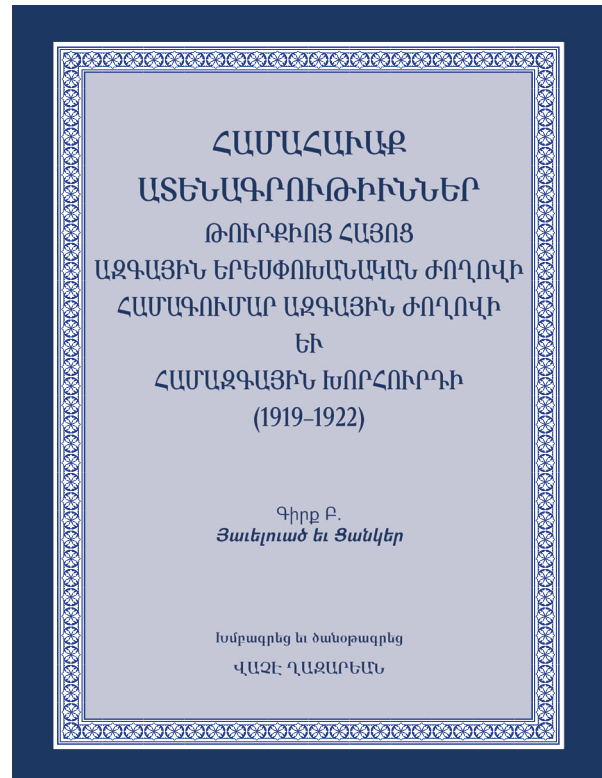
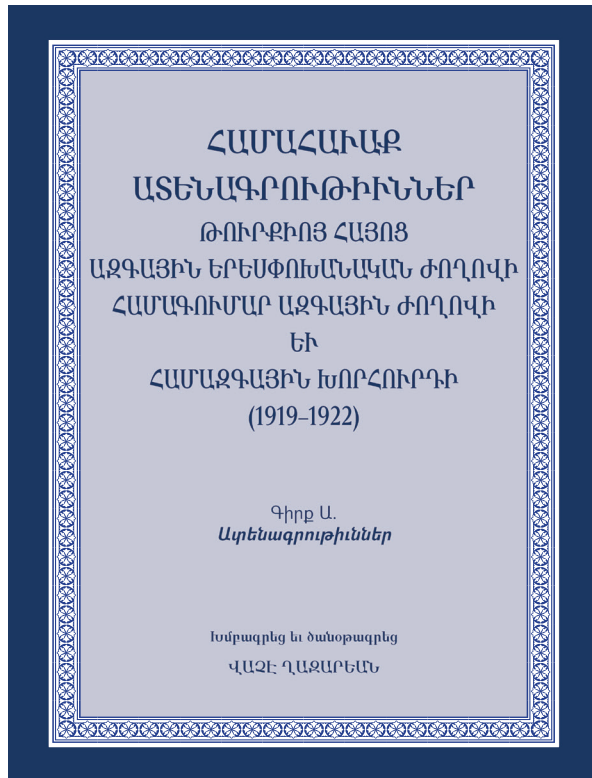


**ԳՐԱԽՕՍԱԿԱՆ**

**ՀԱՄԱՀԱՒԱՔ ԱՏԵՆԱԳՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐ ԹՈՒՐԹԻՈՅ ՀԱՅՈՑ  
ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԵՐԵՍՓՈԽԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԺՈՂՈՎԻ,  
ՀԱՄԱԳՈՒՄԱՐ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԺՈՂՈՎԻ ԵՒ ՀԱՄԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ  
ԽՈՐՀՈՒՐԴԻ  
(1919-1922)**

**Գիրք Ա. Ատենագրություններ, 822 էջ, Գիրք Բ. Յառելուած եւ ցանկեր, 550 էջ: Խմբագրեց եւ ծանոթագրեց Վաչէ Ղազարեան, Երուսաղէմ 2021:**



[Combined/Aggregate Minutes/Records of the National Representative Assembly of Turkey's Armenians, the Conference of the National Assembly, and the All-Armenian Council (1919-1922)]

Volume I: Minutes; Volume 2: Appendices and Lists. Edited and annotated by Vatche Ghazarian, Jerusalem, 2021.

This two-volume work is a monumental achievement that has required years of painstaking labor—labor of love-- and love of history.

