and rode to the desert between Suvar and Der-Zor and returned in the afternoon. We understood that they had gone to kill the Armenians of Der-Zor.

On the following day, I met an Armenian and asked him secretly how right it was for the 200 Armenian families to build a house. The man said: "Brother, never believe in the words of that beast Zeki pasha. When I was in Everek he was the governor. There were few such people. In Everek he used to shoe the feet of the priests and vardapets and made them walk. There is no salvation from him; only those who run away can be saved."

Two days passed and those who had remained were looking for a suitable place along the bank of the Khabur to build their houses. About evening two Chechens came with two others and said to the Armenians: "It is the pasha's order: as you're going to stay here you must give 2,000 ottoman gold tonight, if not – tomorrow morning all of you shall be driven to the deserts." Coming together in groups, we began thinking. As we had already been robbed on our way, we were not able to collect such a sum. Until midnight we gathered 1,000 gold coins and handed over. In ten minutes, the sum was brought back, saying that Zeki pasha would not accept the sum: he demanded the whole sum. I cannot forget the horror and the terror of that night as the Chechens entered each tent

freely and hurried us to obey the order completely. About morning, we gathered 1,500 gold coins and gave them to the Chechens to be taken to Zeki pasha. The Armenians calmed down a little. Hardly had two hours passed when twelve Chechens came to our tents and said that it was right that you gave 1,500 gold coins, but the men must go to the Government Hall of Suvar and sign a paper, that they themselves gave that money not for Zeki pasha, but to the Red Cross (Hilal Ahmar – Arab.) as a present. It was impossible not to agree. At that time, I had gone to the Khabur River to bring water. Two Chechens had entered our tent and forced my brother to go and put his signature. My mother had started to cry and resist, saying: "You have already imprisoned my two sons in Der-Zor. Where are you taking this one?" But the Chechens had slapped mother on the face and taken away my brother.

On that day, 300 men were taken to Suvar under the pretext of signing the paper, but they had been imprisoned in the government hall. The night passed. In the morning, we learned that there was no one left in the building and the Chechens had been washing their bloody daggers on the upper reaches of the Khabur. At night they had taken them in groups, hands tied, to the other bank of the Khabur by boats and had murdered them in the millet fields. Those who had remained were startled and confused. The Chechens came again saying that those who had prisoners in Der-Zor, the females of their family would remain there; the men would go to Sheddadié; all around was desert. There were so many flocks of crows flying that the sun rays could not be seen; they were feeding on the unburied corpses, which were piled all around. The only way for us to survive was flight, if we could. It was impossible to survive in the desert: one could not find a single stone, the earth was hardened, dry, and the people who had been disarmed could do nothing. In two days, they would celebrate their Kourban Bayram. They made us stay there for the night in order to do away with the rest who were condemned to death. Sargis Laleyan from Ayntap was my closest friend, and we had been living together since we came to Der-Zor. We went up near the bank of the Khabur River and met an old Arab and asked him about the Armenians who had come to those places. The man said sincerely: "They slaughtered all those who came, in groups, by indescribable ways and means. They're going to do away with the rest tomorrow on the day of Bayram. I suggest that you should run away if you can." So, our last decision was to escape that same night. I bought one okka of dates from a Chechen with my last gold coin. When I asked for the change, the man gave me only one mejit, saying: "This date will be enough for you to eat today, and the mejit to spend, tomorrow you won't need it..." Towards evening, we, seven friends, under the guidance of Laleyan, were waiting for the convenient moment. Darkness fell. Suddenly a shot was heard. An

Arab had helped an Armenian to escape. A Chechen had given the first signal, and all the guards moved in that direction. Using the last opportunity, each of us got out of our tents one by one; we got together in ten minutes and left behind us the slaughter-house. In half an hour, we reached a place where there was a heap of corpses along the way. What a horrible scene in the night. The next day about noon, we met a naked young man, who had run away from the last caravan we had left. He told us that on the day of Bayram, in the morning, they had separated the men and taken them toward Sheddadié and killed them without guns and then they had killed the women and children with iron rods, and that boy had run away from that hell. Those who slaughtered us were 50 Chechens, about 200 horsemen gendarmes and different people on camels, armed with long iron rods like spears. Their appearance was dreadful and thousands of desert rabble were added to them.

Thus ended the three-month Der-Zor slaughter of the one hundred thousand Armenians. Ending his 'holy task' Zeki pasha came to Aleppo with his Chechen retinue and, after staying at the Hotel Baron for two days, returned to Constantinople triumphantly.

The bones of our beloved and hundreds of thousands

of Armenians still remain unburied in the deserts of Syria. I grieve, and my nation grieves the loss of our great intellectuals who have served their nation and have left unforgettable memories in history, but most of all I grieve for those rosebuds, which did not open to spread their fragrance, those youth aged 15-20, among whom there were future geniuses and talents who fell down like stars without leaving any trace of light in this world and remained unburied in the deserts becoming a meal for the crows. From our ten-member family only I have survived.

Of course our new generation may ask: what was the cause of the Genocide. I answer them with a small verse from Alexander Panossian:

*"A Ladybird was resting in a dark wood,  
Suddenly a Snake stung the light-giver:  
'Why did you sting me heartless brute?'  
'Because you were glowing!'."*

I conclude with the following two lines by Avetis Aharonian:

*"...If our children forget so much evil,  
Let the whole world curse the Armenians!"*

## 265 (265).

### GEVORG YEGHIA KARAMANOUKIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Ayntap)

Our house in Ayntap was a three-storeyed building. The first floor was the major's, the second floor was ours, and the third was my grandfather Gevorg's part.

In 1912, the Turks took my father as a soldier to the Balkan War. He escaped after six months, came home, and remained hidden at home.

In 1915, they drove us out of our house and exiled us to Der-Zor. They took us to Aghadjghoyun and from there to Der-Zor. My grandfather said: "Don't worry about me."

The Germans arrested my uncle Balabek and took him to bake crackers. They took my father to Yahya and they made him work as a porter. My father said to me: "Follow me."

My uncle took care of my mother and two sisters. Together with father, we fled from Der-Zor. We reached Aleppo. We looked for, and found, our relatives.

After the Armenians, they drove away the Assyrians too. Each one took care of himself. We rented a house and barely survived. After a week, my sister, Mary, who was four years younger than I, died. After a few days, the Turkish soldiers caught my father and tied his arms to take him away. At that time, a man came in a carriage and said: "Keep this one for me."

The man took father to the hospital of Djemilié. In

fact, he had been the director of the hospital. He had said: "Tell me the truth, are you Armenian or Muslim?"

Father said: "Efendim, I'm an Armenian Christian. My name is Yeghia."

"I appoint you to the fifth floor; go and work."

They had given father a white coat, and he began to work. For three days, we had no news from father. We were very anxious. At last father said: "I have a wife and children."

The man said: "If your wife is literate, tell her to come and work here."

Father came, kissed us, and took mother to the hospital to work.

At the hospital, an officer said to mother: "You must marry me." Mother did not agree. He insisted. Out of despair, mother threw herself out of the window.

We lost our mother. We were in a very poor state: we were hungry. We used to gather wheat and barley from the ground and eat. Two nurses came, saw us, pitied us, took us to their place, and gave us a bath and clothes. They said to our father: "Yeghia, give us these two children of yours; we'll take them to France."

Father said: "As long as I'm alive, I won't give my children to anyone."

Whatever father could get, he brought to us to eat.

At the end of the First World War, the Germans ran away, and we lived in Bab-el-Faradj. Then I married.

In 1946, we came to Armenia. Now I have three sons and four daughters. I am a pensioner. I'm living somehow.

## 266 (266).

### HAKOB CHERDJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1900, Ayntap)

Our family is from Hromkla, the Greek fortress in Cilicia. Nerses Shnorhali did penance there.

I was fifteen when I was exiled. It would have been better for me to be blind rather than to have seen so many horrible scenes. We reached Hama and Homs on foot. Along the way, the Turks gathered the Armenian men, under the pretence of taking them to the Turkish army, but instead took them to work on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad. It was through their work that the railroad was constructed. They made them work like animals: whipping them and keeping them hungry and thirsty... And the children and women ... they had tied their hands and feet and had lined them up along the Euphrates to slaughter them. One of those exiles, Demir (Iron – Turk.) Artin, broke through his fetters, jumped into the water, and swam till Biredjik. He sent news to his wife and child to come near the water, so that he might rescue them, but the Turks killed Artin with seven shots... Armenians

even had written a song in Turkish about him: "...Yedi kurşun ilan öldürdüler Demir Artını" (Demir Artin was killed with seven bullets – Turk.).

It is said, that the Armenian mistress of the Hotel Baron had spoken to Djemal pasha with a special request not to take them to Der-Zor, but rather to take them to Hama and Homs. At least they would survive.

Djemal pasha had said: "The Armenians will write my name in golden letters." And, in fact, Djemal pasha suggested that the Armenians should change their names in order to remain alive...

The greatest executioner of the Armenian Genocide was Talaat. Soghomon Tehlirian and Levon Shant searched for Talaat, who had fled to Berlin. They pursued him... Every day he used to change his clothes in order not to be recognized, but at an intersection Tehlirian called out: "Talaat!" He turned back and Soghomon squeezed the trigger...

## 267 (267).

### NOURITSA KYURKDJIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1903, Ayntap)

One day, we heard the sounds of horse hoofs from the street. The town crier, Moukouch, announced, "Listen, hey, people! In twenty-four hours, you must either change your homes or your religion."

The people of Ayntap were stunned. Many people got up, gathered their belongings and went away. Some 24 hours later, a donkey was brought before each house: either the old person of the family would ride it, or the children, or one's belongings. The ass was loaded; we were on foot. Instead of two, ten people sat on the back of the donkey. We went towards the Mourat River; that is to the bank of the Euphrates. We pitched tents there, but suddenly the massacre and the slaughter began. They stopped father and mother and said: "You stand and look how your child's blood will gush!" They slaughtered whoever they met. When they met an Armenian they said: "Olan gâvur, sen de mi sağsın?" (Infidel, are you still alive? – Turk.).

They came and took my mother, too. And as I was a child, I followed mother. I did not know they were taking her to slaughter.

Then those who were left alive were taken to Yedessia. There, they crowded us in a place. They opened a hole in the roof and poured petroleum. The house began burning,

it collapsed, and we ran out. They gathered us again and took us to Hama and Homs. My uncle's family also was taken there. My uncle was crippled; they had put him on a camel and had taken him away. He had fallen from the camel, but had remained alive. The Turks then caught him and put him on a stake and killed him that way.

Father was saved, for he was a blacksmith. All the craftsmen were Armenians. The Turks were not craftsman. They had said to father: "We need you. You're a veterinarian and blacksmith."

My father said: "What I want is to save my family from Der-Zor and bring them back."

All our relatives: my mother's sister and brothers, with their families, Avo's family, all of them went to Der-Zor. Not one returned.

This way father saved us. He brought us back from Der-Zor.

Then, the English Protestants opened orphanages. The Armenian girls, who had been kidnapped, were brought back, as well as the children, and put to schools. The adult girls were married to Armenian boys, though many of them had been tattooed on their faces with blue ink\*...

Then the events of 1920 happened. I was then

seventeen and newly married. The prefect called father and said: “Hovhannes, take your girls and daughters-in-law and run away. The Turks and French will fight. The French will go away.”

How could we stay with the Turks?

Father came striking his knees in grief. All of us gathered what we needed. We had a forty-day-old baby. We were about twenty-five people in all. We hired a cart, and the French soldiers accompanied us to Aleppo. Two

families remained. Later, we heard the Turks had come and cut them to pieces. Only a young boy had escaped.

We had taken all our provisions with us. We lived in Aleppo. We used to stuff mulberry leaves as food and eat them.

Finally, those days passed. In 1946, we came to Armenia. Now my daughter, Angel, is a lecturer at the Armenian State Pedagogical Institute of Yerevan. She is a Doctor and a Professor of the Armenian language.

## 268 (268).

### KARAPET KARAMANOUKIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1907, Ayntap)

Before the 1915 massacres, the Turks and the Armenians lived in peace, side by side. Then the Germans came and wanted to construct the Berlin-Baghdad railway. The first adviser of the Sultan was Pezjian Artin Amira. He said: “Long live my king, but you’re doing something wrong. Don’t have it built.”

It is said that the Germans were angry, and the Armenian massacres started. It has been the cause of the Armenian slaughter.

In Marash, they gathered the Armenian males under the pretence of taking them to the Turkish army, but slaughtered them on the way. Later, they dishonored the women; they killed them, and strewed them in the desert. The women begged the gendarmes not to kill them. I remember the officers used to say: “Don’t be afraid, my lambs. Our knives have been checked by doctors; you won’t feel it at all.”

They gouged out my eyes during the massacres. Then I was only a child!...

## 269 (269).

### SANDOUKHT HEKIMIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1908, Ayntap)

In 1920, Ali Keledj attacked Ayntap with a tremendous army. The leader of the self-defensive committee of Ayntap was Adour Levonian. He 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 Keledj to flee in dismay in one night shouting: ‘Gâvurun gözü kan doldu’ (The gâvur’s eye is filled with blood – Turk.. That is: The Armenians are filled with vengeance). The Armenians of Ayntap had composed a song about Adour Levonian.

The heroic self-defensive battle of Ayntap lasted, intermittently, for about a year.

The French, who were controlling the security of the Armenians of Cilicia, deceived us. They covered their horses’ hoofs with felt and withdrew from Cilicia by night.

In 1921, we, the Ayntap Armenians, were compelled to leave our houses and possessions and took refuge in Aleppo. There I got married and bore my son Gevorg.

In 1946, we came to Armenia.

On April 24, 1965, on the 50th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the streets of Yerevan were filled with demonstrators shouting with one voice: “We demand our Lands, we demand our Lands!” – claiming our ancestral Lands in Western Armenia and Cilicia, appropriated by Turkey. My son, Gevorg, who is a great patriot, took, apparently, an active part in that demonstration and, consequently, the KGB people came by night and took him away. We heard later that he was exiled to the ice-covered plains of Siberia. It is five years now that I have not seen him. I do not know whether he will come back or not. If only I could see him for the last time before I die... \*\* [The poor woman began to cry – V. S.].

\* The desert Arabs has the habit of tattooing the faces of their girls and women sometimes, even to the navel in blue ink. During my ethnological activities, I have met many Armenian women survivors, whose faces were marred with traces of their tattoo.

<sup>1</sup> The narrator **Karapet Karamanoukian** (b. 1907, Ayntap) was only 7-8 years old in 1915, during the Armenian Genocide. The Turks had gouged out his eyes, but his memory was stamped with the atrocious scenes of those days. The survivor has confused the facts about Harutyun (Artin) Amira Pezjian (1771-1834), who was the adviser of Mahmoud II (1808-1839).

\*\* **Gevorg Hekimian** (b. 1937, Beirut) stayed in Siberian exile from 1968 till 1974. I met him after his return to Armenia when he had already lost his health, and he sang for me the several heroic songs, which he had heard from his mother. (See the “*Historical Song-Testimonies*” part of this book: T. 427, 443, 641, 642, 672, 673, 692, 693).

**270 (270).**  
**ZABEL AYVAZIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Ayntap)**

I remember my father and my mother had started to build a house for our family, but were deported before the construction was completed. Turk policemen came and forcibly drove us out of the house. My father had bought a donkey. They made me and my younger sister sit on it; my mother, father and brother started to go on foot. The policemen were surrounding us.

My father had seven brothers and three sisters. Altogether there were ten families, about fifty souls of which only 15 survived. My mother had three brothers and two sisters, altogether – five families, about thirty souls of which only one boy was rescued. In other words, sixteen souls, out of eighty people, remained alive.

From Ayntap they brought us to Aleppo. Then they took us to Der-Zor, since instructions had arrived from the center, from Talaat pasha, to massacre all the Armenians. They took us next to Hama. My mother made a tent with two bed-sheets, and we took shelter under it. Other people had not even that. Around us, the Armenians were either under tents or under the scorching sun and in the open air at night.

We got up in the morning and wanted to go to the toilet, which was some distance away and also in the open air. On the way, we saw several people who had died. The typhus epidemic was widespread. The government officials gathered the sick people as if to put them in a hospital, but they poisoned and killed them, then they threw the dead in large pits. My father used to cut wood in the forest and sold it, while my mother worked as a laundress in Arab homes. I and my sister gathered grass in the fields. At last, my father was also infected with typhus and died.

One day an order from the government came saying that all Armenians should either become Mohammedans or be massacred. They changed all our names; we formally became Mohammedans. When I was at the

orphanage, my teacher was Father Nerses Tavoukjian.

We stayed four years in Selimia. Then my mother took us to Hama. After resting for 2 days in Hama, we started, with hundreds of other Armenians, on a journey to Aleppo. We walked in daytime and slept in the desert at night. We drank the muddy rain-water collected on the ground. We walked for eight days from Hama to Aleppo. We went next to Ayntap; the whole town was in ruins. My mother decided to build a small house. We had no food; we were starving. My mother had found one day a piece of meat-pie and had eaten it. She got poisoned and died. We buried her.

The British opened an orphanage in Ayntap. I and my sister were put up in the orphanage. I was later taken to Aleppo. The manager of the American orphanage in Aleppo was Pastor Aaron. There were about two thousand orphans in that establishment. It belonged to the Near East Relief organization. The orphans received a very good education there. In the morning, we all gathered for the prayer, then we did our lessons, after which we had lunch and, in the evening, we were taught needlework. The boys were taught handicrafts, mainly shoe-making. After a while, the orphanage was closed down. The elder girls went to work as house-maids, the younger ones were sent to the “Trchnots Booyñ” (The Birds’ Nest – Arm.) [Armenian orphanage] in Beirut. We, 40 girls, were taken to the Catholic nuns’ convent, where there was a carpet-weaving workshop. The Sebastian ladies wove carpets and rugs in that workshop, and we worked there as apprentices. After six months we learned the trade and we wove rugs and carpets. Then we set up a camp in Azizié, in Aleppo, where we, the Ayntap people, gathered. Afterwards, I became a teacher at the elementary class of the Ayntap Krtasirats School in Aleppo. Later I got married to Jebejian and settled down to married life.

**271 (271).**  
**VERGINÉ GRIGOR GASPARIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1910, Ayntap)**

I was born in Ayntap. We had a nice house and property. But we lost everything, when in 1915 we were sent to exile to the deserts of Arabia.

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.].

272 (272).

**PARGEV MAKARIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1915, Ayntap)**

I am 86 years old. As my father was a craftsman, we were not sent into exile. Father used to weave cloth for the government.

In 1908, the Yeni (Young – Turk.) Turks came to power. Several Jews: Talaat pasha, Enver pasha, Niazit pasha, Djemal pasha were Jews, but they had become Turks in order to organize the Armenian Genocide. In 1908, they adopted the new Turkish Constitution. They declared “Freedom, fraternity, equality.” The Turks and the Armenians kissed each other. But, unfortunately, after a year, they organized the massacre of Adana and in 1915, they martyred more than one and a half million Armenians.

The Young Turks dethroned the Sultan, but did not kill him. They put him away to eat, drink and live for the rest of his life. The Bolsheviks, however, when they deposed the Tsar in 1917 and took over the power, they killed the Tsar, his wife, children, his doctor, his servants, maids; they killed them all.

And then Mustafa Kemal pasha appeared. They called him Ataturk (Father of the Turks – Turk.), for he compelled the Armenians of Western Armenia to flee to the Caucasus and sent some of them to Izmir.

Formerly, Ayntap had 35 thousand Armenians,

of which 25 thousand were massacred, 10 thousand returned. Each person rebuilt his destroyed house, cultivated the orchards, and reopened the schools. But in 1921, the Kemalists surrounded Ayntap. The Armenians of Ayntap began their self-defense. The French gave weapons to the Armenians. The town was divided in two. The Turks were on one side, the Armenians and the French were on the other. My father took a weapon in his hand and fought for six months. Many Armenians fought there. In ten months, 75 Armenians and 550 Turks fell victim. The Turks took their families out of Ayntap, for they were being defeated.

The Great Powers deceived the Armenians: they gave Cilicia to the Turks. The Armenians of Zeytoun, Adana, Sis, Marash, Kilis, Ayntap, Yedessia, 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 the flames. They threw themselves into the sea; all those, who could be saved, went to other countries. Thus, the Turks “cleaned” Turkey of Christians. Turkey, along with Western Armenia and Cilicia, remained to the Turks.

273 (273).

**HARUTYUN VARDANIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1887, Deurtyol)**

I had graduated from the Deurtyol Central College. In 1915, they gathered all the men to become soldiers. We, twenty-seven teachers, went to Avni bey, but in vain. They gathered seven hundred and fifty people, my father and I amongst them, from fifteen up to fifty years of age – men in our district before the government house – everybody was weeping and wailing...

Deurtyol was to resist, but then people changed their minds and submitted. Sahak Catholicos did not want us to fight. Djemal pasha was the governor of Adana.

Early in the morning, they surrounded us and rushed in. They gathered all the men from each house: seven hundred and fifty men. There was a village called Erzin: we stayed there at night. One kilometer after leaving towards the west, they made us turn and took us to the valley. On every side, two hundred and fifty soldiers were ready to massacre us. The sun set. Our caravan entered the valley. When it was completely dark, an order came, “Kneel down.” Most of our people had rifles. At that moment order was given to the soldiers, ‘Set the bayonets.’ Our seven hundred and fifty people’s

footsteps could not be heard; we were stiff with fear...

Suddenly on one of the valley hills an Austrian general appeared, dressed in white, riding on a white horse. Seeing him, the commander ordered that the bayonets be taken down immediately. Seeing the general, they couldn’t do what they had intended. We were ordered to walk to the sea...

Then they took us into a marsh. The water reached our knees; we walked on: all of us scholars – doctors, teachers. For a last time once again, we, the twenty-seven teachers appealed to Avni bey not to send us to the army, to let us continue our teaching. Avni bey became furious and said: “First of all we must deal with the teachers. They were the ones who taught revolution to the children.” As Vahan Karapetian had dared to fight, they killed him. They tied his feet to a horse and had him dragged like a dog.

At last, at night, we reached the Erzin Village that had been ruined. Till our arrival there, they had flooded the place where we were going to sleep in the water. They surrounded us. Bed sheets or whatever there was,

were spread on the ground in the water. The Armenian boys of Erzin made a protest, saying: “How soon you forgot our bread and salt, Turks...”

The day was February 14. It was cold.

We asked for some dry wood. The boys brought some. We made fires: on one side to dry our wet clothes, on the other to cook some food.

The Turk officers began to search us. They took away even the smallest knife. Those who had rifles buried them. For each one who needed to go to the toilet, there was a gendarme to watch over him.

An Italian engineer, Marco Polo, took me as an interpreter to help him on the road construction. They made me a store-keeper. There were seventeen thousand workers.

Manouk Chaoush collected one hundred and fifty gold coins in order to give to the gendarmes so that they set free our writer Grigor Zohrap. But Zohrap would not agree. He said: “How can I leave these people?”

Djermal pasha had been a classmate of Zohrap. He sent six trays of various kinds of food to Zohrap but Zohrap refused to accept these. He said: “If he wants to do me good, let him tell Talaat to free all these people.”

After detaining Zohrap in the Hotel Baron for some four or five days, they killed him in the field of Kharan.

Those seven hundred and fifty people used to warm themselves around the fire in turn. In the morning, the order came, “Stand up.” We moved towards Osmanié. There they told us to rest for five minutes. Then they drove us to ‘Kanli Gechit’ (Bloody Pass – Turk.). It was a thicket. The seven hundred people were in the wood. We were surrounded. God also had taken a liking to the place: it began to rain. The gendarmes began to shout: “Olan, gâvurlar kaçmayın” (Hey, infidels, do not run away – Turk.).

We, the young people, were shouting back: “Duyuyoruz, korkmayın” (We have heard you; do not be afraid – Turk.). One had to have a heart to hear the

old people’s complaints: they remonstrated directly to God...

Morning came. It was still raining. The path went upwards. As much as you went forward, you came back again. There, the military carriages could not move forward in the mud. They were making two-three hundred people work. As they saw us, they began crying and wailing. The rain turned to a flood.

As we reached Hassanbeyli, darkness fell. Neither God had pity on us, nor the Turks. In reality, Armenians had been living there since ancient times. They put us in the stables of these houses. There was an agha there called Lyutfi bey. He told each landlord to take an Armenian to his house.

The landlords said that they vouched for our security and asked him to let us be taken to their houses. Lyutfi bey gave permission, and we were taken to their houses. We warmed up; they entertained us.

In the morning, I came out. Stones were brought to build the road. The Armenians had loaded these from Kyotahia, from the valley, which was one hundred meters deep, and the stones had to be carried up on their backs. Those who could not carry were struck with whips.

The next day again we went to work. At each shift, they took two hundred and fifty to three hundred people. This way they made us work in Entily for three months. We carried stones on our backs.

There was a Turk, Ismail Hakke bey, who had lived with the Armenians in Constantinople. He was a very kind man. He came, called me and said: “Remain beside me. You give me the names of your people who are sixty years old. Write their names down and bring to me.”

I went and wrote these: they were one hundred people. That man took the list and wrote to Aleppo to the Chief of Investigations, telling him that those people should be sent back. He gave a special permit to my father so that no one could give him any trouble...

## 274 (274).

### GEVORG SARGIS YAPOUDJIAN’S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1894, Deurtyol)

I was born in 1894, in Deurtyol. My father’s name was Sargis, mother’s – was Marta. We were very rich. Father had bee-hives, orange orchards. Our house and the school, from which I graduated in 1911 (and the following year I began teaching arithmetic, French and literature), was near the St. Prkich (St. Savior) Church.

World War I started in 1914. In 1915, we were exiled together with the Deurtyol Armenians.

Why didn’t the semi-independent people of Deurtyol resist and were deported? In my opinion, there were

several reasons. First, Catholicos Khabayan, had advised, by a bull, the Armenians of Cilicia not to resist and obey all the orders of the government. That document was read in all the churches. Secondly, the French and the English battleships were constantly shelling the Turkish lines, and thus were giving us hope that soon European soldiers would land. For at that time, Turkey was already weakened. The Turkish army was weak, but the government was shrewd. At the beginning, the mayor called the aldermen and the well-known people of the

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1963, was delivered to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, in 2003.

town and demanded 40 Armenians to work as laborers on the construction of the Islahié-Intilli road. With his convincing, sweet, and pleasant language, he asked the Armenians to assist in the construction of the road to carry the Turkish armed forces to the front. The people of Deurtyol sent them. Then they demanded again; then again. Thus, we did not have the people who could fight. And all those who were taken to work on the construction soon died, because of the heavy, hard, unbearable work.

One morning Deurtyol was surrounded by 2500 soldiers under the command of Miralai Avni bey. The criers, accompanied with two soldiers, announced in all the districts that all males above 12 must appear in the government building. Those, who opposed, were shot on the spot. And all those, who obeyed, were taken to Adana under the guard of Avni bey, to be judged in the military tribunal. They were either shot or hanged.

In a few days, Avni bey returned with his soldiers, and they began searching the houses, looking for weapons. Those who did not give weapons were shot or taken away and beaten to death.

On August 14, 1915, my father was also called by corporal Omar. Our family consisted of 11 people. My sister's husband was taken to serve in the Turkish army, and my sister with her four children remained under our care. Father brought a Turkish cart-driver, from Gyuzuludju Village, who would take us to Katma on his cart. We left him our two cows with 4 calves and 150 boxes of beehives as fare. We could take very little with us. We parted with our house, estates, our dear land Deurtyol, all the time looking back and shedding tears. The daughter of my father's friend, Merish, was also with us.

Our caravan consisted of 11 families. Two Turk soldiers accompanied us. Mustafa was a gray-bearded man, about 50, and, Osman, about 25-years-old. They were armed with Manchester weapons. On the way, we saw a young cedar, of which the bark had been removed by knife, and on it was written in Armenian: "Grigor Zohrap also passed this road," and was signed. I had read his writings in my textbooks. I had heard that he was a very intelligent person, an eminent lawyer-advocate and a member of the Turkish Parliament. I fell into thoughts. Soon we reached the foot of the Intilli Heights. There we rested a little in order to be able to climb the mountain. The tiring and hard road took us to Katma, and there we took the train for Aleppo. Many Armenian refugees had arrived in the Aleppo station. Mesrop Boyadjian, an acquaintance of my father, found us, and giving the gendarmes some money, took us to his house. There we rented a house at a Christian Arab's place. Every day we went to the station to see who was arriving. My Khacher, Toros and Petros uncles' families were in the caravan, but the gendarmes did not allow us to approach them. Their train moved to Damascus. Then we were sent to

Homs. The Circassian, Hamzat efendi, was looking for an Armenian family craftsmen to work for him. He took us to the village of Derfour where Circassians (deported from Daghestan) lived. All were armed with firearms and daggers. They were dressed in their national uniform. The Turkish government had permitted them to carry arms in order to keep the Armenians and Arabs always in terror. We underwent many hardships, but hunger was the worst. Finally, after the truce, we returned to Deurtyol. In 1919, I married Miss Noyemzar. Mustafa Kemal pasha had already started to attack with his chetehs.

And one day, from Chaylu Village, someone by the name of Gara Hassan pasha, began to slaughter the Armenians. We started getting ready for our defense. We dug trenches, and when the Turks attacked, we resisted. The Turks besieged Deurtyol and started shelling. We organized a defense committee under the leadership of Khachaturian. I was the chief of a small group consisting of 24 people. As Deurtyol was besieged the people began to suffer from a shortage of provisions. The French started to weaken. They began retreating from Ayntap, Marash, Hadjn, Amanos, Sis, and Gars. Soon they left Adana as well. It was Deurtyol's turn. The French told us that resistance would do us no good. They threatened us by saying that if we resisted, we would meet their bayonets, and at the same time they told us unofficially that it was the consequence of a temporary policy: "You, Armenians, are our sixth ally, soon we will occupy Cilicia with great force, and then you'll take possession of your country and independence."

So, Deurtyol also began to be abandoned. We went to Alexandrette, 30 km from Deurtyol. It belonged to Syria then. I worked in a café in a bathhouse where my brother-in-law worked. The refugees from Deurtyol built wooden huts on the English counsel's, khavadja Gatoni's vast land to live. I also built one. We moved to our new house. I opened a small retailer's shop. Then I closed my shop in the camp and opened a large shop in the center of the town. Then I got work at the town hall. Many refugees died due to the unhealthy climate of Alexandrette. Our family also had its losses. My 15-year-old sister Anoush and my 23-year-old brother, Hakob, fell victim to typhus and malaria. 80 per cent of the children below the age of ten died and the young women could not have children for 5-6 years. The Armenian physicians advised the Armenians not to stay in Alexandrette in the summer, but to move to summer health resorts, even under tents. It had its good results. Our camp, where 450 families from Deurtyol lived, was called Deurtyol Camp. I began working as a moneychanger near the Alexandrette mosque. Then I was elected alderman. We began thinking about how to help our compatriotic union, including members from all the Armenian parties. The needy got medical help, medicine and clothing free of charge, so we did not have

beggars. Then I went to Latakia, passed my examination at the Regie School and got an office in Ordu. There, I worked for a few years then returned to Alexandrette to my wife and five children.

It was 1939. Alexandrette was incorporated into Turkey, and the Armenians began to leave Sandjak and found refuge in Syria and Lebanon. I moved to Latakia with my family, and in 1946 repatriated to Soviet Armenia.

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**MARIE KHALBOURDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1909, Deurtyol)**

I was six years old when they deported us. My father was a priest in Deurtyol. They called him and said: "Tomorrow you must leave the place." That night, we left the village. They made us sit on a mule – my elder sister and I. They put my younger sisters in the saddlebags that hung on either side of the mule and we left the village. We were together with our kin: my uncles, my aunts with their families, mother, and father. They were taking us to Aleppo. They took us from Toprakkalé to Aleppo by train.

They gathered the men together. They held father, tied his hands and took him away. I did not see him anymore. It was said that they had pulled off his nails. They killed my uncle together with his son and threw them into the Mourat River.

I saw their corpses floating on the water. Then they took us to Der-Zor on foot. We remained there in the desert; we were hungry, many died of hunger. We looked for water-melon rinds, but could not find any. Then an Arab came and said to my mother: "Give me this girl; I'll make her my daughter. If you survive, I'll give her back to you, if not – she'll be my daughter." Mother did not give me away.

"Even if I die, let her be beside me," said she.

The Arab tried to persuade mother. Mother thought that, "Maybe my daughter will remain alive."

I stamped the ground with my feet and said: "I don't want," but there was no one paying attention. We were starving. The children, without water, swelled up and died. The Arab took me to his house. His aim was to bring me up and marry me to one of his sons.

He said to me: "Your name is Arous."

Later that man was taken into the army. He was taken to the frontline and died. The Arab's wife said to me: "You brought evil to me and my house, go away."

I left, homeless, friendless... I was walking and crying. All of a sudden, I saw a Mullah who said: "Where are you going, girl?"

I said: "I have no home, I have no one. I'm just going I don't know where."

"Come to me." He took me by the hand and led me to his house. He said to his wife, "You'll look after her."

The wife said: "I'm tired with my own children; I won't look after her." But later the wife calmed down, and I remained there. That woman had a daughter who

was married and had gone to Baghdad. She came and brought bread, dates, everything with her and she stayed with us for a month and liked me very much. She said to her mother: "Give me this girl: I'll look after her as my own child."

"Take her," said the mother.

She took me, and we sailed over the Mourat River by boat and went to her home. She had a child and a husband. There was storeroom full of bread. They brought wheat, ground it with stones into flour then baked bread.

One day, it was said that the English and the French were coming. The Arabs ran away from Der-Zor. I thought that they would leave me there, and so they did. They did not take me with them: they left me in the street. It was raining, I was hungry, thirsty, I lay down under a wall and fell asleep.

Suddenly I felt that somebody was kicking me. It was a man with a raincoat. He said: "Get up. Who are you?"

I said: "I have no one."

That man pitied me and took me to his house. He was a rich man. They brought out his wife's clothes and dressed me. It was Ramadan; they were cooking dinner. They gave me food too. I ate. I remained there. The man had a big shop in the market. One day the woman said: "Take this bread to your father (that is, to their father)." I took the dinner to the market. As it happened, those of my countrymen who had remained in Der-Zor were brought there to a khan.

Our neighbor's son saw me and recognized me. He came down the stairs and said: "Are you Armenian?"

"No," I said.

"Aren't you Father Grigor's daughter?"

"Yes," I said.

"You're my sister," he said.

I said: "Now I'll take the food to my father; in the evening come to our house."

Our Armenian people came to my father's shop and asked: "Is there an Armenian girl in your house?"

"No," he said. "There isn't."

"You have a girl."

"I haven't."

"Whatever you say, we'll come according to the law and take the girl away."

Towards evening, they came and said to my father: "Where in the girl?"

“There is no Armenian girl here,” he said.

The man had kept me in the woodshed so that they would not find me.

The Armenians began searching the house and found me. They began to persuade me. Somebody said: “Let the girl be convinced: we won’t take her by force.” Finally, I said: “I will go.”

It was morning. The Arab had not been able to sleep. He said: “Give me my girl, she’s mine.”

The Armenians said: “We’ll take her to the French commander. What he decides, let that be” Someone gave me a bracelet, another - a necklace.

The French commander said: “We cannot take her by force.” Then he asked me: “My daughter, you choose

whom you want to be with. Do you want your brother or your (Arab) father?”

I said: “I want my brother.” All of them shouted “Hurrah!” They were happy. The Armenians took me with them to Aleppo. There were other orphan children like me. They took each of them to his or her relative. They gave me to my mother’s brother, Aris. On our way back, we went to Alexandrette; we did not go back to Deurtyol. From there, together with my brother Andranik, we went to Damascus, to our cousin. In Damascus my cousin’s situation was not in a good state, so we went to Djebel Drouz and remained there. There I married Abraham from Yedessia. Later, in 1946, we came to Armenia with our five children.

### 276 (276).

#### GEVORG TER-SAHAKIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Deurtyol)

On the 14th of April, 1915, Grigor Zohrap<sup>1</sup> had been playing backgammon at Talaat pasha’s house. A few days later, they arrested Armenian scholars. Zohrap could not believe this. He went to Talaat to protest. Talaat had answered coldly: “Your protest is in vain...”

My father had met Grigor Zohrap in the Hotel Baron<sup>2</sup> and said: “I’ve just come from the slaughterhouse. There’s not a single Armenian left alive. Come, let me save you...”

Zohrap had said: “If I go, they’ll slaughter all the Armenians...”

### 277 (277).

#### SEDRAK GRIGOR POGHIKIAN’S TESTIMONY\*

(B. 1890, Alexandrette)

I was born in 1890, in Alexandrette (Iskenderun – Turk.), a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. My father, Grigor efendi was a native of the village of Miatun, Chmeshkadsag region. He had come to Alexandrette in the 1860s together with his cousins in search of work. He began to work as a schoolteacher. There was a church and a school there. The church was called the Holy Martyrs’. There were many old Armenian families, for the town had been part of Armenian Cilicia, until it became a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1515.

In 1885, my father married Oghida, the daughter of a wealthy local family. The children born to them did not live. My parents ask a healer for help. He said: “You will have many children, but you must call the boys Shadrach (Sedrak), Meshach (Missak) and Abed-nego (Habet) (Daniel: 3, 19). When Sedrak becomes one-year-old, you must take him to Jerusalem.” My father had already become a merchant, so he took us (mother and

me) to Jerusalem (I have a sign of the cross on my right arm). After me, my sister Parandzem was born, then my brothers – Missak and Habet, then my sisters – Satenik and Gayané, then – our youngest brother, Hayk.

When World War I broke out, my brothers Missak and Habet were studying in Constantinople. I had finished my studies and was working with my father. We had a large commercial office, and I was the manager. My brothers were to be taken to the Turkish army. My father paid bedel for them. Habet was a clever boy, so he managed to come home, while Missak was taken by a colonel to serve him in the office. He would not be sent to the front, for he knew several foreign languages. Missak was very handsome, like our father. He was tall, with blond curly hair and blue-eyes.

My father was a much respected person. A Turkish friend of his told him to take his family and go to Aleppo. I was not taken to the army because a few years ago I

<sup>1</sup> You can find out more about Grigor Zohrap in his daughter’s, **Dolores Zohrap-Liebmann’s** testimony [T. 234].

<sup>2</sup> A famous hotel in Aleppo that belonged to an Armenian.

\* This testimony, written by the eyewitness survivor in 1975, has been delivered to me by his daughter, Anahit Poghikian-Darbinian, in 2002, who is the English translator of the “*Historical Memoir-Testimonies*” and “*Historical Narrative-Testimonies*” parts of this book.

had fallen from the horse and had broken my leg. While healing, it had not been set correctly, so I had a limp. Our family of seven members moved to Aleppo: my father, mother, two sisters, two brothers and me. Hayk was 13 years old then. We had cousins in Aleppo, so they supported our family.

The Armenian deportation had started. Soon the exiles began to arrive in Aleppo. The local Armenians were trying to help them. The Arabs are kind people. Those who arrived in Aleppo survived. With the permission of the Arab authorities, the rich Armenians organized help for the exiled Armenians. An Imaretkhané (alms-house – Arab.) was founded, and I was appointed a manager there. Hundreds of young women and girls worked there, were fed and had lodging. I worked there during those awful years – 1915-1918, when Turkey was sucking the innocent blood of the Armenians.

Suddenly we got news that my brother Missak was killed. But how? One day the Turkish general gave him a note to be taken to his wife and warned him to be back in time, otherwise ... it would be bad. My brother took the note to her and returned... We do not know whether he had been on time or late; there was no witness. The Turkish general took out his revolver and said, “Al sana, namkör gâvur!” (Here you are, ungrateful gâvur! – Turk.) and shot my brother, Missak, who was only twenty-one years old.

And my sister, Parandzem, who was married and had three children, was sent to exile to Der-Zor from Alexandrette. There, she had fallen ill with typhus and died leaving her three daughters orphaned. After the truce, they were taken by us and brought up.

We went back to Alexandrette where we had left our possessions. Many young Armenian survivors went to Egypt, so did my brother, Habet. My sisters married to wealthy Egyptian Armenians and went to Egypt. Then my brother went, and I stayed with my father and mother.

In 1922, Kemal said: “Turkey belongs to the Turks: no Christians must remain here,” and he was victorious against the Greeks; organized the disaster of Izmir and drove the Armenians out of Turkey. The French left Cilicia, so the Armenians were compelled to be deported once more. French ships brought Armenian refugees to Alexandrette. One day, father had gone to the seaport to meet the Armenian refugees, in order to organize help for them. Father saw a lonely woman, Mrs. Iskouhi, asked about her and invited her to come and live in our house, to be a companion to my mother, whose children also had either fallen victim to the Armenian Genocide, or gone away to other countries. Mrs. Iskouhi was from Erzroom. Her appearance, her manners showed that she also had been a khanoum in her house. Her 2 daughters had survived: Tagouhi, who had recently married an Armenian young orphan, and Ashkhen, who had been at the Kelekian Orphanage, and they had moved from Deuryol to Beirut. My father wrote letters to the Kelekian

Orphanage to Ashkhen, Mrs. Iskouhi’s daughter. In the summer of 1925, father invited Ashkhen to come and spend her summer holidays with her mother. She was a lovely young girl of 17 and she was as graceful as her mother. The following year when she became 18, she came to live with her mother.

My mother and father went to Egypt to live with their sons, daughters and grandchildren. I promised to follow my parents, but it was not easy for a man to change his place. I was known here as a good specialist. I had so many friends; I had my position. In 1927, I married Ashkhen and had three children: Oghida-Anahit, Missak and Alice. Alexandrette had become a small Armenia. Many Armenians had built their houses and had families. I had a Turk companion who used to say: “The more we slay the Armenians, the stronger and denser they grow.” There were families who could not speak Armenian, but in our family, we spoke only Armenian. There was this slogan everywhere: “Don’t speak Turkish; remember the two million victims.”

A new school building was built for the Armenian Noubarian School. The Armenian Protestants began to build a new church, which was opposite our house. My daughter and son began to attend the Protestant school. They invited good teachers from Aleppo. The Armenian Holy Martyrs’ Church was always full of people. There were Greeks, Arabs, Turks, French, Italians and American missionaries in the town. All of them had their churches and schools. The American missionaries organized Sunday Schools, where children of different nationalities attended; of course, Christian children. There was a nice public garden near the seashore. My office was near it.

The Armenian weddings attracted attention. Sunday afternoons the procession moved to the Armenian Church, and after the marriage, the newly married couple was led home with music, singing and dancing. The popular songs were: “Yar Gyulé” (My beloved Gyulé) and “Lousin chikar” (There was no moon – Arm.).

But everything changed again, when in 1938, according to a treaty, it [Alexandrette] became the Republic of Hatay and in 1939 joined Turkey. The Christian population began leaving it. In the months of July-August 40,000 Armenians left their houses, orchards, vineyards, churches and schools and moved to Beirut, Sour, Aynjar, and some Armenians, together with the Armenians of Gherekhan and Beylan went to Aleppo. At the same time, 20,000 Arabs left Iskenderun. I was a good specialist for a seaport. As I knew Turkish, French, English, I was asked officially to stay, but I had children, how could I? I took my family to Aleppo, where my wife’s sister lived.

The Second World War began. I was almost unemployed: my specialty would not work there. My brothers and sisters began helping me. My children continued their studies. We hoped to move to Egypt as soon as the War came to an end. But my children had

'discovered' out Motherland, Armenia, which was part of the Great Soviet Union that defeated Fascist Germany.

In 1946, my brothers and sisters invited us to move to Egypt. We were not sure if it would be right. My daughter Anahit was a student of the American High School for Girls and my son Missak had become a student of Melkonian Educational Institution in Cyprus. My sister Satenik Merdjanian and my brother Hayk had no children. They came to Aleppo to persuade us to move to Cairo. But my children's dream was to go to Armenia and continue their studies there. In the autumn of 1946, we repatriated together with thousands of Armenians.

Life was hard in our Motherland. But we tried to overcome the difficulties, and my children continued their

studies at the Institutes of Foreign Languages.

There was a legend about our surname, Poghikian. A rich Armenian from Chmeshkadsag went on a high hill and built a house for his family and called it Miatun (mi = one, tun = house – Arm.), One House. He had sons: Paul, Poghosik (-ik – Armenian diminutive suffix), Petrosik, Torosik, and Markosik. The coming families were called after their ancestors Poghikian, Petikian, Torikian, and Markossian. But when my daughter, Anahit, was taking an examination in Linguistics and had explained the meaning of her surname this way, the prominent Academician Grigor Ghapantsian had said: "To my mind they have been the followers of the Paulikian [Church Reformist] movement in Armenia in the 7th-9th Centuries."

### 278 (278).

#### MARTIROS GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1898, Beylan)

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. Father could not withstand this: his blood pressure knocked him out and he passed away in my arms. My eldest brother was a Turkish soldier in Egypt. He did not return. My four brothers, mother, together with our peasants went; we begged and went on. As we moved, some died, some were lost; some could not walk any longer because of hunger. They lay down on the roadside waiting for death.

I became separated from our people while finding some bread for my youngest brother, Mkrkich. He was a tot yet. With some pieces of bread in my bag, I returned to my people. I looked at mother; I looked at my brothers. My little brother was on no one's lap. I said: "Where's little brother?"

Mother showed me an empty pot and began sobbing. She could not speak.

I turned to my elder brother, Militos and asked him. He said crying: "We sold him to the Arabs for a pot of wheat."

Before my return, they had eaten the wheat. They showed me the place where to find the Arab to whom they had sold, but going to the Arab would be in vain for there was no wheat left to take back.

We left the village where the Arab lived, but my

heart was bleeding. After walking quite a distance, we were passing by the Arabs' threshing floor. I saw the ants carrying wheat to their nest like a stream. Immediately I dug the ground along their path, put our smallest wheat pot in the pit. I put two straws in the pot so that the ant would fall, drop the wheat grain into the pot and go back. In this way, I waited long enough for the pot to fill up. I said to the others "You go; I'll catch up with you."

I took the pot full of wheat and ran to the Arab's house. The Arab allowed me to enter his house. I entered. What did I see! Before my youngest brother were different kinds of food. I gave the wheat to the Arab and entreated him to give back my brother. As the Arab woman saw my tears, her eyes also swelled up with tears, and she said something to her husband in Arabic. I did not understand, but the man turned to me and winked, to say take you brother. I embraced my brother: but now, my brother did not want to go with me. He was full with food; would he come?

He saw that I was going out my head bent down. He could not hold back. He got up from his place and threw his arms around my neck. We went and reached our people. My mother's eyes had become completely red because of crying. When she saw the child, she opened her arms, ran towards us, snatched the child from my arms, pressed him on her breast and began weeping and sobbing. Then we came to Aleppo.

### 279 (279).

#### SIRVARD GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1906, Beylan)

When we returned from Der-Zor, and were living in our house, the Turks of Zeytoun attacked Athekh, a village

near our Beylan. The Armenians gathered and decided to resist. The French also assisted us. I was about fourteen

years old. They cooked two pails of pilaw, gave them into my hands and put a bag of bread on my back to take the dinner to the fedayis. I did not know what fear was.

“Daughter, wherever a handkerchief is tied to a tall stick, you leave the food there.” In the morning, it was one place, during daytime it was another place, at night I

took it to another place. Taking them food was my duty.

The people gathered in the church. Tall and short – all. There was a woman from Deurtyol. Her name was Tigranouhi. Rifle in hand she was fighting from within the church for three days. She was shooting the Turks with the rifle. I remember...

### **280 (280).**

#### **HAKOB PASHAYAN’S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1907, Beylan)**

In 1914, I was seven-eight years old when they took us to the desert of Havran. Then, they brought us back. Djemal pasha was having a road constructed from Damascus to Jerusalem. Until then it was not a proper

road; it was not repaired. The Armenians worked there. They did not pay us money but they gave us flour, olive oil and other things. I was a child, seven years old, but I worked with the grown ups...

### **281 (281).**

#### **MOVSES PANOSSIAN’S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1885, Moussa Dagh)**

I am the last participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh and I am here, alive...

On the 13th of July, 1915, the Turkish government issued an order, telling: “In seven days all the Armenians must leave.” The elders of our seven villages met in Yoghun-Oluk and said: “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.” And so we did. We ascended the mountains. Everyone took whatever he had with him: mattresses, quilts, pots, pans, animals, and chickens. We took everything to the mountain. The Turkish soldiers said to us: “You’re climbing like asses. Tomorrow you will come down like asses and will leave.”

The world was as mixed up then, as it is now. Before the battle of Moussa Dagh, our Hinchaks of Kheder-Bek had gone to fight the Turks in Zeytoun with Mr. Aghassi Toursargsian. That was why when our Moussa Dagh battle began, Mr. Aghassi said: “These are the seeds I have sown.” Until the battle of the mountain, my father used to go to the training by night, and mother used to say to my grandfather: “Your son goes to the training by night, comes in the morning, takes the plough and goes to the fields. He never stays at home.”

My grandpa said to his daughter-in-law: “We must always be ready like that.”

So, well organized, we climbed up the mountain. Our two corporals, Sabintsian and Minas’ grandfather (he was a master of silk worms) split us into groups.

Our Tataralang was a flat open field. In those days, the Tatars had wanted to reap the Armenians with scythes, but our people had made short work of them. That was why that place was called Tataralang; that is to say, a place to massacre the Tatars. We occupied our positions at the pass of Tataralang. Tshents Poghos was there. He had been a soldier of the Turkish army. The English had shot and wounded him. He could play the bugle. He could transfer the news well and he could understand the meaning of the Turk’s trumpets: whether the signal meant something good or bad. That trumpeter Poghos said to us: “Go forward, but the Turkish bullet can kill you. It enters as a small bullet, but the wound is big, be careful.”

What I had was a hunting rifle, and the bullets were filled from the end of the barrel. It was difficult to use it. I did not have a regular gun to fight the Turks the way I wanted. There Mardjimag was wounded. I saw it but was afraid and changed my place. The son-in-law of Blagh Agoup remained there. A bullet shot him and he died before my eyes. My brother Davit was 30 years old; he died there. We buried him with military honors. There were many boys from Hadji-Habibli as were the fighters from Yoghun-Oluk. We shot the Turkish commander and their trumpeter. Seeing that, the Turkish soldiers ran away. After the fight, we went down the mountain and saw their corpses on the ground. The Turks left behind their animals and provisions and ran away. I saw the Turks’ sheep eating the cracked wheat. I took the wheat that was left and threw it over my back to carry it to the

\* While telling his testimony, Movses Panossian sometimes spoke in the dialect of Moussa Dagh.

mountain. We reached Ghezeldjekh and my family was in Savalokh. I walked on and on and reached our people. My mother and sister saw me and rejoiced. They had already recruited my brother Hakob in the Turkish army and had killed all the Armenians on the road while taking them to a valley. So, my brother Hakob had already been killed before the battle of the mountain...

The Turks attacked us four times, but each time got their answer. Our boys of Moussa Dagh fought well: the women and girls helped us; they brought us water to drink in water jugs. Several women, rifle in hand, fought with us. One of them was Nashalian; she was very brave... The children had become messengers: they carried news from one front to the other... All of them were at work. One day a Turk had come to the mountains to plunder. The women had caught him and killed him with stones. Good for you, women! There was always a white cloud, something like mist, on our mountains. One could say that God had sent it specially to help us, for we could see the enemy from above, but the enemy could not see us. The Turks tried to come up, but whoever did so was killed. "Come on, eh Mohammed, come on, eh Mohammed," we used to say and shoot. The Turks could hardly stand this for two hours and then they fled...

It often rained in the mountains; the raindrops pierced our body. Once, when it was raining, we entered under a rock for shelter. Sheikh Panos' son was with us. He had a book and it always was under his arm. We said: "Open your book. Let's see what our future will be."

Sheikh Panos' son opened the book and began his prediction: "A ladder will come down from Heaven and we'll be rescued."

He said this, but we did not believe him, because we had been fighting for more than forty days, day and night; we were exhausted. Our food and the ammunition were getting less and less... The Mediterranean Sea was behind us. At night, we lit a fire for the passing ships to see us and come closer. During the day, Reverend Andreassian had drawn a Red Cross on a bed-sheet and displayed it on the mountain slope... A few days passed and finally a ship was seen far out at sea. The Kerekians' son was a good swimmer; he dived into the sea and swam to the ship. There was a small metal box hung from his neck, containing a letter written in French. From the ship, they had been watching with field glasses; they had seen him. They helped him to get on board the ship. Movses had knelt, crossed his face to make them understand that he was a Christian, for he could not speak French. He had given the captain the written letter; they had read it, understood that about five thousand Armenian Christians of Moussa Dagh were waiting for God's salvation. The captain had asked where they were, where the enemy was, how long they could withstand: "You resist for 8 more days, let me get permission from my government,

either we'll bring you weapons or come and rescue you." They did not bring us any weapons, but they came with warships and rescued us. As Panos' son had said, they lowered ladders from the ship, and we went up on board the ship. What he had said was always in my mind, and I never lost hope, and we were rescued...

When the Turks attacked us again for the last time, the French had already found us. This time Fakhri pasha had come with fifteen thousand Turkish soldiers, but we had already descended to the seashore. His arrival gave no advantage to the Turks. The English had a school near the town of Lavshia, and the wounded had been transported there. The French ship came to take us on board. Petros Dmlakian and Khacher Doumanian went and spoke to the French. We had asked the French ship to bombard the town of Antioch, but the captain refused, saying: "I can use one thousand bullets for one soldier, but I can't fire even one bullet on a town."

At that time, an order came from our commander, Yessayi Yaghoubian, to make haste, for the Turks had been surrounding us from three sides. When we were leaving Damladjek, we left everything – beds, pots, pans on the mountain. Those who had animals – chickens, cows, goats, etc., killed them so as not to leave them to the enemy. I had a herd of goats. I could not slaughter them, but they shelled them from the ship in order not to leave anything to the enemy...

We were already on board the ship. Smoke was rising from the funnel. Petros Dmlakian was signaling on how things would go... The Turks were firing at the ship's masts... Sand was filled in sacks and arranged on each other like a rampart to defend us from the enemy's bullets... The bullets of the Turks came, entered the sand sack; they did not reach us... The ship moved from the shore into the open sea and cast anchor. The enemy's bullets could not reach us anymore. We showed the captain the places to shell. There was a cannon on the ship; they began shelling the military barracks of Lavshia. The shells flew over and exploded there... There were no more sounds from the Turkish side. At that time, if the French had given us arms and let us attack the Turks, we would have razed them to the ground...

Women, children – all of them were on board the ship. The ship weighed anchor and moved. After sailing for several hours, the French captured a German ship. We moved to the German ship, and it took us to Port-Said...

We landed on Egyptian soil. The yellow sand of the desert burned our feet. We saw tents; they had erected tents for us, with beds, everything... At that time, Poghos Noubar was one of the great men of Egypt. God bless his soul. He helped us very much, as well as the Armenian orphans of Der-Zor. There, our children used to write the Armenian alphabet on sand, learned Armenian, until Sisvan School was opened in a tent, and

next to it, was founded a hospital. English captains came there and started training us – one, two, right, two... And we marched. An English officer said to us: “Leave the French and come to our side.”

We said: “The French rescued us; we’ll be on their side.” Mleh came there and found us. Then we were enlisted as volunteers for the French army and laid the foundation of the Armenian Legion. Armenian volunteers came from Harpoot, Sebastia, Arabkir, and Houseinik and everywhere in Cilicia. They joined us; we went to the front at Nablous. We fought and won... The English said to our Armenian leaders: “You’re wealthier than our king, that you have such brave valiant soldiers...”

Each of us was given money as we had triumphed at the battle of Arara...<sup>1</sup>

In 1919, everybody was given the right to go back to his place, and we went to Moussa Dagh. We saw our houses were burned, destroyed, ruined... We began to build, to erect, to plant vineyards, trees and grow vegetables. Then we built a monument on Moussa Dagh to commemorate the ship that had rescued us. There was a cross on it... We lived comfortably until 1939, when the French and the English forgot the big promises they had given to the Armenians and presented the Sandjak of Alexandrette to Turkey. Moreover, they handed over Moussa Dagh. Eh, what can we do? Could we live with the Turks? We gathered everything and set off to the Syrian seacoast – Passit Field. That night it rained. What rain! It poured and everything was wet... Our people did not know where to go; there were no trees for shelter. We started dancing in the rain in order to get warm. We danced the whole night. In the morning, many people were ill, and died soon after. Then they took us

to Aynjar; it was also an open field. We began to build our new houses, plant new orchards. We channeled water and, in a few years, we turned it to a paradise. We grew oranges, lemons ... whatever you could think of, was grown there...

In 1946, news came from Armenia saying that all those who wished could settle in Armenia. Let’s increase, unite in order to take back our lands from the Turks. We left everything – houses, orchards – and came to Armenia. In the district of Malatia, there were not many houses then. My wife Iskouhi, my five sons and two daughters, and I, began building a new, two-storeyed stone house. I was working at the nearby kolkhoz. My sons were builders. They worked on all the big buildings in Yerevan such as the Matenadaran, TseKa,<sup>2</sup> the buildings on the Square, the Sports Palace and many other buildings. When the Sports Palace was burning (and we saw it from our house), my son Smbat wept like a child; after all, he had put his skill and energy into it... Now, all of us live around the same courtyard. Each of my sons has his house, his family. I am happy with my grandchildren, great-grandchildren, thank God! Look, we have a garden as well. My wife is busy there. She sows and waters. I, in my turn, take away the stones from the parcel of land on the street side. See, I have sown greens there: it is a shame to leave the earth unused... I am already 105 years old. I am healthy yet. Every year, I wait impatiently for the harrissa day, in September, so that all those from Moussa Dagh and their children come to the new Monument, cook harrissa through the night and distribute it to all those present, so that each one eating it may know that we fought for our liberty<sup>3</sup> united as the wheat grains in the harrissa dish.

## 282 (282).

### YEGHISSABET KALASHIAN’S TESTIMONY

#### (B. 1888, Moussa Dagh)

...In 1915, when 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;

it was tastier. 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 Christian Arabs took pity on us and occasionally gave us some pilaw, 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...\*

<sup>1</sup> He means the great victory of the Armenian volunteers near Arara (Palestine).

<sup>2</sup> He means the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, now turned to the Parliament House of Armenia.

<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1990, the last participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh, Movses Panossian, died without seeing the beginning of Armenian Independence.

\* In 1956, Yeghissabet Kalashian, communicated me for the first time parts of the Turkish-language song series of “Der Zor çölünde” (“In the desert of Der-Zor”). [TT. 461-530] This poor woman, aged seventy, worked as an office-cleaner at a school in Yerevan, in the Vardashen district, and hardly kept body and soul together. While narrating, she also sang the parts of the historical series of songs, recalled her miserable past, the children she had lost, the tears ran down incessantly from her eyes, her voice coarsened, and she could not speak and sing; she took a breath, started to narrate anew and cry again.

**MOVSES BALABANIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1891, Moussa Dagh)**

I was a farmer, I grew wheat, grapes, and figs. I cultivated silkworms as well. I had four sons, we lived peacefully with my wife, when on July, 1915, an order came from the Turkish government that we had to emigrate in seven days. Turkey had entered the war in 1914 and had started to give trouble to the Armenians and to deport them. Our Kheder-Bek Hnchaks had gone to Zeytoun with Mr. Aghassi Toursargsian to fight against the Turks. That was why when we began our Moussa Dagh battle, Aghassi said: "These are the seeds I've sown." Finally, it was our turn. Those who had soldiers in the Turkish army would not be deported. But later, they were also exiled.

Seven villages of our Moussa Dagh held a meeting and decided to resist. They made an oath: "I was born here; I'll die here. I will not go to die as a slave; I will die here a gun in my hand, but I will not become an emigrant."

In the village of Yoghun-Oluk, priest Ter Abraham Galstian became the leader. The people began to ascend the mountain. We had decided not to leave even one chicken in the village. We had hardly climbed half of the mountain when two thousand soldiers came. We had only three hundred hunting front-loading rifles, while the Turks had much more. We began fighting. The Turks thought that there were French soldiers hidden under the mountain and were helping us, for ours were brave and fought very boldly. Some of those two thousand soldiers were killed, and the rest ran away. Four-five days passed. An army of ten thousand soldiers came. They also remained one day on the Tataralang esplanade. That place had been a port during the Seleucids. The Seleucids' seaport was a prosperous town until the Tatars came and killed the inhabitants there, that was why it was called Tataralang. It is a Turkish word meaning: the Tatars were here.

The following day they began to fight, but when the sun set, those ten thousand soldiers also ran away. That evening and until morning, we flushed them out of the bushes. Some ran away; most died. After a few days, we got a letter from Lavshia, a Turkish small town. The letter informed us that fifteen thousand soldiers were to attack from Dourze Dagh. That letter was written by the prefect of Lavshia: "Let your warriors surrender, so that they may save their children. These new soldiers have no conscience, no God, no Christ and no religion."

We decided not to reply; when they would come, we would deal with them.

The Turks came in droves, but whoever came, was

killed, as was the next who approached. We used to call: "Yalla, ya Muhammad, yalla, ya Muhammad" (Come on, Muhammad! – Turk.), and fired. Those soldiers could not stand two hours – they fled.

One day, as we had on every day, we lit a bonfire, so that a passing ship would notice us. Tigran Andreassian had written in large letters: "Sauvez-nous" in French. That is: "Save us." We also had made a sign with a red cross on a bed-sheet. A ship was seen from afar. A sailor had seen our flag. He had told his captain; but the captain had not believed him. When the captain used his field glass and read the writing on the sheet, he said: "They are Armenians."

Then, Movses Kerekian, a peasant from the village of Hadji-Habibli took off his clothes and jumped in the sea. He was a good swimmer. He had a metal box hanging from his neck. He swam towards the ship. The ship's name was 'Guichen.' They had seen him from the ship, lowered a boat with some ten soldiers in it, and come towards Kerekian and took him to the ship. Seeing them, Kerekian crossed his face to show that he was a Christian. They took him to the captain. The captain read the French letter, which was in the box. There was an Armenian officer on board the ship, Tiran Tekeyan by name. He asked him some questions in Armenian: "Where are you? How strong are the enemy forces? What are your forces? Resist."

The captain said: "I can do nothing, for I have no extra weapons to give you. I cannot send my soldiers to you. My admiral is in Port-Saïd. I'll send him a telegram: I'll do whatever he commands."

Then, he had received his reply – the telegram had come from the admiral: "We cannot open a front there. We have few soldiers. In eight days, we can transfer them to Port-Saïd."

After eight days, they came to transport us. We left the mountain on September 14. We left everything in the mountain; we only saved our souls.

In Port-Saïd, we lived in the open, in tents. Every twenty-five tents was a district, and had a leader. When we went there, there was nothing, even our bread came from outside the camp. Then, we made everything: the craftsman started to work.

We remained in Port-Saïd for four years. In 1919, we returned to Moussa Dagh. The French had occupied it. The French began to educate those wild Turks... The French government had enforced such order that the wolves and the lambs grazed together. If a girl or a woman went out at night, they would not touch her hair. Our people

\* While telling his testimony, Movses Balabonian sometimes spoke in the Moussa Dagh dialect.

had not seen such peacefulness in the reign of any other government. These conditions lasted for twenty years. The French entered Sandjak\* in 1919 and left it in 1939, but they did not forget us. The French bought some land for twenty-one Lebanese gold coins and took us there, to Aynjar. In Arabic, it means ‘Eye of Jar.’

Aynjar was also a waste land: it was without water,

an open field. We changed it. We worked and created. We grew plants and put everything in order. In 1946, we left everything again and came to Armenia, but many people from Djebel Moussa remained in Aynjar. The people of Djebel Moussa\*\* are dispersed all over the world – America, France, Egypt, Baghdad, Palestine, Turkey. Only a few families now live in Djebel Moussa...

## 284 (284).

### HOVHANNES IPREDJIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1896, Moussa Dagh)

When Hurriyet was declared, the Turkish government enlisted Armenians in 1911, too. From our village, 78 young men went to the army. My brother was among them. The Dashnaks said to Andranik: “Go, be reconciled with the Turks, now it’s Enver and times have changed. Andranik answered: “I won’t go; their hands are bloody.”

In 1914, Seferberlik started. Whoever they could grab, they took to the army. Those who could – fled. Turkish officers came and registered all our animals: horses, cattle, sheep, so that they could gather and take away whenever they needed.

Then on a Friday, the chief of the village came, brought a letter and said: “Don’t open this letter until I come. I’ll come next Friday.”

He went. A week passed. He came on Friday, opened the letter and said: “We give you eight days, sell and buy whatever you can; we’re going to exile you.”

We held a meeting and decided to ascend the mountain. From Bitias, from Kheder-Bek, we drove the animals: dogs, cows, donkeys, cattle and climbed the mountain, for the people knew that the government’s hand had a long reach. We took all that we had to the mountain: pots, pans, provisions, and weapons. We even took grinding-stones: we used to grind wheat to make bread from the flour. We baked it on tin plates. When we were short of salt, we brought seawater and boiled it. The salt remained on the bottom of the pot and we used it. We badly needed salt for we had many animals. We cut wood, made houses with slanting roofs and lived there. We had just seven beds. Our settlements were: Damladjek (Dropping water - in the Moussa Dagh dialect) (In 1921 we erected there our monument of victory and constructed a basin; the French general came and laid wreaths), Sovolek (Cold spring - in the Moussa Dagh dialect), and Ghezeldjekh (Red spring - in the Moussa Dagh dialect). We settled near streams. The enemy started advancing towards us from three sides: from Shakhourden, the other from Kheder-Bek, and the third from Bitias [in the direction of Gyarmer Kidayn (Red ground in the Moussa Dagh dialect)]. We faced them, with our backs to the sea...

The first to fire was Movses Abrahamian. They used to call him Hatar. Our boys had hunting rifles; some of them had Belgian or Greek guns. The Turkish soldiers could not stand their ground; they ran away. We climbed down the mountain, gathered their weapons and came up again.

For the second time two hundred, three hundred soldiers came. They started a new attack every fortnight. It used to be Sunday morning when we were having our Holy Mass.

Our warriors were all in all eight hundred people. The rest were children, women, and old people. We had our headquarters. My revolver was an old, double-barreled system that used shot. I used to fill it with gunpowder. It was a very old system.

We had a valley called Deghdzadzor (Peach Valley – Arm.). It was a difficult one: deep and sloping. The Turks tried to climb it. We, the four of us: Karapet (who had a Turkish mauser), Sedrak Urfalian, my cousin’s husband, and I went to the Sindjar Valley. That was towards the eastern side of the military barracks. We fought there from morning till 5-6 in the evening. My cousin’s husband, Hovhannes Kuzhanian, whom we called Fouad, killed fourteen Turks. My brother came and said: “Don’t move from your places.”

At five o’clock, I got up to go to the barracks. The boys said: “Where have you come from?” I said: “From the Sindjar Valley.”

The boys kept on firing; bullets came from all sides and struck the trees; they did not touch us. That was God’s will. It was a miracle.

The Turks gave the order to set the mountain on fire, but the mountain did not burn – just a small area burned. It was also a miracle. Later, the Turks told us that a cloud came and closed the mountain; they did not see us, but we could see them from above, through the trees. That was also God’s miracle... At night, we went down the mountain and gathered fruit from the orchards to take up to the mountain to eat. One day, we went down from the mountain: my father, our neighbor Moussa, and I. The

\* After the victory of Arara, Cilicia became first an English protectorate, then – French.

\*\* Djebel in Arabic means mountain. Dagh is mountain in Turkish.

soldiers came and stood just above our heads, but they did not see us crouched in a hollow just below them, and went away. It was a miracle, was not it?

One night we had made a fire and gathered around it. My father stood up and straightened his belt. A bullet fell into the fire and exploded. There were many people around, but no one was hurt. It was also a miracle, wasn't it? God was with us...

Our food and provisions were dwindling. We hung white bed-sheets facing the sea with Red Cross signs. We lit a fire near it, so that ships passing by on the Mediterranean would see it and help us. After many days, a French ship came and rescued us. That was also God's miracle.

When the ship came, we defended the two sides of the mountain so that the people could get on the ship safely. At the last moment, Habet Vanian and Hovhannes Lidjian were wounded. We took them on board the ship, but they died. We had to bury them in the sea; that was the custom.

We had taken the earth of our martyrs from their graves, each one in a separate box. We took them to Port-Saïd together with us, then brought them back to Moussa Dagh, later to Aynjar, and finally to Armenia.

We left everything on the mountain: our animals were taken by the Turks. We burned the beds and whatever else we could, for the French had said that they would save only our lives.

When we arrived in Port-Saïd we sent an application to the French, saying that we wanted to fight against the Turks, on condition that our Cilicia was given to us.

The French agreed.

One day, French and English doctors came and examined us. Those who were healthy were enlisted; those who were too old were appointed guards.

We, the youth, were six hundred soldiers. We laid the foundation of the Armenian Legion. Then, many young Armenians from different parts came and joined us, and we became twelve thousand Armenians. They took us to Cyprus for training.

One day, we received our orders. We were at Monarka in Cyprus (where the Armenian Legionnaires were being trained). Our orders said: "Get ready; we're going to war against the Turks." We went to the seaport, the ship arrived, and we boarded it. We parted from Cyprus. Another ship followed us, watching and guarding our ship against submarines. We landed at Beirut. We rested. Orders came; we moved towards Jerusalem – Nablous. We walked for eight hours. We halted wherever there was water. Each of us had thirty-five kilos on his back: blanket,

tent, cartridges, and food. Some time passed. Another order came to go to Cilicia – Adana. We were put on board a ship. We reached Alexandrette. We were divided: the machine gun company remained in Deurtyol, the others – in Toprakkalé, Djihan. We were taken to Adana as sentries. Adana had been taken before Cilicia. Wherever we found an Armenian, we recruited him. There were one 115,000 Armenians there. The boys from Zeytoun had defended their mountains for four years. They had fought the Turks, killed them and had taken their weapons and money. In Deurtyol, an Armenian soldier had crossed the Gharakilissa River; the Turks had beaten him. The Armenians then burned the Turkish village. Not a chicken was left alive between Deurtyol and Alexandrette...

All of a sudden, the French sent word to our officer: "Let the Armenians hand over their weapons."

We said: "We won't give them."

We were eighteen from Moussa Dagh; the others were from other places. We said, all as one man: "If the Turk attacks, we're going to fight with our guns."

There was a doctor from Kessab, who was a prisoner of the Turks, for he had been serving in the Turkish army. But there were also Armenians who were helping us despite the fact that they were in the Turkish army. For instance, there was a Turkish cannon on top of the Catholic Monastery in Haifa. It was turned towards the Turkish side and bombarded and killed the Turks. It turned out that the soldier there had been an Armenian boy and, in order to help us, he had turned the cannon towards the Turks and killed many of them. Had they allowed us, we, the Armenians could have come to Armenia then. We would have liberated all our lands. They set us free on 28th of April, 1919. They brought us to Mersin. On the way, in the train, when we saw Turks, we fired on them. There was a Chakalian. He said: "Boys, it's shameful; it's a pity, why do you blame those poor Turkish peasants and kill them? When we go, after us they'll kill the Armenians who live here..."

We went to Mersin; we handed over our guns. I buried my elder sister in Port-Saïd, my mother and my elder daughter – in Lebanon, my father, brother and sister – in Moussa Dagh... My two daughters with their families and grandchildren – all in all 26 people, died during the earthquake on the 7th of December, 1988, in Leninakan (now: Gyumri). I had taken the bus forty minutes before, to come to Yerevan. I am ninety-three years old; I remained alive, and they, all of them young, were buried in the earth...

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**TONIK GABRIEL TONIKIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1898, Moussa Dagh)**

Respect and honor are the highest values in the world. We, the people of Moussa Dagh, love to live our lives

with respect and honor. The massacre of Adana started in 1909. The Turks attacked the Armenians' houses, shops.

They plundered, killed, slaughtered, and raped. They did such things! One could not think of them!

We, the Armenians of the seven villages of Moussa Dagh, took precautions; we assigned guards at night. In many places in Cilicia, the Turks attacked, broke-in, and plundered. People escaped with their lives. The Armenians fled and took refuge in churches, but the Turks entered their houses and plundered. They saw that the Armenians had entered their churches, so they attacked the churches and slaughtered them there. First, they slaughtered babies, right before their parents' eyes, and then killed the parents: men and women. They were slaughtering whole families. Blood flowed like water from the thresholds of the houses. I was in our village when we heard all about it. Until now, Arabs and Turks remember these massacres. After that, we were more careful for the Turks could assault us, too.

In 1915, when the order of exile came, we left our houses and set out. They made us walk till the town of Antioch. They separated the men. They wanted to slaughter us and dump us in the river to drift out at sea. Suddenly an order came: "Don't massacre; drive them away to remote places." They took us on foot. We were five children; our father had died. I was the eldest. Mother and I had to carry the younger ones. The soldiers whipped us. They struck mother on the face and it swelled badly. No money was left. They took us to Hama on foot. We walked three-four days. Along the way, people died in quick succession. Hunger, thirst and exhaustion: we barely survived the relentless walking.

We reached the desert of Hama. We unpacked the bags with the quilts, made tents, and lived in them. The sun was scorching. People began to fall ill. My sisters also died: one of them died on a Friday, the other on the following Saturday, and the third died the following day. There was no burying: all the corpses were taken to a large pit and thrown there one on the other: there were too many deaths every day. Everywhere, there was hunger. The sick simply waited for death. Flies were everywhere.

After a while, the Turks came and yelled: "Come on, get up, walk!" Nobody was healthy, but we walked anyway. Wherever we reached at night, there we slept – in the open air. Many did not wake up in the morning. Finally, we reached Damascus. We remained there eight or nine days. News spread that they were taking us to Der-Zor to be slaughtered. Soon, some officers on horseback came and said: "Get up, we're going."

Mother had my two-years-old sick brother on her lap. She was so exhausted, she could not move. She was crying. And all of a sudden the Turks said: "Those who are Gevorg agha's relatives let them stand aside."

Gevorg agha had been very helpful to the Turks. He was my mother's uncle and the head of our village. We fell into the group of the lucky ones. The other group was taken to Der-Zor. They would have taken us, too, but my

two-years-old brother was very ill. Mother did not know what to do.

We were obliged to leave my little brother behind. My three sisters had already died. Mother and I set out crying: I did not see my brother anymore.

They took us to a place where the inhabitants were Christians. They were all foreigners. We had nothing. We were hungry; we began begging for bread from this and that house. Other Armenian women were also brought to that village. The Turks had killed their husbands and children, and they spoke an Armenian dialect. Those Armenian women used to hold hands, dancing and singing to earn money, for they were ashamed to beg.

The war came to an end. France, England, Russia were on one side, the Turks and Germany – were on the other. The greater part of the Armenians had been massacred. An order was issued, according to which everyone could go to his place. We set off and walked back to our country. We reached our villages. There were even no doors and no windows on the houses. The French had already entered Cilicia. We started rebuilding our houses and cultivating our land. By and by our conditions improved. We lived for 20 years on Moussa Dagh under the French reign. There were no Turks in our villages. The French were protecting us. The French soldiers used to call us 'Second Brother.'

In 1939, the French left Moussa Dagh. From each village we elected two men, who went to Antioch to ask help from the French general. I was elected from our Kabousié. We asked for weapon in order to defend ourselves: "I'll give you no weapons. Keep quiet and live in peace with the Turks," said he. We did not expect such a cold answer. So, the French had forgotten the sufferings of the Armenians! Now they were leaving us again in the hands of the Turk.

We said: "Save us from the Turks' hands."

"Where can I take you? I can't take you to France."

We said: "Take us to another Christian country, for instance to Lebanon."

The French transported us in trucks to Latakia, and from there – by ship to Beirut and from Beirut they took us to Aynjar. We were one thousand five hundred families. The French planned 1500 houses: we worked with them. Each family had a small house. That land belonged to a rich Arab. They bought it and gave it to us, according to the size of the family. There was plenty of water; the land was fertile. We started sowing, reaping, and planting. We had the right to work that land for seven years only, however, so we lived there for seven years.

Then, in 1946, delegates came from Armenia to take us to Armenia. When we said Armenia, our people believed that we were coming to a paradise. Our mothers used to sing cradle-songs:

*"Lullaby, lullaby my darling,*

*Armenia's sacrifice, my darling."*

We were brought up that way.

The representatives of Armenia, three people, came to me. I was living well then: I had a shop and a restaurant. The Dashnaks of Aynjar did not want to come to Armenia; they said they would go to Armenia, when Armenia became theirs. The Dashnaks invited me to their meeting. The leader of the Dashnaks, Movses Ter-Galoustian, said to me: "Tonik, you have resigned from the Dashnak Party and you want to go to Armenia and you're setting an example for the others. Come, change your mind, remain with us, we'll help you; we'll give you whatever you need. Only – don't go."

I said: "Movses efendi, I was a Dashnak, now I have resigned. If I remain here, I know if they'll do away with me; it's better for me to go to Armenia."

Then I went to Beirut, to the repatriation Committee. I said I want to go to Armenia. What can I take with me? Can I take the goods of my shop?

"No," they said. "Everything is ready for you there."

"But what should I take with me? What is valuable there to support my family?"

They said: "Take flint-stones for cigarette-lighters; they are useful there."

I said: "I'm not a worker. I can work as a salesman."

They said: "You're free in Armenia; do what you like."

In fact they deceived me. I bought those flint-stones. In my shop, I had blue woolen material for men's suits; I took material for twenty suits. I also bought ten thousand combs and filled in my chest. I had made 40 flags with the hammer and sickle and distributed one to each family. We went to the port, got on board and arrived in Batoumi. Then they ordered that all those who had food should throw it in the sea. I had twenty kilos of halva in boxes: I did not throw them away. I was told: "You give some candy and they'll let you through." I gave them one or two kilos of candy. Our goods were examined, and I had most of all. We remained in quarantine for forty days. Then, we were put in wagons to go to Yerevan. They said: "Let each person watch over his goods." One of us was a guard and stood before the wagon-door. He wore expensive boots. He was our son-in-law, Hakob. He had slept with his head in the wagon and his feet sticking out. On the way, the train was very slowly climbing a grade. Suddenly, we heard Hakob's voice: "They've taken off my boots." They were Georgian thieves.

When we were in Batoumi, they called me and asked where I'd like to live. I know only Edjmiadsin, so I said: "I want to go to Edjmiadsin."

They assigned me to live in Edjmiadsin. My relatives also wanted Edjmiadsin, but they did not send them there, so that we would not be together. We reached Edjmiadsin. They saw that I had much luggage. Those

who were there, said: "You're rich; it seems you're a kulak. Why are you wearing a hat and not a cap? Why have you got that string of beads in your hand? It seems you don't work."

They gave us a house, and we got in. One day, a man named Comrade Iskenderian came to us. We offered him coffee. He said: "The first and last time I drank coffee was in Berlin, after the victory."

I began to trade unofficially. I sold the flints. I made money.

One day, I sent my son to stand in line for bread. I had given him a 50 ruble banknote. The saleswoman, her name was Haykanoush, took the money from the boy's hand, looked at it and said: "This money is false."

There was a policeman there who was supervising the proceedings. He took my son to the police station. In the evening, some militiamen came and took me to the militia station. I went. I was a newcomer and I could not understand many things, but I saw a revolver on the table, and my hair stood on end. The chief said: "Comrade Tonik, bring your machine."

"What machine?" I asked in surprise.

"The false-money machine."

"I'm an illiterate person; I don't know Armenian well. How could I make false money?"

"Go and bring it. If you don't bring it, you won't stay here," said the chief. Then he asked several questions. Then he made me tell my life. I said: "I resigned from the Dashnak Party in order to come to Armenia."

"Oh, so you're a Dashnak!"

"No, I've resigned. I am against them. I resigned in order to come to Armenia."

They set me free. After two days, at midnight, they came and took me to the militia station. They said: "Sit down, father, you're not guilty; the false money makers are arrested. Three people are arrested; you're free. Have you got other money?"

"I have one hundred 50 ruble banknotes."

"Where did you get so much money?"

When I was abroad, in Aynjar, I had my shop and my restaurant. I have brought my shop goods, but they gave me false money. How could I know that the money was false?

"Father, but why were you keeping your money? Here it's not abroad to keep money; here: what money you get, you must spend."

"I had gathered the money to buy a cow."

"What were you there?"

"The head of the village."

"Have you brought many Dashnaks with you?"

"There are no Dashnaks with me, but there are those who have resigned."

They sent me home, but at mid-night three policemen and an officer came to our house. We woke up; we got up in nightgowns.

“Collect your things.” They began to search the house. They were looking for weapons: “Have you got a rifle?”

“I handed it over to the Dashnaks there”

They brought a truck at night. They put our things in it, and we also got aboard. My grandchild was sleeping in our house that night. They put that child with us, without informing the parents.

I asked: “Where are they taking us?”

“Father, it’s not far; wherever you go, it’s the Soviet Union.”

I had brought with me a box of soap. I asked them to let me take it with us.

They took the box and threw the contents in the garden. Then we saw that there were many trucks that night. The truck took us away. Where? We did not know. They took us to the Edjmiadsin railway station. There were many wagons full of Armenians. They filled us in a wagon, too. Where would they take us?

They closed the wagon doors and sealed them. They were freight wagons. We were inside. There was only a small hole on the side and we peeped outside. We understood that they were taking us to slaughter. We moved one day, two days, three days, many days. We were three families in the wagon. There was a hole in one corner, and we used it as a toilet, holding a quilt around us.

We went for twenty-three days and reached the Altay territory of the Sovetski Region. The wagons were full of people of various nationalities: thousands of people. My relatives: my two sons-in-law with their families, my cousin with his family; we were all together. A young boy came and said: “I am to take this group.”

He filled us in his truck and took us to the Second Sovkhoz. We remained there for a month. There was nobody else beside us. After the war, no men were left: all of them were women: the director, the accountant, and others. They did not give us a house either, and we did not know the language.

“Abazhdi (Wait – Russ.),” they would say.

That night we remained there. My wife and my mother were crying. I saw that they brought a truck. They filled us in it and took us to a house. They filled our possessions in that house. They brought boiled eggs, but there was no bread. The people had no bread.

“Kushai, khorosho budet” (Eat, it will be fine – Russ.).

We were crying. Someone took me by the hand and said: “Poshli” (Let’s go – Russ.).

I was afraid: where would he take me? I saw people waiting. They also were afraid that they were to be killed.

They took us to a yard. We were seven young men. They were dragging us. They were taking us to an underground place; it was a bathhouse. We bathed, then they took me to work: They said: “Can you work as a carpenter?”

I said: “I can manage.” I began to work.

When wheat sowing time came, they took me to sow wheat. Then they took me to reaping wheat. I began crying, for I had never worked in my life. They sent me and my twenty-two-year-old son, Gabriel, to graze animals. My son could not stand it. He had a heart attack and died. We remained there for six months. I wrote forty applications to Moscow. The answer was always a refusal.

Finally, one day, news of ‘being freed’ came. I slaughtered a sheep. I invited everybody; they ate, drank, had a good time and wished us ‘Farewell.’

We came to Armenia. I wanted to write an application to find out why they had exiled me after all I had come to Armenia. They called me to answer my application and said: “Father, you haven’t been exiled.”

“How haven’t I? I’ve been exiled for seven years.”

They put the fault on Stalin. They said: “Let’s give you money.”

I said: “I don’t want money. My son died in exile, my wife fell ill, my daughter-in-law’s lungs are diseased, my eyes and ears no longer work well: our health is ruined.”

They gave me a pension. I wanted to build a house. They did not give me land at Merelashen or Akhparashen.<sup>1</sup> There were many repatriates there. Now that place is called the Araratian Agglomeration. Somebody said to me: “Give them a bribe – they’ll agree.”

My son brought a box of butter, and took it to his house. My daughter-in-law had bought the butter. They gave us land here, in Shahoumian. I built a two storeyed house. They came and said: “We’ll pull down your house.”

“I build, and you destroy?” I said.

They called me from the City Council and said: “Why have you built two stories? With what money have you built this?”

“With my wife’s jewelry: we had brought with us 24 golden bracelets.”

“Where are the purchase documents of the cement and stones?”

They called me from the City Committee and said: “You have been exiled in 1949 with your family of six members and freed in 1956. You have been acquitted.”

But my heart is not broken. Even in my poverty, I am content. I am a patriot – both today and tomorrow.

I want to live to see the authorities of my country as kind and honest people.

<sup>1</sup> Merelashen, Akhparashen – when, in 1946-47, the repatriates were settled there and they developed those barren areas, the districts were called Akhparashen (from the Armenian word for brother – akhpar, or yeghbayr – as used pejoratively by some of the native-born) and since many of the new-comers did not survive the cold and other privations, the neighboring district was called Merelashen (from mernel = to die – Arm.). It is presently called the Araratian District.

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**ASSATOUR SAHAK SOUPOUKIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1901, Moussa Dagh)**

In 1914, Turkey declared a general mobilization. My father, uncle, and his sons were taken to the Turkish army, but we heard that they had been murdered in the desert of Ordu. They had taken my father, my uncles: Movses, Khacher, there and slaughtered them. My uncle's son had seen it; he had pretended to be dead, but he had escaped and came to Moussa Dagh on foot. Five men from our family were victims of the Turkish army.

The exile of the Armenians had started from Zeytoun. Reverend Andreassian had come from among the exiled people and had reached Moussa Dagh. We held a general meeting, especially the men of Yoghun-Oluk, and decided to go atop the mountain. We took all that we could: chickens, livestock – everything. They slaughtered the dogs and the donkeys because they could be noisy and betray our positions.

The battle started. Ours fought from above, from the Oumar field, against the Turks. Our boys fought extraordinarily well. Suddenly we saw the Turks were coming with their mullah. Our boys said: "Let him approach, we'll shoot him." The mullah said: "The Armenian gun doesn't rise against the Turk."

Our boys shot him with a hunting rifle; the mullah fell dead. The Turks ran away. We were small boys; they used to call us 'telephone boys,' for we carried messages among the fighters.

A couple of times, violent battles were fought. Yessayi Yaghoubian had a reserve brigade and he went

to help wherever the battle was serious. He had a small American rifle. Dmlakian Petros and Doudaklian Petros fought with him. Manoushak Nashalian carried water to the fighters and carried messages. So, wherever it was necessary, Yaghoubian would be there.

The provisions and armaments were exhausted. They hung bed-sheets facing the sea. The sheets had the sign of the Red Cross. After a few days, the ship "Guichen" arrived. Gheleboush Kerekian swam out to the ship with a letter asking for help. The captain of the ship said: "I'll come in six days."

The ship arrived on the fifth day. The women and the children got on the ship first and then – the soldiers. They took only people on board, nothing else. Mother gave me a spoon to take with me. A French sailor threw my spoon in the sea. I wanted to take my spoon from the sea; they did not allow me.

Petros Doudaklian and Markos Snapien remained on the mountain. They came to Port-Saïd after a month. Port-Saïd is by the Suez Canal. We were taken there. Everything was prepared there: tents, food, and clothes. Our six villages were set out as separate districts. They opened a school and hospital; we did not have difficulties. We remained there for four years. Then we went back to Moussa Dagh. We saw that everything was destroyed and in ruins. We began building our houses and cultivating our land. Then, in 1939, we were transferred to Aynjar. In 1947, we came to Armenia.

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**PETROS SARGIS SAFARIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1901, Moussa Dagh, Hadji-Habibli Village)**

My father was drafted into the Turkish army but he then deserted. The army blocked our roads and we could not ascend Moussa Dagh.

We were twenty families in our village that were sent into exile. A Turk gendarme slapped my father on the face. They drove us forward like flocks of sheep. We crossed the Orontes River at night where they allowed us to take rest. A woman gave birth to a child there. In the morning, we began walking again. We passed the town of Antioch built in 300 B.C.. They kidnapped my sister and plundered us. We reached Hama in the parching sun, stepping on burning stones. We were told that we would stay there. The people made tents from the quilt cases and entered these tents. The sun was burning. The people were hungry, thirsty, exhausted, sick and in a terrible

state. A man who was shouting for a piece of bread was taken by the Turks who threw him alive into a pit.

Father took us to town where he rented a house to live in. Soon the town crier began to declare: "All those who shelter Armenians in their houses will also be exiled." Then they brought camels and transferred us to Homs.

Many members of our family died.

Talaat from Istanbul had ordered Djemal, who was the prefect of Damascus then, not to leave a dog alive in the streets, that is to annihilate the Armenians. But Djemal was a clever person; he killed the dogs in the streets and told the Armenians to change their names as though they had become Turks. This way we were rescued: my name was Abraham, I became Ibrahim, mother became Fatma, and my sister Aysha.

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**ISKOUHI KOSHKARIAN'S TESTIMONY  
(B. 1902, Moussa Dagh)**

When the village crier came to our Yoghun-Oluk Village to announce publicly that we would be deported, I had gone to the fountain to fetch water. I went home crying and saw everybody was in a panic. We left pots and pans full of our meal and ascended the mountain.

The men fought on the mountain for a long time. Bullets flew over our heads in both directions – but we remained alive.

One day a local man showed the Turks our positions. Our boys cut out his tongue and his ear with an axe. They threw so many stones on him to form a heap. Maybe this heap is still on the mountain. It served him right. Why should he show the enemy the path that would lead to us? The Turks had already caught about twenty people and converted the children into Turks. Thousands of Turks attacked us but we resisted and did not surrender. On white covers we had drawn a flag and beside it we lit a

fire. Anyway, we decided to throw ourselves into the sea from the rocks and the cliffs.

My brother began to cry: “Mummy, let’s not go; they’ll throw us into the sea.”

In eight days, French ships came and lined up in front of us. The French came in small boats that took us to the big ships. We saved only our lives. My father, Hayrapet Polisian, watched the roads. We descended to the seashore... Yessayi Yaghoubian, who was our Godfather, got on board the ship the last. When everyone was on board, the captain looked through the field glasses and saw that the Turks had already entered our village, Yoghoun-Oluk. We sailed to Port-Saïd.

After four years, we went back to Moussa Dagh. In 1939, the Turks came again. This time we went to Aynjar.

In 1946, we came to Armenia in order to get rid of the Turks. We were settled in Massis.

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**GRIGOR GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY\*  
(B. 1903, Moussa Dagh, Kabousié Village)**

There was a great tumult in the village; everybody was rushing everywhere. Those were years of war. I was already twelve years old and understood quite a lot of what was going on. The representatives of the authorities often came to the village to prepare lists for the draft, also of our animals and crops. In the autumn of 1914, general mobilization was proclaimed, and men from the age of eighteen to forty-five were enlisted except priests and deacons. The people were lost in their thoughts. Those who did not want to go to the army paid forty to fifty gold coins as tax. But after a few months, they returned for enlistment, and again the tax had to be paid. In this way, only a few men were left in the village.

We had a teacher, Mr. Aroyan, who came to our house almost every day to meet my father who was the priest. Mr. Aroyan used to give news from newspapers from different places and their conversations were about the diverse problems. The elders of the village often came to our house and discussed various local and international questions. I used to crouch down in one corner and listen.

It was May 1915. Mr. Aroyan came to our house as usual but he was unusually worried. At that moment, father was busy weaving a basket. Seeing this, Mr. Aroyan said: “Father, begin weaving iron baskets, we won’t need reed baskets anymore.”

Father felt his mood and understood that something serious had happened. During the conversation, Mr. Aroyan told in detail the information he had gathered. Already rumors had been spreading among people on the situation in different villages and regions, that people were being deported, driven to deserts and undergoing various tortures, torments. Huge caravans of the exiled gradually ‘thinned out,’ sometimes even reduced to one, disappearing as a stream coming down from the mountains in the summer and flowing into a parched desert.

Meanwhile, other people also came to discuss at length the future of peasants and possible ways of salvation.

The Armenian recruits never saw weapons. They worked under the command of Germans...on the railroad construction – hungry, thirsty, exhausted. Some of them did not withstand and died. Many from the army returned back to the village and hid. The gendarmes found the deserters and sent them back to the army. These deserters later became ‘sparks’ during the self-defense on Moussa Dagh. On their way back home, they had encountered caravans of deported Armenians and had been eyewitnesses of their indescribable sufferings.

One of those deserters was my uncle Serob who

\* This testimony is a fragment of the handwritten “Memoirs” emotionally and descriptively compiled by the eyewitness survivor Grigor Gyouzelian, an intellectual specialized in engineering in Paris.

escaped from the army for the third time. As usual, the elders of the village had gathered at our house and had become all ears to what my uncle was telling. He told, with great agitation, about how the Armenian youth were working in work battalions, the infernal conditions they were working until their last breath, and that they died one after the other. He told how the Turkish supervisors treated the Armenian deported women, many of whom died soon after. Those caravans hardly ever reached the deserts: people died on the road, tortured and tormented.

My uncle was thirty-five and he described what he had seen with his own eyes with such emotion and passion that those present often interrupted him swearing to take vengeance even at the risk of their own lives. They expressed their determination not to be deported, and to live and die on their own lands. Nobody believed the promises of the government that the safety of the refugees was secure, that the exile would be temporary, that they would soon return home, and other such stories.

At the end, my uncle proclaimed, "After what I've seen, I've decided not to be deported but to ascend the mountain with my family and fight together with the other peasants to my last breath. I will kill my family with my own hands and never hand them over to the wild Turks. You do, as you like. God be with you. But I've already decided I shall climb up the mountain."

Having said this, my uncle rose and resolutely went to his house. Everybody was taken aback and was caught up in their thoughts.

Which was right? Ascend the mountain and desperately fight to the end so as not to fall into the hands of the barbarous Turks, or, face deportation while looking out for ways of escape on the road?

From the villages in our region, many people had already ascended the mountain and others were still climbing. The Turkish soldiers watched this but did not pay special attention thinking that they were only a handful of persons. So what could they do? Just as they ascend, so they will then descend. The regional patrol headquarters considered the movement of the people on to the mountain as simply futile and watched them with indifference. The government thought, that whatever happened, it would be just as easy to deal with a crowd armed with hunting rifles only.

Finally, my father broke the depressing silence with great difficulty: "No one can be responsible for another. Those ascending the mountain have one clear objective: to fight to the end. The Turks will surround the mountain with large forces and slaughter all those fighting, or the defendants will put an end to their own lives. The situation of the refugees is no better either, on the way some will be able to free themselves, so at least there could be survivors. So let everyone decide for himself what he's going to do."

Little by little, all of them went to their houses

burdened with their thoughts and without uttering a single word as though they had lost their ability to speak. I had decided for myself to ascend the mountain and fight. For a long time I had been full of hatred and vengeance. Several times at different opportunities, my father had said that he envied his brother as he could decide freely what to do, while he as priest did not have the right to go against the will of the majority of the people. He even had to show some leadership as he had always been with the people, among the people and with the elders of the village and in the region. That there was no news from Sassoun for a long time caused great anxiety. Zeytoun had been cleared out, the population of Kessab had decided to be deported. Father always thought about what miracle might free the people who had climbed the mount. If it lasted long, the Turks would starve the people to death, while on the road of exile those who were clever and crafty might find a way to escape. Of course, many people, thought in the same way, all the peasants were hesitating and what took place was spontaneous.

Nevertheless, our family decided to ascend the mountain. One night, when father was still at a meeting, mother took a set of bedding on her back, sister loaded herself with different items, and I, with a full basket in my hand, set out to uncle Serob's house to climb the mountain together with them. We reached uncle's house and waited in front of the gate.

At that moment father returned home. He saw us and became angry: why hadn't we waited for him? In a very agitated state, he ordered us to return home immediately, saying that it was decided to be deported just as Kessab had already done before us.

I was burning inside but too young to oppose father; I had to obey my parent's will without a word.

Leaving the village in the morning, father was called to the school by the military quarter's commander. In the afternoon, he returned bringing a donkey with him. Father ordered us to prepare items of the most important necessity for deportation. He took his hunting rifle and a few other things, and went to school. It had been agreed to take the rifles. The other things that the villagers considered important could be left behind in the church until their return from deportation. They had even been told by the authorities to write their names on their possessions. What a cunning approach, what deviousness was used to inspire confidence! The military quarter's chief told Father Markos that after storing the things to be kept in the church, to lock the door and take the key together with him (the chief had chosen Father Markos as being the responsible one, taking into consideration that he lived near the church).

It was already sunset, and the gendarmes were pressing the people to get ready to set out. Father made me sit on the bedding which was loaded on the donkey,

and our family, like others, moved towards the church. My uncle Sargis' family also joined us and our group consisting of thirteen people, moved towards Kaler (threshing floors – Arm.). The whole village had gathered at Kaler: there was crying, lamenting, noise, uproar...

“Silence,” shouted the chief of the gendarmes accompanying us. “Forward! Without noise!”

The people became agitated as they began to move towards the regional center, Lavshia.

The sun was setting. Suddenly the sound of trumpets was heard calling the local and regional soldiers to assemble... A chill descended on the noisy people's caravan, which soon calmed down.

On the plain, the road passed through the village of Tats. Women wrapped in their handkerchiefs, cried silently while their amazed children hung onto their skirts watching the sad, strange and disorderly 'parade,' which dissolved into the horizon to be lost in uncertainty...

Who could imagine and comprehend that a tragic, terrible and unlawful massacre was being carried out by a state before the eyes of 'democratic,' 'civilized' and 'progressive' countries with their partial protection, encouragement and, of course, complicity?

After passing through the regional center's streets at about midnight, we reached the military barracks. We put down the loads and the burdens in order to take a rest and, being completely exhausted, soon fell asleep.

The first day of our 'parade' ended this way.

In the morning, we had our breakfast though we did not feel in the mood but ate just to satisfy our hunger. Some people hurried to the regional center (about half an hour's way) to bring back food.

Endless hours of troubling waiting followed. The grown ups, having nothing to do, discussed daily problems, and the children either played or followed the elder's conversations, looking in astonishment once to this speaker's mouth, once to the other's.

It was past noon when the order came to gather up and get ready for deportation. A declaration required that the men should immediately hand over to the military staff their knives, scissors, razors and of course any weapon accidentally still with them. It was also declared that there would be searches and those who did not obey the order would be punished strictly on the spot without any trial. They gathered everything that could be suspicious, in this way the people became a defenseless – even mere objects – subject to an armed child's whim.

At about sunset, the order to prepare to move was given. The convoy stirred. Luggage was put on the donkeys and on each other's back. Father again put me on the beds loaded onto the donkey and told my sister, who was three years older than me to hold fast to the saddle rope so that we might not lose each other in the darkness.

And so the caravan set out towards Antioch, the

largest town in the region, and so ended the second day of our odyssey. We were perplexed and downcast throughout the whole of that night. As I was seated on the beds on the donkey, I was relatively comfortable so I was able to doze off at times. With great difficulty, we crossed the two tributaries of the Orontes River, the large and small Karachays, which were twenty-thirty meters wide at that place and about half a meter deep, with no bridge. It was difficult to cross these stony streams by day, so imagine the difficulties at night for people carrying burdens on their backs, children and old people.

In the morning, at about nine or ten, we reached Antioch most of which lay on the left bank of the Orontes. We stayed on the uninhabited bank where the school and the cemetery were situated. The people settled inside and outside the school as well as near the cemetery.

After some time, they gathered the teenage boys and elderly men into two rooms on the first and second floors (there were no middle aged men; they all had been taken to the army). They checked and investigated again. Soon the whisper of 'massacre' spread among the people. They all got agitated, crying, moaning – an uproar. A mother even wanted to throw her baby into the water...people ran about seeking help...

After a few hours, they set the men free. People began to breathe more easily. What a moving sight! As if they were meeting them after many years of separation...

Not long after this, we set off again. It was almost sunset, when we reached Harbié, a pleasant area full of water and entertaining, but we continued our way through a narrow canyon without stopping...and so ended the third day of our journey.

The sun had already risen above the horizon when we reached a plain that was a typical desert. We felt the difference in the climate as we had lived beside the sea. The sun was parching. All of us were suffering from the heat. The accompanying gendarmes knew where they were leading us, but it was not to paradise... In vain we dreamt of comfort and security.

The news spread immediately that Father Markos's father and mother were missing... They were our victims, our first sacrificed, because we had no news from the other village groups.

And so, days followed each other with an uncertain march towards the depths of the Syrian deserts...

One evening, we reached the foot of the Medek fortress where there was a small lake of twenty meters in diameter. The animals also quenched their thirst entering the water and muddying it. There was no other source of water. We were extremely thirsty and we had to drink from that lake. People, with the help of handkerchief or some other piece of cloth began to quench their thirst. I tried the same. The water was not only muddy, but also full of water bugs. I could hardly moisten my tongue; it was not possible to have a proper drink.

...The sun set, the people rested. There was crying and moaning from a corner... my childhood friend, Hakob Baldjian's mother had passed away. Not being able to bear the midday heat, the poor woman had fallen on the way and not been able to get up...

Our march had lasted two or three weeks. At the beginning of September we reached a camp near Hama, which was a real hell...the camp was at a distance of half an hour from the town. There were tents everywhere in different colors. The tents had been pitched at random, disorderly; there were even tents that consisted only of a piece of cloth. The heap of tents reminded me of an ant nest covered with clouds of flies.

There was not a tent without a sick person. A lying man could become ill and not remain alive for long: he died and was removed.

Many people died while sitting down. The corpse collectors, accompanying the chief doctor, removed the dead from the congested tents with great difficulty.

Camp supervision became more difficult and looser. What could sick people in contact with epidemic diseases do? Where could they go? Nevertheless, there were people who could get out of the camp and try to get something to survive. My father rented a room in Hama, which seemed to be a paradise compared to the camp. The gendarmes soon found where father lived and forced him to perform burial services for the dead. One did not know what these rules were and who had invented them.

The first day of doing this 'duty' so exhausted father, that when he came home in the evening he fell down on the bed like a chain without eating or drinking.

The "graves" had been a wide long ditch that contained two to three hundred bodies filled with the dead or half-dead brought in carts. Father was not the only one to do this, as the epidemic was an 'abundant harvest.'

Father could not withstand this for long, and after 4-5 days, we fled from that place and took shelter in a tent near the Orontes River, in the vicinity of the railway station. We did not stay there either to avoid being driven to Homs. The gendarmes returned refugees they found in the town, or its vicinity, back to the camp in order to move them to Homs or elsewhere. Most of the people could only use the provisions they had brought with them and any purchased in the town. The heat of the desert, the intolerable thirst and the absence of elementary conditions for hygiene tortured the people.

One evening, Hovhannes's Andreas had come to speak to us about his and other common problems. He told us about a village in which the inhabitants belonged to the Greek Church. The climate there was so cold that the urine of a boy froze before it reached the ground. But, as the people were Christians, living there might be somewhat tolerable. Father was troubled because he did not like the place we lived and he often spoke of moving

to another place.

One evening, father agreed terms with an Arab who would lead us to a safer place. The next morning at twilight, the Arab came on his donkey, and we set out to our new place: Mouhardi. We walked the whole day until we reached there, quite a large village in the immense, inhabited desert.

We settled down at Abu-el-Asi's long barn. At the beginning of March, there were four sick people in our family: father, mother, my mother's mother who had left her husband in Hama and had joined us, and myself. I had malaria: I do not remember what the others had. My sixteen years old sister, Vardouhi, and my three-year-old brother, Andranik, were still mobile. She could barely supply us with water as she brought it from the Orontes River, the only source of water.

On March 17, father got worse and lost consciousness. After two days, my uncle Sargis came with his sister, Mariam, and sister-in-law, Martha, but I did not know the reason. On that very same day, my mother died. We put the corpse in the yard. My uncle organized mother's burial on the following day without a priest or service. Father did not notice my mother's death. After several days, my father regained consciousness and noticed that mother was missing. My poor father bitterly cried over his loss in his weak state. I also don't remember how this first day passed, but I do know that I was crying and sobbing for the whole day.

Father's illness lasted for months. We felt very bad with this and my mother's absence. Withdrawn into our deep sorrows, we hardly noticed what was going on about us. During our torment, my father's priestly garment was stolen; on the edge of this, fifteen gold coins were sewn. We had no money. We could not pay the rent for the house so we were evicted. We were obliged to join other families and live in another barn. We lived on the provisions we had brought with us, using them extremely frugally.

Father did not recover, when the authorities gathered the priests and took them away. We (my three-year-old brother, sixteen-year-old sister, and I) effectively became orphans. None of us could work; my sister preferred to starve than beg with her outstretched hand. So, as a 'man,' I was left at home, but being the son of a priest, I could neither steal nor snatch things away. We had to rely on God's charity... I had to go here and there to find a piece of bread or some food. I asked whomever I could, I begged, pleaded, gave blessings... In this way, I could just about get enough to keep us alive. In general, life had become very hard because the government had gathered the grain harvest for the army. Peasants survived from hand to mouth and could not spare anything to feed other people like us. How could we blame them? They were not evil and had no hatred towards us. Very often people pitied us but could do nothing for us when they

themselves were half-hungry. They often cursed the government, those who had caused the war, those who had deported us from our homes and land. But what was the use of this? Many of us were starving to death. After gathering the priests together, a Turkish mullah came with his assistant secretary and ordered all the refugees of the region to gather together. Within fifteen minutes, twenty-twenty-five people came and the mullah preached for quite awhile about the advantages of Islam over Christianity.

“My children,” said the orator. “Today you have gone astray with your Christian beliefs. Once Christianity had been correct, that is why we formally accept and respect your Christ as a great prophet. But after him came Mohammed. He did not only create a new religion but accepted your God and added many things, corrected and made it perfect. In a word, he directly improved Christianity, which had become archaic. Thus, the Mohammedan religion has great advantages over Christianity. Your greatest mistake is that you accept Christ as the son of God, forgive me, forgive, forgive... Does God have a wife in order to have a son...? That is why I say that you have simply gone astray. Now our government is charitable, merciful and forgiving. I am now given a delicate duty to convert you to the true religion. Now,” he addressed his secretary, “open the sacred register and write down the names of the new Mohammedans.”

Then, without giving time to think, the mullah addressed us: “Who is the first honored Mohammedan?”

“Me,” shouted Hakob Parpourian, “Call me Mohammed...”

“Good for you, my son, good for you. And your wife’s name?”

“Aysha,” shouted again Hakob Parpourian.

And so, within one hour or so, 20-25 Christian Armenians became Mohammedans...

Of course, apostasy in our region was not the only one; there had been such ceremonies held in other regions as well.

It must be mentioned that it was one of Djemal pasha’s ‘diplomatic’ tricks. He had been aware indirectly that the governor of Aleppo secretly sympathized with the Armenians. Djemal pasha also knew that with the initiative of Karapet agha Keovterelian from Hadjn and the assistance of the Armenian owner of Hotel Baron\* and other devoted persons, all the refugees had been dispersed, changed religion, and so many dozens of Armenians had been rescued. Djemal pasha knew all this but did not do anything to change these arrangements. The pro-Armenian governor had reported to the center that no Armenian refugees remained in the region. Later the governor’s activities had come under suspicion and

he was replaced by a monster.

The inhabitants of Mouhardi and Skelbi villages belonged to the Greek Church. There were also three wealthy Arab families in Mouhardi. Probably they had an agreement among themselves that each grandmother of the family would give food to the refugees, so every evening there was a large kettle of food or pilaw or tonir bread. We called them ‘Mayrik’ (Mother – Arm.). In particular, one of them, the mother of Appout Beytar, was a special kind of ‘Mayrik.’ She used to distribute to the starving people through the day, appeasing her conscience by rendering service to the people in need.

And how did our refugees respond to the charity of that merciful family?

One night, 8-10 people opened Appout Beytar’s barn and stole the wheat. In the morning, she noticed the loss and immediately told her sons. They went to the Armenians with iron bars and sacks. The crafty Armenians had dug their fireplaces, hidden the wheat under and covered it with ash but the wise sons found the stolen wheat. Before taking back the wheat, the grandmother asked her sons to leave each family at least one or two kilos: “They are to be pitied; they are hungry, they are in difficulty...”

I had heard that life was comparatively comfortable in the Greek village of Skelbi... It was winter. One day, after walking 4-5 hours, I reached Skelbi. It was too early yet to start begging and knocking at doors. I was wandering in the streets when I suddenly met a member of my family, Eva, in a yard with many refugees. She became emotional when she saw me: “What have you become, my dear Godfather...there is nobody to look after you. Come, put your head on my knees, and let me clean the lice from your head. Soon I will die... You’ll remember me...” (And in reality, the poor woman starved to death in a few months).

...It was afternoon. I began hunting as usual. I wandered for hours in vain; at last, I found the house of the merciful ‘mother’ of the village in her yard over a large kettle. She was distributing food with a ladle in her hand. Thanks for this: what else could be done?

Next, I had to look for a place to sleep. I was shown a yard where a poor family lived.

“Son, we have nothing to give you, neither food, nor bed. How can you stay with us?” said the mother of the house pitifully. It was obvious that they were really in a lamentable state.

“Never mind, mother, I’ll lie on the ground,” I insisted.

“As you like, son; don’t blame me then...”

During the day, the poor people had gathered some branches and thorns. As darkness fell, they lit it so that the place, which was called a room, would be illuminated

\* A famous hotel in Aleppo that belonged to an Armenian.

for a period and warm. Soon the fuel burnt out and the room fell into complete darkness. Everybody fell asleep. I also got a stone from outside, put it under my head, spread my coat on the ground and lay under the columns of the house.

The cold weather of Skelbi was well known. The village was situated on the top of a hill; it was open on all sides and the climate was completely continental. The night seemed an everlasting eternity. The cold penetrated through my bones. I was hungry. As if the sun had become cross with us, it seemed to refuse to rise and warm us at least a bit. I could not sleep at all. My eyes looked to the cracks of the door, while I waited for the coming day that would bring happiness... So, I endured this until the morning. I definitely decided to return to Mouhardi. Oh, when would the day break...!

Finally, the cracks of the door revealed the sunrise. Carefully, without making any noise, I picked up my stone and came out to the yard. I put the stone back in its place; I wrapped my coat round my waist and set off. It felt as if my blood was frozen. I could not breathe freely. The ground was covered with frost and thin ice. My feet were bare; bleeding and hurt me badly. I was not really walking, just hopping along... It felt that my tears were freezing on my cheeks. I reached the village dump. The disc of the sun started to rise. Hoping to get a little warm, I stood under a wall, but it felt still worse. I looked in the garbage hoping to find some vegetable, but in vain... In despair, I tried to run down the hill. It seemed to me that I felt a bit warm. I began to breathe quite freely when I was at the foot of the hill. The sun had already risen over the horizon. At a distance, I noticed a shepherd who was grazing the sheep. I went towards the shepherd, and when I was quite near, I began to call to him. Hearing my voice a huge dog ran towards me, barking. I crouched down. The dog reached me, went around me a couple of times with savage eyes fixed on me, sat down and continued barking incessantly. When the shepherd, an elderly man, approached me, the dog stopped barking and went away. I gathered my breath and got up. The shepherd asked dryly: "What's the matter, what do you want?"

"I beg a piece of bread from you..."

As if he was waiting for me to pour out his accumulated bile, he began cursing and swearing at those who had brought us, all those who would take us away, those who created the war, those who were fighting. In a word, no one remained who was not the subject of his rage... I had already lost any hope of receiving anything and was listened to this morning 'preaching' in amazement. But to my surprise, he put his hand into the bag hanging from his shoulder, took out a piece of bread and, giving it to me, thundered towards his sheep. I continued my way towards Mouhardi.

Months passed... One day Father Markos arrived in the village. I went to visit him and received news of my

father. Though completely emaciated and tortured, he had still been able to return. Father was so exhausted and tortured that he was not in mood to talk. He only said that my father was alive, weaving baskets and selling here and there, and somehow keeping alive. Then he gave me two mejitiés, saying that it was his only savings, which he sent to us for a very difficult day. This was a great treasure for us: we did not want to spend it as long as we were able to get something to eat in order not to die.

A few weeks after becoming 'rich,' father came himself. Our joy was beyond description. The poor man had been much tortured and tormented. They had gathered twenty-three priests and taken them for slaughtering. Then, by some miracle, many of them had been rescued. There were no guards anymore and the people had scattered everywhere. With emerging opportunities, people were making to their birthplace. A group of our countrymen, among them my aunt Mariam and her husband, also decided to return to their homes. They planned to travel to Guseyr, which was rather close to Antioch.

Father made me sit beside him and explained his thoughts clearly: "My son, you see and feel that I'm going from one temptation to the other. There is no work. People are going to their birthplaces. Everything is dark and unclear. Sitting here, I am not able to support my family. A group of our countrymen are going to Guseyr. It is not sure when they will reach there. Only one thing is clear – that place is close to our birthplace. Who knows, maybe one day they will reach home, I want you to join that group, maybe you will succeed though there is no great probability. This resembles the people of Israel returning from Egypt towards the Red Sea and from there, under the leadership of Moses to the promised Canaan. You will go towards the land of our ancestors, to Moussa Dagh, but without someone to lead you. And I want to try to go another way. Whoever reaches there first and feels a little stronger, let him enquire after the other members of the family. I have already told your sister to sew two barghouts onto your faradja for any threatening days. I have nothing else to give you except ... my blessings..."

After two days, our group set forth; it consisted of aunt Mariam, her husband and our neighbor Natan. Two Arabs were our guides. In ten day's we reached the vicinity of Jesser-el-Shoughour. One morning, at the hour of prayer, our guides spread out their small carpets on the ground, knelt and began their daily prayers. Meanwhile our group was resting at a small distance. Suddenly we saw three men, one of them rifle in hand, coming towards us. When they reached us, they attacked us and began searching us using all kind of threats. Our guides were still praying as if nothing was taking place around them. One of the robbers was gazing on Natan's faradja. He began to pull and push the poor man to take

off the coat. Natan was very nervous and swore at their din. The robber understood the word din and that he was swearing at their religion. So, he became even more furious and began to use his fists. Poor Natan could not stand the blows and was roaring, bellowing as though a bull was being slaughtered. It was good, because, at last, our praying guides interfered, and we were freed from the robbers' hands. Not long after that my uncle Sargis appeared together with his son. While speaking with our country acquaintances, he noticed me and asked where I was going. I said I had joined the group to be nearer to our land, especially to Guseyr, and that it was my father's wish as well.

"There is no work there either; the people are hungry; there are no jobs".

"Father sent me with the group; I won't turn back," I argued.

But uncle insisted on my going back, as was his right as an elder. So, I had to submit to him and returned together with him. I could not understand the logic of this. People were going back to their birthplace, but we, on the contrary, were going farther away...

We returned to Gaston, a settlement, which has been a fortress town near the eastern border of Armenian Cilicia in the 11th-14th centuries. In the elevated part of the area, probably on the ruins of the fortress, was spread the village consisting of about fifty Armenian families who had emigrated there in previous years. The village had one street with houses standing in rows on both sides. At the eastern end of the village, there was a bakery with a separate entrance for customers with only a covering. The hall of the bakery also served as a meeting place of the unemployed and wandering people. The bakery often had Arab customers from the surrounding villages. We (my uncle, his son, and I) often slept there at night. And sometimes we passed the night in the straw barn which was about two hundred meters from the village, near the threshing-floor.

We stayed there about a month. I do not know how my uncle and his son lived, but we lived on water, grass and charity. Sometimes I did some small jobs for a piece of bread.

I had a woolen cloth, which served as my coat during the day and as a bed at night. One day two Arabs came to the bakery hall. One of them suggested that I sell him my coat for a piece of bread. I refused: "No, I won't sell it; it's everything for me." He offered to buy it with money – I refused again. The Arab became annoyed. His friend said: "Why do you get angry? You can come in the night, he'll agree..."

In the evening, my uncle insisted that we should go to the straw barn to sleep. I objected but he was firm in his decision.

"Uncle, let's not go there; they'll steal my coat."

"Don't be afraid, I...", and he began swearing.

"I beg you, uncle, let's not go. Don't go too, I'll stay here."

"No, I won't leave you alone; we'll go together."

I could not overcome my uncle's obstinacy, and we went to sleep on the threshing-floor for the night. On the road, I had noticed the two men smoking. I warned my uncle and again asked him to return to the bakery. He was not moved. Until morning, half-asleep, half-awake, troubled, only I know how the day broke. Fortunately, nothing happened that night. The following night, my uncle again decided to sleep in the straw-barn, because it was more comfortable in the straw and warm. But I did not feel comfortable, for I was worried for my cloth. Nevertheless, we went to the threshing-floor for the night. Uncle, together with his son, was buried in a large pile of straw and showed me another one to shelter in.

"Get buried deep into the straw; cover yourself well with your coat ... and get to sleep."

I was tired and I slept. Suddenly I felt that my coat was slipping away from me. In front of my half-open eyes appeared a horrifying figure. Before I could shout for help, my coat disappeared... I sat up and started crying...

"What's the matter?" shouted my uncle.

"Didn't I tell you, uncle, that they would take away my coat – you did not believe me."

"Did they take it away?"

"They did..."

"I..." My uncle opened his 'blessed' mouth and swore on their seven generations.

One day an Arab came and wanted a worker. My uncle pointed to me. I went in the hope of being fed. The prospects were good. We reached his place at sunset. He gave me a small piece of Arab bread the size of one decimeter and sent me to sleep outside the tent. I crouched like a dog outside, hoping to be in better conditions in the following day. My job was to watch over the tomato field and my wage was a piece of bread and an unripened tomato. When I asked for a sleeping place in the tent, they would not let me in, saying that my place was outside as on the previous day. I had no alternative. I decided to run away from there. The next day, again I received a small piece of bread. The field was by the roadside. All around was unfamiliar to me. The sun had risen further and there were no more passers by. It was completely deserted. At a suitable moment, I came onto the road and started running as fast as I could, as if running away from gallows.

It was past noon when I reached our bakery. My uncle was sitting with his son ... flicking away flies. I told him what I had experienced and added that I would not go to that place again. The next day the same Arab came again to fetch me but I did not go.

A month had passed when one morning my uncle awoke us very early to set off.

“Where are you going, uncle?”

“I don’t know ... towards Mouhardi...”

My uncle, Sargis, after leaving his wife and daughter in one of the villages of Homs and burying his mother (my grandmother), returned to Hama with his son (my father) and several other people. They lost each other, and he wandered with his son. They reached Antioch. They crossed imperceptibly the bridge over the River Orontes when the watchmen were asleep and made their way to the village. They generally traveled at night in order not to arouse suspicion. They got to the village. My uncle dug and found the pot of cheese he had himself buried under the pomegranate trees of ourcroft; he took the pot and went by night with his son till the mulberry grove and the silkworm-breeding ground. But he did not feel safe there, too, and ascended the hillside. He crawled through the opening of the water-pipe hewn in stone by the Romans and prepared a hiding place for himself and his son. In the daytime he watched and examined through the bushes the mulberry groves. The neighboring Tats, taking advantage of the fact that the owners were exiled, had dismantled the roof of the silkworm-breeding ground, had demolished the walls, had stolen the beams and stones to use them as building materials. There was nothing to do but descend to the orchards by night and eat some August figs and other fruits and take away some others to satisfy their hunger with fruits and cheese. They remained there a whole month. The cheese was finished and the amount of fruit decreased. They lived there like wild animals, but how long could they continue? All the time, they feared the Turks so they decided to return to Hama, which was a tolerable place compared with others. It was at that time that he met me, and we came back together. I found my sister Vardouhi. I was glad that I would return to my father and my brother, Andranik... Who knows? We might meet. My uncle’s son and I went ahead, as my uncle was looking for something, but he soon joined us. We saw before us a plain that was quite elevated. It was covered with thorny bushes, and there was no path through it. As we were barefoot, the thorns scratched our feet, and we climbed it with great difficulty. Our painful and bloodstained ascent lasted about three hours. Finally, we overcame it and reached a broad road that probably would lead to a village.

We had gone about half an hour, when we saw a group of Arabs coming towards us. It was wartime and poverty was common. They stopped us. My uncle had a dirty quilt on his back with a few other items. They detained us, found nothing of interest but, all the same, they took away something and set us free, thanks be to God. We turned to the left, towards the East. The sun began to burn. On the left side of the road, two young armed men appeared and shouted: “Stop.” We had to. They searched my uncle’s belongings. “Gather them and go away,” they said and departed. We did this and

continued our way.

We reached along half of a valley when a voice ordered: “Stop.” They were the robbers whom we had met an hour ago. One of them took aim at my uncle’s chest with his rifle and the other struck us with a club he held in his hand. He ordered the quilt to be put down and to be opened. They searched it but found nothing to take. They looked at my uncle’s son and turned away. They searched me, found nothing. Finally, they finished by threatening us with the rifle and further blows with the club.

We approached a village. The sun had reached its zenith and was pouring out fire. We had not yet entered the village when two youths approached us with heavy sticks in hand. We were not really of any interest but all the same they searched us. Finally, we entered the village. The cannon thundered as it was time for noon dinner. My uncle said to me: “Knock on a couple of doors.” (By the way, the doors were not closed during day time in the villages). He went to another side with his son saying: “A little later you come here and wait.” So, I did, without finding anything to eat. The war and government plunder had hardened people’s hearts... I do not know how long I waited. Grigor, my uncle’s son, appeared: “Where’s father?”

“I do not know; two men were speaking with him. Father said: ‘Go, I’ll come.’”

That was not a pleasant answer; he was alright, but I began to worry. What could two men have to do with him? I did not think anything good would come of it. We set off. My feet would not obey me. My eyes were looking backwards all the time. About ten minutes had passed when uncle appeared with two young men who had derisive smiles on their faces. I calmed down. Uncle was alive... Uncle was very nervous. He had said that we were from Antioch. They had wanted to make sure if he was circumcised or not...

The sun was going under the horizon. On the verge of the village, an old Arab woman joined us. We had some distant hopes. At last we had a fellow traveler. Little by little, my uncle began talking with the woman.

The old woman began to pity us. The path passed through a dry parched valley. In the middle of this valley, a terrible voice came down from the heights: “Stop.” Two outlaws rolled down the hill towards us. One had a weapon, the other a club. “Get undressed,” they ordered. We did not move. We, the young ones, received each a blow of the club. The rifle, which was aimed at my uncle, and the blows of the club made my uncle take off his robe and his trousers; his underwear was torn from top to bottom and was dirty. The blunt dagger became the center of attention. The robber with the club took the dagger saying: “It can split a belly well,” held my half-naked uncle by the collar, raised the dagger and brought it down. The youths began laughing and my poor uncle

also laughed unwillingly. They collected our clothes into a sack. Uncle asked them to search the clothing and then give these back to cover our naked bodies. Only a short shirt had remained on me, reaching my navel. With the help of the club and the weapon, they brought my uncle to his senses and we went away.

At a distance of two kilometers the elderly woman was waiting for us sitting on the roadside. When we reached her, and saw the state we were in, she began crying and sobbing, cursing all those who had caused all those misfortunes, their inhuman ferocity, brutality, and cruelty.

We continued on our way. The sun was almost sinking beneath the horizon when we entered an unfamiliar village. Our fellow traveler parted from us wishing us success.

We sat under the shade of the wall of a house, as it was difficult to appear half-naked before people. A forty-year-old woman spinning thread, approached us, greeted us, and began asking questions. Uncle had crouched down; his torn shirt would not cover his naked body. When he tried to cover his front; his back was exposed, when covering his back, his front was open... He crouched down so much that he was like a clenched fist. When she learned that we were from Antioch, that we relied on the mercy of God, that we were wandering and seeking our future, she put aside her spindle, opened her arms and thanked God: "Thanks to God, thanks to God... Thanks to God that you're not Armenians..."

"Why, sister, are the Armenians so bad," said my uncle with his broken Arabic...

"No, brother," said the woman. "Maybe the Armenians are not bad, but last year the gendarmes brought about fifty Armenian families here, consisting of children, women and old people. The following day they gathered the children and the old as if taking them to work but did not bring them back. They chose the young girls and women, divided among themselves, and the rest they took away in an unknown direction and lost them... Thanks God that you're not Armenians."

