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**THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF VAN AND
BITLIS (BAGHESH) PROVINCES OF WESTERN
ARMENIA IN 1878-1914 (ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL-
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC
SITUATION)***

Key words: Western Armenia, Van, Bitlis, Mush, socio-economic situation, demographic changes, Hamidian massacres.

Introduction

The historical, demographic, and socio-economic processes in Western Armenia at the end of XIX - beginning of XX centuries serve as crucial indicators of the condition of Western Armenians. Understanding these dynamics is essential especially for a comprehensive presentation of the history of the Armenian Genocide. This article examines the causes of historical, demographic, and socio-economic changes in Van and Bitlis provinces, highlighting their direct impact on various aspects of Western Armenian life. The study focuses primarily

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on the period from 1878 to 1914.

The provinces of Van and Bitlis were regions bordering each other and close to Eastern Armenia, encompassing the territories of Vaspurakan, Turuberan, Mokq, and Aghdznik provinces of Greater Armenia. These areas shared significant similarities in terms of geography, primary occupations and social conditions of the Armenian population. The location of these provinces significantly influenced the way of life of the population, which was to some extent influenced by political factors and especially by wars. Notably, the consequences of the 1877-1878 war were felt for an extended period in the Armenian settlements. Additional critical factors were the tax policies implemented by the authorities and the persecution of the Kurdish tribes, which escalated during and after the Hamidian massacres. These circumstances profoundly affected the provincial economy, which was already in a state of decline. Some economic activity persisted, primarily due to the commercial, artisanal, and agricultural engagements of the Armenian population. In compiling this material, we have relied heavily on Armenian, Russian and European sources, contemporary press articles, and relevant historical publications.

Historical demographic profile of the provinces

In mentioned provinces the population primarily consisted of Armenians, Muslims (including Turks and Kurds), and other ethnic groups. Given the inadequacies and inaccuracies of Ottoman statistics, we will refer to the data of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from 1912.

	Armenians	Turks	Kurds	Kizilbaches	Circassians	Tsigans	Zazas	Assyrians	Yezidis	Total
Van	185000	47000	72000			3000		18000	25000	350000
Bitlis	180000	40000	77000	8000	10000		47000	15000	5000	382000 ¹

The data show that the proportions of the Armenian and Muslim populations in both provinces are closely aligned. It is important to note that the Armenian population was often underestimated in available statistical records, including those of the Security Commission, which reported the Armenian population in Van province at 197,000 and in Bitlis province at 198,000². Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the actual number of Armenians in both provinces was likely higher than these figures suggest, potentially comprising half or even more than half of the total population³.

Another significant similarity between both provinces was the similar trends in demographic shifts, in particular the directions of migration towards Eastern Armenia, the Caucasus, and Persia. Prior to the Hamidian massacres, and in the early 1900s, many migrants primarily sought work abroad – a trend that was characteristic of Armenians in various settlements across Western Armenia. The main driving force behind this migration was economic hardship, as individuals sought better opportunities for a decent livelihood. However, during the Hamidian massacres and in the subsequent several years, forced migration intensified dramatically, reflecting the urgent need to escape violence and persecution.

¹Population Armenienne de la Turquie, avant la Guerre. 1920, 10.

² **Թէոդիկ**. 1922, 261-262:

³ Վիճակագրական տվյալների մասին ավելի մանրամասն տես՝ **Թաթոյան**. 2015:

Internal movements among Armenians were also active in provinces of Western Armenia. Many sought to relocate to provincial centers, where job opportunities were more accessible and security was generally better. One notable destination for labor migrants from the region was Van city. According to the publicist and member of the Armenakan party A. Darbinyan (Tseruk), 15% of the population of the city of Van at the beginning of the XX century were Armenians who migrated to Van from various settlements of the province: Shatakh, Moks, Sparkert, Aghbak, where they lived as tenants in the houses of Armenians⁴. Similarly, in the case of Bitlis, the most important cities and therefore the main destinations of the internal migration of the population were the towns of Bitlis and Mush. It is obvious that the situation of those who stayed in the place became more difficult, because in addition to the fact that the number of Armenians in the settlements decreased, their place was also taken by the new Kurds and other Muslims. It is no coincidence that in this period in Western Armenia, and in particular in Vaspurakan, the process of sedentarisation of the Kurdish tribes began, during which the Kurdish elite sought to dominate the lands of Armenian peasants in every possible way. Having owned the lands, Kurdish families were settled on them, who were in a state of maraba⁵. Thus, the Kurds, who settled in villages inhabited by Armenians, appropriated the houses and lands, the best pastures and grasslands of Armenians and became the owners and administrators of the territory.

