

## HISTORIOGRAPHY OF GENOCIDE

CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE:  
THE ARMENIAN CASE  
VAHAKN DADRIAN

## Contents

## The General Picture

- The Variety of Methods of Liquidation of Children
- Trabzon: A Microcosm of Multi-Level Child-killings
- The Drowning Operations and Serial Rapes
- Other Sites of Drowning and Serial Rapes
- The Scope of Homosexual Rapes
- The Holocaust of Armenian Children:  
Infernal Mass Deaths by Burning Alive
- The Elements of License for Fiendishness  
Against Armenian Children
- Scant Exceptions of Benign Turks

## The General Picture

The centrally organized mass murder of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire during World War I is considered to be the first major genocide of the twentieth century. Moreover, many scholars of the Holocaust (Y. Bauer, L. Davidowicz, I.L. Horowitz, I. Charny, R. Rubenstein) in a variety of ways recognize that the Armenian Genocide was more than a mere precedent. It in fact became a connecting link to the subsequent Jewish Holocaust by virtue of the impunity that was accorded to the perpetrators of that genocide by the civilized world. It is, therefore, no accident that on the granite wall of the Exhibition Hall of the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., is engraved in block letters Hitler's following statement: "Who after all is today speaking of the destruction of the Armenians?" The Nazi leader was reassuring his field commanders on the eve of World War II that his impending genocidal initiatives too were likely to be consigned to oblivion.

Since genocide refers to the wholesale extermination of a given religious, ethnic or nationality group, victims of this capital crime invariably include children who are often an integral part of the population. For this very reason, the subject of the genocidal fate of Armenian children has been generally subsumed within that of the entire victim population and not generally treated as a separate and distinct subject of study. This may be

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ  
ՆԵՐՈՒ  
ՀԱՅՏԻՐԻ  
ԴՈՒՍՆԵՐ



understandable at the operational level of the crime of mass murder where differences of age, gender, socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity or nationality tend to dissolve themselves abruptly. They all collapse into an undifferentiated category of people targeted for imminent destruction. However, in recent decades attempts have been launched with a view to discerning certain features or patterns that stand out with respect to the genocidal treatment of children. This attempt provides a perspective through which children are viewed as a distinct subcategory within the overall victim population.

The study of the Armenian Genocide affords the identification and examination of such a subcategory. Several factors played a role in this occurrence, but most particularly the ideology of the perpetrator group, the historical background of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, and the instruments utilized for the mass murder. Therefore, a brief comment in this regard may be in order.

Unlike several other instances of twentieth century genocide, the Armenian Genocide is not a *sui generis* phenomenon but rather the culmination of a historical process. As such it is antedated by decades of a series of periodic massacres, from which the perpetrators remained free from prosecution and from ultimate retributive justice. Predictably fearful of the wrath of the Great Powers of Europe, the perpetrators of these massacres, especially those of 1894-1896, acted with some restraint as women and children were mostly spared. Instead of becoming wholly exterminatory, these massacres, along with the large-scale devastation they entailed, ended up serving the purpose of crippling the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that, by 1915, when the World War I genocide was initiated, the very same population had recovered considerably and had become a viable and organized community was a development that had rattled the Young Turk leaders contemplating genocide.

The operative catch phrase was: "This time we will do a thorough job," in other words, that no category of Armenians would be exempted from destruction. The impunity accruing to the perpetrators of the previous series of massacres had sufficiently emboldened them to embark upon operations of indiscriminate mass murder. Accordingly, these leaders decided to rely on "bloodthirsty murderers" (*kanlı katil*) as instruments of massacre. Thousands of felons and repeat criminals were selected and released from the various prisons of the Ottoman Empire for massacre duty; they were to show no compassion or mercy for women, children or the *infirm*. The variety of ferocious and sadistic methods with which thousands of Armenian children were murdered reflects the efficacy of this administrative arrangement. As a Turkish officer after the war conceded, "the worst crimes against the Armenians were perpetrated by these criminals" (*en büyük cinayetleri ika ettiler*).<sup>1</sup>

There is one more aspect to this condition of differential treatment of children in connection with the Armenian Genocide. Unlike the racist Nazis, for example, the Ottoman Turks were quite appreciative of the value of the gene pool that Armenian children embodied; they were regarded as an invaluable resource for the enrichment of the mainstream of the Turkish nation. Accordingly, whenever possible, Muslim Turks, and orphanages run by governmentally appointed Turks, were encouraged to collect multitudes of Armenian orphans, mostly male, and to raise them as Turks after some nominal rituals of conversion to Islam, including serial circumcisions and name changes. It is against this background that the genocidal fate of Armenian children in World War I may be outlined in terms of a number of categories.



## The Variety of Methods of Liquidation of Children

A significant portion of Armenian children, along with the other two principal segments of the Armenian population of the Empire, i.e., women and old men, succumbed to the severe hardships associated with the arduous and exacting treks of an unending series of dislocations and deportations to the desolate deserts of Mesopotamia in today's Syria. These were arranged in such a way as to accentuate the hardships by deliberately prolonging, for example, the routes of the treks, by denying food and water, and by terrorizing in many brutal ways of mistreatment the already critically wasted deportees. Exposure, exhaustion, starvation, disease and epidemics further aggravated the plight of the victims thereby compounding the scale of lethal attrition. It should be noted in this connection that the absence of able-bodied men in these deportee convoys was due to the fact that nearly all of them were conscripted at the start of World War I and later gradually annihilated in a variety of ways.

Another sizable portion of Armenian children fell victim to the vast array of episodic massacres carried out in all corners of the Empire, massacres that were in and of themselves exceptionally atrocious. As American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau stated, to save "powder and shell," the Moslem peasant population in the countryside, acting as support groups to the criminal gangs recruited for massacre duty, used "clubs, hammers, axes, scythes, spades, and saws. Such instruments... caused more agonizing deaths than guns and pistols..."<sup>2</sup> Noted British historian Arnold Toynbee's massive compilation of eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide is replete with details about these types of atrocities.<sup>3</sup>

Reliable evidence indicates that in the general scheme of things, the method of outright massacre was to be primarily applied in operations directed against the male population of the six provinces in Anatolia. These included Sivas, Diyarbekir, Harput, Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van; to these was added Trabzon province. All of these provinces, considered to be potential flash points, or bones of contention in the lingering Turkish-Armenian conflict, were put under the jurisdiction of the High Command of the Ottoman Third Army, headquartered in Erzurum. The relentless liquidation of an estimated 90% of the able-bodied males of these provinces was effectively carried out in the spring and summer of 1915 by General Mahmud Kâmil, commander-in-chief of the Third Army. The rest of the population was to be liquidated indirectly, i.e., through exhausting and endless deportation treks.