The woman took up her spindle and went away leaving us horrified and terrified... In such a village we would have to pass the night...

From the west, twilight spread. It was difficult to differentiate an Armenian from the Turk. So, we got up and, according to our routine, parted from each other to beg for charity from God and the population, giving blessings to God's mercy. I can't say whether people's hearts had hardened or people had become evil... After knocking at a few doors in vain, I returned to the place where we were to meet, and soon uncle came together with his son. The desire to help others or take an interest in others did not exist anymore. To this day, I have not understood the reason why my uncle turned me away from my original route.

The Mullah chanted his night prayer to God from the tower of the mosque and then there was silence. We wandered the streets when a woman came towards us with some package in her hand. Uncle asked: "Sister, where is the mosque?"

"At this hour of the night, what have you got to do at the mosque?"

"We'll go there, do our night prayer and look for some place to sleep."

"There, it is: that small door..."

We parted from the woman and went to the indicated door. We pushed it, the door opened slowly; in fear, we entered a large room that had old mats hanging here and there on the walls.

"Where can we sleep here, uncle?"

"Shush, don't make noise."

He spread a mat on the floor: "Now lie down." And covered us with another mat: "Now, sleep..."

"Uncle, the Arabs will come and kill us."

"They won't come, I ... We'll get up early."

The dawn had just about started to break when he awoke us, and we got out of the mosque. The Mullah came across us: "Who are you? What are you doing here in the mosque by night?"

"We are Turks from Antioch," declared my uncle. "We came to pray to God before the light broke and now we're going with God's blessing. It's not possible to walk during the day, in the sun."

"God bless you, sons, God bless you, good luck to you."

Soon the sun showed its bright face. Walking slowly we reached the end of the village. Under the wall of an open garbage dump, sheltered from the morning sun, a group of people, some sitting, others standing, were probably talking about their worries and about countrywide poverty. Uncle said, at this time to us: "Let's go and ask for a cigarette."

"Don't do that, uncle, they'll slaughter us..."

"Don't be afraid; I... their..."

My uncle was reconciled with his nakedness: he had lost his shame and had become like an animal. We went close to the people and he greeted them. We, the children, did not have the courage to speak so as not to betray ourselves. He asked for some tobacco from one person. The one who gave the tobacco had no cigarette paper. He asked for some paper from somebody else and wrapped it up. There was no fire so he asked for a light from someone else. A young man said: "These seem to be Armenians. Come, let's kill them..." We were terrified, while this time again uncle used his ingenuity saying that we were from Antioch, so on and so forth...

An old man said: "What do you have to do with the poor people, let them go their way" And turning to us: "Go, go your way, God be with you... My uncle inhaled his cigarette, and we – our breath..."

After wandering more than a week, at last we reached Mouhardi before sunset. Uncle, considering his duty fulfilled with honor and in conscience, left me and went on into the village with his son. I was ashamed to meet people almost naked. The sun hid behind the horizon. Almost no people were on the street. I noticed from afar that a woman was taking bread out of the tonir. The scent of newly baked bread reached my nostrils. It was such a long time I had not smelt the scent of hot bread... I looked around, there was no one. Timidly I approached and greeted her. The woman turned around to see me exclaiming: "Oueli (My God – Arab)... What a state you're in..."

"A piece of bread," I pleaded. The woman cut a piece of bread at the size of a palm and gave it to me.

"Oh, Lord, thanks a lot..."

That night I found my sister and sick brother in the barn familiar to me as the place where my mother's mother, her son, Sargis, and my aunt, Mariam, had also taken shelter. That night... an unforgettable night... my four-year-old sick brother died and his last utterance was: "Bread... bread... bread... My conscience began to torture me, as I had not brought the piece of bread to my brother. How could I know? I cried bitterly..."

After sending me away with the group, father had left sister and Andranik where they were and, together with his sister, Sara, had gone to the west to the village of Bayramian Samson, who served with a ship-owner. In eight or ten days, he reached near Samsun. He had asked for work and Samson had recommended him. No success, the ship-owner had decided not to take any more workers. Father had turned northwards, aiming to reach Jesser-el-Shoughour region – Guseyr. Wandering for weeks, he had reached Yaghoubié, a wholly Armenian village where the inhabitants had become Arabs.

Yaghoubié was founded a long time ago, though there are no records of when. The village was established on a hill with about one hundred fifty to two hundred families. At the foot of the same hill, there was another village – Ghneyé, also only consisting of Armenians who were Catholics. In Yaghoubié Village, whose villagers belonged to the Apostolic Church, only the wealthy agha was Catholic, while in the neighboring village there was not a single member of the Apostolic Church and not even an Arab. In those two sister villages, no one knew how to speak in Armenian.

Yaghoubié had its district council. Chairman Abou-Farah had arranged to open the church every Sunday morning to ring the church-bell, to say mass himself, to bake consecrated bread and distribute it to the people. The people were believers, but only two-three old women and men would be present. Abou-Farah had a son and a daughter; he had prematurely aged after his only son was killed during the war. He was taciturn and did not communicate with anyone. The mainstay

and manager of the house was his stout daughter, more than twenty-five years old. She acted as the male of the house for she cultivated the land herself, sowed, reaped and threshed. Her father was like a walking corpse. "It so happened that sometimes they did not have a cup of wheat flour at home. They gave a cup of barley or millet flour to my sister. She went to the wealthy agha's wife and exchanged it with wheat flour..."

My father cultivated and ploughed the village priest's land, for three palm-size pieces of bread daily. They did not have any more and they too lived in poverty. Infrequently, this young man came to church and helped father during mass.

...Looking back to when we rejoined father.

During his time as a vagrant, father became acquainted with a family from Kessab in Skelbi. He had also got to know a well-known man in Gaston. After settling in Yaghoubié, he sent me a note with a messenger to Mouhardi telling us where to go in Skelbi and Gaston. He had agreed with them to organize my own, my sister's and Andranik's (father did not know about his death) safe journey from Skelbi to Gaston and from Gaston to Jesser-el-Shoughour.

There was no end to our joy. We had a pillow and a small quilt; sister had a small package for her clothes. I had nothing except the rags of my clothes. So, our getting ready for the journey would take minutes. The next day in the morning we divided our luggage into two parts, took them on our shoulders and set off towards Skelbi. We arrived rather late. Father's acquaintances from Kessab were modest people; they shared their supper with us. On the third or fourth day, they found an Arab who presented himself with his donkey in the morning. The small breakfast such as it was, had already finished. The Arab loaded the donkey with our luggage. The animal even did not feel that he was loaded. We set out: I – a teenager with torn Arab clothes, and my sister – with almost with gypsy-like clothes.

At noon, we reached the ruins of Medek Fortress. The same muddy water as two years ago... We could not drink it. We continued on our way. About four hours later, the weather became cloudy, the horizon became dark. Autumn wanted to say his last words. Whether the sun had set or the thick clouds covered the sun, anyhow, it became dark; the wind began to blow bringing drops of rain. The dark evening turned cold. The wind blew more strongly. The drops of rain felt like sand balls against our faces. Hunger and cold had reduced our physical strength. Our knees weakened. Our Arab guide took pity on me and put me on the donkey. We went further, and my sister was exhausted. Her feet would not obey her anymore. The Arab took me off the donkey and made sister ride on it. This time sister was not able to keep herself on the donkey and she started to freeze from the windy rain. Our guide was obliged to push sister to

one side, take back the coat, which he had given to me to protect from rain, put it on himself, ride the donkey, taking my sister under his arm. He gave me his stick and said: "Beat the donkey, run to the Gaston Village and ask for help. Run, be quick, your sister is freezing..."

I completed the one hour journey probably in half an hour. It was already dark. I found the recommended person who hurried both his sons to help. Almost half an hour passed before they brought my sister to the house, half-dead, hardly breathing, even then, only intermittently. The housewife and her two daughters began rubbing my sister's feet, hands, and temples and brought her back to life. Sister's breath became stronger and she began breathing regularly.

I do not know what our hosts ate for supper, but they gave us each a bowl of soup and half a bread for the first time in three years... At the beginning, the food would not go down sister's throat. The kind-hearted hostess put down the spoon and the bread from sister's hands and began rubbing her chest and back, tapping her and helping her swallow the first spoon of soup. She fed her slowly, bit-by-bit until her throat opened up. The housewife was not put off by our condition. She gave us a new mattress and blankets and we slept comfortably.

The next morning, our hosts gave us breakfast and sent us to Jesser-el-Shoughour accompanied by a mule-driver. On the way, sister sat on the mule and I walked as I considered myself a man.

We began to wander the deserts of Jesser-el-Shoughour, looking for a place to pass the night. Whoever I saw, I asked (in Arabic) for some shelter. A man showed us a yard, which had a gate and also two windows on both sides of the door. I entered – as if it was a cursed, abandoned house. One door of the four rooms was open. Two windows without shutters looked out on the yard. It was possible to stay there for the night. When darkness fell, we spread our mattress on the floor. We could not find even a stone to use for a pillow when a swarm of lice attacked us. We had no comfort. It was night in an unknown town where the inhabitants could be either Turks or Arabs. We had no fear of Arabs but the Turks terrified us. Where to go? What to do? We had to wait; we had no other way out. Whichever part of our body we rubbed with our hands was covered with a mass of lice: our feet, our face, our belly, our back. We could not get a wink of sleep until the morning. With the breaking morning light, the number of lice reduced. Nevertheless, we went into the streets in the hope of meeting an acquaintance. About noon, Armen, the grandson of father's uncle ... descended from heaven for us... Our father's wisdom did its work: he had told Armen to go to the town of Jiser beforehand, wander about in the hope of meeting us. He was not mistaken. He brought three loaves of bread and some cheese from a shop, and we ate. It was both breakfast and dinner. We

reached our destination by night. We took off our clothes immediately, and our aunt Sara began boiling them. We covered ourselves by other means.

...In the winter of 1917, we lived on grass. Father received news about his sister Gohar from Kheydem. One day he decided that as we are eating grass, so let her also come and eat grass with us... One day, early in the morning, he set off and the next day, in the evening, he returned home with his sister, Gohar. It was autumn. It was the harvest time for olives. I do not know what my sister and aunts were busy with, but I went to work at the oil-press through an acquaintance of my father. I drove the donkey that was tied to the arm of the stone that pressed the olives and so I was grinding olives. I got a piece of bread each day and a bowl of oil weekly. My aunts gathered grass and boiled it. We put salt and oil on it and ate. One does not know from where my uncle appeared with his sick son. After three days his son died, and he took to his bed, and I was alone. Two or three neighbors buried him in a deserted place. A week later, my uncle also died. We managed to bury him, too... One Sunday, father went to read the burial service.

One day, father sent me to an elderly man for an errand. I went and saw that the old man was cleaning the cotton from seeds using a machine that needed some speed and strength. The work at the oil-press had changed me: it seemed that I had gathered some strength.

"Emmi (Uncle – Arab)," I said. "Let me work a little."

"Ruh, waled (Go, boy – Arab.), who are you to separate cotton seeds?"

"Let me try."

"No."

After cleaning the pail of cotton, he got down from the machine and came near me as I had requested. I immediately jumped up from my place, filled the pail with unrefined cotton and put it beside the machine. I mounted the machine, began adding cotton and operated it. The result was not bad.

This encouraged me. I cleaned one pail of cotton in minutes. The old man was astonished, stood up, examined at my work and a smile appeared on his face.

"Waled (Boy – Arab.)," he cried out with joy and surprise. "Where did you learn this work? Come and work for me. I'll give you money as much as you want."

"No, uncle, I'm already working at the oil-press; it's not proper to leave it."

It was December 1918. We did not know what was going on at the war fronts. One thing was clear for us: there was anarchy everywhere. We missed our home, our birthplace. After years of torture and torment, the hearts and the steps of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide were directed towards their home. Samson agha, together with his family and with some people, consumed with the same desire, had stopped at the foot of Yaghoubié,

at the edge of Ghneyé Village and had enquired about his childhood friend and later the council of the quarter, trustee, and priest. They had told him that there was a priest in Yaghoubié, but they did not know his name. He had immediately sent word to father to join the returning procession.

We had nothing to get ready for or any need to ask anyone's permission. We descended immediately and joined the procession to reach Antioch as soon as possible. People were hurrying to reach their homeland, its image in their eyes and love for it in their hearts. We arrived in Antioch when it was past midnight and, as arranged, went into the Armenian Church.

Father was at the rearguard of the group and so he arrived 20-30 minutes later together with his sister's husband, Hovhannes Nazarian who was ill, weak, and exhausted.

Soon dawn broke. Filled with joy, the people almost had not slept all night. There was no reaction from the Turkish population. We did not feel hunger... The sun was rising... Back in our village!...

We reached Kaler in the evening, just at the same time as when we had left it on 15th of August, 1915, exactly three years, four months and fifteen days after we left, or one thousand two hundred and thirty-three days of torture, torments, suffering, tears, terrors, death, starvation, epidemic, in a word – days interwoven with slaughter...

The last rays of the sun colored the half-ruined houses, the deserted gardens and the surrounding mountain peaks with a gray and golden haze. The orphaned village had lapsed into silence and had shriveled.

What contrast: endless, burning deserts and a small village perched on the mountain-side, abandoned, but the object of dreams!...

Sweet village with a cool breeze! We will work in your fields and gardens with every type of agricultural task that inspires me over half a century later to write down our ethnography, based on my biography.<sup>1</sup>

Starting from 1919, the orphaned village began to be repopulated through the devoted work of the new generation up to 1939, when the second deportation occurred.

## 290 (290).

### BENIAMIN BISLAMIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Moussa Dagh)

One day, a certain Ara told me his story. He said: "I'll confess the truth to you: I was an askyar in Turkey. We were sent to Moussa Dagh, the place called Moussa Mountain, to massacre the Armenians who had ascended the mountain. We surrounded the mountain on three sides.

Suddenly a ladder appeared before us. It was coming down from heaven. On the ladder, two men were standing sword in hands. Blood was dropping from the points of the swords. Seeing this, we became frightened and ran away. Out of fear, I fled here to Homs, Damascus."

## 291 (291).

### TOVMAS HABESHIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1903, Moussa Dagh, Yoghun-Oluk Village)

During the battle of Moussa Dagh, I was twelve years old. I remember that people climbed the mountain in large numbers. Meetings were held in the village whether we should allow ourselves to be deported. Turmoil arose during the meeting. We had not done any wrong thing, why should we be deported or ascend

the mountain? They said: "Let's go up the mountain." House, property... we left everything and ascended the mountain.

The Hadji-Habibli and Bitias villagers hesitated as Rev. Nokhoudian was against ascending the mountain. He persuaded the people to be deported. Most of the

<sup>1</sup> During my search for eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide in the districts of Yerevan, I had made, in 1976, the acquaintance of the intellectual repatriate from Moussa Dagh, **Grigor Gyouzelian** (b. 1903), in his residence in Nor Kilikia. I had recorded ethnographic materials from him and had cooperated with him. Meanwhile, appreciating his rich experience of life, I had requested him putting at his disposal the "Ethnographic Questionnaire" of the ethnographer Stephan Lisitsian, to compile the distinctive life and customs of his ancestors. Because of his migration to the USA, that valuable manuscript had remained, for many years, in the archives of the Institute of the Archaeology and Ethnography of the NAS RA. I have taken and edited it, prepared it for publication, completed it with Armenian and English prefaces, published it as "*The Ethnography of Moussa Dagh*" (Yerevan, 2001) and I have sent it to the moribund author, who saw it before his last breath and closed his eyes forever with a calmed heart.

\* The TV journalist, later – Minister of Education of Armenia, Sergio Yeritsian has put the film-strip shot in Aynjar (Lebanon) at our disposal. It is kept in the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

inhabitants of the village of Kabousié were exiled. Only 17 families went up the mountain. All in all, some six thousand people ascended the mountain.

On the mountain, each family built a hut of wood, as there were no bricks or stones. Young boys erected barricades. They held two meetings: one was administrative and related to the internal life of the mountain, the other to organize military forces. The battle commenced. The first bullet returned was fired by Sargis Gabaghian. The battle continued. The enemy met strong resistance and retreated.

Franz Werfel wrote a literary novel on the Turks' crime and the Armenians' resistance: people that ascended the mountain in full knowledge of their act and the possible ensuing death. The people resisted arms in hand.

Three main battles took place. Our people were always victorious. They knew that the food supply was scarce, winter was at hand, but victory encouraged us. We also hoped that a European ally ship might pass by the sea. Our position was highlighted in a message next to which was a Red Cross. The critical moment arrived. The first European ship to notice us was the "Guichen" which had been exploring the sea-coast. They had seen the messages and the people through their binoculars. They came to investigate the location. They sent a boat. There were inhabitants who knew English, French. The admiral said: "Let them wait for a week."

The mountain was covered with mist. People could not see each other when only ten steps apart. Suddenly the mist lifted and the ship appeared. They undid all

the bed sheets, made flags and waved them in the air with joy. In a last attempt, the Turks attacked, but we counterattacked. They struggled heroically.

After a week, the admiral sent four more ships. Finally, the Admiral Dartif de Fourné arrived personally on the "Jeanne d'Arc." He saw that the situation was critical, people needed help: he took personal responsibility and embarked the population on his ships. He protected the rear, should the enemy attack.

First, they went to Cyprus and asked the English for a sanctuary. They said that they had no place for them. At Port-Saïd, where they took us next, there was something like a quarantine. They brought food to us using ships. The people from Moussa Dagh remained there for four years. The food supplied by the Allied quarters and the Egyptian government kept us alive.

We asked the French government to train us, as the conflict with the Turks had not ended yet. Our boys were trained under the French flag. Later, special delegates visited us and decided that, through the initiative of Moussa Dagh, youth military physical exercises should be organized. The Armenian Eastern army was formed: all the men from 18 to 65 were enlisted without exception and sent to Cyprus, which was the general military training center.

Under the leadership of General Allenby and fighting with the Allies, the Armenians participated in the defeat of the "invincible" Turkish and the German army and pushed them back to Cilicia. And a plan emerged to make Cilicia an Armenian center.

## 292 (292).

### DAVIT DAVITIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Moussa Dagh, Kabousié Village)

Mother used to tell us that in our village Kabousié, girls did not go to school at the end of the last century. When mother went to school, the younger boys threw stones at her. Later, when she finished school, however, she became a teacher at the same school.

I was born in 1905. Mother gave me as much of an education as she could. Father had gone to Paris and became a mason in order to send money for my education. I had two uncles. They were drafted into the Turkish army. We heard that they had been killed on the way.

In 1915, we were shocked when we got news that the Turks were to attack us. A meeting was held. The Dashnak, Hnchak, and Ramkavar parties had not prepared for this.

When the battle of Moussa Dagh started, I was ten years old and I watched it with my own eyes. Father had come back home and they gathered everyone saying that we must ascend the mountain. Father took us up the

mountain.

When the Turks attacked, we were defending ourselves from behind the rocks of the mountain, a little beyond where the Orontes River flowed. When the Turkish attack started, we occupied positions that were far from each other to give the impression that there were many fighters. The Turks began to advance. We had already taken our goats and other animals with us. I was busy with them. When night fell, these animals came to me wanting to sleep near me, as they loved me so much. At night, father and I went together to the orchards below, gathered fruit and brought these for mother and grandmother.

My father had a small weapon. Others had old style hunting rifles, but it was difficult to load them. They had to put the rifle on a stone and fill it with gun powder called chakhmakhlu. Our people fought with those hunting rifles. I saw with my own eyes Turks falling down and dying. Our Moussa Dagh people were brave;

they fought with all their might and main.

I had an aunt. She had a newly born daughter. She used to cry. There had to be no noise, no voice on Moussa Dagh so that the enemy would not locate our position. My aunt always tried to stop her crying. All those on Moussa Dagh were afraid that the enemy might pick up her voice and shout: “Gâvur, where are you?” Aunt breast fed the baby, then put her on the grass to sleep and we fled to a safer place. The baby remained there. Later, when we came back, we saw her sleeping in the same place. That girl grew up: now she is in Armenia. Many women and girls decided to throw themselves into the sea from the rocks if the Turks came and tried to catch them.

Large scale battles took place. My father and other men fought. The fighters hid behind stones and rocks, but there was a shortage of cartridges. Several times, I took ammunition to the first frontline. I was young but fearless. I saw all that with my own eyes. I took water to the fighters. I helped them. I took messages from one to the other. Our battle lasted more than forty days. Among us, there was only one person who knew French. People wanted to pass to the other side of the mountain and wait for help. The women provided white bed-sheets. They joined them together and wrote the Red Cross sign on it. A French ship passed by; saw the sign and approached: “What cross is this?” they asked. Finally, someone descended towards them: “We’re Christians. Save us,” they said. The person who spoke French explained that the Turks were going to massacre us. The French ship captain said: “Now we’re at war.” Others had said: “For pity’s sake, they are Christians after all.” At last, they

received authorization and the ships approached us.

We rejoiced. Orders came that whatever we had – goats, cows, calves – should be killed so as not to fall into the hands of the enemy. The French came up with small boats, took us on board the ship and sailed us to Egypt. There were some available places there; I do not remember where it was. They fed and kept us there. The French government rescued us. The Nile was near. One day I wanted to swim. I jumped into the river. I saw it was deep; I was drowning. One of our friends reached me, rescued me, and dragged me out of the Nile.

When the war was over, they took us back to Moussa Dagh. Then we came to France. During the fascist German occupation of France, I joined the National Front. I fought with Manoushian, and Harutyun Martikian was also alongside us. They caught us and took us to the river. The Gestapo had their rifles in their hands and pushed us forward to the wall. They were about to shoot. They took aim at us to shoot us. They were about to fire. I thought ‘What for?’ In reality, they had mistaken us for Jews. They made us stand under the wall. The soldiers stood in a row and took aim at our foreheads. I looked at them, all my nerves under strain. A person has to live such a moment to understand it. There were Gestapo agents. One of them said something to the other. One of them came forward, approached me and said: “Lower your trousers.” I had blue eyes, yet they had confused me with a Jew. When they found that I was not circumcised, I could not be a Jew. Instead of shooting us, they struck us with the butt of their guns and set us free. Later, we were sent to Buchenwald together with Harutyun Martikian.

## 293 (293).

### **SARGIS ADAMIAN’S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1906, Moussa Dagh, Hadji-Habibli Village)**

The war of 1914 had not yet started. Vast swarms of innumerable locusts arrived: land and sky could not be seen. The crops were ruined. This was God’s will so that the harvest would not fall into the hands of the enemy. One month later, Turkish government agents came and enlisted Armenian boys. All the boys climbed up Moussa Dagh in secret. The Turkish officers came to collect the young boys from their parents but they answered: “We don’t know where they are.”

They began beating the elderly mothers and fathers: the government came to realize that they were resisting.

In a few days, three representatives came, a piece of paper in their hands and said, “Let your boys surrender themselves, otherwise many people will perish.”

We sent word that we would not surrender but fight

as long as we could. These representatives went away. Two weeks later, another three persons came with the same document. Our boys refused again. They also went away. Then a further three persons came with a paper containing a strong rebuke. Our boys cut the ear of one of them, wrapped it in this order and sent it back to declare, “We won’t surrender; we’ll fight.”

The government understood and sent a huge army of twenty thousand soldiers against us, and so began the battle. The enemy could not win because our side was covered in mist. God was our defender. When the Turks attacked us, the mist came down and covered us so that they could not see us. But we could see them and we fired at them. They attacked us every Sunday morning with a huge army but as they came, so they went back

\* This testimony was written in 1975 on the road of Edjmiadsin, on the height of the Moussa Dagh settlement, where the construction of the monument dedicated to the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh was in process, and Sargis Adamian was the watchman.

along the same way. They ran away. During the last battle, we reached the high peak of Moussa Dagh: there was nowhere else to go. The sea was on one side; on the other side was the abyss. Towards sunset, another great battle started and again the mist assisted us. The enemy retreated, but did not descend the mountain. They found a safe place on the mountain in order to attack us early in the morning. Our people held a meeting: what to do? Thirty people armed with rifles, at one o'clock past midnight, secretly went through the forest and attacked them with hand-grenades and guns. Out of fear, the Turks left everything they had, even guns, and ran away.

At 12 o'clock in the morning a ship was noticed on the Cypriot side. Some individuals swam out, taking a letter and explained our situation.

The captain of the ship said, "Resist eight more days!" The ship went away. It came back in eight days, a total of six ships. We burnt up all we had on the mountain: we only saved our souls. Eighteen people died as victims, while the Turks were killed in thousands.

The ships took us to Port-Saïd. In the French army, our boys organized the Armenian Legion together with

Armenian boys from other places and defeated the enemy: the Turks and Germans. As the ships had taken us, so did they bring us back to Moussa Dagh in 1919. We lived in peace for twenty years there under the French administration. We restarted everything from the beginning: planning, plowing, sowing, and reaping...

In 1939, when Sandjak was given to Turkey, the Armenians scattered. The Armenians were again losers. The Turks hoisted their flag on Moussa Dagh. The French brought us to Aynjar and gave us land: we built our houses, sowed, and harvested. After nine years, representatives came from Armenia: if the Patriotic War ended with victory, we could be taken back to our historical lands...

With that hope, we came to Armenia in 1946, seven hundred fifty families on board a ship called the "Pobeda."

I began to work at a kolkhoz. Now, for two years, I have been the watchman of the Moussa Dagh monument. Those from Moussa Dagh collected money to erect the monument with their own resources. Only half of it is constructed; next year the monument will be completed.\*

## 294 (294).

### MARIAM BAGHDISHIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Moussa Dagh, Hadji-Habibli Village)

In 1914, my father was drafted into the Ottoman army from the village of Hadji-Habibli, Moussa Dagh region. My young mother could not climb the mountain with her three small children and we ended up in a caravan of exiles into the deserts of Arabia. I remember the Turkish gendarmes came with whips in their hands and drove us forward by whipping and beating us to Der-Zor. They beat so much that an old man fell down and died. There were many people. There were Armenians from all parts of Armenia: Deurtyol, Hadjn, Zeytoun, and from other places. They had brought the Armenians and assembled them there. We remained there under the sun. They took all to Der-Zor. My grandfather, who was with us, did not go because his son, that is my father, was a soldier in the Turkish army. This way, we were freed from Der-Zor. We were then taken to Homs. An order was issued by the government "Poison the dogs." It meant to say: destroy the Armenians. However, Djemal pasha, the prefect of Adana, protected us. He ordered that the real dogs of the streets be poisoned and saved the Armenians from death, but told them to change their names... It was said that when a baby, Djemal pasha had suckled an Armenian woman's milk and that was why he sympathized with the Armenians. He then issued an order to change our

names. One person became Shukry, the other Ahmad, yet another was named Hussein. He changed the names of the women and girls for their safety.

In this way, we remained Armenian. They told us that we would be taken to Aleppo, but we were not. We remained in Homs. There were many people there from everywhere. The sun was very hot. People had taken off the quilt cases and had pitched something like a tent into which they entered. It was extremely hot. There was no water. If you spat, the saliva would not reach the ground. I had a small sister. Her name was Vardouhi. She used to cry; she wanted grapes. My mother was a beautiful woman. She began beating her breast with her hands and cry: "Our vines were broken under the weight of grapes. Now my child wants grapes, I cannot give this to her."

Then my small sister needed water, there was no water either. The poor one died in mother's arms, saying, 'Water, water'. Together with grandpa, we dug the earth a little, put her in there and went on. We reached a place and that night remained there among the stones and rocks. Among us there were a few sick, old, blind, lame men; the rest were women and children. Suddenly, the Turks arrived to plunder us. My grandpa died there...

I remember, at night there was no place to sleep.

\* The inauguration of the monument of the Moussa Dagh heroic battle took place in 1976, on the Moussa Ler (Dagh) burg height, not far from Edjmiadsin.

Mother slept on the ground, I and my sister, Khatoun, sitting near mother, braided her hair. A woman passed, looked at us and said: "Why, poor darlings, they don't know their mother has died..." We were children, how could we know that our only mother was no more?

An acquaintance of ours, Markar's wife, made needlework and sold it to the Arabs. An Arab woman told her that she wanted a little girl to help her. That Armenian woman said to me: "Come, let me take you to the house of an Arab woman." I went with her. She was a rich and very kind woman: that Arab, if she has died, let there be homage to her soul. She was a dressmaker. Rich women came and went: they used to drink coffee, smoke cigarettes, and I brought water from far away with a water-jug. I used to spin wool... What was my age at that time? Five or six years old. I stayed there for four years. Later, when the Germans left Homs and the Turks were defeated, the English and the French came. One day, I was by the well, the water-jug in my hand. A Greek priest came up and asked me in Arabic: "My girl, are you Armenian?"

I said: "By language I'm Islam, by heart I'm an Armenian."

He said: "Hurry up, come, let me take you to your folks."

I took the water-jug home, took off my shoes, in order not to be heard, slowly went out of the house and followed the priest. Thanks be to God. The priest took me to the orphanage in the Roman District where there were many orphans. There I found my sister Khatoun: we were very happy. But I had forgotten to speak Armenian, I spoke only Arabic. I had forgotten our language...

Some time later, my aunt came to the orphanage, found us and took us to Antioch in a van, to the house of my mother's brother. My uncle was newly married. He said to his wife: "Take care of these children, live as mother and daughter..."

In 1919, one day, we were sitting in our uncle's house when I heard: "Sargis of Khariks has come from the Turkish army." Suddenly two men entered the house and began kissing me and my sister. I did not know which

one was our father. In the army, the Turks had learnt that father was an Armenian. They had shot him. My poor father had been lying wounded on the ground in a Turkish askyar's uniform. The English had come and, thinking he was a Turkish soldier, had not wanted to approach him. Father had crossed himself to show he was Christian. The English realizing that he was a Christian, had taken him, bandaged his wounds, fed him and given him milk to drink. After recovering, father had gone to Homs to look for us. The person responsible for inhabitants had looked for our names in the registers and said that we were not there. With his inquiries, father came and found us... Already orders had been announced to say that those who wanted could return to their places where they came from. Father took us and we all went to Moussa Dagh. There was neither house, nor mother; we did not have any clothes; we had nothing. Our uncle's wife gave us a thin quilt. All three of us lay under it. Father went out and brought some charcoal, pots, and pans made of earth. We made a house. Father married and gave us a new mother and we had two brothers...

Years passed. I grew up and married an Armenian volunteer, Karapet, who had just returned from the Battle of Arara. We made our home. When in 1939, the French and the English gave our Moussa Dagh back to the Turks along with the Alexandrette Sandjak, we did not want to live with the Turks and we were taken to Aynjar. There we started again from the beginning: we built houses, brought water, planted orchards, vineyards ... and then we left everything and came to Armenia...

I have suffered much. I have had many losses, I have worked hard and I have lost my health. First, we lived in Leninakan (now: Gyumri). For long years, I worked in the Textile Factory. Then we moved to Yerevan Malatia District. Here also we built a new house and planted our orchard... My three sons: Arakel, Gevorg, Sargis and my daughter, Azatouhi are married. They have their homes, their children. My Gevorg is a Doctor of Philology, works at the Academy, has been sent to Cyprus and teaches Armenian there at the Melkonian College. Now I pray God that he may come home safe and sound.

## 295 (295).

### GEVORG CHIFTCHIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1909, Moussa Dagh, Hadji-Habibli)

I was born in the village of Kabousié of Moussa Dagh. The battle had yet not started when my father took our beds and provisions up the mountain, and then returned to take us as well. The Turks had already come with four to five hundred soldiers and surrounded our village as it was near the main road. They loaded us on the donkeys of the peasants and took us to Antioch. Then from there, they took us to Hama. Many people

were thirsty, there was no water, and the old people could not walk. Soon, we reached Hama. My grandfather was sitting on the ground; a gendarme came and said: "I'll take you to hospital." They took him away.

The next day, my father went to see his father and he found that they had poisoned him, put his body in a cart and thrown it into pits together with many thousands of Armenians. There was a cave where we were taken.

There was an insect called gana. If it bit, the person died. There was no food. We were hungry. From the garbage, we took orange peels, lettuce leaves and ate them. There were forty-five children, aged between five and six years old like me. There was a Turkish pasha who gave each of us a bit of bread daily. He said to me: "Come and sweep my house; I'll give you a mejitié."

I did go and swept but he did not pay me any money. He beat me. I was blood-stained. I fell down and lost my consciousness. When I came to myself, I ran away into the desert. I saw an Arab praying. They caught me and tied me to a horse but I managed to escape. There was a village called Farbo. The sun had set; I was afraid the dogs might eat me. I was tired; I fell down near a house and slept. In the morning, I saw the cows were eating grass. I also ate grass with them. I saw some dried yoghurt. I wanted to take it; someone struck me on the head. I fell down as if dead. I woke up at night; trembling with cold. I entered a tonir and warmed up. In the morning an Arab woman came and told me to get out. In the ash, the blood had dried on my beaten parts: "Allah yekhrobeythom, ya haram, min darabak?" (May God destroy his house! What a pity! Who beat you? – Arab.) Said the woman.

She made me sit down, gave me some bread. When I was eating, a woman came and hugged me. I looked up; she was my aunt: "My dear, I'll bring your mother and father."

She said that the Turkish pasha, who gave the children bread, had put poison in the bread and a van full of children had been taken away and thrown into the pits. In Ayntap also, they had filled up churches full of Armenian children, poured gasoline, and had burned them down so no one remained alive. At that time Djemal pasha was ruling. He had made a harem for himself of nine to fourteen year old Armenian girls. For doing that, the Armenians killed him.

The next day, an old woman came and said: "Clean the yard, throw away the garbage." I did but she did not give me any bread.

They took my father to the army to dig trenches. We remained: me, my mother, and the baby. My mother fell ill and became insane. The baby remained hungry. I went, milked the goats for the baby to suck. Then we took the baby, my little brother, put him in front of the door of the church because we could not keep him any longer. An Arab Christian family took him to keep.

In 1918, we went back from Hama to Moussa Dagh by foot. There was no food, no water. Our people had not come back from Port-Saïd yet. The Turks saw us and ran away, saying: "The gâvurs have come."

The jackals and wild animals frightened us at night. Slowly, people returned back to Moussa Dagh. They began sowing and reaping, we lived, we survived...

## 296 (296).

### GAROUN ANTONIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1910, Moussa Dagh, Hadji-Habibli Village)

I was five years old when we were driven to exile. I was very small, but I do remember what we endured. We remained in the deserts of Arabia for four years. I forgot to speak Armenian, I spoke Arabic. I used to say: "Allah atikum, khene aleyna, shekhve khebez atina." That means: "May God give you, for God's sake, give

us a bit of bread."

My mother served in an Arab house. I pretended to be playing under the window of the kitchen and waited. While kneading dough, mother would secretly throw down a ball of dough for me to eat; unbaked, as the baked bread was counted, and she could not give it to me...

## 297 (297).

### ASSATOUR MOVSES MAKHOULIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1911, Moussa Dagh, Bitias Village)

I was born on January 1, 1911, in the village of Bitias, Moussa Dagh region. The Makhouliaus were a large family, rich peasants, so they had fields, orchards, and animals.

The village of Bitias was the most beautiful and airy place on Moussa Dagh, for it was situated on the top of the mountain and it was an excellent health resort. Our village had a population of one thousand five hundred Armenians; most of them were members of the Apostolic Church, though there were Protestants as well.

We belonged to the Apostolic Church, but our mother sent us to a Protestant school.

During World War I, my father, Movses had gone to the USA to earn money. My mother, presumably, was an intelligent and organized woman, and many people came to her for advice. When mother expressed her thoughts about the school system, she said: "The British is the best," that is the Anglo-Saxon.

When World War I began, the Turkish government collected all the Armenian men and took them into the

army. Only women, children, and the old people were left. When the deportations started, Rev. Tigran Andreassian lived and worked in Zeytoun. When the Turks deported the Armenians, his family had been among them. Tigran Andreassian had presented himself to the Turkish officer and, because religious leaders were allowed to come out of the caravan of the exiles, he was freed with his family. He returned to his birthplace, Moussa Dagħ, and explained to the people what had been taking place with the Armenians all over Turkey. And he suggested that it should be much better to ascend the mountain than die. Most of the Moussa Dagħ people were convinced and ascended the mountain. They organized matters of provision and communication amongst themselves so, as to find means of salvation. On the other side of the mountain was the Mediterranean Sea, for the mountain side descended right to the sea. We ascended the mountain. I remember: when we carried up certain things to the mountain, we were all wet from the rain and we were cold. Mother had thought to go down to the village to do her washing at home, give the children a bath, dry them and only then ascend the mountain. But the Turks had already surrounded us in our place of refuge. They captured us in the vicinity of the town of Hama. Mother, it seemed, had received money from father so she hired a donkey to ride it in turn. We set out: my elder sister, my younger brother and me. They were driving us through the wilderness. The women were crying. They were giving their small children to the Turks: there was uproar, crying, and a tumult. At last, they brought us somewhere near Hama. It was like a mountain-side, where there were caves. They settled us there and told us not to move from our place. Every morning, Turkish officers came, took people in groups to a "good place" and slaughtered them on the bank of the Euphrates. The Kurdish mob attacked us and kidnapped the girls. Among the slaughtered, a young boy had not died but was wounded and had come and told my mother what he had seen with his own eyes: that the so-called "good place" was the bank of the Euphrates where they killed all without exception and threw the corpses into the river.

Mother found an Armenian who had relations with the Turkish gendarmes. She gave money to the Armenian in order to bribe a gendarme and we had the opportunity of entering the town of Hama. In a khan, where donkeys and camels were tied, mother rented a room. We remained there for four years. When mother saw that people were dying of famine, she sent me to beg. Some people gave their children to the Arabs in order not to die of starvation.

One day, a Muslim Arab who gave me bread, called me to his side and said: "Come, be my son". I told mother about it. She agreed. I went. He fed me well; I had nice clothes; I went to school. Mother, together with other two

women from Moussa Dagħ and her sister Yeghissabet, went to work in the fields and the landlord paid them. Mother had given my sister to an Armenian family so that she would not remain hungry. One year later, a man from Bitias said to mother: "Money has been sent from America and it is at the police station. Come, let's go. You receive it, half for you and half for me." Father had sent it: we received it and of course felt better.

I studied well at school. Whenever we were free, I taught the Muslim children their lessons.

When the war was over, armistice was declared. The English entered Hama and began to register the Armenians. Moussa Dagħ became part of Syria. There was no border between Syria and Lebanon: it was open. The French came and separated Moussa Dagħ from Syria. Then the English came to register us. Mother brought them to my stepfather, whose name was Saïd Tatali. Mother wanted to take me back from him. He gave me back with great difficulty for he had no children. But later Saïd came again, entreated my mother, took me again with him.

My mother protested, the English came, took me away from him and gave me to the American orphanage.

One day they took us, the orphans, to the field to play. I saw the boys of Saïd's neighbor's. They came and persuaded me to go back, and I ran away from the orphanage and went to Saïd. Mother found me again, took me back and asked the authorities to send us to Moussa Dagħ as soon as possible. They put us on a truck and brought us to Alexandrette. There we stayed for a week. The English gave us food. They took us to Antioch and then we came to Moussa Dagħ. It was in September 18. We came to our village; there were no houses, no windows; no animals were left. The Arab-Alevis, who were called Tat, had taken away everything.

When the Armenian Legion came, they fought with arms against the Tat and took back our lands and animals. We began rebuilding the village, and the people came back. The walls of the school and church stood, but the doors and the windows had been taken away. We made them again. The school and the church began to function. We began to learn. Entertainment was organized. Mother began communicating with father who was in America. Mother sent me to Kessab. I remained there for a year. Then mother discovered that there was an American boarding school in Aleppo and sent me there to study. I studied there for nine years.

In 1928, father came from New Jersey; remained a month and said: "I'll go back and call you." But in 1932, the great economic depression began. Father wrote that his conditions were not good: he was washing dishes in a restaurant. He wrote that at my age, he had married so it was time for me to support myself. Certainly, I was indignant and wrote no response. I began working: I was teaching English and French at school in order to pay my

debt to the university.

In 1939, the Great Powers decided to return the Sandjak to Turkey based on its claim. And Alexandrette Sandjak was separated from Syria and given to Turkey. The Armenians decided to leave Moussa Dagh. At that time, I was in Aleppo; I was doing well; I was giving lessons. When I heard that they were taking the Armenians to Lebanon – Aynjar, I went to Beirut. Then I went to Palestine. I worked in Tel-Aviv at a British trading office. I worked there for four years.

The Turks, in order to dominate that territory, had offered that the six vilayets be allocated to the Armenians under Turkish rule and they could have their national schools and culture. Expecting that this policy might harm them, the Turks deceived the world and organized the massacre of the Armenians. Talaat who was directing that Genocide said: “What Sultan Hamid could not do during thirty years, I did in three months. I solved the Armenian problem in Turkey.” The Turks are cunning: for the sake of their nation, they acted very inhumanely to make Turkey a pure Muslim county. Wherever the Turks have gone, they have slaughtered. That’s why Victor Hugo wrote: “The Turks have passed through here” in his poem on the massacres of Chios. Now the whole world knows about the Armenian Genocide. There will come a day when the question of the Armenian territories will be put on the agenda.

On August 23, 1946, I came to Armenia with my mother. When I went to the university to take exams, they asked me what education I had. I said: “I am a graduate of the American University of Lebanon.” They said: “Maybe you will examine us.” They gave me my mark, and I was admitted as a student.

The next day I went to the ‘black market’ to sell our clothes in order to live. I went to the university. They said: ‘The Rector is calling for you.’ I went and presented myself. The Rector opened a drawer, took out a sheet of paper and said: “We want to accept you as a lecturer, bring your diploma. Now we’ll give you a contract and you will get five hundred rubles. Everything will end well...”

At that time, the Faculty of International Relations had opened in the University. I lectured there a year and a half. There were eighteen students in that course: Hamlet Gevorgian and Gevorg Broutian were my best students who later become academician-philosophers. I had a student called Razmik Assoyan. One day, his father came and put a handful of rubles on the table. I did not take them. During the lesson his son, who was a bad student, said: “Comrade Makhouljian is a very good man, but he won’t remain long, for my father is a Chekist.”

On December 21, 1947, the currency changed. On the 23rd, the Rector called me and said: “We’re sending you to Kirovakan (now: Vanadzor) to inspect the teaching of English there. You must be there on the 25th of the

month.”

I went and told the Dean. He called up the Rector. I told my students that I was being sent to Kirovakan. One of the students said: “People are arrested in this way in our country. I’ll accompany you.”

We went, bought the ticket, bought two bottles of beer and a gata. I came out of the buffet. Someone approached me: “Hello, Comrade Makhouljian, where are you going?”

“Kirovakan.”

In the station he took me by the arm, another man came and took me by the other arm. They took me to a barred car and threw me inside. They brought my suitcase to me and the car drove to Nalbandian Street to the building of the State Security Forces, and they took me up to the fourth floor. There was a general there and a man dressed in civilian who was a Chekist.

I said: “Why have you brought me here?”

“We’ll tell you,” they said.

“Why didn’t you arrest me at my house?”

“What difference does it make? You have much guilt, being against our state is the least in the list”

By the way, let me tell you: in Batoumi they had checked my books five times and they had looked through my foreign language dictionaries. I had worked on several papers such as “American Democracy,” “Swiss Democracy,” “Soviet Democracy.” They confiscated them. During my questioning, these papers were on the table. They asked me: “Who has written these?”

“These are the subjects I studied at the university.”

The Chekist, who was questioning me, said: “How is it that you know English well and you haven’t been a British spy?”

They kept me under investigation for eight months. No evidence, no facts.

They declared: “The prisoner is a political spy. He has carried out anti-political propaganda. I advocate five years’ imprisonment.”

Then they asked me: “Do you have anything to say in your own words?”

“Yes. That man is lying. He has neither facts nor witnesses. He is committing state treason. I request ten years’ imprisonment for him.”

They were amazed by my boldness. On both sides of the judge, there were magistrates who had fallen asleep in the August heat. He pushed them to wake up. I said: “Here, now justice has woken up. Now there will be justice, and I will be set free.”

They went away, made their decision came and declared: “Five years’ imprisonment, two years’ disenfranchisement.”

After the trial, I was taken to the prison near the circus. They took me to a small room. Thirty people in it were lying next to each other. They gave us a piece of bread, a little watery borsch. I remained there for a

month. Then they read out my name and said: "We're sending you to Russia."

I said: "I don't know Russian, why do you send me to Russia?" They gave no answer.

One night they put me in a steel wagon: we were thirty-three; sixteen of them were thieves. Their leader was Loutho. As I had stayed in prison for eight months, my mother had brought a woolen mattress, a quilt to keep me warm. Loutho was the boss in the wagon. He took everything good that we had. He gave them to the sentry to take it to town, sell and bring white bread, cigarettes and such things.

There were with us five Armenian boys who were sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment. During captivity, they had learned French. I used to give them tobacco so that they translated for me. I had a pair of nice gloves. One day Loutho said: "Give them to me; I'll give you "Sevan" cigarettes."

I did not know their traditions. I opened the package of the cigarettes and offered everybody. And I put the second package on Loutho's shelf. The package disappeared. I said: "Loutho, did you take it?"

"No," he said.

I searched everybody and found it in someone's pocket. He was an Azerbaijani. At the prison, he had asked me for the pencil and paper that I kept on my person, and I had given these to him. I saw the package, and I became angry. I gave him a blow; he fell down. Loutho said: "Professor, you'll kill him: he will be a burden on us. Come to me. Here are cigarettes, bread, butter, cheese. All these are for you; only do not give to others. Let me see what you have?"

I said: "Don't dare take anything, only look." I showed him my shirt, trousers and other things, and sat on them.

Loutho said: "Give me something."

I gave him a shirt.

After taking us for quite a while, the train stopped in an open field. They kept the elders. I was young and a political prisoner; they took me to a colder place. When we arrived in Doudinka, at the mouth of the Yenisey River, they took us across by raft. In front, there was a ship with goods. We sailed up the Yenisey for nine days. The September colds had started when we reached the camp. I did not know Russian, I had no special skills and they did not need someone who knew English. At the beginning, I worked as a porter. The town of Norilsk was surrounded with marshes, there were no roads. Provisions and everything else were brought in from Russia, from the south.

I began to work. The brigade leader gave me every kind of work: "Armyashka" ("Armenian" meant derisively in Russian), go and bring the axe, bring the

saw."

I did not know Russian. I asked: "What is he saying?" I went and picked up the axe and he saw me. I began working. The brigade-leader came, wanted to take the axe from my hand. I did not give it. He kicked me. I ran away. I threw the axe down and fled. I went into the workshop, sat down and began warming my hands. I told those around me that I wanted to kill the brigade-leader. This information reached the camp commandant. He sent me to prison for fifteen days. There was a lawyer there, who said to the commandant, "Why have you sent him to prison? He knows languages well."

The next day, they called me to the commandant. He gave me a new job in the store. I went there and saw various goods come from France, America, and England and these were getting spoilt in the yard under the snow. I went and worked in that warehouse. I took out the documentation with the goods, read them and translated. They paid attention. In August, the hottest month, it was still cold there. Even in cotton coats, it felt cold. My backbone became stiff. This continued until December 20, 1950 when they set me free. Five years were over. A commission came from Moscow. The Soviet government had decided to count a good worker's one day, equal to three days. I was freed one year earlier. They wanted me to remain there and work for high wages. I did not remain. I returned from Siberia with eight thousand rubles. They brought me to Krasnoyarsk by plane. I went and bought a pair of shoes and took off the slippers from my feet. I bought two kilos of apples and sausages and began eating and walking. Then we took the train to Moscow, which lasted five days. I came to Yerevan. I presented myself to the head of the militia. They did not permit me to live in Yerevan. They said either Kirovakan (now: Vanadzor) or Akhta. I said Kirovakan and went there. I should have remained disenfranchised for another two years but Stalin died. I was permitted to return back to Yerevan. In Yerevan, my mother lived in New Zeytoun. I was given a patch of land. They would not register me in Yerevan. I said: "I am not a repatriate, I've come from Siberia."

They registered me. They would not give me work at the university because I had been to Siberia. I worked at school # 81. Then I sued. I was given the right to count those four years of exile as working years to get a flat allocated earlier, to be paid two months' salary and to be restored at the university as a lecturer. I started teaching English, German and French. I worked for thirty years.

In 1963, I married Ordoyan Nelly who was my student. In 1965, a daughter, Diana, was born to us and in 1969, our son, Tigran. Now we have a grandson, Stepan. I have already retired. This is my life with two stories of exile.

**HOVHANNES ABELIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1903, Kessab)**

In 1909, when the massacres in Adana took place, Shaghban agha gathered a mob of forty thousand people and came to pillage Kessab. They reached Ordu. We started to resist. In the village of Lower Esgyuran a battle waged that lasted four to five hours. At the end, our side said: "It's impossible to resist any further. There is no ammunition: let's escape."

We went to the Kessab seashore. I was six years old. "Father, the killers are coming," I said. And they really came. They captured my father in the bushes, pulled him out, lay him on the ground. I cried out, "Oh, dad, dad," fell on him and started crying.

The men stopped and said: "We also have children: if we kill you, the wild beasts will devour you. We grant your life for this child, you will find your death from someone else. Go, live."

The men left. I then said: "Dad, I'm hungry." We found pieces of dry bread on the ground and ate them.

Then a French ship came to Latakia. Sultan Hamid had fallen. His brother Reshad succeeded him.

Talaat, Enver and Djemal were Hamid's pashas. Hurriet was declared in eight days, and we came home.

The neighboring Turks brought back whatever they had taken away: quilts, mattresses, rugs, cows, goats, sheep...

If you brought two witnesses that a thing belonged to you, they would give it back to the owner. The houses were burnt down. They gave gold coins and we rebuilt our houses. But then, when the First World War broke out, they said to us: "You are Armenians so you must be English or French spies," and they sent us into exile.

In the summer of 1915, we were deported to Ordu. We remained there for fifteen days, then to Jesser-el-Shoughour. We remained there for twenty-five days and then – till autumn, when we reached Yebrou-Nebek beyond Damascus. It was evening when we arrived. There were four houses with Protestants there. The Reverend's wife gave us dinner. In the morning, she fed us again. She kept us a whole week. We were two hundred people in all. There was no house, no shelter, neither bread, nor water. There was an Arab Christian doctor. He distributed bread and medicine to us every morning. Each day, five to six people died. The women gathered grass in order to feed the children. The men made spoons, sold them in order to earn some money. In this way, the winter passed.

In spring, the Turkish government drafted our men: they needed working hands. They took away my father.

We stayed in Yebrou-Nebek for two years. We came to Homs and remained there for a year and a half. First, they took the people of Kaladouran seacoast to Port-Saïd

on foot via Jerusalem. We left Homs begging and wailing. My mother died on the road; I remained all alone.

I went and reached Kurd Dagh. I fell among Arabs near Ghenemié. It so happened that I stayed in the mountains, tending animals. I remained there for nine months. My master had two stables full of animals and I looked after them.

Then I heard that people from Kessab people had returned. I made up my mind, "I also will run away in the spring." Kessab was beyond the valley.

Spring came. One evening, my master came. I said: "Agha, I will go."

He said: "Why do you go? The people of Kessab have been deported."

"No, I've heard they have returned."

My master slapped me on the two cheeks and said: "Take off your clothes."

I took off my clothes, gave them to him and remained only in my underclothes.

Now I could go to Latakia. I set off: begging, helping people with their loads, gaining two pieces of bread as I continued my way.

Some persons saw I had two pieces of bread. They beat me up as I was a child and took away my bread.

I continued my way crying and hungry. They stopped me and asked: "Where are you going?"

"To Dar-bel-Latki (Latakia)."

"Whose son are you?"

"Ahmad's..."

"Come, let's go together."

"Let us go."

I told him all my life; he was a kind man. I was hungry, exhausted, defeated. I had walked for fourteen hours. I had set off in the morning; it was night when we reached a khan. I fell asleep. In the morning, I helped the man with his loads and then ran away secretly. I remained hungry for three days. Then I asked someone: "Where is Kessab?"

"It's over there."

I reached Karsana. One day's journey took me three days: hungry, thirsty, tired, and exhausted. I saw a house, went up, and knocked on the door. They were Tats. They saw me; they pitied me and gave me food. The boys of the house came. They made me sit down, entertained me, they gave me a good bed and I was able to sleep. In the morning, they said: "We will sow tobacco: help us. Stay with us."

I stayed there for three days and helped them.

They said: "Stay with us."

"No, I cannot stay."

I set off. I reached Djebel Akra, but I was on the other side of the mountain. I asked a man coming towards

me: “Dor bel Kessab?” (To Kessab? – Arab.). The man recognized me. He said: “You’re Ohannes. I buried your mother. Do you remember?”

“Have I reached Kessab?”

“Yes, we’ll go there together.”

From far away, the trees of our village could already be seen. We reached the verge of the graveyard. I saw our orchards. My uncle was digging the ground. I saw they were picking mulberry leaves as they kept silkworms. It was April. I greeted him, cried, entered the house, the windows were removed; grass had grown on the roof. There was no one from our family. Of seven people, only I had survived.

I was taken to the orphanage. I remained a year

or two at the orphanage of Aleppo. There were twelve thousand orphans; Reverend Aharonian was our director. It was both a school and workshop at the same time. I remained there for two years. Then they asked me: “Do you want to marry? We’ll marry you and pay the rent of your house for six months.” They were paying those who worked. I had already saved forty mejitiés. I went to Kessab. I repaired our house. Then I went to Alexandrette. I married Beatrice; they also had gone to exile as a group of six – she alone returned. Our house was on one floor; I made it two-storeyed. I have built houses four times for myself. Then I went to Beirut. I became a mason. In 1947, we came to Armenia and settled in the Edjmiadsin Region.

### 299 (299).

#### GYULINIA DSEROUN MOUSOYAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1903, Kessab, Kaladouran Village)

In 1915, they deported us in the night. Where did they take us? We did not know. The fathers of all the families had already been taken into the Turkish army. On the route to exile, my old grandfather walked with difficulty. A gendarme came and began beating him. Mother said: “Why do you beat him? Don’t you see he is old; he cannot walk?”

The Turkish gendarme was moved to pity. He went and, I do not know where from, he found and brought two camels. I had two cousins. He put me and one cousin on one camel, my sister and the other cousin on the other camel. He made mother sit on the other camel (mother had a baby in swathe in her arms) and put grandpa together with us. We moved on. My poor grandpa died of famine on the way. We dug the earth under a stone and buried him. On the road a woman, exhausted and hungry, could not walk; she left her baby under a bush. Mother said: “That’s a sin; don’t do it.”

She said: “I cannot carry it anymore.”

We did not reach Der-Zor. Those who had gone there did not survive. They slaughtered many there. We reached Hama. We were placed with a Turkish family. They were very good people. There, my uncle fell ill and died. The landlord came and said: “Why didn’t you tell me during the night; we could do something with him; maybe we could have saved him.”

That village was a Turkish village. My sister and I

went to beg. Mother used to say: “Be careful, not to fall into the hands of the Turks: they kidnap girls.”

That was the reason why our priest Father Petros Abrahamian married thirty Armenian girls in one night so as not to let them fall into the hands of the Turks. My uncle’s father-in-law asked my uncle to take his daughter, to marry her so that she would not fall into the hands of the Turks.

Before the deportation, the population of Kessab was six thousand. After the deportation, about two thousand two hundred people returned home. Just work out how many people were victims.

In 1918, we went to Jerusalem from Hama. There already was a truce. In 1919, we went back to our houses. We saw everything was pulled down, burnt, and ruined. We, Kessab people, are hard-working people. They began rebuilding the houses one by one. My father had five brothers. One of them was sent to America in order not to be taken to the Turkish army. Five brothers rebuilt all our houses with their own hands. We remained in the village of Bashourt, Kessab region.

In 1939, Sandjak became part of Turkey. At that time, I had just got married. Later, in 1947, each of us behaving like sheep, came to Armenia.

How many times did we have to change our homes because of the Turks! It is not possible to love the Turks. Do not think of them as basil and smell the aroma.

### 300 (300).

#### HOVHANNES BOYNMSHAKIAN’S TESTIMONY (B. 1904, Kessab)

There were six thousand Armenians in Kessab. Kessab was the last place to be deported. In 1914,

the Turkish government drafted the men. They came to gather the weapons too but we put them all in a coffin and

buried it. We also wanted to fight, climb the mountain like the Moussa Dagh people but we could not cross the river. They deported us on August 15. We went and reached Tadmor Desert, near Palestine.

My grandfather was a man of strong character. He said: "I can't live here." Our boys left. I found a place for us at Sadat. We remained there for a year. Many of our people perished of famine and diseases.

My uncle and I took grandfather, grandmother, my mother, and my two brothers to Jesser-el-Shoughour.

My grandfather said: "Let's go to our acquaintances among the Turks."

We went but our acquaintances began beating us saying: "You are deported; you must be exiled."

Then we were taken to Ordu. There, every day we obtained permission, went and worked at a Greek's house, earned some money and bought bread...

One day grandpa said: "Son, let's run away."

We ran away together with grandpa. We remained in the orchards for two days; we gathered mulberries and ate them.

My grandpa said: "Son, go to that house which can be seen from here, and ask for some bread." I went and what did I see? My mother was a servant at the house. She embraced me and said: "Son, where have you been?"

"There, grandpa is in the wood."

"My son," said mother. "Go and bring your grandpa here."

I went to find grandfather in the woods, could not find him. I looked for a long time and came back. I saw a man was shearing seep. He saw me and asked what I wanted. I said: "My mother was here."

"The gendarmes came and took her to another place."

I went back. Grandpa was not under the tree. I began shouting: "Grandpa, grandpa." I saw he had fainted of hunger and fallen on the bank of the stream. I raised him up to his feet and we moved under the tree.

Grandpa said: "Why did you come back, my son?"

"The gendarmes have taken mother away."

"Go, bring those ripened wheat ears; let's make fire; roast them and eat."

I went, gathered the wheat but grandpa could not make a fire. He had no more strength. He fell on his face and died.

"Grandpa, grandpa..." There was no more grandpa.

I took my grandpa's dagger, put his cap on my head and went. A man caught me and handed me over to a gendarme.

I remained for four days in a place like a prison. Then the gendarme took me and a woman from Kessab to Jeseldjehur. Suddenly a boy began to cry out, "Auntie, Vanice has come."

Mother found me and started crying: "Where is grandpa?"

"He died. I'll stay with you."

"Sonny, the gendarme will kill you, go back to the gendarme. In the evening I'll come and take you from the prison."

Mother came in the evening. She had brought some roasted beans in a handkerchief. I and the elderly woman from Kessab ate it.

Mother went and brought Hakob agha from Kessab, so as to ask the gendarmes to free me from prison. They did set me free. I went with mother.

In August 1916, we were near the Euphrates River. The Armenian refugees lived in tents. Every night the Turks came and plundered us. We had no weapons to defend ourselves.

The Shahbazians had two mausers. Before the deportation, they had kept them in their orchard. There was a Turkish acquaintance. They said to him: "Go on mule-back; pretend to be selling needles and thread, unearth our weapons, and bring the guns." The Turks went, dug out the container with the weapons and brought these to us. After he had brought the weapons, that night we killed one of the thieves. He turned out to be the brother of the town chief.

"Woe, the Armenians have killed a Turk!" That was a huge sin. They came, captured the killers and took them away. There was an Armenian doctor Chyurikdjian by name. They were his sons. The Turkish general took both of them. They fell ill with typhoid and died. We lived on the banks of the Euphrates River. Seventy to eighty people died each day. They were buried in the sand. Mother worked as a servant and cared for us, the orphans. We also lived in a tent.

One day, two German boats came down the river and they threw square biscuits on the bank for us to eat. We were hungry. An Armenian man approached, spat on the biscuits and said: "Don't pick them up; they made us get to this situation, now they laugh at us."

We decided to flee to Aleppo. On the way, two gendarmes arrested us and led us to prison. They beat us up. They detained us for a few days. We ran away again. The first day two persons stopped us, took off our clothes. We had pieces of bread in our hands, they took these as well and everything else. I was sick: my belly was swollen; my mouth was red with fever. I said to my mother: "Mum, leave me here; you go. She was a brave mother; she took one child on her shoulder, put me on her back and we left."

We reached the village of Yahoudi. They saw we were hungry. The Arabs brought bread and garlic. Mother and brother ate: I could not eat. My mouth ached...

An Arab came to my mother and said: "Give me one boy. It is a long time I am married, but have no son. Give him to me. Let me enjoy the son's presence."

Mother said: "Here is a boy, take him."

"Is he dead?"

"No, he is ill."

The Arab picked me up and took me to his yard. His Arab mother gave me a pickled cucumber and said: "Eat." I ate. It was like a remedy. I fell asleep. They covered me, and I slept till morning. In the morning, the sunshine fell on my head and I woke up in a sweat. I saw I was in another place. I shouted: "Mummy..." The Arab put his finger on his lips and said: "Shush..." Then he brought a bowl of water and said: "Wash, sonny."

By night, he had gone and gathered grapes for me to eat. At noon, they had cooked some ghavourma. They gave me food and drink.

The Arab said: "I'll heal you. We have no doctors. I'll heal you with my love."

And he really did take good care of me. My eyes opened, I got to my feet. I remained there. I became a shepherd; somehow I lived on...

One day I saw the gendarmes were driving forward many people. I asked one of them: "Where are they taking you?"

"We are Jews. They are taking us to Jerusalem."

I mixed in with them and ran away from the Arab. As I ran away, I saw some people plowing. I was hungry, I had nothing, neither bread nor money. I approached those who were plowing but was afraid and did not speak. I was alone. I began to cry. I put my head on a stone and fell asleep and remained there. When I woke up the plowmen were not there. I crossed the Aleppo River; I wanted to bend down and drink water from the river. I heard a voice: "Son, you may fall into the river. Come, I'll give you water."

I turned round and saw a woman. She gave me a bowl of water. She took me to her yard. There a girl was baking bread: "Will you give me some bread to eat?" They gave me bread, I ate. Then I covered myself with my cloak and fell asleep on the ground. I woke up. I heard a girl's voice, saying: "He is a stranger." The girl went and brought two loaves of bread and a bowl of water. I ate. I stayed there that night.

The girl said: "I have two brothers and a sister; do you want to stay with us?"

I said: "No, give me some bread to eat on my way. I'll go."

I took the bread and set off. I saw a caravan was moving through the village of Idled. The people of the caravan were divided into two. One of them was to go to Latakia. I went and reached the caravan. I had taken off my footwear, thrown my cloak on my shoulder. I was going to Jeseldjehur. On the way a Mullah got on the tower and called: "Allahouakbar." I wanted to find the bridge to Jeseldjehur. I lost my way. Finally when I reached Jeseldjehur, it was noon.

I went and saw the khan where we were taken on our road to exile. I remembered, I was moved, tears welled

up inside me. I was able to control myself. I did not show my emotions; they might detain me. First of all, I brought some thread and needle to sew my clothes. I sold my cloak and went to Ordu.

I was going on the road to Ordu. I asked a man: "Where is the road to Kessab?"

"You're already on the road."

I had a white cloth covering my head and on it, a black round kendir khalkha\*.

I saw a man with a fez on his head, riding a donkey. I said to myself: "He must be an Armenian." I went up to him, tapped him on the shoulder and said: "Barev" (Hello - Arm.).

The man looked at me in surprise and said in Arabic: "Where are you going, son?"

"I'm going to Ordu, grandpa," I said in Arabic.

"You're going to Ordu, son." We started walking together.

I asked again: "Grandpa, where is the Kessab Village?"

"It's near," he said and began to explain that there were four churches in Kessab: Catholic, Protestant, Latin, and Apostolic, which was ours.

I asked again: "Grandpa, where is the fountain of Teknedjok?" I remember that we went there as pilgrims, near Balloum.

The man looked at me and said: "Boy, are you Armenian? Who are you...?"

"I'm Boynmshakian's son."

"Boy, your mother is alive, do you know?"

I was happy, and he took out a handful of dry figs from his pocket and gave them to me.

We reached our village. On the road, a person saw that grandpapa was arriving accompanied with another. He waited for us to approach and said: "Grandpa, who do you bring?"

"Boynmshakian's son..."

"He's my cousin," said the man.

I wanted to find our house by myself but there had been many changes. Our house was near the Sev Djour (Black Water - Arm.). There was no water like ours. But how to find it?

I saw a woman with a basket in her hand. I said: "Sister, which is Shahan's house?"

She called: "Come here, let me see who you are?"

By 1918, the people of Kessab had already returned from exile. The Turks had entered our houses and lived there. They hadn't let them be destroyed. I entered our yard. I saw my elder uncle had survived. I said: "Uncle, I'm Vanes."

I sat down. My uncle looked at me and swore. In fact, he hadn't cared for mother either. He hadn't given her money in order to come and free me from the Arab.

\* The Arab Bedouins wear a black round ring woven from black rope on their white head-dress.

I went to my mother's brother. It was Saturday. My mother lived there. I also remained there. They gave our lands to sow. Then mother married me to Dsaghik. It's already sixty-five years we've been living together. A daughter was born to us there, in Kessab.

In 1915, the Kessab people also would climb the mountain but they were forced into exile. Then, when the Armenian Legion was organized, the Kessabians gave two thousand volunteers to the Armenian Legion. But there were Algerians in the Legion. It is said, that instead of shooting at the Turks, they shot at us. At that time there was neither telephone nor telegraph. They tied the letter to a pigeon to fly to its nest and carry news where the army was.

Our Tigran fired with a machine-gun that had a mirror. He aimed his machine-gun at the Germans and Turks and started to fire. In this way, the Turk was defeated.

I was clever. I acquainted myself with our brave soldiers. When the French frontier-guards caught my cousin, I went, spoke to them and had him freed. I

already possessed a pistol.

Until 1939, the French, English and Saudi Arabians had surrounded us with their soldiers. One day an English soldier caught me and said: "Who are you?"

I said: "I'm a man."

The English said: "We'll arrest you."

I said: "If you touch me, I'll thrust my hand at you and take out your lung."

He said: "Alright, now go to the captain."

I said: "No, I won't go by night. Write a paper, give it to me, I'll go."

He assigned two soldiers to me, wrote a document and gave it to me. I went to the French captain, who asked: "Are you Hovhannes?"

"Yes, I am."

"Why have you brought him?" said the captain. They let me free. I was doing well. People used to come and go, eat, and drink. But the Motherland is sweet. In 1946, we came to Armenia. In 1949, however, they exiled us ... We returned and settled down at the 3rd Sovkhoz of Edjmiadsin. We work and live...

### 301 (301).

#### LUTHER HOVHANNES ESKIDJIAN'S TESTIMONY\*

##### (B. 1913, Kessab, Ekiz-Oluk Village)

I was born on November 1, 1913, in a small village of Kessab, named Ekiz-oluk, in the mountains of Syria where my father, Rev. Hovhannes Eskidjian started his first ministry. The Evangelical Church of Ekiz-oluk and the local population had greatly suffered from the massacres of Adana and the neighboring villages, in 1909. My father had the church reconstructed and had promoted a philanthropic activity. Due to the upheaval of World War I and the tragedies affecting the Armenian people, Rev. and Mrs. Eskidjian moved their family to Aleppo, Syria, to pastor another church. In the course of that ministry, my Reverend father and mother, Mrs. Gyulinia Eskidjian, saved many hundreds of refugees from further deportation and death caused by the Turkish genocide of the Armenian people, an event, which occurred during the years 1915-1918. My father ministered especially to the orphans and was part of the underground movement in Syria to save as many Armenians as possible. My father wrote down the narratives of the survivors miraculously saved from the Armenian Genocide and sent them to the American consul in Aleppo, Jackson, who in his turn, forwarded them to the American ambassador in Turkey, Henry Morgenthau, for consideration. My mother, Mrs. Gyulinia Eskidjian, continued my father's job through the American Red Cross, until she and her two sons, I

and my brother John, immigrated to the United States.

Like thousands before me, as a young boy of 7 years old, I crossed the ocean on a third class ticket, refugee status and was processed by the U.S. government at Ellis Island. I arrived in a new world, not knowing the language or the culture.

Without funds or resources in America, our family struggled to survive, but through perseverance, faith and hard work, I established myself in business and obtained an education as an architect.

Before my own personal plans could progress very far, however, World War II caught up with me, and I entered into the armed forces, serving from October, 1942 to January, 1946. I married my California fiancée, Anna Hatsagordsian, in November 1943, at the base of North Carolina. Shortly thereafter, I was sent overseas, to Europe, with a small army-engineering group and I was later transferred to General Eisenhower's headquarters in Paris to the Office of Chief Engineer. My job was to design hospitals throughout the war front following General Patton's Eighth army from the Rhine River to Berlin, as cities were liberated, and large buildings were evacuated for hospital use.

During my service in Europe, I had little personal time, but when I had, I visited cathedrals and unusual

\* This testimony in English was inscribed and handed to me by the survivor's daughter, the lawyer and preacher, Nancy Eskidjian, in 2005, in Los Angeles.

buildings making sketches of scenes of beauty and devastation. I also purchased art objects from antique shops. These collector's items would become the basis of my extensive collection of antiques for the museum I would establish later in life, in Los Angeles.

Returning to the United States after my tour of duty in January of 1946, I met my first child, who was born while I was serving in France. I and my wife were fortunate to have three children, Martin, Carol and Nancy. I expanded my career as an architect and businessman. I have worked as an advisor and manager for various charitable trusts, estates and wills, directing those financial means into international philanthropic, Christian and cultural causes, including the Armenian Missionary Association of America, churches and schools. I have held various responsible posts in large American designing and construction companies. I have promoted a wide public activity in American and Armenian circles. I have designed and built numerous Armenian, Anglo- and Afro-American churches, schools and other public buildings in different American towns.

I have also engaged in specialized engineering activities in addition to design and I hold a dozen patents.

In retirement, I spent many years in the planning and construction of an outstanding edifice of Armenian architecture, a sanctuary and Museum, for the "Ararat" Home of Los Angeles. That Armenian-spirited complex is built in the district of Mission Hills. The Armenian community is proud today to possess a modern and model national old-age nursing home "Ararat." The sanctuary is most unusual in that it uses modern materials, but incorporates ancient designs, with beamed

ceilings, a central cupola with an ancient gold cross on top, stained glass windows of impressive Biblical scenes, natural split face blocks and marble altar. It is similar in construction to ancient Armenian churches over a thousand year old. It is intended for the three Armenian religious denominations; the Evangelical, the Catholic and the Gregorian Orthodox Armenians can offer their church services there.

The lower floor of the sanctuary contains the Ararat-Eskidjian Museum, which houses diverse historical Armenian artifacts from before the time of Christ, along with European, American and Middle Eastern artifacts, handicrafts of the Armenian people, exhibits of art and sculpture. The museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays and functions by the devoted efforts of volunteers and particularly of Mrs. Maggie Mangassarian-Goshin. The museum possesses also a rich library, multilingual books dedicated to the problems of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the remains of the innocent Armenian martyrs brought from the desert of Der-Zor.

At the entrance of the museum, the visitors are met with an outstanding sculpture conceived by me called "Mother Armenia Arising Out of the Ashes," dedicated to both who survived and perished in the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The duplicate of this meaningful sculpture is now installed in Dsidernakaberd, in the park adjacent to the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide in Yerevan.

The Church and the Museum serve the extensive Armenian community and the foreign visitors in the Los Angeles area.

I enjoy the love and esteem of my wife, children, grandchildren, friends and the Armenian community.

### **302 (302).**

#### **AL GIHIM'S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1880, Rakka)**

I am already 119 years old. I was born in Rakka. I remember well the sufferings of the poor exiled Armenians. They had been violently driven out of their homeland and walked hungry and thirsty to the Syrian Deserts to the bank of the Euphrates River. The Turk

butchers had deceived the Armenians, saying that they would soon return to their homes, but had taken them to the bank of the Rakka rampart and slaughtered. Only 7 families were rescued by our Arabs, who had helped them to escape and find shelter in their tents.

### **303 (303).**

#### **BASHIR EL SAADI'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1901, Rakka)**

In 1915, I was 14 years old. I was a shepherd grazing the animals of our people on the bank of the

Euphrates River, near Rakka. I saw groups of people – tired, exhausted, in rags, half-naked, who came to our

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\* Doctor of History, Nora Arissian, from Damascus, interviewed Arab-Bedouin habitants from the Syrian deserts in 1999 and passed the videocassette to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. I present here these five [T. 302-306] testimonies that I have deciphered and translated.

areas. Later, I learned that the Turkish government had deported them from their homeland and had driven them to the Syrian deserts. Those Armenian exiles had walked under the guard of Turkish gendarmes for days, without knowing where they were going. They left their relatives by the roads. These were unable to walk and many of

them had been killed by the Turks.

I and my cousins used to go to the desert on our camels and, seeing their miserable state, helped them by milking our camels and giving them the milk to drink instead of water. They were so emaciated and weak that all of a sudden they fell down on the ground and died like sheep.

### **304 (304).**

#### **HAB ALI'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1905, Ras-ul-Ayn)**

I was ten years old in 1915 and I remember well the unfortunate Armenian deportees. They reached Ras-ul-Ayn tired, exhausted, half-naked and blood-stained. I, myself, took several of them and hid them in a large pit, and they were saved from the Turkish gendarmes pursuing them.

A number of Syrian tribes also helped those Armenians. Among these kind Arabs were Shanmar, Bakkara, Oubada, Ajubeh, Harp, al Muhamed, al Hassan,

al Udwa, Jabra, Zubeyd and others who hid a great many Armenian women and children in their families and saved them from death.

The Turk gendarmes on horseback and the soldiers, escorting the Armenian deportees, forced them to walk without taking a rest. The Chechens, the Kurds and even the Turkish soldiers themselves attacked them with knives and struck them with axes, while the Arabs have never touched or hurt the Armenians.

### **305 (305).**

#### **ABDUL GHAFOR'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1915, Ras-ul-Ayn)**

The Armenians, who had been driven out of their historical native land by the Turks, arrived in Ras-ul-Ayn completely exhausted and disorganized. In order to survive, they became servants in the houses of the Arabs. Their women had beautiful eyes and were very diligent. These women were obliged to marry our desert sheikhs or the heads of the villages. Some of them changed their religion, but some – did not. In time, negative consequences followed. Their state soon became sad and melancholic. Later they tried

to search and find their relatives and kept links with them, but being honest women, they preserved their families.

A young girl, whose father and mother had been killed by the Turks, had walked the road of exile with her two younger brothers. Due to exhaustion and hunger, her brothers had died on the way, and she, alone, had reached Ras-ul-Ayn. Out of despair, she married the sheikh of the Shamma tribe. She gave birth to me, thus becoming my sisters' and brothers' loving and caring mother.

### **306 (306).**

#### **BATRA'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1906, Deir-el-Zor)**

I am 93 years old woman. I am from the Syrian deserts. In 1915, I was 9 years old and I remember well how the exiled Armenian caravans arrived in Der-Zor one after the other. They had endured much torture. They were hungry, thirsty, in rags, and barefoot. They came and gathered near the Der-Zor bridge. We saw how the Turkish gendarmes and Chechens killed them. The women, who survived, married our Arab sheikhs

and heads of the desert villages. They became good mothers of families. Most of them changed their religion, but some of them did not. We admired the beauty of Armenian women. They had marvelous eyes. Besides, they were balanced in nature, obedient and honest. They never begged.

The Turks scattered the Armenians all over the Syrian deserts, but the Arabs pitied them and gathered them up.

**ABRAHAM STEPANIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1890, Sharoor,\*\* Khanloukhlar Village)**

I was born in 1890, in the village of Khanloukhlar of the Sharoor Province. In the summer of 1918, the Turkish regular army invaded Sharoor. With a view to escaping the Turkish rabble, the Armenian population of Sharoor villages gathered in the large village of Khanloukhlar. We had brought with us some things, beds, etc. and were prepared to put up a serious resistance, but the Turk pasha promised us a safe life. We got disarmed, trusting the Turks. The Turkish army invaded the village and the

violences, the massacres, the pillage, the disrespectful acts to the women and girls started immediately. The Turks collected the beds from the houses and emptied the wool and the feather of the quilts, mattresses and pillows in the public place of the village, forming thus a large stack. They took off the clothes and underwear of the men, and the completely naked villagers hid themselves, in shame, in that stack of wool and feather. The Turks kept watch over the villagers that nobody escaped out of

\* This and the subsequent eight testimonies are presented as examples to give an idea that the Ottoman Turkish government carried out the Genocide of Armenians not only in Western Armenia (1915-1923), but in the territory of Eastern Armenia (1918-1920) as well, which is a separate subject of investigation.

\*\* The four testimonies presented below [TT. 307-310] were written down and handed to me by the descendant of an inhabitant of Sharoor, the Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, the Associate-Member of the International Academy of Environmental Security, the founding chairman of the Sharoor Compatriotic Union, **Sergey Avag Avagian** (b. 1926, Yerevan). He is the author of "Sharoor" (Yerevan, 1998), "Surmalou" (Yerevan, 2000) historical and a number of other professional books. He has attached to those testimonies the following note: "In the beginning of the 14th century the nomadic, sheep-breeding races, the "Kara-Koyunlus" and the "Ak-Koyunlus" (owners of sheep having black and white fleece – Turk.) coming from middle Asia invaded the Armenian highlands and, plundering and massacring the natives, started to lead a settled way of life. One of their tribal chiefs, Osman, was able to create a sultanate called the Ottoman Sultanate. From that period onward, the violences, persecutions and massacres with regard to the diligent and creative native population, the Armenians, started. These atrocities reached their highest degree in 1915, when those criminals named "Turks" began the mass extermination of the Western Armenians as an ethnic group on a state level, using methods plotted and thoroughly planned by the authorities. In the years 1915-1923, the Turks massacred 1.5 to 2 million Armenians, not sparing even the elderly, the women and the children. They forcibly apostatized also a great number of children and young girls, converting them to Turks. If the Armenian massacres had not taken place in those years, then more than 30-40 million Armenians would live and create today on their native land. Consequently, we should speak about the massacre of 30-40 million, and not 2 million, Armenians.

Very little has been written and told about the Turkish crimes and the world, many popular and governmental bodies have no information about those monstrous massacres and Turkish crimes. And what is more, practically nothing is known about the Turkish Gehenna, the genocide organized in the territories of Eastern Armenia. The Turkish massacres, slaughter and genocide perpetrated in the years 1918-1920, in Sharoor, the ancient province of Yerevan, with their nature, their brutality, the methods and manners of carnage were not committed anywhere in the world during the whole history of mankind.

Unconstrained slaughtering the Armenian population of Western Armenia before the eyes of the civilized world and with their silent connivance, the blood-thirsty Turkish criminals gave themselves free rein in Sharoor, creating new ways of massacre... Unfortunately, the world was not aware of it and the historians and the journalists have kept silence about it, the civilized world has not heard the wail and has not seen the bloodshed of the Sharoor people.

Sharoor or the Sharoor Plain occupies the area on the right and left banks of the middle current of the River Arax, the lower basin of the left tributary of Arax, the Arpanial. The area of the Sharoor Plain is 2,700 sq. km. The name of Sharoor was mentioned as early as the period of foundation of the capital of Armenia, Artashat, namely, in 180 B. C. Sharoor was the 22nd province of the country of Ayrarat. "Sharoor" is a real Armenian word meaning "resourceful, nimble." Until 1918-1920 (until the signature of the Russian-Turkish Treaty on March 16, 1921) it was the large Sharoor-Daralagyaz Region of the Yerevan Province of the Republic of Armenia.

On October 20, 1920, the newspaper "Zhoghovurd" (People – Arm.) (Yerevan, Republic of Armenia), published an article of Mikayel Ter-Avetikian entitled: "The terrible massacre of the Armenians of Sharoor;" where it was written that in October 1919, an American delegation came to Sharoor... The Armenians made a complaint and implored the delegates to save them from the barbarism of the Turks, but the Americans did not understand the language of the Armenians and they departed without any result.

It is told that in November, the Turks gathered a great number of Armenians in the village of Parchi of the Sharoor Province. There, the Turks undressed all the Armenians, they branded a cross on the priest's body with a red-hot metal skewer; they kept the Armenians starved for days on end. They cut open the mother's womb, took out the unborn baby and forced the father to eat it. They raped the women in front of their husbands and the girls in front of their parents. On January 8, the Turks took about 700 Armenian men near the village of Alishan and, under the threat of death, they dropped them into the River Arax, then they put their wives up for auction and raped all the girls above the age of five.

On March 16, 1921, Sharoor was forcibly seized by the Moscow Russian-Turkish treaty and given to Nakhidjevan and, as a part of the latter, given to Azerbaijan (let us remember that after the crumbling of the Soviet Union that treaty has lost its legal status as well as the treaty concerning the Western Armenian territories). The Sharoor people who had a narrow escape from the Turkish massacres temporarily settled in the localities situated around Sharoor, hoping that the Soviet authorities would permit them to return to their native cradle. All the appeals and petitions of the Sharoor people fell on the deaf ears of Moscow, Baku and Nakhidjevan.

In 1966, the Sharoor people, living in Armenia, organized the Sharoor Compatriotic Union and sent appeals to the UNO, the UNESCO, the International Tribunal in Geneva, demanding to invalidate the illegal Russian-Turkish Treaty of March 16, 1921 and to permit the Sharoor people to go back to their native houses and to return Sharoor and Nakhidjevan to Mother Armenia. But till now there isn't any respond. At present, the Armenian villages of Sharoor are wrecked to the ground and reduced to ashes, under the domination of the Turks. The barbaric events similar to the genocide of Sharoor are numerous. Unfortunately, the international community is uninformed of the events of Sharoor."

the stack; and those who tried to do so, were slashed on the spot. Thus we kept us for several days hungry and thirsty. The faces of the famished Armenians had swelled up, their eyes were sunken and enlarged. From time to time, the Turkish soldiers threw a dead dog or cat to the ravenous Armenians in the stack. The latter tore them to pieces with their hands and ate them raw. They ate also their dead neighbors. After some time they chopped about a 100 of those living corpses with axes and buried

them in a large pit together with 10 or 15 young children. Human moans were heard for a long time from that large grave, and the thin layer of earth moved up and down for hours. The Turks dishonored my eldest sister, named Araxia, aged 14; she committed suicide on the next day and put an end to her life. My other younger sister was raped by a Turk, who, after satisfying his brutal fancy, cut her neck with his dagger and flung her head away.

I survived miraculously.

### **308 (308).**

#### **HAYKO VARDANIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1893, Sharoor)**

One summer evening, in 1918, I had not returned yet from my work in the field, and my father Danough was having dinner with my mother and four children seated round the tonir, when armed Turkish askyars broke into our house and ordered them not to budge. Then the askyars took hold of my two sisters and raped them in the different corners of the room. They heated the copper basin in the tonir and put it, red-hot, over my father Danough's head. They dropped my two small boys into the heated tonir, covered it with the lid and stood over it. The heart-rending cries and screams of

my poor brothers were heard from inside the pit; then everything lapsed into silence and the room was filled with the odor of the roasted flesh of the children. And when a Turk soldier tried to knock down my mother in order to rape her, she succeeded in drawing the Turk's sword from its sheath and, with a sudden thrust, pierced the askyar's belly. Thereupon, the other man-eaters cut my mother's head...

When I came home I saw that horrible scene. So that from my father's family only my two unfortunate sisters and I remained alive...

### **309 (309).**

#### **ARISTAKES GRIGORIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Sharoor, Khanloukhlar Village)**

I was born in 1900, in the village of Khanloukhlar of the Sharoor Province. In July 1918, the Turkish army invaded Sharoor. The whole population of Sharoor was gathered in the village of Khanloukhlar. Under the leadership of Teacher Khachik we dug deep trenches around the village and got ready to put up a strong resistance to the Turks' advance until the Armenian forces came to our help from Daralagyaz. The Turks deceived us by promising us that they would not harm a hair on anybody's head in the village. We believed them and got disarmed. The Turks entered the village, and the plunder, the violences and the massacres began. After committing unheard-of violences, they slaughtered my

mother, my grandmother, grandfather and my 4 sisters with swords. I was able to escape through the window and to run until I reached Daralagyaz. I was told later that they had put harnesses on the young villagers and had forced them, by lashing them or under threat of death, to draw the carts loaded with the goods looted from the Armenians and to carry them to the railway station, after which they had slaughtered the "draft" young people with swords.

The Turk's favorite way of killing was to slaughter the Armenian, to dismember the Armenian's body and to watch the hot blood flowing like a fountain. You see, he would thus go straight to Allah's paradise...

### **310 (310).**

#### **VARDANOUSH BEKNAZARIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1900, Sharoor, Varmazyar Village)**

I was born in 1900, in the village of Varmazyar of the Sharoor Province. The Turks entered our village. The population raised a hue and cry, and some 40 or

50 people found shelter in our large yard and closed the gates. After some time, the Turkish soldiers started to pound heavily at the gates ordering us to open them.

A few of them appeared on the wall facing our house, jumped inside the garden and opened the gates. The Turks rushed in. In the first instance, they took off the jewels and demanded gold coins and ornaments. They violently tore off the earrings from the women, bloodying their earlobes. Those who did not submit were cruelly beaten. They chose some women and girls and raped them right in front of the terror-stricken people. They picked out 10-15 young men and, under the threat of daggers and rifles, took them out of the enclosure. The soldiers remaining inside turned the house upside down in search of gold and valuables. The Turkish soldiers, who

had taken out the young men, returned and took a new group of young people. Inside the enclosure, the soldiers had already beheaded a few rebellious men and women with their swords and had dismembered their bodies. They murdered my father and my sisters in front of my eyes. We, 10-15 under-aged girls and elderly women, remained in the enclosure. They took us out near the railroad line, and we saw with our own eyes the cut and blood-stained bodies of our young fellow-villagers piled one upon the other. I could not distinguish my brothers, but I saw Stepan, our tall and handsome relative, lying, blood-stained, on his back...

### 311 (311).

#### ARAM STEPAN SANTOURIAN'S TESTIMONY\* (B. 1896, Agoulis)

I was born in 1896, in Agoulis. My father's name was Stepan, my mother's Mariam. Everybody used to call her Mashinka, because she was blue-eyed and fair-haired. She was a real beauty. We were four brothers. I was the eldest, then came Avet (b. 1898), Sedrak (b. 1900) and Rouben (b. 1909). We lived content and happy in Upper Agoulis. My father was a dealer in gold. His shop was adjacent to our house and I, as his elder son, helped him in the trade. He was very strict.

He always kept an eye on our studies and wanted very much that one of us became a doctor. Our house was very large and always had guests, we had many relatives but only my two paternal uncles lived with us. Merchants who came from remote places, from Constantinople and went to Persia, mostly Turks, always stayed at our place.

In the beginning of 1918, those who came from the west brought bad news and warned my father to stop the trade for a while. The situation grew worse, and my father decided to close the shop and to get ready to depart from Agoulis. Now and then, groups of Turkish horsemen appeared and their appearance always coincided with the plunder and murder of Armenians. The local Turks had also become active and had also started to rob and kill the Armenians. I and my brothers had joined the self-defensive detachments, and we went round, in turn, the Armenian quarters at night.

One morning, when we returned from our night watch, we noticed from afar that our house was lost in smoke. Up till now I cannot forget that dreadful scene, which I and my brothers saw. Nobody had been left alive in our house. Those beasts had attacked our family in their sleep and had slaughtered my father, mother, my uncles and my younger brother, Rouben. We had no longer a place to live and in a few days all the houses in Upper Agoulis were reduced to ashes.

With a few dozens of Armenians, we fled to the north to join the Russian army. We moved forward mostly at night avoiding the villages. In the beginning, we went toward Kars hoping to meet the family of my father's cousin. Alas, we found nobody. They had exiled everybody and everything had been turned upside down. We witnessed so many monstrous and distressing scenes on our way that many in our group could not bear. We reached somehow the zone where the Russian army units had taken up positions. We, the young men, joined them and took part in the combats. When the war was over, we moved to Russia. One of my brothers, Avet, went to Rostov-on-Don and, changing his name and surname to Hayk Kistorian, got married and lived there till the end of his life. Now his grave is in the yard of the Armenian Church in Rostov-on-Don. He had a son by the name of Rouben and a grandson.

My other brother, Sedrak, went to Baku, but returned to Armenia after two years. He married the actress Isabella and lived in Ashtarak till the end of his life (1949). He had one daughter and 4 grandsons.

In the beginning, I stayed in Armavir. I married Satenik Santourian whom I knew from Agoulis. We had two sons and one daughter. I worked as a shoemaker in order to barely get by. Subsequently we moved to Astrakhan. We lived in a little wooden cabin. I was afraid to be exiled as a former kulak's son or a Dashnak military man. I obtained Persian passports under my wife's, Satenik's, surname, Santourian and in 1931 we crossed the Caspian Sea and went to Tabriz. But the yearning of the motherland suffocated me and, after 15 years, in 1946, we returned to Armenia, to Edjmiadsin. Two years later, we moved to Yerevan. Only my daughter, Tamar, remained in Persia, because she had already married there.

\* This testimony, written in 1973 by the eyewitness survivor, was handed to me, in 2001, by the survivor's granddaughter, Zhanna Santourian.

I am in the decline of my life. I live with Satenik quietly and peacefully with our two sons and daughters-in-law, we have nine grandchildren. Although I had vowed vengeance on the Turks, but up till now I cannot

raise my hand on an unarmed man, a woman or an innocent child. To my dying day I will not forge the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks, the scar on my heart will never heal.

### 312 (312).

#### SHOUSHANIK MARTIROS KARAPETIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1905, Nakhidjevan, Djaylig Village)

The Turks had attacked my father's tailor shop, had killed my father and his brother, my uncle. My grandmother had gone crazy. She used to take us to the church; she looked at that shop and started to cry bitterly over her murdered innocent sons.

In 1918, the Ottoman soldiers came and began to slaughter the Armenians. We fled. General Andranik came with his small group on horseback and went to Persia.

The battle started. The Ottoman army was gathered on the highest spot of the town. The Armenians had fled from all the villages. When the cannon fired, we all fled in horror. We reached the village of Gyuznoot, then to the village of Abragonis. The villagers of that locality joined us, and we arrived at Kyavar (Bayazet). We were sheltered in the school building. Out of our large family only my mother, myself, my sister, my brother, my grandmother and my aunt were left alive. My aunt had married in the town and had been taken prisoner. The Turks had killed her mother-in-law, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. They had taken them to the ravine, telling them that they would join the other Armenians, and they had slaughtered them all. Only my aunt had been miraculously saved.

My uncle's wife was taken prisoner. The Turks had hanged her. Her three-year-old son had remained in the streets, unprotected, and had died. The first time, in 1918, the Ottoman Turks were the cause of the exile.

The second time, in 1919, the second exile took place, and again the Armenians were slaughtered, this time by the Azeris. Only my uncle was saved there. We moved toward Yerevan. We passed by the Zendjrlou

Mountain. It was an open space. We saw clouds of smoke belching from the houses in the distance. The Armenians had fled, and the Azeris had set fire to their houses. We wanted to go to Artashat, but the Turks had burned down the village of Davalou to ashes. We were thirsty, we asked for a few drops of water, but nobody gave us any. Due to the intense heat and thirst, the Armenians lay unconscious in the streets. My younger brother was very thirsty; he wanted to drink, but there was no water. My mother made him piss and gave it to him to drink.

We moved along very slowly. There was a reedy fen near the railway; we hid ourselves among the reeds, so that the Azeris would not see us. We walked only after nightfall. The border-guards of Artashat thought that we were Turks and began to fire. Then they knew that we were Armenians. They called us and told us to go to the village of Navrouzlu.

We went there and settled in a large yard. There was cotton in big sacks piled up in the yard. My mother sewed mattresses and quilts for us, and we could, at last, sleep quietly.

Then we came to Yerevan. My aunt also came to Yerevan, but she passed away, maybe because of her infinite sufferings. They took me to an orphan asylum. Later my uncle took me to his house, but he did not keep me long.

I had to do all kinds of odd jobs. I nursed four children.

There were many Armenians left in Nakhidjevan, but when the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliev, came, he expelled all the Armenians, in the years 1986-1988. Not a single Armenian remained in Nakhidjevan.

### 313 (313).

#### TSOLAK GRIGOR TOROSSIAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1914, Cherakhli)

In 1920, when the Ottoman Empire put an end to its brutalities in Western Armenia, it continued its attack on Eastern Armenia using all its military resources to totally exterminate the Armenian nation. The Ottoman army occupied Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri) and all the surrounding villages, then moved eastward and reached

the plain called Gherma, which was not far from the village of Cherakhli (now: Charentsavan). Feeling the terrible danger, the villagers of that area began to flee from their houses, leaving behind all their possessions.

The Turkish army was moving very fast, since nobody offered any resistance. The Turks tried to bring

the refugees back to the villages. The refugees were the people from the Cherakhli and the twin Kyapanadji villages.

As everybody, my parents also took their children and ran away. The stream of the panic-stricken people grew denser and denser. Everyone tried to move ahead of the others in order to escape the Turkish slaughterers. Because of the crush, the children, the elderly and the weak people often fell down and could not stand up.

During the crush, I fell down and was not able to rise quickly; and until I got up, I lost my parents. I looked around hoping to find them. I was crying loudly, but nobody was paying attention to my wail. After some time, part of the fugitives was returning to the village of Cherakhli under the blows of the Turkish soldiers, pushing one another more roughly and panic-stricken. Many children, old, sick and weak people, who were unable to walk, became victims of the Turks' bullets. The rest of the people, tired, hungry and tormented, arrived somehow at the village. Numerous blood-stained corpses of men and women lay in the streets of the village.

The Turks hit the people with the butts of their rifles, forcing them to walk faster. During the crush, I fell once more over some corpses and I lost consciousness. The Turkish soldiers, obviously thinking that I was dead, did not pay any attention to me. How long I remained among

the corpses, I do not know. When I came to myself, I heard weak moans and I saw puffs of smoke and flames. The neighboring houses were on fire. I pulled myself together; I got up and somehow went to our house, which was not very far. There was nobody there, it was dark, I groped my way to the place where we used to keep our bread, since I was too hungry, but I found no bread there. I came out of our house, I heard some people speaking Armenian. When they saw me, they asked me in surprise, how, lonely and helpless as I was, I could reach there. I told them what had happened to me, but I could hardly speak. Oddly enough, I had lost all my feelings; I did not know what were my expectations and what would happen to me eventually. Those people helped me and took me to the small village of Khanvali. After making inquiries, I finally found my sister. I was boundlessly happy. My sister was very hungry, but there was no bread to eat. Then, I and my sister Nvard fell asleep in a sitting position. I woke up in the morning and I found her dead of starvation. I learned later that the Turks had packed the Armenians in those houses I had seen a few days earlier and had set them on fire, burning them all alive, among them had been also my parents. Thus, the Turks had set fire to the houses, had burned and killed the Armenians and had left the village.

I have also written down my impressions in verse.<sup>1</sup>

### 314 (314).

#### **VARDOUSH KHACHATRIAN'S TESTIMONY\*** **(B. 1898, Spitak Region, Nalband Village)**

Not satisfied with the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the plunderer and murderer Turks invaded once more, in 1918, our lands with a view to realize their criminal plans and to massacre the Armenians. Without declaring war, the Kemalist armies occupied Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri), in 1920, and reached the village of Nalband, Spitak Region, establishing thus the so-called "Turkish border." That was in December, 1920. At that time, the village of Gharaboya (now: Khnkoyan) of the Spitak Region remained within the "Turkish border." In the morning, the Turks, armed to the teeth, broke into the village and ordered the men to go into the village church and school; they deceived the women by announcing that they would affix seals in the palm of all the women, and those who were not sealed would be killed on the spot. There was a hill on the western side of the village, and a deep valley stretched beside that hill. The Turks, armed with bayonets, divided the women into two groups. They led one group to one side of the valley and the other group to the other side. Half of the Turkish soldiers

stood at the rear of the first group and the other half took position at the back of the second group. Then the Turk soldiers started to pierce the women in the back with their bayonets and to roll them down the valley. I was among those women. I was pregnant and was soon expecting my baby to be born and I was hardly able to move from my place. When the Turks began to strike with their bayonets, I was on the brink of the valley and slowly slid down. I stood on one foot in the snow while my other leg got tucked up, upon which a heavily wounded body fell. I drew, out of fear, that body over me, so that the Turks would not notice me. The Turk murderers walked several times to and fro along the valley brink holding their bayonets downward and pierced the fallen corpses again and again, after which they left. The woman lying over me had been pierced in the back in 9 places.

The Turks had shut the door of the church where the Armenian men were imprisoned and they had started to shoot with their rifles from the windows, killing them all, while those who were enclosed in the

<sup>1</sup> See the verse in the "*Historical Song-Testimonies*" part of this book [T. 556].

\* The testimony of the eyewitness survivor, written in 1975, has been passed to the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, by her daughter, Zhenia Khachatrian.

school building had been burned alive. At daybreak, five Turk gendarmes came and repeatedly pierced the dead or dying bodies and returned to the village. These operations were repeated during 3 days. On the fourth day an order came from the governor to stop all actions against the Armenians. Then they announced: "Whoever is alive, let her speak up." I raised my hand. The Turks hurried to me and wanted to take me out, but it was impossible, since the blood, which had flowed from the wounded bodies, had frozen due to the sharp frost, and my clothes were stuck to the corpses. They took off my outer clothes and pulled me out of the valley with my underwear. Seeing my state, the Turk officer ordered a soldier to take off his overcoat and to clothe me. Then they made me lie on the frozen ground, tied me with the coat belt and they dragged me on the snow till our house in the village, where my husband was hiding. My uncle's 12-year-old daughter, my 2-year-old daughter and three young men from our relatives were also hiding in the house from the Turk slaughterers. My face was swollen from the frost and I had become unrecognizable. The Turk officer ordered the soldiers to get some fuel and light the tonir. After that, he dismissed the soldiers and, remaining alone with me, he started to speak to me in Armenian, telling me that his mother was an Armenian and his father was a Turk official. Before his service in the Turkish army, his mother had imploringly told him: "If you were nourished with my milk, you must not shed Armenian blood. That "Turk" officer's name was Sheko. That is where "Turkish" charity comes from. Hearing that, my husband came out of his hiding place, but seeing

my grave state, he was also filled with regret. I asked my husband to go to my father's house in the village of Nalband and to inform my brother to come and help us. But before my brother arrived, the Turks took me to the village of Ghaltakhchi into a large building, where they had gathered many other Armenian women, and, under the sounds of music, the Turk officers were mocking and dishonoring them. Then my brother came and took me to our house in Nalband. In those days, it seemed that everything was quiet in the daytime, but at night, the Turks attacked the houses. I was in a moribund state and my mother was nursing me. Suddenly we heard unusual noises. My mother ran out and saw that the Turk soldiers were dismantling the roof. Everybody was asleep. My mother quietly took the pitch-fork and struck the Turk soldier hanging from the roof. The wounded soldier fled. The second Turk came forward and was also wounded by my mother and thus the four soldiers, who had attacked our house, took flight leaving traces of their blood on my mother's clothes. Seeing and hearing all that commotion, my condition gradually worsened, my labor pains started, the child was somehow born, but lifeless. The future physician, the second-year student at the Lazarian Academy, who helped me in my childbirth, saw that I did not open my eyes for days on end, he let one and a half liters of blood from my neck and the result was that I lost my eyesight. I was transferred to Tiflis, where my eyesight was restored. But what I experienced and saw with my own eyes is impossible to forget. Every day and night those horrible scenes are before my eyes and I never stop shedding bitter tears.

### 315 (315).

#### **BADAL HOVAKIM SHAHOYAN'S TESTIMONY (B. 1901, Talin Region, Mastara Village)**

On May 22, 1918, at 2 P.M. the Turk governor Ahmad efendi enlisted, in the village of Mastara (Talin Region, Eastern Armenia), 1,500 Armenian men, declaring that they would be taken to Kars to work in road construction and that they would come back in 20 days.

Out of the 1,500 men, 370 were inhabitants of Mastara, while the others were refugees from the villages of the Kars region, who had escaped, terror-stricken, from the massacre, ravage and plunder organized by the Turks and had sought refuge in Mastara.

In order not to arouse suspicion, the shrewd Turks led us escorted by a few gendarmes, as if to protect us from any danger. When we reached the neighboring village where oil was being made, they packed us in four

huge barns and locked the doors. Then they threw inside handfuls of straw and kerosene through the windows and set the barns on fire. From among that huge number of men, only 11 people remained alive. This carnage is an eloquent proof of the plan of exterminating the Armenians framed by the brute Turks.

The list of the Armenians imprisoned and burnt in the barns was compiled in 1922 and it has been compared, name by name, with that of the census taken by Bishop Daniel, and kept at the Archives of the Mother See of Etchmiadzin. I, Badal Hovakim Shahoyan, a person miraculously saved from that carnage, now an inhabitant of the village of Mastara, have written down this testimony.\*

\* The list of the 1,500 men burnt in the barns was written down by Badal Hovakim Shahoyan, who had survived by a miracle. This lengthy list is kept at the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, File No. 24. The communal grave of the 1,500 burnt Armenians has now become a place of pilgrimage, and every year Badal Shahoyan's son, **Hrant Shahoyan** (b. 1926, Talin), who is a pedagogue, organizes this mournful pilgrimage and has written a poem about that, "There is an Answer to Give; There is a Judgment to Come...". See the poem in the "*Historical Song-Testimonies*" part of this book [T. 557].



**II.**  
**HISTORICAL**  
**NARRATIVE-TESTIMONIES**





**1 (316).**

**RONIA TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1920, Aleppo)**

***THE ORIGIN OF THE TURKS - "THE GRAY WOLVES"***

The Turks are of a Mongolian origin. They have come from China or thereabouts. It is said that they had seen a gray wolf and had gone after it. The gray wolf had gone to Armenia and had entered there; they had followed it and had seen that Armenia was a very nice place. The Armenians were industrious and humble people. The Turks had said, "This is a nice place, we shall go nowhere else," and had remained there. From that time on, the Gray Wolf had become their symbol.

These nomadic, alien Turks came to Armenia and began to oppress the Armenians. They subjected the Armenians to heavy taxes. Those who did not pay, were persecuted, killed and their houses burnt down.

They committed all kinds of cruelties. They started kidnapping Christian Armenian boys below the age of ten, circumcised them and turned them to the Islamic faith.

They changed their language and made them Janissaries. The Janissaries, who had been deviated from their roots and were brought up as orphans, became people having a wild military life, they were ruthless and godless. At one time, they persecuted many Armenians, they caused them many sufferings. They even cut the tongues of those who spoke Armenian. The Turks are still faithful to their ancestors: they have a regressive youth organization called "Gray Wolves."

**2 (317).**

**TRVANDA MOURADIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1905, Harpoot)**

***THE KIDNAPPED BIBLE***

For a hundred years this Bible was in our possession. Our elders told us the following. In 1650, around Easter, the women took the linen to wash by the Mourat River. They saw a trunk coming down the river. With the help of a stick, they pulled it to the river bank and opened it. In the trunk was this Bible wrapped in forty silk handkerchiefs. No one knew who had thrown it into the river. They brought it home, and saw that it was a manuscript Bible. The cover and the pictures were golden; the cross on it was made of silver. The parchment sheets were dated 1200.

On holidays the choristers of the church came to

our house, took the Bible to church and, after the mass, brought it back to our house, and put it in its place.

One day the Kurds came, stole our Bible and took it away.

The Bible said: "Put me in a room and light candles near me."

The Kurds put the Bible on cotton and lit candles on its sides. One of the candles fell down on the cotton and it began to burn.

The landowner said: "Go and free the Bible."

They went and saw a fire had started in the room, but the Bible had fallen far aside. When they saw the

miracle, the Kurds took the Bible back to its owner.

In 1895 a Turk stole it, took it to the town and sold it. The Bishop Yeznik of Okhu<sup>1</sup> saw it, came to our house and said to my uncle: “Melkon, I testify that it was your Bible.”

Melkon went and asked the Turk Mavalie to give him back his Bible, but the Turk refused. It remained in the Turk’s house for twenty years. The Turk’s wife removed the handkerchiefs from the Bible and tied them on her four children’s heads. After two days the Turk’s wife died. The husband said: “I better go and get an Armenian wife so she may take care of the Bible.” He went, kidnapped an Armenian girl and brought her to his house.

For five months, Melkon, rifle in hand, had been roaming the mountains. One day he went to the Turk again and said: “Mavalie, give me back my Bible.”

“I won’t,” said the Turk.

One day the Turk came to Melkon’s house, with the Bible under his arm. He had not been able to sleep the whole night; the Bible had tortured him, saying, “Take me back to my owner and put me in my place.”

He gave the Bible to Melkon and said: “Take your Bible. In my dream, it told me to bring it back to you; otherwise, it would throw me between two bulls and they would kill me.”

This is how the Bible came back to our home.

We were still in Okhu village of Balou. They came and took it to the church again. Pilgrims came to see the Bible and brought gifts.

My uncle did not work. He kept his family by means of what came through the Bible.

One day a man had fallen paralyzed; his mouth was deformed. They came and took the Bible to him and he was healed.

By 1921 my uncle Melkon’s stepson Manouk had moved to France. He wrote letters to my uncle Melkon and asked him to move to France and bring the Bible with him: “Bring the Golden Bible with you; you’ll make a lot of money.”

Our village people heard about the letter: “The Golden Bible is the honor of our village, its strength and power. Melkon, don’t go to France.”

But his stepson kept on writing, so my uncle sent it to France by post. The French government confiscated it, saying, ‘This is an antique, it’s valuable. We’ll take it to the museum.’ But he gave them a lot of money, took the Bible and moved to America, to Providence. In 1967 a group of Okhu people living in Yerevan, headed by me, Trvanda Mouradian, went to the Matenadaran<sup>2</sup> and wrote a letter, telling that Manuk–Melkon’s stepson had deceitfully taken the Golden Bible to France and then to America. In 1976, Melkon’s son Gaspar went to the USA, but could not bring the Golden Bible back.

In short, later, the Matenadaran’s Deputy Director, Professor Babken Choukhasezian went to America and legally brought the Golden Bible to Armenia. Now it is at the Matenadaran, and B. Choukhasezian has written about it in his book.<sup>3</sup>

### 3 (318).

#### ANAHIT ADJAPAHIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1920, Sis)

#### *THE RELICS OF SIS – CAPITAL OF CILICIA*

Our dynasty descends from the King of Cilicia, Levon VI. We are descendants of the royal dynasty; later our family begot many catholicoses. Gnel Vardapet Adjapahian was an ancestor of ours who, at the age of thirty-three had the Adjapahian Monastery built. Seeing the monastery, a Turkish bey said: “This is not a monastery, this is a fortress.” Now it has become a mosque.

It is told that, when Gnel Vardapet Adjapahian went to those places, he saw a well, which was dry. He began praying, with St. Grigor the Illuminator’s hand-relic in his one hand and a cross in the other. The well began to get filled with water. Such miracles have taken place. In our possession, we kept St. Grigor the Illuminator’s hand-relic, King Levon’s ivory spoon and his sword,

from which the diamonds had been removed. My mother said that we had taken all those relics with us when the Turks drove us out of our hometown Sis in 1915. The Turkish gendarmes whipped those who came out of line or fell behind. Crying and moaning, thirsty and hungry, we walked in the burning sun. The beaten Armenians reached the town of Gaston. The starving people used to look for grains of barley in the horses’ excrement in order not to die of starvation. The cholera epidemic had already started; people died one after another. My father had become a grave-digger. The dead were so numerous that their corpses were thrown into pits, one on top of the other, and covered with earth. The Turks buried the small children in the earth, leaving their heads above ground.

Finally they took us to the town of Sour-Sayda. We

<sup>1</sup> One of the villages of Balou.

<sup>2</sup> Matenadaran – Depository-Institute of Old Manuscripts in Yerevan.

<sup>3</sup> Choukhasezian, Babken. *Dzeragrevi ashkharhoum [In the World of Manuscripts]*. Yerevan, 1985, pp. 140-144 (in Armenian).

had no money. My mother had to sell King Levon's ivory spoon and, with the money, she bought fourteen kilograms of cornflower to feed us. And that kept us alive. Then mother began working at the American hospital as a washerwoman. Mother had brought a woolen blanket from the hospital and we used to sleep under it. One day we washed it and spread it on wires to dry. It was stolen. We, the children, began to cry. The head doctor of the American hospital saw us, took pity on us, and gave us another woolen blanket. When mother earned some money, she bought back King Levon's spoon and later

gave it to the museum with the other relics.

Then we went to Marash, for the French had entered the city, so it was calm there. But soon everything changed again. The French left by night, tying their horses' hooves with felt, so that no one might hear that they were leaving. When they left, the Turks came and began slaughtering, wreaking destruction and devastation. They put the Armenian Church of Marash on fire, which burnt like a candle. We had to leave Marash and go to Beirut. We lived there until we came to Armenia in 1946.

#### 4 (319).

### **KARAPET TOZLIAN'S TESTIMONY** **(B. 1903, Zeytoun)** ***THE MASSACRE OF CILICIA***

Sultan Hamid reigned for thirty-three years. In 1908 he said: "Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet" (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.). He meant that all people would live as brothers. But three months had not passed when he gave the order of massacre. In Cilicia they began slaughtering the Armenians in Hadjn, Deurtyol, Adana, Sis and other places. In three days, thirty thousand Armenians were massacred.

The massacre approached Marash.

The Armenians of our Zeytoun heard about the massacre of Cilicia and sent a message to the Turkish government, saying, "Don't dare to touch a single Armenian in Marash; otherwise we'll come and set Marash on fire and burn it completely."

The Turkish government was afraid of the Zeytounis and stopped the massacre. It was then that the following song was created:

*"Let the Armenians cry, the cruel massacre  
Turned magnificent Adana into a desert..."<sup>1</sup>*

#### 5 (320).

### **FLORA FARMANIAN'S TESTIMONY** **(B. 1924, Istanbul)** ***PRESENTIMENT OF THE GENOCIDE***

My grandmother has told us: "In our house we had two snakes, which brought us good luck; they never bit anyone, they went in and out of the house freely. The day before the deportation and massacre, the snakes began making strange

movements: they coiled up; they made uncomfortable movements; they hit themselves on the yard stones. We were surprised, wondering what all that meant. That day, at dawn, the Turks came and began slaughtering."

#### 6 (321).

### **SOGHOMON YETENEKIAN'S TESTIMONY** **(B. 1900, Mersin)** ***GENERAL ANDRANIK AND KYOSSA BINBASHI***

One day Sultan Hamid sent his Kyossa binbashi (Bald major – Turk.) against General Andranik.

Andranik went to the major's tent and tore it open with his sword. He saw that the Kyossa binbashi was fast asleep. He said: "It's mean to kill you in your sleep.

Come tomorrow, I have to fight you."

In the morning, the Kyossa binbashi came and stood before Andranik.

Andranik said: "If I strike once with my sword, I'll fling your horse's shoe away; if I strike for a second time,

<sup>1</sup> See the complete version of this song in the "Historical Song-Testimonies" part of this book [T. 436].

I'll send your horse's ear flying, and if I strike you on your forehead, then ... you know the rest! Do you know who you're fighting? I'm General Andranik – Andranik pasha. You're not to blame; Sultan Hamid has sent you. Get up, go back and never come again."

Kyossa binbashi gathered his army and went away without uttering a word.

So you see, the Turks were terribly afraid of Andranik and no one dared to fight against him. They would say, "Andranik pasha is coming," and ran away.

**7 (322).**

**SATENIK GOUYOUMDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1902, Konia)**

***GENERAL ANDRANIK***

When we left Konia, we were taken to Izmir. We were all children. The slaughter of Izmir had not taken place yet. General Andranik came to our orphanage. Everybody asked him to speak to us. He could not speak. His lips trembled: he was so stirred up, seeing so many orphans. He could say nothing; he could hardly keep back his tears.

They said that the Dashnaks had forced Andranik to fight against the Bolsheviks, but he had answered: "I

can't raise my hand against Armenians."

The Dashnaks took him to Paris. He used to ride only white horses. They said to him: "Please, don't ride a white horse: they'll shoot you."

"No bullet touches my body," he answered.

They took off General Andranik's waistcoat, which was like a sieve, but no bullet had ever touched his body, for he crossed himself first, and then began fighting.

**8 (323).**

**GEVORG GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1925, Beylan)**

***THE TURK AHMED AND MY FATHER***

The cellar of our house in Beylan was an armory, for, since we lived in the neighborhood of Turks, we always had to be ready to defend ourselves.

One day, together with my late father and mother, we went to Otli Ghaya (Grassy Shore – Turk.) to bring grass for our black cow. I was too young to help my parents, so I lay down on the grass to rest. My father put his rifle down near me and went to cut grass. Soon my mother also went to help father. I don't know how I had fallen asleep, but when my father came, the rifle was not in its place. My father got very angry and rebuked mother for having been so careless. Immediately he put us on horseback and took us home. Then he went to the village where Ahmed lived, since he suspected out that he might be the thief. Ahmed, also, finding out that it was my father's gun, went to the chief of our village and handed over the gun. My father went to the chief of the village

where Ahmed lived and asked him to show him Ahmed's house. The Chief said: "But how can I show you that robber's house?" But, all the same, he showed it.

My father went to Ahmed's house, kicked the door open and entered. Seeing my father, Ahmed said: "Martiros dayi, I found out that it was your rifle, so I took it to your village chief."

Father said: "Hands up, come out, go ahead," he took him to the village café and ordered him to sit down.

The provincial chief Mr. Joseph, who was a highly educated Armenian from Germany, came. Ahmed fell before his feet, asking for help. Mr. Joseph said: "Go, kiss Martiros dayi's feet, so that he may grant you your life."

The next day Ahmed came with a donkey loaded with butter, yogurt, and a newly born calf as gifts for my father, but father refused to accept, saying, "Take all these back, forget stealing, and try to become a man."

**9 (324).**

**MARTIROS GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1898, Beylan)**

***THE FRIGHTENED MULLAH***

The Genocide dispersed us all. I fell into a Turkish environment. I was hardly seventeen-eighteen years

old then. I went to work for a Turk, who was an old acquaintance of my father. They changed my name and

called me by a Turkish name. In the daytime I ploughed my agha's field; in the nighttime, I herded his cattle.

The Turkish graveyards were situated on the roadsides. In the graveyard grass had grown as tall as my height. I drove the cattle to the graveyard to graze and I lay down near a stone.

At dawn I opened my eyes: the cattle had lain down and were chewing. I turned to the roadside and, guess what I saw! The village mullah, seated on his donkey, was going to the next village. I was scared, so I hid myself behind a rock, but at that moment I began coughing and could hardly suppress it. The

mullah heard my voice and fell off the donkey. He began yelling, "Ya, Allah!" and ran away towards their village.

Immediately I drove the cattle out of the graveyard and took them to my master's field. In trepidation, I began ploughing the field.

The following day people began telling each other that, while passing by the graveyard, a ghost had risen before the mullah, had stricken him, and the mullah had died of fear. I thanked God that no one had seen me. Had they learned that the ghost was the son of a gâvur, they would have torn me to pieces.

### 10 (325).

#### GEVORG GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1925, Beylan)

##### *THE TURK JAILER AND MY FATHER*

The Gyouzelians were very handsome and strong. My father used to relate that his father's uncle had fought a Turkish wrestler.

That Turkish wrestler came to Beylan, to the Armenian village of Soûk-Oluk and said, "Bring your wrestlers," and defeated several of them.

Gyouzelian came forward. The representative of the wrestler said: "Don't fight him, you'll get defeated, because the Turkish wrestler's body is oiled."

Gyouzelian went forward, struck the Turkish wrestler on the belly and cut open his abdomen...

At the beginning of World War I, they recruited my father and imprisoned him without any reason in order

to kill him.

The jailer asked my father: "Are you the son of Gyouzel oghlu?"

My father said: "Yes."

The jailer said: "Take my horse and clean it."

My father took the horse, cleaned it and brought it back.

The jailer said: "Didn't I tell you to take my horse? Clean it very well," and winked at him, hinting to run away, as he knew that all of them would be killed.

My father guessed what he meant and, running away, saved his life, changed his name and went to work for a Turk.

### 11 (326).

#### GEVORG GYOUZELIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1925, Beylan)

##### *OUR FAMILY FROM BEYLAN*

My late father and mother narrated that, in 1915, they were driven to the Syrian deserts. The Turks had killed my elder uncle; the other two were younger so, after wandering in the Syrian deserts, they were taken to an orphanage. In 1919, those who had survived had returned to their homes.

In 1925, the year I was born, my father cultivated a vineyard in my name. I remember, that vineyard yielded abundantly although it was not irrigable (we never watered it) and there were no fertilizers. Only once a year we used to spray the grapevines with sulphur, to protect them from the dampness, which came from the sea.

In 1939, when the Alexandrette region was given to

the Turks, the French withdrew from that part of Cilicia. The Armenians did not wish to remain with the Turks. The ship "Khdevi" came from Egypt to take us away. What we had we took to the seaport. My elder sister took me by the hand and we approached the ship. When I saw the huge ship I was frightened and began to tremble. At that time General de Gaulle was passing by; he smiled at me and stroked my head... The ship took us to Tartous, a town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They say the town was founded by Apostle Thaddeus. We stayed there for fifteen days in tents; then we were taken to Beirut in trucks, and from there to Sour, a town near Beirut, in the vicinity of Arabs. The beginning was very

difficult as the Arabs considered us impure people: if an Armenian woman approached the butcher's counter and touched the meat with her finger, the butcher would get angry and throw away the meat. By and by, they became accustomed to us and we sat together at the table. The French government gave us patches of irrigable land; half a kilometer from the sea there were sweet-water springs and we could irrigate the earth. It was a real paradise: oranges, lemons, bananas and sugar-cane grew there magnificently. The vegetation was so lavish in Sour that when a horseman entered a field, he wouldn't be seen.

The French government gave us construction material free of charge and we built houses, we began working. We were paid according to the number of family members, even if only one person worked. It was bad that there were many swamps around there and many people fell ill with malaria. General de Gaulle came with doctors and nurses and distributed yellow quinine pills to the people.

We lived there for seven years. We lived well. The arms of our mothers and sisters were richly decorated with golden bracelets. Every family worked on the land allotted to it, received a sum of money, got draught

animals and agricultural tools free of charge, and we worked and lived. Each village had its territory, its school and church. From our place to Sour there had been the Biblical towns Sidon and Tyre, but they had gone under the sea with their ancient fortress ruins... The Arabs washed the sea sand to get gold dust.

Later, when the immigration officials came, my father's Arab friends warned us not to go to Armenia: "You won't even find rye bread there," they used to say. During those seven years we cultivated twenty-five hectares of orchards and wheat fields, where we sowed wheat for one year and then other crops for the following two years. We stored different kinds of provisions for the winter. The hunters went to wild boar hunting, and we distributed what we brought among each other. The season of festivities started...

In 1946 we left everything – houses, orchards and all – and came to Armenia. They took us to a remote backward village in Noyemberian, from where, with great difficulty, we moved to Yerevan, to Akhparashen and Merelashen.<sup>1</sup> We built our house, I got married and now I live here with my five children.

## 12 (327).

### TIGRANOUIH MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1943, Tomarza)

#### *MY GRANDMOTHER*

My grandmother kept her husband in a well during World War I, for they knew that those who were taken as soldiers were killed by the Turks. All of a sudden news spread that the Armenians would not be taken to the military service. My grandma took her husband out of the well, brought him into a room, and, looking at his face, saw that his face had turned pale and he had become very thin. Then another order came: "Let the Armenian males come out, we're going to reconcile." My grandfather and other Armenian males went out and they arrested all of them, tied their hands, took them to the river bank and slaughtered them all. My grandmother said: "Armenak, had I known that this would be your end, I would not have kept you in the well so long."

Grandmother had a daughter and twin sons. The French came and took the boys to an orphanage.

Grandmother wove rugs, together with her daughter. They sold them and bought their daily bread.

The massacre, plunder and destruction started; the Turks raped also the young maidens.

My grandmother said to her father-in-law: "At my

wedding I was wearing lots of gold ornaments. Where are they? Let's put them in a special pot."

When the Turks invaded our house, the father-in-law brought the pot full of gold articles, gave it to them and said: "Take all this, only don't touch my daughters and my daughter-in-law."

As to my father's father, who had been ten years of age during the massacre, he worked with his father from early morning till late at night; even at night they remained awake in order to guard their house from any Turkish invasion.

My mother, who was a widow then, married a young boy who was only sixteen then; she wished to have a male protector for her family. The young man's father was against that marriage because of the great age difference. He came and began beating my grandma with his stick and said: "You're much older than my son, you have children, how dare you seduce my young son!" But they paid no attention to him and they got married. Then my father Nazar was born, then my aunt and the others. Then my young grandfather had a perforated appendicitis, the

<sup>1</sup> Akhparashen and Merelashen – in 1946-1947 when the repatriates inhabited this deserted part of Yerevan it was called Akhparashen (akhpar = brother, as the local people called them ironically – Arm.), but many of them could not stand the cold and the difficulties of life; they died, and the nearby district was called Merelashen (merel = dead person – Arm.). Now it is called Araratian District.

doctors could not help him, and he died. My grandmother fell down, injured her shoulder and became confined to her bed; she experienced terrible pains; she did not even know how her young husband was buried. My father Nazar was only eleven years old then.

One day my father's uncle said: "Nazar, we had no money, I wonder who organized your father's burial, since your mother was in bed." My father said that Emin Grigor, the cloth merchant, had paid for everything and now he wanted his money back. My father, in spite of his young age, went to Emin Grigor's house and said: "We are poor people, my mother is in bed. I've come to find out the expenses for my father's burial. We'll pay it as soon as we have money. I don't want my father to sleep in debt."

Emin Grigor said: "It came to one hundred and ninety piasters in all."

One day my father went and gave one gold coin to Grigor. Some time passed and he took him the rest of the debt – ninety piasters – and said: "Now I can have peace, my father won't lie in debt any more."

Emin Grigor put the money into his pocket and said: "Good, you could pay your debt." Then he said to his daughter: "Bring tea. Put a cushion behind him. Bring some pastry, let him eat."

For the first time in his life my father drank tea there.

Years passed by. My father became a respectable person; everybody would point to the houses, which Nazar built. Thank God, we did well. But Emin Grigor, who had claimed the money for my grandpa's burial, died. His son got drowned in Ghezelermagh, his daughter became insane; she developed a mania for cleanliness, something went wrong with her hip-bone and she was taken to an asylum.

My father assumed all the hospital expenses. She was operated, my father had platinum brought to replace the bone, but it did not prove successful. The girl returned home after a while to find her father dead, her mother dead and all the expenses of the burial borne by my father. So, you see what life is: what is richness, what is beauty, what is knowledge? No one can depend on all these things: all of them are directed by God. The most important thing is the word of God, which says: "Trust in Me."

That man was rich, he had paid all my grandfather's burial expenses, but he could do nothing for his family. His father died, my father buried him, his wife died, my father buried her, the daughter became mad and died, my father buried her. How true the saying is: "What was I, what did I become, and what will I become?"

### 13 (328).

#### L. B.'S TESTIMONY (B. 1952, Nicomedia) *OUR FAMILY*

Our family was from the village of Merdegyoz, Nikomedia. Nearby, there were some other Armenian villages as well: Zengiler, Syolez and Nor Gyugh. These were closer to Partizak. Our family had good Turkish friends. One day they came and said: "There's going to be a great turmoil. Let's send you to Istanbul."

But my mother's father would not agree. He said: "Where my countrymen are, there we will be."

As he was endowed by God with healing talents, everybody loved him; he healed people with plants and herbs and he had inherited this skill from his father. One night the Turks came, entered the houses and began beating, breaking and plundering. My mother's father was compelled to take his family and leave the house.