It should be noted that the authorities encouraged the resettlement of Muslim residents in the villages and houses of

⁴ Մուրճ. 1904, № 9, 24:

⁵ Պողոսյան. 1988, 48-49:

the Armenians who had migrated. As a result, the number of Armenian population decreased significantly in previously Armenian-populated settlements. Thus, before 1877, the village of Artamet in the Van region had 400 Armenian houses and 60-70 Turkish houses, but after the war, the number of Turkish families increased to 300 houses, while the number of Armenians decreased to 100 houses⁶. The situation was also directly affected also by the Hamidian massacres and their demographic, economic and other consequences.

As a result of the migration of Armenians, their lands and houses were taken over by Kurds seeking to settle down and by Caucasian mountaineers and Turks from the Caucasus. Villages of Caucasian mountaineers, such as Chechens, Ossetians, and others were also established in Manazkert, Bulanykh, Akhlat, and other regions of Bitlis and Van provinces.

Russian military commander F. Gryaznov highlights the sympathy of the mountaineers towards Turkey, as one of the reasons for their migration. He notes that targeted propaganda efforts were conducted among these groups, accompanied by significant promises that encouraged their movement. This situation also elucidates the movement of mountaineers prior to the Russian-Turkish War, as many crossed the border almost simultaneously with the Caucasian army. They left behind their homes and belongings, arriving in the new settlements with only what they could carry. This contributed to the dire circumstances faced by the resettled mountaineers, who found themselves in a precarious and impoverished situation⁷.

The resettlement of Muslims from the Caucasus brought

⁶ Պողոսյան. 1988, 41:

⁷ Грязновъ. 1897, 70.

significant changes to the lives of Western Armenians, affecting both demographic processes and the socio-economic landscape of the region. Following the Young Turkish Revolution, the establishment of commissions to address land disputes became increasingly common. In 1909, such commissions were formed in Archak, Aljavaz, and other areas of Van province. However, their findings revealed that many aghas had been confiscating the lands of Armenians for over 15 years, turning some of them into marabas and forcing others to flee to the Caucasus, unfortunately, these injustices were largely overlooked and left unaddressed.

Moreover, a similar provincial commission in Bitlis in 1910 came to the conclusion that the disputed territories should be left to the Muhacirs and that the Armenians should be offered land in other places⁸. Thus, despite initial efforts to foster an atmosphere of freedom and justice during the early years of Young Turk rule, the prevailing policy aimed at creating increasingly unfavorable conditions for Armenians, continuing a policy that had already taken root in the past.

The economic persecution of Armenians

The socio-economic environment of Van and Bitlis provinces has been significantly shaped by political circumstances, particularly the effects of war. In his memoirs, Hovh. Archbishop Nazlyan, the head of the Trabizon Diocese, notes that the densely populated Armenian centers of Van, Baghesh, and Mush, close to the Russian border, have historically been turbulent areas. These regions have often found themselves at the center of the intense rivalry between Russia and Turkey,

⁸ Համբարյան. 1979, 55:

leading to periods of persecution and exploitation of their communities⁹. This ongoing conflict has had profound effects on the local economy and social structures, further complicating the lives of the inhabitants.