But due to the interplay of several factors, including the whims of the respective local organizers of the mass murder, the procedures of annihilation were neither uniform nor regular, as far as differentiating between outright massacre and deportation was concerned. The bulk of the Armenian population of Bitlis province, for example, which consisted almost entirely of old men, women, and children, was destroyed within the boundaries of the province; there was no deportation, so to speak. Except for the city of Van itself, the rest of the Armenian population of Van province, which, together with Bitlis province, comprised the cradle of the Armenian nation, was likewise exterminated through a series of local massacres. In the provinces of Sivas, Harput, Trabzon, Erzurum, Diyarbekir, as well as the independent sanjaks of Urfa and Marash the genocide was carried out in part through deportations

and in part through massacres.

In all of these operations children were part of the general population targeted for wholesale destruction. In many instances they were also subjected to separate and differential

forms of mass murder. This was the case each time children constituted a distinct and separate group. In Trabzon province, for example, thousands of children were allowed to be left behind as the adults were pushed into deportation convoys. In the deserts of Mesopotamia, in Deir Zor district in particular, thousands of emaciated children, skeleton-like survivors of the deportation treks, were likewise targeted as a distinct category. In Erzincan, in Erzurum province, hundreds of forlorn children likewise constituted a separate target.

What follows is an outline of the three principal methods of killing employed, i.e., drowning operations, burning alive, and wholesale rapes to precede killing, through which thousands of Armenian children met their genocidal fate in the 1915-1916 period. As specified by the German Vice Consul of Mosul, and by Turkish governmental fiat, male and female children up to 13 years old were subsumed under the category of children.<sup>4</sup>

### Trabzon: A Microcosm of Multi-Level Child-killings The Drowning Operations and Serial Rapes

A major port city on the Black Sea and the capital of the province bearing the same name, Trabzon served as a crucible for the Armenian Genocide. Nearly all forms and aspects of the crime were devised and successfully implemented there. The data cited below are excerpted from a study soon to be published by Cambridge University Press.<sup>5</sup> As noted above, some three thousand children were left behind as orphans in various buildings of Trabzon. During the proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal in Spring 1919, some two dozen Turks, including physicians, military officers, governmental officials, and merchants, in the course of twenty sittings, testified orally and in writing to the methods used to dispose of these children.<sup>6</sup> Two Turkish MDs, Dr. Ziya Fuad, Inspector of Health Services, and Dr. Adnan, the city's Health Services Director, testified based on evidence gathered from local Turkish physicians that Dr. Ali Saib, Director of Public Health of Trabzon province, systematically poisoned Armenian infants brought to the city's Red Crescent Hospital and ordered the drowning at the nearby Black Sea of those who resisted taking his "medicine." Another method Dr. Saib applied in a house full of Armenian infants was "the steam bath." Through the installation there of an army "entv" contraption, babies were exposed to suffocating hot steam and thereby instantly killed. Father Laurent, the French Capuchin Father Superior in Trabzon, testified through an interpreter that he personally saw the corpses of the dead poisoned children being squeezed into large, deep baskets on the hospital grounds, like animals from a slaughterhouse, then dumped into the nearby sea.

That same Red Crescent Hospital had been reduced to a pleasure dome, where the province's governor-general, Cemal Azmi, kept fifteen young Armenian girls (Court-Martial 10th sitting, April 12, 1919), to be used for frequent sex orgies. This had prompted Customs Inspector Nedim to denounce the governor (16th sitting) and Turkish Lieutenant Hasan Maruf to expose the additional fact that "After committing the worst outrages the government officials involved had these young girls killed." In a separate study, a young Armenian, who had befriended the governor's son in Berlin, where the governor had taken refuge right after the war to escape prosecution in Turkey, provided additional data on this episode of lethal debauchery. During one of his boastful narrations about this debauchery, Governor Azmi told the following to the young Armenian, whom he believed to be a Turk as the latter had by then assumed a complete Muslim Turkish identity, including the Turkish name Mehmed Ali, a thorough study of the Kuran, the Islamic Sacred Law, and circumcision: "Among the most pretty Armenian girls,



10-13 years old, I selected a number of them and handed them over to my son [who was then 14 years old] as a gift; the others I had drowned in the sea."<sup>7</sup>

During the same courts-martial, Nuri, the police chief of Trabzon, admitted carrying to Istanbul several young Armenian girls as governor Azmi's gift to CUP leaders there. (9th sitting, April 10, 1919). Similar sexual indulgences were reported in connection with the activities of other Young Turk party potentates, such as the CUP commissar in Trabzon, Yenibahceli Nail, who, according to U.S. Consul in Trabzon, Oscar S. Heizer, "has ten of the handsomest girls in a house in the central part of the city."<sup>8</sup> Heinrich Bergfeld, the German consul at Trabzon, a lawyer by profession, and an ardent Turkophile, in his decrial of the mass murder in Trabzon called attention to "the numerous rapes of young girls." In its Verdict issued at the end of the Trabzon trial series, the Tribunal underscored the fact that these "serial rapes," "the violation of helpless victims," and the fact that "young girls were deflowered (*izaleyi biki*) [took place] in the hospital that supposedly had a humanitarian mission."

One of the ghastliest features of child-killing in Trabzon province was the method of drowning them *en masse*, utilizing Trabzon's river, Degirmendere, but mainly that port city's coastlines on the Black Sea. The most poignant testimony on these latter drowning operations was provided by the Turkish deputy of that province, Hafız Mehmed, who by profession was a lawyer. In a postwar speech (December 11, 1919) in the Chamber of Deputies of the Ottoman Parliament, he revealed that he personally saw how, one day, Armenian women and children were loaded onto barges at the port city of Ordu in Trabzon province and drowned on the high seas. He then stated that the local people were lamenting with the words, "God will punish us for what we did." At the 15th sitting of the Trabzon trial series, Turkish Ordu merchant Hüseyin, appearing as a witness, confirmed this very drowning operation. In its Verdict, the Tribunal with emphasis referred to these operations of mass drownings targeting as they especially did "male and female infants" (*zıkar ve inas cocukları*) with the help of "repeat criminals" (*cerayimi mülkerrere*). Deputy Hafız Mehmed in his above-mentioned speech also indicated that Trabzon's governor-general Djemal Azmi was reported to have applied the same method of drowning in the rest of the province. This attribution to the governor-general was confirmed by General Mahmut (Cürüksulu) who at about the same time in a speech in the Ottoman Senate declared that Djemal Azmi had authorized the procedures of wholesale extermination for the entire province.