The deportation started. And, like all the other deportees, they marched for days and weeks. They got exhausted. Typhus broke out. My grandfather also got infected. The dead were so numerous that, while walking, they used to jump over the corpses. My grandfather felt that he was going to die, so he called his daughter and said: "I'm going to teach you something. My mother had gone to Jerusalem and had become a hadji. Henceforth

you'll be called Hadji Aghavni, your mother – Hadji Tigranouhi, your father – Hadji Avetis. I'm dying, daughter," and he passed away. They left him there without burying him, for the zabtiés whipped those who remained behind. They left their grandfather unburied and they moved on. My mother, Hadji Aghavni, her two younger brothers and her mother, Hadji Tigranouhi, her sister, Hadji Hranoush, and her brother continued their way to Der-Zor on foot, hungry and thirsty.

One day Hadji Hranoush and Hadji Tigranouhi said to the youngsters: "You wait here for us; we'll fetch some food for you." They went and they never saw each other again. My mother, Hadji Aghavni, remained with her two younger brothers.

After long and horrible sufferings a Turk freed them and sent them back to their village. They became engaged with silkworm cultivation and prepared silk. As Partizak was close to the village, the brothers went to work there, and the women got together in a church community, where a priest taught them sharakans. And my mother healed sick people with her God-granted talent and herbs.

14 (329).

**NERMIN OZFERENDJI'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1943, Tigranakert)**  
***MY GRANDFATHER'S LARGE FAMILY***

My grandfather felt that he was going to die. He said: "My daughters put the house in order, heat some water; I'm going to die." The daughters called the priest, he prayed, and my grandfather passed away. But that has its story.

My grandfather's family had eleven bakeries; that's why they were called Ozferendji (feren = oven, bakery – Turk.). My grandfather's family consisted of 99 members. Only one member survived the 1915 massacres: that was Yervand Terpandjian. His father was Mkrtich Terpandjian. He had been very rich. The Turks said: "You tell us where your gold coins are and we'll set you free." But his wife, Manoushak, had already buried his gold somewhere nearby.

Mkrtich Terpandjian showed the Turks the place where his riches were buried. They dug up the gold, then tied his hands, took him away and killed him. My

grandfather's brother Levon saw all that, got a heart attack and died.

Mkrtich's son Yervand became an orphan and lived under poor conditions; he became a shepherd in Merdin. My grandfather heard about the boy. He took pity on him, went and brought him home. He was lost in dirt; his head was covered with wounds. Then Yervand grew up and got married. Later his daughter became my brother's wife. Yervand was nicknamed "Child of the Genocide."

In Tigranakert they [Turks] dug up tins full of gold. The Armenians had kept their gold, silver and copper either in the earth, or buried them in the hearth or in snow. The Armenians had also kept carpets and their valuables, in the hope that they would come back, but the Turk muhacirlar (refugees – Turk.) came, settled in those houses, dug out whatever the Armenians had hidden and took possession of it.

15 (330).

**MARIAM MIRZAYAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1927, Tomarza)**  
***OUR FAMILY***

Our family lived in Tomarza. In 1915 they summoned my grandma to the police station and said: "You must become a Turk."

My grandmother said: "If my husband becomes a Turk, so will I."

My grandfather's father called his son and said: "Become a Turk!"

My father said: "No, we'll die, but we won't become Turks."

Then the police chief said: "Leave that musty gâvur alone; even if he became a Turk, what good should we get out of him?"

My grandma ran away with my mother and they hid behind the trees. My mother was only four or five years old then, so she fell behind. The gendarme noticed her and struck her on her head with his whip: she fell down and lost consciousness. My mother used to show the scar on her ear whenever she told us about it. The gendarme thought that the girl was dead so he went away.

A Greek family had been living there: they [the Turks] had not been bothering the Greeks then, so they took my mother to their house. An Armenian relative saw that the Greeks had taken the child to their house, went to my grandmother and said: "I saw your daughter

in the house of the Greeks." My grandma immediately went to the Greek's house, found her daughter and took her home. My mother used to repeat: "I love the Greek people very much because they saved my life."

This way my grandmother found her daughter, but she could never find her son. She used to curse them, saying, "May the owls hoot in your homes," and she cried bitterly for her lost son.

My father had five brothers and one sister. Two of the brothers left for America: one of them died on his way. My father's name was Nikoghos and my uncles' – Harutyun, Khachik, Aram, Karapet and my aunt's – Mariam.

All of them were exiled; my father was seven years old then. The eldest of my uncles, Karapet, was married and had two daughters. On the way of the exile, his wife and daughters died of hunger. The following day they saw the bones of her two legs emerging from the earth. At night the jackals had eaten the flesh. My grandma said: "If I die, bury me deep." Most of them died on the way. Two of her nieces, who had been with them, said: "These girls will also die. The French Sisters' Monastery is somewhere here. Let's leave them there. Let them survive." They left the girls there and continued their

way.

“We ate the grass on our way; there was nothing else to eat,” said my grandma and cried.

Finally they reached Mosul, an Arab town, where Christian Arabs lived. They gave refuge to my uncle, mother and her two brothers. They gave them food, but they were not able to eat, for they had become so feeble and their intestines were almost dried up. They began feeding them with milk and gradually they began eating. My uncle began working, as he was older than

my father. My father had been only seven then, with long hair, a lovely child. Then the English came and gathered the Armenian orphans. The Arabs decided to keep my father, but the neighbors betrayed them, saying, “There’s an Armenian boy in that house.”

Years later my father and my uncle went back to their town, Tomarza, but they always regretted that they hadn’t taken the two girls from the French monastery.

My father married my mother, and three daughters were born to them.

## 16 (331).

### NAZENI SATAMIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1926, Beirut)

#### *THE DJEREDJANS FROM HADJN*

Our Hadjn was a health resort; people came there to rest and enjoy its air and water.

During the massacre, my mother’s relatives, the Djeredjians had seven sons. Nazaret was the eldest; the others were Hovhannes, Karapet, Minas, Manouk, Sargis, and Gevorg. Nazaret also had seven sons; the eldest was Hovsep, the others were Zakaria, Toros, Vardevar, Hakobos, Arsen and Harutyun.

During the massacre of Hadjn, Toros Djeredjian, together with his fourteen-year-old son Matevos and the other two younger ones in his arms, came to the bridge of Hadjn to leave the children, and go back to fetch his wife and the other children. He saw an airplane pouring fire; below, the Turks were setting fire to the houses of the Armenians. Fire from above, fire from beneath.

The fourteen-year-old son said: “Father, let’s run away.” They ran off to Adana and Sis. So his wife and the other children remained at home, and he lost the two little ones he had left on the bridge. He fled only with one son. On the way a Turk met them. He struck Toros on the head with his gun. Toros fell down, bleeding. The Turk thought that the man had died, so he left him and went away. For a while Toros remained lying on the river bank. By and by, he woke up from the sound of the water, but did not understand what was the matter with him. He got up, but did not remember that his son was with him. He began walking for two or three hours and suddenly remembered that his son was with him. He began shouting, “Matevos, Matevos,” but there was no Matevos. He reached the French guard post and told them that Hadjn was on fire. The French did not believe him.

They said: “We’ll give you five minutes; if other fugitives come, you’re right and we’ll set you free; if

not, we’ll arrest you.”

Very soon other fugitives came and they headed for Sis. In Sis they healed him. The nurse who treated him was Shahseneh. He married her; they moved to Beirut and had two children, Matevos and Azniv.

Nazaret’s son, Vardevar Djeredjian, was a very handsome man. He had been a fedayi, he had fallen prisoner and was sentenced to a one-hundred-and-one-year imprisonment. Vardevar ran away from the Turkish prison – they captured him again and a special order came – to take him over the Hadjn bridge and kill him. Three gendarmes took Vardevar for execution. He said to the gendarmes: “I beg you, give me a few minutes to go and say good-bye to my wife.”

The gendarmes let him go. Vardevar went home, he saw his wife feeding their baby Armen in his cradle, and said to her: “Ossanna, the gendarmes are waiting for me downstairs. I came to bid you good-bye. I’m going away; if they come and ask you about me, you say ‘I have no news, I haven’t seen him’.”

And Vardevar jumped out of the window to the courtyard, ran away and got saved. Then he went to Lebanon. Armen Djeredjian, Vardevar’s son, is a professor today. His sons are Arsen and Aramays.

Nazaret’s second son, Zakaria Djeredjian, was a government official. Together with Ispir Aghadjrian, he saved many Armenians. Zakaria had five sons. The eldest, Nazaret Djeredjian (Kouzhouni), is the editor of “New Hadjn.” The second son, Sargis, is the owner of “Salon Sargis” in Beirut. The third is Harutyun Kouzhouni, who joined all the Armenian parties around the name Hay (Armenian – Arm.). Vahrij is the fourth brother. The fifth brother is a lecturer in Armenia, and Zakaria’s nephew, Edward Djeredjian, is a US diplomat, assistant of the President of America [USA] in Foreign Affairs...

17 (332).

**VAHÉ KITAPJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1924, Alexandria)**  
***OUR FAMILY FROM KAYSERI***

In 1915 my grandfather Tigran Avagian and my grandmother Shahnour, together with their three daughters, Dsiadsan, Anahit and Vehanoush, took to the road of deportation. After six months of roaming, they reached Katma, a settlement near Aleppo, where they remained for a week under tents made of bed sheets and rags. It was strictly forbidden to enter Aleppo. One day my grandfather saw that the gendarme on guard was busy arguing with someone. Taking advantage of this opportunity, he crossed the boundary and entered Aleppo. There was a café on a hill where he went to have some brandy. While drinking, he heard somebody addressing him, "Mister Tigran."

My grandfather recognized the person who had been a former worker of his. The man took him to the government building, of which he was the manager. He arranged so that Tigran's family, together with forty other families, instead of being sent to Der-Zor, would be sent towards Damascus-Havran, where they stayed for three years. Then the British army came to Damascus, and they moved to Beirut. After remaining there for eight days, they went to Mersin, which was under French protection. They stayed there until 1921, the day the French left the town. That same night the Turks entered the city and forced the Armenians to leave by whatever ships they could get on. In Mersin Tigran's eldest daughter, Dsiadsan, had married Hayk Kitapchian, who was to be my father. My grandfather Tigran, together

with his wife and two daughters, went to Istanbul, where his brother Sarim lived. He opened a shop in the district of Gedikpasha in Istanbul to support his family. In 1924 they went to Batoumi with the first caravan of immigrants, moved to Leninakan (now: Gyumri), lived there for a while, and then settled in Yerevan.

Anahit was born in Kayseri, in 1908; she married Hovsep Gouyoumdjian from Izmir, born in 1902, and had two daughters, Herminé, born in 1928, in Yerevan, who became a dentist, and Alice-Ivetta, born in 1936, who became a doctor.

Vehanoush was born in Kayseri, in 1912, and married the surgeon Mesrop Shatakian from Van, born in 1907, in Yerevan. They had two children: their son Petros, born in 1941, graduated from the Polytechnical Institute, and Aida, born in 1945, who became an oculist.

Tigran's daughter Dsiadsan was born in 1903, and, as I've mentioned, had married Hayk Kitapchian from Aksaray, born in 1890. In Mersin Dsiadsan was on the teachers' staff of the Armenian orphanage; among the teachers were Arshak Chopanian, Mambré Vardapet Sirounian, who later became the Primate of Egypt, and Zabel Yessayan. Dsiadsan had three children: Mamas (b. 1922, lived for one year); then I was born in Alexandria, in 1924, my name is Vahé; and my sister Marie – in 1927.

In 1945, after my mother's death, together with my father we moved to Lyon, France. Now I'm retired.

18 (333).

**ANOUSH HARUTYUNIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1922, Baghdad)**  
***MY PARENTS***

My father was a soldier in Keri's army. When Keri was killed, his army dispersed. My father went to Persia together with Yepremkhan. Meanwhile, his wife and 3-year-old daughter had died of smallpox. My mother's husband had also died. The village priest married the widow and widower. In 1920, my parents moved to Baghdad, and in 1922, I was born. My mother had a son from her former husband, and we lived together in great love until 1955, when my father died. After two months, my mother went to Persia to see her brother, but she died on the way in Hamadan.

In 1934, I married Aram Harutyunian. He was born in the Kharagonis Village of Van. In 1915, they were deported from Van. He was 7 years old at the time.

The refugees went to Salmast on foot, then to Iraq. The English met them and led them to Baakuba. From there, they took them to Nahroumar and then to Basra. My husband was with his brother's, Abraham's, family. In Basra, he worked at a Russian's enterprise. After two years, the Russian arranged for my husband to be the postman of the military store. At that time, the Kurds and the Arabs began fighting. The English, who had ruled Iraq for 75 years, took my husband as an interpreter. When they returned, they gave my husband a better job. In 1920, he came to Baghdad from Basra. He worked for some years and then, in 1931, we were engaged. I married at the age of 14 and we had a family; I bore 5 children – Harutyun (1937), Anahit (1939), Vanakan

(1940), Hovsep (1950) and Margarit (1952). In 1965, my husband's brother, Abraham, died.

In 1971, we visited Western Armenia: we went from Iraq to Damascus, then to Lebanon, Aleppo, Iskenderun, Harpoot, Marash, Ayntap, Erzroom, Moosh, and Van. At Datvan we stayed one night. We saw Bingyol. We saw the fortress of Van, Shamiram's summer resort. We took a boat and visited the Island of Aghtamar. We entered the monastery, which is a masterpiece. Alas, the inner walls

have been painted, the icons had been marred, but the outer wall-sculptures were well preserved. Then we stayed in a hotel in Kars for three days. Then we went to Soviet Armenia by train, which is only one tenth of our historical Armenia. Alas, our lands! The Turks have seized all...

We settled in Los Angeles since 1974. Now I have my flat in the "Ararat" Home, in the section of the old-aged people. We're very comfortable and spend delightful and sweet days.

### 19 (334).

#### MARIAM MIRZAYAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1927, Tomarza)

##### *MOTHER KHATUN*

Mother Khatun was from Harpoot. She had a son named Nshan. During the deportation she went to live among Arabs and worked for them. For her work they fed her once daily.

One day two pretty girls came running to the vineyard and asked her: "Madame, are you Armenian?"

"Yes, I'm Armenian," she said joyfully as she was so glad to have seen Armenians.

"Is there a well here nearby?" asked the girls.

"Yes, there is a well from where we get water for the vineyard," said Khatun.

The girls said, "We were engaged to be married; they took away our Armenian fiancés and slaughtered them. Now these Arabs want to marry us. After our fiancés we

won't marry anyone else." Having said this, both of them rushed forward and threw themselves into the well.

At that moment two Arab riders came and said to Khatun: "Did two girls come here?"

"Yes, they did," she said, beside herself. "They just came and threw themselves into the well."

"Why did you show them the well?" the Arabs said and beat her ruthlessly.

Mother Khatun, shocked by the disaster, and hungry, lost consciousness and fell down.

She used to describe that event, crying: "Woe is me, for I didn't save the lives of those pretty young girls. I never thought they would put such an end to their lives."

### 20 (335).

#### YERVAND POLADIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1920, Aleppo)

##### *MY MOTHER'S SUFFERINGS*

I was born in 1920, in Aleppo, Syria. My mother told me what sufferings they had seen until they reached Der-Zor on foot. There, the Turks had shot her 17-year-old son before her eyes. My poor mother cried for him up to the end of her life. Then my mother had come to Aleppo, Syria. She lived in a camp for a while. Then she got married, and

I was born. A French ship took us to Constantinople and from there to Rumania. In 1956, we came from Rumania to Los Angeles. I was a shoe-maker; my wife was a dress-maker. Both of us worked. When my wife died, I came to "Ararat" Home. Our elders saw so much suffering and torture, but, thank God, we remained alive.

### 21 (336).

#### ANAHIT TIGRAN BOSNOYAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1922, Adana)

##### *MY MOTHER'S SORROW*

My mother, Marie Hakobian, was born in Adana but was married and had gone to Hadjn. In the days of the Armenian Genocide, the Turks had taken her four brothers near the edge of a ravine and had slaughtered

them all like goats... She had witnessed all that horrible scene from afar with her own eyes. She always told us about her poor brothers and wept frequently. I used to tell her: "Mother, did you remember your brothers again?"

22 (337).

**RAFIK SOUKIASSIAN'S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1937, Yerevan)**

***MY MOTHER'S NARRATIVE***

My mother, Aghounik Grigor Melkonian, was born in 1907, in the village of Ghernaghran, in the Bassen Region of Erzroom Province, Western Armenia. She often told us with tearful eyes about the massacre and the deportation. Her family had migrated with the other countrymen of Bassen to Eastern Armenia in the spring of 1919. The family consisted of 11 souls, her mother Mariam, her father Grigor and nine children.

When the armed Turks had attacked their village, the Armenians were unarmed and were obliged to run away to the mountains and valleys in order to join the Russian army. But they had not succeeded since the Turks had caught up with them and had driven them to the place called Kyopru Keoy (Bridge Village – Turk.), where there was a bridge built on a river. There, the harassed Armenians were met by the Turkish executioners, who, on horseback and armed with swords, had started to slaughter the Armenians and roll them down the bridge.

Finally my mother's family had reached near the bridge, where numerous Armenian deportees waited for their turn to cross the bridge and to be massacred. Fortunately, darkness had fallen and, at sunset, the

executioners used to stop the carnage and have a rest. At that time, my mother had seen with her own eyes how the whole river was flowing blood and that the human corpses were so numerous that the current of water had come out of the river-bed and human blood flowed down the bridge.

Then my mother's father, Grigor, had called a gendarme and had requested him in Turkish to take all their golden ornaments and to let them free of that bloody slaughterhouse. The Turk gendarme had agreed and had said: "I'll let you go, but if they catch you once more and bring you here again, I'll not be able to help you." And he had let free my mother's family, but my mother's eight-year-old sick sister had not been able to move, and they had left her on the river bank and had moved away. My mother always remembered her sick sister's cries, who implored them not to abandon her. They had fled on foot toward Tiflis. Out of the 11 souls, however, only my mother and her father had remained alive; the other 9 members of her family had died on the road of exile. My poor mother always remembered her lost kinsfolk and wept bitterly...

23 (338).

**ANNA MOR'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1916, Kayseri)**

***IN MEMORY OF ANNA***

There had been four brothers and one sister in my father's family. Their sister Anna was a very beautiful girl. During World War I the four brothers were taken to the Turkish army and were slaughtered. During those troublesome days a Turk requested Anna to marry him. Anna's mother said: "Marry him: you'll have a comfortable life."

But Anna said: "I won't marry a Turk, I'll go to exile together with you," and she joined the deportees. On the

way from Kayseri, they separated the men, tied their hands, killed them with axes, and then threw them into a pit. They took Anna away and the next morning they brought her back; she had been tortured and had become disfigured.

Anna couldn't stand the disgrace and she threw herself into the river. My mother named me Anna in memory of her.

24 (339).

**VARD PAROUYR ALEXANIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1931, Cairo)**

***MY AUNT BERSABÉ***

When I became six years old, I began to think: "Why all the people around me, in our family, are women?"

Since only my father, Parouyr, was a male person.

I asked my grandmother: "Granny, where is my

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\* This testimony was written by the son of the eyewitness survivor and is being kept now at the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

grandfather?”

She answered: “The Turks came and took him away...”

I asked my father’s paternal aunt, Bersabé, who gave me the same answer.

I thought with my small mind: “Where have those Turks taken the males of our family, why aren’t they with us?”

My father’s paternal aunt, Bersabé, was a very sweet person. Once she started to relate her sad life story, that the Turks had taken her husband away when she was a mother of seven children. Another day, two Turkish soldiers had entered their beautiful house in Erzroom and had proposed her to submit to their carnal whims. She, as an honorable Armenian woman of patriarchal traditions, had refused. The Turkish soldiers had taken hold of her eldest son, aged 16, and had killed him on the spot. They had asked her anew. She had refused again. The Turks had killed the other six children in front of her eyes. The whole house had been stained with blood. The Turks had approached her; they had torn her garments, had stripped

her and had ordered her to dance. In her extreme grief, she had refused. One of the Turks had hit her on the head with his yataghan and had wounded her seriously. She had fallen down covered with blood. The Turks had thought that she had also died; they had left the house...

And thus my poor aunt Bersabé had a large scar on her head and had always an awful and pitiful appearance. She always told us: “Children, do not force me to recount all these events, I lose my sleep and I have terrible nightmares...”

So, our elderly people told us about the sufferings they had endured and witnessed, the massacres, the genocide, the carnage of innocent people...

But my mother Satenik, who was born in Trapizon, in 1914, always educated us with willpower and told us: “Tomorrow everything will be all right,” while my father, Parouyr, inculcated in us a sense of accuracy and dignity and used to tell us: “Son, your word should be stronger than your signature.”

## 25 (340).

### MARIAM MIRZAYAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1927, Tomarza)

#### *MY MOTHER-IN-LAW*

My mother-in-law had run away to Batoumi from Kars, together with her son Souren. After staying there for a month or two, they had come back to Kars when things seemed to have calmed down.

When they arrived, they found their house destroyed. The neighbors said: “Your husband came; he searched for you, but went back, since he could not find you.”

My mother-in-law’s husband had been a soldier of General Andranik.

The poor woman got deeply confused, went to

Istanbul, appealed to the Armenian Patriarchate, but could not find her husband.

Then she thought: “It’s wartime, I don’t know what will happen if I go back to Kars?” So she remained in Istanbul, together with her son Souren, and lived in Samatia [a district in Istanbul inhabited mostly by Armenians]. Thus, husband and wife never found each other again.

How many people have lost each other in various ways!

## 26 (341).

### AZATOUHI PETROSSIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1926, Cairo)

#### *MY MOTHER-IN-LAW*

During the days of the Armenian Genocide, my mother-in-law had been deported together with her seven children. On the road of the exile, the Turks had abducted her 4 daughters and had slaughtered her 2 sons. My poor mother-in-law, the mother of so many

children, was left with only one son, who later became my husband.

The poor woman cried and lamented, several times a day, over her lost children, but to no avail. Thousands and thousands of mothers like her had lost their children...

27 (342).

**NOURITSA KYURKDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1903, Ayntap)**  
***PARANDZEM'S REVENGE***

One day, on the road of deportation, they kidnapped a pretty girl named Parandzem. She was engaged to be married. The Turk took her to his house. He had a wife and she was going to be the second. Some time passed. One day the first wife said to her brother-in-law: "How long will he live with this gâvur ghzi (daughter of Christian – Turk.)?"

"What can we do?" said he.

"Every night the gâvur ghzi drinks sherbet. Let's mix some poison with it and kill her."

Actually Parandzem had been watching them through the keyhole and heard what they said.

In the evening the maid-servant came, took something out of a piece of paper to put in the sherbet, but Parandzem saw it and said: "What are you doing?"

"The Turk khanoum ordered me to kill you," said the maid-servant.

The girl began to cry. She cried for a long time, then decided to go out and try to find her relatives. She wrapped herself in an old charshaf and went out. She went and

saw many refugee women lying on the roadsides. She began looking for her mother. She saw a woman lying in old worn-out clothes. She asked: "Mother, haven't you got any one that you're lying here all alone?"

"No, I have no one. I'm all alone. Soon I'll die."

The girl said: "Think well, didn't you have a daughter?"

The mother recognized her daughter. They hugged each other and cried. The mother was too weak to stand this joy. Her heart stopped and she died.

The young woman's fiancée looked for her, found her, and, seeing her condition, said: "Let's get married. Both of us have remained alone. It's not your fault whatever has happened to you."

The girl said: "No, I won't go back to the Turk, nor shall I come with you. There's a snake in my belly."

She went and remained all alone in a room. She wanted to get rid of the child that she was bearing. As she gave birth to the child, she strangled it with her own hands, then she drank poison and died.

28 (343).

**GAREGIN TOUROUDJIKIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1903, Harpoot, Kghi)**  
***TIROUHI FROM KGHI***

I remember in 1914 they gathered the Armenian men and took them to the army, and they killed them on the way. My father came from America either in December or in January. Our village headman, Kemal bey, came with the ghaymagham and wanted to take away my father and uncle. My father said: "We have just arrived, we are very tired, give us a few days. Let's take our baths and rest a little..." They went away.

Immediately my father and uncle left for France.

They gathered the men from Tigranakert, Kghi, Moosh, Khnous and took them to the mountains of Erzroom-Gharakhay (about fifty kilometers from Erzroom), which are the highest mountains in Turkey. They made them all write letters to their families and then killed them with bayonets. Among those Armenians, twelve had remained under the corpses alive. They came to our village of Darman, to our house. My father and uncle had escaped, so now my mother was the head of the family. I and my mother lived alone. Our house was on the edge of the village. My mother knew that those who sheltered deserters were punished by the government. But what could she do. She said: "I'll open the door, you come in silently."

My mother opened the door and took in the twelve men. There was no electricity then. We used lamps. One of the soldier's feet was frozen. Mother brought a big bowl of melted butter, put the man's foot on it and tore away the sock. The man's skin came off with the sock. The man fainted. We had yukliks in our houses, which were secret passages to the neighbor's houses. Mother taught them how to use them in case of emergency. I remember, my mother used to put rags, and the deserters warmed their feet.

Kamil bey's house was opposite ours. My mother's name was Tirouhi. He knew that Tirouhi's husband had run away and there were no adult males in the house. One day he saw a man from his window and sent word to the prefect to come to Tirouhi's house, as there were deserters there. The prefect came with several officers and summoned the Armenian chief of the village. My mother met them and said: "Efendis, there are no deserters in the house. The government's hands are long, you can search the house."

My mother had already taught them where to hide – they had either to hide in the hayloft, the stable or go to the neighbor's house.

They encircled the house: two soldiers stayed outside guarding, the major and the prefect entered the house with several gendarmes and searched the house. On the table they saw the ashtray and in it [there were] some cigarette stubs. The prefect said to my mother: “Halal olsun sana! (Good for you! – Turk.). There are people in the house, we searched, but could not find them. Good for you.”

Thus my mother kept them till March. In 1936, when I went to Aleppo, I began working at a construction site where everyone narrated his own experiences. Once I

told about my mother, about how she had kept twelve deserters. A man with yellow moustaches, about 40-50 years old, stopped eating and was listening carefully. All of a sudden he jumped to his feet, hugged me and began kissing me on the face.

“Boys,” he said, “I was listening attentively and was amazed as to how well he remembered his life. Really, his mother, Tirouhi, kept twelve men till spring, one of them had his foot frozen, and I was among them. My name is Pilipos, I’m from Charsanjak.”

## 29 (344).

### GEVORG CHIFTCHIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Moussa Dagh)

*VICTORIA FROM KESSAB*

In 1915 the Turks had kidnapped an Armenian girl, and they could find her nowhere. It turned out that they had taken her to Damascus and given her to the Arab mullah. The mullah said: “If ever you utter a word that you’re Armenian, I’ll slaughter you like a sheep.”

The frightened girl lived there for years without uttering a single word. She gave birth to five sons and two daughters. The mullah died.

One day the mother called her sons and said: “Take a knife and kill me.”

The sons said: “Mother, what’s the matter with you? Are you out of your mind?”

Then mother began to tell: “I’m not made of stone or wood, I’m Armenian. Now, as your father has died, I can tell you the truth. I am an Armenian from Kessab, near Moussa Dagh. Our house was a two-storeyed one, next to the razed monastery. My father’s and mother’s names are this and that. Go, my sons, search and find them.”

The five sons took a car and drove to Kessab. They said nothing to anyone. They searched the locale as their mother had told them. They found the monastery and the two-storeyed house next to it. They saw a woman descending the stairs. They approached her, “By God, this is the house our mother described. May we come in?”

“You’re welcome.”

“Don’t be afraid, mother; we want to ask you something. What’s your surname?”

“My husband isn’t at home. He’s gone to the village,” said the frightened woman.

That woman had two brothers who had been sitting in the next room. The woman went in and said to her brothers: “Five Arabs have come.”

“Have you any tobacco hidden at home?” they asked.

“No.”

“Then why are you afraid? Come, let’s go and see what they want.”

They came in, greeted each other and sat down. One of them says: “Who is the landowner, who is Abraham?”

“I am.”

“We’ve come to ask you your father’s name, mother’s name, all your relatives’ names.”

The man said all his relatives’ names, one by one, and then he added: “And there is one who was lost.”

The boys said: “By God, this is it, there’s no doubt.” Then he said: “What was your lost sister’s name?”

“Her name was Victoria.”

“Do you know? You’re our uncle. Your sister Victoria is our mother. You see, all the names our mother had mentioned are the names you mentioned.”

The man was stupefied.

The boys said: “Now let’s go. We’ll take you to your sister Victoria.”

They went back to Damascus, together with the men. They said: “Let’s see if your sister will recognize you.”

The boys’ mother came and said: “You’re welcome, but I don’t know who you are.”

One of the boys approached his uncles and said: “Speak to her in your own dialect, call her by her name.”

“Lalo, this is Abraham, this is Ohannes, aren’t you Victoria?”

As the woman heard these words, she embraced them and fainted.

The eldest son said: “Mother, we fulfilled your dream, our father did not do it; we did it. Tomorrow we’ll go to Kessab.”

The next day all of them took a car and went to Kessab, together with Victoria.

As they reached Kessab, the sons said: “Mother, you said you could find your house.”

The woman began walking along her familiar road and came to the ruined monastery and next to it she saw their two-storeyed house. She ran and began kissing the walls... Abraham and Ohannes slaughtered a sheep. They ate and drank and feasted.

Their dreams came true. I wish you the same. Let the dreams of the whole world come true.

30 (345).

**KIRAKOS DANIELIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1923, Balou)**

***KIRAKOS FROM BALOU***

I was born in Balou in 1923. The Turks killed my parents. In 1929 my uncle took me and my younger brother to Syria and gave us to the orphanage in Nor Gyugh, where we remained for three years. Then they planned to send us to America, but we did not go. We came to Aleppo, to our elder brother who lived in Zeytounkhan.

In 1933 we went to Djzire, the village of Telbrak, where many Kurd-Armenians lived: they were Armenians but they had lost their language; they did not speak Armenian. We lived there till 1947. My brother remained there but I came to Armenia with my family. On the way to Armenia our first son was born. They brought us to Sissian, village of Sarnakounk. The third day of our arrival, I began working for the kolkhoz. They loved me very much; they would say: "Kirakos is unique in our kolkhoz."

But in 1949, one night they came, without asking anything, told us that we would be transported to some other place. They put us in a truck and drove away. They took us to a railway station, put us in a freight-wagon and took us to Altayski Kray (Siberia). Me, my wife Mayranoush and my son Vazgen, we did not know what crime we were guilty of. The militia handed us over to the KGB. We were ordered to live in the village of

Andreevka, Slavgorodsk Region, and we had no right to go anywhere. We had come from a warm country, so we did not have warm clothes. In winter the weather was -20oC, and I worked on farms. I did not have valenki as the people used to wear there in winter. I used to wrap my feet with sacks to prevent them from freezing. I did not have anything like an overcoat to keep me warm. We sold my wife's all jewelry, then the clothes from her dowry, and bought us warm clothes. So we lived somehow. After Stalin's death the conditions improved. They set us free in 1956. Till now I don't know what crime I was guilty of. I was a simple, guiltless man. I left my brothers abroad, came to my fatherland in order to get back our lands from Turkey, to make our country prosperous, because the representatives who came from Armenia to encourage us to repatriate used to repeat: "Come to Armenia, gather in Armenia so that we may get back our lands from Turkey." We believed their words and came to Armenia.

Then four children were born to me. I'm very anxious about our lands occupied by the Turks. As long as the Gharabagh problem is not solved, our land problem will never be solved. I'm extremely disappointed. If my children go to America, I'll go as well. Before, I blamed those who emigrated; now, I have nothing to say.

31 (346).

**VARDOUHI VOSKIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1925, Tomarza)**

***BLIND ZATIK***

My father's friend was an elderly man, named Zatik agha. One day Zatik agha came to us and said to my father: "Nikoghos, today I went to the church and prayed, saying, 'Oh, God, you're going to ask me about my sixty years' sins, that's all right, but I'm going to

ask you about my forty-year sufferings'," he said and began to cry.

During the deportation, the Turks had beaten him so brutally that he had lost his eyesight; he had been blind then for forty years.

32 (347).

**ANNIK ASHJIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1910, Adana)**

***VARDERES***

Varderes Garagyoizian was a relative of ours. After finishing school in Istanbul he was sent to Van by the government, to teach Turkish to the Turkish boys. The

Turkish director of the school said: "Varderes is an Armenian name; we must change your name and call you Vatanié, so that the pupils won't guess that you're Armenian."

Thus he continued to work as a teacher. Once he noticed a woman wrapped in black clothes, who came and stood before the ruins on the corner of the street and watched him secretly.

And one day she sent him some bread, yoghurt and boiled eggs with her son. Later he found out that the woman had been an Armenian whom the Turks had kidnapped during the Genocide...

**33 (348).**  
**RONIA TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY\***  
**(B. 1920, Aleppo)**  
**MEMOIRS FROM DER-ZOR**

In 1928, my father was given a job in Der-Zor, and our family moved there.

In Der-Zor, we met survivors who had been rescued by miracle. Most of them had forgotten their mother tongue or had become apostates under pressure, but they considered themselves Armenians and, in their souls, lived as Armenians. Each of them was a sea of grief; there was no end to their suffering.

The Armenian women used to tell us how they had been sent into exile, how they had suffered on the roads. They had seen how their folks had fallen victims of hunger, disease, plunder, rape and abuse. They told us how they had reached Der-Zor – leaving their younger sisters and brothers behind them on the road. They had gone even further than Der-Zor – until Sheddadié. They told all these things and cried, cursing their fate.

Mother and me, we listened to them in tears.

Gohar was a beauty, the daughter of a family from Adabazar. On the road of exile, her doctor fiancé had not parted from her, but they had hardly gone a few hours' distance from the town, when the Turks killed and dismembered him before her eyes.

Khatoun was from Konia. Attributing her parents' sad death to fate, she had become reconciled to it, but she could not forget her six-year-old brother, whom she had left on the road. She used to say, shedding bitter tears, "I couldn't walk any more." My brother was not able to walk due to hunger and exhaustion. I carried him on my back for a few days, but my feet were swollen, I couldn't carry anything. My brother's moans of hunger deafened my ears. My steps became slower. The whip stroke fell on my feet, and I fell down. My brother fell off my back. I was not able to pick him up. My swollen feet began to bleed. I left him there and continued my way sobbing ...

Araxy was from Tekerdagh. She used to say, "My mother had gone from Bursa to Tekerdagh to marry my father, who had died a year before the exile. Mother's brother, Aram, came to take us to Bursa, so that we might be together with my uncles and aunts there, where they would deport us (we were brought to Aleppo on foot

and then on to Der-Zor). We were deported within three days. We were 4: uncle, mother, me and my brother. My uncle did his best to help us and the others: he helped those who had little children carrying one or two in his arms, he took and carried loads for old people, said an encouraging word to others. We were near Meskené. All of a sudden a horrible scene opened before us: in a small cave a young girl was crucified on the wall, completely nude, her abundant hair on her shoulders. We were looking in terror, when my mother said: "Look, she has just died; her body is not swollen yet." The caravan that had passed these places a week earlier had given many victims in Meskené. Our caravan also gave ten victims. My fourteen-year-old brother, who had fallen ill on the road and walked with difficulty, died there. Four days later we were taken to Rakka. There, we remained in tents for ten days. My uncle was a handsome young man, with a blond beard, tall and broad shouldered. He attracted everybody's attention with his appearance and especially with his kindness, and helpful soul. One night, two gendarmes came and stood before our tent. My uncle became pale; mother and me, we began to tremble. One of the gendarmes said, "Come out, gâvur, Ahmed chavoush wants you." My uncle went with them. Soon we heard whip lashes. My uncle was calling for help. But who could approach Ahmed chavoush's tent? Who would dare to come out of the tent at night? In the silence of the night we heard the sound of whipping and my uncle's voice calling, "Help! Help!" My mother wanted to go and ask the executioners not to beat him, not to kill my uncle. The people in the neighboring tent did not allow her. "Where do you go, sister? They'll torture you, too," they said. My mother was crying, was pulling her hair and was rolling on the ground. Then she lost consciousness. The strokes of the whip were heard for a long time. My uncle's voice became weaker and weaker. I was crying for my uncle and my mother. The neighbors sprayed water on my mother's face. She opened her eyes, said "Aram, my brother," and closed her eyes again. My uncle's voice stopped, and the whip strokes stopped. I

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\* This and the subsequent several other testimonies were communicated to me by the resident of the "Ararat" Armenian national old-age nursing home in Los Angeles, the artist Ronia Terzian, who was endowed with an exceptional talent in embroidery.

did not know what had happened. In the morning, fear-stricken, I went to the river to bring water with a small tin. I saw my uncle's naked corpse in the rubbish dump. His body was all black and blue, parts of his body were torn, blood had run and frozen. But I saw his face, which was luminous and smiling, as though he was not dead. After four days, my mother also died.

Haykanoush's narrative was also shocking: "We went into exile together with my aunt's family (mother's sister). We were five – two sisters, one brother, father and mother. I was the eldest of the children, 14 years old. On the way to Der-Zor, my father died of typhus. We remained fatherless. We were driven from place to place. We had many victims and waited for our own agony. One night, we were in a half-destroyed stable. We and our aunts were lying. Suddenly some people, lamps in their hands, rushed in, threw aside our covers and began looking at our faces attentively, then they held my aunt's daughter by the hand and pulled Maral out. My aunt and Maral began to scream. Maral threw her hands around her mother's neck. Both of them were crying. Mother asked the gendarmes not to touch her daughter. They struck mother on the arms, pulled out the

girl, gave a heavy blow with the handle of a rifle on my aunt's head; the poor woman fell down on the ground her head bleeding. They took away Maral. My poor aunt had smeared some soot on her fifteen-year-old Maral's face, had dressed her in rags and covered her head with a black kerchief, had made her walk the whole way bent down like an old woman. In spite of that, Maral was taken away. The next day she returned sad and afflicted. She threw her arms around her mother's neck and cried, she cried for her father, who had gone to serve in the Turkish army, for her small brothers and sisters, who had remained on the road unburied, she cried for the wound her mother had received on the head and for her lost honor. The following day, Maral went to the river under the pretence of bringing water, but she did not return. My aunt could not endure her last child's loss. One day, after we had set off, she fell on the desert sands. We could not throw even a handful of earth on her. We were being taken in groups towards Sheddadié along the banks of the river. From afar, we saw smoke rising from a pile. When we approached, we saw two small hands, which had not burnt yet. In the desert, they had gathered the Armenian orphans and they were burning them."

### 34 (349).

#### GEVORG HEKIMIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1937, Beirut)

#### *SEDRAK FROM AYNTAP*

In our large family, there are four Hekimians named Gevorg. You say, why? It's a very sad story.

I had seven great uncles: one of them was called Gevorg. Because of his kindness and calm nature, he was loved and revered by all our relatives, neighbors and friends. They sent Gevorg into exile, towards Der-Zor, as well as the others. In Der-Zor uncle Gevorg's family, like many others, fell under unbearable conditions; hungry and helpless, they counted their days. One day an Arab came with a woman and, speaking with mimics and gestures, made uncle Gevorg understand that the Turks intended to kill them all, and asked him to give them one of his sons. He said: "We'll take care of him; at least let him be saved," and pointed to Sedrak.

My uncle Gevorg and his wife did not agree, but the Arab and the woman came so often that, at last, they agreed to give them one of their sons. They though at least let one of them would live. The Arabs took Sedrak by the hand and took him away.

The whole way to the Arab's tent Sedrak cried; they reached there, he cried, at night he cried, in the morning he cried, did not eat, and did not drink. The Arabs thought that the child might die of grief, so they took him back to the Armenian camp, but what did they see: the Turks had

burnt down all of them.

When Sedrak saw the half-burned corpses of his parents, brothers and sisters, he became seized with horror, he ran and clung to the Arabs. Seeing this entire heartbreaking scene, the Arab woman began to cry and took the boy back to their tent.

Many years passed. Sedrak grew up in the desert. Hearing that many Armenians lived in Aleppo, he went there and learned to drive a car, but he had made a habit of repeating the names of his parents, brothers, sisters and uncles...

One day my grandpa Simon, who was a well-known brandy distiller, saw a young man in front of his shop, looking attentively at him. For several days the same youth came, stood before his shop and looked at him. Finally my grandpa said to Rouben, his son: "Look, it's already so many days that young man comes, stands there and stares at me. I don't know what he is up to."

Rouben watched the young man carefully and suddenly cried with joy: "Father, he is our Sedrak."

My grandpa Simon and Rouben ran out of the shop and embraced the boy. Then Sedrak gave the names of all his relatives, one by one. "You're my uncle Simon, you're Rouben, he is Hovhannes and I am Sedrak,

Gevorg's son." Then, shedding bitter tears, he told how they had burned them all in Der-Zor.

So they decided whoever gave birth to a son, he would be named Gevorg. This is why we have four Gevorg Hekimians in our family.

Now Sedrak lives in America, he's about ninety and in his advanced age he remembers his sad childhood.

The memory of our innocent victims never gives me a rest; that's why, beginning from the sixties, I devoted

myself to our National Movement. In 1965 I was arrested, together with my friends, and we were sent into exile, to the Mordovian uninhabited steppes, as we had dared to secretly publish the monthly "In Behalf of Fatherland"...

Later, when we were set free and returned to Yerevan, our group for the "Armenian Case" did not retreat from our ideas. The volunteers of the "Armenian Case," together with the freedom fighters, are still fighting in Artsakh and on the borders of Armenia...

### 35 (350).

#### BAROUNAK PAPAZIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1906, Yozghat)

#### *SAMVEL INJEYAN FROM CHAT VILLAGE*

In 1915, when they drove us out of our hometown Boghazlian (Yozghat region) to slaughter us, at the same time they deported the Armenians from the village of Chat, which was an hour and a half's distance from our town. They separated the men and took them to the valley with their hands tied. A father and his son had been tied together. The son, Samvel, said: "Father, I'm going to run away. I don't want to be killed by an axe; I'd rather die from a bullet."

Somehow Samvel untied his hands and ran away. The next day he reached the village, entered the house of a Turk, brought down the gun and the bullets hanging on the wall, went to the kitchen, took some yukha and went away eating. On his way he saw four Turkish gendarmes carrying with goods robbed from the Armenians. They were singing: "Bashi beylik, mali yagma, Ermeni" (The Armenian's head is for the state, his property is for plunder – Turk.).

Our dear Samvel! With one bullet he killed two of the gendarmes, and then killed the other two. He gathered their guns and went to the forest.

Other Armenian youths also ran away and came to the forest: Samvel's group became a troop of 360 persons. They sent notes to Turkish aghas, threatened them and ordered to give them 'this' and 'that.' Thus, for five years, Samvel fought against the Turks. There was also a girl in Samvel's group who fought with them: Samvel married her.

When the truce was declared, Kemal came to power and peace prevailed... The Armenians returned back to their houses. Kemal summoned Karapet Sarafian and said: "Samvel killed and destroyed for five years. Whatever the Turks did, the same was done to them in exchange. He is not to blame. Now I'll give you a letter to take to him. Let him lay down his arms. It's enough. Let Samvel go and live wherever he likes."

Kemal put four soldiers at Sarafian's disposal and sent them. At that time Samvel had surrounded a Turkish village and he was in a cave nearby. Sarafian sent word

to Samvel. He said: "Let him come in."

Karapet Sarafian entered the cave and saw Samvel seated and the Turk aghas standing before him, their hands on their chests. They were waiting to see whether or not Samvel would order his soldiers to set fire to their homes.

Samvel saw Karapet Sarafian, got up and kissed his hand. Karapet said to him: "Look here, son, Kemal told me to give this letter to you." Kemal said: "Put down your arms; come to me and I'll send you to live wherever you like."

Samvel said: "Eh, father, if I give my weapons to the Turk, he will kill me. As long as I have my weapons, I will fight."

Together with the gendarmes, Sarafian came back to Kemal and told him Samvel's response.

At that time the French army was in Cilicia. Samvel said to his friends: "Boys, let's go to Cilicia."

That night Samvel's wife gave birth to a son. His soldiers said: "Let's take your son with us." He said: "No, the child will disturb us. For the sake of three kilos of flesh, I cannot sacrifice 360 people."

Together with his warriors, Samvel came out of the cave and headed towards Kayseri. The Turks followed them and soon surrounded them. Samvel was an excellent marksman – he could shoot an egg three hundred meters away. The Turks saw them, they got frightened and said: "They are carnivores, when dawn comes, they'll slaughter us. Better let's open the ring, let them go away." The Turkish soldiers opened a passage and Samvel went away with his boys and reached Cilicia. He went to the French general, introduced himself and said: "We are both Christians."

The general said: "Change your clothes, change your guns and join our army. There's a bridge over the Djahan River. Tomorrow morning, at 6 o'clock, a Turkish train will pass over it. You must do away with it."

Samvel said: "Tonight I'll take care of the bridge."

Snow had covered the land. Samvel dressed four of his soldiers with white shirts and said: "Two of you will

pass to the other side of the bridge and two of you will stay here, attach a fuse to the bridge and blow it up.”

The boys approached the bridge. The Turk guards were asleep. They prepared everything. In the morning the train came to pass over the bridge, but it exploded and the train with it. Samvel went to the French general and said: “It’s done: the bridge has been blown out.”

The general was surprised. Airplanes were

dispatched, and it was confirmed that the bridge was destroyed. The general thought: “If give them clothes and guns, they’ll become too dangerous.” Samvel’s warriors entered the French barracks, but the general gave them neither clothes nor arms. Samvel said: “As a Christian I gave myself up to you, but you betrayed me. Open the doors, I’ll give an order and my boys will go away.” Samvel got a heart attack and died.

### 36 (351).

#### ARTASHES BALABANIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1926, Moussa Dagh)

#### *MY FATHER’S NARRATIVES*

My father Movses Balabanian has told me the following: when the French army attacked the Turks, Arakel used to disappear sometimes for a short time and sometimes for a long time. I always warned him that when he went somewhere he should not go alone. One evening I found out again that Arakel had gone. No one knew where he had gone. The time was already quite late, almost midnight, and I decided to go and look for him. Then I heard his footsteps. He wore French military shoes, with large nails underneath, which were nailed on the hells in circular rows like a horse-shoe. When Arakel walked, our Gevorg used to say: “The blind horse is coming; the blind horse is going...”

One day Arakel went to Bitias to take the news. It was getting dark when he began to climb the path to the village. When he approached the village, the Turkish guard shouted: “Hey, who’s that? Stop!” Arakel fired in the direction of the sound.

The dying Turkish guard moaned, “Help, I’m dying!”

Arakel began running along the road. After a while, another guard shouted: “Stop, who’s coming?” Again he fired in the direction of the voice and again killed someone. A third guard was killed in the same manner. Then his brain told him that he should not go along the road. He got off the road and, with great difficulty, found his way home and, after that, he decided not to go far from home all alone.

That night confusion spread among the Turkish troop in that sector. They thought that the French had attacked them, so they abandoned their posts and ran away.

Later a Turkish officer told us the following: “I was a signaler then and, together with the soldiers at my disposal, I was watching the Bitias-Sandrank roads. That night I had gone to Bitias to see the major. All of a sudden two soldiers fell into my room, out of breath, and said that the French had attacked our post guards, had killed three of them and had moved forward. We had got news, earlier, that there were foreign [French] soldiers

on Moussa Dagh...”

My father told us all this and, at the same time, laughed wholeheartedly. Poor Turks, how could they know that it was our skilled shooter Arakel, with his French boots on. We, the Moussa-Daghians, we were much fewer than the Turkish army. We were few, but we were courageous.

Some other time we were still fighting on Moussa Dagh, when it began raining cats and dogs. The enemy began climbing up the hill. From the sounds of the guns we understood that the enemy was climbing nearer and nearer, but the command was not to move from our places.

Together with a dozen warriors, I was watching an outlet from Bitias to the mountain, towards Gyarmer Sher (Red Rock – Moussa Dagh dialect). There was no movement from the other side. We already knew that the enemy had found our weak point to climb from Kabousié.

That night, the night of the great battle, a messenger brought the following order: “To keep the guard posts top secret, no smoking, no talking aloud, no kindling fire. Those who violated this order would be shot on the spot.” We were to speak by touching hands, and the one who came from afar was to make the sound of a bird as a password.

It was past midnight, when suddenly turbulent noises arose; I understood that they were shooting different kinds of guns. Gevorg whispered: “Alas, the enemy has climbed up to Damlajek.”

I gave an ear and began listening very carefully. The shooting sounds began to withdraw, as if they were going lower and lower. I approached the boys and whispered in each one’s ear: “Boys, the enemy is retreating, listen carefully.”

Soon everybody was convinced that it was right.

In the morning the messenger came and brought us provision. He said: “Tonight the enemy ran away. We have no losses. We have captured a great number of

bullets, gun, a horse, a mule and a little flour.”

After that the enemy wouldn't dare to attack us.

A countryman of mine, Yessayi Gabagian, later told me: “On the day of the great battle, in the evening the enemy had quite approached our positions, but under the strong counter-attack of our brave warriors the enemy was compelled to retreat. That night the enemy camped on the place called Senjaren Tayre. Petros Demlakian called thirty of us and said: ‘My lion brothers, if the enemy stays on this mountain this night, tomorrow will be our end. With our forces let's give them such a blow that they will never forget. Go, all of you get guns, bullets, pistols, hand-bombs and return here in two hours.’

All of us went to fulfill the order and returned to the place in one hour.

Petros called Father Abraham and said: ‘Father, pray for us, tomorrow you won't be able to find our corpses for your ceremonies.’

The priest prayed, blessed us and went away. We were left alone. He ordered and said: ‘Now, just lie down here and go to sleep.’

We hugged each other and slept in the open air. How long we had been asleep, I don't remember, but someone began poking me: ‘Get up, get up.’

We all got up. Petros spoke and said: ‘Brothers, now we'll go towards the Turks. We'll surround them and leave an outlet for them to the lower parts. We'll approach their camp five by five. You must find a suitable position, where there are holes, pits, rocks and trenches. I'll give the order in French; you will fire on the camp and hide yourselves. They'll run away frantically.’

We approached the camp when almost everybody was asleep. A few askyars were seated around the fire and talking. We all settled down, when we heard the signal. We got ready. In the mysterious and silent darkness we heard Petros's order in French: ‘Attention, fire!’

We opened fire on the enemy from six places from a distance of twenty-thirty meters. At that moment their commander shouted with all his might: ‘Boys, save yourselves!’

The enemy began to run away firing on each other. The commander's yelling, the firing of the Turkish askyars, the explosion of the bombs provoked such a turmoil as if the firmament had collapsed. And we, according to the former order, lay down in our places. In ten minutes everything was over, and we went back stealthily to our camp, safe and sound and in very high spirits.

When we got back to our place, Petros said: ‘Now go and sleep calmly.’

We went ‘home’ and slept calmly.”

\* Andreassian, Tigran. *The Banishment of Zeytoun and Svedia's Revolt [Zeytouni taragroutiune ev Suedio apstamboutiune]*. Aleppo, 1935, p. 66 (in Armenian).

This page is missing in Tigran Andreassian's book, but there is a sentence there: “The following morning we learned that the enemy had left, after passing a hungry night in the rain...”<sup>\*</sup> I asked him why he had not written about it in his book. Yessayi ammi answered: “I told him this event several times and asked him to write it in his book. He promised to, but I could not find out whether he wrote it or not.”

Our Hakob Tonikian from Moussa Dagħ has told me the following: “I was a Turkish askyar. I ran away by night. I walked and walked for several days, I don't remember how long. I used to walk only by night, sometimes like a blind person, sometimes like a cat and sometimes like a thief. I was hungry, thirsty, barefooted and half naked. My clothes gave me the appearance of neither a soldier nor a peasant, as they were worn out when they were given to me; probably they had belonged to a dead soldier. They weren't clean and they stunk. I washed them. There were four holes in them, due to bullets. One evening I noticed from my hiding place that the Turkish army was moving towards Moussa Dagħ. With great caution I began following the Turkish soldiers, hiding carefully, in order not to be noticed. I followed them the whole night. At dawn I reached the vicinity of Bitias, which was familiar to me. That day I slept in thick bushes. When I woke up, the sun was setting and I heard voices of soldiers and cannonade. When it got dark, the cannonade stopped. From the low Bitias orchards I began climbing up slowly. How I climbed, now I don't remember. Fortunately, by chance I had left the enemy frontier behind and approached our positions. Suddenly I heard a voice, which was speaking in our dialect. Again and again I lent an ear and was convinced that they were friends, so I began running toward the voice: ‘Boy, who are you?’

I could hardly utter: ‘It's me, boy, it's me.’

I sat down and could not get up any more. They were calling me from their places, shouting: ‘Come here, be quick, come...’

But I could not speak any more or get up. At that moment I noticed that my feet were awfully swollen. It seemed I was tied to the ground. Two brave boys approached me. I could hardly utter, ‘Water...’

I don't remember the rest. When I opened my eyes, I saw that I was in bed and an elderly woman was washing the wounds on my feet. She brought me a bowl of hot soup. I ate it and, after a short while, I fell asleep again. In eight days I was already well and asked to be sent to the front. In a few days I was given a gun and assigned to a detachment. I went and fought till the end of our heroic war.”

37 (352).

**RONIA TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1920, Aleppo)**  
***THE FRENCH AND CILICIA***

Hakob Kherlakian was a very rich and patriotic Armenian. During the liberation struggle of Cilicia, in 1920-1921, he supplied the French army with provisions for months so that they would not leave Cilicia.

One day, Hakob Kherlakian thought of organizing a great ball and invited the French officers and the rich Armenian families in order to find out, with the help of women, if they would stay or leave. And the French

officers had answered, "No, Madame, we will stay here." But the same night, the French soldiers covered the hoofs of their horses with felt and departed secretly. Hakob Kherlakian had run after them, but the French officers hadn't even turned back their heads. Soon after, the Turks invaded the Armenian localities and beheaded Hakob Kherlakian. They put his head on a rod and took it from district to district celebrating their victory.

38 (353).

**RONIA TERZIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1920, Aleppo)**  
***THE GREAT ARMENIAN-SUPPORTERS***

A number of cherished Danish personalities have written their names in golden letters in the history of the father-deprived and mother-deprived Armenian children in the years of the Armenian Genocide, among them miss Karen Yeppé, who dedicated her whole life to the care of Armenian orphans and, therefore, the Armenian school in Aleppo has been named after her "Karen Yeppé Lyceum."

Miss Maria Jacobson and Miss Karen Peterson founded the educational institution "Trchnots Booy'n" (The Birds' Nest – Arm.) in the mountainous village of Zuk, in Lebanon, and subsequently in the village of Jibeyl, near Beirut.

The Swedish Alma Juhanson, the Estonian Heduk Byul, the Scotswoman Agnes Salmond, the Swiss Jacob

Gyunzler, who was named "The Orphans' Father," these and many other devoted people nursed thousands of Armenian orphans. These children were educated, grew up, learned trades, then they got married and started families under the patronage of these great humanists.

And finally, among the great Armenian-supporters were such renowned individuals as Doctor Johannes Lepsius, James Bryce and many other devoted philanthropists.

Every year, sixty thousand dollars were sent from America for the needy orphans.

Subsequently, the Danes handed over "Trchnots Booy'n" to the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, in Antelias-Beirut.

39 (354).

**JOHN GYURDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1938, Ghamishli)**  
***WHERE THERE IS A LOVE, THERE IS A WAY***

My father was from Tigranakert. He was a very brave and pious man: he always thanked God.

During the Armenian Genocide, he had suffered very much, for his father and elder brother had been taken away and massacred by the Turks, and his sister had been thrown into the Euphrates River, because she had resisted going to a Turkish harem and had remained faithful to her religion.

In his youth, my father had been in love with a girl from their district, but during the deportation a Turk had kidnapped her and taken her to his house to live with his other wives. Father found out where his love was and met her secretly. The girl could not speak long; she only said: "Deliver me from this dog's hands."

In a clever way father organized her escape. They were married in the Christian rite and had three sons and three daughters. I am the youngest son. So, if there is love, every difficulty can be overcome.

When there is God's love in a family there can be no hatred, no pride, and no egoism. Love is patient, love has no indecent behavior, when there is love in a house, God's joy is there.

Therefore, young people of the new generation, respect God's love. Don't be proud; don't be haughty, in order to have a delightful and happy life. We, the Armenians, must follow one another, love each other and respect and help each other, we must not forget our Armenian nationality, our Christian Church and belief.

40 (355).

**TIGRANOUHI MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1943, Tomarza)**

***AN ARMENIAN MAN'S ARMENIAN LOVE***

Mrs. Aghavni was also deported to Der-Zor, together with her two daughters. Her husband married a Turkish woman and had three children from her: one became a pilot, the other a minister.

Years passed. Once this man went to the Armenian Church and there he met an old Armenian acquaintance and asked him if he knew anything about his family. The man told him that they lived in Bakr Keoy, near Istanbul.

The Armenian man wrote a letter, received an answer from his wife, and a photograph, which he kept in his bosom pocket. Every day he looked at the photo and

kissed it. One day his Turkish wife saw the photo and asked him who she was.

“This is my Armenian wife. Don't get angry; I must go.”

The Armenian man went to his wife's place and found her: an old woman and an old man met each other after so many years. The man died of emotion all of a sudden.

The man's Turkish wife and sons said: “Our father was a Christian, so we must bury him as a Christian.”

They took him to the Balikli\* Armenian cemetery and buried him according to the Armenian Church rites.

41 (356).

**TIGRANOUHI MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1943, Tomarza)**

***THE FORMER HUSBAND***

My mother's grandma was deported from Gizi Village, Kayseri region. They took away her husband. At that time my grandma was five years old and her brother – three. On the way the little boy asked constantly for water.

His mother said: “There's water over there, go and drink.”

At that moment the bandits came. The mother looked this way and that way, did not see the boy, took the girl on her back and went forward with the group of deportees. They settled in the village of Tomarza. An Armenian man asked her to marry him, and she got married. They lived together for some years. One day a man came to the village and went to the priest of the village. The man asked about his wife and children and found out that his wife and daughter lived there. The priest took the man to his house and said: “I'll speak to your wife.”

He accompanied the man to the woman's house and said: “Is he your husband?”

The woman said: “Yes, but we came wandering here, this man sheltered us, took care of us. What shall I do now?”

The husband said: “Father, I think I have to leave. Let them live together, let them be happy,” and he went away to a nearby village and got married there.

That woman's daughter – my grandmother – married a youth named Nikoghos. One day a man said: “Nikoghos, that man working in the field is your real father-in-law.”

Nikoghos went over to the man, kissed his hand and said: “I'm your son-in-law.”

“Son, be happy together: she grew up without a father, you be a good husband to her.”

After some time they heard that the man had died. Nikoghos went to his place, took part in the funeral and buried him.

So, you see, this is the fate of the wandering Armenian, who lost his house, his land and also his kin.

42 (357).

**MARIAM MIRZAYAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1927, Tomarza)**

***DELAYED MEETING***

In 1922 Mrs. Siranoush from Van, together with her two sons, Mrs. Astghik with her daughter Srbouhi, my mother-in-law Mrs. Aghavni with her son Souren, and

Mother Khatoun with her son Nshan, came from Kars to Istanbul by an Italian ship. All of them worked in the vineyards. Mrs. Astghik's daughter, Srbouhi, had

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\* One of the sixteen Armenian well-kept cemeteries in Istanbul, acting till today.

long hair. Her mother married her off to a young man, Varoujan from Samatia (a district in Istanbul inhabited mostly by Armenians). They had three children.

Two years ago, in 1994, someone from Iran wrote in an Armenian newspaper: "I'm searching for my wife Astghik and my daughter Srbouhi." Someone read the paper and, coming to Varoujan, said: "Are these your wife and your mother-in-law?"

The answer was: "Yes, they are my wife and my mother-in-law."

They called Iran and told the man that his wife and daughter were in Istanbul. The man immediately went to Istanbul. In those days Mrs. Astghik had fallen ill and was in bed. Her son-in-law joked and said: "Mother, get well soon; we're going to marry you off."

"Eh, I have no time left," said Mrs. Astghik. "Till this age I've remained like this, shall I marry now?"

At last, the man came to Istanbul and found the house through the Armenian Church. Mrs. Astghik was still in bed. They found each other; they hugged each other and cried. They told each other what they had seen and experienced. After staying for some time, the man said: "I have many houses in Iran, I have money as well. Let me go, sell them and come back to you." The man was a lawyer. He went back to settle his affairs, but very soon thereafter he had a heart attack and passed away. Hearing the news, the wife also died of grief.

After that, their daughter Srbouhi went to Iran to sell her father's possessions and bring the money back home. But, by the government law, it was forbidden to take out any sum of money out of the country. One could only donate the money to the Armenian Church. And Srbouhi donated the whole sum to the Armenian Church and returned to Constantinople.

#### 43 (358).

#### TIGRANOUHI MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1943, Tomarza)

#### *MRS. AGHAVNI AND THE REVEREND FATHER*

A Reverend Father came from another state to Los Angeles. Our acquaintance Mrs. Aghavni went to church to attend the mass and listen to his sermon. She looked into the eyes of the Rev. Father and fell in love. She felt that it was a great sin, she tried to suppress her feelings, but she did not succeed. The poor woman became affected by a nervous condition.

Mrs. Aghavni's son was a psychologist. He sensed his mother's strange state, so he wrote a letter to the Reverend, saying that they would like very much to see and hear him again.

One day, that same Rev. Father came to Los Angeles again. The son said to his mother: "The Rev. Father, whom you like so much, has come again. Get up, go to the church."

Mrs. Aghavni wouldn't go; she was afraid of herself. The son went and invited the Rev. Father to their house. Mrs. Aghavni couldn't help looking at his face; she looked and looked at him incessantly...

The Rev. Father asked: "Madame, how did you come here, where are you from?"

The woman started telling: "I'm from Tomarza. My parents were rich. They deported us. I had a younger brother. On the way of deportation the bandits snatched him from my mother's hands and escaped. My poor mother cried three times every day for her lost child." She wept and said: "My sweet darling, had I known that the chetehs would take you away from me, I wouldn't have treated you for such a long time." My brother Zaven had fallen into the tonir and was badly burned, and my mother had treated him for a long time, using medical creams and homemade medicine."

The Rev. Father drew up his sleeves, showing her the scars on his arms, and said: "I am that boy."

Mrs. Aghavni was beside herself with joy and said: "It wasn't in vain that your eyes pursued me from the day I saw you!"

This way sister and brother found each other.

#### 44 (359).

#### GEVORG CHIFTCHIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1909, Moussa Dagh)

#### *THE ARMENIAN'S FATE*

This is a true story. An elderly man has told it to me. He had seen it with his own eyes.

In 1915, when they began slaughtering the

Armenians, a husband and wife had two sons – the elder one nine years old and the younger seven. The Turk killed the husband, and the wife shed tears on his corpse.

There was a German officer with the Turks. He felt sorry for the pretty young woman and her lovely young sons. With signs and gestures he made the Armenian woman understand his intention, which was to take one of the boys with him to Germany and send her to another country with the other son.

The woman gave her elder son to the German. The German sent the boy to Germany by train. He wrote his wife a letter, telling her to take care of the boy, as they did not have a son, and send him to school, together with their daughter.

At the same time, the German sent the woman, together with her younger son, to France, to save their lives. And he wrote in his notebook: "I sent the boy to Germany to my home."

Many years passed; the boy got a good education. The man married his daughter to the young man. A son was born to them.

The German died. While searching his stepfather's drawers, the young man found his father's notebook. There he read: "I sent the boy to France, together with his mother, the other boy – to Germany, to my home."

The young man put the notebook into his pocket. "Wife, we're going to France," he said. Together with his wife and son, he went to France, to a hotel. He said to his wife: "I'm going out for a while."

He took a taxi and said in German: "Take me to the Armenian Church."

He went to the Armenian Church and said: "I've been an Armenian orphan; I was taken to Germany; I've studied there. Now, I'm searching for a woman. Whoever finds her, I'll pay well."

The Armenians went through all the lists and said: "Such a woman and boy live in Lyon." The man gave them much money and came back to his hotel. "Wife," he says, "we're going to Lyon." They went to Lyon and found lodging in a hotel. The man said: "I'm going out for a walk." He took a taxi, went to the Armenian Church and said: "I've been an Armenian orphan. I've grown up in Germany. Whoever finds this woman for me, I'll pay him well."

Who does not want money?

The Armenians began to search for the woman. An Armenian man found her. He was the man who told me this story. He came and said: "I found them, mother and son, but they are very poor, they do not have anything to eat, as the boy is unemployed."

The young man said: "Bring the boy to me. Tell him there's a job for him." He gave the man a lot of money, the man felt happy.

The boy came and introduced himself to the person

from Germany. He looked at him: they looked so much alike, they were brothers, after all. He looked at him. He hardly kept back his tears. He said: "What's your name?"

"Gabriel."

"What have you got?"

"A mother."

"What's her name?"

"Vardouhi."

"I've come from Germany. Every day you'll buy us meat and bread, you'll stay with us all day long, we'll eat together, and in the evening you'll go home."

The boy went and brought what they needed. The man put one thousand francs into his pocket and said: "Go home and buy for yourselves whatever you need." In astonishment the boy went home and said to his mother: "Mother, this man from Germany is either crazy or he's our good-luck agent. He gave me food and drink, and then he put money into my pocket and sent me home."

The same thing happened the following day and so on for a few days. At last he said: "I want to come to your house together with my wife and son. Take this money and buy whatever is necessary for you."

The boy went, prepared his house for the guests, came back and said: "You can come, you're welcome, but what's your name?"

"I can't tell you my name now."

Then he told his wife to get ready for a visit.

They took a taxi and went to the boy's house. They saw an old woman, tears running down her cheeks, her head tied with a kerchief.

The man asked: "Mother, what's your name?"

"My name's Vardouhi."

"Tell me your life story, please."

The woman began to tell: "I had two sons, when the Turks killed my husband. There was a German officer there; he took my elder son with him. I do not know what happened to him, and the other is this one, we live together."

The man took the notebook out of his pocket and read it. Everything was cleared up.

They began to embrace each other. Seeing all this, the German woman got surprised. The man said to his mother and brother: "Get up, get ready. What you have here give to the poor. We're going to Germany. We'll live there. I have everything there."

He took his mother and brother, his wife and child and they went to Germany.

Their dreams came true; let your dreams also come true.

**45 (360).**  
**PERJ ERZIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1921, Adabazar)**  
***MEHMED, THE COACHMAN***

My parents were from Adabazar. After the Genocide many towns were deserted and, in some places, the inhabitants were apostatized and became Turkish-speaking.

Adabazar was not Turkish-speaking. Many Turks had even learned Armenian and they spoke Armenian, especially in the market places. The Adabazar males knew Turkish, but the women did not know the language at all. When Turkey was declared a republic, many deportees came back. Some of them went back to their hometowns, others remained in Istanbul and some others went out of the country.

Adabazar was completely emptied of Armenians.

Until a certain date, not a single Armenian had the right to go to those places. We had somehow adapted ourselves to the conditions.

After a certain date tourism was permitted. So we went to Adabazar, together with my father. My father tried to find an old acquaintance, but in vain. After a while my father wanted to go to the railway station. A man looking like a porter began speaking Armenian with my father. I was astonished. When he left, I asked my father: "Father, there wasn't any Armenian left in Adabazar, how is it, that he has stayed here?"

My father said: "That man isn't an Armenian; he's a Turk. He was our coachman Mehmed."

**46 (361).**  
**TIGRANOUHI MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1943, Tomarza)**  
***THE ARMENIAN WHO HELPED THE TURK***

When my father Nazar lived in Dizeh, on the coast of the Black Sea, the town had two quarters: Upper Dizeh and Market Dizeh. He said that those coming from Upper Dizeh were Armenians for sure; those coming from the market were Greeks. The upper ones were called Artashen (art = field, shen = prosperous – Arm.), meaning those who kept the fields fertile.

My father was then twenty-two years old when he made friends with a Turk working in the government. One day he ate and drank with the man and the man offered him cigarettes. My father said: "I don't smoke that blend, I smoke only my blend."

One day that man invited my father to his house. It was been a big house surrounded with gardens. They ate and drank. My father saw a rifle on the wall and said: "Who knows how many Armenians you've killed with that gun?"

The man said: "What are you saying? I could annihilate you because of those words. I haven't killed Armenians, but I've saved many Armenians. When General Andranik's soldiers occupied our village, my father took refuge in an Armenian's house. Andranik's men doubted that my father entered that house. They came to search the house. The Armenian had put my father in his wife's bed, to avoid suspicion; then he told his people to open the door and he hid himself. For that reason, I've become a friend of the Armenians and have saved many Armenians. Look, you're still young and have committed your first error, saying, 'I don't smoke that kind of cigarettes.' Don't do such a thing anymore. Always descend to the level of the person who has become your friend, so that you may be a beloved person.

That was why my father always remembered the words of the kind Turk and repeated them to us.

**47 (362).**  
**SARGIS YETARIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1907, Afion-Garahissar)**  
***"MAY LIGHT DESCEND ON HER GRAVE"***

Before World War I the Armenians in Turkey were respected for their honest and devoted work. The Armenians and the Turks lived peacefully and were good neighbors. But during World War I the Armenians suffered heavy losses.

In many regions of Turkey the Armenians spoke Turkish: let me begin with our town – Afion-Garahissar, Oushak, Eskishehir, Akshehir, Bursa, Kayseri, Yozghat, Chat, Kemerek, Konia, Adana, Biledjik, Kyotahia, Marash, Ayntap, Elmali and many other places. Though

they were Turkish-speaking, they were very religious.

I was a small boy. I remember, I went to church and saw grown up people, women, kneeling in prayer. After mass the priest delivered the sermon in the Turkish language. The Armenian priest said: “Christian Armenians, love each other, love other nations, be obedient to the Ottoman government, do your best for its perseverance, be loyal citizens...”

I remember the Turkish women wore black chadra and the Armenian women – white kerchiefs, so that they could be differentiated from each other but they were very friendly. They told how there had been a great fire in our town, Afion-Garahissar. I was born in those days; my mother had been awfully frightened by the fire, so she fell seriously ill, her milk dried up, and she was not able to feed me. In those days there wasn't artificial nourishment to feed me. Everybody was busy with my mother, to save her life, thinking they could have another child, but they could not have another mother, so they forgot about me. My uncle's wife, Sandoukht, worked as a nurse in the Turkish military hospital. She was a clever

and lively woman; that was why she was called “Osman (Ottoman – Turk.) Sandoukht.” She saw that nobody was thinking of the newborn child – that was me; she took me in her arms and went to the Turkish district. She entered a house and saw a Turkish woman feeding her baby. She said: “Daughter, I've brought a brother for your child. His mother has fallen ill and has no milk. For God's sake, feed this child, lest he die. I won't forget your kindness.”

“With pleasure, anné,” said the woman. “I'll feed him as long as it's necessary. I have plenty of milk.”

And that kind Turkish woman fed me until I grew up to a certain age.

When I was a grown up boy, my uncle's wife, Sandoukht, told me all about it. Then I understood that I owed my life to that Turkish woman, my nursing-mother, who, probably, had already passed away. Let her be worthy of God's paradise, for it's thanks to her that I've lived for ninety years and I am telling you now my story. It's true, my life has not been a happy one either, but I always pray for her. May light descend on her grave...

#### 48 (363).

#### ZAVEN SOFIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1927, Nicomedia)

#### TOSSUN

Previously, only Armenians inhabited the Bakhchejik quarter of Izmit. During the Genocide most of them were deported, many were slaughtered, and many girls were taken to become the wives of Turks. I had a Turkish friend named Tossun. One day he said to me: “Benim mamam Ermeni dir (My mother is Armenian – Turk.), but when I was a little boy, she left us and went to Bulgaria. Her father had been a well-known goldsmith. He had told her: ‘Leave that son of yours born of a Turk and come with us to Bulgaria.’”

The daughter did as she was told. My father was a Turk, he again married a Turkish girl, and I had new brothers. Years passed. One day a man came from Bulgaria, who made inquiries about me. He said that a mother was seeking her son. I wrote a letter to my mother: “Mother, I've grown up, I want to see you.” My mother answered that she would come to Taksim [a district in Istanbul] as a tourist on the New Year's Eve. I went to see her with my family. I did not remember her. I saw a woman who looked like me, with blue eyes and a round face. I said: “Mama, it's me, Tossun.”

Tears began running, we hugged each other, and we kissed each other. Immediately we took a car and went to our village. My neighbors gathered. I said: “My mother, my

mother has come. Mother, what do you want, please, help yourself.” We all cried, even my father cried, he remembered the past, his Armenian wife. But what could we do? This was our fate. She remained with us a whole month.

I said: “What do you want me to buy for you?”

In Bulgaria she had an Armenian husband. Her son was a major. She had two daughters. The poor woman hadn't told her secret to anyone.

I said: “Mother, stay here.”

She said: “No, I cannot, I have children: Noubar, Anoush, Sirarpi. I cannot leave them.”

My mother returned to Bulgaria, to her family.

After six months, my mother's son, Major Noubar, came to Karakeoy,\* together with his wife. I went to meet him, together with my wife. But I did not know him. I began shouting: “Nubar, kardaşım, ben burda ım” (Noubar, brother, I am here – Turk.).

I saw him waving his hand. He approached and embraced me: “Oh, you're my brother. My mother hadn't told us anything about you till recently.” We hugged each other again. Then we went to our village.

Tossun told all this and, at the same time, he shed tears, because of the call of blood.

One day Tossun brought Major Noubar and his wife

\* One of the districts of Istanbul, where there is a moorage.

to our shop. “See, they are Armenians,” he said.

Seeing us, Noubar said: “Hello, Tossun loves you very much. He always says: ‘I’ve got very good Armenian friends. That’s why he brought me here. Till now we did not know that we had a brother in Turkey.’”

We had coffee together; then they left.

Later Tossun had taken Noubar to the goldsmiths. He had deluged Noubar’s wife with presents of gold: rings, necklaces and the like, all these for remembrance. We have been witnesses of all this.

**49 (364).**

**VARDOUHI VOSKIAN’S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1925, Tomarza)**  
***THE MUSLIM ARMENIANS OF HAMSHEN***

Almost all of the inhabitants of Hamshen are Armenians who have changed their faith. Their names are Ahmed, Muhammed, or Hassan. They say that, when the women of Hamshen knead dough, they make the sign of the cross on the dough like Christians, and they speak Armenian almost like us.

Once we had gone to the hospital at midnight, for my sister-in-law’s husband was seriously ill. The doctor had patients, so they told us to wait. Outside, seated on benches, we were talking, and next to us sat a Turkish peasant woman. She asked me in Turkish: “Siz nerdensiniz?” (Where are you from? – Turk.).

“Biz Erzurum’dan, Yozgat’danız” (We’re from Erzurum, Yozgat – Turk.), I said.

It turned out that she had been listening to us speaking Armenian. She said: “Abla, siz de bizim gibi

konusuyorsunuz” (Sister, you are also speaking like us – Turk.).

I said: “Konus, bakayım” (Speak, let me see – Turk.).

She began speaking in Armenian: “Mayriks hivand e, hivandanots berer enk...” (My mother is ill; we have brought her to the hospital... – Arm.).

At that moment her mother and sister came out of the doctor’s consulting room.

I said to her in Armenian: “Antsyal ella” (Wish you a quick recovery – Arm.).

Her mother answered in Armenian: “Kich me pagher em. Aghdjiks bzhishkin het zrousets, an esav: ‘Hivand aghek e’” (I have caught a slight cold. My daughter spoke to the doctor. He said: ‘Your patient is alright’ – Arm.).

So, you see, they were Armenians from Hamshen who had become Muslims...

**50 (365).**

**HERIKNAZ MIHRANIAN’S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1928, Sebastia)**  
***THE ARMENIANS FROM SVAZ***

We lived in Svaz (Sebastia). There was no Armenian school in Svaz, that’s why we don’t know Armenian well.

There was an Armenian village, Tavra, near Svaz. We lived there. There were no foreigners in Tavra. We had several Armenian Churches: St. Nshan, St. Varvar, Holy Martyrs’ Church. There was a desert there. There was also a hot mineral spring, and sick people came there

to bathe in it and they were healed.

Since our churches were destroyed, a clergyman came once a year from the Armenian Patriarchate and baptized the newborn children. And, once a week we used to gather in someone’s house; we used to gossip a little, read the Bible, sing songs and then return to our houses.

**51 (366).**

**SILVA DALDABANIAN’S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1930, Samsun)**  
***THE TURKISH MAJOR’S SECRET***

Before the Armenian Genocide there were four million Armenians in Turkey and Anatolia. They [the Turks] killed and slaughtered most of them. What’s the

reason that we do not have a father, a mother, sisters, brothers? Many have been apostatized. All this won’t come to an end by telling.

One day they recruited our neighbor Hakob's son, Sargis. The Major called him and said: "Sit there, before me. Tell me, where are you from?" Sargis said: "I'm from Istanbul." The Major said: "Listen, I'll give you a month's leave; go to Istanbul, see your parents and come back.

But listen, I'm telling this only to you; my mother is Armenian. No one must know about it, I'm telling it only to you, for that's the call of the blood. If you tell anybody about it, I'll kill you; that is the secret of my life." So, there are many Armenians among the Turks; some of them know about their identity, others don't.

**52 (367).**  
**MAYRANOUSH VARDANIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1900, Marash)**  
***THE GRANDFATHER'S WILL***

In 1915 on the road of deportation a Turkish officer saw an Armenian girl, took her to his house and said to his mother: "I have no sister, she will be my sister. I loved her." "Alright, let it be so," said the mother. For a long time they lived as brother and sister. Once the parents went to another town to visit their relatives. The boy said to the girl: "My grandfather has buried a trunk in the earth." The girl said: "Do you know its place?"

"Yes, I do."  
"Alright, let's go and see it."  
They went, dug the earth and opened the trunk, and what did they see! A priest's clothes and crosses. They found out that his grandfather had been an Armenian. The Turk officer had pangs of remorse for his actions. His conscience tortured him for what he had done. The Turk officer took the Armenian girl to Istanbul, and they got married there in an Armenian Church.

**53 (368).**  
**TIGRANOUIH MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1943, Tomarza)**  
***THE FATE OF MANY***

The other day, at the market, I wanted to buy eggplants. The grocer said: "There are good ones inside." I told him I was going to prepare "Imam Bayeldi" ("The Imam fainted" – Turk., a dish prepared with eggplants). The man looked at me and said: "There are good ones inside."

Then he came with me; he put the items I had bought in the back of the car and said in a whisper: "I'm from Bitlis. During the Genocide they made us Moslems. My mother is still alive; she prays in Armenian, speaks Armenian and understands it." This has been the fate of many Armenians in Turkey.

**54 (369).**  
**GEVORG SHALDJIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1934, Kayseri)**  
***WE, THE KAYSERIANS***

We are from Kayseri. My father's family was very rich: my father was a basturma merchant. There was a street in Kayseri named after our family: Shaldjian Street. My father had three children. During the deportation our family had a terrible time, spending forty distressful days in the forests. Then they made friends with a Turk, did business with him and moved to Istanbul. My father was a clever man. He

taught himself the language. Then he went to Kars to work. Together with his brother, they sold newspapers. They fall in poverty and they sell everything. He became a terzii crakh (tailor's apprentice – Turk.), but he never became a beggar. He sold fruits, mainly oranges; he polished shoes; he worked as a tailor; then he sold basturma until he became self-contained. Then he went to Kayseri and got married. Then we moved to Istanbul.

55 (370).

**MARIAM MIRZAYAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1927, Tomarza)**  
***UMUD, THE APOSTATE***

Once a young man named Umud, who was a Turk, found a sheet of paper in his house. Something was written on it, but he couldn't understand what language it was. He took it to someone who told him that the writing was in Armenian.

Umud went to an Armenian priest and showed him the paper. The priest read it and said: "This is your

father's baptism document."

Umud said: "But we're Turkish Muslims."

"No," said the priest. "Your family has been Christian Armenians."

Umud got baptized at the Armenian Church, became a Christian Armenian and took the name of Husik. Now he goes to church every Sunday.

56 (371).

**MARIAM MIRZAYAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1927, Tomarza)**  
***HARUTYUN***

During the Armenian Genocide, a Turkish family kidnapped an Armenian boy and took him home where there were many other boys – the sons of that family.

When the Turkish boys called the Armenian boy *gâvur*, he felt insulted and cried. The neighbors saw him crying and said: "Why do you cry, you are an Armenian."

The boy remembered that his name was Harutyun, his sister's name was Mariam whom they [Turks] had killed

before his eyes, but he did not remember his surname. He did not know who his father and mother were.

But he applied to the Turkish government, saying, "I am Armenian, my name is Harutyun," and he changed his name, but he remained Pashali, as he could not remember his Armenian surname.

He attended the Armenian Church and, when he died, he was buried in the Armenian cemetery.

57 (372).

**TIGRANOUHI MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**  
**(B. 1943, Tomarza)**  
***OVSAKNA-AYSHÉ, WHO REMAINED AN ARMENIAN***

Ovsanna, who was my grandfather's cousin (uncle's daughter), was not born before the Genocide. Her mother was pregnant with Ovsanna, when her father was called up in the Turkish army and never came back.

During the massacres, they were exiled. At that time, Ovsanna was six years old. Her grandmother took her to Caesarea (Kayseri) and there, of course, they met with poverty and misfortunes. A Turkish official adopted the little girl, since he himself had no children. He named her Ayshé, took care of her admirably, on condition that nobody should tell her that she was an Armenian. The Turkish foster-father had ordered her grandmother to visit their house as a Turkish friend of the family and not as the girl's relative.

Some time later, the grandmother secretly started to tell the girl that she was an Armenian by birth, that her father's surname was Altoonian, her mother's surname was Gyokbashian and that her name was Ovsanna. The grandmother used always to repeat: "You are a Christian, do not forget it." After a while, the grandmother passed

away.

Ovsanna used to go frequently to the fountain to fetch water. She saw some children playing near the church. She understood that they were orphan children rescued from the massacres. She knew that they were Armenians and decided to enter the church-yard with them.

The Turkish foster-parents searched for the girl, since she had not returned home. Eventually they knew that Ayshé had gone into the Armenian Church. They came to the church at night. The priest did not open the door. The Turkish parents appealed to the judge and slandered the Armenian priest for taking the little girl into the church.

The Turkish foster-father said: "Come on, Ayshé, come, let's go home."

Ovsanna replied: "No, I won't come home."

The judge said: "Ayshé, my daughter, why don't you go with your father and mother?"

The girl said: "First of all, my name is not Ayshé. My name is Ovsanna. My father's surname is Altoonian, my mother's surname is Gyokbashian. I am an Armenian. I

will stay with the Armenians.”

The judge said to the Turkish parents: “I have nothing more to say,” and he left.

At that time, many orphans were brought to the church in Istanbul and many of them discovered their kin. Ovsanna was very sad that she had nobody. One day after Mass, the priest announced: “Next week is St. Sargis’ Holiday, and we shall fast for three days. This fast is kept for the realization of wishes.”

Ovsanna, who was 8-9 years old, did not attend lunch the following week. The priest said: “Why don’t you eat?”

Ovsanna said: “Reverend Father, I have taken an oath to fast so that the Lord gave me, too, a relative.”

On Wednesday morning they took the Holy Communion. A few hours later, the priest summoned the girl to his room and said: “Ovsanna, you are from the

village of Burungheshla (a village near Yozghat). This lady who has just arrived is also from your village. When we went to that village, we used to stay at their house. Your surname is similar to hers; please tell her what you know, who were your parents.”

The lady interrogated the little girl, and Ovsanna told about her family, and it became clear that the lady had brought her three children, two boys and a girl (Gyulbenk, Manuel, Anna) to be entrusted to the orphanage. The lady stood at once, hugged Ovsanna and said: “You are the daughter of my brother-in-law.” And thus, Ovsanna was also taken to the orphanage, where she took care of her new brothers and sisters.

Eventually, Ovsanna got married. In 1970, Ovsanna moved to Los-Angeles with her family. She passed away in 1989.

## 58 (373).

### GRIGOR AMALIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1945, Yerevan, Nor Arabkir)

#### *“I CAME HERE TO DIE AS AN ARMENIAN”*

Gevorg akhpar was seven or eight years old during the Armenian Genocide, and now he remembered quite well how they took away his father, how they kidnapped his sister (my grandmother), Verzhin Hazarian,\* from the exile caravan. He remembered so many atrocities, plunder, pillage, crying, and wailing. He remembered the corpses of Armenians on the roadside on which carnivorous birds were feeding. And now he was going there where these atrocities had taken place. He reached Arabkir, their village. He found their house; he walked up and down the house several times, watched the house where his mother had given him birth, where his childhood had passed. It seemed to him that there was a piece of his soul in them. A bleary-eyed old man was watching him. Gevorg akhpar saw in him the killer of his grandfathers, the usurper of their former house. He wanted to fight him, but he controlled himself. The fear of being an Armenian was in his heart. The village, where his sister had been married to the mukhtar, was not far. He did not know what to do. He couldn’t knock at any door, he couldn’t enter any house to eat something. He took a deep breath; “God, help me,” he said and went to the village fountain. He couldn’t believe his eyes when he saw an old woman by the fountain, for she looked so much like his sister. “That’s her, that’s her,” thought Gevorg akhpar. In spite of so many years – fifty-seven years had passed – they recognized each other. That was the voice of blood, which spoke in them. The moment their gazes embraced each other they shivered.

Their weak knees began to tremble. The old woman got confused. Her pitcher in her hand, her frozen gaze on the man, she was dumbfounded. She did not know what to do. Their feelings were all upside down: they wanted to rush to each other, to hug each other, kiss each other; how long they had missed each other, but no one should see them. There, by the fountain, they whispered something to each other; they understood each other. They would meet in the darkness of the night.

The ninety-year-old woman kissed her grandchildren for the last time, put them to bed and walked out of the house where she had lived for fifty-seven years. Grandma Verzhin was in deep emotion. Her memories went back for many decades. She saw a nation which had taken the road of death. She began to shudder. She closed her eyes tightly, but her ears heard the toll of the falling bells, the call of flowing blood. With closed eyes she saw how Armenian maidens were being raped. She saw how, enchanted by her beauty, they had taken her away from their caravan, while she was crying and struggling: “No, I don’t want, I’ll die.” Now, again, they were pulling her by the arm, but this time it was her brother. Verzhin shivered and came round; she regained her consciousness; she walked, leaning on her brother’s arm. She walked, carrying the cross of the Armenians on her shoulder. They reached the Syrian border and from there they went to Aleppo.

When they asked her why she had come, what she had seen, she would say: “What shall I tell you, son,

\* The narrator has handed me the memorable photo of his grandmother, **Verzhin Hazarian** (b. 1885, Arabkir). See it in the **Photographs** part of this book.

I've seen a lot. I'm over one hundred years old now. I'm from Arabkir. My husband's name was Khacher. From him I had three children. Two of them now live in Armenia with their children and grandchildren. During the massacre we had paid a great ransom for my husband, and I was so glad. But the evil day came, and they gathered all the males of the village and took them away. They did not come back, for they had been

slaughtered. We saw a lot of sufferings; the Turks had decided to kidnap me but my father-in-law gave me to the village moukhtar in marriage. I cried a lot but I remained. From him I had three sons. I lived there for fifty-seven years, but I said my Armenian prayer, I worshipped my Armenian God. I got news from those who came and went that my brother lived in Aleppo. So, I came here to die as an Armenian."

**59 (374).**

**VAHAGN VAHRAM GHARIBIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1928, Addis-Ababa)**

***ALIENATED CHRISTIAN ARMENIANS***

This event took place in Dubai. A disheveled man came and stood in front of my shop and started to speak in Arabic, saying: "I am an Armenian, I beg you to give me a job, so that I can get by." We, the Armenians who were inside the shop, were quite surprised and asked him: "How can you prove that you are an Armenian, if you don't speak Armenian?"

The man rolled up his sleeve and showed us the sign of the Christian cross tattooed on his arm when he was taken on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with his parents. He began to tell us that the Turks had slaughtered his parents before his very eyes when he was a small boy. He had subsequently found shelter at the Arab desert-men who had kept him and taken care of him. When he had attained his majority, the feelings of his national identity had woken up and he had gone on foot a long distance in search of Armenian compatriots.

Another Armenian, who had changed his name and was known as a Turk, worked as a building contractor in Ankara. He had constructed barracks, but the payment had been delayed. He went to the commander to make a complaint about the delay of the payment. The high-ranking Turk military official told him: "Listen to me carefully. I know that you are an Armenian. I am ready to pay you the money, on condition that you do me a favor. But that should remain strictly confidential. My aunt (we call her so) was brought to our house by my father in the days of the Armenian Genocide and she is still living with us. She is now on the verge of death, but she cannot close her eyes until an Armenian clergyman gives her the last Sacrament, in secret, of course."

The Armenian contractor summoned an Armenian priest who came and gave the old lady the Holy Communion, after which she closed her eyes and died happily.

**60 (375).**

**VILEN NERSES NOORIDJANIAN'S TESTIMONY<sup>1</sup>**

**(B. 1933, Yerevan)**

***THE SYMBOL OF NATIONAL IDENTITY***

When I went to Aleppo, my friend Tigran told me about a very touching event, which had happened to him. With his friend, he had gone to Turkey as a tourist to make a video-recording of the monasteries and the churches on the territories of Western Armenia. They approached the town of Van, which had been one of the capitals of historic Armenia. They saw an old Turkish peasant at the corner of the street, selling apples. The two young men wished to buy some apples. One of them said to the other

in Armenian: "Let me see if I have small change." The old apple-seller heard their conversation and said: "You spoke in some other language, follow me."

The young men followed the old man to his house and entered. The old man closed the door and opened an ancient trunk. He flung the contents of the trunk aside and took out a book from the bottom. The young men saw that it was a Bible written in Armenian. They asked the old man: "For how much will you sell this book to us?"

<sup>1</sup> The narrator, Vilen Nooridjanian, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, had always listened, with emotion, the testimonies told by his parents rescued from the Armenian Genocide; about how the Turks had cruelly massacred thousands and thousands of Armenians, and had abducted his 20-year-old beautiful aunt. Imbued with these feelings, the narrator went to Aleppo, in 2000, and visited the desert of Der-Zor, where, at every step, he felt under his feet the bones of the innocent Armenian martyrs. He brought from Der-Zor a handful of soil, which was imbued with the blood of Armenians and donated it to the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide situated in Dsidsernakaberd, Yerevan.

The old man remained silent for a while and said: “When I was a little boy, I, too, spoke in your language. Our whole family was massacred in 1915, only I and this book were saved from our house. Then they took me to the Turkish orphanage, they circumcised me and made me a Turk. I forgot my own language, in which

his book is written. This is the only sacred thing in my house. I cannot sell it, since my son is now working in the field. Everyday when he comes home, he takes out this book, kisses it and replaces it in the trunk. When my son returns from the field and finds out that this book is not here, he will forget his national identity.”

## 61 (376).

### SILVA DALDABANIAN’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1930, Samsun)

#### *CULTURAL GENOCIDE: OUR LOSSES. THE LIGHT, WHICH DESCENDS FROM HEAVEN*

...There was a church in Gazi Antep. We saw they were taking down the church bell, to build a mosque...

In Adana the Church of St. Yeghia was transformed into a mosque. You can imagine our state... We wanted to enter it: we took off our shoes and went in. Everything was the same, only the altar had been removed. It had become the Yagh Mosque...

Harpoot had seven Armenian villages: one of them was named Geghetsik (Beautiful – Arm.). It was really beautiful: the mulberries had ripened, they were so sweet: this village had fascinating nature...

Our hotel was “Biyouk Elaz.” After resting for a while, we went out in search of Armenian churches. I went to the next hotel nearby. There was an amazing young man there.

“Were there any Armenian Churches hereabout?” I asked.

“Sister, I am a Kurd myself. There was a church nearby, now it has been turned into a flour factory.”

We went to see it; only the old door had remained – a wooden door with beautiful carvings. I saw a man who was bringing milk: “Bay baba, what was here before?”

“Oh, daughter, this was an Armenian Church: the Armenians went away and this is what we made of it,” he said.

Then we went to another church. It was an Assyrian Church. I said to the priest: “There were some ten-fifteen Armenian families here, can we see them?” He said nothing. He telephoned, and a girl came, accompanied by her mother. Eighteen-year-old Aghavni was a broad-shouldered girl. They took us by car around Harpoot. We visited St. Mariam Astvadsadsin; the church had an interesting construction. They had dug the mountain descending about thirty steps. We went down and entered the church. A marvelous church was before us...

One day a Turkish woman said to me: “Sister, I’m going to ask you something. We live in Izmit. Every night a light descends on the mountaintop from heaven. We, the peasants, came together and decided that there must be some treasure there so we went to our mullah and asked him about it.”

The mullah said that, in the past, there had been a Christian quarter, so the priest might know it. We went, found a priest and asked him about it. The priest said: “Impossible, there isn’t any treasure there to give light.” Now, sister, what do you say?

I said to her: “You only think of gold and treasure. Don’t you think that there had been many victims there in the past, and it’s on them that light descends from heaven? Haven’t your elders told you anything about it?”

## 62 (377).

### OVSANNA NALBANDOGHLI’S TESTIMONY

(B. 1930, Erzroom)

#### *OUR MONUMENTS*

Oh, my God! Arouse kind feelings in men!

When we left from Kars to Istanbul, in 1953, the Turks appropriated our house and belongings in Kars; they converted also our Armenian Church into a Turkish school.

We heard later that the walls of that school used to crumble every year, and they build them again. They do not know that that was God’s punishment. Why that same God who created the entire world and everything for the people to live in that world, should demolish that

school? Because that was the Armenian’s Church, the church of our faith.

Those who do not believe in God, find their punishment...

Last year, Mrs. Vardouhi went to Tomarza to see her birthplace. She saw that their Armenian Church had been converted into a dwelling place, and that Turks were living in it. And one of the churches of Everek-Fenessé had been transformed into a mosque and the other – into

a gymnasium.

In the same manner, many other Armenian churches in Turkey had been either demolished or served for other

purposes.

Previously, our surname was Nalbandian, but later it was changed into Nalbandoghli.

**63 (378).**

**VARDOUHI VOSKIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1925, Tomarza)**

***OUR CHURCHES***

Last year I went to our birthplace Tomarza and saw that houses had been made in our church, and the Turks were living in it. One of the churches of Everek-Fenessé had been turned into a mosque and the other into a

training ground.

Previously, June 11 was a holiday dedicated to St. Grigor the Illuminator, and pilgrims came there. Where will they go now?

**64 (379).**

**GRIGOR MOVSESSIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1939, Kayseri)**

***OUR PRESENT***

I was born after the Genocide, in Kayseri. There has not remained any Armenian school or Armenian Church. We, the survivors, spoke only Turkish. That is why our family moved from Kayseri to Istanbul in 1951, since there were functioning Armenian churches and schools, though we were already grown up. We wanted to learn Armenian in an evening school; we were 15-20 boys from Kayseri and we all did not know Armenian. They told us to go to school once a week for Armenian language lessons. The first week they told us that it was Atatürk's memorial day, the next week the school mistress had fallen ill. We did not learn a single word. I learned only the Armenian alphabet, but I cannot read, neither I speak Armenian well. But I love very much Armenia and the Armenian people. I am glad that you are our guest. Hoş

geldiniz! (You are welcome! – Turk.).

The inhabitants of Hamshen, who live in Turkey, are all Armenians, but they have been converted into Islam. Their names are Ahmed, Mohammed and Hassan. But it is said that up till now they make the sign of the cross on the dough according to their ancient Christian custom.

Now, the surnames of many of us, Armenians living in Turkey, are already not Armenian, they have changed. For example, our surname was Movsessian, but was changed into Mor, or Nalbandian was changed into Nalbandoghli, Shirinian – Shirinoghli. But, at least, we have remained Armenian-Christians. The first names of my sons are Ararat and Massis. They speak good Armenian and they are good Armenians. That also consoles me.

**65 (380).**

**ANDRANIK AZIZ SIMONIAN'S TESTIMONY**

**(B. 1902, Alashkert, Gharakilissa)**

***THE KURDS' MATERIAL INCENTIVE***

When I was still living in Persia, a Kurd merchant came one day to spend the night in my "Asia" Hotel in Tabriz. He was a clever man and told me that during the Armenian Genocide in 1915 not only the Turks, but also the Kurds killed the Armenians, since the Young Turk government had promised the Kurds, in advance, saying: "He who kills an Armenian, the latter's property will belong to the killer, and nobody else will have the right to seize it."

In this manner, the government roused the material

incentive of the Kurds, so that they, too, killed and exterminated the Armenians as many as they could and took possession of their property.

In essence, that was a secret instruction that the Turkish government had given also to the Kurds the right to do what they themselves wanted to.

It is important to note that this narrator was himself a Kurd and he himself admitted the fact.

So, the Ottoman leaders had aroused the material interest of the Kurds to kill and plunder the Armenians.

66 (381).

**ROBERT AVETIS JEBEJIAN'S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1909, Ayntap)**

***THE ARABIZED ARMENIANS***

On July 17, 1975, Friday afternoon, the well-known Arab writer and translator, Nizar Khalili, came to our house accompanied by one of the tribal chiefs of the Bakkara (Baggara) tribe, Sheikh Abdulkerim Issa Suleiman and his nephew, Ali Soufi, who runs two restaurants in Aleppo, named "Foursen" and "Khayyam." I invited also Mr. Perj Sabaghian, and we had a very interesting talk together.

Sheikh Abdulkerim was a tall man, dressed in the national costume of Arab desert-men and with the manners and behavior of a noble tribal chief. He told us that he was the son-in-law of the great tribal head, Assad-el-Beshir, who lived in Der-Zor.

Sheikh Abdulkerim asserted us that the Bakkaras (the Ayasher tribe) consist of authentic and pure-blooded Armenians, descended from the royal Bagratuni Dynasty. They had migrated southward following the fall of the kingdom. This assertion was persistently communicated in the Bakkara tribe from generation to generation. The Sheikh had heard from his grandfather that they were Armenians, and the grandfather, in his turn, had heard it from his ancestors. The Bakkaras considered themselves as "pure Armenians," since, according to the Sheikh, they had lived for centuries with patrimonial customs, refusing to conclude marriages outside the tribe and, consequently, they were not "mixed" like the others.

In reply to our questions, Sheikh Abdulkerim could not give us any positive arguments in support of traces of Armenian culture and customs in their lifestyle. The Bakkaras were, until recently, completely illiterate. There were no manuscripts and lithographic monuments written either in Armenian or in Arabic, they had no custom of making the sign of the cross on the dough, no other customs, tales, folklore and various ethnological data left from Christianity. Frequent names were Elias, Moussa, etc. There were many fair-haired and blue-eyed

individuals in the tribe (mixed parentage with Cilicians). The families had many children; they were honorable and did not tolerate defeat.

"We feel ourselves particularly close to the Armenians," said the Sheikh. "When we see an Armenian, we feel a mutual blood attraction. In the days of the deportation, the Bakkara tribe rescued many Armenians. A great number of Armenian children were fostered by us. Subsequently, many young girls were married off to Armenians. In 1946, a crime was committed – an Armenian killed someone from the Bakkara tribe. The tribal head, Sheikh Assad-el-Beshir, did not let, at that time, the government to interfere. "We are all of the same tribe," said he, "therefore, let us settle the matter between us."

Sheikh Abdulkerim's father was an enemy of the Chechens, the Armenians' executioners. They were at war with each other. "Their number is greatly reduced nowadays, about 250 people. God took revenge on them," said Sheikh Abdulkerim.

The Bakkaras numbered about 100,000 in Syria and lived mainly in Djebel Abdul-Aziz, the province of Hassiké and Jeziré. These were called Bakkarat-el-Djebel (Bakkaras of the mountain – Arab.). Kindred people lived also in Tel-Abid, Jesser-el-Shoughour, Der-Zor, Aleppo (in Bab-el-Nerap and other districts). In Orinshar (Iraq) 20,000 Bakkaras lived. Turkish-speaking Bakkaras lived also in Turkey – in Yedessia, Diarbekir, Antioch – about 90,000 souls. Other kindred people were scattered also in Lebanon, Egypt and even Sudan.

Sheikh Abdulkerim was the head of the Abdul-Aziz mass of the Bakkara population. The Sheikh's village was Khazné on the northern side of the mountain range, 30 kilometers from Tel-Tamar. Most of the time he lived in his house, in Hassiké. He had also houses in Ras-ul-Ayn and Tel-Tamar.

67 (382).

**JIRAYR REISIAN'S TESTIMONY\*\***

**(B. 1949, Aleppo)**

***SHEDDADIÉ AND MARKADÉ***

In the spring of 2005, I visited Yerevan together with the Arab tribal heads of Syria. An interview was organized

at the "Armenia" TV studio with these Arab tribal heads, and I was invited to translate from Arabic into Armenian.

\* This testimony, written by the well-known Armenian oculist, writer, public man, champion of the Armenian Case, Doctor Robert Avetis Jebejian, of Aleppo, in 1975, was handed to me by his widow, Mrs. Louise Jebejian, in Aleppo, in 2005.

\*\* Jirayr Reisian is the Head of the Armenian National Sahakian School of Aleppo.

One of the tribal heads was Sheikh Nawaf Ragheb-el-Bashir, the chief of the Bakkara (Baggara) tribe from the region of Der-Zor. During the interview, the Sheikh gave the following interesting assertion concerning the Arabic names of the 2 localities “Sheddadié” and “Markadé.”

Sheddadié is the region, quite far from Der-Zor, where, in the days of the Armenian Genocide, in 1915, thousands of Armenian deportees were forcibly driven, packed into natural caves and burned alive. That locality took its name from those horrifying events, since

“Sheddadié” in Arabic means “the place where grave and horrible events took place.”

Markadé is a hill where there is a small memorial chapel in memory of the Armenian martyrs. It is a place where thousands of Armenians and people of other nationalities go on a pilgrimage. If you dig, up to the present day, any part of the hill even with your bare hands, you will find the skulls and bones of the Armenian martyrs. The name “Markadé” means in Arabic “the place where heaps of corpses lie.”

68 (383).

**MARTIROS ASHEKIAN’S TESTIMONY\***

**(B. 1927, Aleppo)**

**“NOUGRET-EL-ARMAN”: “THE ARMENIANS’ CAVE”**

I, Martiros Ashegian, was born in 1927, in the Zeytounkhan Camp of Aleppo (Syria), where the survivors of the Armenian Genocide had arrived after going on foot, for weeks on end.

In 1948, I was working for the Syrian Petroleum Company, near Palmyra, in the desert of Dallaa where we were digging oil-wells.

While we were working in that camp, an Arab watchman used to come often there to take water. I and Garnik Norashkharian, Yerjanik’s son from Zeytoun, saw everyday small girls wearing Arab dresses who had blue eyes and fair hair. They came to watch how we were working.

One day that Arab watchman called these little girls and told them in Arabic: “Don’t be ashamed, come nearer, these are your uncles.”

We asked them: “Where is your mother?”

On the next day, they came with their mother, a lean woman about 40 years old, with a beautiful face, fair hair and blue eyes.

We asked her in Arabic: “How do you remember being an Armenian?”

“I only remember,” she answered, “we used to say ‘hots’ (hats – Arm.) for ‘khebez’ (bread – Arab.) and ‘jeor’ (joor – Arm.) for ‘maye’ (water – Arab.)”

From the dialect she spoke in we understood that she was from Zeytoun. We asked her: “Where did you live in Zeytoun?”

“We had a locality called Dsovkh in Zeytoun. It was a valley, and a small river flowed in it.”

“Do you remember your parents’ family name?”

“Yes, it was Dovlatian.”

Then we definitely knew that she was an Armenian from Zeytoun.

We were transferred later to the right side of Dakka,

on the road to Tetmor, where there was a field called Dallah. We dig pits. Then we were transferred to Jeziré.

In 1950, the British constructed a camp there, and we also moved to work there. That was on the east of the River Khabur, about 45-50 miles from the Iraqi border, before getting to Djebel (Mount) Sinjar. Part of this mountain is in Iraq and another part is in Syria. Our camp was called “Hunahuezia.” Everyday we went there to dig oil-wells. The British SBC company provided us with lunch every day. We ate and when we were satiated, we called the Arab Bedouin shepherds to partake of our lunch. They were members of an Arab nomadic tribe called Jbouri. We used to call them in their language: “Yawel henhen ho-ho! (Come here! – Arab.)”

One day an Arab shepherd came to our table. We asked him: “Where are your sheep?”

“Here,” he replied. “They are not far away. My sheep are behind Nougret-el-Arman (the Armenians’ Pit – Arab.)”

We pricked up our ears and asked: “Can you show us that place?”

He consented. I and my Armenian friend, Garnik, accompanied him there. It was about a mile away from our working-place, a locality called Jesser Sheddadié, on the River Khabur, near the bridge leading to Iraq, a place named Chibisi where, at one time, the Germans had started to dig oil-wells, but since they were defeated in the Second World War, they had left it unfinished and gone away, and we had taken up the job of drilling oil-wells in that region.

We went inside the dark cave. I had taken with me a torch and a sack. The Arab shepherd said: “We always enter this cave of Jesser Sheddadié, which is 7-8 miles long, to take out gold bracelets, tooth-crowns and other ornaments.”

\* I have inscribed this testimony on 24th of April, 2008, precisely at the memorial complex of the Armenian Genocide in Montebello, Los Angeles.

We went about 50-60 meters deeper in the cave and we came across a pit 10-15 meters in diameter. On one side, the cave continued deeper in the direction of the River Khabur.

The Arab continued: "After Der-Zor about 70 miles to the north-east there is a desert where there is no water and no sown fields. The Turks brought here about 40 thousand Armenian survivors miraculously saved from Der-Zor, tormenting them on the road, making them go on foot for 70 miles on the scorching sands of the desert without giving them a drop of water. They brought these poor Armenians, who were emaciated, and all skin and bones, and packed them all alive in this cave or threw them in this pit. Then they brought thorny bushes and tree-branches and covered the mouth of the pit and the entrance to the cave and set everything on fire. I am now 65 years old and I remember very well; I saw everything with my own eyes. The poor Armenians were about 'Arbayin alf nafar' (Forty thousand people – Arab.)."

We went deeper, about 200 feet, into the cave with our torch and the sack. Human bones and skulls were under our feet. We filled our sack with some bones and

skulls. The light of our torch began to fade and finally went out. We were in total darkness and, holding each other's hand, we tried to find our way out of the cave. We groped our way, falling and getting up on the bumpy ground, down the grotto. At last we saw a glimmer of light. We were glad that God showed us that light and led us to the wide world. I recited the Lord's prayer and drew a large cross before the entrance of the cave. I took the sack of bones with me and kept it under my bed. I should have delivered the sack of bones to the church. But I was too young at that time and I did not know what to do. I buried it later in my deceased sister's grave.

Later, when I went to Aleppo, I told my sad adventure to our Zeytounkhan people. Everybody listened with attention; one of them exclaimed: "I have escaped from that pit. I have come out from under the corpses, when the rain waters started to flow into that pit from where they joined the Khabur River. After the sufferings of the deportation, the elderly people and children, who were still alive, but hungry and thirsty and reduced to bags of bones, were packed into that pit and cave and were burned alive."

## 69 (384).

### HAKOB HOVHANNES MOUTAFIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1980, Deir-el-Zor)

*NOWADAY DER-ZOR*

My father's father, Hakob, was forcibly deported with his parents in the days of the Armenian Genocide from the village of Karmounj, near Yedessia. Going on foot, hungry and thirsty, sun-scorched and exhausted, they had reached Der-Zor. There the Turks had started to cut off the heads of the Armenians with axes and to throw them in the Euphrates River. It is said that the water of the Euphrates River was colored red by the Armenians' blood. My grandfather Hakob had miraculously escaped the slaughter. An Arab desert man had taken him as a shepherd to graze his sheep. After many years Hakob had married a girl, an orphan like him, and they had had three sons and two daughters. The three sons had named their firstborn sons Hakob in honor of their father. So, my name is also Hakob after my grandfather.

Our large Moutafian family, numbering 25 souls, lives up till now in Der-Zor and is well-known here by its prosperous situation.

There are also 10-15 other Armenian or semi-Armenian families in Der-Zor. The Armenians are in good friendly relations with the local Arabs. The latter are very kind and hospitable people. The Arab desert tribal chiefs often visit us. They always remember and tell us the narratives about the Armenian deportees they have heard from their fathers and grandfathers, about how the Turkish gendarmes had brought the poor Armenian

exiles in groups to Der-Zor; they had massacred them and had thrown their corpses in the Euphrates River.

That is why the Armenians erected, in 1991, right in the center of today's Der-Zor the Saint Martyrs' Church-Memorial complex dedicated to the memory of one and a half million innocent Armenian martyrs.

There is a hill called Markadé, just a two-hour drive from Der-Zor. According to the testimony of Arab desert tribal chiefs, that name was given precisely by the Arabs at the sight of the slaughter of the Armenians. The name "Markada" is derived from the Arabic word "Rakkadda," which means "countless piled up corpses." It is said that the said hill had been formed by the corpses of the Armenians. In fact, up till the present day, if you dig the earth a little bit with your hand, you will find the bones of the Armenian martyrs. On that same place the Chapel of St. Harutyun was built, in 1996, on the relics of our martyrs, which are displayed in show-cases in every corner of the chapel.

A little farther, there is a large cave called "Sheddadié." Again, according to the testimony of Arab desert men, that name derives from the Arabic word "Shedda," which means "a place of terribly great tragic event." The elderly Arab desert men relate that the Turk gendarmes had brought the Armenian deportees, had packed them into that large cave, had shut its entrance

and had set fire to it. There remained only the bones of the Armenians reduced to ashes...

Those, who come to Der-Zor, do not go back without seeing these places. But during the past few years, petroleum was found near Sheddadié, consequently the Syrian government has forbidden the visits to those places. But the names of these two localities, Markadé and Sheddadié, were given by the desert Arabs, who had witnessed the massacre of the Armenians with their own eyes.

During the massacres many Armenian girls and boys were able to escape, in various ways, from the Turkish murderers and find refuge, naked and hungry, at the Arab desert Bedouins. The latter had tattooed with blue ink the faces of many Armenian girls according to their custom, had made them Moslems and had kept them for years. Most of those Armenians had grown up, had forgotten their mother tongue, had become Arabs, but there are those among them, who still remember that their ancestors were Armenians.

Here is one example. A few years ago, two Arab young men, aged 20-22, knocked at our door. I opened the door and saw two Arab peasant boys and I guessed from their garments that they were from the villages of Der-Zor. I asked them to come in. They sat down and started to speak with great emotion. It turned out that the grandfather of one of them was an Armenian, named

Karapet, who was miraculously saved from the slaughter. The other's grandmother was also an Armenian, named Mariam. Although the names of these young men were Arabic, but they said that there was a nickname added after their family names, "Karapet" and "Mariam" respectively, by which they were known in the villages they lived.

These two young men started to ask questions, whether what they had heard was right, that the Armenians had a country named Armenia, that Gharabagh had been liberated from the Turk-Azeris, that after the Gharabagh victory it was possible to go there and to have the right to live there, that they would be given a piece of land for cultivation and money to build a house for themselves. Therefore, whom should they apply to go to Gharabagh and to settle there? I showed them the way with my advices and I told them that I and my two brothers were already students at the various universities of the capital of Armenia, Yerevan. And I told them that they should apply to the Armenian consul in Aleppo, and he could settle the matter...

Thus, there are thousands of assimilated, estranged Armenians in the Syrian deserts, but there are also many who have still retained their national identity, perhaps not evidently, but the organization of their relocation in Armenia and Gharabagh is, in my opinion, the sacred duty of our government.<sup>1</sup>

## 70 (385).

### VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN'S TESTIMONY

(B. 1934, Alexandria)

#### *MY FATHER, THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVOR GARNIK SVAZLIAN*

I have enjoyed very little the meaningful presence of my father, Garnik Svazlian (1904, Kayseri -1948, Yerevan); he passed away when I was fourteen...

I remember, when we still lived in Alexandria (Egypt) he often told us about the sufferings that the Armenian people had endured in 1915, about how numerous members of their extended family were martyred in the desert of Der-Zor, he told us also passages of Franz Werfel's book, "The Forty Days of Moussa Dagh," emphasizing the self-defensive, heroic

spirit of the Armenian people, he recounted us how he had been miraculously saved from the calamity of Izmir, in 1922, when the Turks had committed to the flames the Armenian quarter, Haynots, and had driven the Christians, the Armenians and the Greeks, to the seashore, where there was fire behind and water ahead, and thousands of corpses floated on the surface of the sea.

Seizing the opportunity, the Turkish boatmen had said: "Gâvurs, give us your gold coins and your jewels,

<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 2005, my dream of many years finally came true. Together with the Doctors of History, Gevorg Yazejian, and my daughter, Knarik Avakian, as well as the well acquainted to these localities, Mr. Sargis Mahtessian, I went on a pilgrimage to Deir-el-Zor, and we stayed with the family of the three businessmen Moutafian brothers. The latter led us to the long bridge, stretched over the large river-bed of the Euphrates, which had become the grave of countless innocent Armenian martyrs. It was already calm, but with a mysterious ripple. We visited also the Saint Harutyun Chapel, in Markadé, built on the dead bodies of the victims. We gathered some relics of our martyrs as a keepsake right under the surface of the sands. We visited then the memorial complex of the Saint Martyrs' Church in Deir-el-Zor. In the museum of that monumental building, one of the curators of which was the patriot, Mr. Zohrap Kassabian, were displayed photographs, the sanctified relics of the martyrs, scanty articles left from them, fine needle-craft and pieces of clothing torn into shreds. In the section of publications were displayed also my books, each of which is, as a memorial cross-stone, the vivid witness of the indescribable sufferings sustained by the Armenian nation and of its righteous demands... I felt then, that I had not lived in vain and had dedicated 50 years of my life to write down and study the testimonies of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide and to present them in various languages to the world and to the coming generations (V. S.).

and we shall take you to the European ships anchored offshore, and you will be saved.” The desperate Armenians, having no other way out, had handed to the boatmen their last belongings with the hope that they would save their and their relatives’ lives. However, the Turkish boatmen had made, in advance, holes at the bottom of their boats and when the dispossessed Armenians had settled in the boats, the boatmen had opened the holes and the sea water had penetrated into the boats, which had lost their balance and had turned upside-down, while the people had found themselves in the sea waves and had drowned.

My father, who was eighteen years old at that time and had lost his relatives in that terrible turmoil, seeing that extensive tragedy and defying death, had thrown himself fully clothed into the sea and, struggling with the waves, had reached the Greek ship and, climbing up the anchor chain, had hidden in the flue.

The ship took the Greek soldiers and my father to the Greek port of Pirea, and since he had will power, he found himself a job and started to sell crackers in the streets and kept body and soul together for a time. Then he went and settled in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Armenian goldsmiths of Izmir were renowned as skilled jewel-makers, and my father was apprenticed, along with his studies, to an Armenian goldsmith to master the secrets of the trade. Subsequently, he rented a shop on France Street and engaged in jewel-making. After a short time, he won such a fame with his talent and his refined taste that he received an order to make the wedding jewelry of the Egyptian King, Farouk’s sister. Then he got married to the daughter of the national benefactor, “Father Protector” of the orphans of the Armenian Genocide, Kerobé Agha-Cherakian, Sirarpi Agha-Chrakian, a decent family from Constantinople, and started his own family.

My father promoted an ardent public activity in Alexandria; he started to publish articles in various Diasporan newspapers describing the troublesome life of the Armenians miraculously saved from the Genocide, scattered all over the world and in danger of assimilation and degeneration. He considered that the only way for their salvation was the massive repatriation to the mother country. Beginning from that period, father became one of the founders of the Alexandria Branch of HOC (Hayastani Ognutyán Comite – Arm.), Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA), contributing thus, to the reconstruction of the Motherland. His theatrical play “The Repatriation” was published in Alexandria, in 1936, on the first page of which the author wrote: “If I am not in a position to materially contribute to the Repatriation, I offer this work of mine in favor of its success.” And he assigned the sum collected from the sale of his book to the purchase of spinning and weaving machines and sent them to the newly founded textile-weaving factory in Leninakan (now: Gyumri).

Later, in the years of World War II, when Fascism was terrorizing the whole world, my father founded in Alexandria the artistic, cultural and essentially patriotic “Sevan Union,” around which the Armenian community of the town rallied. By his efforts, a group of young girls and ladies was formed in that club, who willingly wove woolen socks for the Soviet Red Army soldiers fighting in the bitter frost against the German Nazi armies. I remember, I was then nine years old and I studied at the local Poghossian National School. During the long recesses, I, too, wove socks and I encouraged my classmates to do the same, so that we could, at least to a minimum degree, contribute to the victory over Fascism. Thus, my way of thinking and spiritual-conscious world were gradually shaped under the influence of my father’s ideas.

I recall, I and my sister Zarouhi hurried after school to my father’s shop situated in the center of the town, where we hastily prepared our lessons for the following day in order to go with father, in the evening when his work was over, to the “Sevan Union” Club and to participate in the interesting and instructive events, the literary evenings and the various courses of studies organized there. In that cultural center, special courses were organized for those who did not master the Armenian language. Father, as the chairman of that Union, conducted himself various lectures on different subjects, which had the object of preparing the Diasporan Armenians to the new public life conditions in the Motherland. A four-part choir also functioned there under the leadership of the lawyer Mr. Salerian, and the soloist was the latter’s wife. The choirmaster taught us Armenian songs, particularly those composed by Komitas, owing to which not only patriotism was inculcated in the soul of the young people, groping in foreign countries, but my father allocated also the sums collected from the performances of our choir to the fund for house-building in Armenia, as well as for the creation of the Armenian tank column “David of Sassoun” in those years of the Second World War to fight against the German forces.

The play “The Repatriation” was put on the stage on the eve of Mass Repatriation (1946-1948) with the participation of the “Sevan Union” members, Mr. Onnik and Mrs. Beatrice Voltaire and also the unreserved devotion of my father, the author, at the Lycée Français Hall in Alexandria, in the Ezbekieh Theater in Cairo, in Cyprus, and in other Armenian-populated colonies abroad, raising a colossal wave of patriotism everywhere. Even our seven-membered family, father, mother, my elder sister, Zarouhi, I, my younger sister, Armenouhi, and my newly-born twin brothers, Zhirayr and Zohrap, took part with many others in the most staggering mass scene of the performance, which represented the refugee Armenians miraculously saved from the Genocide sailing to the Motherland on the “Soviet Armenia” ship. I remember, the spectators cried and sobbed with

emotion... Loud applause rumbled through the hall... It was a real fete...

Although the concern for our large family was burdened on my father's shoulders, however, he willingly took the sums collected from the performance of his plays to Cairo and he handed them to the Soviet Ambassador Mr. Sultanov, in order that they would be assigned to the Repatriation fund or to the house-building fund in Armenia.

Being a person miraculously rescued from the Genocide, my father constantly criticized the instigators of war and violences in his journalistic articles and cartoons of political nature published in various countries, and he pointed out that the future and the final haven of the scattered Armenians was the Motherland-Armenia.

My father's paternal uncle, Mihran Svazlian, was a well-known lawyer, political figure, diplomat, the founder of the first lobbying organization in the USA; he had also given advices to President Woodrow Wilson in drawing the claimed map of Armenia. My father always repeated his uncle's meaningful words: "Patriotism is for me a matter of dignity," and he educated us, his children, in that spirit.

When our family was repatriated to Armenia in 1947, certain difficulties and defects were noticeable, but my father reproached those who complained and fell into despair saying: "Our Fatherland has just emerged victorious in the war against Fascism. There is not a single family who has not suffered losses, not a single family where a candle was not extinguished; we have come here to put, hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder with our sisters and brothers, a soothing balm to the wounds of our Motherland in the name of our final goal: United Armenia..."

However, we had come from the temperate climate of the Mediterranean Sea to the Armenian Highlands, having abrupt climatic changes, the frosty winter of which had an adverse effect on my father's precarious state of health, since his bold juvenile step, his jumping, during the Izmir calamity, into the cold sea in Autumn, his swimming to the ship and, later, his secret public-political activities in the Diaspora, the persecutions and the imprisonments, all these had gradually impaired his health...

Nevertheless, Garnik Svazlian won recognition and esteem during the short three or four months he lived in the Motherland. He was elected a member of the Writers' Union of Armenia during the chairmanship of the great poet and writer, Avetik Issahakian. And a number of his extensive and ideologically saturated articles were published in the Armenian periodicals (See "Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia," Yerevan, 1985, Vol. 11, p. 88).

I remember how he was enraptured by the picturesque nature of Armenia, though he was grieved that our Mount Ararat was in captivity...; he also admired and

was proud of the unflinching will of the courageous sons of the Armenian people inherited from the remote ages, of their manual and mental creations and he passed away in the prime of his life, at the age of 44, whispering "My Motherland, my children..." the Motherland whom, according to him, he had not been able to devote himself wholly, and children, whose future he had entrusted to the Motherland.

Subsequently, when I was a Ph.D. student, I gathered my father's journalistic articles and cartoons of political nature, published in various countries, as well as the play "The Repatriation," in a collection entitled "For My Motherland," which was printed in Yerevan at the "Hayastan" (Armenia – Arm.) Publishing House, in 1965. I took a copy of that collection and interred it in my father's grave...

These episodes of my father's (who was miraculously saved from the Armenian Genocide) life are always in my thoughts, and I considered my sacred duty to write them down and to join them to the historical collective memory of the Armenian people, glorified in its afflictions. Since my father spoke continuously about the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, many of which had been scattered in the various countries of the world. My father was very concerned also about the fate of the survivors' following generations, who were gradually diverging from their national roots in foreign countries...

I was, in particular, deeply impressed when, during our repatriation to Armenia in 1947, our ship "Pobeda" stopped at the Syrian port of Latakia, and a group of people, in unusual multi-colored costumes and dresses, the women with tattooed faces, embarked. They were speaking in strange dialects. My father explained to me that they were Armenians miraculously saved from the Armenian Genocide who had found shelter at the Arab Bedouins or the Kurds in the Syrian deserts, in Der-Zor, some of them were even apostatized Armenians who had decided to be repatriated to Armenia in order to preserve their and their children's national identity.

These emotive scenes of the past, my father's explanations and especially the following lines addressed to me were indelibly kept in my mind and constantly accompanied me as a precept:

*"Verjiné, my daughter,  
I want you to be clever,  
Kind with your work and honor,  
Be a credit to your parents,  
Your nation and Motherland."*

These words have constantly accompanied me. Consequently, starting from 1955 and during 55 years I have, with an indefatigable consistency and love, written down, audio- and video-recorded, studied and presented to the world in different languages the collective historical memory of the Fatherland-deprived Western Armenians.

**III.**  
**HISTORICAL**  
**SONG-TESTIMONIES**





1.

**SONGS OF MOBILIZATION, ARM-COLLECTION AND OF THE IMPRISONED**

1 (386).

**THE SOLDIER'S FAREWELL**

In nineteen hundred and fourteen  
An edict of mobilization was proclaimed,  
I'll go, dear mother, I'll go dear sister,  
I am a soldier; I'll go, my yearnings unfulfilled.

For God's sake, mother, sew my bag well,  
My bride is young, treat her tenderly,  
I'll go, dear mother, I'll go dear sister,  
I am a soldier; I'll go, my yearnings unfulfilled.

2 (387).

**GOOD-BYE, SWEET MOTHER!**

Good-bye, sweet mother!  
I have to go;  
Give me a last maternal kiss  
To cool my heart.  
The dark clouds on the sky  
Have formed an arch,

The heart of our Armenian youths  
Has sunk in darkness.  
Fathers are crying, mothers are crying;  
It's time for mourning and laments,  
The hour of separation has come,  
It's beyond our heart's endurance.

3 (388).

**BEHOLD! I'M GOING, DEAR MOTHER!**

Behold! I'm going, dear mother!  
Good-bye for now,  
Fallen under such a pressure  
How can the Armenians endure?  
When I went to Sebastia,  
I came back in two days,

The two days became a year,  
And I missed you badly.  
Good-by, dear mother,  
Wait for my return;  
My friend on the battlefield  
Is waiting for me.