During the war of 1877-1878 and in its aftermath, the Armenian population of the Mush region of Bitlis province suffered the most as Kurdish forces and regular troops ravaged their communities¹⁰. The devastation did not cease with the end of the war; for a long period, the local Armenians faced continued atrocities at the hands of both Kurdish fighters and state troops, as well as relentless taxation and exploitation in the war-torn zone. The British writer and traveler H. Tozer highlighted the plight of a village near Bitlis, noting that it experienced one of the most egregious instances of persecution faced by the Armenian population during this tumultuous period¹¹.

The other contemporary of these events, the preacher and journalist G. Hepworth, noted that the Armenian population in the Bitlis region was left wretched, fearful, and hopeless due to the consistent disregard of their rights by the Kurds¹². This oppressive environment further deepened the suffering of the Armenian population, leaving them in a state of despair. The winter months were especially terrible, when the Kurds were accommodated among the Armenians, who provided them with everything they needed without receiving anything in return. According to Tozer, the main reason for the poverty of the

⁹ Տրապիզոնի թեմին վիճակաւոր Յովի. Արք. Նազլեանի յուշերը. 1960, 153:

¹⁰ **Պողոսյան**. 1985, 118:

¹¹ **Tozer**. 1881, 304.

¹² **Hepworth**. 1898, 223-224.

inhabitants was that "the parasites of this description live upon them during half the year"¹³.

Shakir Agha, a chieftain of one of the Kurdish tribes, was known for his atrocities in Shatak. For years he oppressed the Armenians of Shatak and Nortuz in Van province with his illegal demands, and during the Hamidian massacres, he became notorious for his barbarity and outrageous usurpation. As a result of his actions, he amassed even more influence and wealth, further entrenching his power over the local population. There were so many complaints against Shakir Agha that he was imprisoned under the constitution¹⁴.

Similarly, Husein Pasha amassed significant wealth in the Aljavaz region, acquiring extensive lands, estates, and livestock, all of which he retained without restriction even after the Hamidian massacres¹⁵. Thus, this period was marked by widespread land seizures, theft of property and a dramatic increase in taxes and illegal levies, so excessive that the local population was left reeling under the burden, overshadowing previous oppressions. As the historian and statistician A-do writes, the taxes imposed on the Armenians rose sharply, while the amount collected from the Muslim communities fell.

All these factors, along with various economic issues – such as the famine following the Hamidian massacres, and restrictions on labor migration to Constantinople¹⁶ – had a profound impact on the socio-economic landscape of Western Armenia, particularly in the provinces of Van and Bitlis. The

¹³ Tozer. 1881, 285.

¹⁴ Ա-Ղօ. 1912, 356:

¹⁵ Ա-Ղօ. 1912, 358:

¹⁶ Մտրն. 1904, № 9, 33:

Armenian population faced dire consequences from the ongoing persecutions, expropriations, and massacres, leading to an economic life that was not only inadequate but also characterized by widespread poverty. Evidence of this dire situation is found in the accounts of foreign observers. For instance, the German scientist Müller-Simonis, who visited the region in 1888-1889, described the Armenians in Akhlat and nearby settlements as being in an extremely impoverished state¹⁷.

One of the key factors contributing to the population's poverty was also the oppressive taxation policy and ongoing persecution. A contemporary account indicates that about 65% of Armenian peasants lived in debt, often incurred during the spring spending period which coincided with the payment of state taxes. Faced with a lack of funds, many peasants turned to moneylenders for assistance¹⁸. M. Mirakhoryan, the author of a significant topographical work, reported that the villagers of Trlashen in Van were burdened with debts exceeding 1,500 gold. Even if they sold all their land, they would not still be able to escape this financial strain¹⁹. In addition to the economic challenges, the political system also faced serious problems. The British traveler H. Lynch noted that in Van, bribery had infiltrated all levels of government, further complicating the situation for the local population and exacerbating their hardships²⁰.

All the factors mentioned significantly disrupted the normal

¹⁷ **Müller-Simonis.** 1897, 212.