In one of his longest and most detailed reports to Washington, U.S. Consul at Trabzon, Oscar Heizer, likewise referred to:

*... a number of lighters. [They] were loaded with people at different times [with the result that] a number of bodies of women and children have lately been thrown up by the sea upon the sandy beach below the walls of the Italian monastery here in Trabzon and were buried by Greek women in the sand where they were found.*

For his part, Signor Gorrini, the Italian Consul-General at Trabzon, in a detailed report called attention to the fact that:

*the children [were] torn away from their families... placed by hundreds on board ship in nothing but their shirts, and then capsized and drowned in the Black Sea and the river Degirmendere — these are my ineffaceable memoirs of Trabzon, memoirs which still, at a month's distance, torment my soul and almost drive me frantic...*

The consul of Austria-Hungary, Ernst von Kwiatkowski, and the consul of Germany, Heinrich Bergfeld, both wartime allies of Ottoman Turkey, holding doctorates as a historian and a jurist respectively, did in numerous cipher telegrams sent to Vienna and Berlin refer to "women and children being loaded into barges, taken to the high seas, and drowned there." Colonel Stange, the highest-ranking German combat officer, whose regiment of Turkish irregulars was first assembled at Trabzon, personally

confirmed these drowning operations (*auf's Meer hinausgefahren und dann über Bord geworfen*). After denouncing in his "secret" report sent to German headquarters these acts of "beastly brutality" [which] were perpetrated by Trabzon's "scum" (*Gesinde*) and the "brigands" released from the prisons, he concluded that all of these operations were part and parcel of an overall scheme of wholesale mass murder "conceived a long time ago."<sup>9</sup> In echoing the *prima facie* evidence the postwar court martial proceedings were generating, the Turkish newspaper *Hadisat* underscored the three-dimensional atrocities perpetrated against the Armenian children of Trabzon: serial rapes, poisonings, and drownings.<sup>10</sup>

## Other Sites of Drownings and Serial Rapes

The drowning operations were not limited to seas or rivers; they extended to lakes as well. The report by U.S. Consul at Harput, Leslie A. Davis, is notable in this respect. In his lengthy analysis of the genocide that took place in his jurisdiction, Harput province, he describes how orphanages in which Armenian children were gathered after the liquidation of their families served as transit camps for subsequent annihilation through drowning. It develops that Consul Davis had requested permission from Harput province's governor-general, Sabit, to open an orphanage for "hundreds of children arriving all the time from other places..." Saying that the government will take care of them, the governor denied permission. Shortly after the Consul left the governor's office, an order was issued that all children, along with the other remaining women, had to leave on the following Tuesday, i.e., in three days. "Then the children disappeared and it was reported that they had all been taken to a lake about twenty miles from Harput and drowned."

Consul Davis then describes a horrendous scene of butchering around Lake Goeljuk which was "about five hours distant" from his seat in Harput. "Finally a Turk told me in strict confidence that he had seen thousands of dead bodies around Lake Goeljuk and offered to take me to the places where they were." The Consul estimated that "in the space of twenty-four hours, we had seen the remains of not less than ten thousand Armenians who had been killed around Lake Goeljuk. This, of course, is approximate... I am sure, however, that there were more, rather than less, than that number..." After describing the gaping bayonet wounds on most of the naked bodies, usually in the abdomen or chest, sometimes in the throat with the victims showing "signs of barbarous mutilation," Consul Davis declared: "That which took place around beautiful Lake Goeljuk in the summer of 1915 is almost inconceivable. Thousands and thousands of Armenians, mostly innocent and helpless women and children, were butchered on its shores and barbarously mutilated."<sup>11</sup>

Another center for mass murder through drowning involving especially children was the Kemach Gorge on the Euphrates River, about 50 km southwest of Erzincan in Erzurum province. A large part of the Armenian population of that province, about 20-25,000, in particular that of Erzincan, was massacred at that narrow gorge with the help of the irregulars, i.e., the brigands of the 86th Cavalry Regiment of the 29th division of the Ninth Army Corps of the Ottoman Third Army headquartered in Erzurum. Relying on "a consular report," America's ambassador to Turkey, Morgenthau, states that at Kemach Gorge, "hundreds of children were bayoneted by the Turks and thrown into the Euphrates"."<sup>12</sup>



An equally large number of Armenian children were destroyed through mass drownings at the Mesopotamian lower ends of the Euphrates River, especially in the area of Deir Zor, the Armenian counterpart of Auschwitz. According to the testimony of an Armenian survivor, Mustafa Sidki, Deir Zor's police chief, on August 10, 1916 selected the prettiest girls from a convoy of deportees. They were taken to a bridge on the Euphrates where the police chief and his accomplices raped them. The victims were then all thrown into the river to be drowned. The same police chief "on October 24, 1916 ordered some 2,000 Armenian orphans carried to the banks of the Euphrates, hands and feet bound. They were then thrown into the river two by two to the visible enjoyment of the police chief who took special pleasure at the sight of the drama of drowning."<sup>13</sup>

As described in connection with the atrocities committed in Trabzon, rape in all forms was one of the most common by-products of the Armenian Genocide. As Turkish lieutenant Hasan Maruf admitted to his British captors, "cases of rape of women and girls, even publicly, are very numerous. They were systematically murdered after the outrage."<sup>14</sup> As was the case in Trabzon, multitudes of young girls were transported to Constantinople from many parts of Anatolia for a variety of purposes involving sex. An Austrian resident in Tarsus, near Adana, Mrs. Christie recorded in her diary that a large number of girls were collected from the city's schools and placed at the disposal of the officers in the town's military barracks. "Over a hundred of them were carried in automobiles to Constantinople." One of them, about fifteen years old, managed to escape the fate of the others.<sup>15</sup> In the deserts of Mesopotamia, in the triangle formed by the rivers Euphrates and Khabour that conjoin near Deir Zor, rape was routine. According to one survivor, for example, Ras-ul-Ain's mayor, Hüseyin Bey, a Tchetchen, bragged that he alone had raped 50 to 60 young Armenian girls. His two sons emulated him on a regular basis.<sup>16</sup>