4 (389).

**ON THE BLACK SEA, MOTHER!**

On the Black Sea, mother!  
No boats are sailing,  
Our hands are weakened,  
Mother, they can't hold a gun.  
The river waters  
Come in waves;

How terribly cuts  
The Turks' sword!  
There is no way, mother,  
For me to come and reach you,  
The Armenian nation's grief  
Has seized the world, mother.

**5 (390).**

**MOTHER! I WAS CALLED UP AS A SOLDIER**

Mother, mother! I was called up and taken away,  
I wasn't given a rifle, but was enlisted in the labor battalion,  
The Tokat village of Yatmish was less than four days distant,  
The stones of Yatmish had to be broken down;  
The waters of Tokat were so abundant,

Everybody's hope was to come back,  
Days, days, I go in such grievous days,  
I go, I go, I go as a soldier,  
I go to break stones.

**6 (391).**

**THEY TOOK THE SOLDIERS TO BALOU**

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!

**7 (392).**

**THE GRANDMOTHER'S DESIRE**

I have a pair of oxen; I'll sell them  
For whatever sum they give,  
I'll buy a rifle for Giko  
And let him become a fighter.

Get up, my lad, do not sleep,  
Let's leave our church and work,  
The foreigner is of no help to us,  
Get up, let me tie your rifle.

After only a month  
He will become twenty-one,  
What's lacking in my Giko  
To be turned down as a fighter?

Oh! Almighty God! Don't take my soul!  
I want to see my Giko  
The rifle on his arm, the bullets, in rows, on his chest,  
My desire accomplished; I could die on that day!

**8 (393).**

**I HAVE SENT MY INTIMATES TO RUSSIA**

I have sent my intimates to Russia,  
Give my greetings to all my bosom friends,  
We don't want of you gold or silver,  
We just want of you perforated irons.<sup>1</sup>

I have sent my intimates to Armenia,  
Give my greetings to all the Armenians,  
If we are not in unity,  
We shall be scattered.

**9 (394).**

**I WANT TO TAKE MY REVENGE**

I shall join the Turkish army,  
I shall hold a rifle,  
What shall I do with Turkey?  
I shall go to Armenia.

I want to look at the sky,  
I want to look up,  
The wicked Turk came upon us,  
I want to take my revenge!

**10 (395).**

**ANA, UYANDIR BENİ,  
GİDEYİM TALİME**

Ana, uyandır beni, gideyim talime,  
Aynalı-martini alayım elime,

***MOTHER, WAKE ME UP,  
LET ME GO TO THE TRAINING***

*Mother, wake me up, let me go to the training,  
Let me take in hand my mirrored-rifle*

<sup>1</sup> Rifles.

Gitmeye doğru vatan yoluna,  
Buna ölüm yolu, derler,  
Allah saklasın!  
Ermeniler çoktur, derler,  
Allah kurtarsın!

*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!*

### ASKERİN ŞARKILARI

### THE SOLDIER'S SONGS

#### 11 (396).

Sabahtan kalktım, anam ağlıyor,  
Babam atın üzengisini bağlıyor,  
Baktım gizlice yaman ağlıyor,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*I got up in the morning, mother was crying,  
Father was fastening the horse's stirrup,  
I saw him crying bitterly in secret,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

#### 12 (397).

Getir, anam, getir elini öpeyim,  
Emdiğim sütü helal edeyim,  
Askere gidersem, belki gelemem,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*Give me, mother, your hand to kiss,  
The milk you suckled me with was sacred,  
If I go as a soldier, perhaps I won't come back,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

#### 13 (398).

Trene binince, kuş gibi uçar,  
Memleket yolları gözümden uçar,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*I took the train; it flew like a bird,  
I lost sight of the homeland roads,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

#### 14 (399).

Trene bindim, tren salladı,  
Zalim felek yüreğimi eğledi,  
Ne dedi de zalim doktor  
Beni gurbete yolladı.

*I took the train; it rocked to and fro,  
The knavish fate deceived me,  
On what grounds did the ruthless doctor  
Send me to alien lands.*

#### 15 (400).

Erzurum'dan çıktım başım selamet,  
Meskene'ye gelince, koptu kıyamet,  
Anama, babama acı alamet,  
Gelin Makruhim\* kime emanet?

*I left Erzroom with a quiet mind,  
We reached Meskené and found there commotion,  
Give the bad news to father and mother,  
Who will take care of my bride Makrouhi\*?*

#### 16 (401).

Abraham'ın\* yorganını yüke dürdüler,  
Kara gözlü Vahram'ımı\* vurdular,  
Saat üçten sonra mezara koydular,  
Çontarın da bağlamasını kırdılar.

*They put Abraham's\* quilt in the closet  
And shot my black-eyed Vahram\*,  
They buried him after three o'clock  
And broke down Chontar's lute.*

\* Armenian name.

**17 (402).**

Kışlanın içinde bir pınar akar,  
Askerler oturmuş çamaşır yıkar,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*A fountain flowed in the barracks,  
The soldiers sat and washed their clothes,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

**18 (403).**

Yürüye, yürüye, taburuma kavuştum,  
Evvel Allah, martinime güvendim,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*Walking on foot I reached my regiment,  
God willing, I relied on my gun,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

**19 (404).**

Gide-gide kundurama kum doldu,  
Kum yerine yüreğime kan doldu,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*Walking and walking my shoes were filled with sand,  
In place of sand, my heart was filled with blood,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

**20 (405).**

Kıyma, Çerkez, kıyma tatlı canıma:  
Yeni nişanlım var karalar bağlar,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*Circassian, spare my sweet life:  
I have a new fiancée; she will be bound in black,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

**21 (406).**

Askere gittim gelirim diye,  
Martinimi doldurdum vururum diye,  
Hiç aklımdan geçmedi ölürüm diye,  
Bini bir uğruna ölen yavrular!

*I went as a soldier to come back,  
I filled my gun to shoot,  
It didn't cross my mind that I would die,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

**22 (407).**

Çıktım Gâvur Dağ'ın<sup>1</sup> başına,  
Karı dizleye, dizleye,  
Yaralar göz-göz oldu,  
Cerrah bekleye-bekleye.

*I rose on top of the Gâvur Mountain,<sup>1</sup>  
Climbing on my knees on the snow,  
My wounds opened large as eyes,  
Waiting and waiting for the surgeon.*

**23 (408).**

Çeyizim sandıkta basılı kaldı,  
Sevgili nişanlım kimlere kaldı?  
Arap çöllerinde beni aradı,  
Bini bir uğruna giden yavrular!

*My dowry remained folded in the trunk,  
Whom my fiancée was left to?  
She searched for me in the Arab deserts,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

<sup>1</sup> The mountain was called "Gâvur" (unbeliever – in Turk.; special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians), because a great number of Armenians were martyred there.

24 (409).

Bitlis kapısında çınar ağacı,  
Ayrılık şerbeti zehirden acı,  
Söyleyin anneme, annem ağlasın,  
Annemden başka yalan ağlar.

*There is a plane-tree at the gate of Bitlis,  
The separation potion is bitterer than poison,  
Inform my mother and let her cry,  
People other than my mother will shed sham tears.*

25 (410).

Söylesin destanlar dillerden-dile,  
Gelin de görün Zeytun dağlarda,  
Ermeni fedayi çoktur dağlarda,  
Bini bir uğruna ölen yavrular!

*Let them sing the ballad from mouth to mouth,  
Come to the Zeytoun mountains and see,  
There are many Armenian fighters there,  
Thousands of children will go and perish!*

26 (411).

**YİĞİTLER ASKERE GİDİYOR DİYE**

**THE BRAVES WENT AS SOLDIERS**

Yiğitler askere gidiyor diye  
Halka ile kete azık,  
Aman, aman, yazık oldu!  
Yiğitlere yazık oldu!

*The braves went as if to serve in the army  
With a little bread and pastry,  
Alas, alas, what a pity!  
The braves have gone, what a pity!*

27 (412).

**EGİN'DEN AŞAĞI ZİNCİR ÇEKTİLER**

**THEY FORMED A CHAIN ROUND AKN**

Egin'den\* aşağı zincir çektiler,  
Giden yiğitleri suya döktüler,  
Yiğitler, yiğitler, babayiğitler,  
Su içinde yatan, şirin yiğitler!

*They formed a chain round Akn\*  
And threw the coming braves into the water,  
Braves, braves, heroic braves,  
Drowned heroes, sweet braves!*

28 (413).

**KIŞLANIN ÖNÜNDE BİR BÜYÜK AVLU**

**A LARGE YARD BEFORE THE BARRACKS**

Kışlanın önünde bir büyük avlu,  
Ağalar oturmuş oynuyor tavlu,  
Yiğitler gidiyor kolları bağlı,  
Kimisi nişanlı, kimisi evli.

*A large yard before the barracks,  
The bosses are seated playing backgammon,  
The braves are passing, arms bound,  
Some betrothed, others married.*

29 (414).

**KIŞLANIN ÖNÜNDE  
ÇİFT PINAR AKAR**

**TWO FOUNTAINS ARE FLOWING  
BEFORE THE BARRACKS**

Kışlanın önünde çift pınar akar,  
Kurşun patırtısı yüreğim yakar,  
Şimdi benim anam yoluma bakar,  
Nişanlım da duysa saçları yolar.

*Two fountains are flowing before the barracks,  
The uproar of bullets makes my heart ache,  
My mother is looking now anxiously at my road,  
My fiancée, on hearing, will pluck her hair.*

\* Armenian town.

30 (415).

SÜRÜ-SÜRÜ İÇİ ERKEK UŞAKLI

Sürü-sürü içi erkek uşaklı,  
Döşeğin içi ufak uşaklı,  
Eli tüfekli beli fişekli,  
Bizim beylerimiz nerde kaldı?

MEN AND SERVANTS IN THE ROWS

*Men and servants in the rows,  
Little boys in beds,  
Rifle in hand, bullets round the waist,  
Where our notables have gone?*

31 (416).

KURŞUN KURMUŞ KOLLARINA

Kurşun kurmuş kollarına,  
Karşı koymuş ellerine,  
İzin vermiş Almanya,  
Söyletmemiş dillerini.

HE HAS BULLETS FASTENED ON HIS ARMS

*He has bullets fastened on his arms,  
He has put his hands one opposite the other,  
Germany has given permission,  
And tongues did not utter a word.*

ULAN GÂVUR, DOĞRU SÖYLE!

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Sende martin varmış?”  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(It's hanging on the wall, I won't tell).\*

HEY! GÂVUR, TELL THE TRUTH!

32 (417).

*“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Have you got a gun?”  
“No, sir, it's a slander,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.”  
(It's hanging on the wall, I won't tell).\**

33 (418).

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Sen Türk zabıt öldürdün mü?”  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(I have killed six or seven).\*

*“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Have you killed Turkish officers?”  
“No, sir, it's a slander,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.”  
(I have killed six or seven).\**

34 (419).

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Senin arkadaşın varmış?”  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(We are five hundred, I won't tell).\*

*“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Have you got friends?”  
“No, sir, it's a slander,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.”  
(We are five hundred, I won't tell).\**

35 (420).

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Serop Paşa'yı tanır mısın?”  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(I know him, I won't tell, I know him, I won't tell).\*

*“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Do you know Serob pasha?”  
“No, sir, it's a slander,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.”  
(I know him, I won't tell, I know him, I won't tell).\**

\* He adds secretly in Armenian.

### 36 (421).

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Sen Mersin’e bomba yolladın mı?”  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(Yes, I have sent them, I won’t tell).\*

“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Have you sent bombs to Mersin?”  
“No, sir, it’s a slander,  
I don’t know, I haven’t seen,  
I don’t know, I haven’t seen.”  
(Yes, I have sent them, I won’t tell).\*

### 37 (422).

“Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle!  
Bankayı basan sen misin?”<sup>1</sup>  
“Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.”  
(We did that, I won’t tell,  
I won’t betray the Armenian nation).\*

“Hey, gâvur, tell the truth!  
Did you attack the Bank?”<sup>1</sup>  
“No, sir, it’s a slander,  
I don’t know, I haven’t seen,  
I don’t know, I haven’t seen.”  
(We did that, I won’t tell,  
I won’t betray the Armenian nation).\*

### 38 (423).

#### PIRGIÇ’İN<sup>2</sup> YOLLAR

Pırgıç’in yolları taşınan diken,  
Olmasın cihanda diken,  
Pırgıç’in kapusu dağlara bakar,  
Hastalar oturmuş sıraya bakar.

Doktorlar gelince, yürekler kalkar,  
Korkarım, Zardaryan bana bakacak,  
Biraz dur, Zardaryan, soluk alayım,  
Canımınan tenimi teslim olayım.

Kıyma, doktor Zardaryan, kıyma, canıma!  
Yirmi beş yaşında koyma toprağa,  
Çoluk çocuğum var kalır meydanda,  
Çünkü yazık olacak yarım ilen bana.

Mezarımı Balıklı’ya<sup>3</sup> koysunlar,  
Tasvirimi baş ucuma koysunlar,  
Gelen-geçen "Cahil ölmüş!" desinler,  
Hem hasretlik, hem gurbetlik başıma.

#### THE ROADS OF PRKICH<sup>2</sup>

The roads of Prkich are stony and thorny,  
Let no thorns grow in the world,  
The gate of Prkich faces the mountains,  
The patients, seated, wait for their turn.

When the doctors come, hearts start to beat,  
I am in fear, Zardarian will examine me,  
Wait, Zardarian, let me take a breath  
And render you my body and soul!

Spare me, doctor Zardarian, spare my soul!  
Don’t bury me at the age of twenty-five,  
My children will remain ownerless,  
Take pity on me and on my beloved.

Let them dig my tomb in Balekli<sup>3</sup>  
And put my photograph over my head,  
Passers-by will say, “How young he has died!”  
Yearning and exile hang over my head.

### 39 (424).

#### THE TURK CAME AND ENTERED THE VILLAGE

The Turk came and entered the village  
And took away the young men as soldiers,  
We lost our sleep,  
Day and night your mother’s eyes were tearful.

I got out of breath yelling, “Sahak!  
Come, Sahak, come, my boy!”  
My soul is aching,  
I can’t bear this anguish;

\* He adds secretly in Armenian.

<sup>1</sup> I have written down the fragments of this multi-layered song from several narrators. According to **Mannik Kirakossian** (b. 1929), from Adabazar, this part of the song has been created about Zareh Khachoyan, from the village of Syolez. During the trial of the Ottoman Bank operation, he had taken permission from the Turkish policemen to go to the lavatory. There he had taken off the faucet-handle, had opened his belly and had disemboweled himself and had died in order not to confess and betray his friends.

<sup>2</sup> The St. Prkich (St. Savior) Armenian National Hospital in Istanbul.

<sup>3</sup> The grave-yard near the Armenian St. Prkich (St. Savior) Hospital.

All our household and neighbors  
Remember you and call God for help.  
May the Lord's hand be upon you  
And your roads be free of peril,

May you return safe and sound and enter the village  
And take possession of the girl you love,  
Your mother and father and your kinsfolk  
Will kiss your wedding crown and rejoice.

40 (425).

SONG OF THE PRISONER

I was born in Adabazar,  
I was called up to join the army  
And I said daringly:  
"Leaving a dear mother  
And four honorable sisters,  
I won't be a Turkish soldier

Even if you cut my head off."  
They caught me and took me to Khaskal  
And threw me in jail after beating me.  
They do not understand a simple thing:  
Instead of becoming a Turkish soldier,  
I will be a soldier to Andranik.

41 (426).

THE DOOR OF MY JAIL HAD SEVEN STONES

The door of my jail had seven stones,  
The building was enclosed with a strong iron fence,  
Suddenly the sound of doors was heard  
And Turkish soldiers rushed in.  
At four o'clock in the morning  
They put the sentence of death on my chest,  
And took me before the gallows,  
They let me say my last wish:  
"Give my waistcoat to my mother,  
Don't tell her that her son was hanged,

But that he is a prisoner in jail,  
Give my watch to my sister,  
Don't tell her that her brother was hanged,  
But that he is a prisoner in jail,  
Take my soul to my dear Nazlou,  
Don't tell her that her beloved was hanged,  
But that he is a prisoner in jail.  
Dig my grave yourselves  
And write on my tomb-stone  
That I am a martyr!"

42 (427).

KASAP MİSAK<sup>1</sup>

Aslan gibi ecelim bu  
Ölümüne sebep olan  
Acaba bu halime acır mı?  
Kendirler, annem, yağlanır mı?  
Başı açık, ayağı yalınayak,  
Benim gibi sallanır mı?

Bu ne haldır, Kasap Misak?  
Bu haline can dayanır mı?  
Koyun gibi asılmışsın.  
Seni gören dayanır mı?  
Efendim, aman, aman.

Baktım beyaz entari giydirdiler  
Gece vakit rüya gibi,

BUTCHER MISSAK<sup>1</sup>

*The one who is the cause of my death  
And of the lion-like end of mine  
Will he feel pity for my state?  
Will the ropes be oiled, mother?  
Bare-headed and bare-footed,  
Will he dangle like me?*

*What plight is this, Butcher Missak?  
Can anyone endure your state?  
You are hanging like a sheep,  
Can anyone bear your sight?  
Alas, my master, alas!*

*I saw they dressed me a white robe  
In the dark night as a dream,*

<sup>1</sup> This ballad has been sung by **Gevorg Hekimian** (b. 1937, Beirut). According to him, Missak was a butcher during the massacres of Adana, in 1909. Seeing this horrible slaughter and filled with vengeance, he had killed several Turks in the cellar of his shop, had roasted their meat and had given it to eat to other Turks. At last, the affair was discovered by the Turkish government and Butcher Missak was sent to the gallows and was hanged like a sheep. The narrator has added: "Whether it is right or wrong, I cannot tell with certainty."

Darağacımın acı ipinden  
Teşlim akar Ceyhan<sup>1</sup> gibi  
Darağacımı hazırladılar  
Annem bekler mehtap gibi.

Bu ne haldır, Kasap Misak?  
Bu haline can dayanır mı?  
Koyun gibi asılmışsın  
Seni gören dayanır mı?  
Efendim, aman, aman!

*Tears flowed down the rope of the gibbet  
Like the waters of Djehan<sup>1</sup>  
They prepared my gallows;  
Mother is waiting for me like moonlight.*

*What plight is this, Butcher Missak?  
Can anyone endure your state?  
You are hanging like a sheep,  
Can anyone bear your sight?  
Alas, my master, alas!*

#### 43 (428).

##### HANIYA DA BENİM TUZ-EKMEĞİM YİYENLER

Haniya da benim tuz-ekmeğim yiyenler,  
“Ahbab ölmeden, ben ölüyorum” diyenler.  
Ben bana ettim, anam, kime ne deyim?  
Elimle düştüm, kime ne deyim?  
Çıka-çık şübekden\* bakırım,  
Deli gönlüm ateşlerde yakarım,  
Mevlam izin verirse, mahpusdan çıkarım,  
Elimle düştüm, kime ne deyim?  
Seyisler atları yemiyor,  
Mahpushane üstümüze damlıyor,  
Ben bana ettim, anam, kime ne deyim?  
Elimle düştüm, kime ne deyim?  
Babam çadırları dolanıyor,  
Anam da baş üstümde ağlıyor,  
Biçare nişanlım karalar bağlıyor,  
Ben bana ettim, anam, kime ne deyim?  
Elimle düştüm, kime ne deyim?  
Arara Dağı'nı<sup>2</sup> duman бүrdü,  
Tıglik<sup>3</sup> Sarkis, Taslak<sup>3</sup> Misak vurulmuş,  
Ben bana ettim, anam, kime ne deyim?  
Elimle düştüm, kime ne deyim?

##### WHERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE EATEN MY SALT-BREAD

*Where are those who have eaten my salt-bread,  
Those who said: “Let me die before my friend dies.”  
I did it to myself, mother, who should I blame?  
I fell myself, mother, who should I blame?  
I climb up and look out of the window,\*  
I burn my mad soul in fires,  
God willing, mother, I'll be freed from prison,  
I fell myself, mother, who should I blame?  
The horsemen are feeding their horses,  
It's dripping on us in the prison,  
I did it to myself, mother, who should I blame?  
I fell myself, mother, who should I blame?  
My father is wandering amidst the tents,  
My mother is weeping over my head,  
My poor fiancée is tying black,  
I did it to myself, mother, who should I blame?  
I fell myself, mother, who should I blame?  
The Arara Mountain<sup>2</sup> is fog-covered,  
Teghlik(ian)<sup>3</sup> Sargis, Taslak(ian)<sup>3</sup> Missak were killed...  
I did it to myself, mother, who should I blame?  
I fell myself, mother, who should I blame?*

#### 44 (429).

##### EFE-TOROS<sup>4</sup>

Engürü'den çıktığımı görmüşler,  
Kır atımın yürüyüşünden bilmişler,  
“Şu gelen Efe-Toros,” demişler,  
Doğuramaz olaydın, ay anam, başım belalı,  
Ellerim kelepçe, boğazım halkalı.

##### EFE-TOROS<sup>4</sup>

*They had noticed my departure from Enkuru,  
They had understood from my horse's tramp,  
“The comer is Efé-Toros,” they said.  
I wish you hadn't born me so unlucky, mother,  
Handcuffs on my hands, a ring on my neck.*

<sup>1</sup> River flowing in the center of Cilicia.

\* The Arabic word “şübekden/shubek” (window) has been used in the Turkish language song.

<sup>2</sup> The Armenian volunteer-legionaries defeated the Turkish-German forces in 1918 near the Arara Mountain (Palestine), winning the praise of the French and British allies. During these heroic battles, Teghlikian Sargis and Taslakian Missak were killed, while the husband of the narrator **Mariam Baghdishian** (b. 1909, Moussa Dagh), Karapet, triumphantly returned home and taught her wife the present song composed during the battle.

<sup>3</sup> Armenian surnames, in which the “-ian” ending has been abridged.

<sup>4</sup> A survivor from Chalgharan (Eskishehir), **Samvel Paterian** (b. 1900) has recalled with difficulty the words of this song. According to him, Efé (efendi = sir – Turk.) Toros, had, with his vindictive group, caused great damages to the Turks, who had sentenced him to death. Toros's mother had tried to save his son by paying a ransom, but the Turks hanged him with an oiled rope.

Engürü'den çıktım saat beş idi,  
Benim arkadaşlarım on beş idi,  
Öldürdüğüm Çerkez yüz on beş idi,  
Doğurmaz olaydın, ay anam, başım belalı,  
Ellerim kelepçe, boğazım halkalı.

Ankara'nın ışıkları parlıyor,  
Zalim düşmanlar urgan yağlıyor,  
Urganın üstüne kanım damlıyor,  
Doğurmaz olaydın, ay anam, başım belalı,  
Ellerim kelepçe, boğazım halkalı.

“Asmayın oğlumu, alayım satın,”  
Toros'un anası bir küçük kadın,  
“Cebimde bulunur bin beş yüz altın.”

Varın, söyleyin anama: damda yatmasın,  
Oğlum Toros\* gelir diye: yola bakmasın,  
Anama deyin: bohçam açmasın;  
Çuha şalvarıma uçkur takmasın,  
Çayırı ben sılama varamaz oldum,  
İskuhi\* nişanlım göremez oldum,  
Daracık sokaktan geçemez oldum.

Şu dağın ardında bir gezen olsa,  
Çayırı-çimeni yoklayan olsa,  
Ermeni millete bir beylik olsa,  
Kuş gibi döneriz meydanda,  
Biz ölürüz millet yoluna.

*I departed from Enkuru at five o'clock,  
My friends were fifteen in number,  
I have killed a hundred and fifteen Circassians,  
I wish you hadn't born me so unlucky, mother,  
Handcuffs on my hands, a ring on my neck.*

*The lights of Ankara are glittering,  
The cruel enemies are oiling the rope,  
My blood is dripping on the rope,  
I wish you hadn't born me so unlucky, mother,  
Handcuffs on my hands, a ring on my neck.*

*“Don't hang my son, I'll buy him,  
I'm Toros's mother,” said a little woman,  
“I have in my pocket fifteen hundred gold coins.”*

*Tell my mother not to sleep on the roof,  
Not to gaze at the road expecting her son Toros,\*  
Tell my mother not to open my bundle of clothes,  
And not to pass a cord to my woolen breeches,  
I am already not able to arrive home,  
Unable to see my fiancée Iskuhi,\*  
And not able to come out of this narrow path.*

*If someone could rove behind this mountain,  
If someone could explore these meadows,  
If there were a ruler for the Armenian nation,  
We would fly round the square like birds,  
We would die for the glory of our nation.*

\* Armenian name.





2.

**SONGS OF DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE**

**1 (430).**

**HÜRRİYET, ADALET, MÜSAVAT,  
YAŞASIN MİLLET!**

Geceler gündüz oldu,  
Dillerimiz saz oldu,  
Hürriyetin aşkına  
Çok canlar feda oldu.

**LIBERTY, JUSTICE, EQUALITY,  
LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE!**

*The nights turned into days,  
Our tongues turned into violins,  
For the sake of Liberty  
Many people perished.*

**2 (431).**

**KALK IN, HEY VATANDAŞLAR!**

Kalkın, hey vatandaşlar!  
Sevinelim yoldaşlar!  
İşte size Hürriyet:  
Yaşasın Osmanlılar!

**GET UP, COMPATRIOTS!**

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

**3 (432).**

**UYAN, SULTAN HAMİD, UYAN!**

Pencereden kar geliyor,  
Bak dışarı kim geliyor?  
Ölüm bana zor geliyor,  
Uyan, sultan, zalım sultan!  
Kan ağlıyor bütün cihan!  
Aman! Aman! Mayrik!\*

**WAKE UP, SULTAN HAMID, WAKE UP!**

*Snow is penetrating through the window,  
Look who is coming from outside?  
Death is hard to bear for me,  
Wake up, sultan, cruel sultan!  
The whole world is weeping blood!  
Alas! Alas! Mayrik!\**

Çaya indim, çay geçilmez,  
Su bulanık, hiç içilmez,  
Ölüm bana zor geliyor,  
Uyan, Sultan Hamid, uyan!  
Kan ağlıyor bütün cihan!  
Aman! Aman! Mayrik!\*

*I descended to the river, it was impassable,  
The water was turbid and undrinkable,  
Death is hard to bear for me,  
Wake up, Sultan Hamid, wake up!  
The whole world is weeping blood!  
Alas! Alas! Mayrik!\**

Tuzlu olur İstanbul'un fıstığı,  
Taştan olur Ermeninin yastığı,  
Kör olasin şu meydanın dostluğu:<sup>2</sup>

*The hazelnut of Istanbul is salty,  
The cushion of the Armenians is stony,  
Cursed be this proclaimed friendship,<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> It refers to the massacres of Armenians in the years 1894-1896, where 300,000 Armenians were slaughtered by the Turks.

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>2</sup> It concerns the Constitution of Ottoman Turkey proclaimed in 1908, which formally promised: "Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet" (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.) to all the peoples living in Turkey, irrespective of their nationality and religion.

Aldılar nazlı yarım, duyan ağlasın,  
Aman! Aman! Mayrik!\*

*They abducted my beloved, let the hearer cry,  
Alas! Alas! Mayrik!\**

**4 (433).**

**PADIŞAH OTURMUŞ  
TAHTINDAN BAKAR**

Padişah oturmuş tahtından bakar,  
Tahtının altında al kanlar akar,  
Baltayı vurunca yattı ölüler,  
Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.

Şefketlim oturmuş tahtından bakar,  
Gâvurun kanları sel gibi akar,  
Hürriyet isteyenler derede kokar,  
Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.

**THE KING SEATED IS WATCHING  
FROM HIS THRONE**

*The king seated is watching from his throne,  
Red blood is flowing under his throne,  
Struck by axes, corpses are falling,  
The Armenians' condition is lamentable.*

*The kind ruler is watching from his throne,  
The gâvurs' blood is flowing like a torrent,  
The freedom-wishers are stinking in the valley,  
The Armenians' condition is lamentable.*

**5 (434).**

**KIYMA ADANA<sup>1</sup>**

Hey, çamlar, çamlar, alını-açık çamlar!  
Her güneş vurunca sakız damlar,  
Sakız damlarsa: yüreğim ağlar:  
Adana ırmağı sel gibi akar,  
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!  
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!

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

**SLAUGHTERED ADANA<sup>1</sup>**

*Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars!  
The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,  
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!*

*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!*

**6 (435).**

**THE MASSACRE OF ADANA**

In the morning at dawn  
They encircled us on four sides,  
Thousands of bullets  
Scattered like hail.

Poor Adana was stained  
Red with blood,

And the corpses of Armenians  
Were sprawled here and there.

They broke doors and windows,  
Striking with axes,  
They didn't leave a resplendent house  
And burned them all down.

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>1</sup> This song was composed in 1909 during the massacre of Adana and the surrounding villages of Armenian Cilicia, where 30,000 Armenians were slaughtered by the Turks.

7 (436).

THE LAMENT OF ADANA<sup>1</sup>

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 Roubinians!\*

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 of his mother, the bride of 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,  
Wiped out the Armenians from the face of the earth,  
Blood ran down the Armenian streets...

Prosperous Adana, alas, is deserted,  
Entire Cilicia is burned to ashes,  
Beautiful Hadjn alone is alive,  
Why doesn't rocky-Zeytoun shake?

8 (437).

WHAT I HAVE SEEN WITH MY EYES

What I have seen with my eyes  
And have heard with my ears  
I do not wish the mountain wolves  
And the foe of our fate to see.

How shall I endure, my beloved?  
How shall I endure, dear brother?<sup>2</sup>

Poor mothers threw off their infants and fled,  
Bare-footed and naked, emaciated children,  
Sick people raised their eyes to God  
And implored their death with a husky voice.

How shall I endure, my beloved?  
How shall I endure, dear brother?

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.

How shall I endure, my beloved?  
How shall I endure, dear brother?

I rescued my brother through the roof of the burning stable,  
We escaped sister and brother, hungry and naked,  
I brought my brother here, to Armenia,  
They took him away; again I was left alone and astray.

How shall I endure, my beloved?  
How shall I endure, dear brother?

This world became a hell and a graveyard,  
Mother and child were left ownerless, homeless,  
Nobody held the enemy's hand,  
Our land and house were left to the Turkish beast.

9 (438).

YOU, VASPUKAKAN, OUR PROVINCE

You, Vaspurakan, our province,  
You always were known as a hero,  
You struggled against the enemy,  
Many fathers and sons were sacrificed.

Carts came rocking, mothers came grumbling,  
They came and stood at the pasha's door,

"There's no harm," said the pasha  
And gave forty pounds to the killer.

They ravaged and destroyed  
And left us the pain and the worries,  
Spring was near at hand, spring came,  
Blood fell down instead of rain.

<sup>1</sup> This variant of the popularized poem of the writer and historian, a martyr of the Armenian Genocide in 1915, Smbat Byurat (Ter-Ghazarents) (b. 1862, Zeytoun) has been communicated to me by **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 1903), from Zeytoun. Though he was not literate, he had, owing to his exceptional memory, kept in his mind almost all the songs, which, according to his narrative, he "had murmured every evening, before going to sleep," his memoirs and songs "like a prayer," so that he would not forget them, since, "if the communists heard, they would arrest him..." Consequently, he gladly communicated me his recollections to be recorded: "They would be written down; they wouldn't be forgotten and would be learned by the coming generations..."

\* The House of Rubinians – Armenian princely (1080-1198) and royal (1198-1219) founding dynasty in Cilician Armenia.

<sup>2</sup> The survivor **Shogher Tonoyan** (b. 1901), from Moosh had miraculously escaped out of the burning stable, rescuing also her little brother, whom she carried with great difficulty on her arms and reached Eastern Armenia. There, her brother was imprisoned in 1937, exiled and then was lost without a trace. For more details, See the memoir of the said narrator in the "*Historical Memoir-Testimonies*" part of this book [T. 9].

The Turks came down the Black Mountain of Berkri,  
Corpses were scattered in thousands and thousands,

May you be ravaged, you, insatiable Berkri River,  
You drank the blood of thousands and thousands!

**10 (439).**

**ANDOK-DSOVASSAR**

“Andok-Dsovassar,” said the guarantors,  
And the armed Kurds roared again,  
One day Vahan pasha was hailed  
From the Kurd-mixed Armenian villages.

The Kurds living there got scared and roared:  
“You, fearless fighters, we kneel at your feet,  
Spare our honor and families and  
Let us live in peace under our roof.”

Early one morning when they woke up,  
They found themselves besieged with four thousand soldiers,  
Against whom, with only thirty braves,  
They started to fight boldly.

The Kurds fled horror-stricken,  
They gave ninety victims, left many guns,  
“Let us hurry,” they said, “and escape;  
The Armenians will soon be here.”

**11 (440).**

**TRAGIC CALAMITY**

What happened to the Armenian World?  
It’s a tragedy of universal extent,  
Why, in reality, this has happened?  
Misfortunes never come singly.

Why did our beloved land  
Abandon us and didn’t take us in its bosom?

I speak truly, for what sin?  
We have never destroyed other people’s house.

Now a great part of the Armenians doesn’t exist,  
That remained in our heart like a large wound,  
My house was demolished, it is in ruins,  
My God! Don’t give the same fate to my foe.

**AH, ALAS!**

**12 (441).**

What shall I do with a life full of affliction?  
Ah, alas!

I prefer the glory of the Lord,  
Ah, alas!

**13 (442).**

Seven girls fled and went away,  
Ah, alas!

They shot three of them and caught the other four,  
Ah, alas!

**14 (443).**

They burned little Tigranouhi’s house,  
Ah, alas!

A rich girl like her was given to the mullah,  
Ah, alas!

**15 (444).**

Three mullahs dug the ground,  
Ah, alas!

They buried the Armenian young man all alive,  
Ah, alas!

**16 (445).**

They took away the boy’s sister and crucified her,  
Ah, alas!

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

17 (446).

They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,  
Ah, alas!

They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,  
Ah, alas!

18 (447).

Mother, you took your bundle and got up; where did you go?  
Ah, alas!

Did you go to die on the roads of Der-Zor?\*

19 (448).

**BURASI VAN'DIR**

Burası Van'dır,  
Etrafı kandır,  
Giden gelmiyor,  
Acab ne haldir.

**HERE IS VAN**

*Here is Van,  
All around is blood,  
Those who go there do not come back,  
Who knows, what's happening there.*

20 (449).

**BURASI MUŞ'TUR**

Nenni, yavrum, nenni!  
Havada bulut yok,  
Bu ne dumandır?  
Burası Muş'tur,  
Yolu yokuştur,  
Giden gelmiyor,  
Acab ne iştir.

**HERE IS MOOSH**

*Sleep, my child, sleep!  
There are no clouds in the sky,  
Where has this fog come from?  
Here is Moosh,  
The road is rising up,  
Those who go there, do not come back,  
Who knows, what's going on there.*

21 (450).

**HAVADA BULUT YOK**

Havada bulut yok,  
Bu ne dumandır?  
Mahlede ölüm yok,  
Bu ne figandır?  
Şu Yemen yolları,  
Ne de yamandır,  
Ahu Yemen'dir  
Gülü çemendir,  
Giden gelmiyor,  
Acab nedendir?

**THERE ARE NO CLOUDS IN THE SKY**

*There are no clouds in the sky,  
Where has this fog come from?  
There are no deaths in the district,  
What's all this wail about?  
The roads to Yemen  
Are so terrible,  
Yemen is awful,  
Its rose is pungent,  
Those who go there do not come back,  
Who knows, what's the reason?*

22 (451).

**ERZİNCAN DUMAN OLDU**

Erzincan duman oldu,  
Halimiz yaman oldu,  
Ne canlar kurban oldu,

**YERZKA WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE**

*Yerznka was filled with smoke,  
Our condition became lamentable,  
So many people were sacrificed,*

\* Der-Zor/Deir-el-Zor Desert – a vast, arid, barren, scorching wasteland in Syria, where the Armenians were exiled and exterminated in 1915 by the order of the Ottoman government. Up to the present day, a slight digging in the soil with the finger will disclose the bones of the Armenian exiles. In 1991, St. Martyr's Church complex was erected there in memory of the innumerable Armenian martyrs.

Ayrıldık Erzincan'dan,  
Ottan, ocaktan, candan.  
Oy, nenni, nenni, nenni!  
Anasız kuzu, nenni!  
Babasız yavru, nenni!  
Kimsesiz yavru, nenni!

*We fled from Yerznka,  
We left our crops, home and kins.  
Oh! Sleep, sleep, sleep!  
Motherless lamb, sleep!  
Fatherless child, sleep!  
Ownerless child, sleep!*

23 (452).

**KANLI TELLAL  
ÇARŞILARDA BAĞIRDI**

Kanlı tellal çarşılarda bağırđı,  
Ermeniler sevkıyata sürüldü,  
Bütün cihan geldi seyire çıkdı,  
Şu kâfirin ettiğine baktı.

**THE BLOODY TOWN-CRIER  
SHOUTED IN THE MARKETS**

*The bloody town-crier shouted in the markets,  
The Armenians were sent into exile,  
The whole world came to see  
And watch the deeds of this godless man.*

24 (453).

**HEY, AĞALAR,  
BÖYLE ZULÜM OLUR MU?**

Hey, ağalar, böyle zulüm olur mu?  
Herkes vatanından sürgün olur mu?  
Yat, Padişahım, yat göresin rüya,  
Kuran'a yakışmaz yaptığın işler.

Hükümette oturan hepsi ağa,  
Gidin yalvarın olur mu çare?  
Padişahın emridir, bulunmaz çare  
Ağlaya-ağlaya çıkardı dağa.

**HEY, GENTLEMEN,  
IS SUCH A MISFORTUNE POSSIBLE?**

*Hey, gentlemen, is such a misfortune possible?  
Is it possible to exile people from their homeland?  
Lie down, my king, lie down and dream,  
Your deeds are not proper to the Koran.*

*All those sitting in the government are gentlemen,  
Go and beseech them, are there any means?  
It's the king's order, there is no way out,  
Crying, lamenting, they made us climb the mountain.*

25 (454).

**THE CALAMITY OF CILICIA**

The Turk pashas Enver and Talaat  
Instigated the exile  
And totally exterminated the Armenian nation;  
Why did they order with their evil tongue?  
In the year 1915  
Was the massacre of the Armenians of Cilicia.  
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 into the water with their sisters.

No one protected the Armenian nation,  
How can we forget the calamity of Cilicia?  
The order reached our seven villages:  
"All the villagers will be exiled."  
What was our sin, the sin of our Moussa Dagh?  
How can we forget the condition of the Armenians?  
Yessayi Yaghoubian'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!"

26 (455).

**THE MASSACRE OF YEDESSIA<sup>1</sup>**

Desirable Yedessia, you were a mine of Christianity!  
A source of antiquity with your countless population,

You had a graceful temple worthy of praise,  
And now no temple, no people, no preacher are left.

<sup>1</sup> This song was composed in 1915, during the self-defensive battles of Yedessia (Urfa) when the Turks attacked and massacred the Armenians. The song was sung by Yedessians (Urfans) with tearful eyes.

What a pity! Yedessia lost its people,  
The innocent and devout drove  
Was slaughtered like sheep, even the little infants,  
No one from heaven and earth saw or heard that.

When our ruthless enemies attacked suddenly,  
The poor Armenians remained stupor-frozen,  
Some fled in terror and threw themselves in the valley,  
Many wept; no one was left to rescue them.

Most of the poor people rushed into the church  
To find shelter and to save their lives,  
Expecting at least help from heaven,  
They were burned down to ashes, no one was saved.

When the mournful dawn spread on the town,  
Our wicked foes came to our church,

There was no means left, whether we cried or shouted,  
No leader was left to avert this disaster.

They burned the church with all its people,  
The flames were kindled with kerosene,  
They pillaged sacred vessels and countless relics,  
Where did they take? No princes were left.

They took prisoner whole families at once,  
And plundered what they found in the houses,  
They took away the family possessions on camels,  
We became victims of lice; no spare linen was left for us.

They prepared a place and dug a pit near the gate,  
That being insufficient, they chose the church-porch,  
They delved the ground, threw in the burnt corpses,  
Covered them with lime, no heart could endure all that.

### 27 (456).

#### WE ARE DRIVEN FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF ARMENIA

We are driven from the mountains of Armenia,  
Who doesn't fear of dying with fire and sword?  
We crossed hills and mountains, we had no rest,  
We passed through corpses, we had no tears.

To die under the sun, oh my God, is bad,  
Our lips are in need of a drop of water,  
They slew the infants in their mother's bosom  
And threw the mothers alive into the wells.

"Where is, mother, where is my father?"  
"Don't you know that the Turk's knife is cruel."  
"Where is, mother, where is his dead body?"  
"Tears descended to the bottom of my heart."

Hand in hand, Armenian girls threw themselves  
Into the Euphrates River,  
Two days later they notified their poor mothers  
And made them cry inconsolably.

### 28 (457).

#### THE RIVER EUPHRATES, TOO, BECAME A GRAVE FOR ARMENIANS, MOTHER!

The River Euphrates, too,  
Became a grave for Armenians, mother!  
Armenian girls threw themselves  
Into the water, mother!

Blood flowed in "Kanlı Dere,"<sup>1</sup> mother!  
Mountains and valleys  
Were filled with corpses, mother!

### 29 (458).

#### THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS, IT'S SPRING!

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!

### 30 (459).

#### WE ARE GOING TO DER-ZOR IN TEARS

We are going to Der-Zor in tears,  
Our condition is lamentable,

There is not a spark of hope to glow  
On this road of sand.

<sup>1</sup> "Kanlı Dere" (Valley of Blood), where numerous Armenians were slaughtered.

We are going to Der-Zor in tears,  
Absent-minded and in pain,  
“Get up and walk!” They drive us on  
With enormous whips.

We are going to Der-Zor in rows,  
We forgot about eating and drinking,  
Our eyes are aching,  
Is it possible that God has forgotten us?

We are exiled, we have no home,  
We are deported, we have no sleep,

There is no one who can measure  
Our immensurable affliction.

My father is lying exhausted  
Before the tent, in agony,  
My mother, with a heart of angel,  
Is dying in want of bread.

My tears dried up  
Flowing in drops,  
My innocent soul wore out  
Seeing all this.

### 31 (460).

#### SÜRGÜNÜN BAYRAĞI AÇILDI

Sürgünün bayrağı açıldı  
Duyulduğu gibi herşey değişti  
Genç olanlar dağlara kaçtı  
Canından vazgeçen dağlara kaçtı.

Sürgünlük çıktı, köy boşaldı,  
Benim kıymetli malım Türklere kaldı,  
Çoluk-çocuk yolcu oldu,  
Alan-talanı başladı.

Adana yapılmış boz kiremitten,  
Yakamız bitmedi karadan, bittin,  
Allah bize kurtarsın bu sefillikten,  
Bir şey demem, sen de benzeyesin bize,  
Elindeki silah ilen ölesin sen!

#### DER ZOR ÇÖLÜNDE<sup>1</sup>

Ağaçlardan kuş uçtu,  
Yandı yürek, tutuştu:  
Yanma, yüreğim, yanma!  
Bu ayrılık bize düştü,  
Bu muhacirlik bize düştü,  
Bu Derzorluk\* bize düştü.

Der Zor'a gidersem, gelemem belki,  
Ne ekmek, ne su ölüyorum belki,  
Der Zor'a varmadan Ermeni muhaciri oturmuş  
Hüngür-hüngür ağlıyor...

#### THE ORDER OF EXILE WAS ISSUED

*The order of exile was issued  
When it became known, everything changed,  
The young fled to the mountains,  
Those who renounced their lives fled to the mountains.*

*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.*

*Adana is built of grey bricks,  
We didn't get rid of dirt and lice,  
God save us from this misery,  
I'll say nothing: just be like us  
And die with your own gun!*

#### IN THE DESERT OF DER-ZOR<sup>1</sup>

### 32 (461).

*The birds flew away from the trees,  
My heart is on fire, blazing:  
Don't burn, my heart, don't be afire!  
This separation was our fate,  
This emigration was our fate,  
This derzorluk\* was our fate.*

### 33 (462).

*If I go to Der-Zor, I won't return may be,  
Without bread, without water I'll die may be,  
Before getting to Der-Zor, the Armenian exile sat  
And cried his heart out...*

<sup>1</sup> In 1956, survivor **Yeghissabet Kalashian** (b. 1888, Moussa Dagh), communicated me for the first time parts of this Turkish-language song series (See Svazlian, Verjiné. Moussa Dagh. *Armenian Ethnography and Folklore*. Vol. 16, Yerevan, 1984, pp. 130-131, in Arm.) [T. 282].

\* Exile to Deir-el-Zor.

**34 (463).**

Vara-vara, vardım Der Zor çölüne,  
İndirdiler bizi Der Zor düzüne,  
Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen kelleler gelmez hesapa.

*Going and going we reached the Der-Zor desert,  
They settled us in the Der-Zor plain,  
The place called Der-Zor was a large locality,  
Where the cut heads were countless.*

**35 (464).**

Der Zor çöllerini bürüdü duman,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
İnsan ve yeşil boyandı kana,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
People and grass were stained with blood,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**36 (465).**

Der Zor çöllerini bürüdü duman,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Allah'tan başka yoktur derman,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
We have no remedy but the Lord Himself,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**37 (466).**

Der Zor çölünde çadır kurdular,  
Ermeni milletini çöle döktüler,  
Kalanları ırmaklara döktüler,  
Kükürt ile kükür-kükür yakdılar.

*They pitched tents in the Der-Zor desert,  
They gathered the Armenians in the desert,  
They dropped the remaining into the rivers  
Or brutally burned them with sulphur.*

**38 (467).**

Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasapa,  
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!*

**39 (468).**

Yozgat kasaba şirin kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasapa,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*Yozghat is a pretty locality  
With uncountable slaughtered Armenians,  
The Ottoman chiefs have become butchers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**40 (469).**

Urfa dedikleri yiğit kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı askeri dönmüş kasapa,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The place called Urfa is a heroic locality  
With uncountable slaughtered Armenians,  
The Ottoman soldiers have become butchers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**41 (470).**

Kırıkhan dedikleri küçük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı zabitleri dönmüş kasapa,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The place called Kerek-Khan is a little settlement  
With uncountable slaughtered Armenians,  
The Ottoman officers have become butchers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

42 (471).

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!*

43 (472).

Suvar'dan çıktım başım selamet,  
Der Zor'a varınca koptu kıyamet,  
Ermeni şaşırıldı, bu nedir hikmet?  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I came out of Suvar with a serene head,  
There was a great turmoil in Der-Zor,  
The Armenians got confused, what was the secret?  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

44 (473).

Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş\*  
Ermeni muhaciri tifoya düşmüş,  
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 were infected with typhoid,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

45 (474).

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.*

46 (475).

Der Zor'un içinde naneler biter,  
Ölmüşlerin kokusu dünyaya yeter,  
Bu sürgünlük bize ölümden beter,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor,  
The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,  
This exile is worse than death for us,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

47 (476).

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.*

48 (477).

Der Zor'a giderken lastiğim kaydı,  
İğneden-ipliğe Türklere kaldı,  
Haberı duyanın beli büküldü,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*My galoshes slid on the road to Der-Zor,  
Even the needle and the thread were left to the Turks,  
The bad news bent the back of those who heard it,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

49 (478).

Ermeni, Ermeni, şaşkın Ermeni,  
Bu güne ulaşmış kör ve topalı,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Armenians, Armenians, confused Armenians,  
The blind and the lame fell into this condition,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

\* The Arabic word "mishmish" (apricot or apricot-tree) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

50 (479).

Zatik-Kiraki\* çadır söktüler,  
Çoluk-çocuk yola döktüler,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki,\*  
They deported the infants and the aged,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

51 (480).

Zatik-Kiraki\* çadır söktüler,  
Bütün Ermenileri çöle döktüler,  
Keçi gibi Ermenileri kestiler,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki,\*  
They drove all the Armenians into the desert,  
They slaughtered the Armenians like goats,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

52 (481).

Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil,  
Ağartı saçlarım, döküldü dişim,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor,  
My hair grew white, my teeth fell down,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

53 (482).

Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil,  
Kurşuna dizdiler elli bin kişi;  
Meraktan döküldü milletin dişi,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Fifty thousand people were shot down,  
The people's teeth fell down from affliction,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

54 (483).

Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil,  
Bir güzel bacım var, ateşe düşmüş,  
Analar-babalar esir düşmüş,  
Ermeni milleti dağlara düşmüş.

*Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor,  
My pretty sister fell into the fire,  
Fathers and mothers were taken prisoner,  
They drove the Armenian nation to the mountains.*

55 (484).

Ermenileri mağaraya doldurdular,  
Kireç döküp, ateş verip yaktılar,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*They gathered the Armenians in a cave,  
They covered them with lime, set fire and burned them,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

56 (485).

Der Zor çölünde üç ağaç incir,  
Elimde-kelepçe, boynumda zincir,  
Zincir kımıldadıkça, yüreğim incir:  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*Three fig-trees in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Handcuffs on my hands, a chain on my neck,  
My heart aches every time the chain moves,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

57 (486).

Sabahtan kalktım kapı kapalı,  
Binbaşı geliyor eli sopalı,  
Uğruna bırakmış kör ve topalı,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the door was closed,  
The major came, a club in his hand,  
The blind and the lame spread before him,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

\* The Armenian words "Zatik-Kiraki" (Easter Sunday) have been used in the Turkish-language song.

**58 (487).**

Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Çeteler oturmuş martin yağlıyor,  
Dilerim Allah'dan, versin bir iman,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The brigands, seated, were oiling their guns,  
I asked the Almighty to show me a way out,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**59 (488).**

Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağlıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**60 (489).**

Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Güneşin ateşi beni yakıyor,  
Zulüm Çeçenler mavzer yağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The sun rays were burning me,  
The cruel Chechens were oiling their mausers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**61 (490).**

Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Çeçenler, oturmuş, tüfenk yağlıyor,  
Analar-babalar kan-yaş ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Chechens, seated, were oiling their guns,  
Mothers and fathers were crying their heart out,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**62 (491).**

Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Anam-babam durmadan ağlıyor,  
Düşman gelmiş kollarımı bağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
My father and mother were crying incessantly,  
The enemy has come and is tying my arms,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**63 (492).**

Sabahtan kalktım, çantama baktım,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya boynuma taktım,  
Malımı-mülkümü Devlete 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!*

**64 (493).**

Sabahtan kalktım, çantama baktım,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya boynuma taktım,  
Bir lokma ekmeğe hasretlik çektim,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning and looked at my bag,  
Crying and lamenting I hung it from my neck,  
I craved for a piece of bread,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**65 (494).**

Sabahtan kalktım, hava dumandır,  
Anam-babam yoktur, halim yamandır,  
Bundan sonra gülmek bana haramdır,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*I got up in the morning; the air was foggy,  
I have no father and mother, my condition is awful,  
From now on I'll never smile,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**66 (495).**

Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Çalınan kızlar gelmez hesaba,

*The place called Der-Zor is a large locality,  
With uncountable ravished young girls,*

Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

**67 (496).**

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!*

**68 (497).**

Güzelleri kapla-kapla kaçırdılar,  
Çirkinleri peynir gibi kestiler,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*They ravished the pretty ones  
And cut the ugly ones to pieces like cheese,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

**69 (498).**

Bindik arabaya, indik Katma'ya,  
Orada başladı evlat kaçmaya,  
Türkler başladı alıp-kaçmaya,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*We rode in a cart and got off at Katma,  
There they began to kidnap children,  
The Turks started to ravish and flee,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**70 (499).**

Der Zor çölünde yoruldum, 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.*

**71 (500).**

Der Zor çölünde şaşkırdım, kaldım,  
Yitirdim anamı, yitirdim babamı,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*I stayed confused in the desert of Der-Zor,  
I lost my mother and father there,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

**72 (501).**

Der Zor çölünde vuruldum, kaldım,  
Anne, ben bu candan bıktım, usandım,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*I stayed, shot, in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Mother, I am weary and disgusted of this life,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

**73 (502).**

Der Zor çölünde düştüm, yaralı,  
Bır doktor yoktur yaramı bağlayan,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*I fell, wounded, in the desert of Der-Zor,  
There is no doctor to dress my wound,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

**74 (503).**

Der Zor çölünde çürüdüm kaldım,  
Kargalara tahıl oldum, kaldım,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*I rotted and remained in the desert of Der-Zor,  
I remained and became a meal for the crows,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

75 (504).

Der Zor çölünde yaralı çoktur,  
Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yoktur,  
Allah'dan başka kimsemiz yoktur,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Don't come, doctor, don't come, it's useless,  
We have no one but the Lord Himself,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

76 (505).

Oturmuşlar hoca-keşiş ağlıyor,  
Jandarmalar kollarını bağlıyor,  
İriskin\* de baş ucunda ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The teacher and the priest, seated, are shedding tears,  
The gendarmes are tying their arms,  
The yeretskin\* is weeping in the corner,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

77 (506).

Der Zor çölünde can telef oldu,  
Gide-gide kundurama kum doldu,  
Kum yerine yüreğime kan doldu,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*Lots of people perished in the desert of Der-Zor,  
Walking and walking my shoes were filled with sand,  
Instead of sand my heart was filled with blood,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

78 (507).

Yol verin Ermeniye, dumanlı dağlar,  
Elleri koynunda kız-gelin ağlar,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Make way for the Armenians, foggy mountains,  
Hands on their chest, girls and brides are weeping,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

79 (508).

Yol ver, Habur,\*\* yol ver, geçelim çölü,  
Evlatım çı çıplak Arabın köyü,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Khabur,\*\* make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
My child is in the Arab village, bare and naked,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

80 (509).

Yol ver, Habur,\*\* yol ver, geçelim çölü,  
Çı çıplak yeti şeyim garip yerlere,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Khabur,\*\* make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
Bare and naked, let me reach foreign lands,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der Zor.*

81 (510).

Yol ver, Habur,\*\* yol ver, geçelim çölü,  
Donsuz Araba olayım köle,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Khabur,\*\* make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
And be a servant to the half-naked Arab,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der Zor.*

82 (511).

Muhtaç olduk su içmeye,<sup>1</sup>  
“Hudamın aşkına imdat olasin!”  
Su da içmeye izin vermedi,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*We badly needed to drink water,<sup>1</sup>  
“For God's sake, help us!”  
They didn't even permit us to drink water,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

\* The Armenian word “iritskin/yeritskin” (the priest's wife) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\* Habur/Khabur – river flowing near Deir-el-Zor.

<sup>1</sup> According to an eyewitness survivor from Zeytoun, **Eva Chulian** (b. 1903), the Turkish gendarmes made the exhausted and thirsty deportees sit near the water, but they did not allow them to drink and shot those who dared to approach the water [T. 255].

**83 (512).**

Yeprat getir\* köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,  
Kanlıdır suları; bir tas içilmez,  
Ermeni kanıyla su da içilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The bridge over the get\* Euphrates is narrow, impassable,  
The water is bloody; you can't drink a single cup,  
Water mixed with the blood of Armenians is undrinkable,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**84 (513).**

Der Zor çölleri dikendir, geçilmez,  
Yeprat getir\* suları acıdır, bir tas içilmez,  
Ermeni kanıyla su da içilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The deserts of Der-Zor are thorny, impassable,  
The waters of the get\* Euphrates are bitter and not potable,  
Water mixed with the blood of Armenians is undrinkable,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**85 (514).**

Der Zor çölleri taşlıdır, geçilmez,  
Yeprat getir\* suları acıdır, bir tas içilmez!  
Ermeni kanıyla su da içilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The deserts of Der-Zor are stony, impassable,  
The waters of the get\* Euphrates are bitter, not potable,  
Water mixed with the blood of Armenians is undrinkable,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**86 (515).**

Der Zor'ın içinde zincirli kuyu,  
Ermeniler içti zehirli suyu,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*A well with a chain in Der-Zor,  
The Armenians drank the poisonous water,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der Zor.*

**87 (516).**

Der Zor köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,  
Kan olmuş sular; bir tas içilmez,  
Anadan, babadan vazgeçilmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow, impassable,  
The water is bloody; you can't drink a single cup,  
It is hard to renounce one's mother and father,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**88 (517).**

Der Zor köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,  
Kan akıyor suları, bir tas içilmez,  
Ermeni muhaciri geri dönemez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow, impassable,  
The water is bloody; you can't drink a single cup,  
The Armenian deportee cannot come back,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**89 (518).**

Der Zor köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,  
Kanatlı kuş olsan, geri geçilmez  
Ermeni milleti dinden vazgeçmez,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow, impassable,  
Even if you are a winged fowl, you cannot come back,  
The Armenian nation cannot renounce its faith,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**90 (519).**

Der Zor yolları uzaktır, uzak,  
Yollara bakar bacı-analar,  
Geceler uzun, olmuyor sabah,  
Çoluk-çocukta kalmıyor derman.

*The roads to Der-Zor are distant and far,  
Sisters and mothers are looking at the roads,  
The nights are long, dawn is still far,  
There is no remedy left for our children.*

\* The Armenian word "getin/get" (river) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

91 (520).

Der Zor yolları uzaktır, uzak,  
İhtiyar pederim yollara bakar,  
- Hey, muhacirler, yol göründü  
Benim garip başıma,  
Altım çamur, üstüm yağmur,  
Dağlar-taşlar dayanmaz bizim ahuzarına.\*

*The roads to Der-Zor are distant and far,  
My elderly father is looking at the roads,  
- Hey, deportees, the road of exile  
Is outlined in my poor head,  
Mud is under me, rain above me,  
The mountains-rocks can't endure our sufferings.\**

92 (521).

Aman! Mahmud Paşa, sen gel imana:  
Jandarmalar dönmüş kasapa,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

*Ah! Mahmud pasha, have pity on us:  
The gendarmes have become butchers,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

93 (522).

Der Zor'a geldi bir Şekir Paşa,  
Atını bağladı delikli taş<sup>1</sup>,  
Ermeni sığmadı dağ ile taş:  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*A certain Shekir pasha came to Der-Zor,  
He tied his horse to the hollow stone,<sup>1</sup>  
No room was left for the Armenians in the valley,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

94 (523).

Der Zor çölünde tozdan-dumandan,  
Gözlerim görmüyor çimler-çimenler,  
Zabitler çıkmışlar dinden-imandan  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*From the dust and smoke of the desert of Der-Zor  
My eyes cannot see the fields and meadows,  
The officers have lost their religion and faith,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

95 (524).

Der Zor çölünde tozdan-dumandan,  
Türkler çıkmış dinden-imandan,  
Aman, Padişahım, ne olduk, ne olacağız?  
Ermeni milleti mahv mı olacak?

*From the dust and smoke of the desert of Der-Zor  
The Turks have lost their religion and faith,  
Alas! My sovereign! What happened, what will happen to us?  
Will the Armenian nation perish?*

96 (525).

Der Zor çölünde uzanmış, yatmış,  
Kellesi yokdur, ki yüzüne bakayım,  
Ermeniler bu güne ulaşmış,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!

*He lay, sprawling, 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!*

97 (526).

Çıka-çıkta çıktım yokuş başına,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!  
Hızor\*\* Allahım, hızor,\*\* yetiş!  
Ermeni milletini kurtar, geçir!

*I climbed and rose to the top of the mountain,  
So many misfortunes fell on the Armenians!  
Almighty\*\* God, Almighty,\*\* help us!  
Deliver the Armenian people, save us!*

\* The Armenian word "ahuzarına/ahuzar" (suffering, horror) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>1</sup> "Delikli taş" (hollow stone) – Most rural houses had near their gate a stone-ring fixed on the wall to tie the horse's reins.

\*\* The Armenian word "hızor/hzor" (almighty) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

98 (527).

Diktiğim ağaçlar meyvaya döndü,  
Muhacir gidenin yarısı dönmedi,  
Şu muhacirlik icat eden  
Cennet yüzü görmesin!

*The trees I planted became laden with fruits,  
Half of the deportees did not come back,  
May the person who planned this exile  
Be unworthy of paradise!*

99 (528).

Meyvasız ağaçlar meyvaya döndü,  
Muhacir gidenin yarısı dönmedi,  
Şu sürgünlük icat eden  
Cehennem yoluna kurban olsun!

*The fruitless trees became laden with fruits,  
Half of the deportees did not come back,  
May the person who planned this exile  
Be sacrificed on the road to hell!*

100 (529).

Poğos Nubar Paşa,<sup>1</sup> sen binler yaşa!  
Ermenileri toplattı dağlardan taştan,  
Yaşa Andranik Paşa,<sup>2</sup> sen binler yaşa,  
Ermenileri topladı Ermenistan'a.

*Poghos Noubar pasha,<sup>1</sup> live a thousand years!  
You gathered the Armenians from the mountains, deserts,  
Andranik pasha,<sup>2</sup> live a thousand years!  
You gathered the Armenians in Armenia.*

101 (530).

Dillerden-dile söylensin destanım,  
Garip ellere yanayım derdimi,  
Sefil Ermeniler destan söyledi,  
Dininin uğruna yaşa Ermeni!

*Let us weave this epopee from mouth to mouth  
And tell our grief to foreigners,  
The wretched Armenians wove this epopee,  
The Armenians shall live for the sake of faith!*

SÜRGÜNLÜK ŞARKILARI

EXILE SONGS

102 (531).

Samsun, Trabzon, Amasya, Gürün,  
Gelin de Sıvaz'ın halini görün,  
Taşınan mı yoğrulmuşsun, canım Gemerek?  
Bir Zeytun kalmıştır eşin, Gemerek.

*Samsun, Trapizon, Amassia, Gyurin,  
Come and see the condition of Svaz,  
Are you built of stone, my dear Kemerek?  
Only Zeytoun is your like, Kemerek.*

103 (532).

Halep'ten<sup>3</sup> çıktım yayan,  
Dayan da dizlerim, dayan!  
Şimdi jandarmalar gelir,  
Kimi atlı, kimi yayan.

*I came out of Aleppo<sup>3</sup> on foot,  
Resist, my knees, resist!  
The gendarmes will come soon,  
Some on horseback, others on foot.*

104 (533).

Hey, ne deyim, ne deyim?  
Vay, halına, Ermeni!  
Evi, barkı terkedeyim,  
Yavrumu alıp gideyim.

*Hey! What should I say, what should I say?  
Alas! Your condition, Armenians!  
I'll leave my home and go,  
I'll take my child and go.*

<sup>1</sup> After the armistice in 1918, the chairman of the Armenian National delegation in Paris, Poghos Noubar, gave one gold coin to everyone who found out an arabized Armenian orphan from the Syrian deserts and delivered him to the Armenian orphanage.

<sup>2</sup> Armenian national hero, General Andranik Ozanian, led, under his surveillance, the Western Armenian refugees, who had remained alive after the Genocide, to Eastern Armenia, having an area of 1/10 of the former Historical Armenia.

<sup>3</sup> The Turks exiled the Armenians from all localities and gathered them in Aleppo, from where they were driven in groups to the deserts of Deir-el-Zor.

105 (534).

Hey! Gâvur Dağlar,<sup>1</sup>  
Derde dayanan ağlar,  
Evliler eve varmış,  
Garip Ermeni nerde ağlar?

*Hey! Gâvur Mountains,<sup>1</sup>  
Those who endure affliction cry,  
The married people reached home,  
Where will the exiled Armenian cry?*

106 (535).

Su bağladım kiliğe  
Dağıttım erikliğe,  
Ben burda esir kaldım,  
Dayanamam garipliğe.

*I joined the water-pipe to the brook  
And irrigated the plum-orchard,  
I remained a prisoner here,  
I cannot endure the exile.*

107 (536).

Çay taşını okka diye tutarlar,  
Sarı üzümü leblebiye katarlar,  
Ermeni milletini Der Zor'a atarlar,  
Allah sahaplık etsin bu çöllere!

*They use the river-stones as weights,  
They add yellow raisins to the roasted chick-peas,  
They drive the Armenians to Der-Zor,  
May the Lord protect these deserts!*

108 (537).

Kanı damlar al kayanın üstünden,  
İmdadım yok zalim Türkün dostundan,  
Esvap soyar nazlı yarım üstünden,  
Altın yüzük çıkarır parmağından.

*Blood is dripping from the tawny rock,  
I expect no help from my cruel Turk friend,  
He is robbing the cloths of my beloved  
And taking the golden ring off her finger.*

109 (538).

Dersim dört dağ içinde,  
Gül-bağlar içinde,  
Dersim de hep saklasın,  
Ermeni çok içinde.

*Dersim is between four mountains  
And amongst rose-gardens,  
May Dersim be saved forever,  
There are many Armenians there.*

110 (539).

Diyarbakir ocaktır,  
Mardin yıkılacaktır,  
Aman, fedayi, al martini,  
Ver düşmana cevabı!

*Diyarbakir is a hearth,  
Mardin will be ruined,  
Hey! Fighter, take your gun  
And give the enemy an answer!*

111 (540).

Erzurum dağları kardır, geçilmez,  
Soğuktur suları; bir tas içilmez,  
Al martini, çık dağlara,  
Nuri Hasan,<sup>2</sup> vakitler geçmiş!

*The Erzroom mountains are snow-bound, impassable,  
Their waters are icy; you can't drink a single cup,  
Take your gun and climb the mountains,  
Noury Hassan,<sup>2</sup> time is up!*

112 (541).

Şu Fındıcak'ın da her tarafı dağlık,  
Dağlarının da her tarafı bağlık,

*All around Fendedjak are mountains,  
All around the mountains are orchards,*

<sup>1</sup> The mountains were called "Gâvur" (unbeliever – in Turk.; special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians), because a great number of Armenians were martyred there.

<sup>2</sup> Noury Hassan was a Yezidi national hero who fought with the Armenian fighters against the Turks.

Ermeniler vardı hem yiğit, hem hatırnaz,  
O yerler de sahipsiz kaldı, aman Allah!

*There were Armenians valiant and noble,  
All these places remained ownerless, oh God!*

**113 (542).**

Atımı bağladım delikli taş,\*  
Kör olasın sen, Enver Paşa!  
Ermeni cahil kalmadı,  
Gitti gül, gitti bülbül, ne diyelim!  
İstersen ağla, istersen gül, ne diyelim!

*I tied my horse to the hollow stone,\*  
May you lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
No more Armenian youths were left,  
The rose and the nightingale went away, what should I say!  
You may cry, you may laugh, what should I say!*

**114 (543).**

Atımı bağladım delikli taş,\*  
Kör olasın sen, Enver Paşa!  
Sen olmayaydın, sen gebereydin,  
Şun\*\* -Talaat Paşa!  
Ermenileri dağıttın dağlardan taş.

*I tied my horse to the hollow stone,\*  
May you lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
You shouldn't have been born, you should perish,  
You, hound\*\* -Talaat pasha!  
You dispersed the Armenians in mountains and deserts.*

**115 (544).**

Atımı bağladım delikli taş,\*\*\*  
On iki kaymakam, bir Enver Paşa,  
Bu kadar muhacir kime emanet?  
Ermenileri dağıttın dağlardan taş.

*I tied my horse to the hollow stone,\*\*\*  
Twelve colonels, one Enver pasha,  
Who are so many deportees entrusted to?  
You dispersed the Armenians in mountains and deserts.*

**116 (545).**

Birer-birer saydım dört sene oldu,  
Ermeni askeri Nablus'u<sup>1</sup> aldı,  
Ermeni askeri bin beş yüz kişi,  
İngiliz, Fransız şaştı bu işe.

*One by one I counted four years,  
The Armenian soldiers occupied Nablous,<sup>1</sup>  
They were one thousand five hundred in number,  
The English and the French were amazed.*

**117 (546).**

Talaat Paşa hacim gibi,  
Bıyıkları sicim gibi,  
Bıyığına tel-tel sıçtım!  
Sen de mi oldun bizim gibi?

*Talaat pasha like a giant,  
His moustaches thin like strings,  
Let me shit on every hair of your moustache!  
You, too, became like us, didn't you?*

**118 (547).**

Talaat Paşa eşek gibi,  
Bıyıkları yular gibi,  
Bıyığına tel-tel sıçtım!  
Sen de mi oldun bizim gibi?

*Talaat pasha like an ass,  
His moustaches thin like reins,  
Let me shit on every hair of your moustache!  
You, too, became like us, didn't you?*

\* "Delikli taş" (hollow stone) – Most rural houses had near their gate a stone-ring fixed on the wall to tie the horse's reins.

\*\* The Armenian word "şun/shoon" (hound) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\*\* "Delikli taş" (hollow stone) – Most rural houses had near their gate a stone-ring fixed on the wall to tie the horse's reins.

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian legionaries occupied the impregnable positions of Nablous during the battle of Arara, in 1918.

119 (548).

**ERMENİNİN KADERİ<sup>1</sup>**

Akşamdan yağdı şiddetli yağmur,  
Vurma, Çeçen, vurma, sokaklar çamur,  
Yaram büyüktür, kanım akıyor,  
Vurma, Çeçen, vurma, dört kurşun yeter,  
Çeçenin kurşunu ölümden beter.

Silahın sesine anam uyandı,  
Üstüme kapandı, kana boyandı,  
Ne zulüm imiş Ermeninin kaderi!  
Vurma, Çeçen, vurma, dört kurşun yeter,  
Çeçenin kurşunu ölümden beter.

**THE ARMENIANS' FATE<sup>1</sup>**

*There was a heavy rain last night,  
Don't shoot, Chechen, the streets are muddy,  
My wound is large, my blood is flowing,  
Don't shoot, Chechen, four bullets are enough,  
The Chechen's bullet is worse than death.*

*My mother woke up from the gun report,  
She fell upon me and was stained with blood,  
How ill is the fate of the Armenians!  
Don't shoot, Chechen, four bullets are enough,  
The Chechen's bullet is worse than death.*

120 (549).

**MURAT'IN<sup>2</sup> ÇEVRESİ**

Murat'ın çevresine dumanlar çoktü,  
Garip Ermeninin belini büktü,  
Çerkez eliyle kanlar döküldü,  
Hiç kimse acıyıp imdat vermedi,  
Dinsiz Osmanlı vurdu, çaldı, oynadı,  
Kâfir Alaman da seyir eyledi.

Murat ırmağı kana boyandı,  
Sayısız Ermeni ayak altı gitti,  
Dost-düşman kalmadı seyir eyledi,  
Hiç kimse acıyıp imdat vermedi,  
Dinsiz Osmanlı vurdu, çaldı, oynadı,  
Kâfir Alaman da seyir eyledi.

Murat suyu, nerde senin durağın?  
Çok çağırdım, işitmedi kulağın,  
Sayısız Ermeni ayak altı gitti,  
Hiç kimse acıyıp imdat vermedi,  
Dinsiz Osmanlı vurdu, çaldı, oynadı,  
Kâfir Alaman da seyir eyledi.

**AROUND THE RIVER MOURAT<sup>2</sup>**

*Clouds gathered around the river Mourat,  
The Armenian refugee's back was bent,  
Blood was shed by Circassian hands,  
Nobody helped, nor had compassion,  
The impious Ottoman shot, played and danced,  
The knavish German watched fascinated.*

*The river Mourat was painted with blood,  
The ownerless Armenians were trampled down,  
Enemies and friends watched carelessly,  
Nobody helped, nor had compassion,  
The impious Ottoman shot, played and danced,  
The knavish German watched fascinated.*

*Where is your stop, river Mourat?  
I called you often, but fell on deaf ears,  
The ownerless Armenians were trampled down,  
Nobody helped, nor had compassion,  
The impious Ottoman shot, played and danced,  
The knavish German watched fascinated.*

121 (550).

**MARAŞ'IN ERMENİLERİ  
KÖMÜRLEŞTİLER<sup>3</sup>**

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

**THEY BURNED THE ARMENIANS OF MARASH  
TO ASHES<sup>3</sup>**

*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!*

<sup>1</sup> Remembering her sorrowful past, **Haykuhi Mikian** (b. 1912, Kayseri) has communicated me this song with tearful eyes. Persecuted by the Kemalists, she sought refuge with her family in Izmir. Rescued by miracle from the Izmir calamity, she reached Greece by ship, but despaired of unemployment, she fled to Egypt. She was repatriated to Armenia in 1948. She was exiled with many others to Siberia in 1949, was acquitted in 1956 and returned to Yerevan. Having, by that time, lost all her kins, she was lonely, abandoned and in extreme poverty.

<sup>2</sup> The Turkish denomination of the eastern tributary of the Euphrates.

<sup>3</sup> It concerns the holocaust of the Armenians packed in the Forty Martyrs' Church in Marash by the Kemalists, where the molten grease of the burnt Armenians had flowed down the threshold of the church built on a hilltop and had frozen. For a more detailed description, See the testimony of the narrator **Verginê Mayikian** (b. 1898), from Marash, in the "**Historical Memoir-Testimonies**" part of this book [T. 259].

Ufacık taş ilen yol yaptılar,  
Cıbıl-cıbıl yollarına basılmaz,  
Ermeniler kömürleştiler, yaman!  
Sel gibi yağ gidiyor, yaman!

*The road was built with small stones,  
It was not possible to step on the road,  
They burned the Armenians to ashes, alas!  
The molten grease flowed like a torrent!*

## 122 (551).

### DOĞAN BEY DE GELDI, GIRDİ HACIN'A<sup>1</sup>

### DOGHAN BEY CAME AND ENTERED HADJN<sup>1</sup>

Doğan Bey de geldi, girdi Hacın'a,  
Yazıklar oldu benim kocamın aşiretine,  
Düşman kondu tatlı yurtlarımıza,  
Çat Oluk suyu aktı,  
Çandırlar<sup>2</sup> Hacın'ı yaktı,  
Yazık oldu sana, koca Hacın!  
Viraneye baykuşlar öttü,  
Bindirdiler develere ana, bacıyı...

*Doghan bey came and entered Hadjn,  
I feel pity for my husband's tribe,  
The enemy settled in our flourishing houses,  
The Chat-Oluk fountain water flowed,  
The Chanders<sup>2</sup> burned Hadjn,  
How regrettable for you, immense Hadjn!  
Owls are hooting over your ruins,  
They took away mothers and sisters on camels...*

Gurnaşen'e<sup>3</sup> uğradı göçümüz,  
Orada kapıştılar bizim malımızı,  
Kiraz'dan<sup>4</sup> geçti obamız,  
Tapan'a düştü yolumuz.  
Dinleyin, ey, ana, bacı, kardaşlar!  
Yağmaya gitti tüm bizim malımız.

*Our procession passed through Gurnashen,<sup>3</sup>  
Our possessions were pillaged there,  
Our group then passed near Kiraz,<sup>4</sup>  
And the road led to Tapan,  
Hey! Listen, you, mothers, sisters, brothers!  
All our property was plundered.*

Gısub'dan indi göçümüz,  
Karsbaza uğradı obamız,  
Cihandan geçirdiler ana, bacı, kardaşları,  
Ayak altına gitti namusumuz, canımız,  
Osmaniye'de kondu göçümüz,  
Hasanbey'e düştü yolumuz.

*They led our group down the path,  
Our procession passed near Gharsbazar,  
Mothers, sisters, brothers crossed the river Jihan.  
Our life and honor were trampled down,  
We were called a halt at Osmanieh,  
Then continued our way to Hassanbey.*

Haneleri harap olmuş,  
O da Ermenidir diye,  
Ekbez<sup>5</sup> meydanında konduk hepimiz,  
Orda gömüldü ana, bacı, kardaşlar,  
Halep'ten geçti kalanımız,  
Der Zor çölü oldu bize vatan,  
Ayak altına gitti sahipsiz Ermeni!

*The houses also were destroyed,  
Since they belonged to Armenians,  
They ordered a stop at the Ekbez<sup>5</sup> station,  
Mothers, sisters, brothers were buried there,  
The remainder passed through Aleppo,  
The desert of Der-Zor became our homeland,  
The ownerless Armenians were trampled down!*

## 123 (552).

### ŞİMDİ ADANA'YA GETMELİ DEĞİL

### WE SHOULDN'T GO TO ADANA NOW

Şimdi Adana'ya gitmeli değil,  
Gidip de o halları görmeli değil,  
Çorekşaptı\* günü koçnak\*\* çekildi,  
Bütün Ermeniler jama\*\*\* döküldü.

*We shouldn't go to Adana now,  
We shouldn't go and see that condition,  
On Wednesday\* they rang the bell,\*\*  
And gathered all the Armenians in the church.\*\*\**

<sup>1</sup> The eyewitness **Khacher Dakessian** (b. 1896), from Hadjn, recalled these events with tearful eyes.

<sup>2</sup> The Armenians of Hadjn and environs gave the name of "Chander" to those Turkified inhabitants of Hadjn, who still continued to speak the local Armenian dialect, but had, following their forceful Turkification, become a great plague for their former compatriots.

<sup>3</sup> An Armenian village near Hadjn.

<sup>4</sup> Mountain near Hadjn.

<sup>5</sup> During the deportation of the Armenians, this railway station was one of the concentration centers for the refugees before their departure to Deir-el-Zor.

\* The Armenian word "çorekşaptı/chorekshabti" (Wednesday) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\* The Armenian word "koçnak/kochnak" (bell) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\*\* The Armenian word "jam/zham" (church) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

Beni öldüren doydu mu ola?  
Liralarımı saydı mu ola?  
Benim burda vurulduğumu  
Anam, babam duydu mu ola?

Adana'nın yolları taşlık,  
Cebimizde kalmadı beş para harçlık,  
Aman, Adanalı, canım Adanalı,  
Cebimizde kalmadı, beş para harçlık.

*I wonder whether my killer was sated,  
Whether he counted my gold coins,  
Whether my mother and father  
Heard that I was shot here.*

*The roads of Adana are stony,  
We all became stony-broke,  
Alas, citizen of Adana, my dear,  
We all became stony-broke.*

124 (553).

**NELER GELDİ  
ERMENİNİN BAŞINA**

Odalar yaptırdım bir uçtan uca,  
İçinde yatmadım bir gün, bir gece,  
Konma, bülbül, konma mezar taşına,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!

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

**THE ARMENIANS SUFFERED  
SO MANY MISFORTUNES**

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

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

125 (554).

**WE LEFT OUR HOME AND PLACE**

We left our home and place,  
We were separated from our families,  
We long for our villages,  
I cry yearning and yearning.

We wander in the mountains,  
We have taken our provisions with us,

What we eat is barley-bread,  
Green grass and acrid water.

It's written in the Holy Bible,  
"The larger part is over, little is left,"  
Patience is a very good thing,  
Have patience, my dear, have patience!

126 (555).

**1915 SENESİNİN ZULMÜ**

Bir rüzgâr esti alem dünyaya,  
Zulüm serpildi hep ahaliye,  
Dağlar, vadiler boyandı ala,  
Gün-güneş battı koyu dumana,  
Yeni yetişme insan-kuzular,  
Vatan uğruna kurban oldular,  
Binlerce murat birden uçtular,  
Ah, bu ne tedbir, ey vah yazıklar!  
Garip anneler figan eyledi,  
Kanlı yaş ile "yavrum" meledi!  
Arzulu gelin karalar giydi,  
Celaldan düşüp, cefaya girdi,  
Nazlı büyümüş masum yavrular  
Boyunları eğri yola baktılar,  
Zevk ve sefadan hasret kaldılar,  
Kuru ekmeğe mayil oldular.

**THE AFFLICTION OF 1915**

*A tempest blew over the whole world,  
It brought affliction to all the people,  
Mountains and valleys were stained red,  
The day and the sun were darkened with smoke  
Tender, lamb-like infants  
Were sacrificed for the sake of the homeland,  
Thousands of longings withered at once,  
Ah! What an action it was! Alas!  
Exiled mothers wept and wailed,  
Crying bitterly and whining "my child"!  
The yearning bride was dressed in black,  
She tumbled down from her glory and came to grief,  
Tenderly grown little children  
Watched the road, crest-fallen,  
Longing for pleasure and games,  
And for a piece of dry bread.*

Ey, yarabbim, hangi gün aceb,  
 Geçecek rüzgâr, bitecek şu harp?  
 Yeter değil mi çektiğimiz eziyet?  
 Ya Hak, rahm eyle merhamet!  
 Cihanda adam gün güne azdı,  
 İntikam için kuyular kazdı.  
 Al kan adeta bir taam sandı,  
 Yırtıcı kuşa arkadaş oldu.  
 Kovuk dededen toruna ulaştı,  
 Kimin günahı kime dolaştı,  
 Yedi hükümet ayağa kalktı  
 Düşmüş bir millet arada kaldı.  
 Ermeni gözden düştü Türkiye’de,  
 Sürgünlük için okundu ferman,  
 Yer gösterildi Der Zor Arabistan,  
 Çuldan, hasırdan kuruldu otağ,  
 Ev, bark, ticaret birden biçildi,  
 Fakir bir millet oldu muhacir,  
 Emzikli, hasta, yaşlı, hamile,  
 Ser-sefil düştü ıssız yollara,  
 Aziz yavrular dağlar aşırıldı,  
 Nazik topuklar al kana battı.  
 Dipçik ve kamçı gittikçe arttı,  
 Ana şaşırıp evladı attı,  
 Hasta dermansız yollarda kaldı,  
 Canavarların yemi artıldı.  
 Olan feryatlar yürek dağlattı,  
 İnsafı olan dayanamadı,  
 İnsafsız kullar gülüp haykırdı,  
 Zulüm kendine bir fırsat sandı,  
 Haram mal ile mal-mülk artırdı,  
 Batılık ile can karardı.  
 Ya aziz Allah, eyle inayet,  
 Tövbe yürekten günahımızı affet,  
 Selamet ile bize halaset,  
 Zira sendedir rahmet ve kudret,  
 Şükür olsun, yarab, senin ismine,  
 Ermeni milleti dirildi gene,  
 Dua edelim biz şehitlere,  
 Helal etsinler kanları bize.

*Eh! My God, on what day will  
 This storm abate and this war end?  
 Aren't our distresses enough?  
 Oh, God! Have pity on us!  
 Men of the world got enraged day by day  
 And set traps for vengeance.  
 They regarded red blood as food,  
 And became companions of the ravenous birds.  
 Sour grapes' pain passed from grandfathers to grandsons,  
 One's sin passed to the other,  
 Seven states stood up,  
 A fallen nation was trodden down.  
 The Armenians fell from favor in Turkey,  
 An order of deportation was given,  
 The place indicated was Der-Zor of Arabia,  
 Tents were made from rags and wicker,  
 Houses, property and trades were plundered,  
 The poor population was exiled,  
 The suckling, pregnant, aged and sick  
 People traversed afoot deserted roads,  
 Dear little children crossed mountains,  
 Delicate soles were stained with blood.  
 The blows of whips and butts increased in number,  
 Bewildered mothers hurled their children away,  
 Sick and faltering, they remained on the road  
 And augmented the food of beasts.  
 The uttered screams were heart-breaking,  
 Tender-hearted people could bear no longer,  
 The ruthless ones laughed and guffawed,  
 They considered the misfortune a good chance  
 To increase their property by dishonest means  
 And blackened their souls with vanity.  
 Oh! Dear Lord, have pity on us!  
 We beg you genuinely, forgive our sins!  
 Bring our sufferings to a peaceful end,  
 For thine is the mercy and the power,  
 Glory to Thy Name, oh, my Lord!  
 The Armenian nation has revived again,  
 Let us pray for our martyrs,  
 Blessed be the blood they have shed.*

## 127 (556).

### JUDGE YOURSELF, OH, MY GOD!<sup>1</sup>

The Turk drew his sword from the sheath  
 And cut the head of the casual Armenian he met,  
 He drew the unborn baby out of the mother's womb  
 And raised it to the sky at the point of his bayonet.

Cries and moans filled up the world,  
 He burnt old people and infants in fire,

He burnt and reduced them to ashes,  
 Nobody chastised the godless Turk.

He packed old people and babies into a house  
 And sacrificed them with a single match,  
 He covered the village streets with corpses,  
 Human blood flowed like a river.

<sup>1</sup> **Tsolak Torossian** (b. 1914, Cherakhli, Eastern Armenia) has communicated his testimony also in verse. See the “*Historical Memoir-Testimonies*” part of this book [T. 313].

I had a narrow escape from that turmoil,  
I did not find any of my parents,  
Our village was ruined, deprived of its look,  
It had become a desert and lost its position.

There was no man and no living creature,  
Only the black crows were gathered,

Leaping from one place to another  
Pieces of flesh hanging from their beaks.

The houses were vacant, blackened with smoke,  
The streets were full of dead bodies,  
The paving-stones were stained with blood,  
Judge Yourself, oh, my God!

### 128 (557).

#### THERE IS AN ANSWER TO GIVE, THERE IS A JUDGMENT TO COME...<sup>1</sup>

Many springs have elapsed from that day  
When laments were heard from every ravine,  
When screams and wails, bitter entreaties  
And curses were heard from every mount,  
When not any nation and Adam's son  
Witnessed our people's extermination,  
When the Armenians' God was indignant,  
When heaven had become an inextinguishable blaze.  
Ah! Even God Himself did not hear our complaint  
And did not want to see the pitiless carnage,  
When Christian Europe stealthily  
Caught fresh fish in troubled waters,  
When the blood-sucker Kaiser of Germany  
Throttled the Armenian in the Turk's muzzle,  
When the French, English, Spaniards and Russians  
Left the Armenian hopelessly drowned in his blood.  
How many springs have already passed,  
But the Armenian's sea of blood has not dried yet,  
And still with tearful and fixed eyes  
He longs for his native land, his heart and lungs in fire,  
The native land remained in the mournful songs,  
The owner of the native land is desperately roaming,  
Recalling his house, land and property,  
He is weeping blood from the bottom of his heart,  
The Armenian is crying over his blood-stained map,  
Having left his land and velvety crop,  
He always remembers his village and town.  
Oh! Native land, we hanker for you,  
Call your orphans and hug them tightly,  
Hug them with your boundless yearning  
To slake our eagerness and longing,  
Hug them like an affectionate mother,  
Who grieves for her son unfeigned,  
And I see them like a dream,  
They are coming and coming,  
Nude corpses from beyond the grave,  
Full of wrath, with meager faces,

Skeletons of every sex, old and infant,  
Man or woman...  
They are coming, some who hadn't enjoyed life yet,  
Some advanced in years, with frozen looks,  
They are coming with bridal veils,  
Those loving hearts who missed their honeymoon  
Before becoming mothers,  
They are coming, with dried pupils and swollen feet,  
With curdled blood,  
They are coming, in painful disgrace,  
Dishonored virgins,  
With withered hearts,  
They are coming and shedding tears,  
Genius scholars are also coming,  
And artists, too, before winning fame,  
They are coming, in dense masses  
From Moosh, Taron and Van,  
From our beloved native land,  
From Khnous, Bassen and Alashkert,  
Bitlis, Adana and Zeytoun,  
From Constantinople and Anatolia,  
Yerznka, Cilicia and Sis,  
They are coming from Massis and Ararat,  
Full of pain and sorrow,  
The unfortunate Armenians,  
Victims of the Genocide,  
They are coming with wrathful eyes,  
With decayed bones, shriveled faces  
And numerous wounds.  
They have come out of lifeless deserts,  
From alien roads, where they suffered hardships  
And they fell there  
Vengeance in their hearts, prayer on their lips,  
For time alone is impartial judge;  
There is an answer to give,  
There is a judgment to come...

<sup>1</sup> Original text is kept at the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, File No. 24. **Hrant Shahoyan** (b. 1926, Talin, Eastern Armenia) has written this verse on the basis of his father's, **Badal Shahoyan's** (b. 1901, Talin) testimony transmitted to him. Badal Shahoyan was miraculously saved from the massacre in 1918. See the "*Historical Memoir-Testimonies*" part of this book [T. 315].

129 (558).

**FROM THE SAINT-CROSS CHURCH OF VARAG**

From the Saint-Cross Church of Varag  
I have brought news for you,

Have pity on the Armenian nation  
And give everyone a sword!

130 (559).

**I WANDERED FROM WORLD TO WORLD**

I wandered from world to world,  
I didn't find my grandmother's grave,  
And where could I find it,  
When the Turks had hanged her from a tree.

I found my mother's grave,  
I cried bitterly over her burial place,

My tears, dearest mother,  
Made green grass grow on your grave.

I searched my father's grave,  
And where could I find it,  
When the brute and soulless Turks  
Had slaughtered him cruelly.

131 (560).

**SONG OF RETURN FROM THE EXILE**

Keep walking, keep walking, survivors,  
Let us go and reach our villages,

Let us build our ruined houses  
And sow our barren lands.

132 (561).

**ASLANBEK WAS BURNT DOWN<sup>1</sup>**

Aslanbek was burnt down, seven houses remained,  
There remained the betrothed girls to marry.

Speak, Jiji, speak, let the pears ripen,

May the fatherless boys realize their dreams!

The pears have ripened, there is no one to pick them,  
There is no one to marry the fatherless boys.

133 (562).

**İZMİR'İN ZULMÜ**

Karadeniz fırtına,  
Al pırtını sırtına,  
Mayrik,\* düşman geliyor,  
Kızın kalmış yoluna.

Ah, mayrik\* can, ağlarım,  
Yüreğime yara bağlarım,  
Annemi kayıp ettim,  
Gece-gündüz ağlarım.

Yazı yazdım taşına,  
Gelen-geçen okusun,  
Taş attım, tüfeng çıktı,  
Neler geldi başıma.

**THE CALAMITY OF IZMIR**

*A terrible storm over the Black sea,  
Take your belongings on your back,  
Mother,\* the enemy is coming  
And your daughter has remained on the road.*

*Ah, dear mother,\* I cry,  
My heart covered with wounds,  
I have lost my mother,  
I cry day and night.*

*I wrote letters on the stone  
So that passers-by could read,  
I threw a stone, a gun fired,  
I suffered so many misfortunes.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Turks had burnt the town of Aslanbek (Nicomedia) seven times. The Armenians had rebuilt it seven times and had settled down anew. The last time, in 1921, the Turkish bandits came and besieged Aslanbek from four sides. We, Armenians, fled to Izmir, but Izmir, too, was set on fire and the Armenians and the Greeks were thrown into the sea." A witness of these events, **Mannik Hayrapetian** (b. 1915), from Aslanbek, recalled all these with tearful eyes and sobbed out this pathetic song.

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

**134 (563).**  
**THE CALAMITY OF IZMIR**

We came out of Afion<sup>1</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,  
They burnt you and charred you.

The black train is coming  
And bringing Greek soldiers,  
"Hey, boys, come quickly,  
Mother is about to perish!"

We came out of Izmir  
And were taken to Salonica,  
I didn't find my dear mother,

But found my charming brother.

My brother questioned me:  
"Where did you leave our mother?"  
"She died on the road to Izmir,  
She was left unburied,  
There was no means of saving her,  
She became a meal for the Turks!"

We came out of Salonica,  
I came to the town of Yerevan,  
I worked and lived,  
I grew up and got married.

I had six sons  
But I didn't forget Izmir,  
Ah, dear mother, they deceived us,  
The Turks burnt you.

**135 (564).**  
**THUS WE WERE DISPERSED IN ALL DIRECTIONS**

We, too, have boys and girls,  
We also have no means of escape,  
Have pity for our distress,  
We shouted with tearful eyes:  
"Long live Equality, Liberty,  
Long live the people..."<sup>2</sup>

We left for Constantinople,

We stayed at the church door,  
They gave us bread and olives  
And kept us for three days.

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

<sup>1</sup> The town of Afion-Garahissar.

<sup>2</sup> "Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet" (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.), these were the reforms promised by the Turkish Constitution (in 1908), which proved to be a sham.





3.

**SONGS OF CHILD-DEPRIVED MOTHERS, ORPHANS AND ORPHANAGES**

1 (565).

**MOUSSA-THE HOUND RAVISHED THE ARMENIAN GULIZAR\***

Moussa-the hound ravished the Armenian Gulizar,  
He took off her eyes and cut off her nipples,  
What a pitiless time we're living in,

No one came to our help.  
What a miserable time we're living in,  
No one had compassion for us!

2 (566).

**MOUSSA TOOK SHAHNIK AWAY\***

The wind is blowing on the Tejir Village,<sup>1</sup>  
Moussa is carrying Shahnik on his shoulder,  
Don't speak today, my heart is crumbly,  
When they strike me with a rose, I take it for a thorn,

They pick the rose from the branch as though ownerless,  
They push and poke us as though we were refugees,  
The rose smells sweet, its branch is thorny,  
Everyone's child is sweet for him.

3 (567).

**THE RAVISHED PAYDSARIK**

I got lost outside Tutastan  
And fell in the hands of the enemy,  
Let my mother sit and cry,  
Let all the nation sit and cry.

"Get up at once and search  
All over the mountains and valleys,  
Find Paydsarik without delay  
And give her to her poor mother."

I didn't feel anything, how stupid of me,  
My body and my soul were strained,  
Neither friends, nor relatives  
Were of any help to me.

When we found the poor girl's corpse,  
We were much distressed, old and young,  
Not only her mother should cry,  
Let all the nation sit and cry.

4 (568).

**THE TURKS HAVE RAVISHED THE ARMENIAN GIRLS, SON!**

"What mourning is this in our district,  
mother, mother!"

"The Turks have ravished the Armenian  
girls, son!"

"How serious is the wound of the Armenian nation,  
mother, mother!"

How deep is the grief of the Armenian nation,  
mother, mother!

Mother, mother, I'll go

To fight,

I'll fight and die

For the Armenian nation!"

\* The song has a historical bases; it is about the Kurd tribal (ashirat) chief, the notorious Moussabek, who had collaborated with the Young Turk leaders and who had abducted the Armenian girl Gulizar and others. At that time the Turkish newspapers reported about that, and there had been a legal action.

<sup>1</sup> Armenian district in the town of Aslanbek (Nicomedia).

5 (569).

**HAMBARDZOOM'S LAST WORDS**

Mother, bring my rifle down,  
I'll go to Keramet,  
If I don't come this evening,  
Tomorrow, I will, by all means...

I mistook the pumpkin leave,  
Mother, for my bed,  
I mistook the Syolez Turk's money,  
Mother, for my earnings.

I tied the mule downstairs,  
Mother, there is no one to give it some fodder,  
They have shot Hambardzoum,  
Mother, there is no one to bury his dead body.

Braid Zarouhi's hair  
In fine plaits

And enrobe her every now and then  
Her betrothal dress.

Zarouhi is immaculate,  
Take her for my younger brother,  
Use the leaves of the marrow-field  
In place of my cerements.

"Hambardzoum, my son, where did they shoot you?  
On what rocks and stones  
Did you call, 'Father, mother!'  
And roar with pain?"

Harutyun's clock  
Is striking seven,  
Hambardzoum's knell  
Is ringing sadly.

**I MISS MY CHILD BADLY, I MISS HIM!**

6 (570).

I want to get up, but not to loosen my belt,  
I don't want my child's words to roll down my bosom,  
My child's words are bitterer than poison itself,

"Don't cry, dear mother, I'll come again,  
In a fortnight, I'll come in your dream!"

7 (571).

I wish I were the lowest step-stone of the staircase  
And kissed my child's feet when he went up and down.

Ah, I wish I were not born,  
And I weren't my child's mother!

8 (572).

High, over there, is a mountain,  
There is a village over the mountain,

There is smoke over the village,  
Is, by any chance, my child in that village?

9 (573).

The road to Der-Zor is stony, I miss my child badly,

I miss him!

10 (574).

**THE STONES OF THE FORTY MARTYRS'<sup>1</sup>**

The stones of the Forty Martyrs',  
Mothers should not bear children,

What's the good of bearing children  
If they have buried them in the black earth.

<sup>1</sup> The narrator has provided no information about this song. Most probably, it concerns the Church of Forty Martyrs' built of granite on a hilltop in Marash and in which the Kemalists burned thousands of Armenians alive, in 1920.

**11 (575).**  
**THOSE MOUNTAINS FACING US**

Those mountains facing us  
Are clad in black clouds

And are shedding bitter tears  
For the little Armenian orphans.

**12 (576).**

**URFA'NIN ETRAFI DUMANLI DAĞLAR**

**THE MOUNTAINS AROUND URFA ARE FOGGY**

Urfa'nın etrafı dumanlı dağlar,  
Ermeni yanıyor, gözleri ağlar,  
Urfa'nın etrafına ekin ekenler,  
Ekini ekenler, güzeli seçerler,  
Çıkma, ceylan, şu dağlara,  
Seni avlarlar,  
Anadan, babadan ayrı koyarlar.

*The mountains around Urfa are foggy,  
The Armenians are burning, their eyes are tearful,  
They are sowing the grain around Urfa,  
When sowing the grain, they choose the best,  
Don't roam, deer, in these mountains,  
They will ravish you and  
Separate you from your mother and father.*

Urfa'nın etrafında gezer bir ceylan,  
Yavrusunu kaybetmiş, arıyor yaman,  
Ceylan, senin gibi yüreğim yara,  
Arayıp, bulamadım derdime care,  
Çıkma, ceylan, şu dağlara,  
Seni avlarlar,  
Anadan, babadan ayrı koyarlar.

*A deer is wandering around Urfa,  
It has lost its fawn and is searching it anxiously,  
Eh, deer, my heart is also wounded like yours,  
I sought, but couldn't find a cure for my grief,  
Don't roam, deer, in these mountains,  
They will ravish you and  
Separate you from your father and mother.*

Urfa'nın etrafı dumanlı dağlar,  
Koy verin, geçeyim, dumanlı dağlar,  
Sılada yavrum var:  
Of çeker ağlar.

*Foggy mountains around Urfa,  
Make way for me, foggy mountains,  
I have a son in foreign lands;  
He is sighing and sobbing.*

**13 (577).**

**İSTİHKÂMIN DARDIR YOLU**

**THE ROAD TO THE STRONGHOLD IS NARROW**

İstihkâmın dardır yolu,  
Düşman sardı sağ-solu,  
Ermeni kızlar aldılar,  
Kaçırdılar, bilmem yolu.

*The road to the stronghold is narrow,  
The enemy surrounded us right and left,  
They took the Armenian girls  
And abducted them, I don't know whither.*

**14 (578).**

**ARABKİR YENİ YAPI**

**ARABKİR IS NEWLY BUILT**

Arabkir yeni yapı,  
Dökerim demir kapı,  
Yitirmişim mayrığim,\*  
Aramım kapı-kapı.

*Arabkir is newly built  
And the iron door is newly cast,  
I have lost my mother,\*  
I am searching for her at every door.*

**15 (579).**

**ARABALAR ÇEKİLİR,  
YÜKLER BAĞLANIR**

**THEY ARE PULLING THE CARTS AND  
TYING THE BUNDLES**

Arabalar çekilir, yükler bağlanır,  
Ermeni kızları seçip alınır,  
Yol ver, Uran'ın dağlar,  
Biz gideceğiz:  
Anamızı, babamızı biz bulacağız.

*They are pulling the carts and tying the bundles,  
They are selecting and carrying off the Armenian girls,  
Make way for us, mountains of Uran,  
We will go  
And find our fathers and mothers.*

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

16 (580).

**HAYATIN ÇEŞMESİ  
BUZ GİBİ AKAR**

Hayatın çeşmesi buz gibi akar,  
Türk bacıları çadırdan bakar,  
Ermeni geliyor elleri bağlı,  
Analar ağlıyor – çocuğum diye,  
Gelinler ağlıyor – kocam diye,  
Kızlar ağlıyor – namusum diye.

**ICE-COLD WATER IS FLOWING  
FROM THE FOUNTAIN IN THE YARD**

*Ice-cold water is flowing from the fountain in the yard,  
Turkish women are looking from the tent,  
Armenians are coming with hands bound,  
Mothers are crying over their children,  
Brides are crying over their husbands,  
Girls are crying over their honor.*

17 (581).

**RUM HELEN'İN<sup>1</sup> SULARI  
SOĞUK-SOĞUK AKAR**

Rum Helen'in suları soğuk-soğuk akar,  
Zavallı muhacirler çadırdan bakar,  
Kızlar ağlıyor – namusum diye,  
Gelinler ağlıyor – kocam diye,  
Analar ağlıyor – çocuğum diye,  
Zenginler ağlıyor – malımız diye,  
Fakirler ağlıyor – canımız diye.

**THE ICE-COLD WATERS OF  
GREEK HELEN<sup>1</sup> ARE FLOWING**

*The ice-cold waters of Greek Helen are flowing,  
The poor refugees are looking from the tents,  
Girls are crying over their honor,  
Brides are crying over their husbands,  
Mothers are crying over their children,  
Rich people are crying over their property,  
Poor people are crying over their lives.*

18 (582).

**YEŞİL KURBAN OLAYIM  
GEÇEN GÜNLERE, MAYRIK!\***

Yeşil kurban olayım geçen günlere, mayrik!  
Kırıldı kanatlarım, kaldım çöllerde  
Anasız, babasız, mayrik!  
Düştüm diyar gurbete, mayrik!  
Ya ben ağlamayım, mayrik,  
Kimler ağlasın, mayrik?

**LET ME BE A TENDER SACRIFICE  
TO THE PAST DAYS, MAYRIK!\***

*Let me be a tender sacrifice to the past days, mayrik!  
My arms were crumbled, I was left in the desert  
Without mother, without father, mayrik!  
I found myself in alien places, mayrik!  
If I don't cry, mayrik,  
Who will cry then, mayrik?*

19 (583).

**ARADIĞIM ÇEŞME  
BUZ GİBİ AKAR**

Aradığım çeşme buz gibi akar,  
Ermeni kızlar çadırdan baker:  
“Koy verin, polis beyler, biz de gidelim,  
Der-Zor çöllerinde biz de ölelim.”

**THE FOUNTAIN I WAS SEARCHING  
IS FLOWING ICE-COLD WATER**

*The fountain I was searching is flowing ice-cold water,  
The Armenian girls are looking from the tent:  
“Let us, police beys, let us go, too,  
And die in the deserts of Der-Zor.”*

20 (584).

**ARADIĞIM ÇEŞME  
BUZ GİBİ AKAR**

Aradığım çeşme buz gibi akar,  
Ermeni kızlar çadırdan baker:  
“Koy verin, askerler, biz de gidelim,  
Der-Zor çöllerinde biz de ölelim.”

**THE FOUNTAIN I WAS SEARCHING  
IS FLOWING ICE-COLD WATER**

*The fountain I was searching is flowing ice-cold water,  
The Armenian girls are looking from the tent:  
“Let us, gendarmes, let us go, too,  
And die in the deserts of Der-Zor.”*

<sup>1</sup> Name of a locality.

\* The Armenian word “mayrik” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

21 (585).

**ŞU DAĞIN ARDINDA ERMENİ KIZI VAR**

“Şu dağın ardında Ermeni kızı var,  
Gidin bakın çantasında nesi var?”  
“Güzel gözleri var,  
Sırma saçları var.”

**THERE IS AN ARMENIAN GIRL BEHIND THIS MOUNTAIN**

“There is an Armenian girl behind this mountain,  
Go and see what she’s got in her bag?”  
“She has beautiful eyes  
And silky hair.”

22 (586).

**ŞU DAĞIN ARDINDA ERMENİ KIZI VAR**

“Şu dağın ardında Ermeni kızı var,  
Gidin bakın çantasında nesi var?”  
“Azıcık tuz var, azıcık da ot.”

**THERE IS AN ARMENIAN GIRL BEHIND THIS MOUNTAIN**

“There is an Armenian girl behind this mountain,  
Go and see what she’s got in her bag?”  
“There is a little salt and a little grass.”

23 (587).

**ŞU DAĞIN BAŞINDA  
BİR KUZU MELER**

Şu dağın başında bir kuzu meler,  
O kuzunun sesi böğrümü deler,  
Niye meliyorsun, kuzum, sen bana söyle,  
Anasız yavrular böyle mi meler?

**THERE IS A LAMB BLEATING  
ON THIS MOUNTAIN-TOP**

There is a lamb bleating on this mountain-top,  
The sound of the lamb is piercing my heart,  
Why are you bleating, my lamb, tell me?  
Do motherless kids bleat like that?

24 (588).

**VARA, VARA, VARDIM  
ŞU KARA TAŞA**

Vara, vara, vardım şu kara taş,  
Hasret kaldım bacı-kardaşa,  
Yazılan yazı gelirmiş başa,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına.

**I WENT, I WENT AND REACHED  
THIS BLACK STONE**

I went, I went and reached this black stone,  
I yearned for my sisters and brothers,  
Fate is inevitably our lot, they say,  
The Armenians suffered so many misfortunes.

25 (589).

**TEKİRDAĞ’DA BEŞİKTAŞ**

Tekirdağ’da Beşiktaş,  
Ne anam var, ne babam, ne de kardaş,  
Konma, bülbül, konma, mezar taşına,  
Kara toprak olsun bana arkadaş.

**BESHIKTASH IS IN TEKERDAGH**

Beshiktash is in Tekerdagh,  
I have no mother, no father and no brother,  
Don’t perch, nightingale on my grave-stone,  
Let the black earth be my friend.

26 (590).

**İSTANBUL’UN ORTASI BEŞİKTAŞ**

İstanbul’un ortası Beşiktaş,  
Ne anam var, ne babam, ne de kardaş,  
Bundan sonra beşli martin olacak,  
Hem arkadaş, hem yoldaş, hem de kardaş.

**BESHIKTASH IS IN THE MIDDLE OF ISTANBUL**

Beshiktash is in the middle of Istanbul,  
I have no mother, no father and no brother,  
From now on, the size five rifle will be  
My friend, my comrade and my brother.

27 (591).

**ANNE, BENİM BABAM YOK MU?**

Anne, benim babam yok mu?  
Nerde kaldı, gelmedi,  
Çok öksüzler güldü,  
Ama benim yüzüm gülmedi.

**MOTHER, HAVEN’T I A FATHER?**

Mother, haven’t I a father?  
Where is he now? He didn’t come yet,  
Many orphans grinned,  
But my face didn’t smile.

28 (592).

**GİDEN, GİDEN, ERMENİ KIZLAR!**

Giden, giden, Ermeni kızlar!  
Bir gün ölüm bize düşer,  
Düşmana avrat olmamaya,  
Yeprat'ın içinde ölüm bulayım.

**ARMENIAN GIRLS GOING, GOING!**

*Armenian girls going, going!  
One day death will come upon us,  
Before becoming the enemy's wife,  
Let us find our death in the Euphrates.*

29 (593).

**TÜRK ÇAVUŞU VE ERMENİ KIZI**

“İstanbul'da bir yar sevdim,  
Ermeni, Ermeni, Ermeni,  
Ermeni nasıl göynü  
Vermeli, vermeli, çavuş, vermeli?”  
“Yandım, çavuş, yandım senin elinden,  
Elinden, çavuş, elinden,  
Ölmeyince kurtulamam senin dilinden,  
Dilinden, çavuş, dilinden,  
Çok sallama, çavuş,  
Kasaturan fırlar belinden,  
Fırlar belinden, belinden.”

**THE TURKISH GENDARME AND THE ARMENIAN GIRL**

*“I fell in love with a girl in Istanbul,  
An Armenian, Armenian, Armenian girl,  
How can that Armenian girl  
Give her heart to the gendarme?”  
“I suffered much, gendarme, at your hands,  
At your hands, gendarme, at your hands,  
Until I die, I won't be delivered from your tongue,  
From your tongue, gendarme, from your tongue,  
Don't torture me, gendarme,  
Or else I'll pull out your knife-bayonet from your waist,  
Will pull out from your waist, from your waist.”*

30 (594).

**MUHACİR KIZI**

Ben bir muhacir kızıyım,  
İntikam yıldızıyım,  
Acıyın benim halime,  
Yüreklere sızıyım.

Kıyma bana, efendim,  
Ben de senin gibiydim,  
Gül bahçenin içinde,  
Goncagül gibiydim.

Nar ağacı kurudu,  
Ne arandı, ne soruldu,  
Anam, babam, kardaşlar,  
Hep bir günde vuruldu.

Nerde Ermeninin ocağı?  
Nerde kaldı bucağı?  
Bundan sonar tütmesin  
Osmanlının ocağı!

**THE REFUGEE GIRL**

*I am a refugee girl,  
I am the star of vengeance,  
Have compassion for my state,  
I am a grief for the hearts.*

*Have pity on me, my master,  
I, too, was like you;  
In a garden of roses,  
I was like a rosebud.*

*Our pomegranate-tree dried up,  
They did not search, nor asked,  
My father, mother and brothers  
Were all shot in one day.*

*Where is the Armenian's hearth?  
Where is his home?  
May no smoke rise henceforth  
From the Ottoman's hearth, too!*

31 (595).

**GARİBİM**

Garibim bu vatanda,  
Garip kuşlar öterler,  
Göynüm bitti, hiç oldu,  
Durmuyor çöllerde.

**I AM A STRANGER**

*I am a stranger in this country,  
Alien birds are warbling,  
My life went by, nothing was left,  
I won't stay in the desert.*

Giderim elinizden,  
Kurtulurum dilinizden,  
Yeşil ördek olayım,  
Su içmem gölünüzden.

*I'll get rid of your hands  
And free myself of your tongue,  
Even if I become a green duck,  
I'll not drink water from your lake!*

Bülbül, ne ötersin,  
Çukur ovada?  
Anan seni arar  
Bulmaz yuvada.

*Why are you singing, nightingale,  
In the deep ravine,  
Your mother will search you  
And won't find you in the nest.*

Ey, yüce dağlar,  
Ey, soğuk sular,  
Ben garip düştüm,  
Benim anam ağlar.

*Hey, high mountains,  
Hey, cold waters,  
I became a refugee,  
My mother is crying.*

Garibim, garip kuşum,  
Nerde düşem, yerim yok  
Kar-kışı bir vatan,  
Ben bir vatansız kuşum.

*I am a refugee, I am a refugee bird,  
Wherever I happen to be, I have no place  
In this wintry and snowy homeland,  
I am a bird without a homeland!*

**32 (596).**

**I GET UP IN THE MORNING, MY EYE DOESN'T OPEN**

I get up in the morning, my eye doesn't open,  
My wounds are numerous, not one has healed up,

I knock at doors – not one opens,  
I'm afraid; I'm the guilty of this world.

**33 (597).**

**I REMAINED BETWEEN TWO BRANCHES**

I remained between two branches,  
I remained, like an owl, in the mountains,

I haven't lived a happy day, not a dream has come true,  
I was, thus, left with a hard lot.

**34 (598).**

**THEY EVEN SEPARATE THE YOUNG LAMBS FROM THEIR MOTHERS**

They even separate the young lambs from their mothers,  
The doors of my heart are filled with blood,

I'll put on black clothes and wander in the mountains,  
They tell me: "Don't cry!" How can I not?

**35 (599).**

**THE WAVES ARE CURLING OVER THE SEA OF ISTANBUL**

The waves are curling over the sea of Istanbul,  
How sweet is my father's breath,

May the Lord give me the fortune to go near him,  
To fulfill my dream and then to drop myself into the sea.

**36 (600).**

**THE WAVES ARE CURLING OVER THE SEA OF BEIRUT**

The waves are curling over the sea of Beirut,  
How sweet is the breeze of love blowing,

We had one love like two sisters,  
Fate divided us, we didn't want to part.

**37 (601).**

**HEY, SISTER, WHERE SHALL WE GO?**

Hey, sister, where shall we go?  
We have no lamp, where shall we go?

The Turks will come now,  
The night is dark, where shall we go?

**38 (602).**

**ON THE WORD OF THE TURKS AND FORCIBLY**

On the word of the Turks and forcibly  
We came out of our houses,

We were ruined but we didn't die,  
We found ourselves in these deserts.

**39 (603).**

**MAKE WAY, TAURUS MOUNTAINS!**

Make way, Taurus Mountains!  
We shall go

And we shall find  
Our fathers and mothers.

**40 (604).**

**MAKE WAY, GÂVUR MOUNTAINS!<sup>1</sup>**

Make way, Gâvur Mountains!  
We shall go

And half-way to Der-Zor  
We shall die.

**41 (605).**

**OH, MY BLACK FATE, WHY?**

Oh, my black fate, why  
Did you separate a sister from her brother?

Why did you leave the Armenian orphans  
Fatherless and motherless?

**42 (606).**

**WHEREVER THE ORPHAN GOES, THEY SHUT THE DOOR**

Wherever the orphan goes, they shut the door,

They give him a piece of bread and hurt his heart.

**43 (607).**

**I CAME TO THIS WORLD AND NEVER SMILED**

I came to this world and never smiled,

I passed my good days clad in black.

**44 (608).**

**FAT LICE, LEAN MICE, NUMEROUS AND COUNTLESS**

Fat lice, lean mice,  
Numerous and countless,

Are troublesome  
For our fingers and fingernails.

---

<sup>1</sup> The mountains were called "Gâvur" (unbeliever – in Turk.; special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians), because a great number of Armenians were martyred there.

**45 (609).**

**MAY YOUR HEAD BE BROKEN, TALAAT PASHA!**

May your head be broken, Talaat pasha!  
You should be buried in the ground!

You made us orphans and ownerless  
And left us homeless.

**46 (610).**

**I AM A LITTLE ORPHAN BOY**

I am a little orphan boy, fatherless and motherless,  
I have neither elder sister nor brother,  
Look, I am in rags and tatters,  
I have no shoes to cover my feet,

Other boys are satiated with food,  
At night they sleep in their bed,  
Why was I born and why did I come to this world?  
Was it only to see affliction?

**47 (611).**

**WE, SISTER AND BROTHER, WERE DEPRIVED TOO SOON OF OUR PARENTS**

We, sister and brother, were deprived too soon of our parents,  
What a cruel fate we had, brother,  
We were saved, but sixty souls were burned alive,  
We, sister and brother, were freed from the claws of the Turks.

Call, crane, call!  
While it's spring, while it's spring,  
It's spring for the world,  
It's smoke for me, it's smoke for me!

**48 (612).**

**AH! WHAT DAYS WE'RE LIVING IN**

Ah! What days have come, brother,  
Ah! The cranes came, drank water from Meghraget,<sup>1</sup>  
Ah! I'll bid the cranes  
To go to the doors where my sweet brother is.

Please go to the remote and cold Siberia,  
Take my message to my only brother,  
And take with you a drop  
Of the sweet water of Meghraget.

Cranes, dear cranes,  
For God's sake,  
Call on the prisons,  
My sweet brother is my only one,  
Bring me his news, oh, cranes.  
For God's sake, pretty cranes,

Your sister is a wandering bird, brother,  
She is the sweet Vardenis of Moosh, brother,  
You were rescued from among  
The sixty burned souls, brother,  
But Stalin took you away, too,  
And devoured you, poor brother!

**49 (613).**

**THE ROAD TO AMERICA**

The road to America is long and straight,  
America stood up and claimed the orphans,  
I won't come, I won't go, dear mother,

I won't come, I won't go to America,  
To quit one's father is grief and peril,  
To quit one's mother is a cruel suffering.

**50 (614).**

**THE AMERICAN CAME – THE TIME SHONE**

They sent a telegram to America,  
Mister Brown came,  
The American came – the time shone,

When he saw us, the orphans, his feet trembled,  
He gathered us all, the orphans,  
And left nobody ownerless, unprotected.

<sup>1</sup> Name of a river.

**51 (615).**  
**ARE WE NOW?**

Are we now inferior to the English?  
Are we now inferior to the French?  
Why don't they give us autonomy?  
Let's go to Paris Conference...

Are we now inferior to the English?  
Are we now inferior to the French?  
Why don't they give us autonomy?  
Let's collect our garments and go to America.

**52 (616).**  
**THE ROAD TO THE ORPHANAGE IS STONY**

The road to the orphanage is stony,  
The Armenian orphans long for their mothers.

The road to the orphanage is stony,  
The Armenian orphans long for their fathers.

They took hold of my father and put him in prison,  
Hitting and beating, they murdered him.

My mother was ill, there was no doctor,  
Dear mother, what should I do,  
There was no money either.

My mother asked for water,  
There was no one to give her some,

Dear mother, what should I give,  
When there was no water either.

The golden ring did not suit my finger,  
The earth did not suit my only mother.

The golden ring did not suit my finger,  
The earth did not suit my only father.

In the Taurus Mountains and the valleys  
The blood of Armenians, mother, has formed a lake.

They dug my mother's grave with a ramrod,  
They dug my father's grave with a spade  
And they threw in also the bones of the Armenians.

**53 (617).**  
**THE ORPHANAGE YARDS ARE STONY**

The orphanage yards are stony,  
The hearts of the Armenian orphans long for their mothers.

Cut carefully, baker, so that the bread slice is not too thin,  
The Armenian orphans shouldn't leave the table hungry.

The orphanage bell roared like thunder,  
The Armenian orphans' tears ran like torrents.

The trees of the orphanage are shaking,  
The hearts of the Armenian orphans are full of bitter blood.

**54 (618).**  
**A BLACK BIRD PASSED ABOVE THE ORPHANAGE**

A black bird passed above the orphanage,  
The days of the Armenian orphans passed gloomily.

The trees of the orphanage are shaking,  
The Armenian orphans are imploring the adults.

Cut carefully, baker, so that the bread slice is not too thin,  
The Armenian orphans' guts shouldn't remain hungry.

The stairs of the orphanage are chipped,  
The hearts of the Armenian orphans are worn out.

**55 (619).**  
**THE STAIRS OF THE FACTORY ARE CHIPPED<sup>1</sup>**

The stairs of the factory are chipped,  
The hearts of the Armenian orphans are worn out,  
"Armenian girls,

Why are you pallid?"  
"We rise at the cry of the cock, mother,  
That's why we are pallid."

---

<sup>1</sup> The eyewitness survivor **Satenik Gouyoumjian** (b. 1902), from Konia, sang this and the previous songs with tearful eyes and narrated the following: "After staying for some time in the orphanage in Greece, they took us to a factory to work, where we had composed some songs like those we had made in the orphanage and together with the other girls, we worked and, at the same time, sang and wept..."

**56 (620).**

**THE FAREWELL OF THE ORPHAN BRIDE**

They shook hands with me, they hurt my heart,  
They made me cry painfully.

Ah! Farewell!

The time of parting has approached,  
I won't forget all my sorrows.

Ah! Farewell!

They clothed me as a bride with drum and zurna,  
They made me a bride without father and mother.

Ah! Farewell!

Come, sisters, come, and sit by me,  
Take a handkerchief and wipe my eyes.

Ah! Farewell!

My brother passed and looked up,  
The tears ran from his eyes in a flood.

Ah! Farewell!

Break my spoon and throw it in the garden,  
Give my slice to the orphans.

Ah! Farewell!

Break my plate and throw it in the yard,  
Give my portion of meal to the orphans.

Ah! Farewell!

I have to take my leave, dear sisters,  
They will take me out of the orphanage.

Ah! Farewell!

**57 (621).**

**GET UP, GET UP, ARMENIAN ORPHANS!**

“The lazy ones haven't got up yet,  
They haven't washed their face yet,  
Get up, get up, Armenian orphans  
And sing sweet songs!”

“Zemela! Zemela!  
Food! Food!  
But what soup,  
Headmaster Haykazoun?”

**58 (622).**

**WE, THE NOBLE PUPILS OF JEBEYL<sup>1</sup>**

We, the noble pupils of Jebeyl  
Want to be like lighted torches,

Under the clear sky of Jebeyl  
We want to become book-lovers.

**59 (623).**

**THE ARMENIAN ORPHANS OF ARMASH**

What do the Armenian orphans of Armash eat?  
On Monday they eat kidney beans,  
On Tuesday – macaroni,  
On Wednesday – potatoes,

On Thursday – lentil soup,  
On Friday – broad bean soup,  
On Saturday – dry grits,  
And on Sunday – they eat meat.

**60 (624).**

**THE ORPHANAGE OF BESHIKTASH**

Up here on the hill,  
On the heights of Beshiktash,  
That is our native cradle,  
Which feeds our soul.

Here is our house of compassion,  
The warm nest of the little birds,  
The shelter of the Armenian orphans,  
At the foot of a mountain, silent and lonely.

---

<sup>1</sup> American Protestant orphanage in Beirut, which served the Armenian orphans.

**61 (625).**

**WE ARE THE ORPHANS OF ANTELIAS\***

We are the orphans of Antelias,  
Brother Deliko, dear Deliko,

Books and school are for us,  
Brother Deliko, dear Deliko.

**62 (626).**

**OUR BELOVED, BEAUTIFUL ANTELIAS\***

Brought here from various places,  
We have formed a large family,  
Our home is Antelias,  
Beautiful Antelias.

Let us be one heart and one soul,  
May our family be praised,  
Our home is always peaceful,  
Where love and unity prevail.

There is no more Harpoot or Kayseri,  
Marash and Adana, Tarson or Talas,  
But there is our beloved, beautiful Antelias.

There is no more Harpoot or Kayseri,  
Marash and Adana, Tarson or Talas,  
But there is our beloved, beautiful Antelias.

---

\* One of the suburbs of Beirut (Lebanon), where there was an orphanage next to the Armenia Catholicossate of Cilicia.





4.

**PATRIOTIC AND HEROIC BATTLE SONGS**

1 (627).

**SASSOUN GOT UP AND REBELLED**

Sassoun got up and rebelled,  
Its roar was heard the world over  
And shook America and Europe  
With its legions of braves.

The Armenians' hearts were thrilled,  
The Armenians' voice thundered,  
The valiant men rushed forward  
And freedom resounded.

Ah, Sassouni, brave Sassouni,  
Let us be a sacrifice to your blood,  
May the sacred seeds of unity sprout,  
Let us be a sacrifice to freedom.

The Turks heard and got enraged,  
They sent an army of ten thousand  
And called fifty thousand Kurds,  
Blood-thirsty and powerful.

Those wild Kurds  
Besieged the proud Sassoun,  
Cannons thundered  
Villages were demolished.

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

2 (628).

**AH! VASPOURAKAN**

Ah! Vaspourakan, sorrowful Armenia,  
Countless heroes were sacrificed,  
They resisted so long in the terrible battle  
And were martyred for the love of the nation.

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.

Ah! That's enough, Armenians, to be always enslaved,  
To leave our Homeland, to appeal to foreigners,  
The foreigner likes us as a guest  
And renders our bread and water bitter.

3 (629).

**THE TOWN OF BITLIS IS TOO MOUNTAINOUS**

The town of Bitlis is too mountainous,  
There was no news from Andranik,  
In the morning, at dawn  
Countless were the Turkish soldiers.

Go and call Kaytsak  
And the valiant hero Andranik,

Send for Dezhokhk-Hrayr  
To come hastily to our aid.

The Turkish soldiers with cannons,  
The valiant Armenians with rifles,  
The brave Andranik with his shiny sword  
Killed hundreds of Turks.

#### 4 (630).

### THE ENEMY CAME, ZEYTOUNIS!

The enemy came, Zeytounis!  
Take your rifles, ride your horses!  
Show your bravery before the Turks!  
And kill the black gendarmes!

We have valorous Zeytounis,  
We will avenge the Turks,  
In place of our mother's sacred milk  
Let us squeeze handfuls of blood.  
Get up, Zeytounis!  
Do not bow your heads before the Turk,

Kill the black enemy  
And roll them over the Shughra<sup>1</sup> into the water.

We fought near the Berdis Chay,<sup>2</sup>  
We rose and invaded the barracks,  
We imprisoned the soldiers  
And hoisted our flag.

Long live Zeytoun, long live Zeytoun,  
Let it not see slavery,  
As long as we have such braves,  
Long live Zeytoun, long live Zeytoun!

#### 5 (631).

### WE ARE ZEYTOUNIS, ZEYTOUNIS!

We are Zeytounis, Zeytounis!  
We live free and we have no fear,  
We fought against the enemy,  
We are Zeytounis, Zeytounis!

We are braves, braves, let's go forward,  
Let's go forward and not be exiled,

Let's take revenge on the enemy,  
We are Zeytounis, Zeytounis!

We'll die for the Armenian name,  
We'll shed blood for the motherland,  
We'll deliver the motherland and the Armenians,  
We're Zeytounis, Zeytounis!