¹⁸ Մուրճ, 1904, № 4, 30:

¹⁹ **Միրախորեան.** մաս Բ, 1885, 268:

²⁰ **Lynch.** 1901, 90.

life of the Armenian population in these provinces, exacerbating poverty and prompting new waves of migration. The combination of economic hardships, oppressive taxation policies, and political corruption created an environment of instability, pushing many to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

The main occupations of the Armenian population

Below, we will outline the main occupations of the Armenian population in these two provinces, which formed the backbone of the local economy. It's important to note that the development of trade in these provinces – especially in Van – was constrained by geographical factors. Located at the furthest point of Turkey, close to the Persian border, Van was distant from major trade centers and communication routes. Nevertheless, it served as a vibrant commercial hub in the region, connecting with Tabriz, Bitlis, and several towns around Lake Van. The city of Van emerged as the main commercial center of the province. It had at least 1.500 market stalls, most of which were skillfully constructed buildings²¹. Armenian merchants imported carpets, cotton, textiles and retail goods to Van, and exported grain, livestock, wool, leather, walnut wood, shawls, tarek fish (Van fish), jewelry and silverware to Constantinople and elsewhere²². Goods were transported to the surrounding provinces and to Trebizond by horse and cart, and in the case of Persia, by donkey²³.

There were about 800 small and large commercial and craft stalls in the city of Mush, 500 of which belonged to

²¹ Միրախորեան. մաս Բ, 1885, 141:

²² Հակոբյան. 1987, 237:

²³ Մուրճ. 1904, № 8, 14-38:

Armenians²⁴. Among the products for sale were tobacco, dried fruits, wine, honey, craft products, etc. Mush's primary trade was conducted with Erzurum (Karin) and Bitlis, the latter being recognized as one of the key merchant cities in the region. Armenian merchants from Bitlis were particularly renowned for their dexterity and entrepreneurial spirit, contributing significantly to the local economy and trade networks²⁵. At the beginning of XX century, the city had three markets with about 1,200 shops and stalls selling agricultural products, grains, fruits, dairy products, meat, as well as livestock, various handicrafts such as fabrics, tools, household items, etc. The local red cloth called "shila" had a particularly good reputation and was exported to various places²⁶.

In the case of both Van and Bitlis, craftwork was mainly concentrated in large settlements. In the city of Van, various types of local production, such as textiles, a number of small handicrafts, were very limited due to the poverty of the country²⁷. One of the old handicrafts of Van was jewelry, which until the 1890s was considered completely insignificant and unimportant. However, in the following years, along with silversmithing, it developed to such an extent that it became one of the most important crafts of Van, whose fame was spread not only in Turkey but also abroad²⁸. The silversmiths of Van made various objects: drinking glasses, mugs, spoons, knives, forks, bottles, etc., but the most famous was the cigarette box, of which

²⁴ Հակոբյան. 1987, 201:

²⁵ Էփրիկեան. 1902, 363-364:

²⁶ Հակոբյան. 1987, 101:

²⁷ Lynch. 1901, 89.

²⁸ Մուրճ. 1904, №. 8:

7000 pieces were sent to Karin, Trabizon, Constantinople, Egypt, various European and Asian cities only in 1902²⁹. From the second half of the XIX century, several relatively large enterprises were established in Van. Starting in the 1870s, a tannery began operations in the city. During the same period, the Tokhmakhyan brothers established a linen factory, and a mechanical workshop was also set up producing water pumps, agricultural implements, and various iron items³⁰. Part of the population around Lake Van was also engaged in boating, but the monopoly of boating mainly belonged to the residents of the village Avants. The number of sailing ships reached 100³¹. Mirakhoryan writes that in the 1870s there was even an idea to operate a steamer in Lake Van, but due to some external reasons, the idea was not realized³².

In Bitlis, blacksmithing, shoemaking, jewelry making, and linen weaving were among the primary crafts. As in other provinces of Western Armenia, these trades were predominantly carried out by Armenians. As mentioned above, Bitlis was particularly renowned for its red-painted canvas, which gained popularity in neighboring provinces. Additionally, iron and steel agricultural tools from the iron mine in the village of Talvorik were highly sought after in the region. Firearms, swords, and axes were also widely available, found in the hands of both Armenians and Kurds in places such as Tigranakert and Mush. The lead for the rifles was purchased through Armenian traders, and the gunpowder from the village Tsronk, Mush district.