Another venue for rape on a massive scale was the use and misuse of Armenian churches as temporary brothels. Young Armenian girls were assembled and made available to Turkish officers and soldiers. As a Swiss pharmacist reported in the city of Urfa, for example, "the large, Armenian Gregorian church, an edifice of Armenian sanctity, had been reduced to a bordello. Military officers, gendarmes, police officers, and plain city Turks would come there and choose girls for sexual indulgences."<sup>17</sup> A similar episode of desecration for sex is narrated by a Turkish staff captain, Nebil Bey. As he related, some 300 young girls "belonging to the best Armenian families of Bitlis" were collected in the Armenian church of the city "for the use of the army. Soldiers and officers alike visited the church, which soon became a hotbed of disease. Each regiment that passed through the town on its way to the front left its traces, as after a time all these unfortunate girls became infected."

As a result, the commandant of Bitlis decided to punish the girls "for exhausting the vital forces of the Ottoman army and poisoning with their infection the children of the Fatherland." Some of the girls were given poison, others were killed outright. The captain added that all this was done through the orders of Third Army Commander-in-Chief General Mahmud Kâmil.<sup>18</sup> The license afforded the Turkish military and civilians to rape at will any Armenian girl did take its toll in fatality through exhaustion. As one Turkish court official conceded, in Urfa "ninety-five out of a group of one hundred soldiers... died of exhaustion and disease from committing excessive rapes."<sup>19</sup>

## The Scope of Homosexual Rapes

The sexual license prevalent during the Armenian Genocide was not limited to the rape of young Armenian females. A Swiss pharmacist who throughout the war remained in Urfa and traveled extensively in the area asserts that widespread homosexual rape occurred both in connection with genocidal killings and in Turkish homes where young adopted Armenian boys were kept. As he reported, "Turkish officers, especially, engaged in unbelievable and unspeakable acts of [sexual] bartering of Armenian girls, but nobody can imagine the magnitude of crimes of unnatural sex inflicted upon hundreds, yes thousands, of Armenian boys." He also stated that "long after the killings had stopped, rapes, acts of deflowering virgins and other forms of sexual violations, especially of young boys, continued."<sup>20</sup>

The following two accounts by the Swiss pharmacist exemplify the modalities of rape indicated above. An Armenian boy, adopted by a Turkish family in Mezre, Harput province, related a graphic description of rapes committed regularly by a Turkish man with the full knowledge of his wife in that household. There is also an instance where a *hodja*, a Muslim teacher, is depicted at attempted rape.<sup>21</sup> The other modality involves rape before murder. In Ankara province, near the village of Bash-Ayash, two rapist-killers — a brigand, Deli Hasan, and a gendarme, Ibrahim — raped twelve boys, aged 12-14, and subsequently killed them. Those who did not die instantly were tortured to death while crying "Mummy, Mummy."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, reference may be made to another replica of mass poisoning of children described above in connection with the Trabzon case. A female survivor from Giresun relates how in Agn (Egin), Harput province, some 500 Armenian orphans collected from all parts of that province were poisoned through the arrangement of the local pharmacist and physician. Upon completion of this lethal operation, the Turkish physician is reported to have declared: "The Armenians have no burial plots. The Euphrates is their graveyard" (*Ermenilerin topragi yoktur Onlarin mezari Yepraddir*).<sup>23</sup>

## The Holocaust of Armenian Children: Infernal Mass Deaths by Burning Alive

As described at the outset of this study, the decision makers and organizers of the Armenian Genocide were determined to be as radical as possible in their scheme of wholesale extermination. They were unpleasantly surprised as to how ineffective the segmental massacres of the era of Sultan Abdul Hamid had been in the 1894-96 period and how the Armenians, far from being crippled permanently had, within a matter of two decades, bounced back as a viable and vibrant community. To avoid a similar mistake and to render the projected genocide as optimal as possible in terms of its outcome, they invented a new device: the liberation from the prisons of the Empire of thousands of criminals. They were to be as vicious as possible so as to avoid succumbing to occasional sentiments of pity vis a vis old men, women, and children, and massacre them indiscriminately and mercilessly. They were joined by thousands of Kurds and displaced immigrants from the Caucasus, particularly Chechens from the Caucasus and the Balkan peninsula. All of these groups were filled with hatred of the Armenians toward whom they projected their anti-Christian animosities inherited from their conflict with Christian Russia or the Christian nationalities from



the Balkan peninsula, from which they were either evicted or they opted to leave. No less compelling, however, was their sense of avarice and greed, and their urge for lasciviousness and unrestrained sexuality.

In the mass burning of Armenian orphans, plain sadistic fiendishness was mostly at work. After eliminating the rest of the Armenian population, these remnants had become a nuisance to the perpetrators. In several regards it was deemed most economical to end their misery by torching them *en masse*. In four provinces, Diyarbekir, Harput, Bitlis, and Aleppo, this method was applied with special ferocity. In Diyarbekir, for example, Dr. Reshid, a Circassian with ethnic roots in the Caucasus and that province's governor-general, "took 800 children, enclosed them in a building and set light to it."<sup>24</sup> That such barbarism was not limited to burning alive is evidenced by the following excerpted from the journal of a French Catholic missionary who was there throughout the period of the massacres, i.e., June-December 1915:

*In this province it was customary to bury alive in large ditches and in one fell swoop hundreds of children in the 7-13 age category. After a lapse of several days, one could see the undulations of the earth conveying these souls' agony that was stirring from the bowels of their hecatombs.*<sup>25</sup>

According to the account of an eyewitness, in another instance in Furuncular, district of Malatya, in Harput province, the gendarmes buried alive in a large pit dug beforehand 90-100 Armenian children, aged 3-4. The victims, sensing their imminent death, started to scream hysterically and hopelessly as they were thrown into the pit, located in a place ironically named "The Garden of Children" (*Cocuklar-Bahçesi*). But the gruesome operation was completed in just a few minutes.<sup>26</sup> In Harput province, the county supervisor Kadri "burned to death 800 children who were from Palu" in Diyarbekir province.<sup>27</sup>