#### 6 (632).

### THE HEROIC BATTLE OF MOUSSA DAGH

An order to be fulfilled in seven days was written,  
The decision of the meeting reached the villages,  
The people of Moussa Dagh became freedom fighters,  
They rose and stood against the enemy government,  
And held the front aided by mothers and sisters,  
They fought for forty days heartily and with faith,  
Thousands of soldiers attacked,  
The valleys thundered with the people's shells,

Moussa Dagh became a fortress of seven villages,  
That caused a great pain to the enemy government,  
They attacked with cannons and mausers,  
They left hundreds of corpses and departed,  
The French ships came by chance,  
Demlakian,\* Dumanian\* and Abadjian\* went  
And sent a telegram to Poghos Noubar pasha,<sup>3</sup>  
They brought new life to five thousand people.

#### 7 (633).

### THE HEROINE VARDOUHI<sup>4</sup>

She had tied the rope round her waist  
And had hung the rifle from her shoulder,  
She held the axe in her hand  
And was rolling down huge stones  
To close the road before the enemy,  
She said from the bottom of her heart:  
"Let no bullet be fired in vain,

Let it pierce the enemy's breast."  
She had put the pitcher on her shoulder  
And had no fear of enemy shells.  
She was carrying water  
To help the young people.  
Vardouhi had put the jug on her shoulder  
When, while passing on a height,

<sup>1</sup> Bridge near the town of Zeytoun over the Valley of Blood.

<sup>2</sup> Song of Zeytounis' self-defense, in 1915.

\* Heroes of the self-defensive battles of Moussa Dagh in 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Poghos Noubar pasha – the Founding-Chairman of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, who greatly helped the heroic Moussa Dagh people, rescued by the French ships, to survive during 4 years in the sandy tent-town of Port-Saïd.

<sup>4</sup> Vardouhi Nashalian – the participant and heroine, who was distinguished by her feats in the self-defensive battle of Moussa Dagh in 1915.

A bullet came from a distance  
And broke her pitcher,  
Young and old fought heartily

And struck with faith,  
They knocked down many soldiers  
And retained their freedom.

## 8 (634).

### UYAN, MUSADAĞLI, UYAN!<sup>1</sup>

Çektim kılıcı vurdum taşa,  
Taş yarıldı baştan başa,  
Musadağlı binler yaşa!  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!

Osmanlının askerleri,  
Musadağ'ın yiğitleri,  
Bin-binlerce martinleri,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!

Osmanlının bombaları,  
Musadağ'ın metarışları,  
Bin-binlerce topları,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!

Fransızın vapurları,  
Musadağ'ın duaları,  
Gelin, kızlar, çocukları,  
Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!

### WAKE UP, MOUSSADAGHIAN, WAKE UP!<sup>1</sup>

*I drew my sword and struck the stone,  
The stone split from end to end,  
Live a thousand years, Moussadaghian!  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!*

*The Ottoman soldiers,  
The braves of Moussa Dagh,  
The rifles in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!*

*The Ottoman bombs,  
The ramparts of Moussa Dagh,  
The cannons in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!*

*The French steamships,  
The prayers of the Moussa Dagh people,  
The brides, the girls and the children,  
Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world!*

## 9 (635).

### WE ARE COURAGEOUS MOUSSADAGH BRAVES<sup>1</sup>

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.

If our weapons are not sufficient,  
The forest is an impregnable fortress for us,  
If thousands of invaders rush on us,  
Many of them will not return alive.

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.

Is it proper for the Moussadaghian  
To be cut to pieces like a sheep by the wolf?  
As long as we have swords and weapons in hand  
We'll smash the wolf's muzzle.

Come, brothers of Moussa Dagh,  
Let us not bow before the Turks,  
Let us defend ourselves arms in hand,  
In our thick forests!

The ruthless Turk has decided  
To annihilate the Armenians,  
To ravish and dishonor  
Our young girls.

<sup>1</sup> This song was composed in 1915, under the immediate impression of the world-shaking heroic self-defensive battle of Moussa Dagh, which lasted for fifty-three days.

Let us not trust any longer, Armenian brothers,  
The false promises of the Turks,  
We must fight bravely  
And not surrender to the enemy.  
  
The horn of war tooted  
In the passes of Moussa Dagh,

Armenian braves, armed and ready  
Withstood the enemy.  
  
The Moussadaghians fought fearlessly,  
Eighteen braves were martyred,  
They saved us with their sacred blood  
And held high the Armenians' renown.

### 10 (636).

#### OUR MOUSSADAGHIANS ARE ALL HEROES<sup>1</sup>

Our Moussadaghians are all heroes,  
They are encouraged looking at each other,  
They never know the meaning of fear,  
Since they have you, Moussa Dagh.  
Hey, Moussadaghians, dear ones,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor!  
  
Our Moussa Dagh was all covered with trees,  
It was also called Little Armenia,  
Hey, Moussadaghians, dear ones,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor!  
  
We rose, all seven villages, to the mountain top,

We didn't bow before the enemy,  
We had many victims in forty days,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor.  
Hey, Moussadaghians, dear ones,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor!  
  
I am Karo, the singer from Moussa Dagh,  
I've taken a pen and paper in my hand,  
I'm singing my song, let the Armenian nation know,  
Let this be held as a keepsake from me.  
Hey, Moussadaghians, dear ones,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor!

### 11 (637).

#### THE CHALLENGE OF THE SEBASTIAN

Lo! We need, we need, we need,  
We need swords, rifles, weapons,  
When the enemy comes  
We must attack him!  
  
Who that denies his nation,  
Should be blinded in both eyes,  
And, like a real pauper,  
Should be obliged to beg from door-to-door.

We belong to Vardan with our soul,  
There is no foreigner among us,  
Jesus is our great Lord,  
Who has taught us Love?  
  
Lo! We need, we need, we need,  
We need swords, rifles, weapons,  
When the enemy comes  
We must attack him!

### 12 (638).

#### URFA'NIN YİĞİTLERİ<sup>2</sup>

Urfa büyük, ayrılmaz,  
Dibi gayım, dağılmaz,  
Urfa'nın yiğitleri  
Hiç bir yerde bulunmaz.

#### THE BRAVES OF URFA<sup>2</sup>

*Urfa is large; it cannot be separated,  
Its ground is firm; it cannot be dispersed,  
The braves of Urfa  
Are alone of their kind.*

### 13 (639).

#### HACIN GENE BAŞ KALDIRMIŞ<sup>3</sup>

Yüce dağda tüfekler öter,  
Kâhyaları gelsin diye,  
Hacin gene baş kaldırmış,  
Kozan oğlu gitsin diye.

#### HADJN HAS AGAIN REVOLTED<sup>3</sup>

*The rifles are clanging on the high mountains,  
For the watchmen to come,  
Hadjn has again revolted,  
For Khozan oghlu to go away.*

<sup>1</sup> This popularized song has been composed by the bard Karo Blaghian, from Moussa Dagh.

<sup>2</sup> This song was composed in October, 1915, in the days of the heroic self-defensive battle of Yedessia (Urfa).

<sup>3</sup> This song was composed in 1920, during the eight-month heroic self-defensive battle of Hadjn.

**KATOLİKOSTAN GELDİ  
BİR KARA HABER<sup>1</sup>**

Katolikostan geldi bir kara haber,  
Cin Toros<sup>2</sup> dedi: “Hiç etmeyin keder,  
Kefenimiz hazır, mezarlar açık,  
Vuralım, kardaşlar, şanımız kalsın.

Titretti bütün dağları taşı,  
Toros, Barsum,<sup>3</sup> Hakop bunlar yoldaşı,  
Hacın’ın ortası bir uzun çarşı,  
Dikran’ın evi kaleye karşı,  
Geriden geliyor zabıt-binbaşı,  
Selama durdular Dikran’a karşı.

Borazancı boruyu çalamaz oldu,  
Asker tayini alamaz oldu,  
Binbaşı komut veremez oldu,  
Hücum borusundan Barsum vuruldu:  
“Martinini al da, tez ulaş, Dikran!”

Karsbazarı kurtaran Cin Toros,  
İngiltere’ye vardı söylendi heros,\*  
“Gâvur hınzır,”\*\* diye süngü soktular,  
“Kesilen kurbanları gel gör, Katolikos!”

“Vurulsunlar,” diye yazıldı ferman,  
Ağalar söyledi: “Vurulsun bunlar,  
Bunlar vurulmazsa, halimiz yaman.”  
O zalim hafiyeler de tez tuttu mesken.

Çevirip kolları araya aldılar,  
Martin-fişek ile işlerine daldılar,  
Vurulan dokuz nefer idi, bir de binbaşı,  
Maraşlı Ali’nin de vardı bu işte eli.

Çat Oluk<sup>4</sup> başında yatmış dört aslan,  
Vücüdüm Cin Toros, Kahraman Dikran,  
Bezirgân Hakop, Güdeleş Barsum  
Bunlar verdiler orduya meydan.

İngiliz bayrağı ateşte yandı,  
Asker-jandarmalar kan ile doydu,  
Şahinler tutuldu, düştü tuzağa,  
Yürekten çıkmaz böyle acılar.

Terzioğlu konağını бүrdü duman,  
Binbaşı söyledi: “Kaçayım, aman!”  
Terzioğlu konağı kâgir bacalı,  
Durmasın, ağlasın analar-bacı.

**A BLACK NEWS CAME  
FROM THE CATHOLICOS<sup>1</sup>**

*A black news came from the Catholicos,  
Jin Toros<sup>2</sup> said: “Don’t worry at all,  
Our shrouds are ready, our graves are open,  
Let us strike, brothers, and may our glory be everlasting.*

*The stones of all the mountains shook,  
Toros, Bardzoum<sup>3</sup> and Hakob were friends,  
A long market – in the center of Hadjn,  
Tigran’s house was in front of the fortress,  
The officer-major was coming from afar,  
They stood in salute in front of Tigran.*

*The bugler could not blow the bugle,  
The soldier could not take his ration,  
The major could not give an order,  
At the signal of attack Bardzoum was shot:  
“Take your gun, Tigran, come quick!”*

*Jin Toros liberated Karsbazar  
And was awarded the title of hero\* in England;  
They stuck a bayonet in him saying: “Swine\*\* -gâvur!  
Come and see the slaughtered victims, Catholicos!”*

*“Let them be shot,” said the written order,  
The notables also said: “Let them be shot,  
If they are not shot, our condition will worsen.”  
These knavish spies soon invaded the grounds.*

*Twisting their hands, they took them in their midst,  
They did their job with the rifle bullets,  
Those who were shot were nine, and a major,  
Ali from Marash was also involved in this affair.*

*At the top of Chat-Oluk<sup>4</sup> four lions lay,  
Dear Jin Toros and Hero Tigran,  
Merchant Hakob and Plump Bardzoum  
Inaugurated the battle arena.*

*The English flag was burned in flames,  
The soldiers and gendarmes got gorged with blood,  
They caught the hawks in the trap,  
Such sufferings never leave our hearts.*

*The Derdzakian’s mansion was covered with smoke,  
The major said: “Now, let us run away!”  
The Derdzakian’s mansion had a stone flue,  
Cry, incessantly, mothers and sisters.*

<sup>1</sup> This song is a recollection of Adana massacre in 1909, when Catholicos of the Cilicia and the rich notables were against self-defense and had forbidden the people to take up arms; however, a group of heroes tried to oppose the enemy and were martyred.

<sup>2</sup> The people have added the nickname of “Jin” (invisible spirit) to that of their beloved, fearless hero Toros.

<sup>3</sup> Short for the masculine name of Hambardzoum.

\* The Armenian word “heros” (hero) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\* The Arabic word “hınzır/khnzr” (swine) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>4</sup> “Chat-Oluk” (intersecting fountain) was a place in Hadjn where the waters of two fountains met.

Tarifsiz bahtın var, vay, sefil Hacın!  
Otuz beş bin Ermeniye verdiler acı,  
Ateşlerde yansın Katolikos'un tacı,  
Tutulmasın sözü, ağarsın saçı.  
Yıldızlar tutuldu, aylar bağlandı,  
Hacın'ın çandırları,\* anam, güldü de oynadı.

*You had an inexpressible fate, poor Hadjn!  
They caused pain to thirty-five thousand Armenians,  
May the Catholicos' crown burn in flames,  
Let nobody listen to his words, may his hair turn grey.  
The stars faded, the moon was obscured,  
The chanders\* of Hadjn laughed and danced.*

## 15 (641).

### ADUR PAŞA<sup>1</sup>

Adur Paşa, kalk sen!  
Çam çırayı, yak sen!  
Türkler hücum ediyor:  
Kamavorlar\*\* arş\*\*\* edin!

Adur Paşa, kalk gidek!  
Fenerleri yak sen,  
Türkler ateş açıyor,  
Bombaları saç sen!

Kolejden indim yayan,  
Mendilim dolu payem,  
Adur Paşa geliyor,  
Dayan, Osmanlı, dayan!

### ADOUR PASHA<sup>1</sup>

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

*Adour pasha, get up, let's go!  
Light your torches,  
The Turks are opening fire,  
Disperse your bombs!*

*I came down from the college afoot,  
My handkerchief is full of ration,  
Adour pasha is coming,  
Resist, Ottoman, resist!*

## 16 (642).

### YAŞA, MANUK ÇAVUŞ!<sup>2</sup>

Beni tüketti, arkadaş,  
Bu göğsümdeki yaralar,  
Elbet şehit olacağım,  
Yaşa vatan, yaşa millet!

Hücum borusu çalınır,  
Kimi kaçar, kimi durur,  
Herkes kaderini görür,  
Yaşa vatan, yaşa millet!

Nasip olsun selamete,  
Varırsanız memlekete,  
Manuk Çavuş şehit düştü,  
Yaşa vatan, yaşa millet!

### LONG LIVE, MANOUK CHAVOUSH!<sup>2</sup>

*These wounds on my chest  
Are consuming me, my friend,  
Beyond doubt, I'll be martyred,  
Long live our motherland, long live our people!*

*The bugle for the attack was blown,  
Some fled, others remained,  
Everyone will meet his fate,  
Long live our motherland, long live our people!*

*May you be destined to see salvation  
And you reach the native land,  
Manouk Chavoush fell and was martyred,  
Long live our motherland, long live our people!*

\* The Armenians of Hadjn and environs gave the name of "Chander" to those Turkified inhabitants of Hadjn, who still continued to speak the local Armenian dialect, but had, following their forceful Turkification, become a great plague for their former compatriots.

<sup>1</sup> This song was composed on the occasion of the heroic self-defensive battle of Ayntap led by Adour Levonian, which began on the 1st of April, 1920, and lasted, intermittently, for 314 days.

\*\* The Armenian word "kamavorlar/kamavor" (volunteers) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\*\* The Armenian verb "arş/arshavel" (to charge) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>2</sup> During the self-defensive battles, the Armenian soldiers, serving in the Turkish army, secretly helped their compatriots, such as Manouk Chavoush (Sergeant), who was martyred heroically and about whom this song was composed.

## 17 (643).

### TOPAL HAGOP'UN<sup>1</sup> YİĞİTLİĞİ

Hasan-Bey'in üstünde soğuk yel eser,  
Topal Hagop yolları keser,  
Topal Hagop sazlığa kaçtı.  
Kaymakam geldi sazlığı bastı,  
Topal Hagop nispetten ateş açtı,  
Yüz altmış tane Türk asker kesti.  
Topal Hakop beş dakika sesini kesti,  
Onun yerine kırk tane asker kesti,  
Kaymakamın ciğerini kökten söktü.  
Topal Hakop yüz kişi bağladı,  
Garabed Ağa hepsini de boğazladı,  
Topal Hagop martinini yağlıyor,  
Adını duyan Türkler ağlıyor.  
"Çiğ yumurta yedim düşümde,  
Akıl ermiyor bu benim işime,  
İki tabur asker düştü peşime,  
Türkler şaştı bu benim işime."

### TOPAL HAKOB'S<sup>1</sup> FEAT

*A cool breeze blew over Hassanbey,  
Topal Hakob blocked up the roads,  
Topal Hakob lay in ambush in the reeds.  
The colonel came and besieged the reeds,  
Topal Hakob, out of spite, opened fire  
And killed a hundred and sixty Turkish soldiers.  
Topal Hakob stopped the fire for five minutes,  
Instead he beheaded forty soldiers  
And plucked up the colonel's liver by the roots.  
Topal Hakob tied a hundred men,  
And Karapet agha throttled them all,  
Topal Hakob oiled his gun,  
The Turks, who heard his name, cried.  
"I ate a raw egg in my dream,  
Nobody understands the job I've undertaken,  
Two legions of soldiers chased me,  
The Turks couldn't make head or tail of my job."*

## 18 (644).

### HACIN'IN KAHRAMANLARI<sup>2</sup>

Nisanın dördünde Hacın karıştı,  
İbr oğlu Muhamed çarşıya düştü,  
Çanlar çalındı, insanlar saçtı,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya evlere düştü.

Bilikyan Hrant gencin biriydi,  
İlk postada vurdu bir kereden,  
Fırsat idi Hacı Osman'ın yüreği,  
Gözünden vuruldu, kaçtı geriye.

Yağloğlu damında vardı kırk kişi,  
Bulunmaz bu yiğitlerin eşi,  
Arap saçlı Arşag kumandan başı,  
Atar martinini semaya karşı.

Gürnek Dağı'ndan redif yürüdü,  
Hacın kahramanları öne arş etti,  
Hacın kahramanları arş etti yürüdü,  
"Alaman Hacın'ı," dedi deyus binbaşı.

Der Hamparsum baba haçını aldı,  
Zengin ailelerden erzak getirdi,  
Zengin ailelerden erzak bitirdi,  
Hacın kahramanlarının keyfini getirdi.

### THE BRAVES OF HADJN<sup>2</sup>

*On the fourth of April Hadjn was disturbed,  
Ibroghlu Mohamed appeared in the market,  
The bells rang, people were scattered,  
Crying and lamenting, they reached their homes.*

*Bilikian Hrant was a young man,  
He shot at once on the first occasion,  
The target was Hadji Osman's heart;  
Shot in the eye, he fled back.*

*Forty people stood on the Yaghdjian's roof,  
These braves had no equal,  
The commander Arshak, hairy like an Arab,  
Fired his rifle to the sky.*

*Reinforcement came from the Gyurnek mountains,  
The braves of Hadjn rushed forward,  
The braves of Hadjn walked onward,  
"I can't seize Hadjn," said the knavish major.*

*The Reverend Father Hambardzoum took his cross,  
He brought provisions from wealthy families,  
He provided food from rich families  
And gave pleasure to the braves of Hadjn.*

<sup>1</sup> Topal (lame) Hakob has been a famous national hero during the self-defensive battles of Hassanbey near Adana. It is told that, at the age of five years, he had caught a Turkish officer, had torn the officer's belly with his fingers, had plucked up his heart and lungs and had hung them from the plane-tree. Subsequently, when a snake had stung his foot and feeling that he would die, he had cut his foot with an axe and from that day on he had won the nickname of Topal (lame) Hakob. His group was composed of forty heroes. When Topal Hakob was killed together with his comrades-in-arms, his group, under the leadership of Avetis from Hassanbey, counted thirty-three souls. The narrator of this song, the 103-year-old **Hovhannes Taymazian** (b. 1886, Hassanbey) (nicknamed: Vardevar), a former legionary, fought in this group.

<sup>2</sup> According to the narrator **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 1903), this song was composed during the days of the self-defensive battles of Hadjn, in 1920.

19 (645).

DOĞAN BEY<sup>1</sup> İLE ARAM ÇAVUŞ<sup>2</sup>

Doğan Bey de geldi, girdi Hacın'a,  
Aram Çavuş gitti yetiştirdi ona,  
"Aram Çavuş," derler benim adıma,  
"Kopuş ahırında gömdüm kadını,  
Hacın'da kalmadı Çander<sup>3</sup> adı,  
Şükür murazıma ermedim mi ben?  
Rumilda bastım Çerkez beyleri,  
Yere yattılar uzun-uzun boyları,  
Aram Çavuş seçti katır soyları,  
Şükür murazıma ermedim mi ben?"

DOGHAN BEY<sup>1</sup> AND SERGEANT ARAM<sup>2</sup>

*Doghan bey came and entered Hadjn,  
Sergeant Aram caught up to him,  
"They call me sergeant Aram," he said,  
"I buried your wife in the Ghopush stable,  
I crossed out the name of Chander<sup>3</sup> in Hadjn,  
Didn't I attain the goal of my glory?  
I encircled the Circassian beys in the Greek village  
And sent them sprawling on the ground,  
Sergeant Aram chose the best of the mules,  
Didn't I attain the goal of my glory?"*

20 (646).

MOURAD OF HADJN<sup>4</sup>

You comrade, born in the land of Hadjn,  
Let us be a sacrifice to your deeds,  
You comrade, crucified on dark walls,  
Let us be a sacrifice to your sacred torture.

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name be immortalized!  
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name always glitter!

You, brave comrade Mourad of Hadjn,  
You struggled courageously,  
You withdrew with honor,  
You, too, fell courageously.

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name be immortalized!  
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name always glitter!

You drew your sword from its sheath,  
You shouted "Hurrah" and ran,  
At four o'clock in the morning  
They seized the town of Bitlis.

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name be immortalized!  
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
May your valiant name always glitter!

21 (647).

HERE ARE THE BRAVES IN ROWS<sup>5</sup>

Here are the braves in rows,  
Their hearts, each an altar of vengeance,  
Cry, "vengeance, struggle, death!"  
Conscious death is immortality.

Sword in hand, shouting, "March!"  
On the western summit,  
They screamed on the heights of Sega,  
The people of Hadjn, thirsty for blood.

Onward, onward, people of Hadjn,  
Our deadly Turk has come,

Onward, let us fight, take up your arms,  
Let's see, what does the enemy want?

Rally around the flag of freedom,  
Let's fight in front of the wicked foe,  
Let's fight fearlessly, let's fight bravely,  
Let's not turn back, let's rush forward!

Come on! Fire a volley again!  
Let's seize the impregnable position of the Turks,  
Let's fight unceasingly like braves,  
Soon they'll come to our help.

<sup>1</sup> Kozan oghlu Doghan bey was the commander of the regular Turkish army, who besieged Hadjn with his army, in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> The officer of the Turkish army, Aram Kaytsak (Terzian) was the vice-commander of the eight-month heroic self-defensive "Vrezh" (Vengeance) group of Hadjn, in 1920, who killed Doghan bey.

<sup>3</sup> The Armenians of Hadjn and environs gave the name of "Chander" to those Turkified inhabitants of Hadjn, who still continued to speak the local Armenian dialect, but had, following their forceful Turkification, become a great plague for their former compatriots.

<sup>4</sup> This song was dedicated to the leader of several heroic self-defensive battles (including that of Sassoun, 1894), the national hero, the Great Mourad – Hambardzoum Boyadjian.

<sup>5</sup> Aram-Aspet's present and other poems, dedicated to the eight-month heroic self-defensive battle of Hadjn, in 1920, have been popularized by the denizens of Hadjn and considered as their own.

22 (648).

**THE AEROPLANE CAME WITH A GREAT NEWS**

The aeroplane came with a great news,  
Our hearts were filled with joyful hopes,  
All the fighters wandered unarmed,  
They wanted to kill the Turks with all their soul.

To live or to die, valiant people of Hadjn,  
Let's seize, they said, otherwise we'll die,  
Let's seize the mighty cannon,<sup>1</sup>  
Let's gain the glorious victory!

The brothers already wrote letters,  
"Fight, brothers, we'll come to your help," they said,  
The days went by, however, what happened?  
Two out of a thousand didn't show up.

Firmly determined, a handful of braves  
Set off swimming across the river,  
They stayed night and day in the mountains  
And sent sprawling the corpses of the enemy.

23 (649).

**YOU, BRAVE LAD OF HADJN!**

You, brave lad of Hadjn!  
Who will carry the news of your death?  
Blessed always be the likes of you,  
You are the hope of Armenia.

My tears became a torrent,  
My bright day was darkened,  
The valleys of Hadjn were full of blood,  
So many braves were martyred.

I'll come to you with incense and candles,  
I'll shed tears and mourn,  
Seeing you, everyone cried,  
I, too, sit and weep everyday.

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

Who are your kinsfolk that'll come and cry  
Over your grave and lament?  
Who will take revenge on the enemy?  
There's no one to help Hadjn.

I'll take my sword and go forward,  
I'll kill the Turks right and left,  
I'd lie in my grave happily,  
If I saw Hadjn liberated!

24 (650).

**SOGHOMON TEHLIRIAN<sup>2</sup>**

Talaat pasha fled to Berlin,  
Tehlirian caught him up,  
He shot him in the forehead, 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!

25 (651).

**OH, MY HOMETLAND!**

Oh, my Homeland, when shall I see you free?  
Happy, joyful, secure and painless,  
Tigranakert, Moosh, Bayazet, as far as Van,  
Will guard us with Armenian soldiers.

Oh, my Homeland, when shall I see you bright?  
Enlightened, educated and instructed,  
A meritorious Armenian prince on the throne,  
Who will write orders to Armenians in Armenian letters.

<sup>1</sup> During the self-defensive battles, the people of Hadjn seized the enemy's cannon, but since there were no shells, they could not use it and could not defend themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Soghomon Tehlirian – Armenian national avenger. In 1921, in Berlin, he killed one of the principal criminals, who organized the Armenian Genocide, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkey, Talaat pasha, who was sentenced to death by default and had taken refuge in Europe. The court of Berlin acquitted S. Tehlirian.

Let us not be slaves to foreigners,  
Let us fall courageously for the sake of Armenians,  
The Turk attacked us with numerous soldiers,  
Cilicia was filled with cries and laments.

Tender infants were sacrificed  
And were martyred with innocent blood,

Some, half-dead, still with open eyes  
Looked at the sky for help!

What's the use of such a grievous life?  
When shall I see the Armenians' throne?  
May the day break upon us,  
May the day break upon the Armenian nation!

## 26 (652).

### UNITE, ARMENIANS, UNITE!

We set out from the Moosh plain and are coming,  
King Levon<sup>1</sup> folded the whip,  
We have become strangers,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

Once we fought in the army,  
Near Arara,<sup>2</sup>  
Union is a very good thing,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

They gave seven cans of gold coins  
To the French general,  
Don't trust the foreigners' word,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

We do not have a prince for us  
Or a sovereign king  
Who will protect our nation,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

We have a Homeland, Armenia,  
That is the hope of the Armenians,  
From now on we'll not live abroad,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

May the Armenian Problem be soon settled,  
And let's all gather there,  
Let's flourish it with our endeavor and effort,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

<sup>1</sup> Refers to Levon II the Magnificent, King of Armenian Cilicia (1198-1219).

<sup>2</sup> In 1918, the Armenian volunteer legionnaires in the French army defeated the Turkish-German forces near Arara, in Palestine, and won a great victory. But in vain; their hopes were shattered.





We didn't want to give away Van, Bitlis and Erzroom,  
But we sacrificed you as well, Surmalou!

Alas, alas Surmalou!

The snake is seated on your nest, Surmalou!

Your gardener is not there to adorn your orchard,

You are obscure on four sides, it's a dark night,  
If only God protected you,  
Shall we go one day to Surmalou?

Alas, alas, Surmalou!

The snake is seated on your nest, Surmalou!

#### 4 (656).

#### ON THE BANK OF JOROKH<sup>1</sup>

With a grieving heart, yearning eyes,  
Broken soul and tearful eyes,  
I appeal to you, my native,  
My own and invaluable Jorokh.

Tell me, what news have you got  
Of my native Homeland,  
Its blooming fields and meadows,  
Forests and mountains?

Tell me, what news have you got  
Of the majestic cradle of my childhood,  
Of the clean and pure, cold and limpid  
Fountains and brooks?

I wonder where are your dear  
Armenian valiant children,  
Why was their voice silenced?  
A black grief covered the prosperous country.

The river Jorokh lost patience,  
Its waves clashed together  
And, with the grief of a child-deprived mother,  
It spoke with an afflicted tone.

"Enough! Don't scratch my wounds,  
You patriot, miserable, hoary man,  
My former limpid waters  
Have now become a sea of tears.

Only the graves have remained  
Of my beloved children,

Whose gentle and cool breeze  
Is now blowing and kissing me.

The wicked enemy, the knavish neighbor  
Did not fight face to face,  
Instead, he used perfidy,  
False oath and false promises.

They tied with ropes  
Peaceful people, unarmed people,  
They took them in rows to the valleys  
And riddled them with bayonets.

Now although my banks  
Are clothed and bound in black,  
However the great day is close at hand,  
Which will bring joy and applause.

The cubs of the martyred  
Will become big-big lions,  
Fearless, mighty, valiant fighters  
Under the native sun.

They will not be dupes of the knavish enemy's  
False promises and oaths,  
They will come out sword in hand  
And crush the nest down to its base.

At that very moment  
The bones of the martyrs will revive  
And the children of the Armenian nation  
Will take possession of their country."

#### 5 (657).

#### THE LONGING OF THE MOUSSADAGHIAN

I prayed to the Lord  
To ride a saddled horse,  
To go to Moussa Dagh,  
To pick figs from the fig-tree  
And walnuts from the walnut-tree.<sup>2</sup>

I prayed to the Lord  
To ride a saddled horse,  
To go to Armenia,  
To attend school,  
To acquire knowledge and grace,  
And to flourish our Homeland.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the central part of the Jorokh River was the former Armenian-inhabited town of Ardvin, which was also passed on to Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> The song was composed in 1915-1919, in Port-Saïd, when it was a dream to return Moussa Dagh.

<sup>3</sup> This part of the song was composed in 1946, on the eve of the mass Repatriation, when Mother-Armenia was calling its world-scattered children. The song was narrated by **Hovhannes Doudaklian** (b. 1910, Moussa Dagh) together with his wife **Sima Doudaklian** (b. 1912, Moussa Dagh).

Lay the tables abundantly,  
Fill the glasses with spirits,

Drink to your heart's content  
To the health of the youth going to Armenia.

**6 (658).**

**I YEARN TO SEE MY CILICIA**

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.

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

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

**7 (659).**

**OUR KESSAB**

The summit of Cassios is high,  
It remained a captive just as Ararat,  
The crops and the fields were left to the Turks,  
The grief of the Kessab people increased.

You, long-suffering Kessabis,  
You were owners of your bread,  
You, brave and valiant villagers,  
You, descendants of Cilicians.

You are a remnant of Cilicia, Kessab,  
Disappointed in your dreams,  
Your task was left unfinished,  
You, our glorious Kessab!

You, fragment of Armenian villages,  
You remained intractable,  
Will a lovely day come  
When we'll gather around you?

You have a lot of villages  
With diverse names,  
Where there were various churches,  
Priests, preachers and bishops.

I am Panos of Kessab,  
I wandered over many countries,  
I didn't come across your like,  
You, our glorious Kessab!

**8 (660).**

**NATIVE HOME<sup>1</sup>**

At the end of the village, near the brook,  
Close to the green trees in a cool spot,  
There was a modest, lovely hut,  
My matchless, Native Home!

You'll find me in a corner,  
In my old and low cradle,  
There, my tongue was loosened,  
There, my first steps were taken.

A pair of hearts beat constantly  
In that hut only for me,  
I'll never exchange the sweet hearts  
Of my parents for diamonds.

I have filled my Native Home  
With joy, pleasure and love,  
Nothing whatever under the sun  
Is like my Native Home!

<sup>1</sup> I have heard this song for the first time in 1946, in Alexandria, from my aunt **Arshakouhi Boyadjian** (b. 1898, Kayseri), and her son **Harutyun Boyadjian** (b. 1934, Alexandria) has recalled it word for word in Montreal, in 2005.

**9 (661).**  
**IN FOREIGN LANDS SO MANY YEARS**

In foreign lands so many years  
We shed tears yearning for our Homeland,  
We have become strangers,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

Sergeant Gevorg led in the front row,  
The bullet-belts tied cross-shaped on his chest  
And rifles in hand,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

They have slaughtered my infant children,  
They have ravished my virgin daughters  
And forcibly apostatized them,  
Unite, Armenians, unite!

Red, blue and orange,  
Let them come all and swear,  
As long as we aren't one drove-shepherd,  
We won't have a free Homeland.

**10 (662).**  
**WE WANDERED SO MANY YEARS**

We wandered so many years,  
We remained again on foreign lands  
And we are living too far  
From our sweet Armenia.

I emigrated from the Homeland,  
I met with bitter sufferings,  
I left my kinsfolk, wife and son,  
The black soil was my lot.

**11 (663).**  
**THE NEWS OF THE REPATRIATION\***

We are living now in foreign lands,  
I wonder what conscience is this,  
Patience is a good thing,  
Have patience, my soul, have patience!

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!

I have moved away from my home and place,  
I have lost my kins,  
I long for my Homeland,  
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!

**12 (664).**  
**I WANT TO GO TO YEREVAN**

I want to go to Yerevan,  
I want to read the primer,

What shall I do with the primer,  
When everybody is learned?

**13 (665).**  
**I WILL GO TO ARMENIA**

I will go to Armenia  
And stay there permanently,

What shall I do in foreign lands?  
Lo! I'll go to Armenia!

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\* In the years 1946-1948, the mass Repatriation of the Armenians scattered throughout the world, as a consequence of the Armenian Genocide, to Soviet (Eastern) Armenia was organized.

14 (666).

**I WANT TO GO TO ARMENIA**

I want to go to Armenia,  
I want to see Yerevan,

I want to hoist the flag  
On the top of Mount Ararat!

15 (667).

**HEY, DEAR YEREVAN!'**

I miss you, magnificent Yerevan,  
You, golden Lake Sevan, higher than many seas,  
You have fishes in your depths, Koghak and Ishkhan,  
My soul may testify, I'll give you my life.

Whenever I die, take me to Armenia  
And bury my corpse in the Ararat Valley,  
Fill your glasses with Araratian wine  
And eat roast-mutton with lavash-bread.

Hey, dear Yerevan, you, my Armenia,  
Hey dear, hey dear, lovely Yerevan!

Hey, dear Yerevan, you, my Armenia,  
Hey dear, hey dear, lovely Yerevan!

Yerevan, my dear, be always firm,  
You are surrounded with orchards and gardens,  
Your air and water are sweet, your view – splendid,  
Whoever doesn't love you, isn't a real Armenian.<sup>2</sup>

If only I could see the Great Armenia,  
It won't be painful for me to sink into the grave,  
Then place a monument on my tomb  
And write over it "Long Live Armenia!"

My dear Yerevan, you, my Armenia,  
Hey dear, hey dear, lovely Yerevan!

Hey, dear Yerevan, you, my Armenia,  
Hey dear, hey dear, lovely Yerevan!

16 (668).

**HAYASTAN'IN\* DESTANI**

Kimdir yazan destanı,  
O sever Hayastan'ı,  
Al sazını\*\* eline,  
Çal Hayastan destanı.

**DEDICATION TO ARMENIA\***

Whoever has written this song,  
Loves Armenia,  
Take up your saz\*\*  
And sing the song to Armenia.

Yaşasın Ermeniler,  
Dayandılar bu güne,  
Yakınlarda yolcuyuz,  
Düşmana güle-güle.

Long live the Armenians,  
They endured and lived to this day,  
We shall soon set off,  
Jeering at the enemy.

Oynarım hem de çalarım,  
Çalarım hem de oynarım,  
Hayastan'ı gördükçe,  
Yıldızlara hoplarım.

I shall dance and sing,  
I shall play and dance,  
As soon as I see Armenia,  
I shall fly to the stars.

Stalin'dir babamız,  
Mikoyan hayatımız,  
Bağramyan kardaşımız,  
Matsak Babyan reisimiz.

Stalin is our father,  
Mikoyan is our life,  
Baghramian is our brother,  
Matsak Papian is our leader.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard this song for the first time in 1946, in Alexandria, from my memorable father **Garnik Svazlian** (b. 1904, Kayseri) and, recalling it, I have placed it in this book.

<sup>2</sup> In the other variant: "Your fearless children – Armenian soldiers."

\* The Armenian word "Hayastan" (Armenia) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

\*\* Oriental musical instrument.

Ararat'ın gagatı\*  
Aslanların yuvası,  
Oralar Türk'ün değil,  
Ermeni'nin yuvası.

*The summit\* of Ararat  
Is the lions' nest,  
Those places do not belong to the Turks,  
They are the cradles of the Armenians.*

### 17 (669).

#### THE ARMENIAN'S LAND, THE ARMENIAN'S SOIL

We have clever Armenians,  
We have dearly loved braves,  
Glorious Baghranian  
Became renowned all over the world.

Till when will the Turks reign  
Over the Armenian land and the Armenian soil?

We have waited enough,  
Take up your arms, Armenian sons.

The martyrs' sacred blood  
Calls for revenge,  
By order of Baghranian  
We'll heal it with Katyushas!

### 18 (670).

#### I YEARN FOR MY HOMELAND<sup>1</sup>

Hey caravan, dear caravan, keep going your way,  
I yearn for my Homeland; I've lost my sleep.

I call you at moonlit night, and you don't hear me,  
I yearn for my dear brother; I've lost my sleep.

Drive on beyond the desert thorns,  
I yearn for the Mount Massis; I've lost my sleep.

The ship came from Armenia to Lebanon,

It carried the Armenians from Lebanon to Armenia.

The steamship that Stalin sent is so large,  
It slightly fits the Mediterranean.

Deliver us from the narrowness of Dardanelles,  
I yearn for my sacred soil; I've lost my sleep.

Hey caravan, dear caravan, keep going to Armenia,  
I yearn for my Homeland; I've lost my sleep.

### 19 (671).

#### THE GREAT MAN WOODROW WILSON

The Great Man Woodrow Wilson  
Couldn't solve the Armenian Case,  
Lovely mother, do not cry!

Lovely sister, do not cry!  
We shall go again  
To our ancestral land!

### 20 (672).

#### KARS AND ARDAHAN ARE OURS

Drive on, dear caravan,  
Armenia is waiting for us,  
Let the whole world know,  
Kars and Ardahan are ours.

Long may you live, Father Stalin,  
You saved us like a saint,

You wounded the hearts  
Of the Turks who dislike us.

We want them, we want them,  
Kars and Ardahan are ours,  
If they don't give them to us,  
Baghranian will take them with armed forces.

\* The Armenian word "gagatı/gagat" (summit) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard this song for the first time in 1946, in Alexandria, from my memorable father **Garnik Svazlian** (b. 1904, Kayseri) and, recalling it, I have placed it in this book.

For six centuries our whole nation  
Was prisoner to the foreigner,  
But our eyes are staring  
At Ardahan and Kars...

Kars and Ardahan will  
Soon be returned to us,  
So that we transform  
These waste lands into a paradise.

**21 (673).**

**OUR SMALL GHARABAGH**

Our small Gharabagh  
Is part of the Armenian world,

Why shall we leave it to the foreigner  
When the Armenians are native there?

**22 (674).**

**LET US TAKE IT BACK AGAIN!**

Armenian brothers, we've kept silent enough,  
We have waited enough with patience,

They have bereaved us of Gharabagh,  
Now that we've power, let's take it back again!

**23 (675).**

**COME, BROTHERS, LET US UNITE!**

The bell of my life is silent,  
There will be no prayer  
In my ruined monastery,  
Ah, where shall I go?  
There is no motherland elsewhere.

May the soil be always light upon you,  
Ah, where shall I go? There's no other motherland.

We have to remember the victims  
And the martyrs of the Armenian people,

We are Armenians and will remain Armenians,  
Come, brothers, let us unite,  
Let us take possession of  
The Van Lake, Erzroom and Gharabagh.

**24 (676).**

**OUR ANCESTRAL LANDS**

Though like a sad recollection  
The lands of our dreams  
Have slipped out of our hands,  
Similar to water-drops,  
But they are not in the least  
Unattainable dreams,  
Though our historic Lands,  
Moosh, Van and Svaz...  
Were snatched from us,  
Though they have disappeared  
From our sight like shadows,  
But they are not account tales,  
Our ancestral Lands,  
For those historic Lands  
Can never be forgotten,  
Never be reduced to ashes,  
They still exist  
And they remain,

Our ancestral Lands.  
Though today those lands are waste,  
They shall turn green and bloom again,  
Though they are deserted and gloomy today,  
They shall become village and town,  
Though today they are silent as graves,  
They shall, tomorrow, sing again  
Like an affectionate bride,  
Tomorrow dawn will break anew  
With the paschal colors of Paradise,  
Like Armash mental-temple,  
Like Marash and Ayntap,  
Like our orphans, though abandoned,  
Our ancestral Lands,  
Snatched out of our hands,  
Still exist  
And await us!

## 25 (677).

### WHERE ARE OUR ANCESTRAL LANDS?

Where is Moosh, where is Van?  
Where is Armenian Ardahan?  
Where is Ani, with – thousand churches,  
Its magnificent splendor and grace?  
Where is victorious Zeytoun  
And Sassoun, staunch and virile?  
Where is our sumptuous Adana  
And historic Tigranakert?  
Where is Kars, the Armenians' bride,  
And Narek, the effulgent sanctuary?  
Where is our heavenly Surmalou  
And edenic Taron?  
Where are Marash and Cilicia  
And Saroyan's birthplace, Bitlis?  
Where is our dreamful Yerznka,  
The prosperous city of skilled artisans?  
Where is heroic Moussa Dagh,  
Which fought battles of "life or death"  
And wove epic legends  
For forty days and nights?  
Alas! Of the old-age Armenian treasures  
Only the memory has remained,  
And, whispering these sacred names,  
Soghomon\* reached Berlin  
And killed the blood-thirsty Talaat!  
The surviving Armenians, deprived of Homeland,  
Manage to get by in the Diaspora,

Sad and silent, filled with sorrow and heartache,  
Still keeping watch over their ancestors' graves,  
They cry bitterly and feel grief  
That a foreigner now lives  
On the flourishing ancestral Armenian land.  
There is, however, hope that even belatedly  
The homeland-deprived Armenians'  
Wishful yearning will be fulfilled:  
They will ascend the Ararat summit  
And will embrace the cool mountain,  
The ice-cold babbling brooks  
And will get tipsy with the sweet fragrance  
Of the crimson rose of Aygestan,  
They will refresh themselves in the Van Lake  
And will swim in Karsachay,  
They will be enraptured with Aghtamar,  
With the Firebird and the Mount Nemrout,  
They will taste the life-giving apples of Artamet  
And will be sated with the sweet smell of the Homeland,  
They'll light candles, kneeling, at the Arakelots Church  
And pray to the Heavenly Father that, at last,  
He helped the Armenian to return to his hearth,  
The blissful day will come  
And the native country will become free,  
The refugees will come back home  
And will longingly kiss the ancestral soil!

## 26 (678).

### THE ARMENIAN'S WISH TO THE TURKISH CHILDREN

My faith announces the good tidings  
To wish my enemy well,  
And here I convey my wish  
To the Turkish children:

May you grow up as men with clear souls  
To do people good, to get ennobled,  
May you have hearts full of love  
And be wized with truth.

I do not know  
What you will become in future,  
Whatever you'll be, may you realize this wish,  
I'm quite sure: you'll become real Men.

And when you'll admit honestly  
The faults committed by your grandfathers,  
Hence righteously and magnanimously  
You'll return the Armenians' Land to the Armenians.

---

\* It refers to the national avenger, Soghomon Tehlirian.



6.

NOTATIONS OF THE HISTORICAL SONGS\*

1 (679).

AH! VASPOURAKAN

[T. 628].

Ա.խ, վաս - պու - րա - կան, տը - խուր Հա - յաս -  
տան, ան - թիվ հե - րոս - ան  
քեզ-մե զոհի - վե - ցան, ա - հեղ կըր - վի  
մեջ այն - քան ղի - մա - ցան, ի սեր  
ազ - գու-թյանն նա - հա - տակ - վե - ցան:

*Ah! Vaspourakan, sorrowful Armenia,  
Countless heroes were sacrificed,  
They resisted so long in the terrible battle  
And were martyred for the love of the nation.*

\* The recordings I have made from the survivors have been set to music by:

- The musicologist, the *Doctor of Arts, Alina Pahlevanian* - No. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 17, 18, 20;
- The musicologist, the *Doctor of Arts, Manouk Manoukian* - No. 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22;
- The musicologist, *Karo Chalikian* - No. 3, 4, 12.

The musicologist, the *Doctor of Arts, Anahit Baghdassarian* has studied the presented melodies of the popular historical songs pertaining to the Armenian Genocide and has published an article entitled: “*The popular historical songs of the Armenian Genocide from the viewpoint of the musicological features* (According to the notations of the songs contained in the book Verjiné Svazlian. The Armenian Genocide. Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors. Yerevan: “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2000, in Armenian).” “Problems of the Armenian Genocide and Historiography.” Review of the Scientific Works of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide, NAS RA. Yerevan, 2002, No. 6, pp. 94-104, in Armenian.

2 (680).

BURASI VAN'DIR

*HERE IS VAN*

[T. 448].

Բու - րա - սը վաճ - դոր, Էթ - րա -  
ֆը քաճ - դոր, գի - դեճ գել - սի -  
յօր, ա - ջաբ ան՞ հալ - դոր:

*Here is Van,  
All around is blood,  
Those who go there do not come back,  
Who knows, what's happening there.*

3 (681).

BURASI MUŞ'TUR

HERE IS MOOSH

[T. 449].

Նէճ - Գի՛, յաւ-րում, Գէճ - Գի՛, Հա -

վա - դա բու - լութ յոք՝ բու Գէ՞ դու -

ման - դըր, Բու - բա - սը Մուշ -

դըր, յո - լը յո - խուշ - դըր, Գի - դէճ Գէլ -

մի - յոր, Ա - ջապ Գէ՞ իշ - դըր

Գէճ-Գի՛, յաւ - բում, Գէճ - Գի՛...

*Sleep, my child, sleep!  
There are no clouds in the sky,  
Where has this fog come from?  
Here is Moosh,  
The road is rising up,  
Those who go there, do not come back,  
Who knows, what's going on there.  
Sleep, my child, sleep!*



5 (683).

AH! WHAT DAYS WE'RE LIVING IN

[T. 612].

Այս, ինչ օրիորդ եմ է - կել, ախ - պէր ջան  
ախ, կը ռունկ - անք է - կան,  
Մեղ-րա - գէ - տա ջուր խը-մե-ցին,  
ախ, կը-ռունկ-անք - թում թամ - բեմ կէ - անմ,  
(ը)էր-թան ա - նու - շի դրո-նք  
կը - ռունկ - անք ջան, կը - ռունկ - անք,  
Աստ-վա - ծըն օր կսի - թիք,  
էր - թաք բան - տեք պը - տը - տիք,  
իմ ա - նուշ ախ - պէր մե - կու - ճար է,

(ը)խա - բար սը բե - ռիք,  
ախ, կը - ունկ - գեր,  
ախ, կը - ունկ - գեր ջան:

*Ah! What days have come, brother;  
Ah! The cranes came, drank water from Meghraget,  
Ah! I'll bid the cranes  
To go to the doors where my sweet brother is.*

*Cranes, dear cranes,  
For God's sake,  
Call on the prisons,  
My sweet brother is my only one,  
Bring me his news, oh, cranes, oh, cranes.*

6 (684).

THE LAMENT OF ADANA

[T. 436].

Կո - տո-րածն ան - գութ, հա-յե - ռը թող  
լան, ա - նա - պատ դար - ձավ  
շը - քեղ Ա - դա - նան, կը - բակն ու սու -  
րը և ան-խիղճ թա -  
լան, Ռու-բի - նյանց տու -  
նը, ախ, ը - ռին վե - ղան:

*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 Roubinians!*

7 (685).

ALAS, SURMALOU!

[T. 655].

Ան - բախտ Ա - րա - րա - տը  
յոր սև ամ - պե - րով  
ող-բում է կո - րուս-տըր,  
քաղ - ցըր Սուր-մա - լու  
դար-ձել ես ա - վե - րակ,  
հո - ղիմ հա - վա - սար,  
Հա - յաս - տա - ցի փառք ու  
պար - ծանք, Սուր - մա - լու:  
ա - վաղ, ա - վաղ, Սուր-մա - լու,  
օձն է անս - տել բը - ցիդ  
վը - րա, Սուր - մա - լու:

*The luckless Ararat with its black clouds  
Is deploring your loss, sweet Surmalou,  
You were changed to ruins, leveled to the ground,  
You, Armenia's glory and pride, Surmalou!*

*Alas, alas, Surmalou!  
The snake is seated on your nest, Surmalou!*

8 (686).

WE ARE DRIVEN FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF ARMENIA

[T. 456].

The musical score is written in a single system with six staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are in Armenian and are placed below the notes. The lyrics are: Հա - լած - ված ենք Հա - յաս - տա - մի լեռ - ան - րեան, ո՞վ չի վախ - անք հու - բով, սու - բով մեռ - ան - լեռ, դար ու սա - րեր ան - ցանք, դա - դար չու - ան - ցանք, դի - սկ - ան - րեան ան - ցանք, ար - ցունք չու - ան - ցանք

*We are driven from the mountains of Armenia,  
Who doesn't fear of dying with fire and sword?  
We crossed hills and mountains, we had no rest,  
We passed through corpses, we had no tears.*

9 (687).

WE ARE GOING TO DER-ZOR IN TEARS

[T. 459].

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three staves of music in a 3/8 time signature, with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The lyrics are written in Armenian and are placed below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: 'Դեր Զոր կերթանք լա - լա - գին ցա - վե -'. The second staff contains: 'րուն մեջ մը - տա - ցը - թիվ, չը - կա լույս մը, որ բաց -'. The third staff contains: 'վի ճամփուն վը - ռա ա - վա - գի:'.

*We are going to Der-Zor in tears,  
Our condition is lamentable,  
There is not a spark of hope to glow  
On this road of sand.*

10 (688).

DER ZOR'UN İÇİNDE NANELER BİTER  
MINT HAS GROWN IN THE DESERT OF DER-ZOR

[T. 475].

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/8 time signature. The melody begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked '(2+3+3)'. The lyrics are written in Armenian script below the notes. The score consists of seven lines of music with corresponding lyrics. The final line of music ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Դեր Զօ-րուն ի - չին - դէ ան - գէ - լեր բի-թեր,  
օլ - մնշ - լէ-րին քօ - քու - սու դին-յա - յա յէ - թեր,  
քու սիր - գուն - լիք բի - գէ օ - լիւմ-դէն բէ - թեր,  
դի - ան - ան ուղ - րու - ան օ - լէն էր - մէ - ան,  
ա - մա - ան, յա - ման, հա - լը - մըզ յա - ման,  
Դեր Զօր չօլ-լին - դէ - դէ քալ - դը - դըմ գա - ման:

*Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor,  
The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,  
This exile is worse than death for us,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
Alas! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.*

11 (689).

SABAHTAN KALKTIM, GÜNEŞ PARLIYOR

*I GOT UP IN THE MORNING; THE SUN WAS SHINING*

[T. 488].

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 9/8 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written in Armenian and are aligned with the notes on the staves.

Սա-բախ-դան քալ - քը-թըս՝ գն-նէշ փառ-լը - յօր,  
օս-ման-լը աւ - քէ - ըի սի - լան յաղ - լը յօր,  
էր - մէ - ցի - յէ բաք-դըս՝ յա - ման աղ - լը - յօր,  
դի-ցի ցիս ուղ - ըու - ան օ - լէն էր - մէ - ցի:

*I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

12 (690).

FROM THE SAINT-CROSS CHURCH OF VARAG

[T. 558].

Վա-րա-գա Սուրբ Խա - չից բե-րեք եմ ձեզ  
սուր. Խրդ-ճա-ցեք հայ ազ - գի՛ն՝  
տը-վե - քը մեչ - մեչ սուր, Խրդ-ճա - ցեք հայ  
ազ - գի՛ն՝ տը-վե - քը մեչ - մեչ սուր:

*From the Saint-Cross Church of Varag  
I have brought news for you,  
Have pity on the Armenian nation  
And give everyone a sword!  
Have pity on the Armenian nation  
And give everyone a sword!*

13 (691).

OUR MOUSSADAGHIANS ARE ALL HEROES

[T. 636].



Մեր մու-սա - լեռ - ցիք լը - թիվ հե - թու - են,  
վա - խըն ինչ բան է՝ եր - բեք չը - գի - տեն,  
ի - բար ան - յե - լով կը - քա - ջա - լեր վե՛ն,  
քա - նի որ ու - նեն քե - գի, Մու - սա՛ լեռ:  
Հա՛յ մու - սա - լեռ - ցիք, ջան, մու - սա - լեռ - ցիք,  
հայ - ոց պա - տի - վը բար - ձըր պա - հե - ցիք:

*Our Moussadaghians are all heroes,  
They are encouraged looking at each other,  
They never know the meaning of fear,  
Since they have you, Moussa Dagh.  
Hey, Moussadaghians, dear ones,  
We kept high the Armenians' honor.*

14 (692).

ADUR PAŞA

ADOUR PASHA

[T. 641].

Ա-դուր փա-շա քալք սա - նա, չամ չը - րա - յը յաք սա - նա,  
թհորք-լէր հիւ-ջիւմ է - դի - յօր կա - մա - վոր-լար արշ է - դին:

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

15 (693).

YAŞA, MANUK ÇAVUŞ!

*LONG LIVE, MANOUK CHAVOUSH!*

[T. 642].

Նա - սիր օլ - սուն սէ - լա - սէ - թէ, վա - ռըր - սա - նըզ  
սէս - լէ - քէ - թէ, Մա - նուկ չա - ուշ շէ - հիթ դուշ - թու  
1. լա - շա՛ վա - թան, լա - շա՛ միլ - լէթ, 2. լա - շա միլ - լէթ:

*May you be destined to see salvation  
And you reach the native land,  
Manouk Chavoush fell and was martyred,  
Long live our motherland, long live our people, long live our people!*

16 (694).

THE AEROPLANE CAME WITH A GREAT NEWS

[T. 648].

The musical score is written on seven staves in a single system. The key signature has four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is written in a soprano clef. The lyrics are in Armenian and are placed below the notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and repeat signs.

O - դա-նալն է - կալ մեծ ա - վե - տի- սով, մեր սրբ-տեր լոց  
վան ու - թախ հույ - սե- թով, թա - փա - ռին բո - լոր  
մար - տիկ - ներն ան - զեն, ա - նոք հո - գի - ով  
թուրք ջար - դել կու - զեն, թա - փա - ռին բո - լոր  
մա - տիկ ներն ան - զեն, ա - նոք  
հո - գի - ով թուրք ջար - դել կու - զեն:

*The aeroplane came with a great news,  
Our hearts were filled with joyful hopes,  
All the fighters wandered unarmed,  
They wanted to kill the Turks with all their soul.  
All the fighters wandered unarmed,  
They wanted to kill the Turks with all their soul.*

17 (695).

YOU, BRAVE LAD OF HADJN!

[T. 649].

The musical score consists of four staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and includes a time signature change to 2/4. The third and fourth staves continue the melody, with the fourth staff ending with a double bar line. The lyrics are in Armenian and describe a battle scene.

Ե - թեք հա - թու հայ քա - ջե - թով,  
բո - լոր զին - ված մո - սին - ան - թով,  
Դո-ղան բե - յին մենք ջարդ տա - լով,  
Հա-ճըն ին - կավ՝ «Վրե՛ծ» գո - ռա - լով:

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

18 (696).

ARE WE NOW?

[T. 615].

Հըմ - լա մենք ինգլի - զից պա - կա՞ս ենք, հըմ - լա  
մենք ֆրանկ-սու-զից պա-կաս ենք, հո - ղի՞ մեզ չեն ի - տա ալ - տո-  
նո - միս, հավ-քենք մեր չու-փա-լաս, էր-թանք Ա-մըրր-կա:

*Are we now inferior to the English?  
Are we now inferior to the French?  
Why don't they give us autonomy?  
Let's collect our garments and go to America.*

19 (697).

A BLACK BIRD PASSED ABOVE THE ORPHANAGE

[T. 618].

The musical score is written on four staves in a single system. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is written in a soprano clef. The lyrics are in Armenian and are aligned with the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the melody and lyrics. The second staff contains the second line. The third and fourth staves each contain a first and second ending for the final line of the piece.

Որ - բա - նո - ցին վը - րա - յեմ սև ղուշ  
մը ան - ցալ: Հայ որ - բե - թուն օ -  
րե - թը սե - վե - թով ան - ցալ,  
րե - թը սե - վե - թով ան - ցալ:

*A black bird passed above the orphanage,  
The days of the Armenian orphans passed gloomily.  
The days of the Armenian orphans passed gloomily.*

20 (698).

THE ROAD TO AMERICA

[T. 613].

Ա - մըր - կու ճամ - փեմ եր - կար ու դուզ  
է, Ա - մըր - կան կայ - նե, մայ - ռիկ ջան,  
որ - բե - ռը կու - զէ: Չեմ գա, չեմ եր -  
հո - ռից հո - ռից գա, չեմ եր - թա, -  
լը ղարդ ու թա - լա է,  
մո-րից բաժ-նը-վե - լը, հո - գի ջան, գու-լում - կը - թակ է:

*The road to America is long and straight,  
America stood up, dear mother, and claimed the orphans,  
I won't come, I won't go,  
I won't come, I won't go,  
To quit one's father is grief and peril,  
To quit one's mother, sweet-heart, is a cruel suffering.*

21 (699).

OUR BELOVED, BEAUTIFUL ANTELIAS

[T. 626].

Ծառտ վայ - րե - րեմ մեք հոս բեր - ված  
մեծ ըն - տա - միք մըն եմք կազ - մած,  
մեր տունն է Ան - թիլ - իսս, գե - դե - ցիկ Ան - թիլ -  
իսս, ալ չի - կա Խար - բերդ կամ թե կե - սար -  
իս, Մա - բաշ ու Ա - դա - նա, Տար - սոն կամ թե Թա -  
լաս, այլ՝ մեր շատ սի - րե - լի գե - դե - ցիկ Ան - թիլ - իսս:

*Brought here from various places,  
We have formed a large family,  
Our home is Antelias,  
Beautiful Antelias.*

*There is no more Harpoot or Kayseri,  
Marash and Adana, Tarson or Talas,  
But there is our beloved, beautiful Antelias.*

22 (700).

I YEARN FOR MY HOMELAND

[T. 670].

Ա՛յ քա - րա - վան, ջա՛ն քա - րա - վան, քը - շի՛ր  
քո ճամ - փան, կա - րոտ - ցեղ եմ հայ - րե -  
նի - քիս, քու - նըս չի տա - նիր, կա - րոտ -  
ցեղ եմ հայ - րե - նի - քիս, քու - նըս չի տա - նիր:

*Hey caravan, dear caravan, keep going your way,  
I yearn for my Homeland; I've lost my sleep.  
I yearn for my Homeland; I've lost my sleep.*





VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN

## **THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS**

*(Summary)*

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 1915-1923, 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.

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, I, a student at the Yerevan Khachatour Abovian Pedagogical University, began to write down the testimonies of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide. 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 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, and, from 1996, also of the Museum-

Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic 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 audio- and video-recorded), deciphered and studied the bewildering memoirs, the impressive stories and the diverse historical songs, which they narrated and sang. The originals of all the popular materials are kept at the archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of NAS RA.

These popular testimonies have been presented in my numerous publications and especially in the voluminous edition *“Hayots Tseghaspanutiun. Akanates verapoghneri vkayutiunner”* [*“The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors”*] (Yerevan, “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2000, 500 p., in Armenian), whose English translation is the present volume with some additions.

The present book is composed of two parts:

a) *Academic study*, where the genre and typological peculiarities of the popular testimonies are elucidated; in addition, the whole course of the Armenian Genocide is presented, completed and substantiated with popular memoirs and songs of historical nature (in Armenian and Turkish languages).

b) *Primary source originals* (700 units), which include the Memoir-Testimonies communicated by the eyewitness survivors, historical Narrative-Testimonies, Song-Testimonies and Notations of Songs.

The volume is provided also with a Documentary-informative table about the eyewitness survivors and about the popular materials communicated by them, as well as the Photographs of the survivors, Summaries in different languages, a Glossary, Commentaries, Indexes: Thematic Index, Index of Personal Names, Toponymic and Ethnonymic Indexes, and a Map, giving an idea about the deportation and the genocide of the Armenians realized in the Ottoman Empire.

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 1915-1923, 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 Eastern 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 Kharbert, Nor Sebastia, Nor Malatia, Nor Kessaria, Nor Hadjn, Nor Marash, Nor Ayntap, Nor Moussa Ler (Dagh), Nor Yedessia (Urfa)), as well as in Edjmiadsin (now: Vagharshapat), 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 more than 55 years, owing to my consistent quests in the various regions of Armenia, as well as during my short-term personal or scientific trips to Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Greece, France, Canada, 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 inhumanely 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** (315 units) 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 (Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Meskené, Surudj...), 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 Yedessia (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 Yekarian from Van, the Great Mourad [Hambardzoum Boyadjian], Yessayi Yaghoubian from Moussa Dagh, Mkrtich Yotneghbayrian from Yedessia, Adour Levonian from Ayntap, Aram Cholakian from Zeytoun, the national avenger Soghomon Tehlirian), and numerous other well-known and unknown Armenians, who struggled against violence shoulder to shoulder with the popular masses, who were martyred, who often warded off the danger and survived.

In the present study, the true historical facts have been assembled, detailed and supplemented with the authentic testimonies communicated by the eyewitness survivors, representing, thus, the general historical course of the Armenian Genocide.

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

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 and German.

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.

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.

The Jews, the Greeks, the Gypsies and the other aggrieved nations also have a similar historical memory. [Porter, Jack Nusan, ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 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 on the Internet memoirs and Turkish-language 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, “Gitoutyoum” Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999, as well as the Site: <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html>) 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 [the works of] 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 memoir-testimony] *firsthand* (the highlighting is mine – V. S.). ...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 present collection of memoirs and songs I have written down, recorded, studied and published on my own initiative are increasing with every passing day, following their publication in Armenia [Svazlian 2000], and that is an interminable process, inasmuch as every Armenian has his family grief and losses. Besides, there are countless testimonies (in different dialects, in different languages, 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 20th century, has been directly perceived by the senses of the eyewitnesses and it *has been indelibly impressed in their memory*.

The eyewitness survivors of those historical events, dolefully reliving their sad past, have transmitted to me 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 Armenian people, 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*.

**Hrant Gasparian** (b. 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.” [T.<sup>1</sup> 13]

*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 me 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 94-year-old Zeytouni of proud bearing, **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 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.*” [T. 254]

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** (b. 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.*” [T. 97] *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 more than 95 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 narratives** (70 units). These historical narratives have been written down not only from the eyewitness survivors, but also from the subsequent generations as testimonial evidences of the fact that *the 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** (315 units) communicated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, which also form an inseparable part of the

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<sup>1</sup> T. – Testimony.

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 massacre of the Armenians organized by the government of Young Turks, as well as other factual, affecting and impressive episodes, bold sentiments of protest and of rightful claim.

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 Moosh, **Shogher Tonoyan** (b. 1901), which she communicated me 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...” [T. 437]*

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 massacre of the Armenians. 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 the Turkish army. And the men have created songs, where they have described that the Armenian soldiers 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 Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Meskené, Surudj and other deserts. Both in the memoirs and the songs communicated by the eyewitness survivors, the latter have described the roads they have passed through, 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 self-defense, struggles and battles, composed mostly by men are also presented (“**Patriotic and heroic battle songs**”). And finally, songs of the appropriated Motherland, reassuring songs to regain the lost native land are likewise included (“**Songs of the occupied Homeland and of the rightful claim**”). These various historical songs are presented, whenever possible, along with the notations of their melodies.

With their originality and ideological contents, these historical songs are not only novelties in the field of Folklore and Genocide Studies, but they also provide the possibility for comprehending, in a new fashion, the given historical period, the circumstances and the details of the implementation of the Armenian Genocide.

Consequently, having been created under the immediate impression of these historical events, *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 of different sex-age groups, 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 modifications, *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 eyewitness survivors that it was impossible to mention the names and surnames of all of them. Hence, I have only put the names of those survivors, who have communicated me the main variants, in the table of documentary commentaries of this volume, mentioning the name, surname, date and place of birth of the eyewitness survivor, who communicated the given song (or memoir), as well as the time, place, language and character (handwritten, audio- and video-recordings) of the recorded material and its number in the archival fund (according to Dr. Prof. Isidor Levin's Scientific Method of Documentation of Popular Materials).

The eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide (men or women) have recalled with a bursting emotion and tearful sobs the popular songs, since they are directly connected with the survivors' historical memory. This circumstance explains the distinctive peculiarities of the popular historical songs.

The diverse variants of those popular songs, in addition to their historical veracity, are distinguished by their concise figurativeness, by the subtle or the emotive 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.

*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 the Ottoman Empire 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 mother tongue..." [Galoustian, Grigor. *Marash kam Germanik ev heros Zeytoun [Marash or Germanik and Hero Zeytoun]*. New York, 1934, p. 698, in Armenian] 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, Gevorg. *Patmutyun Antepi hayots [History of the Armenians of Ayntap]*. Vol. A. Los Angeles, 1953, p. 5, in Armenian]

The ethnographer-folklorist Sargis Haykouni, living at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th 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, Sargis. *Nshkharner. Korads u moratsvads hayer. Trapizoni hay-mahmedakan gyughern u nrants avandutyunnere [Relics. Lost and Forgotten Armenians. The Armenian-Mohammedan Villages of Trapizon and Their Customs]*. "Ararat." Vagharshapat, 1895, p. 297, in Armenian]

There are numerous testimonies in the popular memoirs I have recorded, stating that the Armenians living in Sis, Adana, Tarson, Ayntap, Kyotahia, Bursa, Kayseri, Eskishehir and other localities were mainly Turkish-speaking. According to the testimony of **Mikayel Keshishian** (b. 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." [T. 241]

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

*“They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,  
Ah, alas!  
They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,  
Ah, alas!”* [T. 446]

The school-mistress had deserved that punishment, since she 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 songs narrating about the slaughter and massacre of the Armenians have been woven on the roads of exile to Deir-el-Zor, and, since it was prohibited to speak Armenian, the Armenians have expressed their sorrow and affliction in the enemy’s language, in Turkish.

*“Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağlıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!” [T. 488]

Or:

*“Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesaba,  
Osmanlı efratı 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!” [T. 467]

Armenians were dying “for the sake of faith” in order not to betray their Christian fate and national identity. A 90-year-old survivor, an inhabitant of Istanbul, **Sirena Alajajian** (b. 1910), from Adabazar, was four years old when the Turks murdered her father and her mother. The Arab desert inhabitants took care of the parentless child. After four years, following the Armistice in 1918, when the orphan-collectors were gathering the Armenian orphan children in the deserts, they saw an eight-year-old little girl with curly blond hair and blue eyes, her face tattooed with blue ink, and bearing an Arabic name. Undoubtedly, she was Armenian. Although she had forgotten her Armenian speech, but she had not forgotten to cross herself as a Christian, and that was the proof that she was an Armenian-Christian. Thus, little Sirena was taken to the Armenian orphanage. [T. 225]

The eyewitness survivors deported from more than 150 localities have not only told me what they had seen and felt, but they have also come to certain political conclusions, as the survivor from Ayntap, **Pargev Makarian** (b. 1915), who communicated me: “...*The Great Powers deceived the Armenians; they gave Cilicia to the Turks. The Armenians of Zeytoun, Adana, Sis, Marash, Kilis, Ayntap, Yedessia, 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 provoked the disaster of Izmir; the Armenians and the Greeks escaped through the flames, threw themselves into the sea; all those, who were saved, went to other countries. Thus, the Turks “cleaned” Turkey of Christians. Turkey, along with Western Armenia and Cilicia, remained to the Turks.*” [T. 272]

Or **Hakob Holobikian** (b. 1902), from Harpoot, has concluded, after describing in detail the afflictions he and his compatriots had suffered: “...*This crime committed by the Young Turks will never be forgotten and should never be forgiven!*” [T. 115]

Whereas, the Turkish propaganda and official historiography of today are not sparing efforts to distort the true historical evidences, with a view to carefully concealing from the coming generations the Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Young Turk government. They are trying to sidestep the historical truth that the Turkish authorities themselves undertook, from the beginning of 1919, the organization of the trial of the Young Turk criminals, by condemning them to death. 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 1st of August, 1926) also condemned the criminals: “These left-overs from the former Young Turkey Party, who should have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven on masse from their homes and massacred...” [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations*. Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, p. 13]

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

Unfortunately, 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 20th 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.

Genocide is a political massive crime and it should not go unpunished, but it should be juridically elucidated also on the basis of the testimonies of eyewitness survivors. And **the greatest witness is the People**, who, painfully reliving, have narrated and continue to narrate and testify to 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 judgment of mankind.

It is time, therefore, that the present government of the Republic of Turkey, too, has the courage not only of recognizing the obvious historical truth, which has been substantiated by written and oral evidences and is not in need of any further proof, but also of condemning the accomplished fact and of compensating the Armenian people for the moral, material and territorial losses of the tragic historical event, which is called **the Armenian Genocide**.







VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN

## **LE GENOCIDE ARMENIEN: TEMOIGNAGES DES SURVIVANTS**

*(Résumé)*

Le génocide arménien, en tant que crime politique international dirigé contre toute l'humanité, est devenu par une cruelle nécessité historique une partie intégrante de l'identité, de la mentalité et de la conscience du peuple arménien.

Avec le passage du temps, l'intérêt à l'égard du génocide arménien ne cesse de grandir et son résultat est la reconnaissance officielle de ce fait historique par de nombreux pays au cours de ces dernières années. Toutefois, les historiens turcs et pro-turcs continuent à ce jour à faire le possible pour altérer la réalité des faits historiques survenus entre 1915 et 1923 et devenus fatals pour le peuple arménien.

De nombreuses études, des recueils de documents, des déclarations de politologues et d'hommes publics, des œuvres littéraires de divers genres consacrés au génocide arménien sont publiés en différentes langues. Toutefois, la voix du peuple manque dans cette immense littérature; on n'y trouve pas les témoignages communiqués par les témoins oculaires survivants, ni les chants populaires composés sous l'impression immédiate des événements historiques susmentionnés, alors que ces témoignages présentent une valeur importante comme sources historiques et documentaires. C'est le peuple arménien qui a subi ces souffrances inimaginables, c'est lui qui a fait l'objet de ce crime politique massif. Comme les dépositions des témoins oculaires sont d'une importance décisive pour l'issue de toute enquête, dans ce cas aussi, il faut prendre en considération les témoignages portés par les survivants qui ont une valeur de preuves juridiques pour la solution équitable de la Cause arménienne et la reconnaissance du génocide arménien.

C'est avec la profonde conscience de tout cela que dès 1955, alors qu'en Arménie Soviétique il n'était pas permis de parler ouvertement du génocide arménien, alors que les témoins oculaires rescapés du génocide et rapatriés vivaient dans la crainte d'être injustement accusés et exilés, nous, à cette époque encore étudiante de l'Université pédagogique Khatchatour Abovian d'Erevan, méprisant toute difficulté et ayant pleinement conscience de la valeur historique et documentaire de ce genre de témoignages, nous avons réalisé ce travail parallèlement à nos autres recherches scientifiques, d'abord sur notre propre initiative et notre vocation d'Arménienne occidentale, puis dès 1960, avec le soutien de l'Institut d'Archéologie et d'Ethnographie de l'Académie des sciences d'Arménie et, à partir de 1996, sous l'égide du Musée-Institut du Génocide Arménien de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences

d'Arménie. Nous avons cherché et trouvé les survivants rescapés par miracle du génocide en allant à pied de quartier en quartier, de village en village sous le soleil brûlant d'été ou par le froid glacial d'hiver, nous avons essayé de gagner leur confiance par une approche pleine de tact, psychologique, sans détourner leur attention par des questions déplacées, mais leur laissant la possibilité de s'exprimer librement et de raconter spontanément leurs impressions. Nous avons inscrit, enregistré sur cassette audio ou vidéo, déchiffré et étudié leurs horribles récits, leurs impressionnants souvenirs et leurs chants historiques de divers contenus dont les originaux sont conservés dans les archives du Musée-Institut du Génocide Arménien de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences de la République d'Arménie.

Ces témoignages populaires ont été publiés dans un certain nombre de nos ouvrages et surtout dans le volumineux recueil intitulé «*Le Génocide Arménien: Témoignages des Survivants*» (Erevan, Editions «Guitoutiun» ANS RA, 2000, 500 pages, en arménien) dont le présent ouvrage est la traduction anglaise complétée.

Le livre est composé de deux parties:

a) *Recherche scientifique* qui élucide les particularités génériques et typologiques des témoignages populaires et présente tout le déroulement du génocide arménien, complété et argumenté par les souvenirs des rescapés et les chants de caractère historique (en arménien et en turc). Cette étude est unique en son genre en Arménie comme dans la diaspora.

b) *Textes originaux* (700 unités). Mémoires-témoignages oraux des témoins oculaires rescapés du génocide, Narrations-témoignages des générations suivantes, Chants-témoignages historiques, Notations des chants.

Le volume contient également une table de données documentaires concernant les témoins oculaires rescapés et les sujets populaires qu'ils ont communiqués, ainsi que les photographies des rescapés, des résumés en différentes langues, un glossaire, des commentaires, des index thématiques, de noms propres, de toponymes, d'ethnonymes, ainsi qu'une carte montrant les routes de la déportation et du génocide arménien perpétré dans l'Empire ottoman.

**Les témoins oculaires** survivants qui ont communiqué ces sujets sont principalement les représentants de la génération aînée des Arméniens délocalisés de force de leurs lieux d'habitation natals, déportés au cours du génocide arménien entre 1915 et 1923 des provinces peuplées d'Arméniens de l'Arménie Occidentale, de la Cilicie (1921), de l'Anatolie et de l'Asie Mineure (la catastrophe d'Izmir de 1922).

Le déroulement de ces faits historiques a causé l'extermination inhumaine d'une partie considérable des Arméniens occidentaux (plus de 1,5 millions), alors que ceux qui ont survécu sur les routes de la déportation, volés, pillés, ayant subi les pires privations et laissé derrière eux d'innombrables victimes, sont finalement arrivés en Arménie Orientale ou se sont dispersés à travers le monde dans différents pays. Par la suite, une partie de ces survivants, venant de Turquie, de Grèce, de France, de Syrie, du Liban, d'Égypte, d'Iraq, des pays balkaniques, des États-Unis d'Amérique et d'ailleurs, se sont rapatriés en Arménie Orientale et se sont installés aux environs d'Erevan, dans des quartiers nouvellement construits portant le nom de leurs villes et villages d'origine (Aygestan, Sari Tagh, Nor (Nouvelle) Boutania, Nor Arech, Nor Kilikia, Nor Arabkir, Nor Zeytoun, Nor Kharberd, Nor Sébastia, Nor Malatia, Nor Kessaria, Nor Hadjn, Nor Marach, Nor Ayntap, Nor Moussa-Dagh, Nor Edessia), ainsi qu'à Etchmiadzine, Hoktembérian (actuel Armavir), Ararat, Taline, Hrazdan, Léninakan (actuel Gumri), Kirovakan (actuel Vanadzor) et ailleurs.

Lors de nos rencontres, nous avons toujours trouvé les témoins oculaires survivants, rescapés par miracle du génocide, silencieux et réservés, plongés dans leurs réflexions. Ce silence solennel n'était pas sans cause, puisque pendant des décennies les restrictions politiques régnant en Union Soviétique ne leur permettaient pas de parler librement et sans crainte de leur passé. Par conséquent, c'est avec grande difficulté que nous avons découvert et inscrit ces témoignages.

Pendant plus de 55 ans, nos recherches obstinées, tant dans les différents districts d'Arménie qu'en Syrie, au Liban, en Egypte, en Grèce, en France, au Canada, aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique et en Turquie au cours de nos voyages accomplis à titre personnel ou au cours de nos courtes missions comme membre de divers symposiums, nous ont fait découvrir les survivants rescapés du génocide arménien, représentants des générations aînée, moyenne et cadette, dont nous avons fait la connaissance pour les convaincre à nous faire leurs confidences.

Finalement, accédant à nos prières, non sans une violente émotion, ils remémoraient leur triste passé et commençaient leurs récits mêlés de larmes et entrecoupés de sanglots, parlant de leur délocalisation forcée, des gendarmes jeunes-turcs qui les contraignaient à quitter leurs foyers ancestraux, leurs maisons, pour marcher sur les routes interminables de l'exil, voir cruellement tuer sous leurs yeux leurs parents et leurs proches, déshonorer leurs mères et leurs sœurs, écraser sous les pierres les bébés nouveau-nés...

**Les mémoires orales** (315 unités) incluant divers sujets communiquées par les témoins oculaires racontent la beauté de la nature du pays natal, les mœurs patriarcales et les coutumes de la vie quotidienne, l'époque où ils ont vécu: les conditions sociales et politiques, les importants événements historiques, les cruautés perpétrées par les chefs du gouvernement des Jeunes Turcs (Talat, Enver, Djémal, Nazym, Behaeddin Chakir...) et leurs exactions (imposition exagérée, recrutement forcé, confiscation d'armes dans le but de laisser les Arméniens sans défense, autodafé, déportation, pogromes, massacres), la délocalisation obligatoire vers les déserts de la Mésopotamie (Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Raqqa, Meskéné, Souroudj...), les souffrances indescriptibles des Arméniens (marche jusqu'à l'épuisement, faim, soif, épidémies, horreur de la mort...), ainsi que le juste et noble combat héroïquement livré par différents groupes d'Arméniens occidentaux contre la violence, afin de défendre leur droit élémentaire d'existence (la lutte héroïque de Van en 1915, l'autodéfense de Chatakh, de Chapine-Karahissar, de Sassoun, les courageux combats livrés par les habitants de Moussa-Dagh, d'Urfa (Edesse) et, un peu plus tard, en 1920-1921, d'Ayntap et de Hadjn). Ils parlent des héros nationaux de ces combats (Andranik Ozanian de Chapine-Karahissar, Arménak Ekarian de Van, le grand Mourad [Hambartsoum Boyadjian], Essaïe Yaghoubian de Moussa-Dagh, Mekertitch Yotnéghbayrian d'Urfa, Adour Lévonian d'Ayntap, Aram Tcholakian de Zeytoun, Soghomon Teylirian, vengeur national) et bien d'autres héros connus et inconnus qui combattaient contre la violence à la tête des masses populaires et tombaient martyrs ou résistaient et survivaient.

Les faits historiques authentiques narrés dans cette étude sont comparés, détaillés et complétés par les témoignages des survivants, afin de présenter le déroulement historique général du génocide arménien.

Les mémoires orales communiquées par les témoins oculaires rescapés du génocide ont donné la possibilité de soumettre à une recherche scientifique les particularités génériques et typologiques de ces sujets.

Chacun des survivants a raconté ses souvenirs dans son langage, son parler natal, souvent dans son dialecte ou un arménien mêlé de mots étrangers, ou encore en langues turque, arabe, kurde, anglaise, française, allemande.

Les mémoires orales communiquées par les témoins oculaires rescapés du génocide, comme variété de la tradition orale populaire, sont soit brèves et laconiques, soit longues et prolixes; elles contiennent aussi divers dialogues et interpolations; les narrateurs ont eu recours à différents genres de la tradition orale (chant, poème épique, entretien, fable, expression, maxime, bénédiction, malédiction, diffamation, prière, serment), destinés à confirmer la véracité du récit, à rendre leurs paroles plus impressionnantes et dignes de foi, d'autant plus que **les survivants étaient eux-mêmes conscients de leur devoir et de leur responsabilité morale quant à l'authenticité de leur récit. Beaucoup d'entre eux faisaient le signe de la croix avant de communiquer leurs souvenirs ou prêtaient serment.** Et le serment est sacré, il vient du cœur et n'admet pas le mensonge.

Soumettant les mémoires narrées et les chants historiques communiqués par les survivants à une analyse quantitative et qualitative, nous avons réussi à établir que de même qu'il n'y a pas d'homme sans mémoire, **il n'y a pas de peuple sans mémoire**, car la mémoire est la vie même de l'homme ou du peuple, les années vécues, son

passé et son histoire.

Les Juifs, les Grecs, les Gitans et les autres peuples persécutés ont une mémoire collective analogue. [Porter, Jack Nusan. ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 1982] Mais tout autre peuple, dans ce cas le peuple turc, s'il n'a rien de pareil dans sa mémoire collective, c'est qu'il n'a rien vécu de semblable et n'a pas subi de souffrances comparables. Il est bon de citer ici quelques passages de l'interview intitulée «Counterattack in the Virtual World» («*Contre-attaque dans le monde virtuel*»), donnée par Babour Ozden, fondateur des serveurs turcs «Superonline» et «Ixi», où il note que les Arméniens ont mis sur Internet les souvenirs communiqués par les témoins oculaires rescapés du génocide et des chants de caractère historique en langue turque (il s'agit entre autres de notre livre: V. Svazlian. "*The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors*." Yerevan, "Gitoutyoun" Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999, ainsi que le site: <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html>) et il ajoute: «...Je trouve que les «sites du génocide» dans la réalité virtuelle sont le monopole des Arméniens, alors qu'il n'y a pas une seule page turque consacrée à ce sujet. ...C'est une question d'organisation. ...Nous devons être bien organisés. La Turquie ne l'est pas. ...Néanmoins, il est très difficile de trouver dans notre culture ce genre de récits [histoires des survivants]. Nous sommes dans une situation culturelle défavorable, rapport au manque d'individualisation. ...Eux [les Arméniens] ont besoin de mythes pour créer une relation entre leur culture et leur passé. ...Nous [les Turcs], nous n'avons pas besoin de ce genre de relation. Nous voulons oublier le passé et aller de l'avant. Nos familles se sont mêlées. Tout ce qui s'est écrit [dans le passé] l'était à l'aide d'un alphabet différent. Et nous ne pouvons pas lire [les histoires des survivants]. Je ne suis pas capable de lire les notes de mon grand-père. Seul pourrait les lire celui qui connaît le turc ancien [l'ottoman]. ...Il n'est pas utile de mettre des professeurs [et] des historiens sur l'Internet. Les archives n'impressionnent pas les gens. ...Les gens ne sont pas impressionnés par les histoires de leurs semblables dont les parents ont été exterminés [ou] dispersés. Ils sont impressionnés lorsqu'ils entendent ces histoires de *sources premières* (souligné par nous – V. S.). ...Les Arméniens ont des pages de «chants du génocide» même en turc et en anglais». («Milliyet», 28.01.2001, p. 19)

Il est à noter que les sujets de ce recueil des témoignages et des chants, que nous avons inscrits, enregistrés sur cassettes audio et vidéo, étudiés et publiés sur notre propre initiative [Svazlian 2000] et qui représentent la mémoire collective du peuple arménien, ne cessent de se multiplier après avoir été publiés et c'est un processus interminable, car chaque famille arménienne a sa douleur et ses pertes. En outre, dans différents pays du monde, là où se sont réfugiés les milliers d'Arméniens occidentaux dispersés après le génocide, il y a encore d'innombrables témoignages (en différents dialectes, en différentes langues, manuscrits ou enregistrés sur cassettes), se trouvant chez des particuliers ou conservés dans les archives. Et ceux-ci aussi doivent être déchiffrés, étudiés, publiés et mis à la disposition des chercheurs, en tant que documents historiques de la mémoire collective du peuple arménien sur le génocide.

Les survivants sont les victimes directes du *génocide arménien*, perpétré au début du XXe siècle, et ces événements ont laissé *une trace indélébile dans leur mémoire*.

Les survivants, témoins oculaires de ces événements historiques, revivant avec douleur leur triste passé, nous ont communiqué leurs souvenirs personnels sur leur pays natal, leur foyer familial et leurs proches, hélas, disparus depuis longtemps. Ils ont porté ces souvenirs comme un fardeau pendant toute leur vie, sans pouvoir se libérer de cet obsédant cauchemar. Et comme les souvenirs narrés par les survivants retracent leurs impressions immédiates des événements historiques sans précédent tombés en partage aux Arméniens occidentaux, ils sont pénétrés d'un *profond caractère historique*.

Reproduisant objectivement la vie, les mœurs, les coutumes, ainsi que les relations sociales et politiques de l'époque, *les souvenirs rapportés par les survivants sont spontanés, véridiques, documentaires et ils ont la valeur de témoignages dignes de foi*.

**Hrant Gasparian** (né en 1908), originaire de Mouch, a souligné spécialement cette circonstance en déclarant à la fin de sa narration: «...*Je ne vous ai raconté que ce que j'ai vu de mes propres yeux. Et j'ai encore ces choses devant les yeux. Nous n'avons rien emporté de Khnous, nous n'avons fait que nous sauver. Notre parenté comptait 143 personnes et les seuls à survivre ont été ma sœur, mon frère, ma mère et moi.*» [Tém.<sup>1</sup> 13]

Comme au cours de toute leur vie suivante les survivants ressassent un par un leurs souvenirs et les analysent point par point, **leurs témoignages, comparés aux faits historiques, ne laissent place à aucun doute.** Dans leurs mémoires orales, ils mentionnent presque toujours les chefs de leur famille, leur grand-père, leur grand-mère, leurs parents, leurs proches, les autres membres de leur famille, précisant souvent leurs prénoms et leur date de naissance. Les données communiquées sont tellement dignes de foi que parfois les membres d'une même famille, qui se sont perdus dans le tohu-bohu de la déportation et du génocide, bien des années plus tard, ayant lu les souvenirs réunis dans notre livre, se sont retrouvés d'un continent à l'autre et nous ont ensuite exprimé leur reconnaissance.

**Le personnage principal** de la narration **est la personnalité du narrateur** qui non seulement parle des principaux événements historiques, des faits et des gens, mais donne son interprétation, manifestant ainsi les particularités de sa conception du monde et de son individualité, l'originalité de son point de vue, le langage et le style qui lui sont propres. Par conséquent, **les mémoires narrées par les survivants sont originales et uniques en leur genre.** C'est la biographie de chacun de ces narrateurs avec son interprétation du passé et même si ces mémoires sont racontées plusieurs fois, leur contenu fondamental reste presque invariable, **car ce récit a la valeur d'une confession sacrée.** Et nous, avec toute la responsabilité professionnelle qui incombe à l'ethnologue et au sociologue, nous sommes restée fidèle à leur récit oral et nous avons enregistré leur narration mot à mot, en ayant bien conscience qu'ils nous confiaient leur secret intime **pour qu'il soit transmis aux générations futures.** Là, il y a lieu de citer les paroles de **Karapet Tozlian**, âgé de 94 ans (né en 1903), vieillard ayant conservé l'allure fière des originaires de Zeytoun. Bien qu'illettré, «chaque nuit, avant de céder au sommeil», il a chuchoté tout bas «comme une prière» ses souvenirs et les chants qu'il avaient entendus pour ne pas les oublier. C'est donc avec une profonde émotion qu'il nous a confié ses souvenirs, afin «qu'ils soient inscrits, qu'ils ne soient pas oubliés et que les générations futures les lisent». [Tém. 254]

En même temps, **les mémoires narrées par les survivants sont souvent analogues.** Comme les souvenirs racontés en divers lieux par des personnes de sexes et d'âges différents (hommes, femmes, générations aînée, moyenne et jeune), décrivent, indépendamment l'un de l'autre, presque de la même manière les événements de la même période, les mêmes faits historiques, les mêmes cruautés et spectacles horribles qu'ils ont vus avec les mêmes sentiments, ces récits se confirment l'un l'autre, se continuent et se complètent, **allant du personnel au général et de l'individuel au national.** C'est cette circonstance qu'a voulu souligner **Tigrane Ohanian** (né en 1902), originaire de Kamakh, rescapé du génocide, lorsqu'il a terminé sa narration par les paroles suivantes: «...*Mon passé n'est pas seulement le mien, c'est aussi le passé du peuple arménien.*» [Tém. 97] **Donc, le contenu intime des souvenirs des survivants, loin de caractériser uniquement un seul individu et son entourage, atteint la généralisation et devient la mémoire collective du peuple arménien.**

**Cependant, la mémoire collective du peuple a la capacité de survivre.** Bien que plus de 95 ans soient passés sur ces événements historiques et que beaucoup de témoins oculaires rescapés par miracle des massacres ne soient plus en vie, leurs descendants ont si souvent entendu répéter les récits de la génération aînée que ces souvenirs sont devenus aussi l'héritage des générations suivantes et, transmis de bouche à oreille, ils continuent à vivre dans la mémoire des générations suivantes, comme **narrations historiques** (70 unités) que nous avons recueillies en majeure partie non seulement des témoins oculaires, mais aussi des générations suivantes comme témoignages du fait que **la mémoire historique du peuple ne meurt jamais, mais continue à vivre dans la mémoire des**

<sup>1</sup> Tém. – Témoignage.

### *générations montantes.*

Nous avons réussi à enregistrer aussi **les chants historiques populaires et les chants épiques** (315 unités) communiqués par les survivants. Les paroles de ces chants présentent dans un langage poétique divers événements de la vie sociale de leur époque: le recrutement des soldats, la confiscation des armes, la déportation, les massacres organisés par le gouvernement des Jeunes Turcs, d'impressionnants épisodes authentiques, ainsi que des chants exprimant des humeurs de protestation et de revendication.

Ces chants historiques sont composés en majeure partie par des femmes. L'impact psychologique de cette catastrophe nationale est perçu par chacune des femmes et des jeunes filles à sa manière. Ces impressions sont si fortes et si profondes qu'elles se sont incarnées parfois dans une forme poétique, telle la lamentation de **Chogher Tonoyan** (née en 1901), originaire de Mouch, qu'elle nous a communiquée en soupirant et en pleurant:

*«...Nuit et jour, je n'entends que des pleurs,  
Je n'ai ni repos, ni répit, ni sommeil,  
A peine les yeux fermés, je vois des cadavres,  
J'ai perdu tout: amis, parents, maison, pays...» [Tém. 437]*

De nature sensible et émotionnelle, les femmes ont porté sur leurs frêles épaules toute l'immense douleur du génocide arménien, de l'exil et des massacres. Elles décrivent en détail et de manière pittoresque ces événements historiques horribles, exprimant dans une forme poétique ce qu'elles ont vu de leurs propres yeux et senti dans les profondeurs de leur cœur, car ce sont les mères arméniennes qui ont vu partir avec des yeux pleins de larmes leurs maris et leurs fils pour servir dans l'armée turque. A leur tour, les hommes composent des chants, où ils décrivent que ces soldats arméniens n'ont pas reçu d'armes, ils étaient envoyés dans les «*Amélé Tabur*» (bataillons d'ouvriers) et affectés aux corvées les plus pénibles. Ils sont morts épuisés de travail ou tués en basculant dans les tombes creusées par eux-mêmes («**Chants de recrutement, de confiscation d'armes et de prison**»). Ensuite, les femmes arméniennes ont été contraintes à abandonner leurs maisons, leurs vergers et tous leurs biens et à prendre la route de l'exil, accompagnées de leurs enfants et de leurs vieux parents. Épuisées par les longues marches sous un soleil torride, les pieds ensanglantés, elles ont été chassées vers les déserts de Deir-el-Zor, de Ras-ul-Ayn, Raqqa, Meskéné, Souroudj et autres. Leurs mémoires de même que leurs chants décrivent les routes qu'elles ont parcourues, les vols et les pillages des gendarmes turcs, des bandes kurdes et des massacreurs tchéchènes cherchant des pièces d'or, les enlèvements des jeunes filles et des femmes arméniennes violées, empalées, leurs souffrances et leur mise à mort, les femmes enceintes au ventre fendu, les hommes crucifiés ou morts dans les pires tortures. Voici pourquoi les innocentes jeunes Arméniennes, désespérées, se sont jetées main dans la main dans les eaux de l'Euphrate («**Chants de déportation et de massacres**»). Un chapitre spécial est consacré aux chants des mères dont les enfants ont été enlevés, aux orphelins restés sans père ni mère et aux orphelinats («**Chants des mères privées de leurs enfants, des orphelins et des orphelinats**»). Nous présentons aussi des chants audacieux de juste révolte, exigeant la défense des droits de l'homme, de résistance à la violence, d'autodéfense, de lutte et de combat, qui sont composés par les hommes («**Chants patriotiques de combat**»). Enfin, des chants de regrets pour la Patrie occupée, de foi et d'espoir de la retrouver («**Chants de la Patrie occupée et de revendication**»). Ces chants historiques sont présentés dans la mesure du possible avec la notation musicale de leurs mélodies.

L'originalité et le contenu idéologique de ces chants historiques en font des œuvres nouvelles et uniques dans le folklore mondial, propres aux peuples qui ont beaucoup souffert. Ces chants historiques créés par le peuple arménien jettent une lumière nouvelle sur cette époque historique, ainsi que sur les circonstances et les détails de la réalisation du génocide.

Composés sous l'impression immédiate des événements historiques sans précédent qui ont été le partage du peuple arménien, *ces chants historiques et ces poèmes épiques ont donc la même valeur documentaire que les*

### *mémoires populaires.*

Ces chants historiques sont composés par des personnes de talent demeurées anonymes, représentants des deux sexes et de tous les âges. A leur époque, ils étaient largement propagés et, comme les souffrances du peuple étaient communes à tous, ces chants populaires l'étaient aussi, ils passaient de bouche en bouche, donnant naissance à de nouvelles et nombreuses variantes, de sorte que des chants analogues ont été composés simultanément. ***Cette circonstance témoigne de l'essence populaire de ces chants historiques.***

Au cours de nos nombreux et divers enregistrements, un chant populaire donné, ou sa variante, a été parfois communiqué par tant de narrateurs et témoins oculaires qu'il est impossible de mentionner tous leurs noms et prénoms. C'est pourquoi nous avons choisi uniquement les variantes de base dans les tables de notes documentaires de notre livre susmentionné, notant le prénom et nom du témoin survivant qui a communiqué ce chant (ou ce témoignage), la date et le lieu de sa naissance, ainsi que la date et le lieu de l'enregistrement du sujet, la langue, le caractère (manuscrit, enregistrement audio ou vidéo) et le numéro du fonds d'archives (selon la Méthode scientifique de documentation des sujets oraux du Prof. Dr. Isidore Lévine).

Les témoins oculaires du génocide arménien (hommes ou femmes) se sont souvenus avec une violente émotion et des sanglots mêlés de larmes des chants populaires, car tout cela est lié à leur mémoire historique. Cette circonstance explique les particularités spécifiques originales de ce genre de chants populaires historiques.

Les nombreuses variantes de ces chants populaires, avec toute leur authenticité historique, sont caractérisées par un pittoresque réservé et la finesse mélodique propre aux lamentations médiévales arméniennes. Chaque vers est une image bouleversante, un tableau horrifiant de la tragédie collective et les émouvants refrains viennent compléter l'image poétique et pittoresque du chant.

***Ces chants populaires de nature historique sont composés aussi bien en arménien qu'en turc***, car dans les circonstances historiques et politiques de l'époque, dans certaines provinces de l'Empire ottoman la langue arménienne était interdite.

Sans exclure les influences et les inter-influences culturelles inévitables des deux peuples, dues à une longue coexistence, il est à noter qu'on possède des témoignages selon lesquels «...on coupait la langue de ceux qui prononçaient un mot en arménien et, par conséquent, les Arméniens vivant dans un certain nombre de villes ciliciennes (Sis, Adana, Tarse, Ayntap) et dans les localités des environs avaient perdu l'usage de leur langue maternelle...». [Galustian Grigor. *Marach ou Guermanik et héroïque Zeytoun*. New York, 1934, p. 698, en arménien] Ou bien, «Les exactions et les persécutions des Turcs sont si terribles que la ville arménophone d'Ayntap est devenue turcophone comme les autres grandes villes d'Asie Mineure. Et le coup décisif est porté à la langue arménienne par les janissaires qui coupent le bout de la langue de ceux qui parlent arménien...». [Sarafian Guévork. *Histoire des Arméniens d'Ayntap*. T. I, Los Angeles, 1953, p. 5, en arménien]

Sarkis Haykouni, ethnographe et folkloriste de la fin du XIXe et du début du XXe siècles, décrit la situation politique, économique et culturelle d'une partie des Arméniens occidentaux: «...La langue arménienne était interdite par les mollahs turcs et, considérant sept mots prononcés en arménien comme une injure, l'amende perçue était de cinq moutons». [Haykouni Sarkis. *Arméniens perdus et oubliés. Les villages arméniens musulmans de Trébizonde et leurs traditions*. «Ararat». Vagharchapat, 1895, p. 297, en arménien]

Dans les récits populaires que nous avons enregistrés, il y a de nombreux témoignages sur le fait que les Arméniens de Sis, d'Adana, de Tarse, d'Ayntap, de Kutahya, de Bursa, de Césarée, d'Eskichéhir et de bien d'autres villes et régions étaient principalement turcophones. D'après le témoignage de **Mikaél Kéchichian** (né en 1904), originaire d'Adana: «Il était déjà interdit de parler arménien et de l'apprendre. Non seulement on coupait la langue, mais on mettait des œufs cuits brûlants sous les aisselles pour faire avouer si on n'avait pas appris l'arménien à d'autres. Si jamais on l'avouait, on était traîné pour être pendu ou tué». [Tém. 241]

C'est ce dont témoigne ce fragment de chant populaire arménien, communiqué par **Saténik Guyumdjian** (née en 1902), originaire de Konya:

*«Ils sont entrés à l'école, ils ont saisi la maîtresse,  
O mon Dieu!  
Ils lui ont ouvert la bouche et lui ont coupé la langue.  
O mon Dieu!»* [Tém. 446]

Puisque la maîtresse d'école avait eu l'audace d'apprendre la langue arménienne aux enfants arméniens, elle a subi cette affreuse punition. Sur les routes de l'exil et de la déportation, ces interdictions étaient encore plus strictes. Donc, les Arméniens occidentaux ont dû aussi exprimer leur douleur et leurs souffrances en turc.

Compte tenu des circonstances sociales et politiques de cette triste évidence qui est la première étape de l'assimilation linguistique, à côté *des chants communiqués en divers dialectes, nous n'avons pas manqué d'enregistrer des chants populaires historiques et des poèmes épiques en langue turque, mais d'origine arménienne évidente*. Bien que composés en turc, mais sans une connaissance suffisante de la langue (les auteurs utilisent souvent des mots et des expressions, des prénoms et des toponymes arméniens, et on remarque des fautes de prononciation et de grammaire) par les Arméniens de différentes provinces, ces chants ont un contenu idéologique et une valeur documentaire d'une grande importance.

Les chants racontant les massacres sont composés sur le chemin de l'exil, sur les routes de la déportation vers Deir-el-Zor et comme il était interdit de parler arménien, les exilés ont exprimé leur douleur et leurs souffrances dans la langue de l'ennemi, en turc.

*“Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağlıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

«Ce matin, je me suis levé, le soleil brillait;  
Le soldat turc, assis, graissait ses armes.  
J'ai regardé les Arméniens, ils pleuraient amèrement,  
Les Arméniens meurent pour leur foi!» [Tém. 488]

Ou bien:

*“Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasapa,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

«Ce qu'on nomme Der-Zor est un grand espace  
Où les Arméniens égorgés gisent innombrables;  
Les chefs ottomans sont devenus bouchers,  
Les Arméniens meurent pour leur foi!» [Tém. 467]

Les Arméniens meurent «pour leur foi» plutôt que d'abjurer leur religion chrétienne, leur identité nationale. **Siréna Aladjadjian** (née en 1910), originaire d'Adabazar, habitant à Istanbul, n'a que quatre ans lorsque les Turcs tuent son père et sa mère. Les habitants du désert donnent asile à la petite orpheline. Quatre ans plus tard, lors de la trêve, en 1918, ceux qui vont chercher dans le désert les orphelins arméniens remarquent la petite Siréna aux yeux bleus et aux boucles dorées, déjà âgée de huit ans. Elle ne peut être qu'Arménienne, mais elle a oublié sa langue maternelle, sans toutefois oublier la façon de faire le signe de la croix, ce qui devient la preuve qu'elle est Arménienne et chrétienne. On la recueille pour être élevée dans un orphelinat arménien. [Tém. 225]

Les témoins oculaires déportés de plus de 150 localités ne se contentent pas de raconter ce qu'ils ont vu, mais en tirent leurs propres conclusions politiques. Ainsi **Parguev Makarian** (né en 1915), originaire d'Ayntap, ajoute: «...Les grandes puissances ont trompé les Arméniens en abandonnant la Cilicie aux Turcs. Zeytoun, Adana, Sis, Marach, Kiliss, Ayntap, Urfa, Kamourdj et bien d'autres villes se sont entièrement vidés de leur population arménienne. On nous a contraints à quitter la Cilicie. Nous avons été obligés de laisser notre patrie. Et puis, en 1922, ils ont organisé la catastrophe de Smyrne. Les Arméniens et les Grecs ont fui le feu pour se jeter à la mer. Ceux qui ont pu se sauver sont passés dans d'autres pays. Ainsi, la Turquie s'est «purifiée» des chrétiens. La Turquie est restée aux Turcs, l'Arménie Occidentale et la Cilicie aussi». [Tém. 272]

**Hacob Holobikian** (né en 1902), originaire de Kharberd, décrit en détail les souffrances subies par ses compatriotes et lui-même, puis conclut: «... *Ces crimes commis par les Jeunes Turcs ne seront jamais oubliés et ne doivent pas être pardonnés!*». [Tém. 115]

Cependant, la propagande et l'historiographie turques ne ménagent pas leurs efforts pour falsifier les faits historiques et dissimuler avec soin aux générations montantes le génocide arménien perpétré par les Jeunes Turcs. Elles essaient de contourner la réalité historique qui consiste en ce que, dès le début de l'année 1919, les organismes étatiques turcs prennent l'initiative d'intenter un procès aux criminels jeunes-turcs, les condamnant à mort. Et plus tard aussi, lorsque le complot ourdi par les Jeunes Turcs contre Mustafa Kémal, premier président de la République turque, est révélé, Kémal Atatürk lui-même condamne, dans une interview donnée au journal «Los Angeles Examiner» (1er août 1926) «Ces restes du parti des Jeunes Turcs doivent répondre pour la vie d'un million de nos sujets chrétiens qui ont été impitoyablement déportés de leurs lieux de naissance et exterminés...». [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations.* Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, p. 13]

Par conséquent, cette douloureuse réalité historique est incontestable et ne fait pas l'ombre d'un doute.

Malheureusement, la communauté internationale ne punit ni ne condamne dûment en son temps le premier génocide du XXe siècle, le génocide arménien. Comme suite logique de ces événements, on assiste à l'apparition du nazisme et, de nos jours, au terrorisme international avec ses manifestations imprévisibles et son désastreux impact mondial, puisque les crimes restés impunis se répètent pour le malheur du genre humain.

Par conséquent, les mémoires narrées par les survivants sur le génocide arménien et les événements de cette époque, ainsi que leurs chants, présentent une valeur historique et cognitive qui en fait des documents objectifs et des témoignages irréfutables, exprimés en langage populaire, relatifs au génocide arménien et aux événements qui le suivent. Toutefois, ce ne sont pas simplement des témoignages du passé, mais un avertissement pour l'avenir.

Comme le génocide est un crime politique massif, il ne doit pas rester impuni, mais être juridiquement élucidé à l'aide des témoins, entre autres preuves. **Le plus grand témoin de ce crime est le peuple arménien** lui-même qui, survivant dans la douleur, raconte et porte témoignage de son passé tragique, un passé qui est son histoire, sa mémoire historique collective qui doit être exposée au monde entier et présentée au jugement équitable de l'humanité.

Il est donc grand temps que le gouvernement actuel de la République Turque, ait le courage non seulement de reconnaître 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, mais aussi de condamner ce qui a été perpétré et de compenser les pertes morales, matérielles et territoriales du peuple arménien.







VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN

## **DER GENOZID AN DEN ARMENIERN: ZEUGNISSE DER ÜBERLEBENDEN AUGENZEUGEN**

*(Zusammenfassung)*

Der Völkermord an den Armeniern als ein internationales politisches Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit ist durch einen grausamen Zwang der Geschichte zu einem untrennbaren Teil der nationalen Identität, der Denkweise und der geistigen Innenwelt des armenischen Volkes.

Je mehr Zeit verstreicht, umso größer wird das Interesse an dem Armenier-Genozid, was auf die Anerkennung dieses historischen Faktums durch zahlreiche Staaten zurückzuführen ist. Jedoch die türkischen und protürkischen Historiker versuchen bis heute die historische Wahrheit der für das armenische Volk verhängnisvollen Ereignisse von 1915-1923 zu verzerren.

Über den Völkermord an den Armeniern sind inzwischen zahlreiche Bücher, Dokumentensammlungen, Aufsätze von Politikern und Vertretern der Öffentlichkeit, unterschiedliche belletristische Werke in verschiedenen Sprachen erschienen, aber in dieser riesigen Literatur hat bis jetzt die Stimme des Volkes gefehlt, Erinnerungen und Volkslieder der Überlebenden jener grässlichen Ereignisse, die als Urquellen ebenfalls von einem hohen historischen, dokumentarischen Wert sind. Da das armenische Volk selbst diese unsagbaren Leiden tragen musste, war es also das Objekt dieses politischen Massenverbrechens. Und wie bei der Aufdeckung eines jeden Verbrechens die Aussagen der Zeugen eine ausschlaggebende Rolle spielen, so sollte man sich auch in diesem Fall auf die Berichte der Augenzeugen stützen. Jedes dieser Zeugnisse hat vom juristischen Standpunkt her eine Beweiskraft für eine gerechte Lösung der Armenischen Frage und die Anerkennung des Armenier-Genozides.

In vollem Bewusstsein dessen nahm ich, damals eine Studentin an der Pädagogischen Universität „Chatschatur Abovjan“ in Jerewan, diese Arbeit aus eigener Initiative in Angriff, und zwar schon im Jahre 1955, als man in der Armenischen Sozialistischen Sowjetrepublik über den Völkermord an den Armeniern nicht offen reden durfte, als die repatriierten Augenzeugen dieser Gräueltaten, die gleichsam durch ein Wunder dem Tod entkommen waren, in Angst vor einer Verleumdung und Deportation lebten. Trotz unterschiedlicher Schwierigkeiten folgte ich im Bewusstsein der historischen und faktographischen Bedeutung der Materialien der mündlichen Überlieferung des Volkes zuerst dem Ruf meines Blutes (ich stamme aus Westarmenien), dann aber – seit 1960 – konnte ich unter dem

Schutz des Instituts für Archäologie und Ethnographie der Akademie der Wissenschaften von Armenien meine Arbeit fortsetzen (daneben war ich mit anderen wissenschaftlichen Forschungen beschäftigt). Seit 1996 konnte ich meine Arbeit mit Unterstützung der Direktion des in Jerewan eröffneten Museum-Instituts für den Völkermord an den Armeniern der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien fortführen. Unter der brennenden Sonne des armenischen Sommers und in der Kälte des strengen Winters unseres Landes wanderte ich zu Fuß durch Dörfer und Siedlungen auf der Suche nach den Überlebenden des Genozides. Ich bemühte mich, ihnen näher zu kommen, und ohne sie durch andere Fragen abzulenken, ließ ich sie frei reden und davon berichten, was sie erlebt hatten. Ich schrieb, nahm auf Band, machte Videoaufzeichnungen und analysierte die schrecklichen Geschichten, die sie erzählten, und die diversen historischen Lieder, die sie sangen. Die Originale werden im Archiv des Museum-Instituts für den Völkermord an den Armeniern der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien aufbewahrt.

Die Zeugnisse der einfachen Menschen haben wir in einer Reihe Abhandlungen veröffentlicht, insbesondere im Band „*Der Genozid an den Armeniern: Zeugnisse der Überlebenden Augenzeugen*“ (Jerewan, Verlag „Gitutjun“ der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien, 2000, 500 Seiten, arm.), dessen erweiterte englische Übersetzung dieses Buch ist.

Dieser Band besteht aus zwei Teilen:

Der Völkermord an den Armeniern:

a) *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchung*, wo die Genre- und typologischen Besonderheiten der Zeugnisse des Volkes behandelt und der ganze Verlauf des Völkermords an den Armeniern geschildert werden; die Darstellung wird um Erinnerungen der Überlebenden und Lieder historischen Charakters (in armenischer und türkischer Sprache) ergänzt und mit diesen begründet.

b) *Originale der Quellen* (700 Einheiten): Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse der überlebenden Augenzeugen, Zeugnisse in Form historischer Geschichten und Sagen, historischer Lieder; Notenschrift zu diesen Liedern.

Der Band enthält auch eine Dokumentations-und-Informationen-Tabelle mit Angaben über die überlebenden Augenzeugen und die von ihnen mitgeteilten folkloritischen Materialien sowie Fotos der Überlebenden, Zusammenfassungen in verschiedenen Sprachen, ein Glossar, Anmerkungen, Sach-, Personennamen-, Ortsnamenregister und ein Register ethnographischer Namen und eine Karte mit Angaben über die Deportation der Armenier und den Völkermord in dem Osmanenstaat.

Die meisten der **Augenzeugen**, von denen diese Materialien herrühren, sind alte Leute, die in den Jahren 1915-1923 aus ihrer historischen Heimat in Westarmenien, Kiliken (1921) und von Armeniern besiedelten Provinzen Anatoliens (1922, die Tragödie von Izmir) vertrieben wurden.

Ein beträchtlicher Teil der Westarmenier, mehr als anderthalb Millionen Menschen, war während dieser Ereignisse schonungslos vernichtet, während diejenigen, die dem Tod entrinnen konnten, ausgeplündert und erschöpft Ostarmenien erreichten oder sich über verschiedene Länder der Welt verstreuten. Später wurden manche von den Letzteren aus Griechenland, Frankreich, Syrien, Ägypten, Irak und Libanon, aus den Balkanstaaten und der Türkei nach Armenien repatriert; sie siedelten sich dort in den neuen Stadtteilen und den Vororten von Jerewan an, deren Namen – oft mit einem vorangestellten Zusatz „nor,“ d. h. „neu“ - an ihre verlassenen Heimstätten erinnern (Ajgestan, Sari Tagh, Nor (neu) Butania, Nor Aresch, Nor Kilikia, Nor Arabkir, Nor Zeitun, Nor Charberd, Nor Sebastia, Nor Malatia, Nor Kesaria, Nor Hadschin, Nor Marasch, Nor Ajntap, Nor Mussa Ler (Neu Musa Dagh), Nor Edessia) sowie in den Städten Etschmiadsin (heute: Wagharschapat), Hoktemberjan (heute: Armawir), Ararat, Talin, Hrasdan, Leninakan (heute Gjumri), Kirowakan (heute: Wanadsor) und anderswo.

Die Augenzeugen des Armenier-Genozides, die durch ein Wunder überleben konnten, fand ich in der Regel schweigsam und in Gedanken versunken. Auch dieses geheimnisvolle Schweigen hatte seinen Grund: Die

politischen Zustände in Sowjetarmenien ließen sie jahrzehntlang nicht über ihre Vergangenheit frei und unbefangen erzählen oder schreiben. Deswegen war es schwierig, solche Materialien zu entdecken und niederzuschreiben.

Mehr als 55 Jahre lang suchte ich unaufhörlich sowohl in verschiedenen Bezirken Armeniens als auch während meiner persönlichen oder Dienstreisen zu wissenschaftlichen Konferenzen in Syrien, im Libanon, in Ägypten, Griechenland, Frankreich, Kanada, in den USA und in der Türkei nach überlebenden Augenzeugen des Völkermords der alten, mittleren und jungen Generation und versuchte, sie näher kennen zu lernen und in die Tiefe ihrer Seele durchzudringen.

Auf meine inständigen Bitten hin begannen sie mit Tränen und Schluchzen ihre Erinnerungen daran zu erzählen, wie die türkischen Gendarmen sie aus ihren ureigenen blühenden Heimstätten vertrieben und ihre Eltern und Angehörigen vor ihren Augen grausam ermordeten, ihre Mütter und Schwestern entehrten, die neu geborenen Kinder mit Steinen niedermetzten...

Die **Erinnerungen** (315 Einheiten) der Augenzeugen erfassen unterschiedliche Themen, in ihnen erstehen wieder die Schönheit ihrer Heimat, ihr patriarchalischer Alltag und ihre Sitten und Bräuche, die Zeit, in der sie lebten, die sozialpolitischen Lebensbedingungen, bedeutenden historischen Ereignisse, Grausamkeiten der Führer der jungtürkischen Regierung Talaat, Enver, Dschemal, Nazim, Behaeddin Schakir... (Steuererhebung, Einberufung, Waffenabgabe, Verbrennungen lebendiger Menschen, Deportationen, Pogrome, Massaker), der Todeszug durch Wüsten Mesopotamiens (Der-el-Sor, Ras-ul-Ain, Rakka, Meskene, Surutsch...), die unsäglichen Leiden der Armenier (Erschöpfung, Durst, Hunger, Seuchen, Todesangst...) sowie der gerechte und edle Widerstand gegen die Gewalttätigkeiten in verschiedenen Orten und der Kampf um das elementare Recht auf Leben (der Aufstand von Van, die Abwehrkämpfe in Schatach, Schapin-Garahissar, Sassun, Urfa, auf dem Berg Musa Dagh im Jahre 1915, die Kämpfe in Ajntap, Hadschen in den Jahren 1920-1921), die Helden der Abwehrkämpfe (Andranik Osanjan aus Schapin-Garahissar, Armenak Jekarjan aus Van und genannt Murad der Große [Hambarzum Bojadschjan], Jessaji Jaghubjan vom Musa Dagh, Mekrtitsch Jotneghbarjan aus Urfa, Adur Levonjan aus Ajntap, Aram Tscholakjan aus Zeitun, der nationale Rächer Soghomon Tehlirjan) und zahlreiche andere bekannte und unbekannte Armenier, die zusammen mit den Volksmassen gegen die Despotie gekämpft haben, gefallen sind aber auch überlebt haben.

In dieser Abhandlung sind die historischen Tatsachen durch Aussagen der überlebenden Zeugen ergänzt und detailliert, wodurch der historische Verlauf der Ereignisse während des Armenier-Genozides rekonstruiert wird.

Die Erinnerungen der Überlebenden gewähren die Möglichkeit, auch die für dieses Genre charakteristischen Genre- und typologischen Besonderheiten solcher Materialien zu untersuchen.

Jeder der Augenzeugen erzählte in seiner Sprache, in seiner Mundart, in einem mit fremden Wörtern durchsetzten Armenisch, aber auch in Türkisch, Arabisch, Kurdisch, Englisch, Französisch, Deutsch.

Der Aufbau der Erinnerungen der Überlebenden des Völkermords an den Armeniern als eine Art der mündlichen Volksüberlieferung weist folgende Merkmale auf: Sie sind entweder kurz und gedrängt oder umfangreich und langatmig, sie enthalten unterschiedliche Dialoge, Zitate, Muster verschiedener Gattungen der Folklore (Lied, Epos, Märchen, Fabel, Sprichwort, Segnung, Fluch, Gebet, Schwur), die die Echtheit des Erzählten verbürgen und das mündliche Wort besonders glaubwürdig und ausdrucksvoll erscheinen lassen. **Die Überlebenden waren sich ihrer moralischen Verantwortlichkeit bewusst, ihre Worte waren von einem tiefen Pflichtbewusstsein geprägt. Viele von ihnen schlugen ein Kreuz oder schwuren einen Eid, bevor sie mit ihren Erinnerungen begannen.**

Aus einer ausführlichen quantitativen und qualitativen Analyse der Erinnerungen und historischen Lieder erhellt, dass **es ein Volk ohne Erinnerung genauso wenig gibt wie einen Menschen ohne Erinnerung**, denn die Erinnerung ist das Leben eines Menschen oder eines Volkes, seine Vergangenheit, seine Geschichte.

Eine ähnliche historische Erinnerung haben Juden, Griechen, Zigeuner und andere von einer leidvollen Geschichte geprägte Völker. [Porter, Jack Nusan, ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 1982] Und wenn ein Volk, in unserem Fall das türkische Volk, seine historische Erinnerung nicht bewahrt hat, dann hat es nicht gelebt und alle diese Leiden nicht empfunden. Hier ist es wohl angebracht, manche Stellen aus einem mit „Gegenschlag in der virtuellen Welt“ überschriebenen Interview zu zitieren, das der Gründer der türkischen Server „Superonline“ und „Ixir“ Babur Ozden gegeben hat; in diesem Interview behauptet er, die Armenier hätten Erinnerungen der Überlebenden des Armenier-Genozides und in türkischer Sprache verfasste Lieder historischen Charakters im Internet untergebracht (er meint u. a. unser Buch *“The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors.”* Yerevan, “Gitoutyoum” Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999, sowie die Webseite <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html>) und er fügt hinzu: „...Ich habe festgestellt, dass die ‚Webseiten des Genozides‘ in der virtuellen Wirklichkeit ein Monopol der Armenier sind. ...Wir müssen uns organisieren. Die Türkei ist nicht organisiert. ...Es ist indes schwierig, diese Geschichten [Lebensgeschichten der Überlebenden] in unserer Kultur zu entdecken. Unsere Kultur ist wegen Mangels an Selbstförderung und Individualisierung in einer ungünstigen Situation. ...Sie [die Armenier] bedürfen der Mythen, um ihre Kultur und ihre Vergangenheit zusammenzuhalten. ...Wir [die Türken] brauchen diesen Zusammenhang nicht. Wir wollen die Vergangenheit vergessen und nach vorn schauen. Unsere Familien sind gemischt. Was [in der Vergangenheit] niedergeschrieben wurde, wurde in einer anderen Schrift geschrieben. Wir können sie [Lebensgeschichten der Überlebenden] nicht lesen. Ich kann nicht die Notizen meines Großvaters lesen. Wer der alten türkischen Sprache mächtig ist, kann sie lesen. ...Es ist nutzlos, die Abhandlungen von Professoren und Historikern im Internet unterzubringen. Die Archive haben keine Wirkung auf die Menschen. ...Die Leute lassen sich nicht von den Lebensgeschichten der Menschen beeindrucken, deren Eltern vernichtet wurden oder sich verstreut haben. Sie sind beeindruckt, wenn sie diese *aus der ersten Hand* hören (Von mir hervorgehoben – V. S.). ...Die Armenier haben im Internet sogar Abteilungen der ‚Völkermord-Lieder‘ in türkischer und englischer Sprache.“ („Milliyet“, 28.01.2001, S. 19)

Es müsste auch erwähnt werden, dass die auf unsere eigene Initiative aufgezeichneten, analysierten, und veröffentlichten Erinnerungen und Lieder in dieser Sammlung, die die historische Erinnerung des armenischen Volkes darstellen, nach ihrer Veröffentlichung in Armenien [Svazlian 2000] täglich ergänzt werden, wobei es sich um einen endlosen Vorgang handelt. Denn jeder Armenier hat seinen Familienkummer und seine familiären Verluste. Außerdem gibt es unzählige Berichte (in verschiedenen Mundarten und Sprachen von Hand geschrieben oder auf Ton- und Videoband gezeichnet) in unterschiedlichen Ländern der Welt, wohin es Tausende und Abertausende Westarmenier infolge des Völkermords geschlagen hat. Diese Berichte sind im privaten Besitz und in Archiven zusammengetragen. Sie sollten indes als faktographische Zeugnisse der historischen Sammelerinnerung des armenischen Volkes ebenfalls entschlüsselt, veröffentlicht und in den wissenschaftlichen Verkehr gebracht werden.

***Der Völkermord an den Armeniern***, der Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts verübt wurde, haben die Überlebenden unmittelbar erlebt, und ***all das hat sich in ihrem Gedächtnis unauslöschlich eingegraben***.

Die Augenzeugen dieser geschichtlichen Ereignisse, die ihre traurige Vergangenheit gleichsam schmerzlich wieder erlebten, erzählten uns ihre persönlichen Erinnerungen an die historische Heimat, an das Zuhause und an die lieben Angehörigen, die leider nicht mehr leben. Diese Erinnerungen trugen sie in ihrem ganzen Leben immer in sich, unfähig, sich von diesem Albtraum zu befreien. Und da es sich bei den ***Erinnerungen, die die Überlebenden uns erzählten***, um unmittelbare Eindrücke von den historischen Ereignissen handelt, die den Westarmeniern zuteil geworden sind, haben sie ***eine zutiefst historische Bedeutung***.

Indem sie das Leben, den Alltag, die Sitten, die politisch-gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse der Zeit widerspiegeln, ***sind die Erinnerungen der Überlebenden spontan, wahr, glaubwürdig und haben sie den Wert***

### **authentischer Aussagen.**

**Hrant Gasparjan** aus Musch (geb. 1908) betonte diesen Umstand, indem er zum Schluss versicherte: „... *Ich habe Ihnen erzählt, was ich mit diesen meinen Augen gesehen habe. Alles, was ich gesehen habe, steht vor meinen Augen. Wir haben nichts aus Chenos mitgebracht, nur unsere Leiber gerettet. In unserer Familie waren 143 Leute; eine Schwester, ein Bruder von mir, meine Mutter und ich sind entkommen.*“ [Zg.<sup>1</sup> 13]

**Wenn man diese dokumentarischen Zeugnisse der Überlebenden ausführlich analysiert und mit den geschichtlichen Ereignissen vergleicht**, wird klar, dass die Glaubwürdigkeit der Erinnerungen keinen Zweifel aufkommen lässt. Sie erwähnen in ihren Erzählungen beinahe immer ihre älteren Verwandten, ihre Großeltern, Eltern sowie weitere Personen, die der Familie oder der Sippe angehörten, wobei häufig deren Namen und Geburtsdaten genannt werden. Die Auskünfte sind so genau und authentisch, dass die Menschen, die im Chaos der Massaker ihre Verwandten verloren haben und in verschiedenen Winkeln der Welt leben, auf Grund der Erinnerungen, die in unserem Buch stehen, Jahrzehnte später einander finden und uns dafür danken.

**Die Hauptperson in der jeweiligen Erinnerung ist der Erzähler bzw. die Erzählerin**, bei der Erinnerung handelt es sich nicht nur um eine Schilderung der bedeutenden geschichtlichen Ereignisse, Vorfälle und Personen, sondern auch um deren Auslegung, wodurch die Weltanschauung und die Hauptmerkmale der Persönlichkeit des Augenzeugen bzw. der Augenzeugin, aber auch ihre besonderen Ansichten, Sprache und Stil zum Ausdruck kommen. **Also ist jeder Bericht, jede Erzählung der Überlebenden einzigartig**. In ihnen finden die Lebensläufe der Erzähler einen Niederschlag, deswegen bleibt der Hauptinhalt der Erinnerung, **die gleichsam ein inniges Bekenntnis ist**, so gut wie der gleiche, auch wenn sie mehrmals erzählt wird. Ich als Folkloristin und Ethnographin habe die mündlichen Berichte mit einem professionellen Verantwortungsgefühl behandelt und sie Wort für Wort aufgeschrieben, und zwar in vollem Bewusstsein dessen, dass die Erzähler mir ihre innerlichsten Geheimnisse preisgaben, damit diese **an die künftigen Generation weitergegeben werden**. Hier möchte ich die Worte des würdevollen 94-jährigen **Karapet Tosljan** aus Sejtun (geb. 1903) anführen. Obwohl er des Lesens und Schreibens nicht kundig war, hatte er seine Erinnerungen und Lieder „jeden Abend vor dem Schlafengehen wie Gebete“ gemurmelt, um sie nicht zu vergessen. Er wollte mir seine Erinnerungen erzählen, damit sie „aufgeschrieben, nicht vergessen werden und die künftigen Generationen daraus lernen.“ [Zg. 254]

Zugleich **sind die Erinnerungen der Überlebenden auch einander ähnlich**. Denn in den Erinnerungen der Vertreter unterschiedlichster Altersgruppen beider Geschlechter aus verschiedenen Orten werden die geschichtlichen Ereignisse und Personen, die schrecklichen Szenen und Bilder, die sie erleben mussten, voneinander unabhängig, aber fast in derselben Weise geschildert; die Berichte verschiedener Personen bestätigen und ergänzen sich, in ihnen macht sich **die Tendenz einer Entwicklung vom Persönlichen und Gegenständlichen zum Allgemeinen und Nationalen** bemerkbar. Diesen Umstand meinte **Tigran Ohanjan** aus Kamach (geb. 1902), als er seinen Bericht mit folgenden Worten abschloss: „...*Meine Vergangenheit ist nicht nur meine Vergangenheit, sondern auch die meines Volkes.*“ [Zg. 97] **Die Erinnerungen der Zeugen charakterisieren also mit ihrem Inhalt nicht nur die betreffende Person und deren Umgebung, sondern auch die ganze Gemeinschaft, wodurch sie zu einer kollektiven historischen Erinnerung des armenischen Volkes werden.**

**Aber die historische Erinnerung des Volkes vermag fortzuleben**. Obwohl nach jenen Ereignissen mehr als 90 Jahre vergangen sind und die meisten wie durch ein Wunder Überlebenden nicht mehr am Leben sind, sind die Erzählungen der Älteren in den Familien so oft gehört und wiederholt worden, dass sie von den Nachkommen geerbt und weiter erzählt werden, so dass sie als **historische Erzählungen** (70 Einheiten) im Gedächtnis der jüngeren Generationen fortleben. Die meisten dieser historischen Erzählungen haben wir sowohl von den Überlebenden Augenzeugen als auch von deren Nachkommen gehört und aufgeschrieben – als ein Zeugnis davon, dass **das historische Gedächtnis des Volkes nicht stirbt, sondern in dem Gedächtnis der späteren Generationen**

<sup>1</sup> Zg. – Zeugnis.