²⁹ Մուրճ. 1904, № 8:

³⁰ Հակոբյան. 1987, 236-237:

³¹ Մուրճ. 1904, № 8:

³² Միրախորեան. մաս Բ, 1885, 207:

Unfortunately, the iron mine of Talvorik ceased to operate in 1912³³.

Like the majority of the Armenian population of Western Armenia, the main occupation of the Armenians of Van and Bitlis was agriculture, mainly grain cultivation and horticulture. In the case of the settlements of Van, the scarcity of water was a major obstacle to the development of agriculture or the increase of the output³⁴. The Russian military commander F. Gryaznov, investigating the causes of recurrent famines in the provinces of Erzurum and Van, identified water scarcity and persistent drought as the main factors³⁵. At the same time, there were regions that had both fertile fields and Armenians with agricultural skills in the territory of Van province. Abundant and high-quality grain was produced in the areas of Aljavaz, Archesh, Berkri, Khoshab, Gyavash, Karchkan, Timar, and Julamerk. In normal years, these regions yielded wheat harvests of 10 to 20 times the amount sown, while in particularly fruitful years, this could be up to 60 times³⁶. In describing the Archesh region, Mirakhoryan notes that the Armenians here cultivate a diverse range of crops, including wheat, which was notably white and larger than typical grains, barley, corn, lentils, and flax, as well as watermelons and melons renowned for their size and sweetness³⁷. However, the author also highlights an important issue regarding land use; specifically, in Shushants village, 40 to 45 Armenians were forced to cultivate alfalfa and

³³ Պողոսյան. 1985, 119-120:

³⁴ Միրախորեան. Մաս Բ, 1885, Ը:

³⁵ Грязновъ. 1897, 149.

³⁶ Մուրճ. 1904, № 3:

³⁷ Միրախորեան. մաս Գ, 1885, 27-28:

korkan in designated wheat fields due to a shortage of pastures³⁸. This inappropriate use of arable land illustrates the wider challenges the community faces in effectively managing its agricultural resources..

The majority of Armenians in Bitlis province were also farmers, despite the mountainous terrain characterized by rich valleys and ravines. In the Mush Valley, agriculture was the primary occupation of the Armenian community. While they excelled in agricultural production compared to the Kurds, they often lagged behind in general agricultural practices. Specifically, they lacked the habit of selecting the best crops for sowing, fertilizing their fields, and implementing other essential agricultural techniques. This lack of knowledge hindered their overall productivity and development in farming³⁹, whereas more consistent and correct cultivation of the land could have produced more tobacco, cotton, silk and other products⁴⁰.

Horticulture was particularly popular among the residents of Van city and its surrounding villages, where there were approximately 2,400 gardens both within the city and in nearby villages⁴¹. In the Aygestan district of Van, every house, with very few exceptions, had its own garden or orchard, and some even had extensive vineyards outside the settlement itself⁴². Artamet was one of the prominent villages in the Van region, where residents primarily engaged in farming and gardening. The settlement boasted around 300 to 350 orchards, including

³⁸ Միրախորեան. մաս Գ, 1885, 27-28:

³⁹ Լումա. 1899, 113:

⁴⁰ Լումա. 1898, 149:

⁴¹ Պողոսյան. 1988, 35:

⁴² Միրախորեան. մաս Բ, 1885, 167:

vineyards and a variety of fruit orchards, most notably apples. According to Mirakhoryan, these apples were widely exported via Lake Van and overland by hundreds of caravans operated by Armenian and Kurdish peasants. Additionally, the village was renowned for its cherries, pears, and walnuts for their size⁴³. Horticulture also had a certain place among the occupations of the Armenians of Bitlis province, particularly the Bitlis district was rich in gardens and famous for its pear, apple, and walnut crops⁴⁴.

In terms of winemaking, the village of Shahpaghi in Van province distinguished itself with its 120 to 130 Armenian houses. The village had more than 60 gardens, which contributed to its wine production. The wine from Shahpaghi gained a reputation comparable to that of Porto in France, which is celebrated for its quality and distinction in the Van-Tosp region⁴⁵.