During one of the major death marches from Deir Zor to two major death camps in the deserts of Mesopotamia, Souvar and Shedadiye, some 5,000 Armenian children were consumed alive in a holocaust of flame and death. For four days, approximately 60,000 emaciated deportees were driven to these camps. It was on August 25, 1916 (or September 7, 1916, new style date), the day of the Muslim Festival of Sacrifice (*kurban bayramı*) that the orphans were gathered together and crowded into a large orphanage building in Deir Zor. They were then pushed in batches to a spot about an hour distant from the city, doused with petrol and torched to death.<sup>28</sup> This holocaustal method of immolation was not always limited to children, however. As narrated by a Jewish eyewitness, it was inflicted about the same time in the same area of Deir Zor on multitudes of other Armenians, mostly women. Eitan Belkind was an officer in the Turkish army and was assigned to the headquarters of the Ottoman Fourth Army, whose jurisdiction included Aleppo, the Mesopotamian deserts, and Deir Zor, in particular. He was assigned to the vicinity of the Khabour River that flows by Suvar and Shedadiye.

Here is his account:

*After a three day ride I reached the heart of Mesopotamia where I was a witness to a terrible tragedy... The Circassian soldiers ordered the Armenians to gather thorns and thistles and to pile them into a tall pyramid... afterwards they tied all of the Armenians who were there, almost five thousand souls, hand to hand, encircled them like a ring around the pile of thistles and thorns and set it afire in a blaze which rose up to heaven together with the screams of the wretched people who were burned to death by the fire... Two days later I returned to this place and saw the charred bodies of thousands of human beings.*<sup>29</sup>

A high-ranking German officer, Colonel Ludwig Schraudenbach, the commander of the Ottoman Fourteenth Division operating mainly in Mesopotamia, in

his post-war memoirs, referred to another method of immolation. As he put it, "children were placed between wooden planks, tied to them and then burned to death."<sup>30</sup> The most extensive operations of mass burning of children took place, however, in the province of Bitlis. The massive participation of certain Kurdish tribal groups in these operations wrought havoc with the victim population. That holocaust was initiated by the governor-general of the province, Mustafa Abdulhalik (Renda), who happened to be the brother-in-law of Interior Minister, later Grand Vizier, Mehmed Talaat Pasha, the principal architect of the Armenian Genocide. According to the testimony of the Armenian Catholic Bishop of Trabzon,

*Having gathered together 1,000 little children, the governor-general Mustafa Abdulhalik led them to a place called Tashod where he had them burnt to death in the presence of notables and Turkish crowds, at the same time shouting at the top of his voice, 'It is necessary to erase once and for all the Armenian name in these provinces for the security of Turkey.'*

Their remains, along with those still alive, were afterwards thrown into ditches prepared especially beforehand; the moans of those not yet completely consumed could be heard for days.<sup>31</sup>

Two European eyewitnesses likewise reported these incidents of burning alive. Swedish missionary Alma Johansson, who was running the German orphanage in Mush, reported that the Armenian orphans, along with the staff of the orphanage "were burnt alive" (*lebendig verbrannt*). "It was heartrending to hear the cries of the people and children who were being burnt to death in their houses. The soldiers took great delight in hearing them..."<sup>32</sup> For his part, German M.D. H. Stoffels, staff physician with the Persian Expeditionary Corps, reported to the Austrian consul in Trabzon that on his way to Mosul he came across in Mush (and Siirt in the same province) "a large number of formerly Armenian localities, where in the churches and houses he saw charred and decomposed corpses of women and children" (*verkohlte und verweste Frauen- und Kinderleichen*).<sup>33</sup>

Reference may also be made to a Venezuelan major who had volunteered his services to the Ottoman-Turkish army in World War I and was assigned to duties in the areas of Bitlis, Van, and Mush as Inspector General of the Turkish Forces in Armenia. In his memoirs he stated that in Mush "women and children were penned up and burned alive..."<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the most trenchant eyewitness testimony on the veritable holocaust of Armenian children in Mush, Bitlis province, comes from a Turkish Army Commander, General Mehmed Vehib. Following the completion of the main part of the Armenian Genocide, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army in February 1916. A gallant military officer, he was dismayed at his realization that an entire nation had all but disappeared from the land. A local massacre of Armenian labor battalion soldiers in his jurisdiction prompted him to investigate, to set up a court-martial and execute two genocidists. In his detailed postwar report, prepared at the request of the Turkish Military Tribunal, he provides a glimpse into the nature of the genocide that had taken place in the areas of the six eastern provinces subject to the authority of the Third Army. In that report, General Vehib testified as to what he personally saw while on an inspection trip: "Armenian women and children were burnt alive in the village Tchurig, located 5 km north of Mush." He had seen the victims' charred remains, and with indignation he declared, "One can hardly find in Islam a parallel to such atrocity and savagery" (*Tarihi Islamda misti görülmemis bir zulüm ve vahset*).<sup>35</sup>



Another very credible Turkish military source openly and without equivocation confirms the sweeping holocaust to which the Armenians of Mush and the ninety-eight Armenian villages of Mush Plain were subjected — with the dubious justification that “armed Armenian units were assaulting Turkish soldiers and villages.” This source also reveals the wholesale burning-alive operations that were conducted by Kū+ūk Kāzim, who, according to this Turkish source, “was burning down the entire Mush valley and was annihilating the Armenians.”<sup>36</sup>

## The Elements of License for Fiendishness Against Armenian Children

As a rule, the degree of success in genocide hinges, all other things being equal, on the degree of ruthlessness, bordering on viciousness, with which the crime is conceived, organized, supervised, and implemented. More often than not, however, it is at the level of implementation that ultimate success is measured and determined. As indicated above, a large body of the executioners of the Armenian Genocide were highly motivated for their involvement. Frustration, displaced aggression, rage, cupidity, and in no small measure cultural conditioning for primordial violence were all factors that converged in an atavistic impulse for genocide.

A brief review of the *modus operandi* of Salihzeki, the mutasarrif of Deir Zor, and the arch-organizer of the secondary Armenian Genocide in the deserts of Mesopotamia in the summer of 1916, provides insight into this type of motivation. On several occasions he scolded his Chechen underlings for ineptness in the art of cruelty and viciousness. In Deir Zor, for example, he assembled his Chechen executioners and admonished them not to be swayed by pity or lured by bribes and thereby help some Armenians escape their fate.