*weiter lebt.*

Es ist uns gelungen, auch **Lieder und Balladen historischen Charakters** (315 Einheiten) der überlebenden Augenzeugen des Armenier-Genozides aufzuschreiben. Ihre Texte widerspiegeln unterschiedliche Phänomene des öffentlichen Lebens jener Zeit - die Einberufung und Waffenabgabe, die Deportation und die Massaker, von der Regierung der Jungtürken organisiert - sowie andere aufregende und beeindruckende Episoden und bringen Klage und rebellische Stimmungen zum Ausdruck.

Die meisten dieser historischen Lieder und Gesänge rühren von armenischen Frauen her. Die schauerlichen Eindrücke waren so tief, dass sie oft eine dichterische Form bekamen, wie beispielsweise das Klagelied der Überlebenden **Schogher Tonojan** aus Musch (geb. 1901), das sie mit Tränen und Seufzern sang:

*„...Tag und Nacht höre ich Weinen und Klagen,  
Ich habe keine Ruhe, keinen Schlaf;  
Schließe ich die Augen, so sehe ich immer Tote;  
Ich habe Familie, Verwandte, Grund und Haus verloren...“ [Zg. 437]*

Die von Natur aus emotionalen Frauen trugen auf ihren schwachen Schultern die ganze Last der Deportation, des Exils und der Massaker der Armenier. Was sie mit eigenen Augen gesehen und in der Tiefe ihrer Seelen gefühlt haben, haben sie ausführlich und bildhaft beschrieben. Denn die armenischen Mütter mussten sich mit Tränen von ihren Ehemännern und Söhnen verabschieden, die in die türkische Armee eingezogen wurden. Und die Männer dichteten Lieder, in denen beschrieben wurde, dass man den armenischen Soldaten keine Waffen gab, sie sollten nämlich in „*Amele tabur*“ (Arbeitsbataillonen) schwere Arbeiten verrichten. Erschöpft hauchten sie dort ihr Leben aus oder wurden umgebracht und die Gräben geworfen, die sie selbst ausgehoben hatten („**Lieder der Einberufung, der Waffenabgabe und der Häftlinge**“). Man zwang die armenischen Frauen ihre Häuser und Gärten, ihren Besitz und ihre Kinder zu verlassen und mit ihren alten und hilflosen Eltern den Weg des Exils anzutreten. Mit vor Müdigkeit blutenden Füßen, hungrig und durstig, unter der brennenden Sonne und den Peitschen der türkischen Polizisten schleppten sie sich in die Wüsten von Der-el-Sor, Ras-ul-Ain, Rakka, Meskene, Surutsch und in andere Wüsten. In den Erinnerungen und Liedern der überlebenden Augenzeugen werden die Wege, die sie gegangen sind, die Ausschreitungen der türkischen Polizisten, der kurdischen Banditen und der tschetschenischen und tscherkesischen Mörder, der Raub und die Ermordung armenischer Frauen und Mädchen, ihre Pfählung, das Aufritzen der Bäuche schwangerer Frauen und die Suche nach Goldstücken, die Kreuzigungen und Foltern geschildert. Deshalb stürzten sich die unschuldigen armenischen Mädchen, um nicht in die Hände der Türken zu geraten, ihre Frauen zu werden und türkische Kinder zu gebären, in den Fluss Euphrat („**Lieder der Deportation und des Massakers**“). Einen speziellen Abschnitt bilden die traurigen Lieder über die Leiden der Mütter der entführten Kinder, über die verwaisten Kinder und die Waisenheime („**Lieder der Mütter, die ihre Kinder verloren haben, der Waisen und der Waisenheime**“). Vertreten sind auch die hauptsächlich von Männern gedichteten stolzen Lieder über den gerechten Protest und die Auflehnung der Armenier, die Verteidigung des Grundrechts auf Leben, die Weigerung, Gewalttaten hinzunehmen, und über die Selbstverteidigung und den Kampf gegen die gewalttätigen Unterdrücker („**Lieder des Patriotismus und der Heldenkämpfe**“). Schließlich gibt es Lieder, die das unterjochte und verlorene Heimatland beweinen und die Hoffnung, es wieder zu finden, zum Ausdruck bringen („**Lieder über das usurpierte Heimatland und Lieder der Rebellion**“). Im Buch findet sich auch die Notenschrift der Melodien, zu denen diese unterschiedlichen Lieder gesungen wurden.

Diese historischen Lieder sind mit ihrer thematischen Eigentümlichkeit und ihrem ideellen Inhalt etwas Neues in der Folkloristik und der Wissenschaft über Völkermorde und sie schildern in einer neuen Weise jene geschichtliche Epoche, die Umstände und Details des Völkermords an den Armeniern.

Unter den unmittelbaren Eindrücken von den historischen Ereignissen entstanden, *weisen auch diese*

***Volkslieder und epischen Gesänge eine hohe historische Authentizität auf und haben einen hohen dokumentarischen Wert.***

Diese historischen Gesänge wurden von talentvollen unbekanntem Frauen und Männern unterschiedlichen Alters erdichtet, waren seinerzeit weit verbreitet, weil große Volksmassen von diesem unsäglichen Leid betroffen waren. Sie gingen von Mund zu Mund, wodurch neue unterschiedliche Varianten entstanden. Dieses oder jenes Volkslied sind zu gleicher Zeit in verschiedenen Varianten entstanden, ***was davon zeugt, dass das Volk ihr Urheber ist.***

Dasselbe Volkslied oder seiner Varianten hörten wir von so vielen überlebenden Augenzeugen, dass es unmöglich war, sie alle namentlich zu nennen. Deswegen sind nur die Namen derjenigen in der erwähnten Tabelle dieses Buches erfasst, von denen die Hauptvarianten herrühren. Ebenda werden der Name, das Geburtsjahr und der Geburtsort der oder des Überlebenden sowie die Zeit, der Ort, die Art der Aufzeichnung (Handschrift, Audio-, Videoaufnahmen), die Sprache des Liedes und die Nummer im Archiv genannt (nach der wissenschaftlichen Methodik der Dokumentierung der folkloristischen Materialien des Professors Dr. Isidor Levin).

Die überlebenden Augenzeugen des Völkermords an den Armeniern (Frauen und Männer) gaben die besagten Volkslieder mit großer seelischer Erregung, Schluchzen und Tränen wieder, weil sie mit ihrer historischen Erinnerung unmittelbar verbunden sind. Daraus erklären sich die eigentümlichen Besonderheiten der historischen Volkslieder.

Die verschiedensten Varianten dieser Lieder zeichnen sich neben ihrer historischen Genauigkeit auch durch eine knappe Bildhaftigkeit und für die mittelalterlichen Klagelieder der Armenier charakteristische zarte oder auch erregte Weisen aus. Jede Zeile und jede Wortfügung in diesen Gesängen ist ein vollendetes Bild, eine erschütternde Szene der Tragödie der großen Volksmassen, die Kehrreime ergänzen und vervollständigen die poetische und bildhafte Aussage.

***Lieder historischen Charakters wurden nicht nur in der armenischen, sondern auch in der türkischen Sprache gesungen,*** weil es damals in manchen Provinzen des Osmanischen Reiches verboten war, armenisch zu sprechen.

Ohne die gegenseitige Beeinflussung der geistigen Kulturen der beiden neben- und miteinander lebenden Völker auszuschließen, sollte hier erwähnt werden, dass es Zeugnisse gibt, dass „...denjenigen, die ein armenisches Wort aussprachen, die Zunge geschnitten wurde, so dass die Armenier, die in einigen Städten Kilikiens (Sis, Adana, Tarson, Antep) und ihrer Umgebung wohnten, ihre Muttersprache verloren hatten...“ [Galustjan, Grigor. *Marasch oder Germanik und das heldenhafte Zeitun*. New York, 1934, S. 698, arm.] Oder dass: „die Unterdrückung und die Verfolgungen durch die Türken so grausam waren, dass das armenischsprachige Antep türkischsprachig wurde, wie es auch in anderen Großstädten Kleinasiens der Fall war. Und den letzten harten Schlag bekam die armenische Sprache von den Janitscharen, die die Zungen derjenigen, die armenisch sprachen, abschnitten...“ [Sarafjan, Geworg. *Die Geschichte des armenischen Antep*. B. 1, Los Angeles, 1953, S. 5, arm.]

Der Ethnograph und Folklorist Sargis Hajkuni (Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts), der die damalige politische, ökonomische und geistige Situation der Westarmenier schildert, schreibt: „...Die armenische Sprache war von den türkischen Mullahs verboten, und sieben armenische Wörter wurden als Schimpf betrachtet, wofür als Strafe fünf Schafe abzugeben waren.“ [Hajkuni, Sargis. *Die verlorenen und vergessenen Armenier. Armenisch-moslemische Dörfer von Trabzon und ihre Traditionen*. „Ararat.“ Wagharschapat, 1895, S. 297, arm.]

In den von uns aufgezeichneten Erinnerungen gibt es zahlreiche Zeugnisse davon, dass die Armenier in Sis, Adana, Tarson, Antep, Keutahia, Bursa, Kayseri, Eskischehir und anderen Orten vorwiegend türkisch sprachen. Der Überlebende **Mikajel Keschischjan** aus Adana (geb. 1904) berichtet: „*Es war schon verboten, armenisch zu sprechen und zu lernen; nicht nur Zungen wurden abgeschnitten, sondern man legte auch heiße gekochte Eier*

ihnen in die Achselhöhlen, damit sie gestünden, dass sie den anderen Armenisch beibrächten. Die Geständigen wurden abgeführt, erhängt oder totgeschlagen.“ [Zg. 241]

Davon zeugt auch folgendes Fragment eines Volksliedes, das wir von der Überlebenden **Satenik Gujumschjan** aus Konya (geb. 1902) gehört haben:

„Sie traten in die Schule ein, nahmen die Lehrerin fest,  
O weh!  
Machten ihr den Mund auf, schnitten ihr die Zunge ab,  
O weh!“ [Zg. 446]

Die Lehrerin hatte es nämlich gewagt, den armenischen Kindern Armenisch beizubringen. Auf den Wegen der Deportation und der Verbannung wurde man noch brutaler. Deswegen sprachen die Westarmenier ihren Kummer und ihr Leid auch in der türkischen Sprache aus.

Unter Berücksichtigung der öffentlich-politischen Aspekte dieser traurigen Erscheinung der sprachlichen Assimilation haben wir neben Materialien in verschiedenen Mundarten auch **die türkischsprachigen historischen Volkslieder und epischen Gesänge aufgezeichnet, die offensichtlich armenischen Ursprung haben**. Obwohl diese von Armeniern aus verschiedenen Provinzen herrühren und von mangelhaften Kenntnissen der türkischen Sprache zeugen (oft kommen darin armenische Wörter und Wendungen, Vornamen und Ortsnamen vor, grammatikalische und phonetische Unstimmigkeiten fallen ab und zu auf), haben sie einen hohen historischen und kognitiven Wert.

Die Lieder, die von dem Massaker erzählen, sind auf dem Weg zur Wüste von Der-el-Sor entstanden. Und da es verboten war, armenisch zu sprechen, haben die Armenier ihr Leid und ihre Schmerzen in der Sprache des Feindes, auf Türkisch, zum Ausdruck gebracht:

“Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”

„Ich stand am Morgen auf, die Sonne schien,  
Der osmanische Polizist fettete seine Waffe ein,  
Ich schaute auf die Armenier, sie weinten bitterlich,  
Die Armenier sterben für ihren Glauben!“ [Zg. 488]

Oder:

“Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesapa,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasapa,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”

„Was Der-Sor hieß, war eine weite Gegend,  
Zahllos waren die abgeschlachteten Armenier,  
Die osmanischen Führer waren Metzger geworden,  
Die Armenier sterben für ihren Glauben!“ [Zg. 467]

Die Armenier starben „für den Glauben,“ weil sie ihre christliche Religion und nationale Identität nicht leugnen wollten. Die Überlebende Augenzeugin des Genozides **Sirena Alatschatschjan** aus Adabasar (geb. 1910), die zum Zeitpunkt meines Gesprächs mit ihr in Istanbul wohnte, war vier Jahre alt, als die Türken ihre Eltern umbrachten. Für das schutzlose Waisenkind sorgten arabische Wüstenbewohner. Vier Jahre später, nach dem Waffenstillstand (1918), stießen die Leute, die die armenischen Waisenkinder abholen gekommen waren, auf ein achtjähriges blondes und blauäugiges Mädchen mit einem blau tätowierten Gesicht; es hatte jetzt einen anderen Vornamen, sprach kein Armenisch mehr, wusste aber noch ein Kreuz zu schlagen, wodurch es als eine Armenierin zu erkennen war. Die kleine Sirena kam in ein armenisches Waisenhaus. [Zg. 225]

Die aus mehr als 150 Orten vertriebenen überlebenden Augenzeugen erzählten, was sie gesehen und erlebt hatten, aber sie machten auch bestimmte politische Schlussfolgerungen, wie z. B. **Pargew Makarjan** aus Aintab (geb. 1915), der sagte: „...Die Großmächte betrogen die Armenier und gaben Kilikien den Türken. Zeitun, Adana, Sis, Marasch, Kilis, Aintab, Urfa, Kamurdsch und andere Städte blieben ohne ihre armenischen Einwohner. Man

zwang uns, aus Kilikien auszuziehen. Wir waren gezwungen, unsere Heimat zu verlassen. Und im Jahre 1922 organisierten sie die Katastrophe von Izmir; die Armenier und die Griechen flohen durchs Feuer, stürzten sich ins Meer. Wer sich retten konnte, ging in ein anderes Land. So „säuberte“ man die Türkei von Christen. Die Türkei blieb den Türken, Westarmenien und Kilikien ebenfalls.“ [Zg. 272]

Oder der Überlebende **Hakob Holobikjan** aus Charput (geb. 1902), der die ausführliche Schilderung seines Leids und der Leiden seiner Landsleute mit folgenden Worten abgeschlossen hat: „...*Dieses Verbrechen der jungtürkischen Regierung wird nie vergessen und darf nie vergeben werden!*“ [Zg. 115]

Die heutige türkische Propaganda und Geschichtsschreibung scheuen indes keine Mühe, die historischen Fakten zu falsifizieren, den von der jungtürkischen Regierung verübten Völkermord an den Armeniern vor den kommenden Generationen sorgfältig zu verbergen. Sie versuchen die historische Wahrheit zu verheimlichen, dass die türkischen staatlichen Behörden selbst vom Beginn des Jahres 1919 an einen Prozess gegen die jungtürkischen Verbrecher vorbereitet und diese zum Tod verurteilt haben. Später, als bekannt wurde, dass die Jungtürken gegen Mustafa Kemal, der nun der erste Präsident der Türkischen Republik war, einen Komplott geschmiedet hatten, sprach Atatürk in einem Interview für die Zeitung „Los Angeles Examiner“ (1. August, 1926) von der früheren jungtürkischen Partei, „die für das Leben von Millionen unserer christlichen Untertanen verantwortlich war, die massenweise schonungslos aus ihren Wohngebieten vertrieben und vernichtet wurden...“ [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations*. Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, S. 13]

Die tragischen Ereignisse sind also ein unwiderlegbarer Fakt, der über jeden Zweifel erhaben ist.

Die internationale Ländergemeinschaft hat leider den ersten Völkermord des 20. Jahrhunderts, den Armenier-Genozid, nicht in gebührender Weise verurteilt, und als seine logische Fortsetzung entstanden der Faschismus und neuerdings der internationale Terrorismus mit seinen unberechenbaren Manifestationen, der eine katastrophale Gefahr für die ganze Welt bedeutet; die unbestraften Verbrechen wiederholen sich nämlich und darunter leidet die ganze Menschheit.

Somit werden die Erinnerungen, Erzählungen und Lieder und Gesänge der überlebenden Augenzeugen, die von Generation zu Generation weitergegeben werden, zu Zeugnissen, die den Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Ereignisse, die darauf folgten, in der Sprache des einfachen Volkes beleuchten; es sind authentische faktographische Dokumente, die nicht nur von der Vergangenheit reden, sondern auch eine Warnung für die Zukunft sind.

Denn der Völkermord ist ein politisches Verbrechen, das auch dank Zeugenaussagen aufgedeckt werden muss. **Der größte Zeuge ist das Volk selbst**, das von seiner tragischen Vergangenheit mit tiefem Leid erzählt hat und weiter erzählt. Eine Vergangenheit, die die Vergangenheit des armenischen Volkes, seine Geschichte ist, seine kollektive historische Erinnerung, die dem gerechten Urteil der Welt und der Menschheit überlassen wird.

Es ist also an der Zeit, dass die Regierung der heutigen Türkei, ebenfalls den Mut aufbringt, nicht nur die mit schriftlichen und mündlichen Zeugnissen begründete offensichtliche historische Wahrheit anzuerkennen, die keiner Beweisung bedarf und **Genozid an den Armenien** heißt, sondern auch das Geschehene verurteilt und die moralischen, materiellen und territorialen Verluste des armenischen Volkes wiedergutmacht.







VERJİNE SVAZLİAN

## ERMENİ SOYKIRIMI: HAYATTA KALAN GÖRGÜ TANIKLARININ ANLATTIKLARI

(Özet)

İnsanlığa karşı işlenen uluslararası siyasi bir suç olarak Ermeni Soykırımı tarihin zorlamasıyla, Ermeni Halkı'nın ulusal bilincinin, düşüncelerinin ve iç dünyasının ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir.

Yıllar geçtikçe Ermeni Soykırımı'na duyulan ilgi daha da artıyor. Bunun nedeni, o tarihi olayın son zamanlarda çok sayıda ülke tarafından tanınması gerçeğidir. Ancak, Türk ve [resmi] Türk tezlerini benimseyen tarihçiler Ermeni Ulusu'nun kaderini tayin etmiş olan, 1915-1923 yılları arasında cereyan etmiş, doğruluğu kesin tarihi olayları çarpıtmak için bugüne kadar her türlü çabayı sarf etmişlerdir ve halen de sarf etmektedirler.

Ermeni Soykırımı hakkında farklı dillerde çok sayıda araştırma, belge içeren kitaplar, siyasetçi ve toplum adamlarının sözleri ve çeşitli türlerde sanat eserleri yayımlanmıştır; ama yayımlanmış o muazzam literatürde, sözü edilen o tarihi olayların doğrudan tesiri altında kalmış soykırımdan kurtulan görgü tanıklarının anlattığı anılar ve aktardığı halk şarkıları bulunmamaktadır. Bu hatıra ve şarkılar hem tarihin anlaşılması açısından, hem de belge ve birincil başvuru kaynakları olarak büyük önem taşımaktadırlar. Mademki o tarif edilemez ıstırapları Ermeni Ulusu'nun kendisi çekmiştir, o halde o kitlesel siyasi cürümün nesnesi de kendisidir ve nasıl ki her suçun aydınlatılmasında şahitlerin verdiği ifadeler belirleyici rol oynuyorsa, aynı şekilde bu vakada da soykırımdan kurtulan görgü tanıklarının anlattıklarını temel almak gerekmektedir. Bu hikâyelerden her biri Ermeni Davası'nın adil bir biçimde çözümlenmesi ve Ermeni Soykırımı'nın tanınması çalışmasında hukuki açıdan kanıt değeri taşımaktadır.

Tüm bunların bilincinde olarak, henüz Sovyet Ermenistan'ında Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan açıkça bahsetmenin imkânsız olduğu 1955 yılından itibaren, ve soykırımdan kıl payı kurtulmuş, sürgün edilmiş ve vatanlarına dönüş yapmış görgü tanıkları haksız bir biçimde iftiraya uğrama ve sürgüne gönderilme korku ve dehşeti içinde yaşarlarken, Yerevan Haçatur Abovyan Devlet Ermeni Pedagoji Üniversitesi'nde öğrenci olan ben, her türlü zorluğu hiçe sayıp halkın sözlü geleneklerine ait o tür konuların tarihbilimsel açıdan ve belge olarak değerlerini iyi bilerek başlangıçta batı Ermeni'si olmanın dürtüsüyle ve kendi şahsi inisiyatifimle, daha sonra, 1960 yılından itibaren ise Ermenistan Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji ve Etnografya Enstitüsü'nün, 1996 yılından itibaren de yeni kurulmuş Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti Ulusal Bilimler Akademisi Ermeni Soykırımı Müze-Enstitüsü'nün şemsiyesi

altında, başka bilimsel çalışmalara paralel olarak, yazın yakıcı sıcağında, kışın dondurucu soğukunda, mahalle mahalle, köy köy yayan gezerek Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan mucize eseri olarak kurtulmuş görgü tanıklarını arayıp bularak, onlara incelikle yaklaşarak, ek sorular sorup anlatıma müdahale etmeden, doğrudan doğruya edindikleri izlenimleri serbest bir şekilde ifade etmelerine izin vererek onların, orijinalleri EC UBA Ermeni Soykırımı Müze-Enstitüsü'nün arşivlerinde saklanan dehşet verici anılarını, etkileyici hikâyelerini ve söyledikleri muhtelif tarihi şarkıları yazıya döktük, bunların ses kayıtlarını yaptık, video görüntülerini kaydettik ve bantları deşifre edip inceledik.

Halktan elde edilen bu hikâyeler bir dizi çalışmamızda, özellikle de **“Ermeni Soykırımı: Hayatta Kalan Görgü Tanıklarının Anlattıkları”** (Yerevan, EC UBA “Gitutyun” Yayınevi, 2000, 500 sayfa, Ermenice) adlı kalın ciltli kitapta yayımlanmıştır; elinizdeki çalışma, o kitabın belirli eklemeler de içeren İngilizce tercümesidir.

Kitap iki kısımdan oluşmaktadır:

1) **Bilimsel inceleme:** Burada halkın anlattığı hikâyelerin tür ve tipoloji özellikleri açıklanmakta, halkın anıları ve tarihsel nitelikli (Ermenice ve Türkçe) şarkılarla tamamlanan ve desteklenen, Ermeni Soykırımı'nın bütün gidişatı sunulmaktadır;

2) **Birincil Kaynak Teşkil Eden Orijinal Kayıtlar** (700 birim). Bunlar hayatta kalan görgü tanıklarının anlattıkları anı-tanıklıkları, tarihi hikâye-tanıklıkları, tarihi şarkı-tanıklıkları ve şarkı notalarını içermektedir.

Kitapta görgü tanıkları ve onların aktardığı konular hakkında olayların kaydedildiği bir bilgi tablosuna, aynı zamanda soykırımdan kurtulanların fotoğrafları, farklı dillerde özetler, sözlük, açıklamaları, tematik, şahıs isimleri, yer isimleri ve etnoisimler indekslerine ve ayrıca Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda uygulanan Ermeni Tehciri ve Soykırımı hakkında fikir veren bir haritaya da sahiptir.

Halka ait o konuları aktaran **görgü tanıkları** daha ziyade kendi tarihi vatanlarından zorla kovulmuş Ermenilerin en yaşlı temsilcileridir. Onlar 1915-1923 arasında uygulanan Ermeni Soykırımı sırasında Batı Ermenistan'dan, Kilikya'dan (1921'de) ve Anadolu'da Ermenilerin yaşadığı çeşitli bölgelerden (1922'deki İzmir felaketi) sürgüne gönderilmişlerdir.

O tarihi olaylar sırasında batı Ermenilerinin hissedilir bir kısmı, 1,5 milyondan fazla insan, acımasızca yok edildi. Sürgün yollarında soyulan, varını yoğunu kaybeden ve bitkin düşüp mucize eseri olarak kurtulanlar ise tehcir yollarının mahrumiyetlerini yaşayıp sayısız kurban vererek Doğu Ermenistan'a ulaşmış veya dünyanın çeşitli ülkelerine yayılmışlardır. Daha sonra, soykırımdan arda kalan o insanların belirli bir kısmı Türkiye'den, Yunanistan'dan, Fransa'dan, Suriye'den, Lübnan'dan, Irak'tan, Mısır'dan, Balkan ülkelerinden ve ABD'den düzenli aralıklarla Doğu Ermenistan'a göç etmiş ve bir zamanlar yaşadıkları memleketlerinin hatıralarını simgeleyen, Yerevan yakınlarında yeni inşa edilmiş mahallelere yerleşmişlerdir (Aygestan, Sari Tağ, Nor [Yeni] Butanya, Nor Areş, Nor Kilikya, Nor Arabkir, Nor Zeytun, Nor Kharberd [Harput], Nor Sebastiya [Sivas], Nor Malatya, Nor Kesarya [Kayseri], Nor Hacın, Nor Maraş [Kahramanmaraş], Nor Ayntap [Gaziantep], Nor Musa Ler [Musa Dağ], Nor Yetesya [Urfa]). Ayrıca Eçmiadzin (şimdi Vağarşapat), Hoktemberyan'da (şimdi Armavir), Ararat, Talin, Hırzdan, Leninakan'da (şimdi Gümrü), Kirovakan'da (şimdi Vanadzor) ve başka yerlere de yerleşmişlerdir.

Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan mucize eseri olarak kurtulmuş, hayatta kalmış görgü tanıklarına rastladığımızda onları hep içlerine kapanık ve sessiz, derin düşüncelere dalmış olarak bulduk. O esrarengiz sessizliğin de bir sebebi vardı; on yıllar boyunca Sovyet Ermenistanı'nda hüküm süren siyasi engeller kendi geçmişlerinden serbestçe bahsetmelerine olanak tanımamıştı. Dolayısıyla, bu tür konuları büyük zorluklarla ortaya çıkarıp yazıya döktük.

55 yılı aşkın bir süredir yaptığımız tutarlı araştırmalar sayesinde hem Ermenistan'ın farklı bölgelerinde, hem de Suriye, Lübnan, Mısır, Yunanistan, Fransa, Kanada, ABD ve Türkiye'ye yaptığımız kişisel seyahatler ve bilimsel toplantılarla ilintili kısa süreli yolculuklar sırasında devamlı, Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan kurtulan görgü

tanıkları arasından en yaşlı, orta yaşlı ve en genç nesillerin temsilcilerini arayıp bulduk, onları yakından tanıdık ve onların ruhlarının derinliklerine nüfuz ettik.

Ricalarımız ve teşviklerimiz karşısında konuşmayı kabul ederek duygusal bir patlamayla acı geçmişlerini tekrar yaşayıp gözyaşlarına karışan hıçkırıklarla, küllenmiş, yürek sızlatan anılarını anlatmaya başladılar; Jön Türklere bağlı zaptiyelerin kendilerini gelişmiş ve zengin memleketlerinden nasıl zorla sürgüne gönderdiklerini, ebeveynlerini ve yakınlarını kendi gözlerinin önünde insanlık dışı bir biçimde nasıl parça parça ettiklerini, annelerinin, kız kardeşlerinin ve ablalarının namusunu lekelediklerini, yeni doğmuş bebekleri taşlarla ezdiklerini anlattılar...

Görgü tanıklarının anlattıkları **hikâyeler** (315 birim) farklı konular içermektedir. Vatanın güzellikleri, Ermenilerin eski zamanlardan kalma günlük yaşam tarzları ve gelenekleri, yaşadıkları zaman dilimi, toplumsal ve siyasi ortamın koşulları, önemli tarihi olaylar, Jön Türk hükümet liderlerinin (Talaat, Enver, Cemal, Nazım, Bahattin Şakir...) sergiledikleri vahşet (vergi toplama, seferberlik, silah toplama, zorla sürgün, katliam ve kıyım), o liderlerin Mezopotamya'nın ıssız çöllerine (Deir-es-Zor, Ras-ül-Ayn, Rakka, Meskene, Suruc...) doğru tertiplediği tehcir, Ermenilerin çektiği anlatılması imkânsız eziyetler (bitkin düşecek derecede uzun yürüyüşler, susuzluk, açlık, salgın hastalıklar, ölüm dehşeti...), ve batı Ermenilerinin farklı kesimlerinin kendi temel yaşamsal haklarını müdafaa etmek için zulme karşı haklı ve asil mücadeleleri (1915 Van Muharebesi; Şatak [Çatak], Şebinkarahisar ve Sasun'da [Sason] ölüm kalım mücadeleleri, Musa Dağ, Urfâ [Şanlıurfa] ve daha sonraları 1920-1921'de Ayntap [Gaziantep] ve Hacın muharebeleri) görgü tanıklarının anlattıkları anılara yansımaktadır. O savunma muharebelerinin ulusal kahramanları (Şebinkarahisarlı Andranik Ozanyan, Vanlı Armenak Yekaryan, Büyük Murad [Hambardzum Boyacıyan], Musa Dağlı Yesayi Yakupyan, Urfalı [Şanlıurfa] Mıkırtiç Yotınyeğpayryan, Ayntaplı [Gaziantep] Adur Levonyan, Zeytunlu [Süleymanlı] Aram Çolakyan, ulusal intikamcı Soğomon Tehliryan) ve toplumsal kitlelerle kaynaşarak şiddete karşı mücadele etmiş, şehit düşmüş, veya direnerek hayatta kalmış başka birçok tanınmış veya meçhul Ermeni evladı da bu anılara yansımıştır.

Bu incelemede, kesin tarihi kanıtlar soykırımdan kurtulan görgü tanıklarının aktardığı inanılır hikâyelerle birleştirilmiş, ayrıntılarıyla anlatılmış ve tamamlanmış olup, bu şekilde Ermeni Soykırımı'nın genel tarihsel gidişatı sunulmuştur.

Soykırımdan kurtulan görgü tanıkları tarafından anlatılan anılar o kategoriye ait konuların tür ve tipoloji özelliklerini bilimsel araştırmaya tabi tutma imkânını sunmaktadır.

Görgü tanıklarından her biri anılarını kendine has Ermenice konuşma tarzıyla, çoğu zaman lehçe veya yabancı kelimelerle karışık Ermeniceyle, bazen de Türkçe, Kürtçe, Arapça, İngilizce, Fransızca, Almanca anlattı.

Ermeni Soykırımı'nın görgü tanıkları tarafından anlatılan anılar halkın sözlü geleneklerinin bir çeşidi olarak yapıları itibariyle ya çok kısa ve öz, ya da kapsamlı ve uzundur. Bu anılar, sözlü anlatımları daha da inanılır ve etkileyici kılarak anlatılanların güvenilirliğini kanıtlamaya yarayan çeşitli dialoglar, aktarımlar ve halk folklorunun farklı türlerini (şarkı, türkü, hikâye, fabl, atasözü, özdeyiş, kutsama, beddua, dua, yemin) içermektedir. Özellikle, kendileri, **soykırımdan kurtulanlar anlattıklarına karşı ahlaki sorumluluk ve görev bilinci hissetmişlerdir. Onlardan birçoğu hatıralarını bize aktarmadan önce haç çıkarmış veya yemin etmiştir.** Yemin ise kutsal bir sözdür, sahteciliğe müsaade etmez.

Söz konusu anıları ve tarihsel nitelikli şarkıları nicelik ve nitelik açısından detaylı bir analize tabi tutarak gösterdik ki, nasıl ki hafızasız insan **yoksa hafızasız ulus da yoktur;** zira hafıza insanın ya da halkın yaşadığı yıllardan ibaret olan hayatıdır; onun geçmişi, onun tarihidir.

Yahudilerin, Rumların, Çingenelerin ve zarar görmüş başka halkların da tamamen buna benzer tarihsel hafızaları vardır [Porter, Jack Nusan, ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 1982] ve bir halk, bahsi geçen olaylarda Türk Halkı, eğer kendi tarihsel hafızasını muhafaza etmemiş ise o

halde bütün o ıstırapları çekmemiş demektir. Burada, Türk “Superonline” ve “İxir” İnternet Servis Sağlayıcılarının kurucusu Babür Özden’le yapılan “Sanal Dünyada Karşı Atak” başlıklı söyleşiden bazı bölümleri aktarmakta yarar var. Bu söyleşide Ermenilerin, Ermeni Soykırımı’ndan kurtulan görgü tanıklarının anlattığı anıları ve tarihsel nitelikli Türkçe şarkıları İnternet’te yayımladığından bahsedilmekte (burada V. Svazlian’ın “*The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors*” [*Soykırımdan Kurtulanların Hatıralarında ve Türkçe Şarkılarında Ermeni Soykırımı*]. Yerevan, EC UBA “Gitutiun” Basımevi, 1999 adlı kitabı ve <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html> İnternet sitesi söz konusudur) ve şunlar eklenmektedir: “...ben ‘soykırım siteleri’ nin sanal dünyada Ermenilerin tekelinde olduğunu fark ettim. ...Bizim örgütlenmemiz lazım. Türkiye örgütlenmemiştir. ...Bununla birlikte, o hikâyeleri [hayatta kalanların yaşam hikâyelerini] bulup ortaya çıkarmak bizim kültürümüzde çok zordur. Bizde kendi kendini motive etme ve bireyleşme eksikliğinden doğan olumsuz kültürel şartlar mevcuttur. ...Onlar [Ermeniler] kültürlerini ve geçmişlerini birbirine bağlamak için bir efsaneye ihtiyaç duyuyorlar. ...Bizim [Türklerin] böyle bir bağa ihtiyacımız yok. Biz geçmişi unutup geleceğe bakmak istiyoruz. Bizim ailelerimiz birbirine karışmış. [Geçmişte] Yazılan ne varsa, farklı bir alfabeyle yazılmıştır. Biz onları [hayatta kalanların yaşam hikâyelerini] okuyamazdık. Ben büyükbabamın yazdıklarını okuyamam. Eski Türkçe’yi [Osmanlıca] bilen insanlar onları okur. ...İnternet’te profesörlerin, [ve] tarihçilerin [çalışmalarını] yayımlamanın faydası yok. Arşivler insanları etkilemiyor. ...İnsanlar, ebeveynleri yok edilen ya da oraya buraya dağıtılan kendi benzerlerinin hayat hikâyelerinden etkilenmiyorlar. Onlar, onu [hikâyeyi] **kaynağından** (vurgulama tarafımıza aittir – V. S.) duyduklarında etkilenmektedirler. ...Ermenilerin İnternet’te yayımlanmış Türkçe ve İngilizce ‘Soykırım Şarkıları’ bile var.” (“Milliyet,” 28.01.2001, sayfa 19).

Şunu da belirtmek gerekir ki, kendi inisiyatifimizle yazıya döktüğümüz, ses ve görüntülerini kaydedip inceleyerek yayımladığımız, Ermeni Halkı’nın tarihsel hafızasını sunan, yukarıda bahsi geçen bu anı ve şarkı kitabının konuları [Svazlian 2000] Ermenistan’da yayımlandıktan sonra günden güne çoğalmaya devam etmektedir ve bu sonu olmayan bir süreçtir; zira her bir Ermeninin kendi sülalesinde acılar ve kayıplar olmuştur. Bunun dışında, soykırım neticesinde dünyaya yayılan binlerce Ermeninin sığındığı çeşitli ülkelerde sayısız tanık hikâyeleri bulunmaktadır (çeşitli lehçelerde, çeşitli dillerde, el yazması, ses veya video kaydı şeklinde). Bu hikâyeler bireylerin yanında veya arşivlerde toplanmış ve birikmiştir; halbuki, bunların da Ermeni Ulusu’nun tarihsel toplumsal hafızasına ait belge niteliği taşıyan hikâyeler olarak yazıya dökülmesi, yayımlanması ve bilimsel çevrelerde yayılması gerekmektedir.

Yirminci yüzyılın başında uygulanan **Ermeni Soykırımı** doğrudan doğruya görgü tanıklarının duyu organları tarafından algılanmış ve bütün bunlar **onların hafızalarına silinemeyecek şekilde kaydedilmiştir**.

O tarihi gelişmelerin görgü tanıkları acı geçmişlerini tekrar yaşayarak, bize maalesef çoktandır yok olmuş olan kendi tarihi vatanları, baba ocakları ve sevgili yakınları hakkında şahsi anılarını anlattılar. Onlar kendilerini bunaltan kâbustan kurtulmayı başaramayarak o şahsi hatıraları bütün hayatları boyunca taşımışlardır. **Soykırımdan kurtulanların anlattıkları anılar** Ermeni Halkı’nın yaşadığı çok özel tarihsel gelişmelerden doğrudan edinilen izlenimleri temsil ettiği için **tarihsel gerçekliğe doymuştur**.

**Soykırımdan kurtulanların ilettikleri anılar** mevzu bahis dönemdeki hayatı, yaşam tarzını, ananeleri, siyasal-toplumsal ilişkileri objektif olarak yansıtmakta olup **spontane, gerçeğe uygun ve güvenilirdir, ve inanılır tanık hikâyesi değeri taşımaktadır**.

Muşlu **Hırant Gasparyan** (d. 1908) anlattığı hatıranın sonunda o niteliğin altını özellikle çizdi: “...*Bütün gördüklerimi, kendi gözlerimle görmüş olduğlarımı anlattım size. Bütün gördüklerim gözlerimin önündedir. Khınus’tan [Hınıs] hiçbir şey getirmedi; sadece canlarımızı kurtardık. Sülalemizde 143 kişi vardı. Bir kız kardeşim, bir erkek kardeşim, annem ve ben kurtulduk*” [Tnk.<sup>1</sup> 13].

Sonraki bütün yaşamları boyunca, soykırımdan kurtulmuş görgü tanıkları tarafından tek tek sayılmış ve

<sup>1</sup> Eserde, bundan sonra Tanıklığı [Tnk.] şeklinde kullanılacaktır.

her bir noktası tahlil edilmiş, *o gerçek tanık hikâyeleri tarihi olaylarla birleştirildiklerinde zihinlerde en ufak bir şüphe dahi bırakmamaktadır*. Onlar anılarını anlatırlarken daima kendi sülalelerinin en yaşlı üyelerini anmaktadırlar: büyükbabayı, büyükanneyi, ebeveyni, ayrıca yakın akrabaları ve ailenin diğer fertlerini; çoğu zaman onların isimlerini ve doğum tarihlerini de vermektedirler. Dolayısıyla onların aktardığı veriler o kadar doğru ve inanılırdır ki, soykırım kargaşasında birbirini kaybetmiş akrabalar, kitaplarımızdaki anıları okuyarak, bazen onyıllar sonra, dünyanın çeşitli kıtalarından birbirine tekrar kavuşmakta ve bize teşekkür etmektedirler.

Hatıratta öne çıkan *başlıca şahıs anısını anlatan insan tipidir*. O sadece tarihsel önemli gelişmeleri, olayları ve simaları anlatmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda kendi dünya görüşünün ve kişiliğinin temel özelliklerini, kendine has yaklaşımı, kendine özgü dili ve tarzı dışa vurarak anlattıklarını yorumlamaktadır. *Dolayısıyla, görgü tanığının anlattığı anı, emalsizliği nedeniyle belirsizliğe yer bırakmamaktadır*. O, söz konusu bireyin geçmişi hakkında kendi yorumunu yansıtan özgeçmişidir; o anı her yeniden anlatıldığında temel içeriği hemen hemen hiç değişmemektedir; zira *bütün bunlar onların hafızasının ayrılmaz bir parçasını teşkil etmektedir* ve ben, bir folklorcu-etnoğrafa özgü uzman sorumluluğuyla, görgü tanıklarının sözlü anlatımlarına sadık kalarak onların anlattıklarını kelimesi kelimesine yazıya döktüm. Şunun da bilincindeydim ki, onlar içlerindeki en kutsal sırları *gelecek nesillere aktarılmak üzere* bize teslim etmekteydiler. Zeytunlulara has gururlu bir tavrı olan 94 yaşındaki **Karapet Tozluyan**'ın (d. 1903) ifadesiyle, kendisi okuma yazma bilmemesine rağmen: “*her akşam uyumadan önce dua eder gibi*” anılarını ve şarkılarını mırıldanmış ki, unutmasın. O, aklında tuttuklarını kutsal bir şefkatle bize aktardı ki: “*yazıya dökülsün, unutulmasın ve gelecek nesiller de öğrensün*” [Tnk. 254].

Aynı zamanda, *soykırımdan kurtulanların anlattıkları anılar birbirine tıpatıp benzemektedir*; zira farklı mekânlarda, farklı cins ve yaş gruplarının (erkek, kadın; en yaşlı, orta yaşlı ve genç nesiller) anlattıkları anılar, birbirinden bağımsız olarak, aynı tarihi dönemin gelişmelerini, benzer tarihi olayları ve simaları, gördükleri ve hissettikleri aynı dehşet verici manzaraları ve vahşeti hemen hemen aynı şekilde tasvir etmektedir. Bu anılar biraraya gelerek birbirini teyit etmekte, birbirinin devamını teşkil etmekte, tamamlamaktadır; anıların niteliği de *kişisel ve objektiften, genel ve ulusala doğru yönelmektedir*. Soykırımdan kurtulan **Tigran Ohanyan** (d. 1902, Kemah) da anlattığı anıyı özetlerken o durumu kastetmiştir: “*...Benim geçmişim sadece benim değil, halkımın da geçmiştir*” [Tnk. 97]. *Dolayısıyla, görgü tanıklarının anıları içerikleriyle sadece söz konusu bireyi ve onun bulunduğu ortamı değil, bütün toplumu karakterize etmekte, böylece Ermeni Halkı'nın ortak tarihsel hafızası haline gelmektedir*.

*Ama halkın tarihsel hafızası sürekli olma özelliğine de sahiptir*. Gerçi o tarihi olayların üzerinden 95 yılı aşkın bir süre geçti ve mucize eseri olarak kurtulmuş görgü tanıklarından birçoğu artık aramızda bulunmuyor; fakat en yaşlı neslin temsilcilerinin anlattıkları, ailelerde o kadar sık dinlenmiş, o kadar sık tekrarlanmış ki, sonraki nesillere kalan bir miras haline gelmiş ve sözlü olarak aktarılarak sonraki nesillerin hafızalarında da artık **tarihi hikâyeler** (70 birim) şeklinde, varlığını sürdürmeye devam etmektedir. O tarihi hikâyeleri sadece soykırımdan kurtulan görgü tanıklardan değil, sonraki nesillerden de alarak, *halkın tarihsel hafızasının hiç ölmediği, aksine sonraki nesillerin hafızalarında da varlığını sürdürdüğü gerçeğinin* bir kanıtı olarak yazıya döktük.

Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan kurtulan görgü tanıklarının aktardığı **tarihsel nitelikli şarkı ve türküleri yazıya dökmeyi de başardık** (315 birim). Bu şarkıların sözleri, bahsi geçen dönemdeki toplumsal yaşamın çeşitli yönlerini sanatsal bir şekilde yeniden canlandırmaktadır: Jön Türk Hükümeti'nin ilan ettiği seferberlik ve yürüttüğü silah toplama faaliyetleri, düzenlediği tehcir ve katliamlar, başka gerçek, acıklı ve etkileyici olaylar, şikâyet ve hak talepleriyle ilgili mağrur niyetler.

O tarihi şarkıları besteleyenlerin büyük çoğunluğu Ermeni kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Ulusal felaketin psikolojik etkisi her kadın veya kız tarafından kendine özgü bir biçimde algılanmıştır. O dehşet verici izlenimler o kadar güçlü ve derin olmuştur ki, çoğu zaman şiirsel olarak ifade edilmiştir. Tıpkı soykırımdan kurtulan Muşlu **Şoğër Tonoyan**'ın (d. 1901) gözyaşları ve feryatlarla bize ilettiği, kendi eseri olan ağıt gibi [orijinali Ermenicedir]:

“...Gece gündüz ağlamalar sızlamalar duyuyorum,  
Rahatım yok, huzurum yok, uykum yok,  
Gözlerimi kapayınca, hep ölüler görüyorum,  
Milletimi, dostlarımı, toprağımı ve evimi kaybettim...” [Tnk. 437].

Doğuştan hassas ve duygusal olan kadınlar Ermeni Tehciri'nin, sürgün ve katliamların neden olduğu bütün eziyetlerin yükünü doğrudan kendi cılız omuzlarında taşımışlardır. Dolayısıyla onlar kendi gözleriyle gördüklerini, ruhlarının derinliklerinde hissettiklerini detaylı bir şekilde ve imgeli bir dille betimlemişlerdir; zira kendi kocalarını ve çocuklarını Türk Ordusu'nda görev yapmaya göz yaşlarıyla yolcu eden Ermeni annelerdir. Erkekler ise Ermeni askerlere silah verilmediğini, onların “*Amele Taburları*”na ağır işlerde çalışmaya gönderildiklerini anlatan şarkılar bestelemişlerdir. Onlar bitkin düşerek ölmüş veya öldürülmüş ve kendi kazdıkları çukurların içine doldurulmuştur (“**Seferberlik, silah toplama ve mahpusluk şarkıları**”). Ondan sonra Ermeni kadınları evlerini ve bahçelerini, ve mallarını terk etmeye, kendi çocukları ve güçsüz yaşlı ebeveynleriyle birlikte göç yolunu tutmaya zorlanmışlardır. Onlar yorgunluktan kanayan ayaklarıyla yakıcı güneşin altında, aç susuz, Türk zaptiyelerin kırbaç darbelerine maruz kalarak Deir-es-Zor, Ras-ül-Ayn, Rakka, Meskene, Suruc ve diğer çöllerde doğru yürümüşlerdir. Hem görgü tanıkları tarafından anlatılan anılarda hem de onların aktardığı şarkılarda, geçtikleri yollar, Türk Zaptiyeler, Kürt çeteleri, Çeçen ve Çerkez katliamcılarının gerçekleştirdiği soygun ve yağma olayları, Ermeni kız ve kadınlarının kaçırılıp öldürülmesi, kazığa oturtulması, karınlarının yarılması ve altın aranması, bazılarının çarpmıha gerilip işkenceyle öldürülmesi, hamile kadınların karınlarının canlıyken süngülerle yarılması ve ceninlerin dışarı çıkarılması, vs. gibi konulardan söz edilmektedir. İşte bu nedenledir ki, Türk'ün eline geçmemek, Türk'e karı olmamak, Türk çocuklar doğurmamak için umutsuzluğa kapılmış masum Ermeni kızlar elele tutuşup, kendilerini Fırat Nehri'ne atmışlardır (“**Tehcir-sürgün ve kırım şarkıları**”). Kaçırılmış çocukların annelerinin çektiği acılara, anasız babasız kalmış öksüzler ve yetimhaneler hakkında bestelenmiş hüznü şarkılara özel bir bölüm ayrılmıştır (“**Evlat kaybetmiş anneler, yetimler ve yetimhane şarkıları**”). Büyük bir kısmı Erkekler tarafından bestelenen, Ermenilerin haklı şikâyetleri ve isyanı, kendi temel insan haklarını müdafaa etme, zulme tahammül etmeme, özsavunma, mücadele ve savaşım konulu mağrurluk ifade eden şarkılar (“**Vatanseverlik ve kahramanlık şarkıları**”) da sunulmuştur. Son olarak ise zorla zaptedilmiş Vatan hakkında, ona tekrar kavuşma inancını ifade eden, umut dolu şarkılara da yer verilmiştir (“**İşgal edilmiş Vatan ve talepkarlık şarkıları**”). Farklı nitelikteki o şarkılar mümkün olduğu ölçüde notalarıyla birlikte sunulmuştur.

Bu tarihi şarkılar, temalarının orijinalliği ve fikirsel içerikleriyle, halk bilim ve soykırım bilim alanında yenilik olup, ayrıca o tarihsel dönemi, Ermeni Soykırımı'nın uygulandığı şartları ve ayrıntıları yeni bir şekilde takdim etmektedir.

Ermeni Ulusu'nun yaşadığı özel tarihsel olayların doğrudan etkisi altında yaratıldıklarından, **bu tür şarkılar ve türküler de tarihsel gerçekliğe doymuş olup, gerçek belge değeri taşımaktadırlar.**

O tarihi şarkılar her iki cinsten, değişik yaşlarda, yetenekli, kimliği belirsiz bireyler tarafından bestelenmiş, zamanında yaygın olarak söylenmiştir; halkın ıstrabı kitlesel bir niteliğe sahip olduğundan, halk şarkıları da kitlelere yayılmış ve ağızdan ağıza dolaşmıştır. Bu durum çok çeşitli yeni versiyonların doğmasına yol açmıştır; öyle ki, birbirine tıpatıp benzeyen şarkılar eşzamanlı olarak çeşitli versiyonlar biçiminde ve dönüşüme tabi tutularak bestelenmiştir. **Bu durum o tarihi şarkıların halka ait olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır.**

Yaptığımız çok sayıda söyleşi ve ses kaydı sırasında bir şarkıyı ya da onun bir versiyonunu bana o kadar çok yaşayan görgü tanığı iletmişti ki, onların hepsinin ad-soyadlarını anmak imkânsızdı. Dolayısıyla bu kitabın belge açıklama tablosuna sadece bu şarkıların temel varyantlarını iletenerin isimlerini koyduk. Aynı yerde, söz konusu şarkıyı (ya da anıyı) ileten soykırımdan kurtulmuş görgü tanığının adını, soyadını, doğum tarihini, doğum yerini, konunun yazıya döküldüğü tarihi, yeri, anlatımın hangi dilde olduğunu, niteliğini (el yazması, ses ya da görüntü kaydı) ve arşiv dizi numarasını (Prof. Dr. Isidor Levin'in halka ait sözlü konuları bilimsel olarak belgeleme

yöntemine göre) belirttim.

Ermeni Soykırımı'nın (kadın ya da erkek) görgü tanıkları o şarkıları, geçmişi duygusal bir patlamayla yeniden yaşayarak ve gözyaşlarına karışan hıçkırıklarla hatırlamışlardır; çünkü bu şarkılar onların tarihsel hafızasıyla doğrudan ilintilidir. Tarihi halk şarkılarının orijinal özellikleri bu durumla açıklanabilir.

O halk şarkılarının çeşitli versiyonları tarihi açıdan doğru olmakla birlikte, kısa bir imgeli anlatım ve ortaçağın ağlamaklı Ermeni şarkılarına özgü ince veya hüznü melodilerle karakterize edilirler. O şarkıların her satırı ve deyişi bütün bir resim, kitlesel trajedinin tüyler ürperten bir sahnesidir; hıçkırıklarla dolu nakaratlar ise şiirsel, imgelerle ifade edilen bir düşünceyi tamamlamaktadır.

**Tarihsel nitelikli şarkılar sadece Ermenice değil, Türkçe olarak da bestelenmişlerdir;** zira söz konusu tarihi ve siyasi şartlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun bazı bölgelerinde Ermenice konuşmak yasaktı.

Uzun süre bir arada yaşamış iki halkın tinsel kültürlerinin etkilerini ve etkileşimlerini imkânsız addetmemekle birlikte, şunu da belirtmek gerekir ki, "...Ermenice kelime telaffuz edenlerin dillerini kesmişlerdi; dolayısıyla Kilikya'nın bazı şehirlerinde (Sis, Adana, Tarson [Tarsus], Ayntap [Gaziantep]) ve o şehirlerin çevresinde yaşayan Ermeniler kendi ana dillerini unutmuşlardı..." [Galustyan Grigor, *Maraş kam Germanik yev Heros Zeytun (Maraş veya Germanik ve Kahraman Zeytun)*. New York, 1934, sayfa 698, Ermenice] veya "Türklerin zulmü o kadar büyük oldu ki, Ermenice konuşan Ayntap [Gaziantep], Küçük Asya'nın diğer belli başlı şehirleri gibi, Türkçe konuşur oldu. Ermenice diline son kesin darbe Ermenice konuşanların dillerini kesen yeniçerilerden geldi..." [Sarafyan Gevorg, *Patmutyun Antepi Hayots (Antep Ermenilerinin Tarihi)*. 1. Cilt, Los Angeles, 1953, sayfa 5, Ermenice].

19'uncu asrın sonunda ve 20'inci asrın başlarında etnolog-folklorcu Sargis Haykuni kendi döneminde yaşayan batı Ermenilerinin siyasi, ekonomik ve dini durumunu tasvir ederken şöyle yazmış: "...Ermenice Türk mollalar tarafından yasaklanmıştı ve Ermenice 7 kelime bir küfür addedildiğinden, bunun için 5 koyunluk bir ceza öngörülmüştü" [Haykuni Sargis, *Korats u Moratsvats Hayer. Trabzoni Hay-Mahmetakan Gyuğern u Nrants Avandutyunneri (Kaybolmuş ve Unutulmuş Ermeniler. Trabzon'un Müslüman Ermeni Köyleri ve Gelenekleri)*. "Ararat," Vağarşapat, 1895, sayfa 297, Ermenice].

Bizim yazıya döktüğümüz anılarda da Sis, Adana, Tarson, Ayntap, Kütahya, Bursa, Kesarya [Kayseri], Eskişehir ve başka yerlerde yaşayan Ermenilerin genellikle Türkçe konuştuğuna dair birçok hikâye vardır. Soykırımdan kurtulan Adanalı **Mikayel Keşişyan**'ın (d. 1904) anlattıklarına göre: "*zaten Ermenice konuşmak ve öğrenmek yasaklanmıştı; buna karşı gelenin sadece dilini kesmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda koltuklarının altına haşlanmış sıcak yumurta da koyarlardı ki, başkalarına Ermenice öğrettiğini itiraf etsin. İtiraf etmesi durumunda da götürüp asarlar veya öldürürlerdi*" [Tnk. 241].

O konuda bizim yazıya döktüğümüz, Konyalı **Satenik Kuyumcuyan**'ın (d. 1902) bize aktardığı küçük bir Ermeni halk şarkısı da bu hususu doğruluyor [şarkının orijinali Ermenicedir]:

*"Okula girip, öğretmeni tuttular,  
Vay, aman!  
Ağzını açıp, dilini kestiler,  
Ah, aman!"* [Tnk. 446]

Ermeni bayan öğretmen Ermeni çocuklara Ermenice öğretme cüretini gösterdiği için o şekilde cezalandırılmıştı. Tehcir yollarında ise o sert önlemlerin şiddeti daha da artmıştı. Dolayısıyla, batı Ermenileri çektikleri ıstırapı ve eziyeti mecburen Türkçe olarak da ifade etmişlerdir.

Dil yoluyla gerçekleştirilen asimilasyonun ilkel seviyesini temsil eden o üzücü olayın toplumsal-siyasi koşulları göz önünde bulundurularak, çeşitli lehçelerde yazıya dökülmüş konularla birlikte, **Türkçe ama bariz bir şekilde Ermeni kökenli olan tarihi halk şarkıları ve türküleri** de gözümüzden kaçmadı. Bunlar her ne kadar farklı

bölgelerden Ermeniler tarafından bestelenmişler de, ki mükemmel bir Türkçe bilgisiyle de bestelenmemişlerdir (Sık sık Ermenice sözcükler ve ifadeler, Ermenice şahıs ve yer adları geçmekte, dilbilgisi ve telaffuz hataları göze çarpmaktadır), fikirsel içerikleriyle tarihin anlaşılması açısından büyük değer taşımaktadır.

Katliamları anlatan şarkılar Deir-es-Zor'a giden sürgün yollarında bestelenmiştir ve Ermenice konuşmak da yasak olduğu için, Ermeniler çektikleri acıları ve eziyetleri düşmanın diliyle, yani Türkçe ifade etmişlerdir:

*“Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağıyor,  
Ermeniyeye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”* [Tnk. 488, ŞOT<sup>1</sup>]

ya da:

*“Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesaba,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasaba,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”* [Tnk. 467, ŞOT]

Ermeniler “*dinleri uğruna*” ölüyorlardı; zira Hıristiyanlık inançlarını ve ulusal kimliklerini inkâr etmek istemiyorlardı. İstanbul'da yaşayan soykırımdan kurtulmuş Adapazarlı 90 yaşındaki **Sirena Alacacıyan** (d. 1910) Türkler anasını ve babasını öldürdükleri zaman dört yaşındaymış. Sahipsiz kalan öksüze çöl Arapları bakmışlar. Dört yıl sonra, mütarekeyi müteakip (1918), Ermeni öksüzlerini çöllerden toplayan kişiler 8 yaşına gelmiş, yüzüne mavi mürekkeple dövme yapılmış, ismi değiştirilmiş, mavi gözlü, sarı kıvrıkcık saçlı kızcağızı görmüşler; tabii, onun Ermeni olduğunu anlamışlar. Gerçi o Ermenice konuşmayı unutmuş ama, istavroz çıkarmayı unutmamış; bu da onun Hıristiyan-Ermeni olduğunun kanıtı olmuş. Küçük Sirena'yı alıp Ermeni Öksüzler Yurdu'na götürmüşler [Tnk. 225].

Yaklaşık 150'ü aşkın yerleşim merkezinden zorla tehcir edilmiş görgü tanıkları yalnız kendi görüp hissettiklerini anlatmakla kalmıyorlar, aynı zamanda belirli siyasi sonuçlar çıkarıyorlar. Mesela, Ayntaplı **Pargev Makaryan** (d. 1915) şunları ekledi: “...*Büyük devletler Ermenileri kandırıp Kilikya'yı Türklere verdi. Zeytun, Adana, Sis, Maraş, Kilis, Ayntap, Urfa, Kamurc ve başka şehirler Ermenilerden tamamen arındırıldı. Bizi Kilikya'dan ayrılmaya zorladılar. Vatanımızı terk etmeye mecbur kaldık. 1922'de de İzmir Faciası'nı düzenlediler; Ermeniler ve Rumlar ateşten kaçarak denize atıldılar. Kim kendini kurtarabildiyse başka ülkelere gitti. Böylece Türkiye'yi Hıristiyanlardan “temizlediler.” Türkiye, Batı Ermenistan ve Kilikya'yla birlikte Türklere kaldı.*” [Tnk. 272].

Kharberdli [Harput] görgü tanığı **Hakob Holobikyan** (d. 1902) kendisinin ve hemşerilerinin çektiği ıstırapları detaylı bir şekilde anlattıktan sonra sözlerini şöyle sonuçlandırmıştır: “...*Jön Türkler tarafından gerçekleştirilen o cürüm hiçbir zaman unutulmaz ve affedilmemelidir!*” [Tnk. 115].

Gelin görün ki, günümüzün Türk propagandası ve tarihçiliği Jön Türk Hükümeti'nin uyguladığı Ermeni Soykırımı'nı insanlardan özenle saklayarak doğruluğu kesin tarihi olayları çarpıtmak için hiçbir çabayı esirgemiyor. Onlar daha 1919 yılının başından itibaren Türk devlet kurumlarının Jön Türk katillerine davalar açılması işine giriştikleri ve onları ölüme mahkûm ettikleri tarihi gerçeğini dikkate almamayı denemektedirler. Daha sonra, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilk cumhurbaşkanı olan Mustafa Kemal'e karşı düzenlenmiş Jön Türk komplosu ortaya çıkarıldığında ise, “Los Angeles Examiner” gazetesine (1 Ağustos 1926'da) verdiği mülakatta, bizzat Mustafa Kemal'in kendisi de Jön Türkleri kınayarak şöyle demiştir: “Eski Jön Türk, İttihat Partisi'nin o kalıntıları, o parti ki yaşadıkları yerlerden acımasızca kitlesel olarak sürgüne gönderilen ve yok edilen bizim milyonlarca Hıristiyan vatandaşımızın canının hesabını vermesi gerekirdi...” [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World*

<sup>1</sup>Bundan böyle Ermeniler tarafından yaratılan Türkçe şarkılar, Şarkının Orijinali Türkçedir – ŞOT kısaltmasıyla belirtilecektir.

*Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations.* Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, sayfa 13].

Öyle ki, o acı tarihi olay inkâr edilemez bir gerçektir ve akıllarda hiçbir şüphe bırakmamaktadır.

Maalesef uluslararası toplum da 20'nci yüzyılda uygulanmış ilk soykırım olan Ermeni Soykırımı konusunda zamanında uyarıda bulunmadı ve bu olayı gerektiği gibi kınamadı ve bunun mantıksal bir devamı olarak Faşizm doğdu; günümüzde ise ne şekilde ortaya çıkacağı öngörülemeyen ve bütün dünya için feci bir tehlike oluşturan uluslararası terör görülmektedir; yani cezasız kalmış suçlar insanlığa zarar vererek tekrarlanmaktadır.

Böylece, hayatta kalan görgü tanıklarının anlattığı, hiçbir iz bırakmadan yok olmaktan kurtulan ve gelecek kuşaklara aktarılan anılar ve tarihi niteliğe sahip şarkılar, tarihin kavranması açısından taşıdıkları önem nedeniyle Ermeni Soykırımı'na ve o soykırımı müteakiben cereyan etmiş tarihsel olaylara halkın kullandığı basit dille ışık tutan tanık hikâyeleri haline gelip, inanılır, objektif ve olayları kaydeden belgeler olmaktadır. Onlar sadece geçmiş hakkında hikâyeler olmayıp, aynı zamanda geleceğe dönük uyarılardır.

Soykırım kitlesel siyasi bir suçtur ve cezasız kalmaması, aksine, görgü tanıklarının verdiği ifadelerle de hukuken aydınlatılması gerekir. **En büyük tanık ise Halkın kendisidir.** Acılarıyla hayatta kalan Halk trajik geçmişini anlatmış ve hala da anlatmaya devam etmektedir. O geçmiş, Ermeni Ulusu'nun geçmişi, onun tarihidir; dünyanın ve insanlığın adil yargısına teslim edilmesi gereken, onun toplumsal tarihsel hafızasıdır.

Dolayısıyla, şimdiki Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti için de, hem yazılı hem de sözlü kanıtlara dayanan, ispatlanmasına gerek olmayan ve **Ermeni Soykırımı** adı verilen o açık tarihi gerçeği sadece tanıma değil, ayrıca yapılanları kınama ve Ermeni Ulusu'nun maddi, manevi ve toprak kayıplarını tazmin etme cesaretini gösterme zamanı da gelmiştir.







**ВЕРЖИНЕ СВАЗЛЯН**

## **ГЕНОЦИД АРМЯН: СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВА ОЧЕВИДЦЕВ**

*(Резюме)*

Геноцид армян как политическое злодеяние против человечества по суровому диктату истории стал неотъемлемой частью национального самосознания, менталитета и психологии армянского народа.

По прошествии лет интерес к Геноциду армян еще более возрос, что обусловлено признанием в последнее время данного исторического факта множеством стран. Однако турецкие и протурецкие историки по сегодняшний день всячески пытаются фальсифицировать ставшие для армянского народа судьбоносными доподлинные исторические события 1915-1923 годов.

О Геноциде армян издано на разных языках мира множество исследований, сборников документов; опубликованы высказывания политических и общественных деятелей, разножанровые художественные произведения. Однако в огромном массиве изданной литературы не был отражен глас народа – воспоминания и народные песни, поведанные нам свидетелями-очевидцами упомянутых исторических событий, которые также представляют историко-познавательную, документальную и источниковедческую ценность. Поскольку на долю армянского народа выпали эти неописуемые страдания, то наш народ является объектом этого массового политического злодеяния. И поскольку при раскрытии любого преступления решающим фактором являются показания свидетелей, то в данном случае также следует основываться на свидетельствах очевидцев, каждое из которых с правовой точки зрения имеет доказательственное значение для справедливого решения Армянского Вопросы и признания Геноцида армян.

Начиная с 1955 года, когда в Советской Армении возбранялось открыто говорить о Геноциде армян, а чудом уцелевшие репатрианты свидетели-очевидцы боялись быть несправедливо оклеветанными и сосланными, автор данного исследования, будучи студенткой Армянского государственного педагогического университета имени Хачатура Абовяна, не страшась всякого рода трудностей и глубоко осознавая историко-научную и документальную ценность такого рода материалов, восходящих к устной народной традиции, вначале по зову крови западноармянской репатриантки и личной инициативе, затем – с 1960 г. под эгидой Института археологии и этнографии АН Армении, а с 1996 года – также под началом Музея-института Геноцида армян НАН РА, параллельно с иной научной работой, в летний зной и зимнюю стужу, по крупицам собирала эти материалы, обходя квартал за кварталом, деревню за деревней, находя

очевидцев, записывала рассказы-воспоминания чудом спасшихся свидетелей-очевидцев Геноцида, проявляя при этом особый психологический подход, дабы дать им возможность высказаться, не прерывая посторонними вопросами. Ужасающие воспоминания, впечатляющие рассказы, исторические песни с уст свидетелей были записаны (также на аудио- и видеокассеты), расшифрованы и изучены нами. Оригиналы этих материалов хранятся в архиве Музея-института Геноцида армян НАН РА.

Эти народные свидетельства опубликованы в ряде наших работ и, в частности, в объемной книге *“Геноцид армян: Свидетельства очевидцев”* (Ереван, Издательство “Гитутюн” НАН РА, 2000, 500 с., на арм. яз.), и настоящее издание является ее английским переводом с некоторыми дополнениями.

Книга состоит из двух разделов:

а) *Научное исследование*, где освещаются жанровые и типологические особенности народных свидетельств, а также процесс Геноцида армян, дополненные и обоснованные рассказами и песнями исторического характера (на армянском и турецком), поведенными нам очевидцами событий.

б) *Первоисточники* (700 единиц), которые включают Воспоминания, исторические Повествования, исторические Песни свидетелей-очевидцев, а также их последующих поколений, Нотирование песен.

В книге помещена также Документальная информационная таблица, содержащая сведения о свидетелях-очевидцах, народоведческих материалах, а также Фотографии очевидцев, Резюме на разных языках, Словарь, Примечания, Тематические Индексы, Индексы Имен, Топонимов и Этнонимов, а также Карта депортации и Геноцида армян в Османской империи.

**Свидетели-очевидцы**, предоставившие нам эти народоведческие материалы, в подавляющем большинстве являются представителями старшего поколения, насильственно депортированными в 1915-1923 гг. из Западной Армении, Киликии (1921 г.) и заселенных армянами местностей Анатолии (1922 г., трагедия в Измире).

Во время этих исторических событий значительная часть западных армян – более 1,5 млн. – была беспощадно истреблена, а некоторая часть чудом спасшихся, разоренных, обездоленных и обессилевших на дорогах депортации и вкусивших все лишения армян, давших неисчислимые жертвы, перебралась в Восточную Армению, либо рассеялась по разным странам мира. В дальнейшем многие из них репатриировались из Турции, Греции, Франции, Сирии, Ливана, Ирака, Египта, балканских стран и США на Родину, в Восточную Армению, и обосновались в пригородах Еревана, символизировавших их былую историческую родину в Западной Армении (Айгестан, Сари Таг, Нор (Новый) Бутания, Нор Ареш, Нор Киликия, Нор Арабкир, Нор Зейтун, Нор Харберд, Нор Себастья, Нор Малатия, Нор Кесария, Нор Аджн, Нор Мараш, Нор Айнтап, Нор Муса Лер (Муса Даг), Нор Едесия), а также в Эчмиадзине (ныне: Вагаршапат), Октемберяне (ныне: Армавир), Арарате, Талине, Раздане, Ленинакане (ныне: Гюмри), Кировакане (ныне: Ванадзор) и др..

Свидетели-очевидцы были немногословны и замкнуты, углублены в свои мысли, что также имело свои причины: существовавшие в Советской стране на протяжении десятилетий политические запреты вынуждали их молчать, не давая возможности открыто говорить или писать о прошлом. Поэтому автору книги пришлось приложить немало усилий, чтобы выявить и записать подобного рода материал.

На протяжении более чем 55 лет, благодаря кропотливым поискам как в различных районах Армении, так и в ходе краткосрочных личных поездок в Сирию, Ливан, Египет, Грецию, Францию, Канаду, США и Турцию, а также во время имевших место в этих странах научных конференций нам удалось найти представителей старшего, среднего и младшего поколений свидетелей-очевидцев Геноцида, познакомиться с ними поближе, заглянуть им в душу.

Вняв нашим настойчивым увещаниям, они с волнением, вновь переживая свое печальное прошлое,

то плача, то рыдая, пересказывали нам запавшие им в память и хватающие за душу картины былого, описывая, как младотурецкие полицейские насильственно депортировали их с родины прадедов, на их глазах убивая родителей и близких, обещавшая матерей и сестер, камнями раздавливая новорожденных...

**Воспоминания** свидетелей-очевидцев (315 единиц) охватывают различные темы: они отображают красоту их родной природы, патриархальный уклад, обычаи и традиции армян, общественно-политическую жизнь, важные исторические события, чинимые главарями правительства младотурок (Талаат, Энвер, Джемал, Назим, Беаеддин Шакир...) жестокости – сборы налогов, военные сборы, сборы оружия, массовое истребление, насильственное выселение, резню, погромы, организованную ими депортацию в пустыни Месопотамии (Дейр-эл-Зор, Рас-ул-Айн, Ракка, Мескене, Суруч...), невероятные страдания армян, которых заставляли идти по пустыням до изнеможения (голод, жажда, эпидемии, страх смерти...), а также справедливая и честная борьба армян в различных областях Западной Армении во имя защиты своего элементарного права на жизнь (героическое сражение Вана в 1915 г., сражения в Шатахе, Шапин-Гарайсаре, Сасуне, Муса Даге, Урфе, позднее, в 1920-1921 годах, героическая борьба армян Айнтапа, Аджна); национальных героев этих самооборонительных боев (шапингарайсарец генерал Андраник Озаян, Арменак Екарян из Вана, Мецн (Великий) Мурад (Амбарцум Бояджян), мусадагец Есаи Ягубян, Мкртич Ётнегбайрян из Урфы, айнтапеец Адур Левонян, зейтунец Арам Чолакян, народный мститель Согомон Тейлирян) и многих других известных и неизвестных сынов армянского народа, которые, восстав против насилия, воевали вместе с народом, умирали мученической смертью, но и противостояли, выживали.

Упомянутые в этом исследовании исторические события и факты сопоставлены, детализированы и дополнены документальными свидетельствами очевидцев, представляющими исторический процесс Геноцида.

Воспоминания свидетелей-очевидцев дали также возможность исследовать жанровые и типологические особенности подобного рода материалов.

Очевидцы этих трагических событий рассказывали о пережитом на своем родном армянском наречии, часто с привлечением диалектных и инородных слов, а также – на турецком, арабском, курдском, английском, французском, немецком языках.

Воспоминания свидетелей-очевидцев Геноцида армян как разнородность устной народной традиции по своей структуре либо кратки и сжаты, либо объемны и пространны и охватывают различные диалоги, цитаты и разные жанры фольклора (песни, поэмы, беседы, басни, пословицы, поговорки, благословения, заклинания, молитвы, клятвы), что придает им еще большую достоверность, сделав их устную речь более экспрессивной. Тем более, что сами *очевидцы испытывали чувство долга и высокой моральной ответственности за рассказанное: многие из них предваряли свои воспоминания клятвой, либо осеяли себя крестом*. А клятва не терпит лжи, ибо она свята.

Подробный количественный и качественный анализ составляющих книгу воспоминаний и исторических песен приводит к заключению, что подобно тому, как без памяти нет человека, так и *без памяти нет народа*, поскольку память – это история народа, его прошлое, ведь память – это годы человеческой жизни, жизни народа.

Подобные материалы исторического характера есть также у евреев, греков, цыган и других пострадавших народов, на долю которых также выпало немало испытаний. [Porter, Jack Nusan, ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 1982] А если народ, в данном случае турецкий, не сохранил свою историческую память, то он, следовательно, не пережил всех этих страданий. Здесь уместно вспомнить отрывки из интервью основателя турецких “Superonline” и “Ixi” серверов Бабура Оздена “Ответный удар в виртуальном мире” (“Counterattack in the Virtual World”), отметившего, что армяне внесли

в Интернет воспоминания очевидцев о Геноциде армян и туркоязычные песни исторического характера (имеет в виду также нашу книгу – V. Svazlian. “*The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors.*” Yerevan, “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999, а также – <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html> страница). К тому же он добавляет: “...Я нахожу, что ”сайты Геноцида” в виртуальном мире [стали] монополией армян. ...Мы должны быть организованны. Турция неорганизована. ...Тем не менее, в нашей культуре весьма сложно найти подобные истории [истории жизни очевидцев]. Нам не хватает самостимулирования и индивидуальности – налицо неблагоприятная культурная ситуация. ...Они [армяне] нуждаются в мифе, дабы сочетать свою культуру и прошлое. ...Мы [турки] не нуждаемся в подобном сочетании. Мы хотим забыть прошлое и смотреть вперед. Наши семьи смешались. Все, что было написано [в прошлом], было написано на основе другого алфавита. Мы не могли их [истории жизни очевидцев] прочесть. Я не могу прочесть записи моего деда. Их читает только знаток старотурецкого [османского]. ...Нет пользы от внесения в Интернет [трудов] профессоров и историков. Архивы не действуют на людей. ...Людей не впечатляют истории жизни их подобных, родители которых либо уничтожены, [либо] рассеялись по миру. Их впечатляет то, что [историю] они узнают из *первоисточника* (подчеркнуто нами – В. С.). ...У армян в Интернете есть даже разделы “песен геноцида” на турецком и английском языках.” (“Milliyet,” 28.01.2001, с. 19)

Следует отметить, что собранные и записанные (а также на аудио- и видео) по нашей собственной инициативе первоисточники, исследованные и опубликованные воспоминания и песни нашего данного сборника представляют собой коллективную историческую память армянского народа и, после издания в Армении [Свазлян 2000], изо дня в день пополняются новыми, и этот процесс нескончаем, поскольку у всех армян были потери. Кроме того, в различных странах мира, ставших убежищем для тысяч армян, есть бесчисленное множество свидетельств (на различных диалектах, языках, письменные или аудио- и видеоматериалы), которые хранятся у отдельных лиц и в архивах. Между тем они также должны быть расшифрованы, изданы и введены в научный оборот как документальные свидетельства коллективной исторической памяти армянского народа.

Осуществленный в начале XX в. *Геноцид армян оставил неизгладимый след в памяти свидетелей-очевидцев*, непосредственно переживших его кровью и плотью.

Свидетели этих исторических событий, с болью в сердце обращаясь к печальному прошлому, поделились с нами своими личными воспоминаниями об исторической родине, родном очаге, любимых и близких, которых, увы, давно нет в живых. Эти картины прошлого они пронесли через всю свою жизнь, не сумев забыть и избавиться от гнетущего их кошмара. И поскольку *воспоминания очевидцев* непосредственно отображают трагедию, постигшую армянский народ, поэтому их рассказы-воспоминания *глубоко историчны*.

*Воспоминания очевидцев правдивы, документальны и достоверны*, ибо они объективно воссоздают быт, нравы и общественно-политические отношения в Османской империи того периода.

**Грант Гаспарян** из Муша (1908 г. рожд.), особо подчеркивая это обстоятельство, отмечает: “...Я рассказал вам то, что видел своими глазами. Все увиденное мною – перед моим взором. Из Хнуса ничего с собой не взяли, только себя спасли. Наш род состоял из 143 человек: спаслись лишь сестра, брат, мать и я.” [Свид.<sup>1</sup> 13]

Сопоставление всех до единого проанализированных на протяжении всей их жизни *фактических свидетельств с имевшими место историческими событиями не вызывает сомнений в их достоверности*. В своих меморатах они почти всегда упоминают старших своего рода – деда, бабушку, родителей, а также близких родственников и других членов семьи, часто называя их имена и даты

<sup>1</sup> Свид. – Свидетельство.

рождения. Следовательно, приводимые ими данные настолько точны и достоверны, что потерявшие друг друга родственники, спустя десятки лет, на разных континентах мира, благодаря воспоминаниям, включенным в нашу книгу, находят друг друга, выражая нам признательность.

*Главное действующее лицо мемуаров – рассказчик*, который не только повествует о важных исторических событиях и лицах, но и осмысляет их, выражая свое отношение, свою точку зрения по поводу передаваемых им сведений, т. е. главные его личностные качества и мировосприятие также накладывают свой отпечаток на его рассказы, язык и стиль. Следовательно, *воспоминания свидетелей-очевидцев однозначны в силу их исключительности*. Каждый рассказ-воспоминание – это биография данной личности сквозь призму прошлого. И несмотря на многочисленные пересказы, их стержневое содержание остается почти неизменным, т. к. *все это является неотъемлемой частью их памяти*. Будучи фольклористом-этнографом, автор книги с огромной профессиональной ответственностью записывала поведанные ей истории, повторяя их слово в слово и оставаясь верной их устному изложению, осознавая при этом, что они делятся глубоко личным и сокровенным с тем, *чтобы это было передано будущим поколениям*. Как отмечает достопочтенный 94-летний зейтунец **Карапет Тозлян** (1903 г. рожд.), хотя он и был безграмотен, но *“каждый вечер перед сном как молитву,”* шепотом пересказывал пережитое, дабы не забыть, передавая нам с благоговением свои воспоминания с тем, чтобы они *“были записаны, не переданы забвению и переданы будущим поколениям.”* [Свид. 254]

Вместе с тем, *в воспоминаниях разных свидетелей-очевидцев есть много общего*, поскольку в различных местностях, в воспоминаниях разных половозрастных групп (мужчины, женщины, старшее, среднее, младшее поколение), независимо друг от друга, почти точь в точь описываются события того же исторического периода, те же лица, те же картины ужасов и жестокостей, которые при сопоставлении подтверждают и дополняют друг друга, являясь как бы продолжением и обобщением одной истории – *от личного и предметного – ко всеобщему и общенациональному*. На это указывал очевидец **Тигран Оганян** (1902 г. рожд., Камах), подытоживая свои воспоминания: *“Мое прошлое – не только мое прошлое, но и прошлое моего народа.”* [Свид. 97] *Следовательно, воспоминания очевидцев по своему внутреннему содержанию характеризуют не только данную личность с его средой, но и являются коллективной исторической памятью армянского народа.*

*Историческая память народа живуча*. Хотя и прошло более 95 лет со дня этих исторических событий, и многих свидетелей-очевидцев уже нет в живых, однако рассказанное представителями их старшего поколения стало также наследием последующих поколений, ибо они передавались из уст в уста, продолжая жить в их памяти уже в качестве исторических повествований. Эти **исторические повествования** (70 единиц) нами были записаны не только с уст свидетелей очевидцев, но и от последующих поколений, что свидетельствует о том, что *историческая память не умирает, она живет, оставаясь в памяти будущих поколений*.

Нам удалось записать также **песни и эпические песни исторического характера** (315 единиц), которые образно отображают различные явления общественной жизни данного временного отрезка – организованные правительством младотурок военные сборы и сборы оружия, депортацию, погромы и другие волнующие и в том числе впечатляющие фактические эпизоды, также песни-жалобы и отважные песни-требования.

Создателями этих исторических песен были преимущественно армянские женщины. Психологический фактор национального бедствия по-своему воспринимался каждой армянской девушкой или женщиной. Эти ужасающие впечатления были столь сильны и глубоки, что часто обретали стихотворную форму. К примеру, **Шогер Тоноян** из Муша (1901 г. рожд.) со слезами и стенаниями поведала нам о своей скорби стихами:

*“...Днем и ночью рыданья я слышу,  
Нет покоя мне, отдыха, сна,  
Лишь закрою глаза – мертвецов я вижу,  
Потеряла я землю и дом свой,  
Растеряла родных и друзей...” [Свид. 437]*

Эмоциональным по своей природе женщинам довелось на своих хрупких плечах вынести всю тяжесть депортации, ссылок и погромов армян. Поэтому они подробно и образно описывали увиденное и глубоко прочувствованное, ибо армянским матерям пришлось со слезами на глазах провожать своих мужей и сыновей в турецкую армию. А мужчины создавали песни, в которых описывалось, как армянским солдатам не давали оружия, отправляя в *“Амеле табур”* (“Рабочий батальон”) на тяжелые работы, где они либо умирали, обессилев, либо их убивали и закапывали в ими же вырытых ямах (**“Песни о военных сборах, сборах оружия и заключенных”**). Армянских женщин вынуждали покинуть “родимые пепелища” вместе с детьми и старыми немощными родителями и брести по дорогам ссылок. Погоняемые турецкими жандармами, с окровавленными от усталости ногами, они, изнемогая от жажды, голода и долгого пути под палящим солнцем шли к Дейр-эл-Зору, Рас-ул-Айну, Ракке, Мескене, Суручу и другим пустыням. Об этом повествуют как рассказы очевидцев, так и приводимые ими исторические песни – о пройденных ими дорогах, погромах и грабежах со стороны турецких жандармов, курдских банд, чеченских и черкесских погромщиков. Армянских женщин и девушек похищали и убивали, сажали на кол, вспарывали им животы в поисках золота. Многие из них были распяты и замучены. То же самое они проделывали с беременными женщинами. Вот почему отчаявшиеся невинные армянские девушки, дабы не попасть в руки турок, не стать их женами и не родить от них детей, взявшись за руки, бросались в воды Евфрата (**“Песни о депортации и резне”**). Специальный раздел книги посвящен печальным песням, передающим муки матерей похищенных детей, которые остались сиротами (**“Песни о матерях, потерявших сыновей, о сиротах и сиротских домах”**). Представлены также песни о мятежах армян, защищавших свое элементарное право на жизнь, не терпящих гнета. Это грозные песни самообороны, борьбы, которые были созданы, в своем большинстве, мужчинами (**“Патриотические песни и песни о героических сражениях”**). И, наконец, песни о захваченной Родине и о вере в то, что они смогут вновь обрести ее (**“Песни о захваченной Родине и песни-требования”**). Эти разнохарактерные песни сопровождаются в ряде случаев нотами.

Эти исторические песни по своей тематической специфике и идейному содержанию не только являют собой нечто новое в сфере фольклористики и геноцидологии, но и по-новому представляют этот исторический период – обстоятельства и подробности осуществления Геноцида армян.

Будучи созданными под непосредственным впечатлением от выпавших на долю армянского народа исторических событий, *подобного рода народные и эпические песни также проникнуты историчностью и имеют ценность подлинных документов.*

Эти песни были созданы одаренными неизвестными лицами разного пола и возраста. В свое время они имели широкое распространение, и так как эти страдания имели массовый характер, то и народные песни получили массовое распространение, переходили из уст в уста, благодаря чему появлялось множество новых вариантов. Одни и те же песни одновременно создавались в различных вариациях и трансформациях, что *свидетельствует об их народном характере.*

В процессе наших многочисленных записей одну и ту же народную песню или ее схожий вариант мы записывали с разных уст, поэтому невозможно было упомянуть имена и фамилии всех свидетелей-очевидцев. Исходя из этого в документальной информационной таблице упомянуты лишь имена тех, кто передал нам их стержневые варианты, где указываются также имя, фамилия, год рождения свидетеля-очевидца, с уст которого она записана, а также время, место, язык, характер записи (рукопись, аудио- и

видеозапись) и номер архивного фонда (по научному “Методу документации устных народных материалов” доктора-профессора Исидора Левина).

Свидетели-очевидцы Геноцида армян (мужчины или женщины) вспоминали эти песни с плачем и рыданиями, заново переживая эмоциональный стресс, ибо песни непосредственно были связаны с их исторической памятью. Этим объясняется самобытность народных исторических песен.

Различные варианты этих народных песен, наряду с исторической точностью, характеризуются сжатой образностью и нежной либо проникновенной мелодичностью, присущей армянским средневековым песням-плачам. Каждая строка этих песен, имеющих разные варианты, воссоздает целостную картину массовых погромов и жестокостей, а припевы, передающие стенания, дополняют и обобщают образную поэтическую мысль.

*Песни исторического характера создавались не только на армянском, но и на турецком языке*, т. к. в данной историко-политической ситуации в некоторых губерниях Османской империи запрещено было говорить по-армянски.

Не исключая взаимовлияния культур живущих бок о бок двух народов, следует указать, что имеются свидетельства о том, что “...срезали кончик языка тем, кто произносил хоть одно слово по-армянски, следовательно, армяне, проживающие в ряде городов Киликии (Сис, Адана, Тарсон, Айнтап) и в близлежащих к ним районах потеряли свой родной язык...” [Галустян Григор. *Мараши или Германик и героический Зейтун*. Нью Йорк, 1934, с. 698, на арм. яз.] Или: “Угнетения и гонения турок настолько ужесточились, что армяноязычный Айнтап стал тюркоязычным, как и другие главные города Малой Азии. И последний окончательный удар по армянской речи нанесли янычары, которые срезали кончики языков тем, кто говорил по-армянски...” [Сарафян Геворг. *История армянства Айнтапа*. Т. 1, Лос Анджелес, 1953, с. 5, на арм. яз.]

Этнограф-собирающий фольклора конца XIX – начала XX вв. Саркис Айкуни, описывая политическое, экономическое и духовное положение западных армян, писал: “...Армянский язык был запрещен тюркскими муллами, и за семь армянских слов устанавливался штраф в размере пяти овец, ибо это воспринималось в качестве ругани.” [Айкуни Саркис. *Потерянные, забытые армяне. Армяно-магометанские деревни Трапезунда и их обычаи*. “Арагат.” Вагаршатап, 1895, с. 297, на арм. яз.]

В наших записях также имеются многочисленные свидетельства того, что армяне Сиса, Аданы, Тарсона, Айнтапа, Кётайа, Бурсы, Кесарии, Эскишегира и других местностей были в основном тюркоязычными. По свидетельству очевидца из Аданы **Микаела Кешишяна** (1904 г. рожд.), “уже запрещено было говорить и учить по-армянски: не только отрезали язык, но и под мышки клали горячее вареное яйцо, чтобы признался в том, что учит других армянскому. Если бы признался, тогда отвели бы повесили или убили бы.” [Свид. 241]

Об этом свидетельствует отрывок из записанной нами армянской народной песни с уст **Сатеник Гуюмджян** (1902 г. рожд.) из Кони:

*“Ворвавшись в школу, схватили учительницу,  
Ох, горе какое, ох горе!  
И рот ей открыв, вырезали язык,  
Ох, горе какое, ох горе!”* [Свид. 446]

Учительница была наказана за то, что осмелилась учить армянских детей армянскому языку. А на дорогах ссылки и депортации эти строгости были более ужесточены. Поэтому западные армяне свою скорбь и боль вынуждены были выражать также на турецком языке.

Учитывая общественно-политическую ситуацию, связанную с этим печальным фактом и

представляющую начальный уровень языковой ассимиляции, при записи материалов на различных диалектах нами также были записаны *туркоязычные, однако явно армянского происхождения исторические и эпические песни*. Хотя и последние были созданы в разных западноармянских областях и грешат не идеальным знанием турецкого (упоминание армянских слов и выражений, армянских собственных имен, топонимов, грамматические и фонетические неточности), но в силу своего идейного содержания представляют огромную историко-познавательную ценность.

Песни, рассказывающие о резне и погромах, создавались на дорогах депортации в Дейр-эл-Зор; и поскольку запрещено было говорить по-армянски, свою боль и страдания армяне выражали на языке врага – на турецком.

*“Sabahtan kalktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

“Проснулся я утром, солнце светило,  
Османские воины оружие смазывали,  
Взглянул на армян я, горько рыдавших,  
Гибнут во имя веры они!” [Свид. 488]

Или:

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

“Большая местность – пустыня Дер-Зор,  
Изрубленных армян нам не счесть,  
Османские главари мясниками стали,  
Во имя веры гибнут армяне!” [Свид. 467]

Армяне “погибали во имя веры,” не желая отречься от своей христианской веры и национальной принадлежности. Жительнице Стамбула **Сирене Аладжаджян** (1910 г. рожд., Адабазар) было четыре года, когда турки убили ее отца и мать. Сиротку приютили арабы-пустынники. Спустя четыре года после перемирия (1918 г.), когда была организована акция по сбору армянских сирот из арабских пустынь, была найдена восьмилетняя голубоглазая девочка с золотистыми кудрями и татуировкой на лице. Девочку называли другим именем. Хотя и родной язык был забыт ею, однако крестилась она по-христиански, что было свидетельством ее армянского происхождения. Маленькую Сирену забрали и отправили в армянский приют. [Свид. 225]

Очевидцы-свидетели, депортированные из более чем 150 армянских областей, не только рассказывают об увиденном и пережитом, но и приходят к определенным политическим выводам. К примеру, **Паргев Макарян** (1915 г. рожд.) из Айнтапа заключает: “...*Великие державы обманули армян: Киликию дали турку, были полностью очищены от армян Зейтун, Адана, Сис, Мараш, Килис, Айнтап, Урфа, Камурдж и другие города. Нас принудили, чтобы мы оставили Киликию. Мы вынуждены были покинуть родину. А в 1922 году спровоцировали трагические события в Измире, армяне и греки бежали из преданного огню города, бросались в море; кто смог спастись – перебрался в другую страну. Таким образом Турцию “очистили” от христиан. Турция осталась туркам, Западная Армения и Киликия – также.*” [Свид. 272]

Свидетель-очевидец из Харберда **Акоп Олобикян** (1902 г. рожд.), подробно описывая муки, которые довелось испытать ему и его близким, заключает: “...*Эти злодеяния, совершенные младотурками, никогда не должны быть забыты и прощены!*” [Свид. 115]

Между тем сегодняшняя турецкая пропаганда и историография, не жалея сил, фальсифицирует подлинные исторические факты, утаивая от будущих поколений факт Геноцида армян, организованного правительством младотурок, пытаясь обойти историческую истину, которая заключается в том, что турецкие государственные органы еще в начале 1919 года инициировали организацию процесса над преступными младотурками, приговорив их к смерти. А позднее, когда был раскрыт заговор, организованный младотурками против первого президента Турецкой республики Мустафы Кемалю, в интервью газете “Los

Angeles Examiner” (1 августа 1926 г.) сам Кемаль Ататюрк осудил их злодеяния: “Эти отбросы прежней иттихадской партии младотурок, партии, которая должна была быть в ответе за жизни миллионов наших подданных, в массовом порядке беспощадно изгнанных из родных мест и уничтоженных...” [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations*. Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, с. 13]

Так что, невозможно отрицать историю, как бы прискорбна она ни была, она несомненна.

К сожалению, учиненный младотурками в XX в. первый геноцид – Геноцид армян (The Armenian Genocide) в свое время не был осужден международным сообществом, и его логическим продолжением стал фашизм (Fascism), а в наши дни – международный терроризм (Terrorism) в его непредсказуемых проявлениях, представляющий мировую опасность, поскольку ненаказанные и неосужденные преступления повторяются во зло человечеству.

Таким образом, спасенные от забвения и передаваемые поколениям свидетелями-очевидцами воспоминания и песни исторического характера, – это ценные историко-познавательные, достоверные, объективные и фактические документы, доступным народным языком освещающие Геноцид армян и последовавшие за ним исторические события, которые являются не только свидетельствами прошлого, но и предостерегают от повтора подобного в будущем.

Геноцид есть массовое политическое злодеяние, и оно не должно оставаться безнаказанным, а должно быть юридически раскрыто также на основе показаний свидетелей-очевидцев. **А самый главный свидетель – это Народ**, который помнит и рассказывает людям и миру о своем трагическом прошлом, являющемся историей армянского народа и его коллективной исторической памятью. А историческая память народа должна быть представлена миру и вынесена на справедливый суд человечества.

Поэтому настало время, чтобы правительство нынешней Турецкой Республики нашло бы в себе мужество не только признать обоснованную как письменными, так и устными фактами, не нуждающуюся в доказательстве историческую истину, но и осудить содеянное и возместить моральные, материальные и территориальные потери армянского народа, что является диктатом очевидной исторической истины, именуемой **Геноцидом армян**.







## ՎԵՐԺԻՆԵ ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ

# ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ. ԱԿԱՆԱՏԵՍ-ՎԵՐԱՊՐՈՂՆԵՐԻ ՎԿԱՅՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ

*(Ամփոփում)*

Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը, որպես մարդկության դեմ ուղղված քաղաքական ոճրագործություն, պատմության դաժան պարտադրանքով դարձել է հայ ժողովրդի ազգային ինքնության, մտածողության և հոգեգիտակցական ներաշխարհի անբաժանելի մասը:

Որքան տարիներն անցնում են, այնքան ավելի է մեծանում հետաքրքրությունը Հայոց ցեղասպանության նկատմամբ, որը պայմանավորված է վերջերս բազմաթիվ երկրների կողմից պատմական այդ փաստի ճանաչման իրողությամբ: Սակայն պաշտոնական թուրք ու թուրքամետ պատմաբաններն առ այսօր ամեն կերպ ճգնում են խեղաթուրել հայ ժողովրդի համար ճակատագրական դարձած 1915-1923 թթ. պատմական ստույգ իրողությունները:

Հայոց ցեղասպանության մասին տարբեր լեզուներով լույս են տեսել բազմաթիվ ուսումնասիրություններ, փաստաթղթերի ժողովածուներ, քաղաքագետների և հասարակական գործիչների ասույթներ, գեղարվեստական տարբեր ժանրերի ստեղծագործություններ, սակայն հրատարակված այդ հսկայական գրականության մեջ բացակայել է ժողովրդի ձայնը՝ պատմական հիշյալ իրադարձություններից անմիջական տպավորություններ ստացած ականատես-վկա վերապրողների պատմած հուշերն ու հաղորդած ժողովրդական երգերը, որոնք ևս պատմաճանաչողական, փաստավավերագրական և սկզբնաղբյուրային կարևոր արժեք են ներկայացնում: Քանի որ հայ ժողովուրդն ի՛նքն է կրել այդ բոլոր անասելի տառապանքները, հետևաբար, ժողովուրդն ի՛նքն է այդ զանգվածային քաղաքական ոճրագործության օբյեկտը: Եվ ինչպես ամեն մի հանցագործություն բացահայտելիս որոշիչ են վկաների ցուցմունքները, նույնպես և այս պարագայում պետք է հենվել նաև ականատես վերապրողների վկայությունների վրա, որոնցից յուրաքանչյուրն իրավաբանական տեսակետից ապացուցողական նշանակություն ունի Հայ Դատի արդարացի լուծման և Հայոց ցեղասպանության ճանաչման գործում:

Տակավին 1955 թվականից, երբ Խորհրդային Հայաստանում Հայոց ցեղասպանության մասին բացահայտ խոսել չէր կարելի, երբ մազապուրծ վերապրած ականատես-վկա տարագիր հայրենադարձները հանիրավի զրպարտվելու և աքսորվելու վախ ու դողի մեջ էին ապրում, ես՝ Երևանի Խաչատուր Աբովյանի անվան Մանկավարժական Ինստիտուտի ուսանողս, արհամարհելով ամեն կարգի դժվարություն և խորապես գիտակցելով ժողովրդական բանավոր ավանդու-

թյան այդ կարգի նյութերի պատմագիտական և փաստավավերական արժեքը, սկզբում արևմտահայի արյան կանչով և անձնական նախաձեռնությամբ, այնուհետև՝ 1960 թվականից Հայաստանի գիտությունների ակադեմիայի Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտի, իսկ 1996 թվականից նաև նոր հիմնադրված ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Հայոց ցեղասպանության թանգարան-ինստիտուտի հովանու ներքո, գիտական այլ աշխատանքներին զուգահեռ, ամռան կիզիչ արևին, ձմռան ցուրտ սառնամանիքին, թաղից թաղ, գյուղից գյուղ ոտքով շրջելով, Հայոց ցեղասպանությունից հրաշքով փրկված ականատես-վկաներին որոնել-գտնելով, նրանց հոգեբանորեն մոտենալով և թողնելով ազատ արտահայտել իրենց անմիջական տպավորությունները՝ առանց կողմնակի հարցերով միջամտելու, գրի են առել, ձայնագրել, տեսագրել, վերծանել և ուսումնասիրել նրանց պատմած սահմոկեցուցիչ հուշերը, տպավորիչ զրույցներն ու պատմական տարաբնույթ երգերը, որոնց բնօրինակները պահվում են ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Հայոց ցեղասպանության թանգարան-ինստիտուտի արխիվում:

Ժողովրդական այդ վկայությունները հրատարակված են իմ մի շարք աշխատություններում և հատկապես «**Հայոց ցեղասպանություն. Ականատես վերապրողների վկայություններ**» (Երևան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատարակչություն, 2000, 500 էջ, հայերեն) սովորաժամալ հատորում, որի անգլերեն թարգմանությունն է սույն աշխատությունը որոշ հավելումներով:

Հատորը բաղկացած է երկու բաժիններից.

ա) **Գիտական ուսումնասիրություն**, որտեղ լուսաբանվում է ժողովրդական վկայությունների ժանրային և տիպաբանական առանձնահատկությունները, ինչպես նաև ներկայացվում է Հայոց ցեղասպանության ամբողջ ընթացքը՝ լրացված և հիմնավորված ժողովրդական հուշերով ու պատմական բնույթի երգերով (հայերեն և թուրքալեզու):

բ) **Սկզբնաղբյուրային բնագրեր** (700 միավոր), որոնք ընդգրկում են ականատես-վկա վերապրողների հաղորդած Հուշ-վկայություններ, պատմական Զրույց-վկայություններ, պատմական Երգ-վկայություններ, երգերի Նոտագրություններ:

Հատորն ունի նաև ականատես-վկաների և նրանց հաղորդած ժողովրդական նյութերի մասին Փաստագրական-տեղեկատվական աղյուսակ, ինչպես նաև՝ վերապրողների Լուսանկարներ, տարբեր լեզուներով Ամփոփումներ, Բառարան, Ծանոթագրություններ, Թեմատիկ, Անձնանունների, Տեղանունների և Էթնոանունների Ցուցիչներ և Օսմանյան կայսրությունում իրագործված հայերի տեղահանության ու ցեղասպանության մասին գաղափար տվող Քարտեզ:

Ժողովրդական այդ նյութերը հաղորդած **ականատես-վկաները** գերազանցապես ավագ սերնդի ներկայացուցիչներն են՝ իրենց պատմական բնօրրանից բռնի կերպով արտաքսված հայերը, որոնք 1915-1923 թթ. Հայոց ցեղասպանության ընթացքում տարագրվել են Արևմտահայաստանից, Կիլիկիայից (1921 թ.) և Անատոլիայի հայաբնակ գավառներից (1922 թ. Զմյուռնիայի աղետ):

Պատմական այդ իրադարձությունների ընթացքում արևմտահայության զգալի մասը՝ 1,5 միլիոնից ավելի, անխնա բնաջնջվել է, իսկ աքսորի ճամփաներին կողոպտված, ունեզրկված և ուժասպառ հրաշքով փրկվածները, գաղթի ճամփաների զրկանքները ճաշակելով և բազմաթիվ զոհեր տալով, հասել են Արևելյան Հայաստան կամ՝ սփռվել աշխարհի տարբեր երկրներ: Հետագայում այդ մնացորդացի որոշ մասը Թուրքիայից, Հունաստանից, Ֆրանսիայից, Սիրիայից, Լիբանանից, Իրաքից, Եգիպտոսից, Բալկանյան երկրներից և ԱՄՆ-ից պարբերաբար ներգաղթել են Արևելյան Հայաստան և բնակություն հաստատել իրենց երբեմնի բնօրրանների հիշատակները խորհրդանշող Երևանի մերձակա նորակառույց թաղամասերում (Ալգեստան, Սարի թաղ, Նոր Բուրճանիս, Նոր Արեշ, Նոր Կիլիկիա, Նոր Արաբկիր, Նոր Զեյթուն, Նոր Խարբերդ, Նոր

Սեբաստիա, Նոր Մալաթիա, Նոր Կեսարիա, Նոր Հաճըն, Նոր Մարաշ, Նոր Այնթապ, Նոր Մուսա Լեռ, Նոր Եդեսիա), ինչպես նաև՝ Էջմիածնում (այժմ՝ Վաղարշապատ), Հոկտեմբերյանում (այժմ՝ Արմավիր), Արարատում, Թալինում, Հրազդանում, Լեւոնականում (այժմ՝ Գյումրի), Կիրովականում (այժմ՝ Վանաձոր) և այլուր:

Հայոց ցեղասպանությունից հրաշքով փրկված վերապրող ականատես-վկաներին ես մշտապես հանդիպել եմ ինքնամփոփ ու լուռ՝ իրենց մտորումների մեջ խորասույզ: Այդ խորհրդավոր լռությունը ևս ունեցել է իր պատճառը, քանի որ տասնամյակներ շարունակ խորհրդային Հայրենիքում տիրող քաղաքական արգելքները թույլ չեն տվել իրենց անցյալի մասին ազատ ու անկաշկանդ պատմել կամ վիպել: Հետևաբար, այդ կարգի նյութերը մեծ դժվարությամբ եմ հայտնաբերել ու գրի առել:

Ավելի քան 55 տարիների ընթացքում իմ հետևողական պրպտումներով, ինչպես Հայաստանի տարբեր շրջաններում, նույնպես և Սիրիա, Լիբանան, Եգիպտոս, Հունաստան, Ֆրանսիա, Կանադա, ԱՄՆ և Թուրքիա կատարած իմ անձնական կամ գիտաժողովային կարճատև ուղևորությունների ընթացքում մշտապես որոնել, հայտնաբերել եմ Հայոց ցեղասպանությունից վերապրող ականատեսների ավագ, միջին և կրտսեր սերունդների ներկայացուցիչներին, մոտիկից ծանոթացել նրանց հետ, թափանցել նրանց հոգու խորխորատները:

Տեղի տալով իմ թախանձագին հորդորներին՝ նրանք, պողթկացող հուզումով կրկին վերապրելով իրենց տխուր անցյալը, արցունքախառն հեկեկոցներով սկսել են պատմել իրենց հիշողության մեջ անթեղած սրտամորմոք հուշերը, թե ինչպես երիտթուրքական ոստիկանները բռնի տեղահանել են իրենց պապենական շեն բնօրրանից և իրենց աչքերի առաջ հոշոտել իրենց ծնողներին ու հարազատներին, պատվազրկել իրենց մայրերին ու քույրերին, քարերով ճխլել նորածին մանուկներին...:

Ականատես-վկաների պատմած **հուշերը** (315 միավոր) ընդգրկում են տարբեր թեմաներ: Դրանցում արտացոլված են հայրենի բնաշխարհի գեղեցկությունը, հայերի նահապետական առօրյա կենցաղն ու սովորույթները, նրանց ապրած ժամանակաշրջանը՝ հասարակական-քաղաքական կյանքի պայմանները, նշանակալից պատմական իրադարձությունները, երիտթուրքական կառավարության պարագլուխների (Թալեաթ, Էնվեր, Ջեմալ, Նազիմ, Բեհաեդդին Շաքիր...) գործադրած դաժանությունները (հարկահավաք, զորահավաք, զինահավաք, ողջակեզ, բռնագաղթ, ջարդ, կոտորած), նրանց կազմակերպած բռնի տեղահանությունները դեպի Միջագետքի ամալի անապատներ (Դեյր Էլ Ջոր, Ռաս ուլ Այն, Ռաքքա, Մեսքենե, Սուրուհ...), հայերի կրած անասելի տառապանքները (քայք ու ժասպատվելու աստիճան, ծարավ, քաղց, համաճարակ, մահվան սարսափ...), ինչպես նաև՝ արևմտահայ տարբեր հատվածների մղած արդար ու ազնիվ ոգորումներն ընդդեմ բռնության՝ պաշտպանելու համար իրենց ապրելու տարրական իրավունքը (1915 թ. Վանի հերոսամարտ, Ծատախի, Ծապին-Գարահիսարի, Սասունի գոյամարտեր, Մուսա Լեռան, Ուրֆայի, ավելի ուշ՝ 1920-1921 թթ. Այնթապի, Հաճընի հերոսամարտեր), այդ ինքնապաշտպանական մարտերի ազգային հերոսներին (շապինգարահիսարցի Անդրանիկ Օզանյան, վանեցի Արմենակ Եկարյան, Մեծն Մուրադ [Համբարձում Բոյաջյան], մուսալեոցի Եսայի Յաղուբյան, ուրֆացի Մկրտիչ Յոթնեղբայրյան, այնթապցի Ադուր Լևոնյան, զելթունցի Արամ Չոլաքյան, ազգային վրիժառու Սողոմոն Թեհլիրյան) և բազմաթիվ այլ հայտնի ու անհայտ հայորդիներին, որոնք ժողովրդական զանգվածների հետ միաձուլված պայքարել են ընդդեմ բռնության, նահատակվել, նաև՝ դիմակայել ու վերապրել:

Սույն ուսումնասիրության մեջ պատմական ստույգ փաստերը համադրված, մանրամասնված

ու լրացված են ականատես վերապրողների հաղորդած վավերական վկայություններով՝ ներկայացնելով Հայոց ցեղասպանության ընդհանուր պատմական ընթացքը:

Ականատես-վկաների պատմած հուշերը հնարավորություն են տվել գիտական հետազոտության ենթարկել նաև այդ կարգի նյութերի ժանրային ու տիպաբանական առանձնահատկությունները:

Ականատես վերապրողներից յուրաքանչյուրն իր կյանքի հուշը պատմել է իրեն հարազատ հայերեն խոսվածքով, հաճախ՝ բարբառով կամ օտարախառն հայերենով, նաև՝ թուրքերեն, արաբերեն, քրդերեն, անգլերեն, ֆրանսերեն, գերմաներեն:

Հայոց ցեղասպանության ականատես-վկաների պատմած հուշերը, որպես ժողովրդական բանավոր ավանդության տարատեսակ, իրենց կառուցվածքով կա՛մ հակիրճ են ու սեղմ, կա՛մ՝ ծավալուն ու երկարապատում, որոնք ներառում են նաև զանազան երկխոսություններ, մեջբերումներ, ժողովրդական բանահյուսության տարաբնույթ ժանրեր (երգ, վիպերգ, զրույց, առակ, առած, ասացվածք, օրհնանք, անեծք, աղոթք, երդում) հաստատելու համար իրենց պատմածի հավաստիությունը՝ առավել արժանահավատ ու տպավորիչ դարձնելով իրենց բանավոր խոսքը: Մանավանդ, իրենք՝ **վերապրողները, բարոյական պատասխանատվություն և պարտքի գիտակցություն են զգացել իրենց պատմածի նկատմամբ: Նրանցից շատերն իրենց հիշողություններն ինձ հաղորդելուց առաջ խաչակնքել են կամ՝ երդվել:** Իսկ երդումը նվիրական խոսք է՝ արքություն, որը կեղծիք չի ընդունում:

Խնդրո առարկա հուշերը և պատմական երգերը, ենթարկելով քանակական ու որակական մանրակրկիտ վերլուծության՝ պարզվել է, որ, ինչպես առանց հիշողության մարդ չկա, նույնպես և **առանց հիշողության չկա ժողովուրդ**, քանի որ հիշողությունը մարդու կամ ժողովրդի ապրած տարիների կյանքն է, նրա անցյալը, նրա պատմությունը:

Նույնաման պատմական հիշողություն ունեն նաև հրեաները, հույները, զնչուները և այլ տուժված ժողովուրդներ [Porter, Jack Nusan, ed. *Genocide and Human Rights. A Global Anthology*. Lanham, New York, London, 1982]: Իսկ որևէ ժողովուրդ, տվյալ դեպքում թուրք ժողովուրդը, եթե չի պահպանել իր պատմական հիշողությունը, ուրեմն նա չի ապրել և չի զգացել այդ բոլոր տառապանքները: Այստեղ տեղին է հիշատակել թուրքական "Superonline" և "Ixir" սերվերների հիմնադիր Բաբուր Օզդենի հետ «Հակահարված վիրտուալ աշխարհում» ("Counterattack in the Virtual World") հարցազրույցից որոշ հատվածներ, որտեղ նշվում է, թե Համացանցում (Internet) հայերը տեղադրել են Հայոց ցեղասպանությունից վերապրած ականատեսների հաղորդած հուշեր ու պատմական բնույթի թուրքալեզու երգեր (նկատի ունի՝ նաև իմ V. Svazlian. "The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors." Yerevan, "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 1999 զիրքը, ինչպես նաև՝ <http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/Index.html> Կայքը), և ավելացվում. «...Ես գտա, որ վիրտուալ իրականության մեջ «ցեղասպանության կայքերը» հայերի մենաշնորհն [են]: ...Մենք պետք է կազմակերպված լինենք: Թուրքիան կազմակերպված չէ: ...Այնուամենայնիվ, մեր մշակույթում շատ դժվար է վեր հանել այդ պատմությունները [վերապրողների կյանքի պատմությունները]: Մենք ունենք ինքնախթանման և անհատականացման պակասի մշակութային անբարենպաստ իրավիճակ: ...Նրանք [հայերը] առասպելի կարիք ունեն իրենց մշակույթն ու անցյալը միմյանցից անբաժան պահելու: ...Մենք [թուրքերս] մյան կապի կարիք չունենք: Մենք ուզում ենք մոռանալ անցյալը և առաջ նայել: Մեր ընտանիքները խառնվել են: [Անցյալում] ինչ որ գրվել էր՝ տարբեր այբուբենով էր: Մենք չէինք կարող դրանք [վերապրողների կյանքի պատմությունները] ընթերցել: Ես չեմ կա-

րող կարդալ իմ մեծ հոր գրառումները: Հին [օսմանյան] թուրքերենի գիտակ մարդն է դրանք կարդում: ...Օգուտ չկա Համացանցի վրա պրոֆեսորների [և] պատմաբանների [աշխատությունները] գետեղելուց: Արխիվները չեն ազդում մարդկանց վրա: ...Մարդիկ չեն ազդվում իրենց մամուլի, որոնց ծնողները ոչնչացվել են կամ՝ ցրվել, կյանքի պատմություններից: Նրանք ազդվում են, երբ այն [պատմությունը] լսում են *սկզբնաղբյուրից* (ընդգծումը իմն է - Վ. Ս.): ...Հայերը Համացանցում նույնիսկ թուրքերեն և անգլերեն լեզուներով «ցեղասպանության երգերի» բաժիններ ունեն» ("Milliyet," 28.01.2001, էջ 19):

Հարկ է նշել նաև, որ իմ անձնական նախաձեռնությամբ գրառած, ձայնագրած, տեսագրած, ուսումնասիրած և հրատարակած հուշերի ու երգերի սույն ժողովածուի նյութերը, որոնք ներկայացնում են հայ ժողովրդի պատմական հիշողությունը, Հայաստանում հրատարակվելուց հետո [Սվազյան 2000], օրըստօրե շարունակում են ավելանալ, և դա անվերջանալի գործընթաց է: Քանի որ ամեն մի հայ իր գերդաստանի վիշտն ու կորուստներն ունի: Բացի այդ, աշխարհի տարբեր երկրներում, որտեղ ապաստան են գտել ցեղասպանության հետևանքով սփոլված բազմահազար հայեր, անթիվ ու անհամար վկայություններ կան (տարբեր բարբառներով, տարբեր լեզուներով, ձեռագիր, ձայնագրված ու տեսագրված), որոնք անհատների մոտ և արխիվներում հավաքված ու կուտակված են: Այնինչ դրանք ևս պետք է վերծանվեն, հրատարակվեն ու գիտական շրջանառության մեջ դրվեն, որպես հայ ժողովրդի պատմական հավաքական հիշողության փաստավավերական վկայություններ:

**Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը**, որն իրագործվել է 20-րդ դարակազմի, անմիջականորեն ընկալվել է ականատեսների զգայարաններով, և այդ բոլորն *անընչելի կերպով տպավորվել է նրանց հիշողության մեջ*:

Պատմական այդ իրադարձությունների ականատես-վկաները, ցավագնորեն վերապրելով իրենց տխուր անցյալը, ինձ են հաղորդել իրենց անձնական հուշերը՝ պատմական բնօրրանի, հայրենի օջախի, սիրելի հարազատների մասին, որոնք, ավա՛ղ, վաղուց չկան: Այդ անձնական հուշապատկերները նրանք կրել են իրենց ողջ կյանքի ընթացքում՝ չկարողանալով ազատագրվել ճնշող մղձավանջից: Եվ քանի որ *վերապրողների պատմած հուշերը* ներկայացնում են հայ ժողովրդին վիճակված պատմական յուրահատուկ իրադարձությունների անմիջական տպավորությունները, ուստի *հազեցած են խոր պատմականությամբ*:

Առարկայորեն վերարտադրելով տվյալ ժամանակաշրջանի կյանքը, միստ ու կացը, բարքերը, քաղաքական-հասարակական հարաբերությունները, *վերապրողների հաղորդած հուշերն անմիջական են, ճշմարտացի, վավերական և ունեն հավաստի վկայությունների արժեք*:

Մշեցի Հրանտ Գասպարյանը (ծնվ. 1908 թ.) հատուկ ընդգծել է այդ հանգամանքը՝ իր պատմած հուշի վերջում հավաստիացնելով. «...*Ես ինչ որ տեսել եմ, էն իմ աչքերով տեսածը պատմեցի ձեզ: Ամբողջ աչքիս դեմն է իմ տեսածը: Խնուսից ոչ մի բան չենք բերել, միայն ջաններս ենք ազատել: Մեր գերդաստանը 143 հոգի էինք. մի քուր, մի ախպեր, մերս ու ես փրկվանք*»: [Վկ.<sup>1</sup> 13]

Հետագա ամբողջ կյանքի ընթացքում ականատես վերապրողների կողմից մեկ առ մեկ հաշվված, կետ առ կետ վերլուծված այդ *փաստացի վկայությունները, պատմական իրադրությունների հետ համադրելիս, դույզն իսկ կասկածի տեղիք չեն տալիս*: Նրանք գրեթե միշտ իրենց պատմած հուշի մեջ հիշատակում են իրենց գերդաստանի ավագներին՝ մեծհայրերին, մեծմայրերին, ծնողներին, նաև՝ մոտիկ ազգականներին և ընտանիքի մյուս անդամներին՝ հաճախ նշելով նրանց անուններն ու ծննդյան թվերը: Հետևաբար, նրանց հաղորդած տվյալներն այնքան են

<sup>1</sup> Վկ. – վկայություն:

ստույգ ու հավաստի, որ նույնիսկ ցեղասպանության թոհ ու բոհի մեջ իրար կորցրած հարազատները, իմ գրքերում զետեղված հուշերն ընթերցելով, տասնյակ տարիներ անց, աշխարհի տարբեր ցամաքամասերից հաճախ գտնում են միմյանց և ինձ շնորհակալություն հայտնում:

Հուշապատումի մեջ հանդես եկող *գլխավոր անձը պատմողի կերպարն է*, որը ոչ միայն պատմում է պատմական նշանակալից իրադարձությունների, դեպքերի ու դեմքերի մասին, այլև իմաստավորում է դրանք՝ դրսևորելով իր աշխարհայացքի և անհատականության հիմնական հատկանիշները, իր մոտեցման ուրույն տեսակետը, իր յուրահատուկ լեզուն և ոճը: Հետևաբար, *ականատես-վկայի պատմած հուշը միանշանակ է իր եզակիությամբ*: Այն տվյալ անհատի անձնական կենսագրությունն է՝ անցյալի իր իմաստավորմամբ, որը, յուրաքանչյուր անգամ վերապատմելիս, հուշի առանցքային բովանդակությունը գրեթե մնում է անփոփոխ, քանի որ *այդ բոլորը նրանց հիշողության անբաժանելի մասն է կազմում*: Եվ ես, բանագետ-ժողովրդագետին հատուկ մասնագիտական պատասխանատվությամբ, հավատարիմ մնալով ականատեսների բանավոր խոսքին, նրանց պատմածները բառ առ բառ գրի եմ առել, գիտակցելով, որ նրանք իրենց ներանձնական սրբասուրբ գաղտնիքներն են ավանդում ինձ՝ *հետագա սերունդներին փոխանցելու համար*: Ինչպես վկայել է զեյթունցու արժանավայել, խրոխտ կեցվածքով, 94-ամյա **Կարապետ Թոզլյանը** (ծնվ. 1903 թ.), որ թեպետ ինքը գրաճանաչ չէր, բայց *«ամեն իրիկուն քննալեն առաջ աղոթքի պես»* մրմնջացել է իր հուշերն ու երգերը, որպեսզի չմոռանա: Հետևաբար, նա սրբազան խանդադատանքով է ինձ հաղորդել իր մտապահածները, որպեսզի *«գրի առնվին, չմոռացվին և գալիք սերունդներն ալ սորվին»*: [Վկ. 254]

Միաժամանակ, *վերապրողների պատմած հուշերը նաև համանման են*: Քանի որ տարբեր վայրերում, սեռատարիքային տարբեր խմբերի (տղամարդ, կին, ավագ, միջին, կրտսեր սերունդներ) պատմած հուշերն իրարից անկախ, գրեթե նույնությամբ նկարագրում են պատմական միևնույն ժամանակաշրջանի իրադարձությունները, պատմական համանման դեպքերն ու դեմքերը, իրենց տեսած ու զգացած նույն սարսափազդու տեսարաններն ու դաժանությունները, որոնք, համարվելով, գալիս են միմյանց հաստատելու, միմյանց շարունակելու, լրացնելու և ամբողջացնելու՝ *միտվելով անձնականից ու առարկայականից դեպի համընդհանուրն ու համազգայինը*: Այդ հանգամանքն է նկատի ունեցել վերապրող **Տիգրան Օհանյանը** (ծնվ. 1902 թ., Կամախ), երբ իր պատմած հուշն ամփոփել է հետևյալ խոսքերով. *«...Իմ անցյալը իմ անցյալը չէ միայն, այլ նաև իմ ժողովրդի անցյալն է»*: [Վկ. 97] *Հետևաբար, ականատեսների հուշերն իրենց ներքին բովանդակությամբ բնութագրում են ոչ միայն տվյալ անհատին ու նրա միջավայրը, այլև ողջ հավաքականությանը՝ դառնալով հայ ժողովրդի հավաքական պատմական հիշողությունը*:

Սակայն *ժողովրդի պատմական հիշողությունը նաև հարատևելու կարողություն ունի*: Թեպետ պատմական այդ իրադարձություններից ավելի քան 95 տարի է անցել, և հրաշքով փրկված ականատես-վկաներից շատ-շատերն արդեն չկան, սակայն ավագ սերնդի ներկայացուցիչների պատմածներն ընտանիքներում այնքա՛ն են լսվել, այնքա՛ն են կրկնվել, որ դարձել են նաև հետագա սերունդների ժառանգությունը և, բերնից բերան անցնելով, շարունակում են հարատևել նաև հետագա սերունդների հիշողության մեջ՝ արդեն որպես *պատմական զրույցներ* (70 միավոր): Պատմական այդ զրույցները գրի եմ առել ոչ միայն ականատես վերապրողներից, այլև՝ հետագա սերունդներից, որպես վկայություն այն իրողության, որ *ժողովրդի պատմական հիշողությունը բնավ չի մեռնում, այլ շարունակում է գոյատևել նաև հետագա սերունդների հիշողության մեջ*:

Ինձ հաջողվել է գրի առնել նաև Հայոց ցեղասպանության ականատես վերապրողների հաղորդած *պատմական բնույթի երգերն ու վիպերգերը* (315 միավոր): Այդ երգերի բառերը գեղար-

վեստորեն վերարտադրում են տվյալ ժամանակաշրջանի հասարակական կյանքի բազմազան երևույթները՝ երիտթուրք կառավարության կազմակերպած զորահավաքն ու զինահավաքը, տեղահանություններն ու կոտորածները, ինչպես նաև՝ այլ փաստացի, հուզիչ ու տպավորիչ դրվագներ, բողոքի և պահանջատիրության խրոխտ տրամադրություններ:

Պատմական այդ երգերի հորինողները գերազանցապես եղել են հայ կանայք: Ազգային աղետի հոգեբանական ազդեցությունը յուրովի է ընկալվել յուրաքանչյուր կնոջ կամ աղջկա կողմից: Այդ սահմոկեցուցիչ տպավորություններն այնքան զորեղ ու խորն են եղել, որ հաճախ նաև բանաստեղծական ձև են ստացել, ինչպես մշեցի վերապրող **Շողեր Տոնոյանի** (ծնվ. 1901 թ.) հյուսած ողբը, որն ինձ է հաղորդել արցունքներով և հառաչանքներով.