In Van and Bitlis, animal husbandry was an important aspect of rural life, with the inhabitants raising a significant number of animals well suited to the local climate. The main livestock included sheep and goats, followed by cows, oxen, buffaloes, horses, mules, and donkeys⁴⁶. This diverse array of animals not only supported agricultural activities but also contributed to the community's economy and sustenance.

It's important to note that the Muslim population in the mentioned regions predominantly consisted of landowners who managed irrigated fields. They were rarely engaged in crafts;

⁴³ Միրախորեան. մաս Բ, 1885, 238:

⁴⁴ Էփրիկեան. 1902, 366:

⁴⁵ Միրախորեան. մաս Բ, 1885, 249:

⁴⁶ Մուրճ. 1904, № 3:

instead, a small fraction participated in grocery and animal trade, along with some involvement in partisanship⁴⁷.

Conclusion

Van and Bitlis, located in the south-eastern regions close to the Russian border, shared similarities in terms of the direct consequences of the war of 1877-1878, the demographic processes taking place in the mentioned areas and the socio-economic situation of the provinces. The resettlement of Muslims from the Caucasus, the Hamidian massacres, the labor and forced migration of Armenians significantly changed the lives of Western Armenians, affecting both the demographic and the socio-economic landscape of the region. It was obvious that the actual number of Armenians in the mentioned provinces constituted half or even more of the total population.

A similar environment existed in Van and Bitlis regarding agriculture, handicrafts, and commercial activities. Handicrafts flourished primarily in urban areas, while the rural population engaged in crafts mainly to meet local needs. Notable crafts included silversmithing, tailoring, linen-making, and ironwork. In agriculture, the situation was somewhat different, where problems of tax collection and ongoing persecution posed significant challenges and severely hampered the development of this sector. At the same time, there were regions that had both fertile fields and, in more favorable conditions and with the proper use of available opportunities, significant achievements could also be made in agriculture. Both provinces faced challenges related to poor educational conditions, as the socio-economic status had a direct impact on the educational and

⁴⁷ **Միլիտարիզմ**. մաս Բ, 1885, 164:

cultural life of the Armenian community.

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ինստիտուտ, պ.գ.թ., **Արևմտյան Հայաստանի Վանի և**
Բիթլիսի (Բաղեշ) նահանգների հայ բնակչությունը 1878-
1914 թթ. (պատմաժողովրդագրական գործոնների և
սոցիալ-տնտեսական իրավիճակի վերլուծություն)

Ամփոփում

XIX-XX դդ. հայոց պատմության և, հատկապես, հայոց ցեղասպանության պատմության ամբողջական ներկայացման

տեսանկյունից խիստ կարևոր ու արդիական է Արևմտյան Հայաստանում ընթացող պատմաժողովրդագրական ու սոցիալ-տնտեսական կյանքին առնչվող գործընթացների ուսումնասիրությունը: Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվում Վանի ու Բիթլիսի նահանգների պատմական, ժողովրդագրական և սոցիալ-տնտեսական իրողություններին, դրանց պատճառներին ու արևմտահայության ներքին կյանքի տարբեր ոլորտների վրա անմիջական ազդեցությանը:

Վանի և Բիթլիսի նահանգները իրենց տեղադրությամբ, հայ բնակչության հիմնական զբաղմունքներով ու նրանց սոցիալական վիճակով բավական ընդհանրություններ ունեին: Դրանց դիրքով պայմանավորված՝ բնակչության կենսակերպը որոշակիորեն ազդվում էր նաև քաղաքական գործոնների և, հատկապես, պատերազմների հետևանքով: Մասնավորապես, 1877-1878 թթ. ռուս-թուրքական պատերազմի հետևանքները հայաբնակ բնակավայրերում դեռ երկար ժամանակ զգացվում էին: Կարևոր գործոններ էին նաև իշխանությունների վարած հարկային քաղաքականությունն ու, հատկապես, նրանց կողմից հովանավորվող քրդական ցեղախմբերի հալածանքները, որոնք մեծ ծավալներ ընդունեցին համիդյան կոտորածների ընթացքում և դրանցից հետո: Այս ամենը մեծապես ազդում էր նահանգային տնտեսության զարգացման վրա, որը գտնվում էր հետամնաց վիճակում և որոշակի տնտեսական ակտիվություն էր պահպանվում հայերի առևտրական, արհեստագործական, նաև երկրագործական զբաղվածության շնորհիվ:

Ինչ վերաբերում է հայ բնակչության հիմնական զբաղմունքներին, ապա Վանի ու Բիթլիսի նահանգներում գրեթե

նույն իրավիճակն էր. արհեստագործությունը հիմնականում զարգացած էր քաղաքներում, իսկ գյուղերում արհեստներով զբաղվում էին հիմնականում տեղական կարիքները հոգալու համար: Արհեստներից հատկապես զարգացած էին արծաթագործությունը, դերձակությունը, կտավագործությունը, երկաթագործությունը, այլ ոլորտներ: Երկրագործության պարագայում իրերի դրությունը մի փոքր այլ էր: Այստեղ ավելի կարևորվում էր հարկահանության, շարունակական հալածանքների հարցը, ինչն այս ոլորտի զարգացման լուրջ խոչընդոտ էր: Մինչդեռ, ավելի նպաստավոր պայմաններում և հնարավորությունների ճիշտ օգտագործման դեպքում այս ոլորտում կարելի էր արձանագրել որոշակի հաջողություններ:

Քանալի բաներ՝ Արևմտյան Հայաստան, Վան, Բիթլիս, Մուշ, սոցիալ-տնտեսական իրավիճակ, ժողովրդագրական փոփոխություններ, համիդյան կոտորածներ:

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Армянское население провинций Ван и Битлис (Багеш)
Западной Армении в 1878-1914 гг. (анализ историко-
демографических факторов и социально-экономической
ситуации)

Резюме

Проблемы, связанные с историко-демографическими и социально-экономическими процессами в Западной Армении в конце XIX – начале XX века, имеют важное значение для

полного изложения истории Геноцида армян. В статье анализируются причины исторических, демографических и социально-экономических изменений в провинциях Ван и Битлис, а также их непосредственное влияние на различные сферы внутренней жизни западных армян.

Географическое расположение провинций Ван и Битлис, основные занятия и социальное положение армянского населения были схожи. Политические факторы, включая войны, особенно Русско-турецкую войну 1877–1878 гг., существенно изменили уклад жизни местного населения, оставив глубокий след в армянских поселениях. Важным фактором были также налоговая политика властей и особенно преследования курдских племен, которые достигли значительных масштабов во время и после гамидовских избиений. Эти обстоятельства существенно ухудшили положение армянского населения, создавая серьезные препятствия для их социальной и экономической стабильности. Все эти факторы значительно повлияли на развитие экономики провинции, которая оставалась в отсталом состоянии. Определенная экономическая активность поддерживалась благодаря торговле, ремесленному производству и сельскохозяйственной деятельности армян.

В провинциях Ван и Битлис ситуация в основном была схожей: ремесленные производства развивались преимущественно в городах, где армяне занимались производством товаров для местного рынка. В селах жители также занимались ремесленной деятельностью, но в основном для удовлетворения местных потребностей. Из ремесел в провинциях особенно развитыми были серебряное дело, портняжное дело, льняное производство, железоделие и другие отрасли.

В сельском хозяйстве ситуация была несколько иной: налоговые взыскания и постоянные преследования становились

серьезными препятствиями для развития этого сектора. Эти факторы негативно сказывались на производительности труда и условиях жизни крестьян. Тем не менее, при более благоприятных условиях и рациональном использовании имеющихся ресурсов сельское хозяйство могло бы демонстрировать заметные успехи.

Ключевые слова: Западная Армения, Ван, Битлис, Муш, социально-экономическая ситуация, демографические изменения, гамидовские избиения.