He then rode his horse to a nearby tent, grabbed a two-year-old Armenian child, brought him to the Chechens and said,

*Even this innocent one — assuming that it is possible to consider innocent an Armenian offspring, for these sons of bitches are no longer innocent — needs to be killed, just like all others of his age, without pity. There will come a day when they will rise up, hunt down those responsible for the killings of the Armenians and will avenge themselves. He then whirled the child in the air round and round several times and violently hit him to the ground.*

Another time he again admonished his Chechen and Arab aides, strictly forbidding them to ever relax and allow any Armenians to escape:

*Why do you need bribes? If what you want is money, kill them first and then you have all their money and goods. Kill them first and then you will have all that they possess... You are rendering a service to the Empire, hence your work is legitimate. You have accomplished your mission but be cognizant of the fact that if one of these sons of bitches, if he is a little boy, stays alive, he will avenge himself one day.*<sup>37</sup>

Salihzeki relied almost entirely on Chechen tribes who lived mostly in Sefa, southeast of Ras-ul-Ain, and who originally had migrated from the Caucasus. The heads of local governments in Ras-ul-Ain, Suvar, Shedadiye, and Hassiche were his closest accomplices. In addition, he had co-opted the deputy of Deir Zor, the governor of Aneh, Commanders Salahaddin and Ali Bey, Cavalry Colonel Hasan, Lieutenant of

Cavalry Tevfik, Deir Zor Garrison Commandant Mustafa, Anah's police chief Bedri, Inspector of Police Balsidi and some ten police officers.<sup>38</sup>

This subculture of primordial barbarism came into full play in several instances that would be recorded by foreign eyewitnesses and Armenian survivors. A German chronicler relates, for example, how gendarmes battered out the brains of Armenian children who lagged behind convoys by smashing their skulls.<sup>39</sup> And here are three additional examples from the killing fields of the notorious Kemach Gorge near Erzincan in testimony supplied by two Armenian survivors:

1. — May 25, 1915

At the plain near the pass of Kemakh, where we had camped, the gendarmes entered a neighbor's tent and in order to get the beautiful girl, Armine, they slaughtered her father, her brother, and two young nephews. Armine was taken away and never returned.

YEPRAKSI YANIKIAN

2. — May 26, 1915

At the same place, in bright daylight two gendarmes killed with bayonets Aram Kasbarian and took away his beautiful wife. His six years old son when crying and screaming on his father's bleeding body, was taken and a long wooden stick was forced in through his rectum and in this condition he was shown to the people with the cries, "Here is your flag..."

YEPRAKSI YANIKIAN

3. — May 26, 1915

At the same place, several gendarmes took by force the young child Mesrob, five years old, from his mother's arms and nailed him on a wooden frame through his eyes, hands and feet. then he was elevated in the midst of the people with shouts of, "Here is your Christ and his Cross, let him come and save you..."

AREVALOUYS PASHALIAN<sup>40</sup>

Mabel Evelyn Elliott, an American physician who served in Istanbul during the Armistice as Medical Director of Near East Relief and was the representative of the American Women's Hospitals recorded in her memoirs case studies she [conducted] at the Rescue Home for Armenian girls in Üsküdar, a city on the Asiatic side of Istanbul, where Florence Nightingale had laid the foundation for the Red Cross and the tradition of modern nursing. The cases involved some 150 survivor-victims of the Armenian Genocide, victims which Dr. Elliott described as "girl-children:"

You must see them as I remember them, passing, one by one, through my consultation room; gentle, well-bred girls, with brushed hair and shining finger nails, who spoke in low voices and wore with instinctive taste their borrowed clothes. None of them had discussed with anyone her experiences during the war. For the first time their reticence was disturbed, necessarily, by professional questions, and when they had begun to speak it was as though they could not stop. The whole story poured from them.

The things that I heard were unbelievable. A doctor sees more deeply into the abysses of human society than any other person except a priest, but I knew only America... It was incredible, too, that these girls could have seen and endured them, and survived to sit there telling of them. The stories did not vary greatly; the variety was in the revealed temperament of the girls. Some sat quietly, with folded hands, talking on



and on in a low voice, growing whiter and whiter until there was no blood in their lips. Others became excited, little by little lost their self-control, and ended screaming and sobbing.

It was better for them to pour out this bitterness that had been so long damned behind their silence, and I did not stop them. I sat in the little, white room and listened... Then there was another girl, whose story had a touch of the incredibly fantastic. With eyelids closed, she was the most beautiful girl I have seen among a people renowned for feminine beauty. Her features were like those preserved for us from antiquity by the chisels of great artists; her skin was like that of a child, and her body was a rhythm of line. But when she opened her eyes, it became painful to look at her. One eyeball, swung outward in its socket so grotesquely that one thought of a gargoyle... I did not believe it. I had grown accustomed to hearing of monstrous things as I shall ever be, but this was incredible. When a knife or hot iron would have served the purpose, why resort to an infinitely delicate surgical operation? It is a question I cannot answer, a question whose answer is so deep in the Turkish character that only a Turk could answer it. For when I examined the eye, and saw beyond doubt that the story was true. The microscopic scars were there, in the minute muscles of the eye. Some finely trained and skillful surgeon had used his training at the operating table to make this girl hideous. He had done this, while hundreds of Turkish soldiers, wounded in fighting for their country, were dying for lack of surgical help<sup>41</sup>

This manifestation of the concentrated hate of the centuries, turned into professional sadism, cannot be divorced from the social system in which that hatred was nurtured, fueled, and even rewarded. Dr. Elliott's additional data and her related comments attest to this fact, highlighting at the same time the diabolical and hideous targeting of children as an integral part of organized genocide.

Finally, reference may be made to a report sent to the U.S. State Department by another American physician. Dr. George B. Hyde, of the American Red Cross, who was stationed in Cilicia in 1919. In 1920 he advised the State Department and also Senator Warren Harding shortly before this Republican Senator from Ohio was elected the 29<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, on the victimization of Armenian children during World War I. He stated that he "had treated several hundred Christian children of both sexes, ranging between the ages of 5 and 12, upon which, the Turks had committed beastly outrages." He gave his opinion that at least "nine out of ten of these victims of Turkish savagery must have succumbed."<sup>42</sup>

## Scant Exceptions of Benign Turks

The magnitude of the number of victims of the Armenian Genocide is testimony to the scale of the success of that lethal undertaking by the Ittihadist Young Turk regime. But it also attests to the paucity of "righteous" Turks whose involvement in significant numbers could have made a difference in the outcome of that genocide. It is true that there were strict orders and very stern threats against such involvement, but the opportunities to circumvent such orders were likewise considerable. Religious cleavages and wartime incitements against the Armenians combined to impede the engagement of a significant number of Turks to intercede or directly assist the Armenians targeted for annihilation.