*«... Գիշեր ու զոր լաց ու ողբ եմ ես լսում,  
Չունիմ հանգիստ, չունիմ դադար, չունիմ քուն,  
Աչքս փակում՝ մեռելներ եմ միջտ տեսնում,  
Կորցրեցի ազգ, բարեկամ, հող ու տուն...»:* [Վկ. 437]

Ի բնե հուզական և զգացմունքային կանայք անմիջականորեն իրենց վտիտ ուսերին են կրել հայերի տեղահանության, արքայի և կոտորածների ամբողջ տառապանքների ծանրությունը: Ուստի նրանք հանգամանորեն և պատկերավոր կերպով են նկարագրել իրենց աչքերով տեսածներն ու իրենց հոգու խորքում զգացածները: Քանի որ հայ մայրերն են արցունքներով ճանապարհել իրենց ամուսիններին ու որդիներին թուրքական բանակում ծառայելու: Իսկ տղամարդիկ հորինել են երգեր, որոնցում նկարագրվել է, թե ինչպես հայ զինվորներին զենք չեն տվել, նրանց ուղարկել են *«Ամելե թաքոր»* (Աշխատանքային գումարտակ) ծանր աշխատանքներ կատարելու: Նրանք ուժասպառ անշնչացել են և կամ սպանվել ու լցվել իրենց իսկ փորած փոսերի մեջ (*«Զորահավաքի, զինահավաքի և բանտարկյալի երգեր»*): Այնուհետև հայ կանանց ստիպել են թողնել իրենց տունն ու այգին, ունեցվածքը և իրենց երեխաների, անկարող ու ծեր ծնողների հետ բռնել արքայի ճամփան: Նրանք հոգևորությունից արյունոտված ոտքերով, կիզիչ արևի տակ, սոված ու ծարավ, թուրք ոստիկանների մտրակների հարվածների ներքո, քայլել են դեպի Դեյր էլ Զորի, Ռաս ու Այնի, Ռաքքայի, Մեսքենեի, Սուրուհի և այլ անապատները: Ինչպես ականատեսների պատմած հուշերում, նույնպես և նրանց հաղորդած երգերում հիշատակված են նրանց անցած ճանապարհները, թուրք ոստիկանների, քուրդ հրոսակների, չեչեն ու չերքեզ ջարդարարների ավարառություններն ու թալանը, հայ աղջիկների ու կանանց առևանգումն ու սպանությունը, նրանց ցցերի վրա նստեցնելը, կանանց փորերը ճեղքելն ու ոսկի փնտրելը, ոմանց խաչելն ու տանջամահ անելը, հղի կանանց ողջ-ողջ որովայնը սփռնելով բացելն ու պտուղը դուրս բերելը և այլն: Ահա թե ինչու հայ անմեղ հուսահատ աղջիկները թուրքի ձեռք չանցնելու, թուրքի կին չդառնալու, թուրք երեխաներ չծնելու համար, իրար ձեռքից բռնած Եփրատ գետն են նետվել (*«Տեղահանության և կոտորածի երգեր»*): Հատուկ բաժին է հատկացված առևանգված երեխաների մայրերի տառապանքներին և անհայր ու անմայր մնացած որբերի ու որբանոցների մասին տխուր երգերին (*«Որդեկորույս մայրերի, որբի և որբանոցի երգեր»*): Ներկայացված են նաև հայերի արդար բողոքի և ըմբոստության, իրենց ապրելու մարդկային տարրական իրավունքները պաշտպանելու, բռնությունները չհանդուրժելու, ինքնապաշտպանության, պայքարի և մաքառումի խրոխտ երգեր, որոնք հորինվել են մեծ մասամբ տղամարդկանց կողմից (*«Հայրենասիրության և հերոսամարտերի երգեր»*), և ի վերջո՝ բռնազավթված Հայրենիքի, այն կրկին վերագտնելու հավատավոր երգեր (*«Բռնազավթված Հայրենիքի և պահանջատիրության երգեր»*): Այս տարաբնույթ պատ-

մական երգերը, ըստ հնարավորին, ներկայացված են իրենց մեղեդիների նոտագրություններով:

Այդ պատմական երգերն իրենց թեմատիկ ինքնատիպությամբ ու գաղափարական բովանդակությամբ ոչ միայն նորույթ են բանագիտության և ցեղասպանագիտության բնագավառում, այլև դրանց շնորհիվ նորովի է ընկալվում պատմական տվյալ ժամանակաշրջանը՝ Հայոց ցեղասպանության իրագործման հանգամանքներն ու մանրամասները:

Հորինվելով հայ ժողովրդին վիճակված պատմական յուրահատուկ իրադարձությունների անմիջական տպավորությունների ներքո, *այդ կարգի ժողովրդական երգերը և վիպերգերը ևս հազեցած են պատմականությանը և ունեն հավաստի վավերագրերի արժեք:*

Պատմական այդ երգերը հորինվել են սեռատարիքային տարբեր խմբերի օժտված անհայտ անհատների կողմից: Դրանք իրենց ժամանակին ունեցել են լայն տարածում: Եվ քանի որ ժողովրդի տառապանքը կրել է զանգվածային բնույթ, հետևաբար, ժողովրդական երգերը ևս ունեցել են զանգվածային տարածում, անցել են բերնից բերան՝ ծնունդ տալով նորանոր, բազմազան տարբերակներ: Այնպես որ, նույնանման երգեր միաժամանակ հորինվել են զանազան տարբերակներով ու փոխակերպումներով, *հանգամանք, որը վկայում է պատմական այդ երգերի ժողովրդական բնույթի մասին:*

Իմ բազմաթիվ գրառումների և ձայնագրությունների ընթացքում ժողովրդական տվյալ երգը կամ դրա նման տարբերակն այնքան շատ ականատես վերապրողներ են հաղորդել, որ անհնարին էր բոլորի անունները հիշատակել: Ուստի դրանց առանցքային տարբերակներ հաղորդողների անուններն են միայն հիշատակված սույն գրքի փաստագրական ծանոթագրությունների աղյուսակում: Նույն տեղում նշված է նաև տվյալ երգը (կամ՝ հուշը) հաղորդած ականատես-վկա վերապրողի անունը, ազգանունը, ծննդյան թիվը և վայրը, ինչպես նաև՝ նյութի գրառման ժամանակը, վայրը, լեզուն, բնույթը (ձեռագիր, լսողական և տեսողական ձայնագրություններ) և արխիվային ֆոնդի համարը (ըստ դոկտոր, պրոֆեսոր Իսիդոր Լևինի ժողովրդական բանավոր նյութերի վավերագրման գիտական մեթոդի):

Հայոց ցեղասպանության ականատես-վկաները (կին, թե՛ տղամարդ) հոգեկան պոռթկացող վերապրումով և արցունքախառն հեկեկոցներով են վերհիշել այդ երգերը, քանի որ վերջիններս անմիջականորեն կապվել են իրենց պատմական հիշողության հետ: Այդ հանգամանքով են բացատրվում ժողովրդական պատմական երգերի ինքնատիպ առանձնահատկությունները:

Ժողովրդական այդ երգերի բազմազան տարբերակները, պատմական ստուգությամբ հանդերձ, բնութագրվում են սեղմ պատկերավորությամբ և հայ միջնադարյան լալյաց երգերին բնորոշ նուրբ ու հուզական մեղեդայնությամբ: Այդ երգերի յուրաքանչյուր տողն ու բառակապակցությունը մի ավարտուն պատկեր է, զանգվածային ողբերգության մի սահմոկեցուցիչ տեսարան, իսկ լալահառաչ կրկներգերը համալրում և ամբողջացնում են բանաստեղծական, պատկերավոր միտքը:

*Պատմական բնույթի երգերը հորինվել են ոչ միայն հայերեն, այլև՝ թուրքերեն, քանի որ պատմաքաղաքական տվյալ հանգամանքներում Օսմանյան կայսրության որոշ գավառներում հայերեն խոսելն արգելված է եղել:*

Չբացառելով երկարատև համատեղ կեցության պայմաններում երկու ժողովուրդների հոգևոր մշակույթների ազդեցություններն ու փոխազդեցությունները՝ հարկ է նշել, որ վկայություններ կան, թե՛ «...հայ բառ արտասանողներու լեզուները կտրուած էին, հետևաբար, Կիլիկիայի մի շարք քաղաքներու (Միս, Ադանա, Տարսոն, Անթէպ) և անոնց շրջակայքը ապրող Հայերը կորուսած էին իրենց մայրէնի լեզուն...»: [Գալուստեան Գրիգոր, *Մարաշ կամ Գերմանիկ եւ հերոս*

*Զէյթուն*, Նիւ Եորք, 1934, էջ 698] Եվ կամ՝ «թիրքերուն հարստահարութիւնն ու հալածանքն այն-քան խիստ եղաւ, որ հայախօս Անթէպ եղաւ թիրքախօս, Փոքր-Ասիոյ ուրիշ հայաբնակ գլխաւոր քաղաքներուն պէս: Եւ վերջին կտրուկ ու սաստիկ հարուածը Անթէպի Հայախօսութեան Ենի-չէրիներն են որ տուին, ծայրատելով հայերէն խօսողներուն լեզուները...»: [Սարաֆեան Գէորգ, *Պատմութիւն Անթէպի Հայոց*, հ. Ա, Լոս Անճելէս, 1953, էջ 5]

19-րդ դարավերջի և 20-րդ դարասկզբի ազգագրագետ-բանահավաք Սարգիս Հայկունին, նկարագրելով իր ժամանակի արևմտահայերի քաղաքական, տնտեսական և հոգևոր իրավիճակը, գրել է. «...Հայոց լեզուն թուրք մոլլաների կողմից արգիլուած էր, եւ, հայերէն եոթ բառը մի հայհոյութիւն նկատելով, սահմանուած էր տուգանք՝ հինգ ոչխարի քանակով»: [Հայկունի Սարգիս, *Կորած ու մոռացուած հայեր. Տրապիզոնի հայ-մահմետական գիւղերն ու նրանց աւանդութիւնները*, «Արարատ», Վաղարշապատ, 1895, էջ 297]

Իմ գրառած ժողովրդական հուշերում ևս բազմաթիվ վկայություններ կան այն մասին, որ Սիւսի, Ադանայի, Տարսուսի, Այնթապի, Քյոթահիայի, Բուրսայի, Կեսարիայի, Էսքիշէհիի և այլ վայրերի հայերը հիմնականում թուրքախոս էին: Ադանացի վերապրող **Միքայել Քեշիշյանի** (ծնվ. 1904 թ.) վկայությամբ՝ «*արդեն արգելված էր հայերեն խոսիլը և սորվիլը. ոչ միայն լեզուն կկտրեին, նաև թևերուն տակ խաշած տաք հավկիթ կդնեին, որ խոստովանվի, թե հայերեն կտրվեցնե ուրիշներուն: Եթե կխոստովանվեր՝ կտանեին, կկախեին կամ՝ կսպանեին*»: [Վկ. 241]

Այդ մասին է վկայում նաև իմ գրառած հայ ժողովրդական երգի պատատիկը, որը հաղորդել է կոնիացի **Սաթենիկ Գույումշյանը** (ծնվ. 1902 թ.).

*«Դպրոցը մտան, վարժուհուն բռնեցին,  
Վա՛յ, ամա՛ն,  
Բերանը բացեցին՝ լեզուն կտրեցին,  
Ա՛խ, ամա՛ն»:* [Վկ. 446]

Վարժուհին այդ պատժին էր արժանացել, քանի որ հանդգնել էր հայ մանուկներին հայերեն սովորեցնել: Իսկ տեղահանության ու աքսորի ճամփաներին այդ խստություններն ավելի են սաստկացել: Հետևաբար, արևմտահայերն իրենց վիշտն ու տառապանքն ստիպված արտահայտել են նաև թուրքերեն:

Նկատի ունենալով լեզվական ձուլման նախնական մակարդակը ներկայացնող այդ տխուր երևույթի հասարակական-քաղաքական հանգամանքները, զանազան բարբառներով գրառված նյութերի հետ, իմ ուշադրությունից չեն վրիպել նաև **թուրքալեզու, սակայն բացահայտ հայկական ծագմամբ ժողովրդական պատմական երգերն ու վիպերգերը**: Վերջիններս թեպետ հորինվել են տարբեր գավառների հայերի կողմից և այն էլ ոչ կատարյալ թուրքերենի իմացությամբ (հաճախ հիշատակվում են հայերեն բառեր ու արտահայտություններ, հայկական անձնանուններ ու տեղանուններ, նկատվում են քերականական և հնչյունային անճշտություններ), սակայն իրենց զաղափարական բովանդակությամբ ունեն պատմաճանաչողական կարևոր արժեք:

Ջարդի և կոտորածների մասին պատմող երգերը հյուսվել են դերգորյան աքսորի ճամփաներին: Եվ քանի որ հայերեն խոսելն արգելված է եղել, հայերն իրենց վիշտն ու տառապանքը արտահայտել են թշնամու լեզվով՝ թուրքերեն.

*“Sabahtan kalktim, güneş parlıyor;  
Osmanlı askeri silah yağıyor;  
Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor;  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”*

*«Առավոտյան վեր կացա՝ արևն էր փայլում,  
Օսմանցի ասկյարն իր զենքն էր յուղում,  
Հայերին նայեցի՝ սաստի՛կ էին լաց լինում,  
Հավատքի համար հայերն են մեռնում»:* [Վկ. 488]

Եվ կամ՝

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

«Ռեք Զոր կոչվածն էր մի մեծ տեղավայր,  
Մորթված հայերին էլ հաշիվ չկար,  
Օսմանցի պետերը մսագործ դարձան,  
Հայերն են մեռնում հավատքի համար»: [Վկ. 467]

Հայերը մեռնում էին «*հավատի համար*», որովհետև չէին ուզում ուրանալ իրենց քրիստոնեական հավատն ու ազգային ինքնությունը: Ստամբուլի բնակիչ, ադաբազարցի վերապրող **Սիրենա Ալաճաճյանը** (ծնվ. 1910 թ.) չորս տարեկան էր, երբ թուրքերը սպանել են իր հորն ու մորը: Անտեր մնացած որբուկին պահել են արաբ անապատականները: Չորս տարի անց, զինադաշարից հետո (1918 թ.), երբ որբահավաքներն անապատներից հայ որբուկներին էին հավաքում, տեսնում են արդեն ութ տարեկան դարձած, դեմքը կապույտ թանաքով դաշված, անունը փոխված աղջնակին՝ կապույտ աչքերով, դեղին, գանգուր մազերով. անշուշտ, նա հայ էր: Թեպետ նա մոռացել էր հայերեն խոսելը, սակայն չէր մոռացել քրիստոնեական խաչակնքումը, որը և դառնում է նրա հայ-քրիստոնյա լինելու վկայությունը: Փոքրիկ Սիրենային վերցնում և տանում են հայկական որբանոց: [Վկ. 225]

Ավելի քան 150 բնակավայրերից տեղահանված ականատես-վկաները ոչ միայն պատմել են իրենց տեսածն ու զգացածը, այլև հանգել են որոշակի քաղաքական եզրակացությունների: Այսպես, այնթապցի **Պարզև Մակարյանը** (ծնվ. 1915 թ.) ամփոփել է. «...Մեծ տերությունները հայերուն խաբեցին՝ Կիլիկիան թուրքին տվին. Զեյթունը, Ադանան, Սիսը, Մարաշը, Քիլիսը, Այնթապը, Ուրֆան, Կամուրջը և այլ քաղաքներ ամբողջապես հայաթափվեցան: Մեզի ստիպեցին, որ Կիլիկիայեն դուրս ելլանք: Մենք ստիպված մեր հայրենիքը լքեցինք: 1922 թ. ալ Իզմիրի աղետը սարքեցին. հայերն ու հույները կրակներուն մեջեն փախան, ծովը նետվեցան. ով կրցավ ինքզինքն ազատել՝ ուրիշ երկիր անցավ: Այսպիսով, Թուրքիան «մաքրեցին» քրիստոնյաներեն: Թուրքիան մնաց թուրքերուն, Արևմտյան Հայաստանն ու Կիլիկիան ալ հետը»: [Վկ. 272]

Եվ կամ՝ խարբերդցի ականատես-վկա **Հակոբ Հոլոբիկյանը** (ծնվ. 1902 թ.), մանրամասնորեն նկարագրելով իր և իր հայրենակիցների կրած տառապանքները, եզրակացրել է. «...Երիտթուրքերի կողմից կատարված այս ոճրագործությունը երբեք չի՝ մոռացվի և չպե՛տք է ներվի»: [Վկ. 115]

Մինչդեռ այսօրվա թուրքական քարոզչությունն ու պատմագիտությունը ջանք չեն խնայում խեղաթյուրելու պատմական ստույգ փաստերը, սերունդներից խնամքով թաքցնելով երիտթուրքական կառավարության իրագործած Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը: Նրանք փորձում են շրջանցել պատմական այն ճշմարտությունը, որ թուրքական պետական մարմինները դեռևս 1919 թ. սկզբից իրենք իսկ ձեռնամուխ են եղել երիտթուրքական ոճրագործների դատավարությունը կազմակերպելուն՝ նրանց դատապարտելով մահվան: Իսկ ավելի ուշ, երբ բացահայտվեց արդեն Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության Առաջին Նախագահ դարձած Մուստաֆա Քեմալի դեմ երիտթուրքերի կազմակերպած դավադրությունը, "Los Angeles Examiner" թերթին (1 օգոստոսի, 1926 թ.) տված հարցազրույցում ինքը՝ Քեմալ Աթաթուրքը, նույնպես դատապարտել է ոճրագործներին. «Նախկին երիտթուրքական կուսակցության այդ թափթփուկները, կուսակցություն, որը պետք է պատասխան տար մեր միլիոնավոր քրիստոնյա հպատակների կյանքի համար, որոնք անգթորեն քշվեցին զանգվածաբար իրենց բնակավայրերից և ոչնչացվեցին...»: [Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005. Documents and Declarations*. Glendale, Published by 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of California, 2005, p. 13]

Այնպես որ, պատմական ցավալի իրողությունն անժխտելի փաստ է և ենթակա չէ որևէ կասկածի:

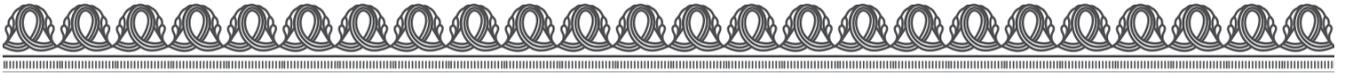
Ցավոք միջազգային հանրությունը ևս ժամանակին չսաստեց և ըստ արժանվույն չդատապարտեց 20-րդ դարում իրագործված առաջին՝ Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը (The Armenian Genocide), և, որպես տրամաբանական շարունակություն, ծնունդ առավ ֆաշիզմը (Fascism), իսկ մեր օրերում՝ միջազգային ահաբեկչությունը (Terrorism) իր անկանխատեսելի դրսևորումներով և համաշխարհային աղետալի վտանգավորությամբ, քանի որ անպատիժ մնացած հանցագործությունները կրկնվում են ի վնաս մարդկության:

Այսպիսով, անհետ կորստից փրկված, սերունդներին ավանդվող ականատես վերապրողների հաղորդած հուշերն ու պատմական բնույթի երգերն իրենց պատմաճանաչողական արժեքով դառնում են Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը և դրան հաջորդած պատմական իրադարձությունները ժողովրդական պարզ լեզվով լուսաբանող վկայություններ, հավաստի, առարկայական և փաստագրական վավերագրեր, որոնք ոչ միայն անցյալի վկայությունն են, այլև՝ ապագայի նախազգուշացում:

Ցեղասպանությունը քաղաքական զանգվածային ոճիր է և այն չպետք է անպատիժ մնա, այլ պետք է իրավաբանորեն բացահայտվի նաև ականատես վերապրողների վկայությունների հիման վրա: Իսկ **ամենամեծ վկան ինքը՝ Ժողովուրդն է**, որը, ցավագնորեն վերապրելով, պատմելու դեռ շարունակում է պատմել՝ վկայելով իր ողբերգական անցյալը: Անցյալ, որը հայ ժողովրդի անցյալն է, նրա պատմությունը, նրա պատմական հավաքական հիշողությունը, որը պետք է ներկայացվի աշխարհին ու մարդկության արդար դատին:

Ուստի ժամանակն է, որ ներկայիս Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության կառավարությունը և քաջությունն ունենա ոչ միայն ճանաչել ինչպես գրավոր, նույնպես և բանավոր փաստերով հիմնավորված, ապացուցման կարիք չունեցող, պատմական այդ բացահայտ ճշմարտությունը, այլև՝ դատապարտի կատարվածը և հատուցի հայ ժողովրդի բարոյական, նյութական և տարածքային կորուստները՝ պատմական այն իրողության, որը կոչվում է **Հայոց ցեղասպանություն**:





## ABBREVIATIONS

Arab. – Arabic

Arm. – Armenian

Eng. – English

Fr. – French

Germ. – German

Gr. – Greek

Kurd. – Kurdish

Russ. – Russian

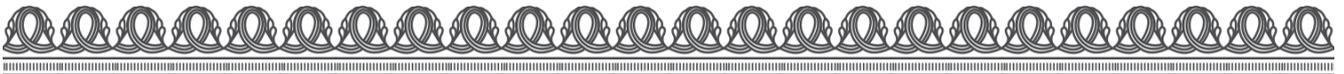
Turk. – Turkish

AS ASSR – Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic

NAS RA – National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

T. – Testimony





## DOCUMENTATION ON THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS AND THEIR TESTIMONIES

Number of the Material	Fund Number, Nature of the Material and Language <sup>1</sup>	Survivor's Name and Surname	Survivor's Birth-Year	Birthplace of the Survivor and Recording Place <sup>2</sup> of the Material	Year of the Recording
<b>I. HISTORICAL MEMOIR-TESTIMONIES</b>					
1 (1).	Man.GM.3-Arm.	Yeghiazar Karapetian	1886	Sassoun>Yerevan	1940
2 (2).	DD.GM.10*-11*-Arm.	Khachik Khachatrian	1900	Sassoun>Ashnak	1989
3 (3).	DD.GM.3*-4*-Arm.	Hakob Grigorian	1903	Sassoun>Ashnak	1989
4 (4).	DD.GM.22*-23*-Arm.	Arakel Davtian	1904	Sassoun>Ashnak	1989
5 (5).	VS.1+138*-Arm.	Moushegh Hovhannissian	1908	Sassoun>Talin	1997
6 (6).	VS.2+171*-Arm.	Rehan Manoukian	1910	Taron>Yerevan	1998
7 (7).	Man.VS.3-Arm.	Noyemzar Mouradian	1883	Moosh>Yerevan	1970
8 (8).	VS.4-Arm.	Tonakan Tonoyan	1893	Moosh>Yerevan	1981
9 (9).	DD.GM.38*/VS.5**-Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1981/96
10 (10).	VS.6+138*-Arm.	Sedrak Harutyunian	1904	Moosh>Yerevan	1997
11 (11).	DD.GM.1*-Arm.	Satenik Petrossian	1908	Moosh>Los Angeles	1989
12 (12).	DD.GM.55*-Arm.	Arshak Stepanian	1908	Moosh>Yerevan	1989
13 (13).	VS.7+120*-Arm.	Hrant Gasparian	1908	Moosh>Yerevan	1996
14 (14).	VS.8+138*-Arm.	Hrach Hovhannissian	1908	Moosh>Talin	1997
15 (15).	DD.GM.31*-Arm.	Khachatour Ghokassian	1898	Bitlis>Ashnak	1989
16 (16).	VS.9-Arm.	Tagouhi Antonian	1900	Bitlis>Los Angeles	1990
17 (17).	VS.10-Arm.	Yenok Aslanian	1901	Bitlis>Yerevan	2001
18 (18).	Man.GM.29-30-Arm.	Sokrat Mkrtchian	1901	Bitlis>Yerevan	1980
19 (19).	DD.GM.6*-Arm.	Hmayak Boyadjian	1902	Bitlis>Yerevan	1989
20 (20).	VS.11+193*-Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
21 (21).	VS.12+207*-Arm.	Srbouhi Mouradian	1911	Bitlis>Yerevan	1998
22 (22).	VS.13+207*-Arm.	Nvard Mouradian	1912	Bitlis>Yerevan	1998
23 (23).	DD.GM.58*-Kurd.	Hakob Mouradian	1903	Sgherd>Yerevan	1989
24 (24).	Man.VS.14-Arm.	Heghnar Ghokassian	1896	Bassen>Yerevan	1972

<sup>1</sup> The materials of the collection are kept at the Memoir, Diary, Audio and Video Funds of the Archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA).

VS. – Verjiné Svazlian Fund

DD. – Department of History and Culture of the Diasporan Armenian Communities, NAS RA, Fund

GM. – Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide, NAS RA

Man. – Manuscript

\* – Video-recording

\*\* – Audio-recording

<sup>2</sup> The place of the recording of the material is indicated according to the towns, while the environs of Yerevan are designated according to the newly built suburbs where the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide lived.

25 (25).	Man.VS.15-Arm.	Nvard Mouradian	1903	Shatakh>Yerevan	1970
26 (26).	VS.16+131*-Arm.	Andreas Gulanian	1905	Shatakh>Yerevan	1997
27 (27).	VS.17+131*-Arm.	Hayrik Mouradian	1905	Shatakh>Ararat	1997
28 (28).	VS.18+131*-Arm.	Edward Dashtoyan	1907	Shatakh>Yerevan	1997
29 (29).	Man.GM.9-Arm.	Sahak Bazian	1913	Shatakh>Yerevan	1970
30 (30).	Man.GM.55-Arm.	Vahan Ktranian	1900	Van>Berlin	1947
31 (31).	DD.GM.59*-Arm.	Tovik Baghdassarian	1901	Van>Yerevan	1989
32 (32).	DD.GM.33*-Arm.	Manvel Maroutian	1901	Van>Yerevan	1989
33 (33).	VS.19+119*-Arm.	Aghassi Kankanian	1904	Van>Yerevan	1997
34 (34).	DD.GM.46*-Arm.	Smbat Davtian	1905	Van>Yerevan	1989
35 (35).	VS.20+119*-Arm.	Sirak Manassian	1905	Van>Yerevan	1997
36 (36).	VS.21+143*-Arm.	Varsenik Abrahamian	1905	Van>Yerevan	1997
37 (37).	DD.GM.48*-Arm.	Siranoush Toutoundjian	1906	Van>Yerevan	1989
38 (38).	VS.22+193*-Arm.	Patrick Saroyan	1906	Van>Yerevan	1998
39 (39).	VS.23+207*-Arm.	Makrouhi Sahakian	1907	Van>Yerevan	1998
40 (40).	DD.GM.55*-Arm.	Ardsroun Harutyunian	1907	Van>Gyumri	1989
41 (41).	VS.24+143*-Arm.	Yervand Shirakian	1907	Van>Yerevan	1997
42 (42).	DDGM51*-52*/VS25-Arm	Ghazar Gevorgian	1907	Van>Yerevan	1989
43 (43).	VS.26+132*-Arm.	Nshan Abrahamian	1908	Van>Yerevan	1997
44 (44).	DD.GM.41*-42*-Arm.	Azniv Aslanian	1908	Van>Yerevan	1989
45 (45).	VS.27+204*-Arm.	Kadjberouhi Shahinian	1908	Van>Yerevan	1989
46 (46).	VS.28+132*-Arm.	Silva Byuzandian	1908	Van>Yerevan	1997
47 (47).	DD.GM.39*-Arm.	Sargis Bardalian	1909	Van>Yerevan	1989
48 (48).	VS.29+119*-Arm.	Varazdat Harutyunian	1909	Van>Yerevan	1997
49 (49).	VS.30+140*-Arm.	Ardevik Terzian	1910	Van>Yerevan	1997
50 (50).	Man.GM.25-Arm.	Lousik Balassanian	1910	Van>Yerevan	1970
51 (51).	VS.31+204*-Arm.	Vardges Alexanian	1911	Van>Yerevan	1999
52 (52).	Man.VS.32-Fr.	Aghavni Barseghian	1911	Van>Lyon	1994
53 (53).	VS.33-Arm.	Shoghik Mkrtchian	1911	Van>Yerevan	2000
54 (54).	VS.34+183*-Arm.	Vardouhi Potikian	1912	Van>Yerevan	1998
55 (55).	VS.35+130*-Arm.	Derenik Saroyan	1912	Van>Yerevan	1997
56 (56).	VS.36+140*-Arm.	Armik Terzian	1912	Van>Yerevan	1997
57 (57).	DD.GM.39*-Kurd.	Ghoukas Karapetian	1901	Moks>Lousavan	1988
58 (58).	VS.37-Arm.	Kamsar Khachatryan	1898	Bayazet>Yerevan	1974
59 (59).	VS.38+143*-Arm.	Evelina Kanayan	1909	Igdir>Yerevan	1997
60 (60).	Man.VS.39-Arm.	Israel Grigorian	1909	Igdir>Armavir	2001
61 (61).	VS.40+207*-Arm.	Dsaghik Chinimian	1910	Igdir>Yerevan	1998
62 (62).	VS.41-Arm.	Hrant Khondkarian	1911	Igdir>Yerevan	2000
63 (63).	VS.42+216*-Arm.	Andranik Simonian	1902	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
64 (64).	VS.43+193*-Arm.	Paruyr Khachatryan	1908	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
65 (65).	VS.44+204*-Arm.	Lousik Martirosian	1909	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
66 (66).	DD.GM.169*-Arm.	Mihran Baghdassarian	1909	Alashkert>Yerevan	1989
67 (67).	VS.45+193*-Arm.	Nvard Gevorgian	1910	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
68 (68).	VS.46+193*-Arm.	Vardoush Kirakossian	1911	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
69 (69).	VS.47+143*-Arm.	Gourgen Mouradian	1914	Alashkert>Yerevan	1997
70 (70).	VS.48+130*-Arm.	Natalia Barseghian	1889	Kars>Yerevan	1997

71 (71).	VS.49+140*-Arm.	Annman Arakelian	1903	Kars>Yerevan	1997
72 (72).	VS.50+216*-Arm.	Peproné Toumassian	1910	Kars>Yerevan	1998
73 (73).	VS.51-Arm.	Siranoush Petrossian	1910	Kars>Yerevan	1990
74 (74).	VS.52+216*-Arm.	Armenouhi Yeghikian	1910	Kars>Yerevan	1998
75 (75).	VS.53-Arm.	Parandzem Ter-Hakobian	1912	Kars>Gyumri	1998
76 (76).	VS.54-Arm.	Khanouma Djalil	1912	Kars>Yerevan	2000
77 (77).	VS.55-Arm.	Elena Abrahamian	1912	Kars>Yerevan	2001
78 (78).	VS.56+140*-Arm.	Aghassi Karoyan	1913	Kars>Yerevan	1997
79 (79).	VS.57+130*-Arm.	Emma Asatrian	1914	Kars>Yerevan	1997
80 (80).	VS.58+182*-Arm.	Stepan Hovakimian	1910	Ardvin>Yerevan	1998
81 (81).	VS.59+182*-Arm.	Nektar Gasparian	1910	Ardvin>Yerevan	1998
82 (82).	Man.VS.60-Arm.	Shoushanik Pachadjian	1901	Trapizon>Yerevan	1970
83 (83).	VS.61+138*-Arm.	Arshalouys Ter-Nazaretian	1905	Baberd>Yerevan	1997
84 (84).	VS.62+182*-Arm.	Massis Kodjoyan	1910	Baberd>Yerevan	1998
85 (85).	Man.GM.41-Arm.	Gegham Hatsagordsian	1902	Sper>Yerevan	1960
86 (86).	Man.GM.35-Arm.	Sargis Makarov	189?	Erzroom>Moscow	1915-21
87 (87).	Man.GM.31-Arm.	Harutyun Grigorian	1898	Erzroom>Yerevan	1975
88 (88).	Man.GM.33-Arm.	Loris Papikian	1903	Erzroom>Yerevan	1970
89 (89).	VS.63-Arm.	Ovsanna Nalbandoghli	1905	Erzroom>Istanbul	1996
90 (90).	VS.64-Arm.	Mariam Ter-Mkrtchian	1908	Erzroom>Vardashen	1983
91 (91).	VS.65*-Arm.	Manoushak Ter-Stepanian	1908	Erzroom>Yerevan	2001
92 (92).	Man.VS.66-Arm.	Ashkhen Poghikian	1908	Erzroom>Yerevan	1978
93 (93).	VS.67+169*-Arm.	Ishkhan Haykazian	1909	Erzroom>Yerevan	1998
94 (94).	VS.68-Arm.	Siranoush Nassoyan	1900	Khnos>Hrazdan	1980
95 (95).	DD.GM.53*-Arm.	Garnik Stepanian	1909	Yerznka>Yerevan	1989
96 (96).	VS.69-Arm.	Arakel Tagoyan	1902	Derdjan>Dilidjan	1975
97 (97).	DD.GM.47*-Arm.	Tigran Ohanian	1902	Kamakh>Yerevan	1989
98 (98).	Man.VS.70-Arm.	Kadjouni Gharagyozyan	1905	Sh.-Garahissar>Gyumri	1971
99 (99).	VS.71-Arm.	Mkrtich Khachatrian	1907	Sh.-Garahissar>Edjmiadsin	1978
100 (100).	VS.72-Arm.	Hakob Terzian	1910	Sh.-Garahissar>New York	1979
101 (101).	Man.GM.23-Arm.	Hovhannes Ginossian	1902	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1970
102 (102).	VS.73+118*-Arm.	Haykaz Torikian	1902	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1996
103 (103).	VS.74+118*-Arm.	Sargis Amalian	1904	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1996
104 (104).	Man.GM.16-Arm.	Ghazar Gyumishgerdanian	1905	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1970
105 (105).	VS.75-Arm.	Petros Kikishian	1906	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
106 (106).	VS.76-Arm.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
107 (107).	VS.77+132*-Arm.	Arpen Aghadjanian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1997
108 (108).	Man.VS.78-Fr.	Moushegh Demirjian	1910	Arabkir>Lyon	1996
109 (109).	Man.GM.15-Eng.	Elmas Kavoukjian	1883	Harpoot>New York	1997
110 (110).	VS.79-Arm.	Haykaz Ajemian	1892	Harpoot>Sari Tagh	1971
111 (111).	Man.VS.80-Eng.	Johar Mamigonian	1895	Harpoot>Boston	1978
112 (112).	Man.VS.81-Arm.	Harutyun Martikian	1899	Harpoot>Nor Zeytoun	1970
113 (113).	VS.82-Arm.	Dsirani Matevossian	1900	Harpoot>Yerevan	2002
114 (114).	DD.GM.21*-Arm.	Yeghsa Khayadjanian	1900	Harpoot>Noubarashen	1989
115 (115).	DD.GM.53*-Arm.	Hakob Holobikian	1902	Harpoot>Noubarashen	1988
116 (116).	DDGM189/VS83+120*-Arm.	Sargis Khachatrian	1903	Harpoot>Yerevan	1989/96

117 (117).	DD.GM.6*-Arm.	Sargis Martirosian	1903	Harpoot>Damascus	1989
118 (118).	VS.84-Arm.	Garegin Touroudjikian	1903	Harpoot>Nor Kharbert	1985
119 (119).	Man.VS.85-Arm.	Mikayel Chilingarian	1904	Harpoot>Noubarashen	1979
120 (120).	VS.86-Arm.	Trvanda Mouradian	1905	Harpoot>Nor Marash	1985
121 (121).	VS.87+135*-Arm.	Stepan Stepanian	1907	Harpoot>Nor Kharbert	1997
122 (122).	VS.88+135*-Arm.	Payloun Terterian	1907	Harpoot>Nor Kharbert	1997
123 (123).	VS.89-Arm.	Aram Kyosseyan	1908	Harpoot>Yerevan	1987
124 (124).	VS.90-Arm.	Yeghsa Antonian	1910	Harpoot>Sari Tagh	1978
125 (125).	DD.GM.57*-Arm.	Margarit Nadjarian	1910	Harpoot>Yerevan	1989
126 (126).	VS.91-Arm.	Annman Toukhmanian	1910	Harpoot>Los Angeles	2001
127 (127).	VS.92-Arm.	Rober Galenian	1912	Harpoot>Nor Aresh	1986
128 (128).	VS.93-Arm.	Marta Eoylenjian	1912	Harpoot>Los Angeles	2001
129 (129).	VS.94+130*-Arm.	Hazarkhan Torossian	1902	Balou>Nor Sebastia	1997
130 (130).	Man.VS.95-Arm.	Karapet Farashian	1906	Balou>Lyon	1987
131 (131).	VS.96-Arm.	Sargis Saryan	1911	Balou>Paris	1999
132 (132).	VS.97+204*-Arm.	Marie Vardanian	1905	Malatia>Nor Malatia	1998
133 (133).	VS.98-Arm.	Arshalouys Tashjian	1908	Malatia>Nor Malatia	1980
134 (134).	VS.99+204*-Arm.	Verginé Nadjarian	1910	Malatia>Nor Malatia	1998
135 (135).	VS.100-Arm.	Grigor Ekizian	1921	Malatia>Nor Malatia	1980
136 (136).	Man.VS.101-Arm.	Hovsep Bazoyan	1901	Tigranakert>Ottawa	1972
137 (137).	VS.102-Arm.	Hovhannes Kyoroghlian	1904	Tigranakert>Los Angeles	1979
138 (138).	Man.VS.103-Arm.	Satenik Ter-Sargissian	1908	Tigranakert>New York	1982
139 (139).	VS.104-Arm.	Mkrtich Karapetian	1910	Tigranakert>Shengavit	1990
140 (140).	VS.105-Kurd.	Eva Topalian	1909	Merdin>Istanbul	1996
141 (141).	VS.106-Kurd.	Mariam Akhoyan	1909	Merdin>Istanbul	1996
142 (142).	Man.VS.107-Arm.	Petros Voskerichian	1905	Severek>Cairo	1973
143 (143).	Man.GM.28-Arm.	Khacher Ablapoutian	1893	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1980
144 (144).	VS.108-Arm.	Khoren Ablapoutian	1893	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1987
145 (145).	VS.109+120*-Arm.	Nvard Ablapoutian	1903	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1987/96
146 (146).	VS.110-Arm.	Haykanoush Ter-Petrosian	1910	Yedessia>Aygestan	1987
147 (147).	VS.111-Arm.	Gevorg Kiledjian	1912	Yedessia>Los Angeles	2001
148 (148).	VS.112-Arm.	Mariam Karadjian	1903	Adiyaman>Sari Tagh	1973
149 (149).	Man.VS.113-Arm.	Vahan Darbinian	1917	Derendé>Yerevan	1970
150 (150).	Man.VS.114-Arm.	Karapet Azarian	1884	Sebastia>Yerevan	1960
151 (151).	Man.VS.115-Arm.	Maritsa Astourian	1887	Sebastia>San Francisco	1970
152 (152).	DD.GM.54*-Arm.	Khoren Gyulbenkian	1895	Sebastia>Yerevan	1989
153 (153).	Man.VS.116-Arm.	Hambardzoum Sahakian	1898	Sebastia>Nor Zeytoun	1970
154 (154).	Man.GM.16-Arm.	Manvel Sahakian	1901	Sebastia>Yerevan	1989
155 (155).	VS.117/DDGM25*-Arm.	Souren Sargsian	1902	Sebastia>Nor Sebastia	1982/89
156 (156).	VS.118-Arm.	Satenik Doghramadjian	1903	Sebastia>Nor Sebastia	1978
157 (157).	VS.119-Arm.	Imastouhi Galadjian	1904	Sebastia>Los Angeles	2001
158 (158).	Man.GM.32-Germ.	Andranik Gavoukdjian	1905	Sebastia>Radebeul	1978
159 (159).	Man.VS.120-Eng.	Arshalouys Tingurian	1906	Sebastia>Fresno	1980
160 (160).	DDGM25/VS.121+138*-Arm.	Hovhannes Chadrdjian	1908	Sebastia>Nor Aresh	1989/97
161 (161).	VS.122-Arm.	Meliné Khanzadian	1908	Sebastia>Nor Aresh	1988
162 (162).	VS.123+143*-Arm.	Haykoush Ohanian	1908	Sebastia>Nor Aresh	1997

163 (163).	VS.124-Arm.	Azniv Siradeghian	1909	Sebastia>Los Angeles	2001
164 (164).	VS.125-Arm.	Araxy Onbashian	1909	Sebastia>New York	1979
165 (165).	Man.VS.126-Arm.	Toros Terdjianian	1912	Sebastia>Ottawa	1975
166 (166).	VS.127-Arm.	Annik Marikian	1892	Tokat>Nor Zeytoun	1972
167 (167).	VS.128-Arm.	Nvard Shirinoghli	1909	Tokat>Istanbul	1996
168 (168).	VS.129-Arm.	Endsa Jemperjian	1898	Amassia>Shengavit	1977
169 (169).	Man.VS.130-Arm.	Maritsa Papazian	1874	Samsun>Cairo	1970
170 (170).	VS.131+169*-Arm.	Mesrop Minassian	1910	Samsun>Yerevan	1998
171 (171).	Man.VS.132-Arm.	Missak Derounian	1907	Marzvan>Cairo	1977
172 (172).	Man.VS.133-Arm.	Mesrop Mesropian	1900	Yozghat>Yerevan	1970
173 (173).	Man.VS.134-Fr.	Hovhannes Varzhapetian	1901	Yozghat>Lyon	1978
174 (174).	Man.VS.135-Arm.	Srbouhi Galtakian	1902	Yozghat>Ottawa	1975
175 (175).	VS.136-Arm.	Arshakouhi Petrossian	1903	Yozghat>Nor Marash	1978
176 (176).	DD.GM.17*-20*-Arm.	Barounak Papazian	1906	Yozghat>Yerevan	1989
177 (177).	DD.GM.12-14/VS.137+121*-Arm.	Veronika Berberian	1907	Yozghat>Yerevan	1989/96
178 (178).	Man.GM.44-Arm.	Hovakim Karakekedjian	1907	Yozghat>Yerevan	1986
179 (179).	VS.138-Arm.	Anoush Topalian	1910	Yozghat>Istanbul	1996
180 (180).	VS.139-Arm.	Herminé Ter Voghormiajian	1912	Yozghat>Istanbul	1996
181 (181).	VS.140-Arm.	Paydsar Yerkat	1887	Kayseri>Nor Arabkir	1989
182 (182).	VS.141-Arm.	Harutyun Tsulikian	1896	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1972
183 (183).	VS.142-Turk.	Anna Nadjarian	1900	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1965
184 (184).	VS.143-Arm.	Arsen Svadjian	1901	Kayseri>Nor Aresh	1986
185 (185).	Man.VS.144-Arm.	Byuzand Moroukian	1904	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1972
186 (186).	VS.145-Arm.	Grigor Armenian	1909	Kayseri>Los Angeles	2001
187 (187).	Man.GM.42-Arm.	Khoren Gledjian	1910	Kayseri>Athens	1973
188 (188).	VS.146-Arm.	Lousaber Demirjian	1913	Kayseri>Los Angeles	2001
189 (189).	VS.147-Arm.	Karapet Kelekian	1904	Everek>Lyon	1986
190 (190).	VS.148-Arm.	Karapet Yeghyayan	1898	Nidé>Shengavit	1970
191 (191).	VS.149-Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
192 (192).	VS.150+216*-Arm.	Nerses Galbakian	1902	Konia>Nor Arabkir	1999
193 (193).	VS.151-Arm.	Marie Manoukian	1912	Konia>Los Angeles	2001
194 (194).	VS.152-Arm.	Iskouhi Hetoumian	1915	Stanoz>Istanbul	1996
195 (195).	VS.153-Arm.	Arpiné Bartikian	1903	Af.-Garahissar>Nor Kilikia	1990
196 (196).	VS.154+118*-Arm.	Sargis Yetarian	1907	Af.-Garahissar>Nor Arabkir	1996
197 (197).	VS.155+121*-Arm.	Assatour Menedjian	1907	Af.-Garahissar>Vardashen	1997
198 (198).	VS.156-Arm.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
199 (199).	VS.157-Arm.	Gegham Khachatrian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Nor Aresh	1979
200 (200).	Man.VS.158-Arm.	Hakob Papazian	1891	Sivrihissar>Yerevan	1975
201 (201).	VS.159-Arm.	Haykouhi Boghchadjian	1910	Kastemouni>Istanbul	1996
202 (202).	Man.VS.160-Arm.	Galoust Soghomonian	1905	Bolou>Yerevan	1981
203 (203).	VS.161-Arm.	Hovhannes Paronian	1890	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1979
204 (204).	VS.162-Arm.	Yeghissabet Gavgavian	1900	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1980
205 (205).	VS.163-Arm.	Samvel Patrian	1900	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1980
206 (206).	Man.GM.19-Arm.	Hovhannes Gasparian	1902	Eskishehir>Yerevan	1973
207 (207).	VS.164-Arm.	Sara Berberian	1905	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1988
208 (208).	VS.165-Arm.	Farnem Bursalian	1908	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1988

209 (209).	VS.166-Arm.	Haykanoush Cheshmedjian	1909	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1977
210 (210).	DD.GM.25*-Arm.	Sinan Sinanian	1912	Eskishehir>Yerevan	1989
211 (211).	Man.VS.167-Arm.	Grigor Sutjian	1901	Bursa>Beirut	1985
212 (212).	VS.168+143*-Arm.	Ashot Ohanian	1905	Bursa>Vardashen	1998
213 (213).	VS.169-Arm.	Angel Srapian	1905	Bursa>Aygestan	1972
214 (214).	VS.170+135*-Arm.	Davit Davtian	1908	Bursa>Yerevan	1997
215 (215).	VS.171+135*-Arm.	Avetis Norikian	1909	Bursa>Yerevan	1997
216 (216).	VS.172-Arm.	Karapet Poponian	1911	Bursa>Los Angeles	2001
217 (217).	VS.173-Arm.	Meliné Terzian	1905	Biledjik>Sari Tagh	1977
218 (218).	Man.GM.53-Arm.	Garegin Hisheyan	1896	Adabazar>Yerevan	1978
219 (219).	VS.174+132*-Arm.	Artavazd Ktradsian	1901	Adabazar>Yerevan	1997
220 (220).	VS.175+130*-Arm.	Vazgen Sadatian	1907	Adabazar>Yerevan	1997
221 (221).	VS.176-Arm.	Haykouhi Azarian	1908	Adabazar>Yerevan	1988
222 (222).	VS.177-Arm.	Sirvard Andreassian	1908	Adabazar>Nor Butania	1979
223 (223).	VS.178-Arm.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
224 (224).	VS.179-Arm.	Mary Yerkat	1910	Adabazar>Nor Zeytoun	1979
225 (225).	VS.180-Arm.	Sirena Alajajian	1910	Adabazar>Istanbul	1997
226 (226).	VS.181-Arm.	Karpis Tashjian	1914	Adabazar>Cairo	2006
227 (227).	VS.182-Arm.	Hambardzoum Markossian	1915	Adabazar>Cairo	2006
228 (228).	VS.183+207*-Arm.	Moushegh Hakobian	1890	Nicomedia>Sari Tagh	1998
229 (229).	VS.184-Arm.	Barouhi Chorekian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
230 (230).	VS.185-Arm.	Barouhi Silian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1982
231 (231).	VS.186+121*-Arm.	Geghetsik Yessayan	1901	Nicomedia>Nor Aresh	1997
232 (232).	VS.187-Arm.	Yevniké Papazian	1908	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
233 (233).	VS.188-Arm.	Hakob Terzian	1910	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
234 (234).	DD.GM.94-Eng.	Dolores Zohrap-Liebmann	1892	Istanbul>New York	1989
235 (235).	VS.189-Arm.	Gevorg Zoulalian	1907	Chanak-Kalé>Shengavit	1980
236 (236).	VS.190-Arm.	Marie Voskerchian	1913	Izmir>Nor Arabkir	1973
237 (237).	VS.191-Arm.	Soghomon Yetenekian	1900	Mersin>Nor Kilikia	1980
238 (238).	VS.192-Arm.	Petros Keshishian	1909	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1979
239 (239).	VS.193-Arm.	Ghazaros Khrimian	1911	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1979
240 (240).	VS.194-Arm.	Srbouhi Makarian	1903	Adana>Nor Malatia	1985
241 (241).	VS.195-Arm.	Mikayel Keshishian	1904	Adana>Nor Arabkir	1975
242 (242).	VS.196-Arm.	Arousyak Neferian	1906	Adana>Nor Malatia	1986
243 (243).	VS.197-Arm.	Vrezh Edyurian	1906	Adana>Istanbul	1996
244 (244).	DD.GM.43*-Arm.	Arousyak Vanessian	1909	Adana>Yerevan	1989
245 (245).	VS.198-Arm.	Harutyun Adamian	1909	Adana>Cairo	2006
246 (246).	VS.199-Arm.	Ester Stepanian	1913	Adana>Los Angeles	2001
247 (247).	VS.200-Arm.	Harutyun Alboyadjian	1904	Fendedjak>Nor Arabkir	1985
248 (248).	VS.201-Arm.	Aharon Mankrian	1903	Hadjn>Sari Tagh	1983
249 (249).	VS.202-Arm.	Yervand Karamian	1903	Hadjn>Sari Tagh	1981
250 (250).	VS.203+194*-Arm.	Yebrouhi Djrtekhian	1906	Hadjn>Noubarashen	1999
251 (251).	Man.VS.204-Arm.	Missak Herouni	1906	Hadjn>Yerevan	1975
252 (252).	VS.205+135*-Turk.	Gyurdji Keshishian	1900	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1997
253 (253).	VS.206+118*-Arm.	Hovsep Bshtikian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983/96
254 (254).	VS.207-Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983

255 (255).	VS.208-Arm.	Eva Choulian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
256 (256).	VS.209-Arm.	Sedrak Gaybakian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1978
257 (257).	VS.210-Arm.	Samvel Ardjikian	1907	Zeytoun>Armavir	1981
258 (258).	VS.211-Arm.	Gayané Adourian	1909	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1978
259 (259).	VS.212-Arm.	Verginé Mayikian	1898	Marash>Shengavit	1974
260 (260).	VS.213-Arm.	Makrouhi Haladjian	1900	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1974
261 (261).	VS.214+135*-Arm.	Levon Evrengedjian	1908	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1997
262 (262).	VS.215-Arm.	Aram Momdjian	1909	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1989
263 (263).	Man.VS.216-Arm.	Ester Antonian	1916	Marash>Los Angeles	2001
264 (264).	Man.GM.37-Arm.	Tigran Jebejian	1888	Ayntap>Aleppo	1955
265 (265).	VS.217+143*-Arm.	Gevorg Karamanoukian	1900	Ayntap>Vardashen	1997
266 (266).	VS.218-Arm.	Hakob Cherdjian	1900	Ayntap>Nor Arabkir	1980
267 (267).	VS.219-Arm.	Nouritsa Kyurkdjian	1903	Ayntap>Nor Zeytoun	1987
268 (268).	VS.220+95*-Arm.	Karapet Karamanoukian	1907	Ayntap>Nor Kilikia	1987
269 (269).	VS.221-Arm.	Sandoukht Hekimian	1908	Ayntap>Nor Zeytoun	1973
270 (270).	Man.GM.66-Arm.	Zabel Ayvazian	1910	Ayntap>Aleppo	1978
271 (271).	VS.222-Arm.	Verginé Gasparian	1910	Ayntap>Los Angeles	2001
272 (272).	VS.223-Arm.	Pargev Makarian	1915	Ayntap>Los Angeles	2001
273 (273).	VS.224-Arm.	Harutyun Vardanian	1887	Deurtyol>Edjmiadsin	1980
274 (274).	Man.GM.45-Arm.	Gevorg Yapoudjian	1894	Deurtyol>Yerevan	1963
275 (275).	VS.225-Arm.	Marie Khalbourdjian	1909	Deurtyol>Nor Marash	1989
276 (276).	VS.226-Arm.	Gevorg Ter-Sahakian	1909	Deurtyol>Edjmiadsin	1980
277 (277).	Man.VS.227-Arm.	Sedrak Poghikian	1890	Alexandrette>Nor Sebastia	1975
278 (278).	VS.228-Arm.	Martiros Gyouzelian	1898	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1975
279 (279).	VS.229-Arm.	Sirvard Gyouzelian	1906	Beylan>Edjmiadsin	1977
280 (280).	VS.230-Arm.	Hakob Pashayan	1907	Beylan>Edjmiadsin	1981
281 (281).	VS.231-Arm.	Movses Panossian	1885	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1989
282 (282).	VS.232-Arm.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
283 (283).	VS.233-Arm.	Movses Balabanian	1891	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1958
284 (284).	VS.234-Arm.	Hovhannes Ipredjian	1896	Moussa Dagh>Gyumri	1988
285 (285).	VS.235+98*-Arm.	Tonik Tonikian	1898	Moussa Dagh>Nor Sebastia	1995
286 (286).	VS.236+118*-Arm.	Assatour Soupoukian	1901	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1996
287 (287).	VS.237+132*-Arm.	Petros Safarian	1901	Moussa Dagh>Nor Sebastia	1997
288 (288).	VS.238-Arm.	Iskouhi Koshkarian	1902	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1979
289 (289).	VS.239-Arm.	Grigor Gyouzelian	1903	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1976
290 (290).	VS.240-Arm.	Beniamin Bislamian	1903	Moussa Dagh>Hrazdan	1981
291 (291).	VS.241+203*-Arm.	Tovmas Habeshian	1903	Moussa Dagh>Aynjar	1997
292 (292).	VS.242-Arm.	Davit Davitian	1905	Moussa Dagh>Paris	1999
293 (293).	VS.243-Arm.	Sargis Adamian	1906	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1975
294 (294).	VS.244-Arm.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
295 (295).	VS.245-Arm.	Gevorg Chiftchian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1979
296 (296).	VS.246-Arm.	Garoun Antonian	1910	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1985
297 (297).	VS.247+194*-Arm.	Assatour Makhouljian	1911	Moussa Dagh>Nor Nork	1998
298 (298).	VS.248-Arm.	Hovhannes Abelian	1903	Kessab>Nor Malatia	1973
299 (299).	VS.249+194*-Arm.	Gyulinia Mousoyan	1903	Kessab>Nor Malatia	1998
300 (300).	VS.250-Arm.	Hovhannes Boynmshakian	1904	Kessab>Edjmiadsin	1977

301 (301).	Man.VS.251-Eng.	Luther Eskidjian	1913	Kessab>Los Angeles	2005
302 (302).	GM.221*-Arab.	al Gihim	1880	Rakka>Rakka	1999
303 (303).	GM.221*-Arab.	Bashir el Saadi	1901	Rakka>Rakka	1999
304 (304).	GM.221*-Arab.	Hab Ali	1905	Ras-ul-Ayn>Ras-ul-Ayn	1999
305 (305).	GM.221*-Arab.	Abdul Ghafour	1915	Ras-ul-Ayn>Ras-ul-Ayn	1999
306 (306).	GM.221*-Arab.	Batra	1906	Deir-el-Zor>Deir-el-Zor	1999
307 (307).	Man.VS.252-Arm.	Abraham Stepanian	1890	Sharoor>Yerevan	1980
308 (308).	Man.VS.253-Arm.	Hayko Vardanian	1893	Sharoor>Yerevan	1980
309 (309).	Man.VS.254-Arm.	Aristakes Grigorian	1900	Sharoor>Yerevan	1980
310 (310).	Man.VS.255-Arm.	Vardanoush Beknazarian	1900	Sharoor>Yerevan	1980
311 (311).	Man.VS.256-Arm.	Aram Santourian	1896	Agoulis>Yerevan	1973
312 (312).	VS.257+28*-Arm.	Shoushanik Karapetian	1905	Nakhidjevan>Yerevan	1998
313 (313).	Man.GM.7-Arm.	Tsolak Torossian	1914	Cherakhli>Hrazdan	1978
314 (314).	Man.GM.40-Arm.	Vardoush Khachatryan	1898	Spitak>Spitak	1975
315 (315).	Man.GM.24-Arm.	Badal Shahoyan	1901	Talin>Talin	1922
<b>II.</b>					
<b>HISTORICAL NARRATIVE-TESTIMONIES</b>					
1 (316).	VS.258-Arm.	Ronia Terzian	1920	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
2 (317).	VS.259-Arm.	Trvanda Mouradian	1905	Harpoot>Nor Marash	1980
3 (318).	VS.260-Arm.	Anahit Adjapahian	1920	Sis>Aygestan	1980
4 (319).	VS.261-Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
5 (320).	VS.262-Arm.	Flora Farmanian	1924	Istanbul>Istanbul	1996
6 (321).	VS.263-Arm.	Soghomon Yetenekian	1900	Mersin>Nor Kilikia	1984
7 (322).	VS.264-Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1980
8 (323).	VS.265-Arm.	Gevorg Gyouzelian	1925	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1990
9 (324).	VS.266-Arm.	Martiros Gyouzelian	1898	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1970
10 (325).	VS.267-Arm.	Gevorg Gyouzelian	1925	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1990
11 (326).	VS.268-Arm.	Gevorg Gyouzelian	1925	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1990
12 (327).	VS.269-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
13 (328).	VS.270-Arm.	L. B.	1952	Nicomedia>Istanbul	1996
14 (329).	VS.271-Arm.	Nermin Ozferendji	1943	Tigranakert>Istanbul	1996
15 (330).	VS.272-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
16 (331).	VS.273-Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
17 (332).	VS.274-Arm.	Vahé Kitapjian	1924	Alexandria>Lyon	1999
18 (333).	VS.275-Arm.	Anoush Harutyunian	1922	Baghdad>Los Angeles	2001
19 (334).	VS.276-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
20 (335).	VS.277-Arm.	Yervand Poladian	1920	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
21 (336).	VS.278-Arm.	Anahit Bosnoyan	1922	Adana>Cairo	2006
22 (337).	Man.GM.55-Arm.	Rafik Soukiassian	1937	Yerevan>Yerevan	1998
23 (338).	VS.279-Turk.	Anna Mor	1916	Kayseri>Istanbul	1996
24 (339).	VS.280-Arm.	Vard Alexanian	1931	Cairo>Ras Sudr	2006
25 (340).	VS.281-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
26 (341).	VS.282-Arm.	Azatouhi Petrossian	1926	Cairo>Cairo	2006
27 (342).	VS.283-Arm.	Nouritsa Kyurkdjian	1903	Ayntap>Nor Zeytoun	1985
28 (343).	VS.284-Arm.	Garegin Touroudjikian	1903	Harpoot>Hor Kharbert	1985
29 (344).	VS.285-Arm.	Gevorg Chiftchian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1985

30 (345).	VS.286-Arm.	Kirakos Danielian	1923	Balou>Nor Marash	1983
31 (346).	VS.287-Arm.	Vardouhi Voskian	1925	Tomarza>Istanbul	1997
32 (347).	VS.288-Arm.	Annik Ashjian	1910	Adana>San Francisco	1979
33 (348).	VS.289-Arm.	Ronia Terzian	1920	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
34 (349).	VS.290-Arm.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
35 (350).	VS.291-Arm.	Barounak Papazian	1906	Yozghat>Yerevan	1997
36 (351).	VS.292-Arm.	Artashes Balabanian	1926	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1986
37 (352).	VS.293-Arm.	Ronia Terzian	1920	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
38 (353).	VS.294-Arm.	Ronia Terzian	1920	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
39 (354).	VS.295-Arm.	John Gyurdjian	1938	Ghamishli>Los Angeles	2001
40 (355).	VS.296-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1997
41 (356).	VS.297-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1997
42 (357).	VS.298-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
43 (358).	VS.299-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
44 (359).	VS.300-Arm.	Gevorg Chiftchian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1985
45 (360).	VS.301-Arm.	Perj Erzian	1921	Adabazar>Istanbul	1997
46 (361).	VS.302-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
47 (362).	VS.303-Arm.	Sargis Yetarian	1907	Af.-Garahissar>Nor Arabkir	1996
48 (363).	VS.304-Arm.	Zaven Sofian	1927	Nicomedia>Istanbul	1996
49 (364).	VS.305-Arm.	Vardouhi Voskian	1925	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
50 (365).	VS.306-Turk.	Heriknaz Mihranian	1928	Sebastia>Istanbul	1997
51 (366).	VS.307-Arm.	Silva Daldabanian	1930	Samsun>Istanbul	1997
52 (367).	VS.308-Arm.	Mayranoush Vardanian	1900	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1980
53 (368).	VS.309-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsessian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
54 (369).	VS.310-Arm.	Gevorg Shaldjian	1934	Kayseri>Istanbul	1996
55 (370).	VS.311-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
56 (371).	VS.312-Arm.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
57 (372).	VS.313-Arm.	Tigranouhi Movsissian	1943	Tomarza>Istanbul	1997
58 (373).	VS.314-Arm.	Grigor Amalian	1945	Yerevan>Nor Arabkir	1995
59 (374).	VS.315-Arm.	Vahagn Gharibian	1928	Addis-Ababa>Ras Sudr	2006
60 (375).	VS.316-Arm.	Vilen Nooridjanian	1933	Yerevan>Yerevan	2001
61 (376).	VS.317-Arm.	Silva Daldabanian	1930	Samsun>Istanbul	1997
62 (377).	VS.318-Arm.	Ovsanna Nalbandoghli	1930	Erzroom>Istanbul	1996
63 (378).	VS.319-Arm.	Vardouhi Voskian	1925	Tomarza>Istanbul	1997
64 (379).	VS.320-Turk.	Grigor Movsessian	1939	Kayseri>Istanbul	1997
65 (380).	VS.321-Arm.	Andranik Simonian	1902	Alashkert>Yerevan	1998
66 (381).	Man.VS.322-Arm.	Robert Jebejian	1909	Ayntap>Aleppo	1975
67 (382).	VS.323-Arm.	Jirayr Reisian	1949	Aleppo>Aleppo	2005
68 (383).	VS.324-Arm.	Martiros Ashekian	1927	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2008
69 (384).	VS.325-Arm.	Hakob Moutafian	1980	Deir-el-Zor>Deir-el-Zor	2005
70 (385).	VS.326-Arm.	Verjiné Svazlian	1934	Alexandria>Yerevan	2007

**III.  
HISTORICAL SONG-TESTIMONIES**

**1. Songs of Mobilization, Arm-Collection and of the Imprisoned**

1 (386).	VS.327-Arm.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
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2 (387).	VS.328-Arm.	Anitsa Tokatlian	1908	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1988
3 (388).	VS.329-Arm.	Nerses Nooridjanian	1898	Ardvin>Yerevan	1958
4 (389).	VS.330-Arm.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
5 (390).	VS.331-Arm.	Annik Marikian	1892	Tokat>Nor Zeytoun	1972
6 (391).	VS.332-Arm.	Sargis Saryan	1911	Balou>Paris	1999
7 (392).	VS.333-Arm.	Mannik Kirakossian	1929	Adabazar>Nor Aresh	1989
8 (393).	VS.334-Arm.	Hazarkhan Torossian	1902	Balou>Nor Sebastia	1997
9 (394).	VS.335-Arm.	Yervand Albarian	1923	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
10 (395).	VS.336-Turk.	Harutyun Martikian	1899	Harpoot>Nor Zeytoun	1970
11 (396).	VS.337-Turk.	Soghomé Pashayan	1903	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
12 (397).	VS.338** -Turk.	Kerobé Agha-Chrakian	1886	Istanbul>Athens	1946
13 (398).	VS.339** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
14 (399).	VS.340-Turk.	Hakob Cherdjian	1913	Aytnap>Nor Arabkir	1986
15 (400).	VS.341-Turk.	Arousyak Hovakimian	1914	Van>Los Angeles	2001
16 (401).	VS.342-Turk.	Serob Gyouzelian	1882	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1958
17 (402).	VS.343-Turk.	Nazaret Balboudjakian	1906	Hadjn>Nor Hadjn	1976
18 (403).	VS.344-Turk.	Hambardzoum Bardakchian	1921	Marash>Shengavit	1980
19 (404).	VS.345-Turk.	Sargis Kharikian	1897	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1958
20 (405).	VS.346-Turk.	Missak Yaralian	1902	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1958
21 (406).	VS.347-Turk.	Hakob Pashayan	1907	Beylan>Aygestan	1987
22 (407).	VS.348-Turk.	Anna Davtian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1959
23 (408).	VS.349-Turk.	Hayk Syulahian	1907	Zeytoun>Aygestan	1986
24 (409).	VS.350-Turk.	Tigran Tsulikian	1931	Cairo>Nor Malatia	1998
25 (410).	VS.351** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
26 (411).	VS.352** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
27 (412).	VS.353** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
28 (413).	VS.354** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
29 (414).	VS.355** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
30 (415).	VS.356** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
31 (416).	VS.357** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
32 (417).	VS.358** -Turk.	John Chookasian	1939	New York>Fresno	2008
33 (418).	VS.359-Turk.	Garegin Amadian	1888	Arabkir>Yerevan	1963
34 (419).	VS.360-Turk.	Antoine Terdjanian	1944	Aleppo>Yerevan	2006
35 (420).	VS.361-Turk.	Vardoush Hovhannissian	1912	Agoulis>Yerevan	1965
36 (421).	VS.362-Turk.	Soghomon Yetenekian	1900	Mersin>Nor Kilikia	1980
37 (422).	VS.363** -Turk.	Mannik Kirakossian	1929	Adabazar>Nor Aresh	1989
38 (423).	VS.364-Turk.	Paydsar Yerkat	1887	Kayseri>Nor Arabkir	1989
39 (424).	VS.365-Arm.	Mariam Ghassabian	1921	Bursa>Nor Arabkir	1997
40 (425).	VS.366-Arm.	Mary Yerkat	1910	Adabazar>Nor Zeytoun	1979
41 (426).	VS.367-Arm.	Kirakos Danielian	1923	Balou>Nor Marash	1983
42 (427).	VS.368** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
43 (428).	VS.369** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
44 (429).	VS.370-Turk.	Samvel Patrian	1900	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1980

## 2. Songs of Deportation and Massacre

1 (430).	VS.371-Turk.	Nerses Galbakian	1902	Konia>Nor Arabkir	1999
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2 (431).	VS.372-Turk.	Sargis Khachatryan	1903	Harpoor>Yerevan	1996
3 (432).	VS.373** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
4 (433).	VS.374** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
5 (434).	VS.375-Turk.	Karapet Akhoyan	1895	Moussa Dagh>Armavir	1976
6 (435).	VS.376-Arm.	Ovsanna Lousinian	1891	Adana>Yerevan	1960
7 (436).	VS.377** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
8 (437).	VS.378** -Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1996
9 (438).	VS.379-Arm.	Varsenik Abrahamian	1905	Van>Sari Tagh	1997
10 (439).	VS.380-Arm.	Marie Vardanian	1905	Malatia>Nor Malatia	1998
11 (440).	VS.381-Arm.	Varsenik Abrahamian	1905	Van>Sari Tagh	1997
12 (441).	VS.382-Arm.	Sirarpi Svazlian	1909	Istanbul>Alexandria	1946
13 (442).	VS.383-Arm.	Azniv Agha-Chrakian	1886	Istanbul>Athens	1946
14 (443).	VS.384-Arm.	Vardouhi Petikian	1919	Istanbul>Yerevan	1989
15 (444).	VS.385-Arm.	Anoush Gasparian	1905	Ardvin>Yerevan	1973
16 (445).	VS.386-Arm.	Haykanoush Cheshmedjian	1909	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1977
17 (446).	VS.387** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
18 (447).	VS.388-Arm.	Mayreni Saroukhanian	1908	Harpoor>Nor Zeytoun	1988
19 (448).	VS.389** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
20 (449).	VS.390** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
21 (450).	VS.391** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
22 (451).	VS.392** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
23 (452).	VS.393-Turk.	Payloun Terterian	1907	Harpoor>Nor Kharbert	1997
24 (453).	VS.394-Turk.	Arpen Aghadjanian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1997
25 (454).	VS.395-Arm.	Poghos Soupkoukian	1887	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1977
26 (455).	VS.396-Arm.	Khacher Ablapoutian	1893	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1980
27 (456).	VS.397** -Arm.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
28 (457).	VS.398-Arm.	Payloun Terterian	1907	Harpoor>Nor Kharbert	1997
29 (458).	VS.399-Arm.	Louis Varzhapetian	1900	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1972
30 (459).	VS.400** -Arm.	Mariam Ter-Mkrtchian	1908	Erzroom>Vardashen	1983
31 (460).	VS.401-Turk.	Haykouhi Mikian	1912	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1983
32 (461).	VS.402** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
33 (462).	VS.403-Turk.	Sara Dermishian	1896	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1987
34 (463).	VS.404** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
35 (464).	VS.405** -Turk.	Yervand Varouzian	1925	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1977
36 (465).	VS.406** -Turk.	Onnik Varouzian	1932	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1977
37 (466).	VS.407** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
38 (467).	VS.408** -Turk.	Eva Choulian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
39 (468).	VS.409** -Turk.	Veronika Berberian	1907	Yozghat>Yerevan	1996
40 (469).	VS.410** -Turk.	Nvard Ablapoutian	1903	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1996
41 (470).	VS.411** -Turk.	Siranoush Galadjian	1910	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
42 (471).	VS.412** -Turk.	Mayranoush Vardanian	1900	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1980
43 (472).	VS.413** -Turk.	Makrouhi Haladjian	1900	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1974
44 (473).	VS.414** -Turk.	Zabel Vardian	1902	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1986
45 (474).	VS.415** -Turk.	Marie Zhamkochian	1904	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1983
46 (475).	VS.416** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
47 (476).	VS.417** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984

48 (477).	VS.418** -Turk.	Srbouhi Balboudjakian	1905	Hadjn>Nor Hadjn	1976
49 (478).	VS.419** -Turk.	Arevalouys Amalian	1913	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1985
50 (479).	VS.420** -Turk.	Nazeni Abrahamian	1900	Kessab>Edjmiadsin	1985
51 (480).	VS.421** -Turk.	Tirouhi Dedeyan	1903	Kessab>Edjmiadsin	1985
52 (481).	VS.422** -Turk.	Varsik Ayanian	1907	Kessab>Edjmiadsin	1985
53 (482).	VS.423** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
54 (483).	VS.424** -Turk.	Gyulinia Mousoyan	1903	Kessab>Nor Malatia	1998
55 (484).	VS.425** -Turk.	Sirvard Gyouzelian	1906	Beylan>Edjmiadsin	1977
56 (485).	VS.426** -Turk.	Lousadsin Galemkerian	1927	Beylan>Edjmiadsin	1986
57 (486).	VS.427** -Turk.	Klarouhi Baharian	1929	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1986
58 (487).	VS.428** -Turk.	Nouritsa Kyurkdjian	1903	Ayntap>Nor Zeytoun	1987
59 (488).	VS.429** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
60 (489).	VS.430** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
61 (490).	VS.431** -Turk.	Rebeka Melkonian	1924	Constantsa>Shengavit	1986
62 (491).	VS.432** -Turk.	Anahit Darbinian	1928	Alexandrette>Nor Sebastia	1999
63 (492).	VS.433** -Turk.	Arshalouys Cherdjian	1905	Ayntap>Nor Arabkir	1986
64 (493).	VS.434** -Turk.	Marie Khalbourdjian	1909	Deurtyol>Nor Marash	1989
65 (494).	VS.435** -Turk.	Nouritsa Harmandayan	1900	Hassanbey>Nor Aresh	1972
66 (495).	VS.436** -Turk.	Nvard Ablapoutian	1903	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1996
67 (496).	VS.437** -Turk.	Haykanoush Ter-Petrossian	1910	Yedessia>Aygestan	1987
68 (497).	VS.438** -Turk.	Gayané Adourian	1909	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1978
69 (498).	VS.439** -Turk.	Hazarkhan Torossian	1902	Balou>Nor Sebastia	1997
70 (499).	VS.440** -Turk.	Alis Keshishian	1920	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1976
71 (500).	VS.441** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
72 (501).	VS.442** -Turk.	Victoria Sinanian	1900	Adana>Nor Malatia	1976
73 (502).	VS.443** -Turk.	Srbouhi Makarian	1903	Adana>Nor Malatia	1985
74 (503).	VS.444** -Turk.	Arousyak Neferian	1906	Adana>Nor Malatia	1986
75 (504).	VS.445** -Turk.	Yeranouhi Chaparian	1912	Adana>Nor Malatia	1987
76 (505).	VS.446** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
77 (506).	VS.447** -Turk.	Tagouhi Touroudjikian	1905	Harpoote>Nor Kharbert	1985
78 (507).	VS.448** -Turk.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
79 (508).	VS.449** -Turk.	Trvanda Mouradian	1905	Harpoote>Nor Marash	1985
80 (509).	VS.450** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
81 (510).	VS.451** -Turk.	Yeghsa Antonian	1910	Harpoote>Sari Tagh	1978
82 (511).	VS.452** -Turk.	Haykouhi Mikian	1912	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1983
83 (512).	VS.453** -Turk.	Verzhin Taghavarian	1898	Sebastia>Shengavit	1958
84 (513).	VS.454** -Turk.	Meliné Khanzadian	1908	Sebastia>Nor Aresh	1988
85 (514).	VS.455** -Turk.	Sirvard Andreassian	1908	Adabazar>Nor Butania	1979
86 (515).	VS.456** -Turk.	Tagouhi Ter-Yeghishian	1926	Beirut>Shengavit	1975
87 (516).	VS.457** -Turk.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1980
88 (517).	VS.458** -Turk.	Veronika Berberian	1907	Yozghat>Yerevan	1996
89 (518).	VS.459** -Turk.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
90 (519).	VS.460** -Turk.	Ovsanna Abikian	1893	Nicomedia>Aygestan	1986
91 (520).	VS.461** -Turk.	Azganoush Abikian	1898	Nicomedia>Aygestan	1986
92 (521).	VS.462** -Turk.	Barouhi Silian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1982
93 (522).	VS.463** -Turk.	Mkrtich Karapetian	1910	Tigranakert>Shengavit	1990

94 (523).	VS.464** -Turk.	Zabel Vardian	1902	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1986
95 (524).	VS.465** -Turk.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
96 (525).	VS.466** -Turk.	Haykouhi Azarian	1908	Adabazar>Yerevan	1988
97 (526).	VS.467** -Turk.	Angel Tekeyan	1907	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1970
98 (527).	VS.468** -Turk.	Dsaghik Kyomourjian	1905	Bursa>Nor Butania	1982
99 (528).	VS.469** -Turk.	Varvara Mousoulian	1910	Bursa>Nor Butania	1982
100 (529).	VS.470** -Turk.	Beatris Veranian	1924	Banderma>Yerevan	1982
101 (530).	VS.471** -Turk.	Shaké Zoulalian	1914	Istanbul>Shengavit	1975
102 (531).	VS.472-Turk.	Makrouhi Haladjian	1900	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1974
103 (532).	VS.473-Turk.	Siranoush Galadjian	1910	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
104 (533).	VS.474-Turk.	Victoria Sinanian	1900	Adana>Nor Malatia	1976
105 (534).	VS.475-Turk.	Zabel Vardian	1902	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1986
106 (535).	VS.476-Turk.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
107 (536).	VS.477-Turk.	Arshalouys Cherdjian	1905	Ayntap>Nor Arabkir	1986
108 (537).	VS.478-Turk.	Arpen Aghadjanian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1997
109 (538).	VS.479-Turk.	Barouhi Silian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1982
110 (539).	VS.480-Turk.	Barouhi Chorekian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
111 (540).	VS.481-Turk.	Haykanoush Cheshmedjian	1909	Eskishehir>Nor Butania	1977
112 (541).	VS.482** -Turk.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1980
113 (542).	VS.483-Turk.	Srbouhi Balboudjakian	1905	Hadjn>Nor Hadjn	1976
114 (543).	VS.484-Turk.	Nazeni Abrahamian	1900	Kessab>Edjmiadsin	1985
115 (544).	VS.485-Turk.	Arousyak Neferian	1906	Adana>Nor Malatia	1986
116 (545).	VS.486** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
117 (546).	VS.487** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
118 (547).	VS.488-Turk.	Srbouhi Makarian	1903	Adana>Nor Malatia	1985
119 (548).	VS.489-Turk.	Haykouhi Mikian	1912	Kayseri>Nor Malatia	1983
120 (549).	VS.490-Turk.	Sara Dermishian	1896	Moussa Dagh>Edjmiadsin	1987
121 (550).	VS.491-Turk.	Verginé Mayikian	1898	Marash>Shengavit	1974
122 (551).	VS.492-Turk.	Khacher Dakessian	1896	Hadjn>Nor Malatia	1972
123 (552).	VS.493-Turk.	Srbouhi Makarian	1903	Adana>Nor Malatia	1985
124 (553).	VS.494-Turk.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
125 (554).	VS.495** -Arm.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
126 (555).	VS.496-Turk.	Paydsar Yerkat	1887	Kayseri>Nor Arabkir	1989
127 (556).	Man.GM.7-Arm.	Tsolak Torossian	1914	Cherakhli>Hrazdan	1978
128 (557).	Man.GM.24-Arm.	Hrant Shahoyan	1926	Talin>Talin	1956
129 (558).	VS.497-Arm.	Silva Daldabanian	1930	Samsun>Istanbul	1997
130 (559).	VS.498-Arm.	Nektar Gasparian	1910	Ardvin>Yerevan	1998
131 (560).	VS.499-Arm.	Zohrap Ghassabian	1919	Istanbul>Nor Arabkir	1999
132 (561).	VS.500** -Arm.	Mannik Hayrapetian	1915	Aslanbek>Nor Butania	1982
133 (562).	VS.501** -Turk.	Smblyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
134 (563).	VS.502** -Arm.	Smblyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
135 (564).	VS.503-Arm.	Mary Yerkat	1910	Adabazar>Nor Zeytoun	1979
<b>3. Songs of Child-Deprived Mothers, Orphans and Orphanages</b>					
1 (565).	VS.504-Arm.	Ovsanna Abikian	1893	Nicomedia>Aygestan	1986
2 (566).	VS.505-Arm.	Mannik Hayrapetian	1915	Aslanbek>Nor Butania	1982

3 (567).	VS.506-Arm.	Anitsa Tokatlian	1908	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1988
4 (568).	VS.507-Arm.	Barouhi Silian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1982
5 (569).	VS.508-Arm.	Anitsa Tokatlian	1908	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1988
6 (570).	VS.509-Arm.	Anitsa Tokatlian	1908	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1988
7 (571).	VS.510-Arm.	Azganoush Abikian	1898	Nicomedia>Aygestan	1986
8 (572).	VS.511-Arm.	Barouhi Silian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1982
9 (573).	VS.512** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
10 (574).	VS.513-Arm.	Zabel Vardian	1902	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1986
11 (575).	VS.514** -Arm.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
12 (576).	VS.515-Turk.	Hakob Gyurdjian	1927	Rodosto>Nor Aresh	1985
13 (577).	VS.516-Turk.	Annouk Mikian	1924	Kayseri>Athens	1984
14 (578).	VS.517-Turk.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
15 (579).	VS.518-Turk.	Nvard Adamian	1923	Harpoote>Yerevan	1972
16 (580).	VS.519** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
17 (581).	VS.520-Turk.	Eva Choulian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
18 (582).	VS.521** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
19 (583).	VS.522-Turk.	Iskouhi Panossian	1901	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
20 (584).	VS.523-Turk.	Meliné Khazadian	1908	Sebastia>Nor Aresh	1988
21 (585).	VS.524-Turk.	Barouhi Chorekian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
22 (586).	VS.525-Turk.	Verzhin Taghavarian	1898	Sebastia>Shengavit	1958
23 (587).	VS.526-Turk.	Aghavni Zoulalian	1890	Chanak-Kalé>Shengavit	1958
24 (588).	VS.527** -Turk.	Tagouhi Halapian	1912	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1986
25 (589).	VS.528-Turk.	Marie Izmirlian	1903	Rodosto>Athens	1984
26 (590).	VS.529-Turk.	Adriné Alajajian	1921	Istanbul>Athens	1984
27 (591).	VS.530-Turk.	Silva Daldabanian	1930	Samsun>Istanbul	1997
28 (592).	VS.531-Turk.	Ovsanna Nalbandoghli	1905	Erzroom>Istanbul	1996
29 (593).	VS.532** -Turk.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
30 (594).	VS.533-Turk.	Hrachouhi Djianian	1919	Biledjik>Aygestan	1986
31 (595).	VS.534-Turk.	Srbouhi Kikishian	1909	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1977
32 (596).	VS.535-Arm.	Nazaret Varzhapetian	1892	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1972
33 (597).	VS.536-Arm.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
34 (598).	VS.537-Arm.	Louis Varzhapetian	1900	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1972
35 (599).	VS.538-Arm.	Nazaret Varzhapetian	1892	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1972
36 (600).	VS.539** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
37 (601).	VS.540-Arm.	Haykanoush Galfayan	1898	Rodosto>Athens	1984
38 (602).	VS.541-Arm.	Sirvard Ter-Merkerian	1909	Biledjik>Yerevan	1959
39 (603).	VS.542-Arm.	Anahit Adjapahian	1920	Sis>Aygestan	1980
40 (604).	VS.543-Arm.	Gevorg Keshishian	1921	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1976
41 (605).	VS.544** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
42 (606).	VS.545** -Arm.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
43 (607).	VS.546** -Arm.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
44 (608).	VS.547** -Arm.	Smyul Berberian	1909	Af.-Garahissar>Aygestan	1989
45 (609).	VS.548-Arm.	Sara Hadji-Minassian	1908	Bursa>Nor Butania	1985
46 (610).	VS.549-Arm.	Ghazaros Khrimian	1911	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1979
47 (611).	VS.550** -Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1996
48 (612).	VS.551** -Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1996

49 (613).	VS.552** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
50 (614).	VS.553** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
51 (615).	VS.554** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
52 (616).	VS.555** -Arm.	Alis Keshishian	1920	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1976
53 (617).	VS.556** -Arm.	Barouhi Chorekian	1900	Nicomedia>Nor Butania	1979
54 (618).	VS.557** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
55 (619).	VS.558** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
56 (620).	VS.559** -Arm.	Lousik Bodourian	1909	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1984
57 (621).	VS.560** -Arm.	Arsen Svadjian	1901	Kayseri>Nor Aresh	1986
58 (622).	VS.561 -Arm.	Harutyun Alboyadjian	1904	Fendedjak>Nor Arabkir	1985
59 (623).	VS.562 -Arm.	Anitsa Tokatlian	1908	Adabazar>Sari Tagh	1988
60 (624).	VS.563** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
61 (625).	VS.564** -Arm.	Ghazaros Khrimian	1911	Tarson>Nor Kilikia	1979
62 (626).	VS.565** -Arm.	Aram Momdjian	1909	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1989
<b>4. Patriotic and Heroic Battle Songs</b>					
1 (627).	VS.566 -Arm.	Moushegh Hovhannissian	1908	Sassoun>Talin	1997
2 (628).	VS.567** -Arm.	Aghassi Kankanian	1904	Van>Yerevan	1997
3 (629).	VS.568** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
4 (630).	VS.569** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
5 (631).	VS.570** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
6 (632).	VS.571 -Arm.	Poghos Soupkoukian	1887	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1977
7 (633).	VS.572 -Arm.	Poghos Soupkoukian	1887	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1977
8 (634).	VS.573 -Turk.	Karapet Akhoyan	1895	Moussa Dagh>Armavir	1976
9 (635).	VS.574** -Arm.	Gevorg Chiftchian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1979
10 (636).	VS.575 -Arm.	Dshkhouhi Doudaklian	1934	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
11 (637).	VS.576 -Arm.	Senekerim Kozmanian	1882	Sebastia>Sari Tagh	1979
12 (638).	VS.577 -Turk.	Khoren Ablapoutian	1893	Yedessia>Nor Arabkir	1987
13 (639).	VS.578 -Turk.	Aharon Mankrian	1903	Hadjn>Sari Tagh	1983
14 (640).	VS.579** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
15 (641).	VS.580** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
16 (642).	VS.581** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
17 (643).	VS.582 -Turk.	Hovhannes Taymazian	1886	Hassanbey>Nor Sebastia	1980
18 (644).	VS.583** -Turk.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
19 (645).	VS.584 -Turk.	Aharon Mankrian	1903	Hadjn>Sari Tagh	1983
20 (646).	VS.585** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
21 (647).	VS.586** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
22 (648).	VS.587** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
23 (649).	VS.588** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
24 (650).	VS.589** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
25 (651).	VS.590 -Arm.	Nazaret Varzhapetian	1892	Arabkir>Nor Arabkir	1972
26 (652).	VS.591** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
<b>5. Songs of the Occupied Homeland and of the Rightful Claim</b>					
1 (653).	VS.592** -Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1996
2 (654).	VS.593 -Arm.	Shnorik Kankanian	1912	Van>Yerevan	1979
3 (655).	VS.594 -Arm.	Hayrik Mouradian	1905	Shatakht>Ararat	1997

4 (656).	VS.595-Arm.	Vardan Mazmanian	1886	Ardvin>Yerevan	1960
5 (657).	VS.596-Arm.	Hovhannes Doudaklian	1910	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1956
6 (658).	VS.597** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
7 (659).	VS.598-Arm.	Panos Kitapsezian	1912	Kessab>Nor Malatia	1986
8 (660).	VS.599** -Arm.	Arshakouhi Boyadjian	1898	Kayseri>Alexandria	1946
9 (661).	VS.600-Arm.	Haykanoush Zatikian	1903	Adabazar>Yerevan	1975
10 (662).	VS.601-Arm.	Peproné Toumassian	1910	Kars>Yerevan	1998
11 (663).	VS.602** -Arm.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
12 (664).	VS.603** -Arm.	Gevorg Chiftchian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Kilikia	1979
13 (665).	VS.604** -Arm.	Vardan Karagyozyan	1916	Kessab>Vanadzor	1986
14 (666).	VS.605-Arm.	Hakob Ter-Poghossian	1920	Deurtyol>Los Angeles	1989
15 (667).	VS.606** -Arm.	Garnik Svazlian	1904	Kayseri>Alexandria	1946
16 (668).	VS.607** -Turk.	Yervand Albarian	1923	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
17 (669).	VS.608-Arm.	Gevorg Gyouzelian	1925	Beylan>Nor Malatia	1990
18 (670).	VS.609** -Arm.	Garnik Svazlian	1904	Kayseri>Alexandria	1946
19 (671).	VS.610** -Arm.	Gevorg Kiledjian	1912	Yedessia>Los Angeles	2001
20 (672).	VS.611** -Arm.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
21 (673).	VS.612** -Arm.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1988
22 (674).	VS.613** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
23 (675).	VS.614-Arm.	Varsenik Abrahamian	1905	Van>Yerevan	1997
24 (676).	VS.615-Arm.	Zarouhi Partamian	1929	Aleppo>Los Angeles	2001
25 (677).	VS.616-Arm.	Serik Galstian	1933	Yerevan>Yerevan	2006
26 (678).	VS.617-Arm.	Djemma Lalayan	1935	Vanadzor>Yerevan	2006

#### 6. Notations of the Historical Songs

1 (679).	VS.618** -Arm.	Aghassi Kankanian	1904	Van>Yerevan	1997
2 (680).	VS.619** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
3 (681).	VS.620** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
4 (682).	VS.621** -Turk.	Mariam Mirzayan	1927	Tomarza>Istanbul	1996
5 (683).	VS.622** -Arm.	Shogher Tonoyan	1901	Moosh>Yerevan	1996
6 (684).	VS.623** -Arm.	Karapet Tozlian	1903	Zeytoun>Nor Zeytoun	1983
7 (685).	VS.624** -Arm.	Hayrik Mouradian	1905	Shatakht>Ararat	1997
8 (686).	VS.625** -Arm.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
9 (687).	VS.626** -Arm.	Mariam Ter-Mkrtchian	1908	Erzroom>Vardashen	1983
10 (688).	VS.627** -Turk.	Yeghissabet Kalashian	1888	Moussa Dagh>Vardashen	1956
11 (689).	VS.628** -Turk.	Mariam Baghdishian	1909	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
12 (690).	VS.629** -Arm.	Silva Daldabanian	1930	Samsun>Istanbul	1997
13 (691).	VS.630** -Arm.	Dshkhouhi Doudaklian	1934	Moussa Dagh>Nor Malatia	1984
14 (692).	VS.631** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
15 (693).	VS.632** -Turk.	Gevorg Hekimian	1937	Beirut>Nor Zeytoun	1987
16 (694).	VS.633** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
17 (695).	VS.634** -Arm.	Nazeni Satamian	1926	Beirut>Nor Malatia	1986
18 (696).	VS.635** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
19 (697).	VS.636** -Arm.	Satenik Gouyoumdjian	1902	Konia>Hrazdan	1984
20 (698).	VS.637** -Arm.	Aghavni Mkrtchian	1909	Bitlis>Andranikavan	1998
21 (699).	VS.638** -Arm.	Aram Momdjian	1909	Marash>Nor Zeytoun	1989
22 (700).	VS.639** -Arm.	Garnik Svazlian	1904	Kayseri>Alexandria	1946



## GLOSSARY\*

- Aba** – large cloak of thick and coarse cloth  
**Abla** – younger sister  
**Aflık** – pardon  
**Agha** – sir, landowner  
**Aghandz** – roasted wheat (Arm.)  
**Agravakar** (crow-stone) – the last hero of the Armenian epos “Sassountsi Davit” (Davit of Sassoun – Arm.) is Young Mher – God of the Sun, who is represented as the savior of the world. He will come out of his place of confinement Agravakar (the crow is the bird protecting the fire) and will liberate the mankind suffering from the evil spirits and will establish a blissful kingdom (Arm.).  
**Akhpar, yeghbayr** – brother (Arm.)  
**Amelé tabour** – labor battalion in the Turkish army  
**Amira** – governor of a province, chief, nobleman  
**Ammi, emmi, ammo** – uncle, father’s brother  
**Ana, anné** – mother  
**Aoul** – village in the mountains  
**Araba** – cart  
**Arakelots (Vank)** – Apostles’ (Monastery) (Arm.)  
**Ashirat** – tribe  
**Ashough** – minstrel (Arm.)  
**Askyar** – Turkish soldier, policeman  
**Astvadsadsin** – *See St. Astvadsadsin*  
**Avelouk** – sorrel (Arm.)  
**Aygestan/-ner** – vineyard/-s, orchard/-s (Arm.)  
**Azan, Ezan** – Muslims’ call for prayer
- Baba** – father  
**Badji** – sister  
**Baghardj** – bread baked of unleavened dough (Arm.)  
**Baghcha** – garden  
**Banfac** – faculty for workers (Abbrev. Arm.)  
**Barghout** – small sum of money  
**Bashibozuk** – mob, rabble, fighter not in the regular army
- Basturma** – salted and dried raw beef covered with fenugreek paste  
**Batman** – unit of weight (obsolete), approx. 8 kg  
**Bayram, Kourban Bayram** – feast, holiday  
**Bedel** – ransom paid to ensure freedom from military service  
**Bedouin** – desert Arab  
**Bek** – *See Bey*  
**Bekmez** – a kind of syrup made of grape- or mulberry-juice  
**Bey** – mister, chief  
**Binbashi** – major (in the army)  
**Bishi** – pastry fried in oil  
**Borsh/-ch** – Russian cabbage soup (Russ.)  
**Bulghur, bulgur** – beaten, boiled and dried wheat, grits, hominy
- Cennet** – Paradise  
**Chadra** – outer wear for Moslem women, yashmak  
**Chakhmakh** – flint  
**Charshaf** – bed-sheet  
**Chavoush** – sergeant  
**Chekist** – representative of the Extraordinary Committee of the Committee of the State Security (KGB) (Russ.)  
**Cheteh** – partisan, band, outlaw, member of a fighting band  
**Chikyofte** – raw meat cutlets  
**Choban** – shepherd  
**Chongour** – musical instrument  
**Comsomol** – Young Communist League (YCL), member of that league (Russ.)
- Dagh** – mountain  
**Dayi** – uncle, mother’s brother  
**Dhol-zourna** – Armenian national music instruments (Arm.)

\* The words, the origin of which is not mentioned in this Glossary, are loan words either from the Turkish or other languages through the Turkish.

- Din** – belief, religion (Arab.).  
**Dinar** – unit of currency in oriental countries  
**Djadi** – bread made of Indian corn flour  
**Djan** – soul, dear  
**Djan-fida** – freedom-fighter, partisan  
**Djihad** – holy war for the Moslems against Christians  
**Doshab** – thick syrup made of grape- or mulberry-juice  
**Doudou** – aunt  
**Drakhmi** – unit of currency in Greece (Gr.)  
**Duduk** – oriental musical wind instrument  
**Dzavar** – wheat freed of its bran (Arm.)
- Ebem geomedj** – malva  
**Efendi** – sir, mister  
**Emmi** – *See Ammi*  
**Eshkhie** – gunman  
**Ezan** – *See Azan*
- Falakha** – heavy club used as an implement of torture  
**Faradja** – an Arabic cloth for men  
**Fedayi, feda** – freedom-fighter, partisan  
**Fellah** – peasant  
**Ferman** – royal decree  
**Fez, fes** – red oriental felt hat for men
- Gata, kete** – Armenian or oriental pastry  
**Gâvur** – humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians, unbeliever  
**Gâvur ghzi** – daughter of Christian  
**Gazyagh** – kerosene  
**Ghachagh** – outlaw  
**Ghade, kade** – judge  
**Gharavanadji** – elder boy  
**Ghavourma** – beef or mutton meat specially cooked and preserved for the winter  
**Ghaymagham, kaymakam** – prefect  
**Ghurush, kurush** – piaster, 1/100 part of the Turkish Lira or Egyptian pound  
**Gilgil** – kind of bread grain
- Hadji** – Christian who has visited Jerusalem as a pilgrim  
**Hakeem** – healer  
**Halva** – oriental sweet, paste made of nuts, sugar and oil  
**Hamam** – public bath-house  
**Hambardzoum** – Ascension (Arm.)  
**Hamidié** – irregular military regiments in Turkey composed of Kurds to suppress the Armenian liberation movements  
**Han** – *See Khan*  
**Hanem, hanoum** – madam
- Harrissa** – Armenian national dish cooked with husked wheat, chicken, lamb or beef  
**Harutyun** – resurrection (Arm.)  
**Hayduk** – freedom-fighter, combatant  
**Hayrik** – father (Arm.)  
**Hekim** – physician, doctor  
**Hoja** – teacher  
**Hurriyet** – liberty  
**“Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet”** – “Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People”
- Imam** – Mohammedan priest and prayer leader  
**Iritskin, yeritskin** – Armenian priest’s wife (Arm.)  
**İttihat** – unity, union  
**“İttihat ve Terakki”** – “Union and Progress”
- Kaghakamedj** – center of the city, town (Arm.)  
**Kamourdj** – bridge (Arm.)  
**Kanon** – oriental musical string instrument (Arm.)  
**Karassoun Mankants, Manouk (Forty Children)** – Holy Martyrs’ (Monastery) (Arm.)  
**Katyusha** – rocket projector (Russ.)  
**Kaydsak** – lightning (Arm.)  
**Kaymakam, Ghaymagham** – prefect  
**Keshish, Keşiş** – Christian priest  
**Ketem** – people kept in secret  
**Khach** – cross (Arm.)  
**Khachkar** – cross-stone, cross carved on stone (Arm.)  
**Khalfa, kalfa** – handicraftsman  
**Khalif** – Arab ruler, Mohammedan spiritual leader  
**Khamsin** – sandstorm  
**Khan, han** – prince, lord or governor in Asiatic countries  
**Khan, hane** – a roadside inn in Eastern countries  
**Khanoum** – *See Hanem*  
**Khavadja, khavaga** – sir, mister  
**Kheder, heder** – useless sacrifice  
**Khojakhanum** – woman-teacher  
**Khonakh** – a roadside inn  
**Khondjan** – large drawers for men (Arm.)  
**Khorovads** – barbecue (Arm.)  
**Kirva** – friend, kin  
**Kochari** – Armenian dance (Arm.)  
**Kolkhoz** – collective farm (Russ.)  
**Kopeck** – Russian coin (Russ.)  
**Koran** – sacred book of Muslims  
**Kot** – Armenian measure of capacity for cereals (Arm.)  
**Kourmandji** – Kurds living in Western Armenia, who spoke a special dialect  
**Kray** – region (Russ.)  
**Kulak** – owner of land and cattle (Russ.)  
**Kyokhva** – village headman  
**Kyoshk** – residence  
**Kyufta** – meat-balls

**Lablabou, leblebi** – roasted chick-peas  
**Lahmadjoun** – oriental food – minced meat on a thin layer of dough baked in an oven  
**Lakhti** – a game with clubs  
**Lalé** – iron ring put on the neck of a prisoner  
**Lao** – my child (Arm. dialect)  
**Lavash** – thin Armenian bread baked in a tonir (Arm.)

**Madsoun** – sour clotted milk, yoghurt (Arm.)  
**Mahrarna** – scarf, handkerchief  
**Maraba** – plowman  
**Mardavar** – a pun: mard = man, var = burning, burning of men, people (Arm.)  
**Matagh** – sacrifice  
**Mauser** – rifle  
**Mayrik** – mother (Arm.)  
**Medjlis** – parliament  
**Mejit, mejidié** – old Turkish silver coin  
**Merhaba** – hello  
**Milli** – nationalistic  
**Millidji** – Turk nationalists  
**Moukhsi, Mekhsi, Mahtesi** – one who has been in Jerusalem as a pilgrim  
**Mudur** – director, head-master, superintendent  
**Muhacir, muhadjir** – refugee, emigrant  
**Muharebe** – war  
**Mukhtar** – headman of the village, tithing man  
**Musluk** – tap, faucet  
**Mutasarrif, moutasarif** – governor of the province

**Nabat-sugar** – fruit-sugar  
**Namaz** – Mohammedan prayer  
**Nana, nane** – mother, grandmother (in remembrance of the Shumerian goddess of love and fertility “Inanana”)  
**Narguilé, narghile, nargileh** – hookah: a pipe having a flexible tube attached to a bowl of water, through which tobacco smoke is drawn, used in Eastern countries

**Okka, oke** – unit of weight (about 1.283 g) (obsolete)  
**Om, ommi** – mother  
**Onbashi** – corporal

**Papakh** – felt or fur hat  
**Papaz** – priest  
**Para** – Turkish small coin  
**Pasha** – title of nobility or high office  
**Pastegh** – thin sheet of cooked and dried fruit juice (Arm.)  
**Pilaw, pilav, pilaff, pilau** – dish of cooked rice

**Pobeda** – victory (Russ.)  
**Pokhindz** – ground and roasted wheat or barley (Arm.)  
**Polygon** – Near East Relief American orphanage in Alexandrapol (now: Gyumri)  
**Pood** – unit of weight (16.3 kg) (obsolete)  
**Porov kyufta** – stuffed meatballs

**Quluria** – ring-shaped bread covered with sesame seeds (Gr.)

**Raki** – vodka, brandy  
**Reshin** – aid for refugees  
**Reshit** – adult  
**Ruble, rouble** – Russian unit of currency (Russ.)

**Sabab** – guard  
**Sandjak** – 1. country or subdivision of a province, 2. flag  
**Sarma** – oriental dish, prepared of vine leaves stuffed with minced meat  
**Seferberlik (dir)** – general mobilization, recruitment  
**Shakhtour** – river boat with air-filled sheepskin bags attached under it  
**Sharakan** – church hymn or song (Arm.)  
**Sheikh** – Muslim priest; head of a Bedouin family or tribe  
**Shek Avetaran** – Blond Bible (Arm.)  
**Sherbet** – syrup  
**Soorb** – Saint, Holy (Arm.)  
**Sovkhoz** – state farm (Russ.)  
**Srbazan** – title of a bishop: Your Grace, Your Eminence; sacred (Arm.)  
**St. Amenaprkich** – Our Savior (Arm.)  
**St. (Mariam) Astvadsadsin** – Holy Virgin (Mary) (Arm.)

**St. Harutyun** – St. Resurrection (Arm.)  
**St. Khach** – St. Cross (Arm.)  
**St. Nshan** – St. Mark (Arm.)  
**St. Prkich** – St. Savior (Arm.)  
**St. Tagavor** – St. King (Arm.)  
**Subeureyi** – dish made of dough and minced meat or cheese  
**Sudjukh** – oriental sausage with minced, spiced beef; also sweet sudjukh: stringed nuts covered with grape juice and dried  
**Sumac, sumakh, sumach** – condiment, spice

**Tan** – diluted yogurt (Arm.)  
**Tar** – Armenian national string instrument (Arm.)  
**Ter** – Reverend Father, priest (Arm.)  
**Tiarnendaradj** – feast of the Candlemas (Arm.)

**Tiramayr** – Holy Virgin (Arm.)  
**Tolma** – stuffed cabbage or vine leaves with minced meat  
**Tonir, tondir, tundir** – pit in the ground, in which a fire is made and bread is baked (Arm.)  
**Tonratoun** – a building or room where there is a tonir (Arm.)  
**Touman** – old Iranian currency unit  
**Troyka** – carriage-and-three (Russ.)  
**Tuff** – a lava deposit, porous stone used in construction (Arm.)  
**Turban** – oriental headdress worn by men

**Ud** – oriental musical string instrument (Arm.)

**Valenka** – felt boots (Russ.)  
**Vardanank Day** – the Armenian Holiday for the national hero Vardan the Great (Arm.)  
**Vardapet** – doctor in theology, celibate priest, preceptor (Arm.)  
**Vardavar** – formerly pagan holiday of water and fertility, when people sprinkled water on each other; later, feast of the Transfiguration of Christ (Arm.)  
**Vartik** – drawers (Arm.)

**Varzhapet** – teacher (Arm.)  
**Vatan** – fatherland  
**Vesika** – a document to be freed from the Turkish army, pass permit, coupon  
**Vilayet** – province

**Yashmak** – kerchief, scarf, veil worn by women, in Turkey; Turkish women wore black yashmaks, while Armenian women wore white ones  
**Yataghan** – curved sword  
**Yenicheri(s), yeniçeri** – Turkish army infantry in Ottoman sultanist Turkey created at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They were initially composed of war prisoners and later from Christian youth, who were taken away from their parents, Islamized and trained for the Ottoman army.  
**Yukha** – kind of thin Turkish bread baked on a hot tin sheet  
**Yuklik** – wall-recess for storing mattresses, quilts and blankets

**Zabtié, zabit** – Turkish policeman or gendarme  
**Zeben, zıbin, zubun** – oriental cloak  
**Zurna** – oriental musical wind instrument





## COMMENTARIES

- Abovian, Khachatour** – (1809, Kanaker – 1848), Armenian writer, pedagogue, illuminator, founder of the Armenian new literature and pedagogy.
- A-Do** – Hovhannes Ter-Minassian (1867-1954), Armenian historian, economist.
- Aghbalian, Nicol** – (1875, Tiflis – 1947, Beirut), Armenian social and political activist, literary critic, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party.
- Agravi Kar** (Crow Stone - Arm.) – the last hero of the Armenian national epic “Daredevils of Sassoun,” Little Mher (the God of Sun), represented as the redeemer of the world, who will come out of his hiding place, the rock called the Crown Stone (the crow is the bird – the protector of fire) of Van and will redeem humanity suffering from the evil spirits and will establish a blissful kingdom.
- Aharonian, Avetis** – (1866, Igdir – 1948, Paris), Armenian public and political activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party, writer.
- Ajarian, Hrachya** – (1876, Constantinople – 1953, Yerevan), Armenian linguist, philologist, academician.
- Alazan (Gabouzian), Vahram** – (1903, Van – 1966, Yerevan), Armenian writer, social activist; he has been repressed by the Soviet regime.
- Altaiski Kray / Altai Region** – region in Siberia with vast, barren and frozen plains, where the citizens of the Soviet Union, considered ‘persona non grata’ to the Stalinian regime, were exiled.
- Altounian, Tatoul** – (1901, Adana – 1973, Yerevan), Armenian musician, pedagogue, founder and conductor of the Armenian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble.
- Amercom** – American Committee of the Near East Relief (NER), founded in 1918. It began to work in Armenia in May, 1919.
- Amirkhanian, Aram** – Hambardzoum (...., Chmeshkadsag – 1933, Fresno), American-Armenian writer, in 1922 he went to the USA and founded the newspaper “Nor Or” (New Day – Arm.), in Fresno.
- Andranik, General** – *See Ozanian, Andranik.*
- Andreassian, Andranik** – (1909, Chmeshkadsak), Armenian-American writer, editor, cultural and political activist. He lives in the USA since 1928 and has edited the newspapers “Nor Or” (New Day – Arm.) (1937-1957) and later “Paykar” (Struggle – Arm.).
- Andreassian, Rev. Tigran** – (1888, Moussa Dagh – 1962, Beirut) – preacher of the Armenian Evangelical Church, one of the organizers of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh (1915).
- Aram** – *See Manoukian, Aram.*
- Aram Kaydsak** – Terzian, one of the well-known Armenian figures fighting for the liberation of Cilicia, in 1920-1921. He was the vice-commander of the eight-month heroic self-defensive “Vrezh” (Vengeance) group of Hadjn. In 1920, he killed Doghan bey.
- “Ararat” Home** – Armenian national old-age nursing home in Los Angeles, California, USA.
- Arlen, Michael** – Tigran Gouyoumdjian (1895, Ruschuk – 1956, New York), English-language Armenian writer.
- Armash Seminary** – religious higher educational institution. It was founded in 1889, in the Charkhapan St. Mother of God Monastery of Armash Village, under the patronage of Archbishop Khoren Ashegian, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and of Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian, as a Seminary of the Constantinople Patriarchate.

**Armenakan Party** – national-political party, founded in 1885, in Marseille (France) by the efforts of the editor of the official newspaper “Armenia,” Mkrtich Portougalian.

**Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)** – founded in 1906, in Cairo, by Poghos Noubar, to give an impetus to the educational and cultural development of the Armenian nation. It has its chapters in almost every Armenian community of the world.

**Armenian Liberal-Democratic (ALD) Party** – (Ramkavar Party), national-political party, founded in 1921, in Constantinople.

**Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Party** – (Dashnak Party), national-political party, founded in 1890, in Tiflis by the efforts of Kristapor Mikaelian, Simon Zavarian, Rostom and others. In 1894 started to publish “Droshak” (Banner – Arm.) official newspaper.

**Armenian Social Democrat Hnchak (ASDH) Party** – national-political party, founded in 1887, in Geneva by the efforts of a group of Caucasian Armenian students of the Geneva University, Avetis and Maro Nazarbekian, Rouben Khanazat and others, who also published the “Hnchak” official newspaper in 1887.

**Astghik, goddess** – daughter of the god Aramazd, ancient Armenian goddess among the deities of pagan Armenia, goddess of love, beauty, fertility and waters. There were many temples dedicated to Astghik in pagan Armenia. It corresponds to the Greek Aphrodite.

**Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal** – (1881-1938), state, political and military leader of Turkey. Founder and first president (1923-1938) of the Republic of Turkey.

**Atayan, Robert** – (1915 – 1994, Yerevan), Armenian music expert, composer, pedagogue.

**Avetissian, Mkrtich** – Terlemezian (1864, Van – 1896), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement.

**Ayvazian, Artemi** – (1902, Baku – 1975, Yerevan), Armenian composer, founder of the Armenian jazz music and the jazz-band.

**Azat Vshtouni** – Karapet Set Mamikonian (1894, Van – 1958, Yerevan), Armenian poet, literary and public activist. One of the initiators of Armenian poetry of the newest period. He has studied at the Yeramian School in Van, then at the Central School in Constantinople and subsequently, in 1911, at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Sorbonne University. In 1914, he moved to Tiflis and took part in the Armenian volunteer movement and in the cultural life of the Caucasian Armenians. He has published the collection of stories “From the notebook of a volunteer” (1915).

**Baghramian, Hovhannes Khachatour** – (1897, Kirovabad – 1982, Moscow), Soviet-Armenian military activist, Marshal of the USSR.

**Bagratuni Dynasty** – Armenian royal dynasty in medieval Armenia (885-1045).

**Bashalian, Levon** – (1864, Constantinople – 1943, Vichy, France), Armenian writer, editor, publicist, public man.

**Bastermadjian, Garegin** – Armen Garo (1872, Karin – 1923, Geneva), Armenian public and political activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. He has participated in the “Bank Ottoman” incident in 1896. He has gone to USA in 1917 and organized material assistance to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. He was the first ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Washington in 1920.

**Bolshevik** – Russian communist, representative of the majority, in contrast to Menshevik, representative of the minority (Russ.).

**Boyardjian, Hambardzoum** – Mourad the Great (1867, Hadjn – 1915, Kayseri), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Hnchak Party. After the Young Turk coup in Turkey, in 1908, he was elected member of the Ottoman Parliament. He was arrested in 1915 along with other Armenian intellectuals, was exiled to Kayseri and sent to the gallows.

**Byurat (Ter-Ghazarents), Smbat** – (1862, Zeytoun - 1915), Armenian writer and historian, martyr of the Armenian Genocide, in 1915.

**Chapaev, Vassili Ivanovich** – (1887-1919), hero of the Civil War in Russia in the years 1918-1920.

**Charents (Soghomonian), Yeghishé** – (1897, Kars – 1937, Yerevan), famous Armenian poet, prose-writer, cultural activist. Repressed by the Soviet authorities.

**Cheraz, Minas** – (1852, Constantinople – 1929, Paris), Armenian writer, public man and cultural worker. As a secretary, he took part, in 1878, in the delegation of “The Armenian Problem,” going to Berlin, headed by the Catholicos Khrimian Hayrik.

**Cholakian, Aram** – (1894, Zeytoun – 1921), hero of Zeytoun and Fendedjak, who fought in 1915 and 1921 during the

self-defensive battles against the Turks. He was named “The last Eagle of Zeytoun.”

**Chopanian, Arshak** – (1872, Constantinople – 1954, Paris), Armenian poet, publicist, editor and translator. In 1898 founded and edited “Anahit” monthly.

**Choubar, Yeghia** – (1897, Nor Nakhidjevan - 1938), participant of the revolutionary movement in Transcaucasia, publicist.

**Cilician Armenia** – medieval Armenian state in the XI-XIV centuries, in the south-eastern part of Asia Minor, in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean coast.

**Clemenceau, George** – (1841-1929), French politician and statesman. Member of the French Academy, physician. Taking the leadership of the French government in 1917, he became Minister of War, organized the anti-Soviet intervention and assisted the White-guards.

**Dabaghian, Norayr** – (1904, Van – 1955, Yerevan), Armenian literary man, specialist of European literature.

**Dashnak** – *See Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)*, member of that party (Arm.).

**Dashtents (Tonoyan), Khachik** – (1910, Dashtadem Village [which became his pseudonym], Bitlis – 1974, Yerevan), Armenian writer, philologist, translator of William Shakespeare’s and other’s works.

**Demirjian, Gevorg** – brother of the Armenian historian, writer, public activist Derenik Demirjian (1877, Akhalkalak – 1956, Yerevan).

**Demirjian, Karen Serob** – (1932, Yerevan – 1999, Yerevan), Armenian political activist, First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee (1974-1988).

**Demirjian, Serob** – father of Karen Serob Demirjian.

**Denikin, Anton Ivanovich** – (1872 – 1947, USA), one of the leaders of the all-Russian anti-Soviet movement during the civil war in 1918-1920, lieutenant-general.

**Deroyan, Tigran** – Vazgen (1873, Van – 1898, Kurubash Village, Van Province), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement.

**Djemal pasha** – (1872–1922), Turkish statesman, one of the leaders of the Young Turk party “Union and Progress,” a member of the “Triple leading committee” (Talaat, Enver, Djemal), Minister of the Navy, one of the principal criminals, who organized the Armenian Genocide.

**Dro** – *See Kanayan, Drastamat.*

**Enver pasha** – (1881-1922), Turkish state and military activist, one of the leaders of the Young Turk party “Union and Progress,” a member of the “Triple leading committee” (Talaat, Enver, Djemal), Minister of Military Forces, one of the main criminals, who organized the Armenian Genocide.

**Gabikian, Karapet** – (1867, Sebastia – 1925), Armenian philologist, historian, pedagogue. During the days of the Armenian Genocide, he was exiled to Aleppo together with his family. In 1924, his “Yeghernapatoum pokoun hayots ev norin medzi mayrakaghakin Sebastio” (Genocide Narrative of the Armenians of Lesser Hayk and its Great Capital Sebastia – Arm.) was published in Boston. It describes the deportation of the Armenians of Sebastia and their massacre. His “Bargirk Sebastahay Gavaralzui” (Glossary of the Armenian Provincial Dialect of Sebastia – Arm.) is of a great value.

**Gaï** – Hayk Bzheshkiantz (1887, Tabriz – 1937), Soviet-Armenian military activist.

**Garò Armen** – *See Bastermadjian, Garegin.*

**Gasparian, Samson** – (1909, Bayazet – 1974, Yerevan), Armenian music expert, historian, pedagogue.

**Gevorg Chavoush** – (1870, Sassoun – 1907), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement.

**Goddess Astghik** – *See Astghik, goddess.*

**Grigor of Narek / Grigor Narekatsi** – (951-1003), Armenian philosopher, musician, writer and linguist, creator of the new Armenian poetry and music. Forefather of the Armenian Renaissance, founder of the doctrine of man’s self-perfection. His revolutionary creation “Matian Woghbergutean” (The Book of Laments – Arm.) is of world-renown.

**Hamastegh** – Hambardzoum Kelenian (1895, Harpoot – 1966, USA), Armenian writer and public man.

**Hamazasp** – Hamazasp Srvandztian (1873, Van – 1921, Yerevan), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement.

- Hambardzoumian, Kostya** – Oukhtavor (Pilgrim – Arm.) (1882, Shoushi – 1918, Iraq), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. Member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. In May, 1915, he took part in the liberation of Van. In the autumn of 1917, when the Russian forces left Van, he became the leader of the temporary Armenian government of Van. In 1918, when the Turks attacked Van again, he organized the emigration of the Armenians of Van. He was killed by the Turks.
- Hamid, Sultan Abdul II** – (1842-1918), Sultan of Turkey (1876-1909). In 1876, he proclaimed the Ottoman Constitution, but established soon a cruel regime: he introduced a rigorous censorship; he prohibited the words “Freedom” and “Armenia.” He has cruelly suppressed the national liberation movements of the Bulgarians, Macedonians, Arabs and Armenians. He was surnamed “Zalim” (cruel, ruthless, tyrant – Turk.). In 1894-1896, he organized the massacre of 300,000 Armenians, for which was given the name of “The Red Sultan.”
- Harut, Levon** – *See Levon Harut.*
- Hatsouni, Vardan** – (1870, Partizak – 1944, Venice), Armenian philologist and scholar. He has taught at the Mkhitarist Colleges in Venice, Milan and Constantinople.
- Hayk, Vahé** – *See Vahé Hayk.*
- Hnchak** – *See Armenian Social Democratic Hnchakian (ASDH) Party*, member of that party (Arm.).
- HOK** – *See Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA).*
- House of Roubinians** – *See Roubinian Dynasty.*
- Hrach Yervand** – (1885, Harpoot – 1968, Boston), Armenian public man, publicist and lawyer. He was accidentally saved from being arrested in Constantinople on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 1915 and emigrated to the USA as an American citizen. He has published a number of Armenian periodicals in USA: “Dzayn Hayreniats” (Voice of Fatherland – Arm.), “Pahak” (Watchman – Arm.), “Zhoghovrdi Dzayn” (Voice of the People – Arm.), etc.
- Hugo, Victor** – (1802, Besançon – 1885, Paris), French poet, novelist and dramatist, founder and theorist of the French Democratic Realism.
- “Hurriyet, adelet, okuvet, moussafat millette”** – in 1908, the new Constitution of the Ottoman Empire proclaimed the motto: “Liberty, justice, brotherhood, equity of nations.”
- Ishkhan** – Nikoghayos Poghos Mikayelian (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. He was killed on the eve of the self-defensive battles of Van in April, 1915, by order of the vice-regent Djevdet pasha.
- Issahakian, Avetik** – (1875, Alexandropol – 1957, Yerevan), famous Armenian poet, prose writer, public activist, Academician of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chairman of the Writers’ Union of Soviet Armenia in the years 1944-1957.
- Jebejian, Sargis** – (1864, Yozghat – 1920, Hadjn), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, commander of the Hadjn defense forces in 1920.
- Kamsar, Ler** – *See Ler Kamsar.*
- Kanachian, Barsegh** – (1885, Rodosto – 1967, Beirut), a pupil of Komitas, Armenian composer, conductor and public activist.
- Kanayan, Drastamat** – Dro (1883, Igdir – 1956, Boston), Armenian military and political activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party, writer. During World War I he was the commander of the Armenian Second Volunteer Regiment.
- Kapoutikian, Silva** – (1919, Yerevan – 2006, Yerevan), Armenian poetess, prose-writer, translator and publicist.
- Karabekir, Kyazim** – (1882-1948), Turkish general, pasha. In the years 1918-1919, he was the commander of the Turkish 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Caucasian army corps, has participated in the occupation of Yezznka, Erzroom and Kars; subsequently, he was the commander of the Turkish army on the Eastern front. In September 1920, the Turkish forces, under the leadership of Karabekir, invaded Eastern Armenia, causing great damages and ravages and conquering large territories.
- Kassian, Sargis** – (1876, Shoushi – 1937), Armenian party and state activist. He signed the Declaration of 1920, with which Armenian became part of the Soviet Union.
- Kaydsak, Aram** – *See Aram Kaydsak.*
- Kelekian, Tigran** – (1868, Kayseri – 1951, New York), Armenian public activist, diplomat. He was the Consul of

Persia in New York (1901-1922). After the Adana massacres (1909), he founded the Kelekian Orphanage in Deurtyol, in 1912, which was later transferred to Beirut and existed until 1932.

**Kerensky, Alexander Feodorovich** – (1881, Simbirsk – 1970, New York), Russian bourgeois politician, leader of the Provisional bourgeois government.

**Keri** – Arshak Gavafian (1858, Erzroom – 1916, Revandouz, buried in Tiflis), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party.

**KGB** – Committee for Government Security in the former USSR (Russ.).

**Khabayan, Sahak II** – (1849, Harpoot – 1939), Armenian clergyman, philologist, educational worker. Elected Catholicos of Cilicia in 1903.

**Khandjian, Aghassi** – (1901, Van – 1936, Tbilisi), Soviet-Armenian party and political activist. In 1930, he became the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist (Workers') Party. Exterminated by the Soviet authorities.

**Khanzatian, Zatik** – (1886, Izmir – 1980, Paris), French-Armenian cartographer, Foreign member of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

**Khatissian, Alexander** – (1874, Tiflis – 1945, Paris), Armenian political activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1918), later Prime-Minister (1919-1920) of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920).

**Khent** – literary hero of the well-known work of the Armenian writer Raffi “The Fool” (Khente – Arm.). *See Raffi.* “The Fool” (Vardan in the historical novel), whose prototype was Samson Ter-Poghossian (1846-1911), was a hero in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878.

**Khrimian, Mkrtich** – Khrimian Hayrik (Father – Arm.) (1820, Van – 1907, Edjmiadsin), Armenian clergyman, public and political man, activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, Catholicos of All Armenians (1892-1907). In 1878, he led the “Armenian Case” delegation to the Berlin Congress.

**Khrimian, Mourad** – Mourad of Sebastia, Mourad Hakobian (1874, Kovtoun, Sebastia – 1918, Baku), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, fedayi. Member of Social-Democratic Hnchakian Party, later of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party.

**Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich** – (1894, Kalimovka Village, Kursk – 1971, Moscow), Soviet State and party activist, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (1953-1964).

**Kodjoyan, Hakob** – (1883, Akhaltsekha – 1959, Yerevan), People's Painter of Armenia. He is well-known by his illustrations of books, carvings on wood and metal.

**Komitas Vardapet** (Priest – Arm.) – Soghomon Soghomonian (1869, Kyotahia – 1935, Paris), clergyman, great Armenian composer, folklorist, theorist, choirmaster, pedagogue. Founder of the Armenian popular music art.

**Koryun** – Gomsa Isso (1870, Goms Village – 1915, Sassoun), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, fedayi. He was the chief of the Goms Village, in the Moosh Plain. One of the leaders of the self-defensive heroic fight of Sassoun in 1915, when he fell victim during the fight.

**Kotikian, Arman** – (1896, Trapizon – 1968, Yerevan), Armenian actor, poet and translator, People's Artist of Armenia (1967).

**Kouchak, Nahapet** – *See Nahapet Kouchak.*

**Lawrence of Arabia** – (Thomas Edward Lawrence) (1888-1935), Secret agent of the Great Britain in the Middle East.

**Lenin (Oulianov), Vladimir Ilich** – (1870, Simbirsk (Oulianovsk) – 1924, Gorki), Russian revolutionary activist, founder of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

**Ler Kamsar** – Aram Tovmakhian (1888, Van – 1965, Yerevan), Armenian humorist writer. Repressed by the Soviet government.

**Levon Harut** – (1894, Van – 1957), Armenian actor. Has performed at the Odeon Theater, in Paris. In 1927 he went to Canada and USA with Cecil Sorell's group and was shot in a series of films in Hollywood. He was repatriated to Armenia in 1936. Worked in HayKino (Armenian Film) Studio, in the theatres of Leninakan, Goris, Kirovakan. Honored Artist of the Soviet Armenia.

**Levonian, Adour** – activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, organizer and leader of the self-defensive battles of Ayntap in 1920-1921.

**Liebnecht, Karl** – (1871, Leipzig – 1919, Berlin), public figure of the German and international working-class movement.

**Loris-Melik/-ian/-ov, Mikayel** – (1825, Tiflis – 1888, Nice), Count, infantry general, state and military activist of Armenian origin in the Russian Empire. During the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, he was appointed

commander of the Russian army on the Caucasian front, when his army occupied Ardahan and Kars and defeated Moukhtar pasha's army.

**Lounacharski, Anatoli Vassilevich** – (1875, Poltava – 1933, Mentone), Soviet statesman, writer, literary and art critic, Academician of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

**Luxemburg, Rosa** – (1871, Zanosť – 1919, Berlin), public figure of the German, Polish and international working-class movement.

**Lyuledjian, Levon** – (1891, Harpoot), Armenian cultural activist, editor. In 1920, editor of the newspaper “Aror” (Plough – Arm.). Editor of General Andranik's “Diary (1914-1917),” and of the “Battle of the Arakelots Monastery.”

**Mahari, Gourgen** – Ajemian (1903, Van – 1969, Yerevan), Armenian writer, author of many books. His well-known novel is “Ayrvogh aygestanner” (Burning garden-plots – Arm.) (1966). Repressed by the Soviet government.

**Makhokhian, Vardan** – (1869, Trapizon – 1937, Nice), famous Armenian marine-painter, who learned at the studio of Hovhannes Ayvazovski and studied his method of portraying the sea, continuing thus his principles. The stormy wave was for him a living creature with its depth and impact strength. In his marine-paintings, he has vividly expressed the tragic events of his people.

**Makintian, Poghos** – (1884, Agoulis – 1938, Yerevan), Armenian literary man, translator, statesman.

**Malezian, Vahan** – (1871, Constantinople – 1966, Paris), Armenian writer, poet and public man.

**Mamikonian, Vardan** – Vardan the Great, Vardan the Brave (388/391-451), Armenian general, leader of the Armenian army in the national liberation battle of Avarayr in 451 against the Sassanite Persian troops, Armenian national hero.

**Mamoulian, Rouben** – (1897, Tiflis – 1987, USA), Armenian-American filmmaker.

**Manoukian, Alex** – (1901, Izmir – 1996, Detroit). Armenian industrialist and public man, Diasporan benefactor, President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (1953-1996).

**Manoukian, Aram** – Sargis Hovhannessian (1879, Zeyva (Ghapan) – 1919, Yerevan), Armenian state, political and public activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. He organized the heroic self-defensive battles of Van (1915). He became governor of the province of Van for 70 days.

**Manoushian, Missak** – (1906, Adiyaman – 1944, Paris), Armenian poet, activist of the French Resistance against fascism, member of the Communist Party of France.

**Mantash/-ian/-ov, Alexander** – (1849, Tabriz – 1911, Tiflis), renowned Armenian oil industrialist, benefactor.

**Mantashians** – Armenian family of great oil industrialists in the Transcaucasus at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Martikian, Harutyun** – (1899, Dsovk, Harpoot – 1981, Yerevan), French-Armenian public and cultural man, writer and editor, activist of the French Resistance against fascism, member of the Communist Party of France. Has escaped from Buchenwald fascist camp. *See* his memoir in this book [T. 112].

**Mashtots, Mesrop** – *See Mesrop Mashtots.*

**May Rebellion** – armed rebellion (1920) against the Dashnak government of Armenia (1918-1920).

**Menshevik** – Russian anticommunist, representative of the minority, in contrast to Bolshevik, representative of the majority (Russ.).

**Mesrop Mashtots** – (362, Hatsekats Village, Taron – 440, Vagharshapat, buried in Oshakan Village, Ashtarak Region), creator of the Armenia alphabet. Together with Sahak Partev, he was the initiator of the Armenian translational literature. He was the founder of the written Armenian-language school and the first translator and teacher of the Armenian language, illuminator, cultural-public man, preacher of Christianity.

**Mikoyan, Anastas** – (1895, Sanahin – 1978, Moscow), State and party activist in Soviet Union.

**Mirzoyan, Gourgen** – (1911, Tiflis – 1975, Yerevan), Armenian kamanchist (oriental string instrument player), musician, pedagogue and public activist.

**Morgenthau, Henry** – (1856-1946), American diplomat and lawyer, Ambassador of the USA in Turkey (November, 1913 – Spring, 1916). During the Armenian Genocide, he met Talaat and Enver and tried in vain to forestall the deportation and the massacre of the Western Armenians. In his memoirs “Ambassador Morgenthau's Story” (1918), based on documents, he described the tragedy of the Western Armenia as “the most horrific events of history.”