As the title indicates, the volumes offer, for the first time in the case of most documents,

the minutes and related documents of three major institutions in post-World War I Ottoman Empire/Turkey. The significance of the almost 1500 pages of documents becomes clear when one thinks of the fateful events that followed that most fateful of events, now characterized as the Genocide of the Armenians: The return of Armenian life and politics in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, the establishment of what came to be known as the First Republic of Armenia, the negotiations preceding and then the signing of the Treaties of Versailles and Sèvres, the collapse of the Armenian republic and the rise of the Turkish one on the ashes of its Armenian subjects.

Volume I include the minutes of 41 meetings covering the March to December 1919 period, 68 for the year 1920, 69 for the year 1921 and 55 for 1922.

Volume II offers 223 appendices (correspondence involving American, European and Armenian leaders such as Col. William N. Haskell, James W. Gerard, Boghos Nubar Pasha and Patriarch Zaven, to name a few; between the Armenian Patriarchate and the Ottoman government; and between Armenian councils in Istanbul and the surviving Armenians in the regions) as well as lists (National assembly members, Index of proper names).

Editor Vatche Ghazaryan's well-researched and detailed introduction places these documents in their proper historical setting. Mr. Ghazarian is careful in describing the journey these documents have taken from Istanbul to Jerusalem via Manchester and Marseille, a most valuable contribution to our ability to assess origin and authenticity.

Ghazarian is careful to observe that for the historian to do his/her proper job s/he must also refer to a plethora of still unpublished documents such as the minutes of the Political Council and the daily newsletter (released by the Information Office, Տեղեկատու Դիւան) of the Istanbul Patriarchate (1912-1922), as well as archives of the Armenian Delegation, Republic of Armenia and memoirs of diplomats.

It is common for states to publish archival material or otherwise make them available to scholars and lay readers alike. This is rarely the case for non-state actors or Diasporas.

Archival material constitutes one of the basic sources for the writing of history and yet it is not so simple or even natural for organizations to preserve their documents in any organized form, house them safely and with the necessary care, and then publish them or see them published.

In the case of Armenian history, we should note that before World War I the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople published the proceedings of the National Assembly in print form within a few days of the meetings, just as state legislatures do. Not a state, the Patriarchate was not Diaspora either. Situated outside of historic Armenia, it constituted the nominal and, in some ways, the actual leadership of all Armenians in the Ottoman Empire that included the majority of the Armenian people, the segment living on the historic Western Armenian lands.

To my knowledge, of all the non-state actors in Armenian history, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul and the Dashnaktsutiune are the only institutions that have kept meticulous records AND published them in a systematic manner.

The material in these volumes cover the challenges facing the leadership of what was left of the Armenian people following the Genocide, a multiplicity of complex and painful issues,

including:

The gathering of orphans, women, and Islamized Armenians; organizing relief for the survivors; the re-creation of national, i.e., community life and the future of the National Constitution; the transformation of the prewar “azgayin durk” or national/millet tax with “hayreniki durk” or the fatherland tax; cataloguing of losses, reparations, and return of confiscated properties; the preparation of files against those responsible for the massacres and deportations following Allied promises for justice to be rendered; relations between the various bodies speaking, in one logic or another, in the name of Armenians; relations with other non-Muslim communities such as the Greeks; relations with the Ottoman government, the Allies, with special reference to the British in the capital and the French in control of Cilicia where eventually Armenians had to face the rising Turkish nationalists; and the preparations for and conduct during the Treaties of Versailles and Sevres.

The list can easily be characterized as the material of which the history of the period is made, especially the coming to an end of most organized Armenian existence in Turkey outside of Istanbul. In sum, the material in these two volumes tell the story, almost day by day, of the valiant but ultimately failed attempt of Armenian leaders to recover from what came to be known as the Genocide and reestablish a modicum of organized Armenian life in what would emerge as Turkey.

The collection of documents in these two volumes touch upon themes that are relevant today: The internal dynamics of the relationship of various bodies claiming leadership and the right to determine policy; relations between the political parties and the Church; Armenians in the provinces versus the leaders in Istanbul; the government of the Republic facing the challenge of the National Delegation; the refugees versus state authorities; questions of legitimacy, coordination, and cooperation; and, ultimately, the definition of national interest(s).

The style of these documents, dry and dispassionate, belie the dramatic and traumatic events they cover. Maybe that is the way it should be, if these documents are to serve as bases for analysis and not just hatred.

Finally, the collection in these two volumes is more than material for Armenian history. It also sheds light on the policies of the Great powers and the Ottoman government and the way one category of people, Armenians, perceived them and were affected by them.

The scholarly community should be most grateful to Mr. Vatche Ghazaryan and his colleagues for having produced this treasured collection.

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