Notwithstanding this, it is only right that even when a negligible minority tries to help, such brave people should be singled out and recognized for their benevolence. The cases below

are all but illustrative examples. They are not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive. One of these examples is both striking and moving. According to information supplied by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul during the Armistice, a number of kind Turkish military officers, at great personal risk to themselves, took the trouble of bringing with them and handing over to the Patriarchate several male and female orphans from such distant provinces as Harput, Aleppo, and Diyarbekir. In another instance, a colonel dared to transport at once eleven little girls to Istanbul and hand them over to the Patriarch.<sup>43</sup> In Arabpınar a Turkish major who spoke German told a German employee of the Baghdad Railway Co. that he and his brother each rescued and carried with them a little Armenian girl whom they had found in the streets of Ras-ul-Ain. He strongly criticized the authorities for the atrocities which he said, "our Koran forbids."<sup>44</sup> Even more moving is the story of a Turkish *mullah*, a religious chief judge in Mush, who died trying to save Armenian women and children. The notorious Kurdish brigand chief, Moussa Beg, after selecting and removing the youngest and prettiest Armenian girls from the collected crowd was getting ready to burn to death the rest in the village of Avzoud. The *mullah*, arguing that no religion, whether Muslim or Christian, allows the burning alive of women and children, energetically intervened with his protest. And, hoping that he could thus prevent an imminent holocaust he took shelter in the same building where the victims were piled together. The killers just ridiculed him and, undeterred, they proceeded with their scheme and the *mullah* perished in the ensuing inferno along with the other victims he was trying to save.<sup>45</sup>

The genocidal victimization of Armenian children is equally relevant and significant in terms of the final fate of the surviving children is concerned. Thousands of male children were adopted as sons and raised as Turks. Tens of thousands of female children and young girls were likewise absorbed in the mainstream of the Turkish nation as servants, concubines for harems, or legitimate wives following conversion to Islam. Still many others languished in orphanages. The subject of Armenian children as victims of genocide, in order to be complete, needs to be additionally explored in terms of the final stage of that victimization, namely, the differential fate of the surviving orphans, concubines, brides, and religious converts.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ahmed Refik Altınay, *İki Komite İki Kital* (Two Committees, Two Massacres). Istanbul, 1919, p. 23. He was assigned duties at the Ottoman General Headquarters, Dept. II, Counterintelligence, as a Navy Lieutenant. After the war, he served as Professor of History at Istanbul University and has published several books.
- <sup>2</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, Garden City, N.Y., 1918, p. 312.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916*. Documents presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by Viscount Bryce. (Compiled by Arnold Toynbee) London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Miscellaneous No. 31 (1916), pp. 90, 248, 323, 351, 374, 378, 385-6, 455, 485-6, 540, 553, 561. (This important compilation was republished in 2000 and is now available from Gomidas Institute, Princeton, NJ)
- <sup>4</sup> *German Foreign Ministry Archives* i.e., symbol A.A. Türkei 183/44, A25739; in the new catalog system R14093, no. 2463, sent from Aleppo to the German Embassy in Constantinople (Istanbul) on August 29, 1916.
- <sup>5</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Framework: The Armenian Genocide: An Interpretation" in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*. Jay Winter, ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,



- 2003 (forthcoming). See Section III dealing with The Case of Trabzon: A Microcosm of the Armenian Genocide.
- <sup>6</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Turkish Military Tribunal's Prosecution of the Authors of the Armenian Genocide: Four Major Court-Martial Series," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 39-42 on The Trabzon Series.
  - <sup>7</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Documentation of the World War I Armenian Massacres in the Proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 23, No. 4 (November 1991), p. 574, note 55; Arshavir Sheeragian, *Gudagun Err Nahadagneroun* (The Testament of the Martyrs). Beirut, 1965, pp. 262-263.
  - <sup>8</sup> U. S. National Archives. RG59.867.4016/128. July 28, 1915; *ibid.* 4016/411, no. 169. April 11, 1919.
  - <sup>9</sup> A.A. Botschaft Konstantinopel 170, registry no. 3841. August 23, 1915 report.
  - <sup>10</sup> April 2, 1919 issue.
  - <sup>11</sup> Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province. An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*. Susan K. Blair, ed. New Rochelle, N.Y., 1989, p. 64, 79, 82, 83, 87. A copy of the 132 typed pages report is in U.S. National Archives RG59.867.4016/392.
  - <sup>12</sup> Morgenthau, *Ambassador* [n:2], p. 318. See also *The Treatment* [n:3], p. 239.
  - <sup>13</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide: A Sociohistorical Perspective." *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*. A.S. Rosenbaum, ed. Boulder, CO., 1996, p. 131.
  - <sup>14</sup> *British Foreign Office Archives*. FO 371/2781/264888, Appendix B, report no. 1, pp. 6-7.
  - <sup>15</sup> *The Treatment* [n:3], pp. 442-443.
  - <sup>16</sup> Raymond Kevorkian, "L'Extermination des déportées Arméniens Ottomans dans les camps de concentration de Syrie-Mésopotamie (1915-1916). La deuxième phase du génocide. *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine*. Special Edition vol. II, Paris, 1998, pp. 109, 119.
  - <sup>17</sup> Bruno Eckart, *Meine Erlebnisse in Urfa* (My Experiences in Urfa). Potsdam-Berlin, 1922, pp. 18-19.
  - <sup>18</sup> *Ararat*, vol. VI, No. 66, 1919, p. 422. The affidavit of Captain Nebit is in the archives of Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate. File Zh, doc. 747, no. 49.
  - <sup>19</sup> Ephraim K. Jernazian, *Judgment Unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide*. New Brunswick, N.J., 1990, p. 65.
  - <sup>20</sup> Jacob Künzler, *Im Lande des Blutes und der Tränen. Erlebnisse in Mesopotamien Während des Weltkrieges* (In the Land of Blood and Tears. Experiences in Mesopotamia During the World War). Berlin-Potsdam, 1921, pp. 77, 87. In the new edition, edited by Hans-Lukas Kieser, Zurich, 1999, pp. 99, 108-109.
  - <sup>21</sup> M. Esmerian, *Aksoree yev Baderazmee Guragneroun Metch* (Amid the Fires of Exile and War). Boston, 1952, pp. 94-95, 105, 108-109.
  - <sup>22</sup> *Haigashen Darekirk* (Haigashen Annual). Vol. 1, 1922, p. 328. The names of four of the victims are listed in this source.
  - <sup>23</sup> Mariam Kokmanian, "Hayatchintch Sarsapner" (Horrors from the Armenian Extermination Campaign). *Djagadamard* (Istanbul Armenian newspaper), January 17, 1919.
  - <sup>24</sup> *Morning Post* (London newspaper). December 7, 1918.
  - <sup>25</sup> Therese Philippe Bresse, *La famine de la Syrie et le martyre de l'Arménie* (The famine in Syria and the martyrdom of Armenia). Alexandria, 1919, pp. 8, 9.
  - <sup>26</sup> G. Kapigian, *Yegernabadoum* (The Holocaust), Boston, 1924, pp. 251-253.