**Mourad the Great** – *See Boyadjian, Hambardzoum.*

**Mourad-Rafaelian College** – Armenian college in Venice, founded in 1836 by the Mkhitarist Congregation.

**Mourad of Sebastia** – *See Khrimian, Mourad.*

- Mouradian, Hayrik** – (1905, Shatakh – 1999, Yerevan), a connoisseur of Armenian folk songs, a popular singer, historian. *See* his memoir in this book [T. 27].
- Mussolini, Benito** – (1883-1945), founder of the Fascist Party of Italy, head of the Fascist government (1922-1943).
- Myasnikian, Alexander** – (1886, Rostov-on-Don – 1925, Tiflis), Soviet-Armenian Communist Party member, political, military and state activist, literary critic, Chairman of the Soviet government in Armenia (1921).
- Nahapet Kouchak** – (16<sup>th</sup> century, Kharakonis Village, Van – 1592, Kharakonis Village, Van), Armenian medieval poet.
- Nalbandian, Tigran** – (1878, Van – 1954, Yerevan), Armenian singer and pedagogue.
- Nansen, Fridtjof** – (1861-1930), Norwegian scientist, polar explorer, humanist, public man. After World War I, he, as a Commissary of the League of Nations, was engaged in the return home of war prisoners and the problems of refugees. He has strongly condemned the massacres and the genocide of the Armenians, organized by Sultan Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks and has stressed that the atrocities of the Turks, with their proportions and cruelty, had no equal in the history of mankind.
- Narekatsi, Grigor** – *See Grigor of Narek / Grigor Narekatsi.*
- Nazarbek/-ian, Avetis** – Lerents (1866, Tiflis – 1939, Moscow), Armenian public and political activist, publicist, one of the founders of the Social Democratic Hnchak Party.
- Nazarbek/-ian/-ov, Thomas** – (1855-1931, Tiflis), Armenian military activist, general-major of the Russian army.
- Nazim** – one of the leaders of the Young Turk party. He has taken part in the organization of the Armenian Genocide. On July 5, 1919, he was sentenced, together with Talaat, Enver and Djemal, to death by default.
- Near East Relief** – *See Amercom.*
- Nerses Shnorhali** – (around 1100, Dsovk – 1173, Hromkla), Armenian poet, literary man, musician-composer, political figure. According to his conviction, the Armenian Church was, in the absence of a centralized national statehood, the only establishment, which should unite the people. He has left a rich literary and musical heritage, including more than 300 moral-edifying riddles.
- Norents, Vagharshak** – (1906, Sassoun – 1973, Yerevan), Armenian poet, literary and public activist.
- Noubar/-ian, Poghos** – (1851, Constantinople – 1930, Paris), Armenian public and political activist. Son of the eminent statesman, Prime Minister of Egypt (1878-1879, 1884-1889, 1894-1895), Noubar Noubarian. In 1906, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) was founded in 1906, in Cairo (Egypt) on his initiative. By its financial means hospitals and cultural centers have been founded in various Armenian Diasporan colonies and Armenia, a number of Armenological works have been published. The borough, named “Noubarashen” after him, has been built for repatriated Armenians in the environs of Yerevan, as he greatly supported for the repatriation of Armenians to Armenia.
- Nzhdeh (Ter-Harutyunian), Garegin** – (1886, Nakhidjevan – 1955, Vladimir), Armenian military and political activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party, founder of the “Tseghakron sharzhum” (Racial-Theological Movement). Repressed by the Soviet government.
- October Revolution** – Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, headed by Vladimir Ilich Lenin.
- Otian, Yervand** – (1869, Constantinople – 1926, Cairo), Armenian writer and humorist, journalist and publicist.
- Ozanian, Andranik** – General Andranik (1865, Shapin-Garahissar – 1927, Fresno, USA), Armenian national hero, activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. He was called “General” and “Pasha” by the Armenian people. Songs have been woven about his heroism.
- Papazian, Vahan** – Koms (Count – Arm.) (1876, Tabriz – 1973, Beirut), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. He was a leader during the self-defensive fights. During World War I (1914-1918) he joined Rouben’s fighting battalion. He went to Tiflis in 1918.
- Papian, Matsak** – (1901, Stepanavan – 1962, Yerevan), Soviet-Armenian statesman. In 1938-1954, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR).
- Paramaz** – Matevos Sargissian (1863, Meghri – 1915, Constantinople), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, writer. Member of the Hnchak Party. He was arrested by the Turkish government and was hanged in Constantinople with 19 other prominent Armenians.
- Paulician Movement** – a medieval anti-feudal heretical movement, which has organized in Armenia and has

subsequently spread to the Asia-Minor regions of the Byzantine Empire. In the preserved sources it is first mentioned in the Epistle “Congregation Charter of the Armenian Land,” passed at the Dvin Synod in 554 A.D..

**Poincaré, Raymond** – (1860-1934), French politician and statesman. Member of the French Academy, lawyer. He was president of France from 1913 to 1920, prime-minister from 1922 to 1924 and from 1926 to 1929. He has led an equivocal and fraudulent policy in the Western Armenian Question. When the project of the Armenian Reforms was put forward (1913-1914), he pretended to be the Armenians’ protector, but, at the same time, provided credits to Turkey. By pharisaic promises he induced, in 1918-1919, the return of the Cilicians rescued from the Genocide to their native lands without ensuring their security against the Kemalist attacks. He has favored, by his policy, to the enactment of anti-Armenian resolutions at the Lausanne Conference (1922-1923).

**Provisional Government** – central body of state authority in Russia following the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution in February 1917 till November 7, 1917.

**Raffi** – Hakob Melik-Hakobian (1835, Salmast – 1888, Tiflis), Armenian historical novel writer, publicist, social activist.

**Ramkavar** – *See Armenian Liberal-Democratic (ALD) Party*, member of that party (Arm.).

**Relief Committee for Armenia (RCA)** – (Hayastani Ognutyun Komite – HOK, in Armenian), public organization founded in Yerevan, in 1921, which had branches in various countries of the Diaspora (Board of Directors: the poet and writer Hovhannes Toumanian, Chairman, and 8 other Armenian intellectuals). The aim of RCA was to aid the starving population of Armenia and to promote the building of the Republic. Was liquidated in 1937.

**Romanov, Nicolay II** – last Tsar (1894-1917) of the Russian Empire, who was dethroned by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V. Lenin.

**Rouben** – Minas Ter-Minassian (1882, Akhalkalak – 1951, France), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. In 1915, he was the leader of the national liberation movement in Sassoun.

**Roubinian Dynasty** – Armenian princely (1080-1198) and royal (1198-1219) founding dynasty in Cilician Armenia.

**Safarian, Nver** – (1907, Arjesh, Van – 1982, Yerevan), Soviet-Armenian military activist, general-major of the Soviet Army.

**Sardarapat Battle** – battle, which took place on May 21-29, 1918, of the Armenian regular army and the mass of Armenian people who took up arms against the Turkish army, which had invaded Eastern Armenia and ended in the defeat of the Turkish forces.

**Saroyan, William** – (1908, Fresno – 1981, Fresno, part of his ashes is buried in Yerevan), was born in a family emigrated to the USA from Bitlis. World-renowned Armenian writer and playwright.

**Sepouh** – Arshak Nersissian (1872, Baberd – 1940, USA), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, fedayi, general.

**Serengyulian, Vardges** – (1871, Erzroom – 1915, Yedessia), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. Armenian member of the Ottoman Parliament in Constantinople till 1915.

**Serob Aghbyur** – *See Vardanian, Serob.*

**Sevak (Ghazarian) Parouyr** – (1924, Chanakhchi Village, now: Sevak - 1971), Armenian highly gifted poet, innovator, cultural figure, literary critic and translator, Doctor of Philological Sciences. He is well known with his numerous writings, among which worthy of remembrance are the collection of poems, entitled: “The Man in the Palm of the Hand,” the voluminous poems: “The Endlessly Ringing Bell-Tower,” “Three-Part Mass,” “Let There be Light” and others, dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, to the memory of its millions of innocent victims, including also to that of the great Armenian composer Komitas.

**Shaghoyan, Levon** – (1887-1933), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. In 1915, he took part in the self-defensive battles of Shatak and the surrounding villages.

**Shahkhatouni, Arshavir** – (1885, Alexandrapol – 1957, Paris), Armenian artist.

**Shahmouradian, Armenak** – (1878, Moosh – 1939, USA), Armenian singer. The Armenian people have called him “The Nightingale of Taron.” He has received his education at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1913, he went, together with Komitas, to Constantinople and participated in the celebrations dedicated to the 1500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of the Armenian alphabet. He has records where he sings with the accompaniment of Komitas. Beginning from 1919, he gave concerts in Egypt, Europe and the USA.

**Shahnour (Kerestedjian), Shahan** – (1903, Constantinople – 1974, Paris), one of the founders of Diasporan-Armenian literature.

- Shahoumian, Stepan** – (1878, Tiflis – 1918, Baku), activist of the Armenian Communist Party and International worker's movement, theorist of Marxism.
- Shakir, Behaeddin** – (1874-1922), Turkish statesman, one of the principal criminals, who organized the Armenian Genocide.
- Shant (Seghbossian), Levon** – (1869, Constantinople – 1951, Beirut), Armenian writer, dramatist, publicist, pedagogue, public activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party.
- Shiraz, Hovhannes** – (1915, Alexandropol – 1984, Yerevan), talented Armenian poet, who has always sung the longing of the occupied native land and of the Massis-Ararat Mountains.
- Shirvanzadé (Movsissian), Alexander** – (1858, Shamakhi – 1935, Kislovodsk, buried in Yerevan), Armenian writer, dramatist, public man.
- Shishikian, Barounak** – (1902, Zeytoun – 1974, Edjmiadsin), an Armenian from Zeytoun, who, in the days of the Armenian Genocide, had took shelter near the desert-Bedouins of Syria. During that period he compiled the maps of the desert Arab villages, indicating the Armenian names of Islamized Armenian orphans (girls and boys) and women surviving in every Ashiret (tribe). Thanks to these lists, he was able, following the armistice, to find, together with the orphan-collectors, these orphans and women and to return them to the bosom of the Armenian nation. He has requested an area from the Syrian government and has founded there the settlement of Telbrak, where he gathered and housed, even married off those Armenian orphans. In 1947, he was repatriated together with all these orphans, to Armenia and settled with his large family in the village of Meymandar, Edjmiadsin region, where he remained till the end in his Bedouin-like outfit, while the people nicknamed him “Mullah,” since he knew how to cure the sick with his bewitching prayers.
- Shnorhali, Nerses** – *See Nerses Shnorhali.*
- Shoushanian, Vazgen-Onnik** – (1903, Rodosto – 1941, Paris), one of the founders of the Diasporan-Armenian literature. The main theme of his creations is the Armenian Diaspora, the struggle for survival and for remaining Armenian, the love and the striving for the reborn fatherland.
- Siamanto** – Atom Yarjanian (1878, Akn – 1915, victim of the Armenian Genocide), Armenian poet. He has greatly favored the development of the Armenian literature.
- Silikian, Movses** – (1862, Noukhi – 1937), Armenian military activist, general of the Russian army.
- Sirounian, Archbishop Mambré** – primate and spiritual leader of the Armenian community in Egypt (1940-1960).
- Soghomon Tarontsi** – Soghomon Movsissian (1904, Bitlis – 1971, Yerevan), Armenian poet, translator.
- Solakhian, Arshavir** – (18...-1915), one of the martyred intellectuals of the Armenian Genocide, actor, translator, theatrical critic.
- Stalin (Djughashvili), Josef Vissarionovich** – (1879, Gori – 1953, Moscow), leader-statesman of the USSR, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1924-1953).
- Stepanian (Ter-Stepanian), Garnik** – (1909, Derdjan – 1989, Yerevan), Armenian literary critic, theatrical critic, writer, Honored Art Worker, Doctor of Art Sciences, author of numerous monographs. *See* his memoir in this book [T. 95].
- Svazlian, Garnik** – (1904, Kayseri -1948, Yerevan), Armenian writer, publicist, public and political activist, caricaturist, author of the play “Nergaghte” (The Repatriation – Arm.) and the book “Hayrenikis hamar” (For My Fatherland – Arm.). He appeared in the Diasporan press under the pen-names of “Pahak” (Watchman – Arm.), “Mtrak” (Whip – Arm.), “Yerevantsi” (Inhabitant of Yerevan – Arm.), “Gordsazurk” (Unemployed – Arm.), etc. *See* the narrative about him in this book [T. 385].
- Svazlian (Svazli), Mihran** – (1863, Izmir – 1935, Boston), Armenian public and political activist, lawyer, diplomat, publicist, writer. He was one of the founding-leaders of the Armenian Liberal-Democratic (Ramkavar) Party. He has established the first lobbying organization in the US (1917, Boston), the Armenian National Union of America, with its 187 chapters, with a view to acquainting the ill-informed public of USA and Europe with the Armenian Case. He was the founding-editor of “The Armenian Herald” (1917-1919, Boston), the official organ of the Armenian National Union of America. Owing to his efforts, the President of the US, Woodrow Wilson addressed, in 1920, the Congress with the proposal of establishing US mandate supervision over the questionable Armenian territories.
- Taghavarian (Chaderdjian), Nazaret** – (1862, Sebastia – 1915, martyr of the Armenian Genocide), Armenian biologist, physician, agriculturist. Following the coup of the Young Turks, he was elected member of the Turkish Parliament in Constantinople. He was arrested on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 1915, and was cruelly massacred on the roads of the exile.

- Talaat pasha** – (1874-1921), Turkish statesman, one of the leaders of the Young Turk party “Union and Progress,” a member of the “Triple leading committee” (Talaat, Enver, Djemal), Minister of Internal Affairs, of the Post and Telegraph of Turkey, one of the principal criminals who organized the Armenian Genocide.
- Tamatian, Mihran** – (1863, Constantinople – 1945, Cairo), Armenian public and political activist. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 1920, in Adana, the national Supreme council, presided over by Tamatian declared Independent Armenia, under the protection of France, which lasted only one day. The French military forces dispersed it soon.
- Tarontsi, Soghomon** – *See Soghomon Tarontsi.*
- Tehlirian, Soghomon** – (1896, Erzroom – 1960, San Francisco), activist of the national liberation movement, Armenian national avenger. On March 15, 1921, in Berlin, he killed one of the principal criminals, who organized the Armenian Genocide, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkey, Talaat pasha, who was sentenced to death by default and had taken refuge in Europe. The court of Berlin acquitted S. Tehlirian.
- Tekeyan, Vahan** – (1878, Constantinople – 1945, Cairo), Armenian poet, writer, editor and public activist. He went to Europe in 1896, then he settled down in Egypt and edited the newspaper “Arev” (Sun – Arm.), His works have been published in 14 volumes.
- Tenekedjian, Nikoghos** – (1860, Harpoot – 1915), Armenian educational and public activist.
- Teodik** – Theodoros Lapjinian (1873, Constantinople – 1928, Paris), Armenian writer and public activist. Author of the encyclopedic almanacs “Amenoun Taretsuyts” (Everybody’s Almanac – Arm.). In 1919, he published, in Constantinople, the “Houshardzan Nahatak Hay Mtavorakanoutean” (Memorial Book on the Martyred Armenian Intellectuals – Arm.) collection, where the biographies of about 1000 Armenian intellectuals arrested and massacred by the Turkish government on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 1915, are presented along with their photographs.
- Ter-Gabrielian, Sahak** – (1886, Shoushi – 1937), Armenian revolutionary, party and state activist, member of the Communist Party.
- Ter-Simonian, Drastamat** – (1895, Spitak - 1937), Soviet party and state activist, journalist, publicist.
- Ter-Todik** – Armenian medieval scholastic personality, a model of illiterate and stern teacher.
- Terendez / Tiarnendaradj** – feast of the “Presentation of the Lord to the Temple” on His 40<sup>th</sup> day. The feast has pagan roots and is closely connected with life fertility. It is observed in Armenia up to the present day. In mid-February a fire is made in an open space and newly married couples jump over it. The fire is taken home to kindle the hearth. After Armenia adopted Christianity as a state religion (in 301) it was connected with heavenly power; literal meaning: “going toward the Lord with a candle in hand.”
- Terlemezian, Panos** – (1865, Van – 1941, Yerevan), artist-painter, activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. He has participated in the self-defensive battles of Van in 1915. The mass slaughters of the Armenian people have found their reflection in his art.
- Terzibashian, Avetis** – (1873, Van – 1947, Paris), Armenian public and political activist, writer. He was a participant in the self-defensive battles of Van in 1915. In the years 1924-1926, he edited the newspaper “Apage” (Future – Arm.).
- Tigran the Great** – Tigran II (140-55 B. C.). King of Armenia (96/95-55 B. C.). Political and military activist. The son of Tigran I. Tigran II founded the capital Tigranakert in 83-78 B. C. and the theater. In 78-77 B. C. he transferred 300,000 Cappadocian peasants and 100,000 inhabitants from 11 cities of Cilicia to Armenia, thus increasing the number of the working and tax-paying population. He encouraged the Hellenistic culture. In the history of Hellenism, Tigran II was the last to create a great state. In the 70s B. C., the sovereignty of Tigran the Great spread from the Caspian Sea to the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, from the Great Caucasian Mountains to the Red Sea. The Roman historians have named Tigran the Great “the strongest enemy of Rome in the East,” “the most powerful king of Armenia.”
- Tigranian, Nikoghayos** – (1856, Alexandrapol – 1951, Yerevan), Armenian composer, collector of folk songs, pianist.
- Totovents, Vahan** – (1893, Harpoot – 1938, Yerevan) Armenian writer, poet, translator and cultural activist. He went to Constantinople in 1908 and later to Paris and New York. He has studied at the University of Wisconsin. In the years of World War I, he came to the Caucasus and fought as a volunteer at the Caucasian front. In the years 1917-1918, he published, together with General Andranik, the periodical “Hayastan” (Armenia – Arm.) in Tiflis. His well-known novel is “Life on the Ancient Roman Road” (Arm.). Repressed by the Soviet government.
- Toumanian, Hovhannes** – (1869, Dsegh Village, Lori Region – 1923, Moscow), great Armenian poet and prose-writer, public activist. President of the Relief Committee for Armenia (HOK).
- Toursargsian, Aghassi** – (1871, Hadjn – ....), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement. During the hamidian massacres of the Armenians in 1894-1896, he guided, together with Apah, Mleh, Hrachya, Karapet

and Nshan, the heroic self-defensive battles of Zeytoun (1895) against the Turkish and Kurdish slaughterers, which lasted several months.

**Trotskyism** – ideology opposed to Marxism-Leninism and to international communistic and working-class movement, which arose in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a variant of Menshevism and, on an international scale, of centrism. Subsequently it became an anti-Soviet and anti-communistic current. The denomination is after Leon Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Bronstein) (1879-1940).

**Vahé Hayk** – Vahé Tinjian (1896, Harpoot – 1983, Fresno), Armenian writer and editor. Activist of the Armenian Liberal-Democratic (Ramkavar) Party. Has studied at the Yeprat (Euphrates) College of Harpoot. He also studied law, political economics and literature in the USA. He edited the newspaper “Nor Or” (New Day – Arm.) in California. He has published “Hayreni Dskhan” (Homeland Hearth – Arm.) in 5 volumes.

**Varandian, Mikayel** – Ego (1870, Shoushi – 1934, Boston), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, publicist, philosopher, historian, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. He has greatly promoted the Armenian Case in Europe.

**Vardan the Great** – *See Mamikonian, Vardan.*

**Vardanian, Serob** – Aghbyur Serob (1864, Khlat – 1899, Sassoun), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, fedayi, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. The Armenian people have woven songs about his heroism.

**Vardges** – *See Serengyulian, Vardges.*

**Varouzhan (Chiboukhkarian), Daniel** – (1884, Sebastia – 1915, martyr of the Armenian Genocide), Armenian poet, literary man and public activist.

**Vehib, Mehmed pasha** – (1877-1940), Turk military activist, lieutenant-general. During World War I, he was the commander of the Northern group and the Caucasian front.

**Vorberian, Rouben** – (1874, Malatia – 1931, Paris), Armenian poet, philologist, pedagogue and translator.

**Vorbouni (Euksuzian), Zareh** – (1902, Ordou – 1981, Paris), one of the founders of the Diasporan-Armenian literature. His works are full of deep psychological descriptions, with poetic pictures of human torment and struggle.

**Vramian, Arshak** – Onnik Derdzakian, Vahap, Varaz (1870, Constantinople – 1915, Van), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. Following the coup d'état of the Young Turks in 1908, he was elected a member of the Ottoman Parliament. In April, 1915, he fell victim to the Turkish conspiracy.

**Vratsian, Simon** – (1882, Nor Nakhidjevan – 1969, Beirut), Armenian political and state activist, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party. He was the Prime-Minister of the Republic of Armenia in 1920. In 1951, he became the director of the Nshan Palandjian Seminary in Beirut.

**Vshtouni, Azat** – *See Azat Vshtouni.*

**Werfel, Franz** – (1890, Prague – 1945, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles), an Austrian writer and humanist, one of the founders of expressionism. He has studied in Leipzig, Hamburg and Prague. Following the Fascist occupation of Austria in 1938, he left for France and, in 1940, to the United States of America. He is the author of a number of books, among which the historic novel “The Forty Days of Moussa Dagh” (1934) was awarded the prize of the best book of the year. With a view to writing this novel, Franz Werfel studied for three years the Armenian history and culture at the Mkhitarist Congregation in Vienna. He has gotten acquainted also with the documents of the First World War, has spoken with the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide. The hero of the novel is the Armenian people.

**Wilson, Woodrow Tomas** – (1856-1924), American state activist, the 38<sup>th</sup> president of the USA, who was an advocate of the positive solution of the Armenian Problem and of the creation of an independent Armenian state, which found its expression in his willingness to assume “the Armenian Mandate” (1920).

**Yaghoubian, Yessayi** – (1878, Moussa Dagh – 1957, Yerevan), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, freedom-fighter. He commanded, together with Petros Demlakian, Rev. Tigran Andreassian and others, the heroic self-defensive battle of Moussa Dagh, in 1915.

**Yeghiazarian, Arto** – (1899, Djalaloghli – 1974, Yerevan), Armenian public activist, pedagogue.

**Yekarian, Armenak** – (1870, Van – 1925, Cairo), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement, Member of

the Armenakan Party beginning from 1888. One of the leaders of the self-defensive battles of Van in 1915. He has written memoirs on the self-defense of Van.

**Yepremkhan** – Yeprem Davtian (1868, Shamkhor – 1912, Hamadan), activist of the Armenian national liberation movement and military man, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party.

**Yervand, Hrach** – *See Hrach Yervand.*

**Yessayan (Hovhannissian), Zabel** – (1878, Constantinople – 1943), Armenian writer, translator and publicist.

**Zarian, Nairi** – (1900, Van – 1969, Yerevan), Armenian poet, prose-writer and dramatist.

**Zarifian, Hovhannes** – (1879, Alexandropol – 1937, New York), Armenian actor, organizer of theatrical activities. He has portrayed Hamlet and other Shakespearean roles on stage.

**Zaroubian, Yakov** – (1908, Ardvin – 1980, Yerevan), Soviet-Armenian party activist, member of the Communist Party of the USSR. During the Armenian Genocide, he emigrated with his family to Kharkov. Beginning from 1960, he was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Armenia. Owing to his efforts, the memorial complex of the Armenian Genocide has been constructed in Dsidsernakaberd, in the environs of Yerevan.

**Zohrap, Grigor** – (1861, Constantinople – 1915, Changhré Desert, victim of the Armenian Genocide), Armenian advocate-lawyer, writer, publicist, public and political activist, member of the Ottoman Parliament in Constantinople till 1915.





## THEMATIC INDEX\*

"If our children forget so much evil,  
Let the whole world curse the Armenians!"

**Avetis Aharonian**

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**To be rescued from the massacre, the exile by offering a bribe** – II, T. 13, 95, 115, 122, 134, 156, 177, 178, 195, 199, 221, 235, 236, 243, 245, 264, 273, 385,

To make the Armenians sit in boats taking bribes (one suitcase full of gold), as if to save them, then, opening the holes at the bottom of the boats, drown the people into the open sea – II, T. 195, 199, 235, 236, 385,

To offer a bribe, in order to be rescued, but, nevertheless, to get killed (also together with the entire extended family) – T. 177, 178, 273,

By offering a bribe (gold coins, ornaments, watches) – T. 13, 95, 115, 122, 134, 156, 221, 243, 245, 264,

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**Self-defense, heroic battles, struggles for survival, counter-attack, defense of one's own person (also women**

**along with the men)** – I, II, T. 1, 2, 3, 4, 21, 26, 29, 32, 71, 93, 112, 120, 137, 147, 203, 211, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 269, 272, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 291, 350, 454, 558, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 679, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695,  
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**Swearing before giving a testimony** – I, II, T. 88, 254,

**Turkish arm-collecting, search, confiscation (they collected even the kitchen-knives of the Armenians)** – II, T. 3, 6, 19, 38, 41, 81, 84, 87, 97, 98, 101, 115, 117, 119, 121, 129, 135, 143, 145, 148, 177, 178, 181, 192, 218, 252, 274, 289, 307, 417,

Those, who did not hand over arms, had their fingernails pulled out, were beaten until they had their nose smashed and were wounded – T. 181,

Those, who had no arms to hand over, were forced to buy some and hand them over, otherwise they were killed – T. 143,

**Turkish mobilization (to draft Armenians into the Turkish army, they were murdered on the road, were slaughtered and thrown into the water, they forced them to dig pits, then they were made to stand in a row, were slaughtered or shot and thrown into those pits)** – II, T. 2, 6, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19, 29, 35, 38, 41, 42, 63, 65, 84, 85, 87, 95, 97, 98, 101, 103, 105, 112, 113, 116, 117, 120, 121, 129, 130, 134, 135, 140, 142, 145, 147, 148, 150, 153, 155, 156, 158, 163, 165, 168, 170, 173, 177, 178, 179, 181, 184, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 200, 202, 203, 205, 206, 208, 212, 216, 218, 222, 223, 224, 227, 228, 235, 239, 247, 252, 261, 265, 268, 273, 274, 275, 286, 287, 289, 294, 297, 298, 299, 325, 327, 343, 366, 372, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 428, 429,

Burning the Armenian deserter and melting his body fat – T. 223,

To draft into the army those, who had already paid the ransom [bedel - Turk.] and then to kill them – II, T. 192, 200,

Escape from the Turkish army – T. 105, 155, 177, 228, 265,

To exile the families of those serving in the Turkish army (also the family of a doctor), contrary to the law – T. 200, 212, 224,

To hang the Armenian soldier drafted into the Turkish army – T. 426,

To imprison the Armenian soldier drafted into the Turkish army, after beating him and breaking his bones – T. 425,

Imprisoned Armenian soldier drafted into the Turkish army – II, T. 428, 429,

To kill or slaughter the Armenians for not joining the Turkish army or for quitting military service – T. 120, 191,

To be killed by a Circassian – T. 405,

To let the Armenian soldiers write letters to their relatives and then to kill them – T. 343,

To make the Armenian soldiers dig pits and then to throw them in those pits – T. 156, 163, 391,

To be released from the Turkish army service by paying a ransom [bedel - Turk.] – II, T. 112, 158, 203,

To save the family of the Armenian doctor serving in the Turkish army from the exile, according to the law – T. 222,

To throw into the water the Armenian soldier drafted into the Turkish army – T. 412,  
To tie the hands of the Armenian soldier drafted into the Turkish army – T. 413,

**Vision-miracle-belief** – T. 9, 123, 147, 168, 180, 221, 250, 281, 290, 317, 376, 377, 557, 570, 573,  
The Armenian Church converted into a Turkish school crumbles several times – T. 377,  
To foretell by means of a vision – T. 147, 281,  
Horrorifying vision of the Turkish soldier – T. 290,  
Light descended on the grave – T. 9, 180,  
The Martyrs' bones emitted light by night – T. 376,  
The mother's lamentation over her dead child – T. 570, 573,  
To be reassured by a vision – T. 168, 180, 221,  
To recover following a vision – T. 250,  
The speaking Bible – T. 317,  
Vision of the Martyrs – T. 557,

**Young-Turk atrocities (Turkish soldiers, officers, irregulars, policemen, military policemen, Hamidié forces, the mob, groups of armed brigands, dregs of the society of all kinds: looters, child-kidnapers, woman-kidnapers, slaughterers, criminals released from the jails, thieves, gangs of robbers), Armenian-extirpation, those who converted slaughter into public enjoyment** – I, II, T. 1-700,

To abduct, to violate (women, girls, boys, infants), to force them to become the Turks' wives, to enslave, to sell, to put them up for auction – I, II, T. 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 34, 39, 43, 46, 47, 57, 71, 74, 77, 80, 81, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 92, 95, 97, 98, 99, 102, 105, 111, 112, 113, 115, 119, 120, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 130, 137, 139, 140, 142, 145, 150, 152, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 163, 165, 168, 170, 171, 174, 175, 177, 181, 182, 187, 189, 190, 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 203, 205, 211, 216, 218, 220, 230, 231, 240, 241, 244, 250, 251, 252, 258, 261, 268, 289, 316, 317, 327, 341, 342, 344, 347, 348, 354, 358, 367, 371, 373, 383, 442, 483, 495, 496, 497, 498, 507, 551, 557, 565, 566, 567, 568, 576, 577, 579, 580, 583, 584, 585, 593, 661,

*Abduction from the bath-house* – T. 74,

*To organize the escape of the beloved girl from the harem* – T. 354,

*The return of the abducted and Turkified girl to her paternal home* – T. 344,

Armenian Church, servant of the Church, crossing oneself, Christianity – II, T. 9, 10, 83, 98, 114, 140, 155, 157, 172, 177, 192, 220, 221, 225, 243, 264, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 291, 294, 322, 364, 376, 377, 378, 505,

*The Armenian Church converted into a Turkish school crumbles several times* – T. 377,

*To behead the Armenian clergyman (to play with the head as a ball)* – T. 157, 177,

*To build an Armenian Church by digging in the rock to remain unnoticeable* – T. 376,

*To burn the beard of the Armenian clergyman and...* – T. 172,

*To convert the Armenian Church into a dwelling* – T. 377, 378,

*To convert the Armenian Church into a flour-mill* – T. 376,

*To convert the Armenian Church into a gym-hall* – T. 377, 378,

*To convert the Armenian Church into a jail* – T. 13,

*To convert the Armenian Church into a school* – T. 377,

*Crossing oneself (the Cross), as an evidence of Christianity* – T. 225, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 291, 294, 322, 364,

*To destroy the Armenian churches or to empty them for other purposes* – T. 377,

*To kill the Armenian sexton for not handing over arms* – T. 192,

*To make a fool of the Armenian clergyman* – T. 83, 140, 177,

*Murder of the Armenian clergyman* – T. 157,

*To pack the Armenians in the Church, to desecrate the Church* – T. 98, 220, 221,

*To plunder the riches of the Armenian Church* – T. 83,

*To put the Armenian clergyman on all fours, to ride him as a donkey and to thrust knives into his back and neck* – T. 140,

*To remove the bell of the Armenian Church and to convert it into a mosque* – T. 376, 378,

*To shoe the feet of the Armenian clergymen, to pull out their teeth and fingernails, to put a red-hot iron on their heads, to burn their skin, to pluck their beard, to beat them* – T. 155, 264,

- To slash, to torture, to murder the Armenian clergymen* – T. 9, 10, 83, 114,  
*To take refuge in the Armenian Church* – T. 243,  
*To tie the hands of the Armenian clergyman* – T. 505,  
 Armenian-speaking Turks – T. 253, 360,  
*Acquaintance* – T. 360,  
*Enemy* – T. 253,  
 Atrocities perpetrated against Armenian children – II, T. 11, 19, 46, 98, 99, 101, 102, 105, 115, 119, 120, 124, 125, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 137, 138, 139, 145, 147, 148, 152, 155, 156, 158, 159, 170, 172, 178, 181, 243, 247, 252, 253, 254, 261, 263, 275, 294, 300, 305, 308, 318, 324, 334, 339, 508, 510, 535,  
*To abduct the children from the orphanage* – T. 105,  
*Abduction of children, Islamization* – T. 145, 158, 247, 252,  
*After seeing the massacre of her seven children, the Armenian woman did not give herself to the Turk brute* – T. 339,  
*To bury the children alive in the ground, their heads emerging* – T. 170, 318,  
*To drag the children and roll them down the valley* – T. 120, 155,  
*To drive the imprisoned, naked, hungry, thirsty, crying and pallid children to the deserts like sheep* – T. 181,  
*To drop the children into a burning tonir [pit for baking bread]* – T. 308,  
*Forced labor of children, servitude, captivity (in houses, in fields, to graze cattle and sheep plundered from the Armenians), in the homes of Turks, Kurds, Chechens and Arabs* – T. 11, 19, 98, 99, 102, 119, 124, 128, 129, 130, 131, 137, 138, 145, 152, 155, 156, 159, 243, 253, 254, 261, 275, 294, 300, 305, 324, 334, 508, 510, 535,  
*Half-slaughtered child* – T. 130,  
*To kill the children on their mothers' knees* – T. 263,  
*To massacre the children before their parents* – II, T. 46,  
*To place a stone on the children's belly, to stand on it and squeeze their bowels out* – T. 148,  
*Sale of children* – T. 178,  
*To separate the children from their parents, to take them away, sell them, kill them, throw them into the water (the Rivers Euphrates, Aradsani, Khabur, Tigris)* – T. 101, 102, 115, 125, 131, 138, 139, 147, 172,  
*To take aim at the children and shoot them* – T. 147,  
*To throw the children alive into a pit* – T. 132,  
*To throw the children into a bonfire and burn them* – T. 155, 156,  
 Atrocities perpetrated against Armenian infants (also new-born) – II, T. 2, 6, 13, 39, 42, 87, 88, 94, 105, 142, 155, 172, 191, 228, 258, 264, 358, 436, 494, 499, 500, 555, 684,  
*Burning of infants* – T. 87, 555,  
*Child-killing* – T. 2, 6, 13, 88,  
*Child violation, to rape children and to throw them into the garbage-can* – T. 39, 142, 172,  
*To crush the head of babies with a stone* – T. 142,  
*To hurl the new-born babies to the ground* – T. 155,  
*To impale babies on bayonets* – T. 39, 42, 228,  
*To knock down swaddled babies to the ground and to trample them* – T. 94, 191,  
*Orphaned infants, loss of parents and relatives* – T. 436, 494, 499, 500, 684,  
*To seize the infant by the feet and to plunge him into the boiling water, then to throw him into the River Euphrates* – T. 258,  
*To seize the infant by the legs and tear the body into two parts* – T. 264,  
*Theft of babies and children* – T. 105, 358,  
*To throw swaddled babies into the sea* – T. 191,  
 Atrocities perpetrated against Armenian men and young people – II, T. 6, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, 39, 50, 57, 64, 71, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88, 92, 98, 99, 101, 103, 105, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 124, 126, 130, 131, 132, 142, 155, 159, 162, 165, 166, 167, 171, 172, 173, 174, 177, 179, 181, 183, 195, 244, 264, 267, 275, 289, 309, 350, 485, 616,  
*To burn the Armenian men alive* – T. 112,  
*To collect and isolate the Armenian males, to arrest and imprison them, to beat them (with manacles), to massacre, to kill them (in the valley with machine-gun fire, to drop them in wells, to pack them*

*in the church, to pour kerosene over them and burn them), to slaughter them – II, T. 6, 18, 23, 24, 26, 39, 50, 57, 71, 81, 85, 88, 92, 98, 101, 103, 105, 111, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 124, 126, 130, 131, 132, 142, 167, 171, 173, 174, 177, 181, 183, 195, 244, 350,*  
*To collect the Armenian boys, to slaughter them, to throw them into the river (Euphrates), to burn them, on a massive scale, on a bonfire – T. 64, 103, 105, 130, 155, 166, 289,*  
*To collect the Armenian men and to take them to build mosques – T. 99,*  
*To collect the Armenian men, to tie them, to beat them, to break their bones, to slaughter them and throw them into the river (Euphrates, Murad, Khabur – to spare bullets) – T. 114, 117, 155, 159, 179, 264, 275, 616,*  
*To force the Armenian men to sit on stakes – T. 267,*  
*To harness the Armenian young men to carts and force them, by whipping, to carry the looted property to the railway station and then to slaughter them with swords – T. 309,*  
*To insert the Armenian men's head between their legs, to tie them in that position and roll them down the valley – T. 99,*  
*To separate the Armenian males, to tie them (together and hands tied) and to throw them into the river – T. 19, 39, 57, 71, 80, 81, 110, 119, 162, 165, 485,*  
*To slaughter the Armenian young man like a ram as an offering – T. 172,*  
*To tie the Armenian men back to back and kill them with one bullet – T. 84,*  
 Atrocities perpetrated against Armenian women, girls – II, T. 6, 39, 59, 64, 68, 83, 87, 88, 96, 98, 99, 100, 112, 114, 115, 121, 131, 139, 140, 142, 147, 150, 152, 153, 155, 166, 170, 172, 175, 192, 198, 205, 225, 243, 245, 252, 260, 266, 307, 314, 330, 339, 456, 686, *Auction of Armenian women and girls – II, T. 87,*  
*The child suckling milk from her slaughtered mother – T. 142, 175, 192,*  
*To collect the Armenian women and girls, to kill them and to fling their bodies into the river or the pit – II, T. 6, 88, 98, 166, 170, 252,*  
*To cut off the breasts of women and to throw them to the dogs – T. 39, 170,*  
*To cut off the woman's head like a hen – T. 114, 139,*  
*To cut the woman's nipples – T. 566,*  
*To dismember those, who did not adopt the Islamic religion and to fill the parts into the toilet-pan – T. 100,*  
*To drive the women to deserted places – T. 98,*  
*To drop the mothers alive into the wells – T. 456, 686,*  
*Even after seeing the massacre of her seven children, the Armenian mother did not give herself to the Turk brute – T. 339,*  
*To exploit women (as servants or for pleasure) – T. 98, 115,*  
*To hit the woman on the head with a whip – T. 330,*  
*To impale the women, to force them to sit on spears – T. 155,*  
*To make the Armenian women and children stand in a row, hands and feet tied, on the bank of the River Euphrates, to slaughter them and to throw them into the river – II, T. 266,*  
*To prepare hand-beads and necklace-charms from the nipples of the girls and women the Turks had killed and to pass them from hand to hand – T. 170, 172, 260, 566,*  
*To rape, to cut their head with a dagger – T. 307,*  
*To rape, to cut their heads, to impale their bodies on stakes, to throw their bodies into the River Euphrates – T. 198, 260,*  
*To slaughter the infants in their mothers' bosom – T. 456, 686,*  
*To slaughter the mother together with her child – T. 192,*  
*To strip the women and drop them into the valley by means of bayonets – T. 314,*  
*To take the women and girls to the harem – T. 112, 147, 150, 152, 225,*  
*To torture the pregnant women, to cut open their belly – T. 243, 245, 556,*  
     - *To bet on the sex of the unborn baby – T. 142, 192, 205,*  
     - *To impale the baby on a stake (to fling him away) – T. 59, 88, 99, 142, 153, 170, 556,*  
     - *To lay the woman in childbirth on the ground, to drop a paving stone on her head and watch the fetus dart out of her womb – T. 172,*  
     - *To put a heavy stone on the pregnant woman's belly, to stand on it and to kill the fetus – T. 140,*  
     - *To throw the unborn fetus to each other – T. 99,*  
*To undress the women and to cut open their belly and their digestive organs in search of gold coins*

- T. 192,  
*To undress the women and force them to dance* – T. 64, 68,  
*To undress the women, to collect the (national) costumes (to kick in their buttocks, also the children's) and to throw them into the river (Euphrates, Aradsani, Tigris)* – T. 83, 96, 115, 121, 139,
- Attack of Turkish soldiers, of the rabble and brigands (also Kurds), invasion (into the houses, churches, the diocese building, schools, shops, pillage of relics and sacred things), looting, beating, massacre, plunder of Armenians, of their houses and shops, even of the bloody garments of the massacred people (also by Kurds and other tribes, by Turk and Kurd women) – II, T. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 24, 26, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 57, 58, 59, 66, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 105, 113, 114, 115, 118, 121, 123, 126, 129, 134, 142, 143, 151, 152, 155, 156, 159, 162, 163, 168, 171, 172, 174, 175, 176, 180, 181, 189, 192, 196, 198, 206, 207, 211, 213, 214, 218, 221, 228, 231, 234, 249, 251, 253, 259, 262, 263, 273, 277, 289, 300, 307, 310, 311, 312, 323, 329, 348, 455, 460, 537, 551, 552, 555,
- To be compelled to leave the disabled sick people on the road of the exile and to let them die unburied – II, T. 95, 348,
- To beat (black and blue with a bludgeon), to torture, to break the bones of Armenians, to kill them – II, T. 82, 87, 104, 105, 115, 142, 155, 175, 178, 224, 253,
- To behead the victims, to cut their throats – II, T. 9, 13, 17, 39, 42, 71, 77, 82, 120, 121, 143, 145, 159, 171, 175, 192, 219, 251, 252, 254, 307, 330, 339, 348, 352, 556,  
*To break the victims' neck with an axe* – T. 192,  
*To crush the victims' head with an axe* – T. 171,  
*To crush the victims' head with stones* – T. 120, 219,  
*To cut off the head of children and women, to fling it into a pit and to burn it* – T. 252,  
*To cut off the head, to cut the throat (as a pastime)* – II, T. 9, 13, 17, 42, 82, 120, 145, 159,  
*To cut off the head of the victim and to nail it on the façade of the house* – T. 71,  
*To cut off the head of the victim, to fix it on a stake (march with it from district to district)* – T. 254, 352,  
*To cut off the head of the victim, to play with it as a ball* – II, T. 175, 177,  
*To cut off the victims' head with a bayonet* – T. 556,  
*To cut off the victims' head with a saw* – T. 143,  
*To cut the victim's neck, to wind the hairs on the hand and to show the severed head to those still alive, in order to terrorize them* – T. 175,  
*To divide the victims' head into four parts with an axe* – T. 121,  
*To hit the victims' head with the rifle-butt and to kill them* – T. 39, 251, 348,  
*To hit the woman's head with a whip* – T. 330,  
*To rape, to cut off the head of the victim with a dagger* – T. 307,  
*To shatter the head* – T. 77,  
*To strike the victims' head with a yataghan* – T. 339,
- To break the backbone with a millstone – II, T. 82,
- Bribery (money-collecting) for letting cross the bridge over the river (Euphrates) – II, T. 98, 165,
- To burn the elderly people in the bonfire – T. 155,
- To bury alive – II, T. 111, 170,
- To bury (boys and children) alive in the ground (heads protruding) – T. 35, 200, 444,
- Crucifixion – II, T. 348, 445,  
*To crucify the Armenian young girl, stark naked, on the wall of the cave* – T. 348,  
*To crucify, to cut the different parts of the body, to arrange them in various patterns* – II,  
*To crucify, then to lower the corpse from the cross and to throw it into the sea* – T. 445,
- To cut the ear of the victims (in order to take off the earrings) – T. 43, 91, 120, 310,
- To cut the finger, in order to take off the ring – T. 84, 97,
- To cut the member and to shove it into the victim's mouth (to hang) – T. 43, 91, 113, 134,
- To cut the nose – T. 43,
- To cut the tongue of the teachers, teaching the Armenian language, to forbid them to speak Armenian – I, II, T. 53, 181, 114, 127, 316, 446,
- To cut various parts of the body with red-hot iron bars and to roast them over the fire – II,
- To disembowel the victims – II, T. 13, 17, 114, 125,
- To dismember the victims – II, T. 25, 46,

- To drown people (into the river, lake, sea), to kill, to slaughter, to throw the corpses into the river – II, T. 1, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 20, 39, 48, 71, 72, 77, 78, 83, 95, 96, 98, 102, 120, 142, 194, 195, 198, 235, 236, 261, 412, 438, 445, 466,
- To crucify, then to lower the corpse from the cross and to throw it into the sea – T. 445,*
- To drag the corpses with a hooked wire and drop them into the water – T. 98,*
- To drown very young infants – T. 454,*
- To fling people alive into the river (Euphrates), into the valley – T. 142, 261,*
- To kill people under the bridge and throw the corpse into the river – T. 198,*
- To make the Armenians sit in boats taking bribes, as if to save them, then, opening the holes at the bottom of the boats, drown the people into the open sea – T. 195, 199, 235, 236, 385,*
- To pour boiling water from the shore over people swimming toward the rescuing ships – T. 175, 217,*
- The River Euphrates, as a grave for the Armenians, bloody Euphrates covered with corpses, corpses floating over its surface, the riverside stones stained with coagulated blood – T. 20, 64, 88, 96, 98, 248, 457, 512,*
- To throw people, hands tied, into the water – T. 142,*
- To throw into the water the Armenian soldiers drafted into the Turkish army – T. 412,*
- The earth moving over the half-dead bodies of the Armenians – II, T. 95,
- The enjoyment of the Turks, who organized the Armenians' torture and suffering, murder and plunder – II, T. 9, 172,
- Executions – II, T. 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 35, 39, 44, 51, 53, 56, 57, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 81, 85, 88, 102, 103, 106, 115, 116, 120, 121, 122, 140, 143, 150, 151, 154, 155, 158, 160, 173, 178, 181, 184, 190, 225, 261, 264, 335, 442, 482,
- To execute (also by the Kurds), to murder, to throw the corpses into the wells on a massive scale – T. 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24, 35, 39, 44, 51, 53, 57, 72, 74, 75, 77, 81, 88, 102, 106, 116, 120, 122, 140, 150, 155, 178, 184, 225, 261, 482,*
- To execute, to kill by a burst of gunfire, to fling the corpses into the river (Euphrates), into the sea, dragging them by the feet – T. 1, 5, 6, 13, 18, 35, 56, 71, 77, 85, 103, 115, 121, 143, 151, 154, 155, 158, 160, 173, 181, 184, 190, 335, 442,*
- To execute, then, as though an amnesty has been granted, to execute also those, who had remained alive and then to trample down the corpses under the horses' hoofs – T. 264,*
- To shoot people, because they had dared to drink water – T. 155,*
- Exile from the native cradle with the object of exterminating the Armenian nation, deportation, banishment of women, elderly people and children dressed in Armenian costumes, with gold coins and ornaments, driving them (tied up like animals, whipping, cursing, bayoneting, shooting) to the Syrian deserts (Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Homs, Hama, Meskené, Surudj, making them walk through the same roads again an again, and finally to Aleppo), separating the relatives from one another (then miraculously finding each other), losses, homelessness, sufferings, fear, trembling, terror, tumult, uproar, commotion, lamentable condition, murder – II, T. 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124, 131, 133, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 167, 168, 171, 173, 175, 176, 178, 181, 182, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 218, 220, 221, 223, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 237, 240, 241, 243, 244, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 262, 264, 270, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280, 282, 285, 287, 289, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 318, 326, 334, 335, 338, 341, 342, 344, 346, 348, 355, 356, 357, 358, 360, 367, 369, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 383, 384, 385, 436, 447, 452, 453, 454, 456, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 571, 572, 599, 600, 604, 684, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690,
- Deportation of clergymen – T. 289,*
- Description of the Deir-el-Zor desert (stony, sandy, thorny, muddy, rainy, hazy, bloody), the narrow (Deir-el-Zor) bridge across the River Euphrates, the Euphrates River: poisonous, bloody, bitter – T. 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478,*

479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530,

*In the desert (to get shot, to get weary, confused, to leave the parents on the road, to fall down wounded, to decay, to be killed, to become a prey to crows) – T. 499, 500, 501, 502, 503,*

*The feet of the people were bleeding from walking – T. 212, 555,*

*To fling the people alive into the pit and to bury them – T. 287, 307,*

*To gather Armenians in the desert (of Deir-el-Zor), to drown the rest into the rivers or burn them with sulfur – T. 466,*

*To kill the disabled on the road – T. 178,*

*The knees of the people became weary of walking, their shoes were filled with sand – T. 476, 506, 532,*

*To leave the relatives on the road, to lose the relatives, to become orphans, to search the relatives – II, T. 95, 436, 494, 499, 500, 571, 572, 684,*

*Not to allow people cry over the dead relative, to bayonet them – T. 202,*

*Orphan children dying in the desert of Deir-el-Zor – T. 604,*

*People and greenery were dyed with blood – T. 464,*

*To prefer the exile to marrying a Turk – T. 338,*

*To remain under the desert sand – T. 243,*

*The roads of exile (with toponymic names and lengths in kilometers) – T. 173, 187, 189, 211, 212, 214, 218, 221, 231, 264, 289, 300, 551,*

*To separate the craftsmen, to leave on the spot one Armenian from each craft – T. 103, 104, 131, 133, 246, 272,*

*To separate the relatives from each other – T. 159, 348, 599, 600,*  
*- Relatives, who found each other – T. 344, 355, 356, 357, 358, 372, 373,*

*To set free the Protestant (Evangelical) and Catholic Armenians from the exile, to deport the Gregorian Orthodox Armenians – T. 131, 133, 134,*

To fill the Armenians in a pit and to kill them – II, T. 19, 32, 250, 551,

Flaying – II, T. 137, 198,

To force the parents to kill their child – T. 39,

To freeze from cold – T. 195,

To gouge out the victims' eyes, to make them blind – T. 43, 46, 253, 268, 566,  
*To become blind after being heavily beaten – T. 346,*  
*To fill the victim's eyes with earth, to make him blind – T. 253,*

To hang, to send to the gallows – II, T. 9, 13, 35, 37, 53, 80, 143, 173, 177, 187, 203, 218, 274,  
*To hang the Armenian party-members – T. 187,*  
*To hang Armenians, head down, hands tied behind the back, to wet their bodies with a bucketful of water and beat them with a bludgeon until blood spurts from their nose and mouth – T. 112,*  
*To hang from the trees – T. 113, 150, 559,*  
*To send to the gallows the Armenian soldier drafted to the Turkish army – T. 426,*

Human offering, to slaughter the Armenian Christian as an offering – T. 172,  
*To slaughter an Armenian like a ram as an offering before the feet of visitors on horseback – T. 172,*  
*To slaughter the Armenian young man like a ram as an offering – T. 172,*  
*To slaughter a 4-5-year-old-boy or girl as an offering in honor of the Turkish notable, when getting off the phaeton – T. 172*

To imprison, to deport, to torture to death, to execute, to crush the heads of Armenian notables, intellectuals, clergymen, national leaders (subsequently also their families) – II, T. 178, 181, 206, 211, 219, 221, 224, 234, 253, 274, 276, 557,

To kill the disabled sick people in their bed – T. 98,

To kill the parents before the children, to slaughter – II, T. 46,

To kill, to slaughter people with cold steel arms (with bayonets, daggers, swords, axes, scythes, hatchets, maces, iron spears, metallic objects, (oak) bludgeons, whips, yataghans, shears, instruments of torture, rifle-butts), to shoe people, to burn people with hot skewers, to place hot boiled eggs in their armpits (also Turkish women torturing people with bags full of stones), to subject people to unheard-of torments, to fill people in pits – II, T. 39, 80, 83, 84, 86, 87, 88, 91, 96, 97, 98, 114, 119, 120, 132, 139, 143, 150, 152, 155, 170, 172, 176, 178, 180, 182, 192, 200, 202, 203, 204, 208, 218, 255, 264, 304, 307, 308, 313,

- 314, 338, 343, 435, 456, 459, 486, 555, 640, 686, 687,  
*“Battalion of butchers” [“Ghassab tabour”]* – T. 1,  
*To break the bones of people with a log* – T. 142,  
*To break the head with an axe* – T. 171,  
*To break the neck with an axe* – T. 192,  
*To burn the various parts of the body with a red-hot iron bar, to put hot boiled eggs in the armpits, to execute* – T. 155,  
*“Butcher” Ottoman chiefs, notables, policemen, askyars, soldiers, officers* – T. 467, 468, 469, 470, 521,  
*To cut the neck with a saw* – T. 143,  
*To cut the victim’s head with a bayonet* – T. 556,  
*To divide the head into four parts with an axe* – T. 121,  
*To drag the live and sick people with their neck caught in a lasso and throw them into the pit* – T. 155,  
*To fix horseshoes on the victims’ feet* – II, T. 87, 204,  
*To force the victim to walk barefoot on a red-hot tin sheet* – T. 204,  
*To hammer a nail in the victim’s forehead* – T. 46,  
*To hit on the head with the rifle-butt, to kill* – T. 39, 251, 348,  
*To hit a woman on the head with a whip* – T. 330,  
*Irregulars, soldiers, Chechens oiling their (Mauser) guns to kill the Armenians* – T. 487, 488, 489, 490, 689,  
*To kill people by towing them, feet tied, behind a horse in full gallop* – T. 273,  
*To kill by torturing* – II, T. 98,  
*To kill with an axe and to throw the corpse into the river, the valley* – T. 72, 132, 166, 433,  
*To kill with a bayonet* – T. 158,  
*To kill with a scythe* – T. 13,  
*To pierce the people’s face with bayonets* – T. 39,  
*To put a red-hot metallic bowl on the victim’s head* – T. 308,  
*To rape, to cut off the head of women and girls with a dagger* – T. 307,  
*To riddle people with bayonets* – T. 198,  
*To roll the victims down the hill or mountain* – T. 2, 12, 13, 80, 83,  
*To slash, to kill people, to drop them down the bridges* – T. 307, 337,  
*To stone to death (those, who did not adopt the Islamic faith)* – T. 87, 170,  
*To strike on the victim’s head with a yataghan* – T. 339,  
*Thrusting of bayonets into the buttocks of intellectuals* – T. 155, 158,  
*To tie the victims’ hands and feet, to slaughter them like sheep, rams or goats, to crush them like cheese* – T. 143, 336, 480, 497,
- To kill by subjecting people to starvation, thirst, nakedness, homelessness, exhaustion, to subject them to misery, cadging, inhuman treatment – II, T. 7, 10, 34, 42, 46, 51, 73, 75, 77, 80, 85, 87, 88, 93, 97, 98, 111, 124, 130, 134, 142, 143, 148, 151, 152, 155, 159, 165, 169, 171, 175, 189, 195, 203, 204, 207, 211, 213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 221, 228, 231, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 258, 261, 270, 278, 282, 289, 294, 295, 296, 299, 300, 302, 303, 304, 306, 307, 328, 383, 456, 459, 462, 474, 493, 509, 511, 512, 555, 586, 616, 686, 687,
- To demand money to let people drink water* – T. 142,  
*To die of thirst* – T. 98, 111,  
*To drink camel urine and die* – T. 250,  
*To drink horse urine* – T. 151,  
*To drink muddy water* – T. 207, 219, 270,  
*To drink rainwater collected in the footprints of camels* – T. 195,  
*To eat grass* – T. 88, 98, 169, 215, 252, 253, 282, 586,  
*To eat the infants’ flesh* – T. 252,  
*To eat the meat of animals (dogs, cats, donkeys)* – T. 87, 148, 219, 307,  
*To eat the meat of rabid animals* – T. 254,  
*To eat tree-leaves* – T. 97,  
*To kill people, who dared to drink water* – T. 165,  
*The living people eating the dead people’s flesh* – T. 255,

*Not to let people drink (turbid) water (people were compelled to drink urine) – T. 7, 87, 97, 142, 152, 203, 211, 511,*

*Not to let people sit in the shade, to demand instead a girl as a ransom – T. 221,*

*To search barley grains in the excrement of horses and eat them – T. 148,*

*To search food in the garbage dump, to get poisoned from decayed food and to die – T. 130,*

“Labor battalion” [“Amelé tabour”], hard physical work in jail, penal servitude (to break stones, to carry stones on their back heaving them up from the valley), death, murder – II, T. 1, 18, 24, 34, 42, 84, 85, 87, 116, 129, 132, 147, 155, 160, 192, 216, 219, 235, 251, 252, 266, 268, 273, 274, 289, 315, 390,

*To force 25 Armenian engineers to construct a tunnel and to kill them afterwards – T. 251,*

*To make the Armenian laborers work on the railway and then kill them – T. 155,*

To lie down in the ashes to get warm – T. 130,

To lie down in the dung to get warm – T. 13,

Marauding – II, T. 172, 178,

*To cut open the digestive organs of the Armenians in search of gold coins they might have swallowed – T. 172,*

Mass arrests – II, T. 86, 87, 98, 121, 122, 142, 155, 158,

*Arrest of men – II, T. 86,*

*Arrest of notables, intellectuals, national leaders – II, T. 87, 98, 121, 142, 155, 158,*

*- Thrusting of bayonets into the buttocks of intellectuals – T. 155, 158,*

Mass immolation and burning of Armenians (in Cilicia, Adana, Sassoun, Moosh, Bitlis, Marash, Hadjn, Zeytoun, Sheddadié, Aslanbek, Smyrna and elsewhere, burning in houses, churches, schools, shops, stables, barns, caves and pits) – II, T. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 19, 24, 42, 64, 68, 71, 79, 80, 90, 96, 113, 129, 143, 144, 147, 150, 155, 156, 175, 181, 192, 198, 200, 217, 219, 201, 223, 233, 236, 243, 245, 251, 252, 253, 254, 259, 261, 267, 272, 308, 311, 313, 315, 318, 319, 348, 349, 382, 383, 384, 385, 434, 436, 437, 443, 451, 455, 466, 483, 550, 551, 552, 556, 561, 562, 563, 611, 612, 640, 682, 683, 684,

*To burn the elderly people in the bonfire – T. 155,*

*To burn people with kerosene in houses, stables, barns, caves and pits – T. 1, 2, 9, 12, 14, 21, 22, 24, 34, 39, 67, 68, 78, 90, 143, 200,*

*To burn people with lighted torches – T. 219,*

*To burn in sulfur – T. 466,*

*Burning the Armenian deserter and melting his body fat – T. 223,*

*To collect the Armenian waifs in the desert and to burn them – T. 348,*

*To fling people into the fire and burn them – T. 1, 483, 563,*

*To force a man to sit in a cauldron filled with boiling water; to boil the lower half, so that the upper half can see and feel – II,*

*To pack the Armenians into a tunnel, to pour kerosene on both sides of the tunnel and burn the people alive – T. 217,*

*To pack people in a cave, to pour lime over them and set fire to them and burn them – T. 204, 484,*

*To pour gasoline over the children (1,500 souls, also elders) and burn them – T. 198, 315,*

*To pour kerosene over the people and set them on fire – T. 80, 96,*

*To pour kerosene (through the cupola) over the Armenians packed into the churches and burn them alive, the molten human grease flowing down the threshold of the church-door – T. 68, 143, 147, 200, 259, 318, 455, 550, 552,*

*To roast the children in the tonir [pit for baking bread] – T. 1, 71,*

*To set villages, houses and shops on fire – T. 19, 71, 150, 181, 201,*

*To throw children into the bonfire and burn them – T. 155, 156,*

*Turkish women searching gold with sieves in the ashes of the burnt Armenians in the church – T. 259,*

*Vardavar [Transfiguration of Christ - Arm.] – Mardavar [burning of people - Arm.], Easter Sunday, massacre, butchery, holocaust – T. 1, 7, 9, 129, 233,*

Mass slaughter, massacre, holocaust, carnage (perpetrated also by the Kurds) – II, T. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 30, 34, 38, 41, 57, 59, 64, 67, 68, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 91, 93, 96, 98, 99, 118, 120, 121, 129, 135, 142, 143, 144, 147, 151, 155, 176, 177, 180, 182, 188, 190, 192, 213, 230, 231, 245, 251, 253, 254, 257, 263, 307, 318, 328, 348, 366, 368, 375, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 448, 449, 450, 451, 549, 551, 680, 681, 682, 684,

Murder of the Armenian doctor, hands tied – T. 85,

The nightmarish dreams of the eyewitness – I, II, T. 81, 92, 129,

Offending the national dignity, holding the Armenians up to ridicule, humiliating, outraging, cursing them, defaming Christianity, guilty for being Armenians – I, II, T. 18, 87, 92, 140, 145, 159, 170, 172, 202, 221, 267, 268, 551, 640,

*Defaming Christianity* – T. 18, 140,

*To have his buttocks cleaned with a stone by an Armenian with a view to humiliating him* – T. 170,

*The Turk's curse to the Armenian Christians* – II, T. 202,

*Violation of the human dignity of the Armenians, to use foul language, to hurt their national feelings* – II, T. 87, 115, 155, 277, 371, 555,

To open pockets with the bayonet on the thighs and the body of Armenians and to shove the victims' hands in them – T. 43, 71,

To poison, to kill – T. 147, 270,

*To poison the food* – T. 147, 270, 295,

*They poisoned an Armenian in a Turkish hospital, they killed him and dropped him into the well* – T. 295,

*The Turk pasha killed the Armenian children by giving them a piece of poisoned bread* – T. 295,

To pour boiling water on the back of the Armenian people – T. 160,

To pull out the victim's fingernails – II, T. 39, 87, 142, 155, 275,

To pull out the victim's moustache in bunches – T. 142,

To pull out the victim's teeth with pincers and to nail them to their forehead – II, T. 39, 87, 155,

To rape women and girls (before the parents, before the people, mass rape, as a result of which the victim went mad, they killed those, who did not submit, they cut off their heads), they tortured them to death, they murdered them, they threw the corpses into the pits, into the rivers (Euphrates) – II, T. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 20, 34, 39, 42, 47, 68, 71, 77, 80, 95, 98, 99, 118, 119, 130, 142, 150, 155, 156, 159, 170, 174, 177, 178, 181, 197, 198, 200, 202, 216, 218, 221, 231, 241, 260, 261, 268, 307, 308, 310, 327, 338, 342, 348, 505, 567, 580,

Raze to the ground, annihilation, martyrdom (of race, nuclear and extended families, villages, localities, towns, also numerical data of the losses) – II, T. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 34, 35, 42, 44, 50, 57, 61, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 83, 95, 96, 98, 106, 110, 113, 114, 115, 119, 120, 121, 130, 134, 136, 142, 143, 154, 159, 172, 176, 178, 182, 185, 196, 200, 201, 214, 225, 231, 244, 250, 251, 252, 253, 261, 263, 264, 270, 271, 287, 305, 311, 312, 315, 337, 348, 374, 375, 376, 440, 454, 455, 517, 531, 551, 556, 557, 594,

To roast the Armenians alive – II,

Sale of Armenian people – T. 14, 16,

*Sale of children* – T. 14,

*Sale of women* – T. 16,

Search in the Armenians' homes, imprisonment, murder – II, T. 9, 13, 24, 87, 98, 121, 172, 189, 206, 273,

Slaughter of the French military men by Turks (1920) – T. 143, 145,

*Beheading of the high-ranking French military man by the Turks, fixing his head on a stake and marching around the town* – T. 145,

Slaughtered, dismembered, swollen, decaying, disfigured, unburied (naked), piled on each other corpses (in the river, in the streets, in the valleys, in the pits, in the wells, on the lakeside, on the shores of Euphrates, on the trees and shrubs, on the sea), the stench of decaying corpses spreading, flowing blood, bloody river – II, T. 1, 8, 13, 18, 25, 26, 33, 35, 39, 42, 43, 59, 71, 77, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 95, 96, 98, 99, 111, 112, 123, 128, 129, 130, 138, 142, 143, 155, 159, 160, 175, 177, 178, 181, 189, 197, 202, 207, 214, 215, 231, 233, 237, 240, 241, 243, 245, 249, 252, 253, 259, 261, 266, 270, 281, 302, 303, 309, 310, 311, 313, 337, 341, 348, 374, 382, 383, 384, 432, 455, 456, 463, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 474, 475, 521, 525, 549, 556, 557, 559, 569, 594, 640, 686, 688,

*"Battalion of butchers" ["Ghassab tabour"]* – T. 1,

*Beheaded corpse* – T. 525,

*Blood flowing like a river* – T. 556,

*To bury half-dead people* – T. 240,

*"Butcher" Ottoman chiefs, notables, policemen, askyars, soldiers, officers* – T. 467, 468, 469, 470, 521,

*To come out alive from under the slaughtered corpses* – T. 159, 177, 178, 181,

- The corpses laid one over the other in the form of a cross* – T. 233, 253,  
*Corpses of mothers and children* – T. 98,  
*The corpses of slaughtered Armenians piled up in the River Euphrates in such an amount, that the flow of water could not be seen* – T. 237,  
*The dogs got enraged by eating human flesh* – T. 237,  
*The dogs were eating the infants' flesh* – T. 189,  
*To fill everyday a pit with corpses and live people* – T. 253,  
*Hills of innumerable severed heads* – T. 123, 463,  
*Innumerable slaughtered and disfigured corpses* – T. 112, 466, 467,  
*To kill, to slaughter in the valley, to throw half-dead corpses into the valley* – T. 175, 249, 281,  
*To make Armenian women and children stand in a row, hands and feet tied, along the bank of the River Euphrates, to slaughter them and to throw them into the river* – T. 266,  
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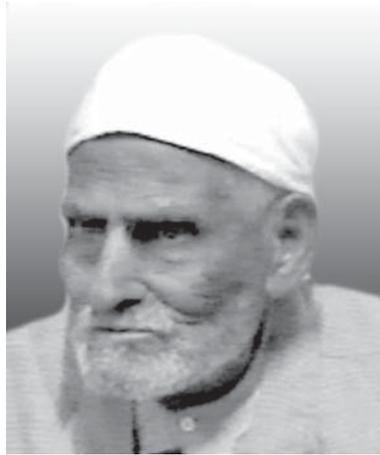


**PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS  
OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**





Maritsa Papazian  
(1874, Samsun)



al Gihim  
(1880, Rakka)



Mariam Chookasezian  
(1881, Sebastia)



Serob Gyouzelian  
(1882, Moussa Dagh)



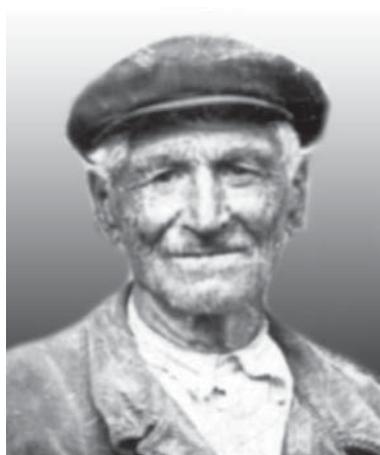
Senekerim Kozmanian  
(1882, Sebastia)



Kakav Mouradian  
(1883, Bitlis)



Noyemzar Mouradian  
(1883, Moosh)



Karapet Azarian  
(1884, Sebastia)



Verzhin Hazarian  
(1885, Arabkir)



Movses Panossian  
(1885, Moussa Dagh)



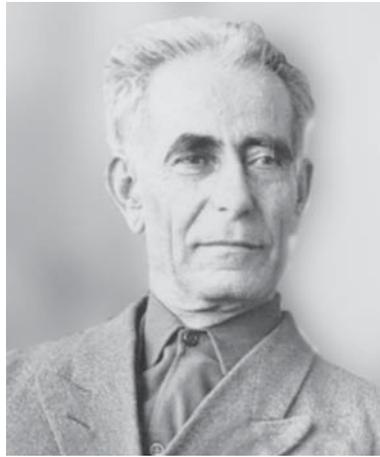
Vardan Mazmanian  
(1886, Ardvin)



Azniv Agha-Chrakian  
(1886, Istanbul)



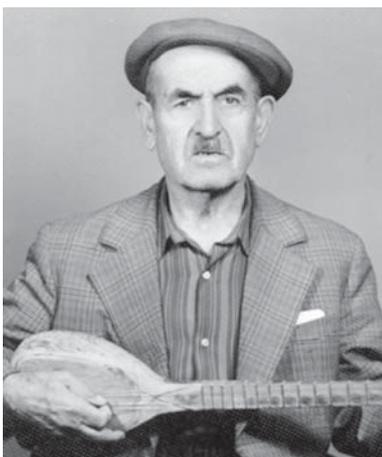
Kerobé Agha-Cherakian  
(1886, Istanbul)



Yeghiazar Karapetian  
(1886, Sassoun)



Paydsar Yerkat  
(1887, Kayseri)



Poghos Soupkoukian  
(1887, Moussa Dagh)



Maritsa Ohanian-Astourian  
(1887, Sebastia)



Garegin Amadian  
(1888, Arabkir)



Tigran Jebejian  
(1888, Ayntap)



Anna Davtian  
(1888, Moussa Dagh)



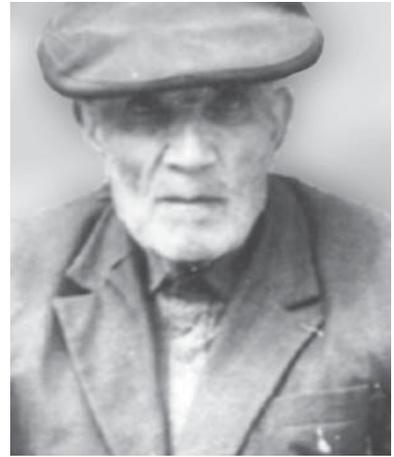
Natalia Barseghian  
(1889, Kars)



Sedrak Poghikian  
(1890, Alexandrette)



Aghavni Zoulalian  
(1890, Chanak-Kalé)



Hovhannes Paronian  
(1890, Eskishchir)



Moushegh Hakobian  
(1890, Nicomedia)



Movses Balabanian  
(1891, Moussa Dagh)



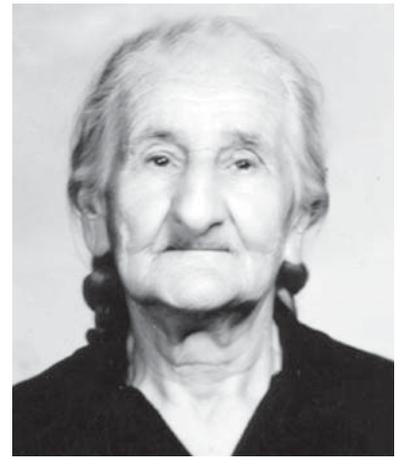
Hakob Papazian  
(1891, Sivrihissar)



Dolores Zohrap-Liebmann  
(1892, Istanbul)



Tonakan Tonoyan  
(1893, Moosh)



Ovsanna Abikian  
(1893, Nicomedia)



Avag Avagian  
(1893, Sharoor)



Hayko Vardanian  
(1893, Sharoor)



Khacher Ablapoutian  
(1893, Yedessia)



Khoren Ablapoutian  
(1893, Yedessia)



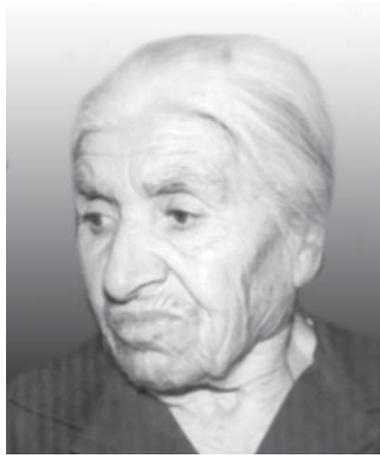
Johar Aslanian-Mamigonian  
(1895, Harpoot)



Khoren Gyulbenkian  
(1895, Sebastia)



Aram Santourian  
(1896, Agoulis)



Heghnar Ghoukassian  
(1896, Bassen)



Harutyun Tsulikian  
(1896, Kayseri)



Hovhannes Ipredjian  
(1896, Moussa Dagh)



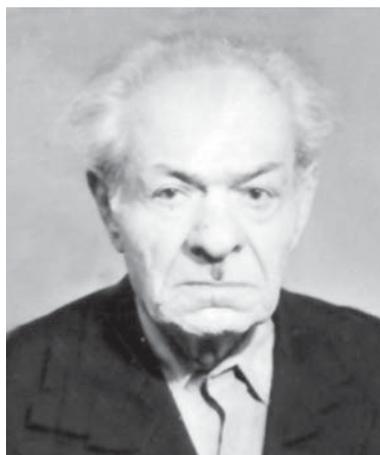
Sargis Kharikian  
(1897, Moussa Dagh)



Endsa Jemperjian  
(1898, Amassia)



Nerses Nooridjanian  
(1898, Ardvin)



Kamsar Khachatrian  
(1898, Bayazet)



Martiros Gyouzelian  
(1898, Beylan)



Arshakouhi Boyadjian  
(1898, Kayseri)



Verginé Mayikian  
(1898, Marash)



Tonik Tonikian  
(1898, Moussa Dagh)



Hambarzoum Sahakian  
(1898, Sebastia)



Verzhin Taghavarian  
(1898, Sebastia)



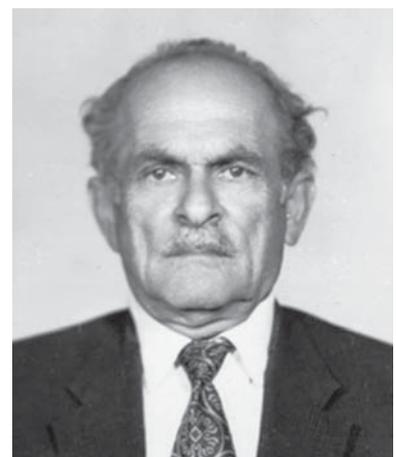
Vardoush Khachatryan  
(1898, Spitak)



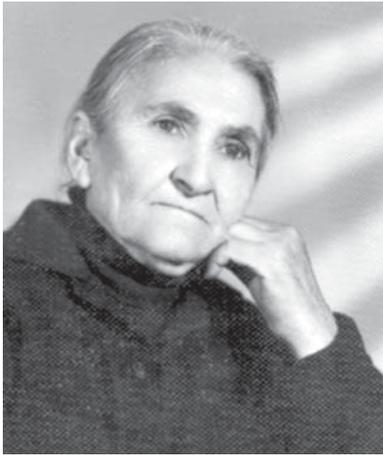
Harutyun Martikian  
(1899, Harpoot)



Hakob Cherdjian  
(1900, Ayntap)



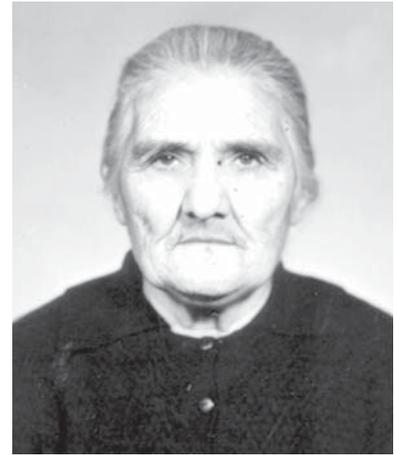
Gevorg Karamanoukian  
(1900, Ayntap)



Dsirani Matevossian  
(1900, Harpoot)



Soghomon Yetenekian  
(1900, Mersin)



Barouhi Silian  
(1900, Nicomedia)



Vardanoush Beknazarian  
(1900, Sharoor)



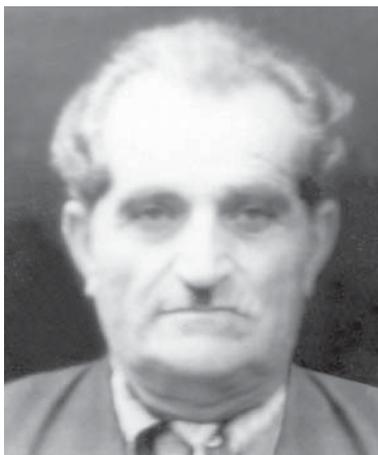
Mesrop Mesropian  
(1900, Yozghat)



Gyurdji Keshishian  
(1900, Zeytoun)



Artavazd Ktradsian  
(1901, Adabazar)



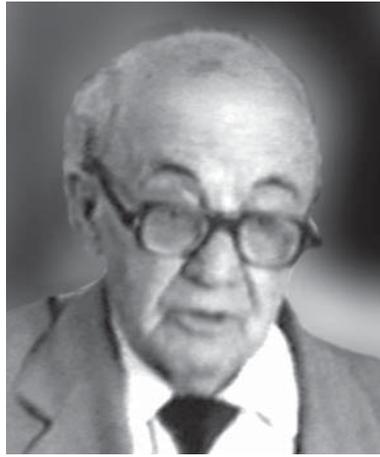
Yenok Aslanian  
(1901, Bitlis)



Sokrat Mkrтчian  
(1901, Bitlis)



Arsen Svadjian  
(1901, Kayseri)



Ghoukas Karapetian  
(1901, Moks)



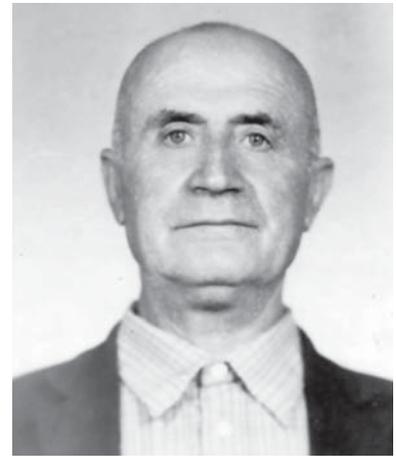
Shogher Tonoyan  
(1901, Moosh)



Iskouhi Panossian  
(1901, Moussa Dagh)



Petros Safarian  
(1901, Moussa Dagh)



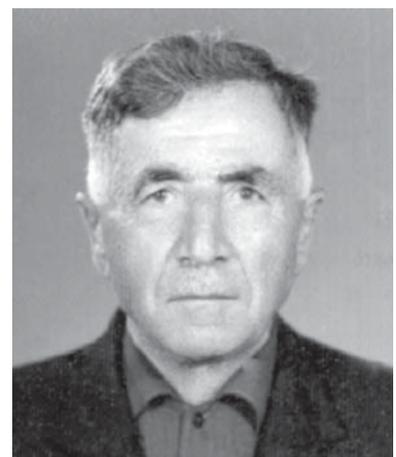
Assatour Soupoukian  
(1901, Moussa Dagh)



Geghetsik Yessayan  
(1901, Nicomedia)



Bashir el Saadi  
(1901, Rakka)



Hovsep Bazoyan  
(1901, Tigranakert)



Shoushanik Pachadjian  
(1901, Trapizon)



Tovik Baghdassarian  
(1901, Van)



Manvel Maroutian  
(1901, Van)



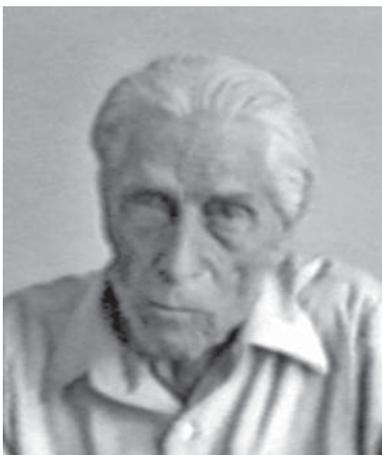
Andranik Simonian  
(1902, Alashkert)



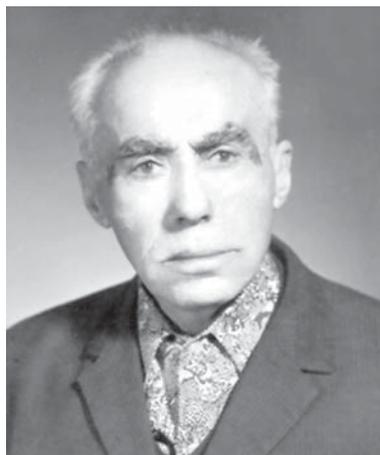
Haykaz Torikian  
(1902, Arabkir)



Hazarkhan Torossian  
(1902, Balou)



Hmayak Boyadjian  
(1902, Bitlis)



Arakel Tagoyan  
(1902, Derdjan)



Hovhannes Gasparian  
(1902, Eskishchir)



Hakob Holobikian  
(1902, Harpoot)



Tigran Ohanian  
(1902, Kamakh)



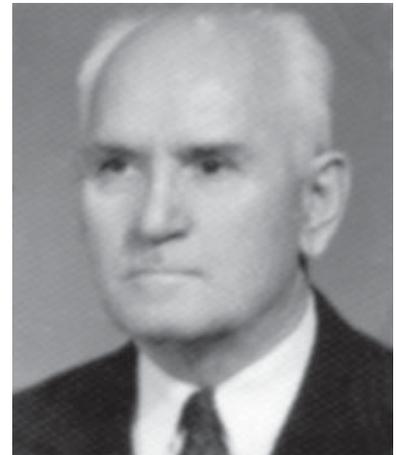
Nerses Galbakian  
(1902, Konia)



Zabel Vardian  
(1902, Marash)



Missak Yarialian  
(1902, Moussa Dagh)



Souren Sargsian  
(1902, Sebastia)



Srbouhi Galtakian  
(1902, Yozghat)



Barounak Shishikian  
(1902, Zeytoun)



Haykanoush Zatikian  
(1903, Adabazar)



Arpinn Bartikian  
(1903, Afion-Garahissar)



Nouritsa Kyurkdjian  
(1903, Ayntap)



Loris Papikian  
(1903, Erzroom)



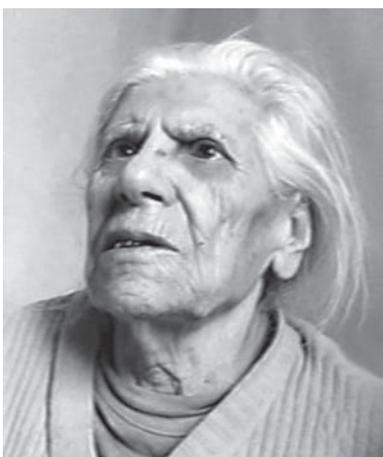
Aharon Mankrian  
(1903, Hadjn)



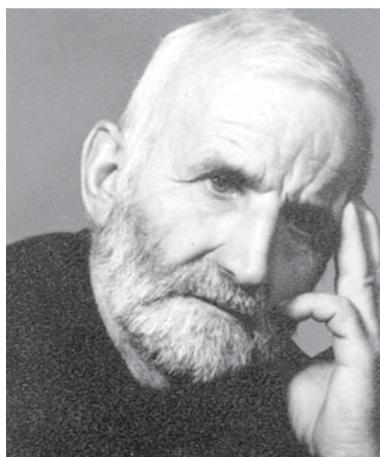
Sargis Khachatrian  
(1903, Harpoot)



Sargis Martirosian  
(1903, Harpoot)



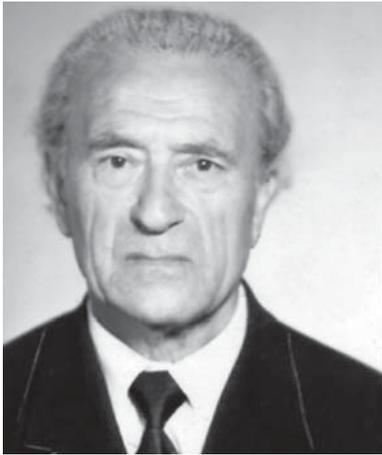
Annman Arakelian  
(1903, Kars)



Hovhannes Abelian  
(1903, Kessab)



Gyulinia Mousoyan  
(1903, Kessab)



Grigor Gyouzelian  
(1903, Moussa Dagh)



Soghomé Pashayan  
(1903, Moussa Dagh)



Hakob Grigorian  
(1903, Sassoun)



Hakob Mouradian  
(1903, Sgherd)



Nvard Mouradian  
(1903, Shatakh)



Nvard Ablapoutian  
(1903, Yedessia)



Arshakouhi Petrossian  
(1903, Yozghat)



Hovsep Bshtikian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



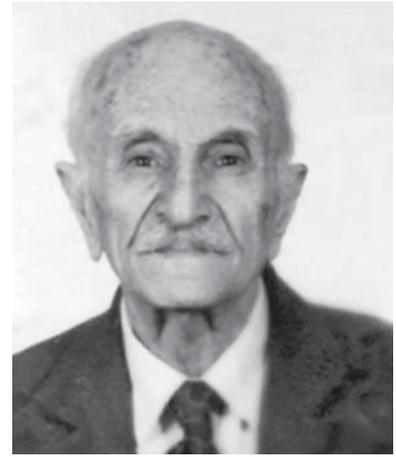
Eva Choulian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Sedrak Gaybakian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



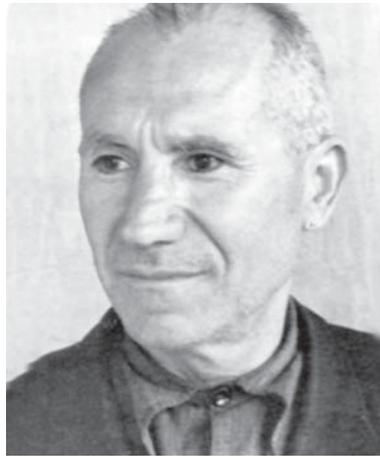
Karapet Tozlian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



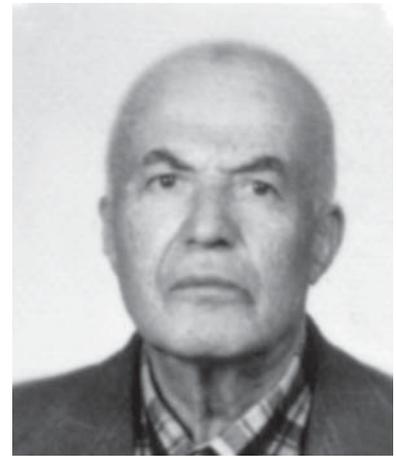
Mikayel Keshishian  
(1904, Adana)



Sargis Amalian  
(1904, Arabkir)



Harutyun Alboyadjian  
(1904, Fendedjak)



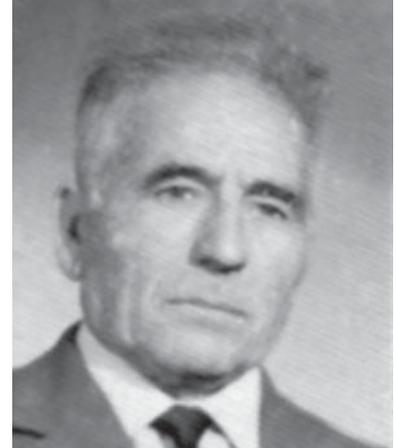
Mikayel Chilingarian  
(1904, Harpoot)



Byuzant Moroukian  
(1904, Kayseri)



Garnik Svazlian  
(1904, Kayseri)



Sedrak Harutyunian  
(1904, Moosh)



Imastouhi Galadjian  
(1904, Sebastia)



Hovhannes Kyoroghlian  
(1904, Tigranakert)



Aghassi Kankanian  
(1904, Van)



Anoush Gasparian  
(1905, Ardvin)



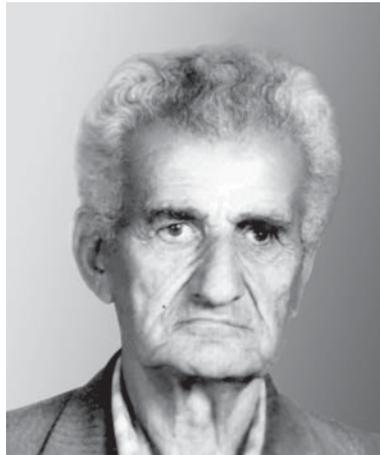
Arshalouys Cherdjian  
(1905, Ayntap)



Arshalouys Ter-Nazaretian  
(1905, Baberd)



Galoust Soghomonian  
(1905, Bolou)



Ashot Ohanian  
(1905, Bursa)



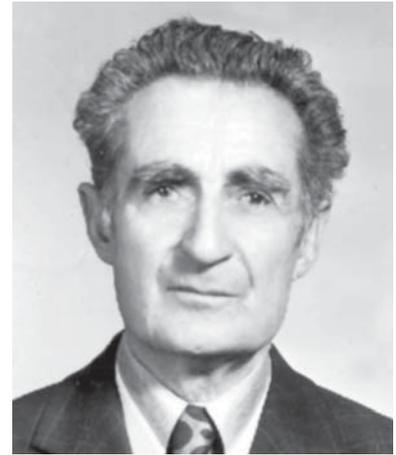
Marie Vardanian  
(1905, Malatia)



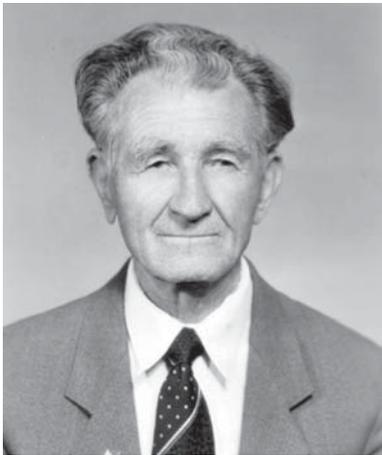
Davit Davitian  
(1905, Moussa Dagh)



Petros Voskerichian  
(1905, Severek)



Kadjouni Gharagozian  
(1905, Shapin-Garahissar)



Andreas Gulanian  
(1905, Shatakh)



Hayrik Mouradian  
(1905, Shatakh)



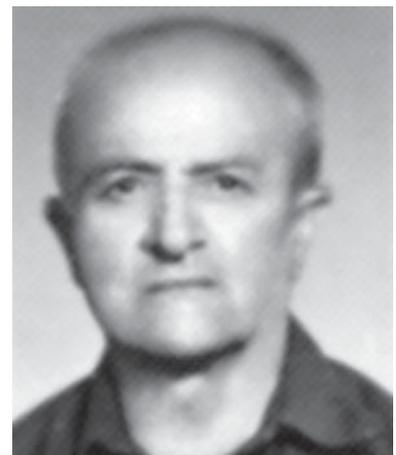
Varsenik Abrahamian  
(1905, Van)



Smbat Davtian  
(1905, Van)



Sirak Manassian  
(1905, Van)



Petros Kikishian  
(1906, Arabkir)

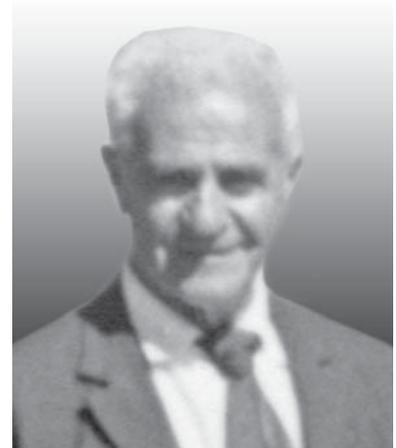


Batra  
(1906, Deir-el-Zor)

-



Yebrouhi Djrtekhian  
(1906, Hadjn)



Missak Herouni  
(1906, Hadjn)



Arshalouys Tingurian  
(1906, Sebastia)



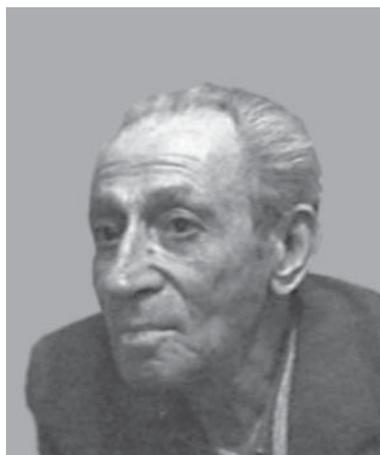
Patrick Saroyan  
(1906, Van)



Siranoush Toutoundjian  
(1906, Van)



Vazgen Sadatian  
(1907, Adabazar)



Assatour Menedjian  
(1907, Afion-Garahissar)



Sargis Yetarian  
(1907, Afion-Garahissar)



Gevorg Zoulalian  
(1907, Chanak-Kalé)



Stepan Stepanian  
(1907, Harpoot)



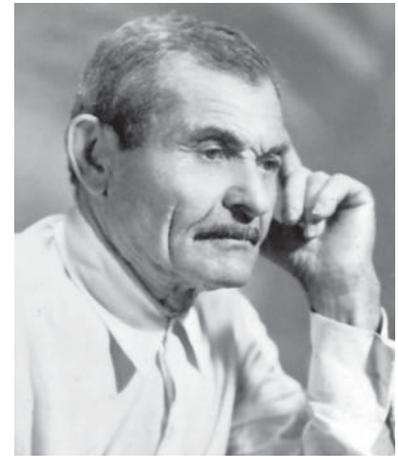
Payloun Terterian  
(1907, Harpoot)



Angel Tekeyan  
(1907, Kayseri)



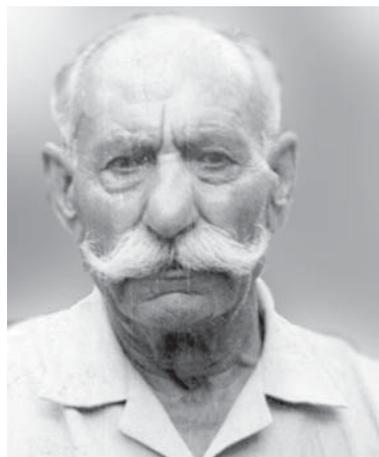
Missak Derounian  
(1907, Marzvan)



Mkrtych Khachatryan  
(1907, Shapin-Garahissar)



Edward Dashtoyan  
(1907, Shatak)



Ghazar Gevorgian  
(1907, Van)



Ardsroun Harutyunian  
(1907, Van)



Makrouhi Sahakian  
(1907, Van)



Yervand Shirakian  
(1907, Van)



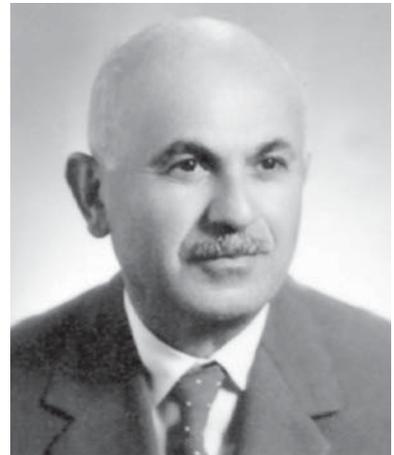
Veronika Berberian  
(1907, Yozghat)



Haykouhi Azarian  
(1908, Adabazar)



Paruyr Khachatrian  
(1908, Alashkert)



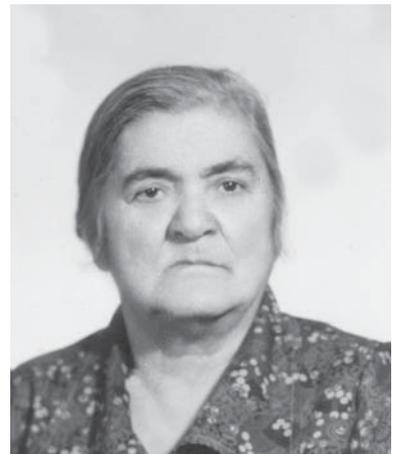
Davit Davtian  
(1908, Bursa)



Ashkhen Poghikian  
(1908, Erzroom)



Mariam Ter-Mkrtchian  
(1908, Erzroom)



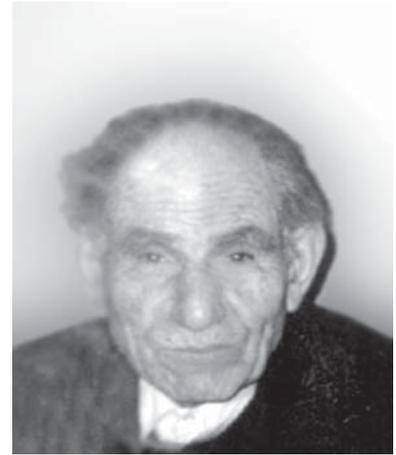
Manoushak Ter-Stepanian  
(1908, Erzroom)



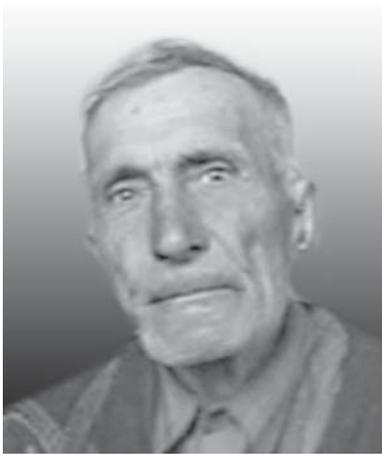
Arshalouys Tashjian  
(1908, Malatia)



Levon Evrengejdjian  
(1908, Marash)



Hrant Gasparian  
(1908, Moosh)



Hrach Hovhannissian  
(1908, Moosh)



Arshak Stepanian  
(1908, Moosh)



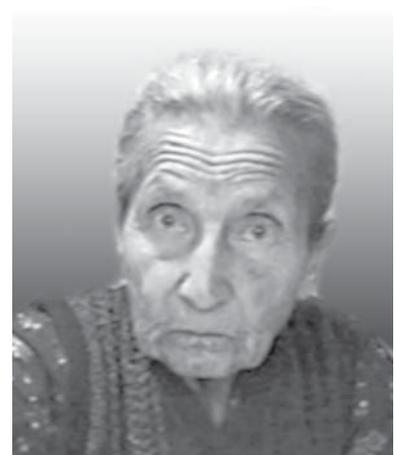
Moushegh Hovhannissian  
(1908, Sassoun)



Hovhannes Chadrdjian  
(1908, Sebastia)



Meliné Khazadian  
(1908, Sebastia)



Haykoush Ohanian  
(1908, Sebastia)



Nshan Abrahamian  
(1908, Van)



Silva Byuzandian  
(1908, Van)



Kadjberouhi Shahinian  
(1908, Van)



Lousik Martirosian  
(1909, Alashkert)



Srbouhi Kikishian  
(1909, Arabkir)



Robert Jebejian  
(1909, Ayntap)



Aghavni Mkrтчian  
(1909, Bitlis)



Avetis Norikian  
(1909, Bursa)



Ishkhan Haykazian  
(1909, Erzroom)



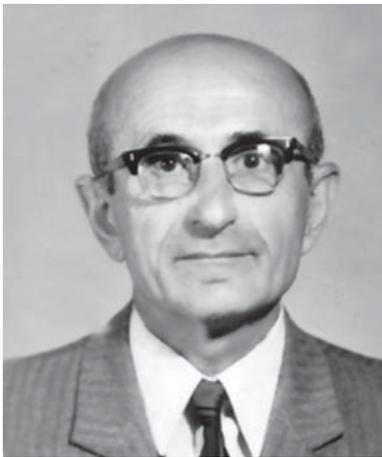
Evelina Kanayan  
(1909, Igdir)



Sirarpi Svazilan  
(1909, Istanbul)



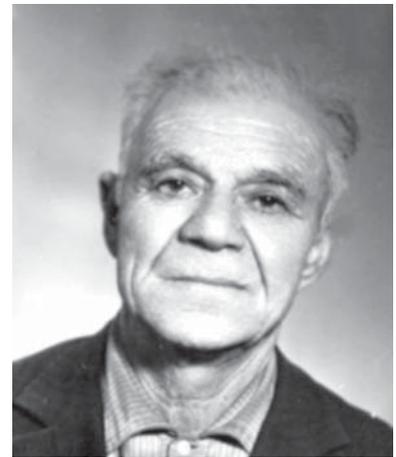
Grigor Armenian  
(1909, Kayseri)



Aram Momdjian  
(1909, Marash)



Mariam Baghdishian  
(1909, Moussa Dagh)



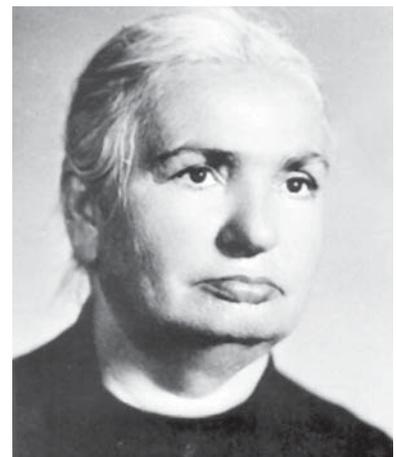
Gevorg Chiftchian  
(1909, Moussa Dagh)



Varazdat Harutyunian  
(1909, Van)



Garnik Stepanian  
(1909, Yerznka)



Gayané Adourian  
(1909, Zeytoun)



Sirena Alajajian  
(1910, Adabazar)



Mary Yerkat  
(1910, Adabazar)



Nvard Gevorgian  
(1910, Alashkert)



Nektar Gasparian  
(1910, Ardvin)



Stepan Hovakimian  
(1910, Ardvin)



Massis Kodjoyan  
(1910, Baberd)



Dsaghik Chinimian  
(1910, Igdır)



Peproné Toumassian  
(1910, Kars)



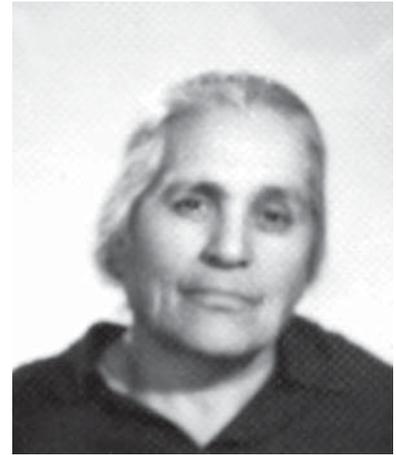
Armenouhi Yeghikian  
(1910, Kars)



Khoren Gledjian  
(1910, Kayseri)



Verginé Nadjarian  
(1910, Malatia)



Garoun Antonian  
(1910, Moussa Dagh)



Hovhannes Doudaklian  
(1910, Moussa Dagh)



Mesrop Minassian  
(1910, Samsun)



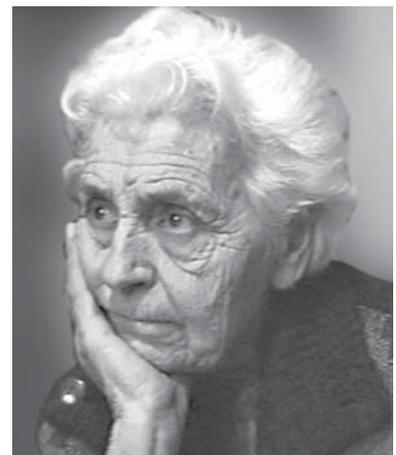
Rehan Manoukian  
(1910, Taron)



Mkrtych Karapetian  
(1910, Tigranakert)



Ardsvik Terzian  
(1910, Van)



Vardoush Kirakossian  
(1911, Alashkert)



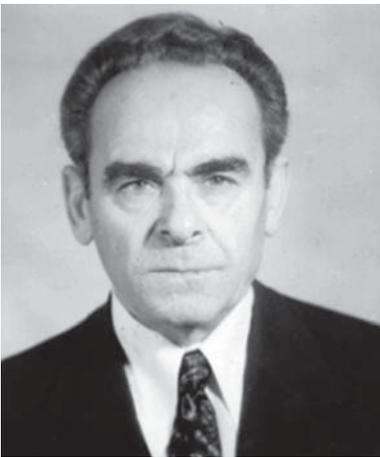
Sargis Saryan  
(1911, Balou)



Srbouhi Mouradian  
(1911, Bitlis)



Hrant Khondkarian  
(1911, Igdir)



Assatour Makhouljian  
(1911, Moussa Dagh)



Vardges Alexanian  
(1911, Van)



Shoghik Mkrtchian  
(1911, Van)



Yeranouhi Chaparian  
(1912, Adana)



Vardoush Hovhannissian  
(1912, Agoulis)



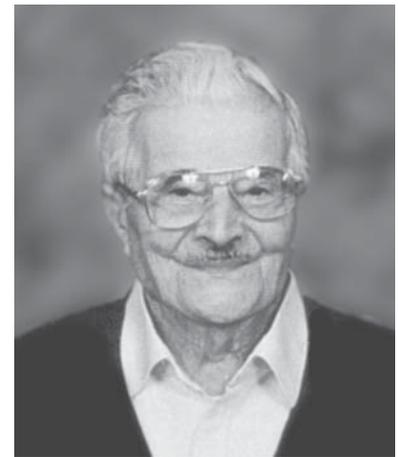
Nvard Mouradian  
(1912, Bitlis)



Sinan Sinanian  
(1912, Eskishehir)



Marta Eoylenjian  
(1912, Harpoot)



Rober Galenian  
(1912, Harpoot)



Elena Abrahamian  
(1912, Kars)



Khanouma Djalil  
(1912, Kars)



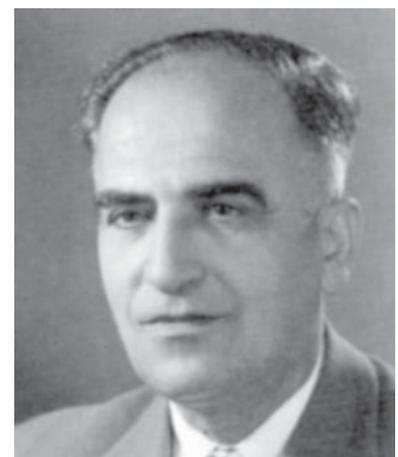
Parandzem Ter-Hakobian  
(1912, Kars)



Tagouhi Halapian  
(1912, Marash)



Sima Doudaklian  
(1912, Moussa Dagh)



Toros Terdjanian  
(1912, Sebastia)



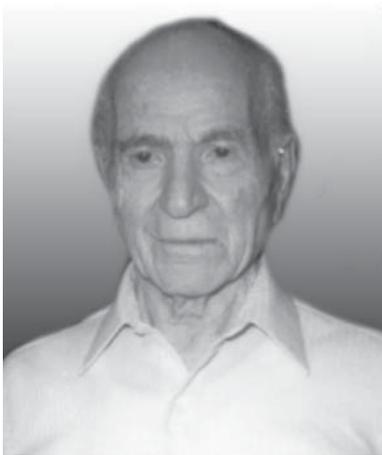
Vardouhi Potikian  
(1912, Van)



Derenik Saroyan  
(1912, Van)



Armik Terzian  
(1912, Van)



Gevorg Kiledjian  
(1912, Yedessia)



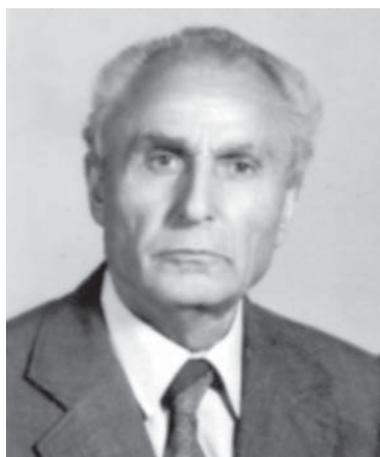
Herminé Ter Voghormiajian  
(1912, Yozghat)



Arevalouys Amalian  
(1913, Arabkir)



Marie Voskerchian  
(1913, Izmir)



Aghassi Karoyan  
(1913, Kars)



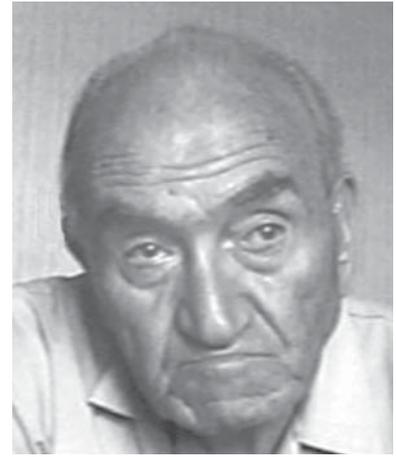
Lousaber Demirjian  
(1913, Kayseri)



Luther Eskidjian  
(1913, Kessab)



Sahak Bazian  
(1913, Shatakh)



Gurgén Mouradian  
(1914, Alashkert)



Shaké Zoulalian  
(1914, Istanbul)



Emma Asatrian  
(1914, Kars)



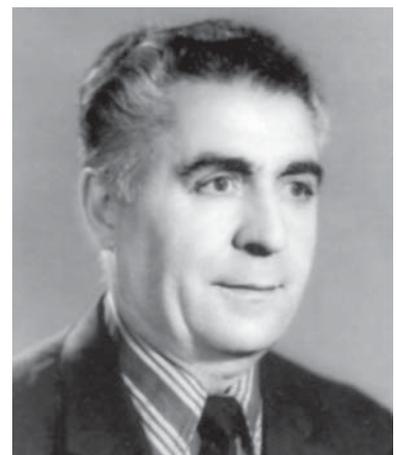
Arousyak Hovakimian  
(1914, Van)



Tsolak Torossian  
(1914, Cherakhli)



Hambardzoum Markossian  
(1915, Adabazar)



Vahan Darbinian  
(1917, Derendé)

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



Hrachouhi Djinanian  
(1919, Biledjik)



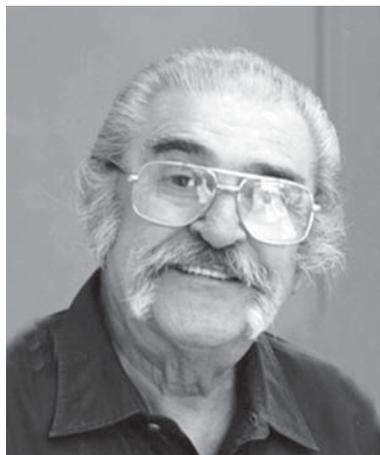
Zohrap Ghassabian  
(1919, Istanbul)



Vardouhi Petikian  
(1919, Istanbul)



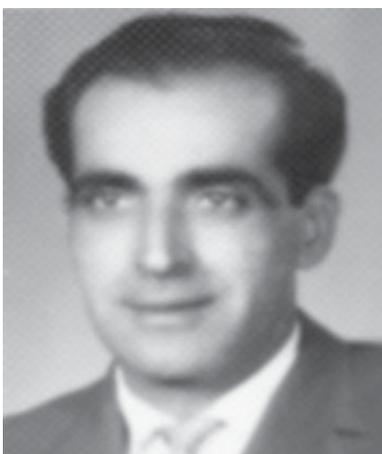
Ronia Terzian  
(1920, Aleppo)



Hakob Ter-Poghossian  
(1920, Deurtyol)



Alis Keshishian  
(1920, Tarson)



Gevorg Keshishian  
(1921, Tarson)



Mariam Ghassabian  
(1921, Bursa)



Adriné Alajajian  
(1921, Istanbul)



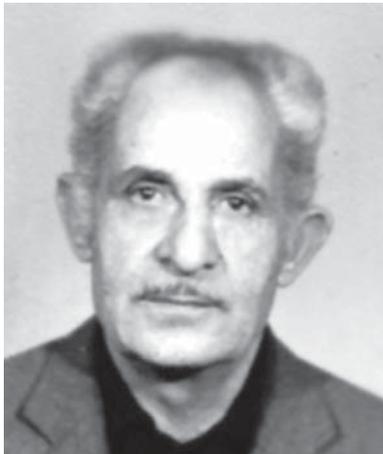
Grigor Ekizian  
(1921, Malatia)



Hambarzoum Bardakchian  
(1921, Marash)



Anoush Harutyunian  
(1922, Baghdad)



Kirakos Danielian  
(1923, Balou)



Yervand Albarian  
(1923, Beirut)



Nvard Adamian  
(1923, Harpoot)



Vahé Kitapjian  
(1924, Alexandria)



Rebeka Melkonian  
(1924, Constantsa)



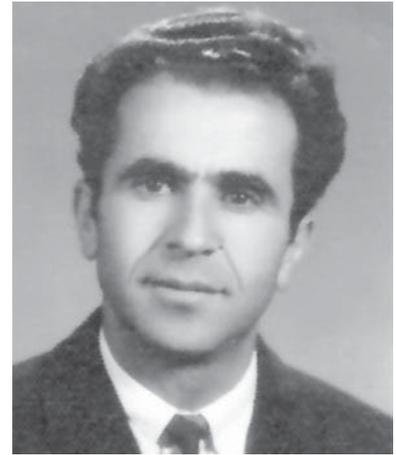
Yervand Varouzian  
(1925, Moussa Dagh)



Nazeni Satamian  
(1926, Beirut)



Tagouhi Ter-Yeghishian  
(1926, Beirut)



Artashes Balabian  
(1926, Moussa Dagh)



Sergey Avagian  
(1926, Yerevan)



Martiros Ashekian  
(1927, Aleppo)



Mariam Mirzayan  
(1927, Tomarza)



Vahagn Gharibian  
(1928, Addis-Ababa)



Anahit Darbinian  
(1928, Alexandrette)



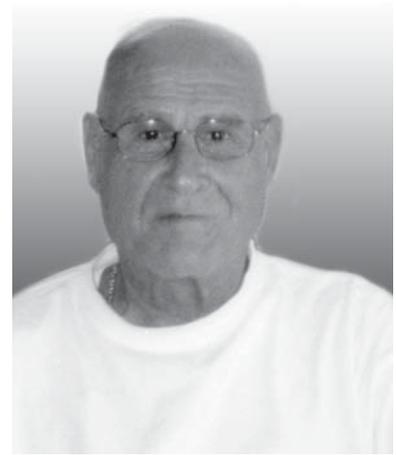
Klarouhi Baharian  
(1929, Beylan)



Zarouhi Partamian  
(1929, Aleppo)



Silva Daldabanian  
(1930, Samsun)



Vard Alexanian  
(1931, Cairo)



Tigran Tsulikian  
(1931, Cairo)



Onnik Varouzian  
(1932, Moussa Dagh)



Serik Galstian  
(1933, Yerevan)



Vilen Nooridjanian  
(1933, Yerevan)



Harutyun Boyadjian  
(1934, Alexandria)



Dshkhouhi Doudaklian  
(1934, Moussa Dagh)



Djemma Lalayan  
(1935, Yerevan)



Gevorg Hekimian  
(1937, Beirut)



John Gyurdjian  
(1938, Ghamishli)



John Chookasian  
(1939, New York)



Antoine Terdjian  
(1944, Aleppo)



Grigor Amalian  
(1945, Yerevan)



Jirayr Reisian  
(1949, Aleppo)



Dr. Knarik Avakian  
(1968, Yerevan)



Hakob Moutafian  
(1980, Deir-el-Zor)

*The author's daughter,  
herself an eyewitness survivor's  
grand-daughter, who realized the  
computerization of this enormous volume  
with willingness and great passion.*



## 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. She had her elementary education at the local Poghossian Armenian National School, then her secondary education – at the Armenian Nuns’ Immaculate Conception School with a French language bias.

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

In 1956, she graduated with honors from the Historico-Linguistic Department of the Yerevan Khachatour Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University.

Beginning from 1955, she started, on her own initiative, to write down and thereby saved from a total loss the various folklore relics communicated, in different dialects, by the Armenians forcibly exiled from Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia to the various countries of the world and finally repatriated to Armenia, 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 Manouk 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 Karapet 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 to 2004, also at the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA).

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

In the years 1996-2004, she was a member of the Scientific Council of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of NAS RA, and, from 1996 up to the present day, a member of the Professional Council of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of NAS RA.

She has participated in a number of republican and international conferences and has given reports in the various organizations of Diasporan Armenian communities (Russia, Greece, France, Austria, Germany, USA, Canada, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Turkey), discoursing upon folklore, ethnography, the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Case.

She is also the author of more than 500 academic and public papers, including more than 20 books, published in Armenia, Diaspora and abroad.

Doctor Professor Verjiné Svazlian, has written down (also tape-recorded and video-recorded), word by word, fragment by fragment, studied and published, during a period of more than 55 years, the various relics of the oral tradition, as well as the documental testimonies and historical songs (in Armenian and Turkish languages) of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, who were deported from Historic Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia, including more than 150 Armenian inhabited localities, and were settled in Armenia and in the Diaspora (Greece, France, Italy, Germany, USA, Canada, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, the Balkan countries, Turkey), thus saving from a total loss the collective historical memory of the Armenian nation with a view to presenting it to the world and to the impartial judgement of mankind in various languages (in Armenian, Russian, English, French, German and Turkish).

A great number of reviews, encyclopedic and other articles have been published in Armenia and abroad about Verjiné Svazlian's works, as well as a film entitled "*The Creed of the Svazlian Extended Family*" was recently shot (film-director and scriptwriter Laura Minassian, Yerevan, 2009. See the **Insert** at the end of this volume).

#### **Publications:**

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- Artsakh-Outik.** "Hay zhoghovrdakan hekiatner" ["Armenian Folk Tales"]. Vol. 6. Yerevan: Publishing House of AS ASSR, 1973, 778 p. (in Armenian).
- Taron-Tourouberan.** "Hay zhoghovrdakan hekiatner" ["Armenian Folk Tales"]. Vol. 12. Yerevan: Publishing House of AS ASSR, 1984, 650 p. (in Armenian).
- Moussa Ler [Moussa Dagh].** "Hay asgagrutyun ev banahyusutyun" ["Armenian Ethnography and Folklore"]. Vol. 16. Yerevan: Publishing House of AS ASSR, 1984, 215 p. (in Armenian).
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- Meds Yeghern. *Arevmtahayots banavor vkayutyunner [The Great Genocide: Oral Evidences of the Western Armenians].*** Yerevan: "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 1995, 234 p., ISBN 5-8080-0336-8 (in Armenian).
- Meds Yegherne arevmtahayots hooshapatumnerum ev toorkalezu ergerum [The Great Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians].** Yerevan: "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 1997, 32 p. (in Armenian).
- Genotsid v vospominaniikh i turkoiazychnikh pesniakh zapadnykh armian [The Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians].** Yerevan: "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 1997, 32 p. (in Russian).

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- The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory*. Yerevan: “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2004, 160 p., ISBN 5-8080-0533-7.
- Le génocide arménien et la mémoire historique du peuple*. Erevan: Ed. «Guitoutiu» de l’Académie Nationale des Sciences d’Arménie, 2005, 140 p., ISBN 5-8080-0602-3.
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- Genotsid armian i istoricheskaiia pamiat’ naroda [The Armenian Genocide and the People’s Historical Memory]*. Yerevan: “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2005, 140 p., ISBN 5-8080-0599-X (in Russian).
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- Hayots tseghaspanutyun. Akanates veraproghneri vkayutyunner [The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors]*. Second completed edition, Yerevan: “Gitoutyoun” Publishing House of NAS RA, 2011, 880 p., ISBN 978-5-8080-0856-4 (in Armenian).
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### **Has compiled and edited:**

Garnik Svazlian. *Hayrenikis hamar [For My Fatherland]*. Yerevan: "Hayastan" Publishing House, 1965, 212 p. (in Armenian).

Grigor Gyoalian. *Moussa Leran azgagruytyune [The Ethnography of Moussa Dagh]*. Yerevan: "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 2001, 280 p., ISBN 5-8080-0472-1 (in Armenian).

### **Honors:**

In 1975, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR granted her the Medal of "**USSR Veteran of Labor**" for her "conscientious work of many years."

On March 29, 1983, she was awarded the "**Honor Certificate**" of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR.

In September, 1985, the General Compatriotic Union "Moussa Dagh" (Beirut) granted her the "**Gold Medal of Honorable Denizen of Moussa Dagh.**"

In 1992, the Historico-Cultural Union "Zeytoun" of Armenia awarded her the title of "**Honorable Denizen of Zeytoun.**"

On September 22, 1995, on the occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh the administration of the "Moussa Dagh" Compatriotic Benevolent Union granted her the "**Diploma of Honor**" "for supporting the compatriotic movement and for the active involvement in the duties of the union."

On July 11-17, 1996, for having participated in the "Vardavar" International Conference, organized in Turkey on the occasion of the 535<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, she was awarded the "**Testimonial Diploma**" of the Armenian Patriarch.

In 1999, the Compatriotic Union "Van-Vaspourakan" of Armenia awarded her the title of "**Honorable Denizen of Vaspourakan.**"

On April 24, 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 Question, the Armenian Genocide and the Diasporan Armenians."

On January 20, 2001, she received the "**Letter of Blessing**" No. 487.634 of Pope John Paul II from Vatican.

In May, 2002, she was awarded the Diasporan literary-philological prize "**Haykashen Ouzounian**" of the Tekeyan Cultural Union.

On April 22, 2003, the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia and the International Committee "The Truthful People for the Armenians" granted her the "**Fridtjof Nansen Memorial Medal**" "for the scientific and public activity directed toward the condemnation of the Armenian Genocide and toward the establishment of philanthropic principles."

On April 24, 2004, she was awarded the title of *Professor of the Armenological Academy "Ararat" in Paris.*

On April 24, 2005, she was awarded the "**Memorial Medal**" "for meritorious services in the field of Genocide Studies issued by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the occasion of the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. 1915-2005."

On June 26, 2005, she was awarded the "**Gold Memorial Medal**" of the Cultural Union of the Armenians of Istanbul, in Montreal (Canada).

On September 30, 2005, Aleppo (Syria) branch of ABGU awarded her the **“Mesrop Mashtots Memorial Medal.”**

On January 30, 2006, the Compatriotic Union “Hadjn” of Armenia awarded her the title of **“Honorable Denizen of Hadjn”** “for the services rendered to the country and statehood and for supporting the activities of “Hadjn” nongovernmental organization.”

On April 24, 2006, the Armenian Political Council of Alexandria (Egypt) granted her the **“Nile Key Gold Memorial Medal.”**

On June 28, 2006, President of Armenia and the “Robert Boghossian and Sons Fund” (Switzerland) awarded her the **“Presidential First Prize”** and **“Gold Memorial Medal”** of the Republic of Armenia “for the valuable contribution in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.”

In 2008, the American Biographical Institute awarded her the Title and Memorial Medal of the **“Great Mind of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”** for her studies presenting the Armenian Culture to the world.

On March 8, 2009, on the occasion of the International Women’s Day, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia awarded her the **“Diploma of Honor”** for her significant contribution to education and science.

In 2009, “for services rendered to the Armenian culture and to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her Birthday” the Direction of the National Library of Armenia honored her with the **“Memorial Medal of the First Armenian Printer Hakob Meghapart.”**

In 2009, for saving the oral tradition of the Western Armenians from a total loss, for her semi-centennial ethnographic and folkloristic activities and on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her Birthday the “Moussa Dagh” Compatriotic Benevolent Union granted her the Memorial Medal **“1915. Everlasting Glory to the Heroes of Moussa Dagh.”**

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**Verjiné Svazlian**

Dr. Prof., Leading Researcher,  
 Institute of Archaeology & Ethnography,  
 National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

Address: 36 Saryan St., Apt. 23,  
 Yerevan 0002,  
 Republic of Armenia

Tel.: (00 374) 010 53-60-06 House, 091 22-01-99 Cell.

E-mail: <vsvaz333@yahoo.com>

URL: <http://sci.academia.edu/VerjineSvazlian>  
<http://www.iatp.am/resource/science/svazlyan/folklore/>  
<http://armenian-history.com/Nyuter/BIOGRAPHY/V-Svazlian.htm>





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VERJINÉ GARNIK SVAZLIAN

**THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE:  
TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS**

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**“THE CREED OF THE SVAZLIAN EXTENDED FAMILY”:**  
***“Patriotism is a Question of Dignity for Me”***  
**MIHRAN, KARNIK & VERJINÉ SVAZLIANS**



The documentary film “**The Creed of the Svazlian Extended Family**” traces the 20th century history of the Armenian nation through portrayal of the life of the Svazlian extended family, which includes three consecutive generations. The creed of the Svazlian extended family is presented through the fatal for the Armenian people centennial history, which is condensed in the Svazlianic slogan: “*Patriotism is a Question of Dignity for Me*” and in their mission demonstrated by their own life and deeds.

The film presents the life and activities of the publicist, lawyer, diplomat, political figure **Mihran Svazlian – Svazli** (1863, Smyrna - 1933, Boston), the founding-chairman of the first Armenian Lobbying organizations in Great Britain (1888, London) and the USA (1917, Boston).

The film gives also an account about nation-supporting activities of the noted Egyptian-Armenian writer, publicist, public-man and cartoonist **Karnik Svazlian** (1904, Kayseri - 1948, Yerevan), the founding-chairman of the Alexandrian branch of the Aid Committee for Armenia (HOK) and the “Sevan” Union, member of the Egyptian-Armenian National Council, as well as the author of the play “Repatriation” (1936, Alexandria), ideologically and materially supporting the mass repatriation and reconstruction of Armenia.

Finally, the representative of the third generation of the extended family is presented, the Leading Researcher of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, the ethnographer and folklorist, the Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor **Verjiné Svazlian**. Beginning from 1955 and during a period of more than 55 years, she has written down, word for word, fragment for fragment, audio- and video-recorded, studied and published thousands of various relics of the popular oral tradition communicated by the eyewitness-survivors of the Armenian Genocide, who were deported from our occupied Homeland, from the Armenian inhabited localities of Historic Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia. These relics include 700 factual testimonies and songs of historical nature (in Armenian and Turkish languages), thus saving from a total loss and presenting to the world in various languages the collective historical memory of the Armenian nation in favor of a righteous solution of the Armenian Case and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Documentary video-materials of an exceptional archival value have been used in the film, among which are also live testimonies of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, as well as statements of contemporary renowned scientists, famous cultural and political figures of Armenia and the Diaspora, which characterize the Svazlian extended family.



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«ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ ԳԵՐԴԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՆԱՎԱՏԱՄՔԸ»  
«Ինձի համար հայրենասիրությունը արժանապատվության խնդիր է»  
ՄԻՆԿԱՆ, ԳԱՌՆԻԿ և ՎԵՐԺԻՆԵ ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆՆԵՐ



“THE CREED OF THE SVAZLIAN EXTENDED FAMILY”  
“Patriotism is a Question of Dignity for Me”  
MIHRAN, GARNIK & VERJINÉ SVAZLIANS