- <sup>27</sup> FO608/244/8183, folio 407.
- <sup>28</sup> Teotig, "Mius Merelotzu" (The other Memorial Day) *Amenoun Daretzoutzu* (Everyone's Almanac). Istanbul, 1921, pp. 318-319.
- <sup>29</sup> Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide*. New Brunswick, N.J., 2000, pp. 181, 183.
- <sup>30</sup> Ludwig Schraudenbach (retired Colonel), *Muharebe* (War). Berlin/Vienna, 1925, pp. 351-352.
- <sup>31</sup> *Les Memoirs de Mgr. Jean Naslian. Eveque de Trebizonde*. (The Memoirs of His Grace Archbishop Jean Naslian). Vienna, 1955, pp. 146, 413. On p. 138 of the same work, there is a description of the burning alive at Norshen, near Mush, of the Armenian Catholic Primate of Mush. Archbishop Naslian coincidentally was in Europe during the Genocide and could thus escape a similar fate.
- <sup>32</sup> A. A. Türkei 183/48, A34435; R14097 in the new catalog system, October 1, 1917 report. See also *Germany, Turkey and Armenia*. A selection of documentary evidence relating to Armenian atrocities from German and other sources. London, 1917, p. 26.
- <sup>33</sup> *Austrian Foreign Ministry Archives*. 12 Türkei/380, folio 909, May 26, 1917.
- <sup>34</sup> Rafael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, Muna Lee, translator. New York, London, 1926, p. 135.
- <sup>35</sup> Vahakn D. Dadrian, "The Armenian Question and the Wartime Fate of the Armenians as Documented by the Officials of the Ottoman Empire's World War I Allies: Germany and Austria-Hungary," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 34, No. 1. (February 2002), pp. 76-77, p. 84, note 111, p. 85, note 111.
- <sup>36</sup> İlhan Selçuk, *Yüzbaşı Selahattin'in Romanı* (The Roman of Captain Selahattin). Vol. 1, Istanbul, 1993, p. 124.
- <sup>37</sup> Kevorkian, *L'Extermination* [n. 16], p. 190, item 47; p. 192, item 48.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 184.
- <sup>39</sup> Heinrich Vierbücher, *Armenien 1915. Die Abschlachtung eines Kulturvolkes durch die Türken* (The Slaughter of a Cultured People by the Turks). Hamburg, 1930, p.58.
- <sup>40</sup> Levon K. Daghljan, D.M.D., *Memories of the Holocaust*. Boston, 1976, p. 48.
- <sup>41</sup> Mabel Evelyn Elliott, *Beginning Again at Ararat*, New York, 1924, pp.20-26. See also Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Role of Turkish Physicians in The World War I Genocide of Ottoman Armenians," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, (1986), pp.169-192.
- <sup>42</sup> *The Lausanne Treaty, Turkey and Armenia*, ed. by The American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty, New York, 1926, p.71.
- <sup>43</sup> Nubar Library. Paris. *Papers of Patriarch Zaven*. 1914-1916. File 288/P. 1, 2/6.
- <sup>44</sup> A. A. Türkei 183/38, A 23991, or R14087. Report by W. Spieker. Enclosure in Aleppo German Consul Rössler's communication of September 3, 1915. 183/38, A28019. Enclosure no. 81.
- <sup>45</sup> Henry Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante*. (In the land of terror) Paris, 1917, p.96.

Ա մ փ ո փ ո մ

Երեխաները՝ ցեղասպանության զոհեր  
Վահագն Տատոյան

20-րդ դարի ստաջին՝ Հայոց ցեղասպանությանը, որը ողջ հայ ժողովրդին ոչնչացնելու փորձ էր, զոհ գնացին մահ երեխաները:

Երեխաների ոչնչացման ձևերն ու մեթոդները եղել են բազմազան և աչքի են ընկել առանձնահատուկ դժանությամբ: Երեխաների մշակակալի մասը դարձել են հենց անմիջականորեն ջարդերի զոհեր: Հայ երե-



խաների զանգվածային ջարդի քառերաբեմ էր Տրապիզոնը, ուր երեխաներին ուղղակի ծռվն էին լցնում: Մանուկների մի մասն էլ ուղղակի երկիզվել է: Հայ աղջիկներն, իրենց հերթին, համալրում էին թուրքական և քրդական հարեմները: Վերը նշվածին ի հակադրություն եղել են մահ եզակի դեպքեր, երբ թուրքերը փորձել են փրկել հայ երեխաներին, հաճախ վտանգելով սեփական կյանքը:

Անշուշտ Հայոց ցեղասպանագիտության մեջ հայ երեխաների ճակատագրի հարցը դեռ նոր է ասպարեզ հանվում և կարևոր է հետագա ուսումնասիրության:

## Резюме

Дети - жертвы геноцида.

Ваагн Дадрян

Жертвами первого геноцида 20 века – геноцида армян, стали также дети.

Способы уничтожения детей были изощренными. Они отличались особой жестокостью. Значительная часть детей стала непосредственной жертвой резни. Ареной массовой резни был Трапизон, где детей просто бросали в море. Часть детей была просто сожжена. В свою очередь – армянские девушки пополняли турецкие и курдские гаремы.

Вопрос судьбы армянских детей важен с той точки зрения, что он нов и нуждается в дополнительном исследовании.