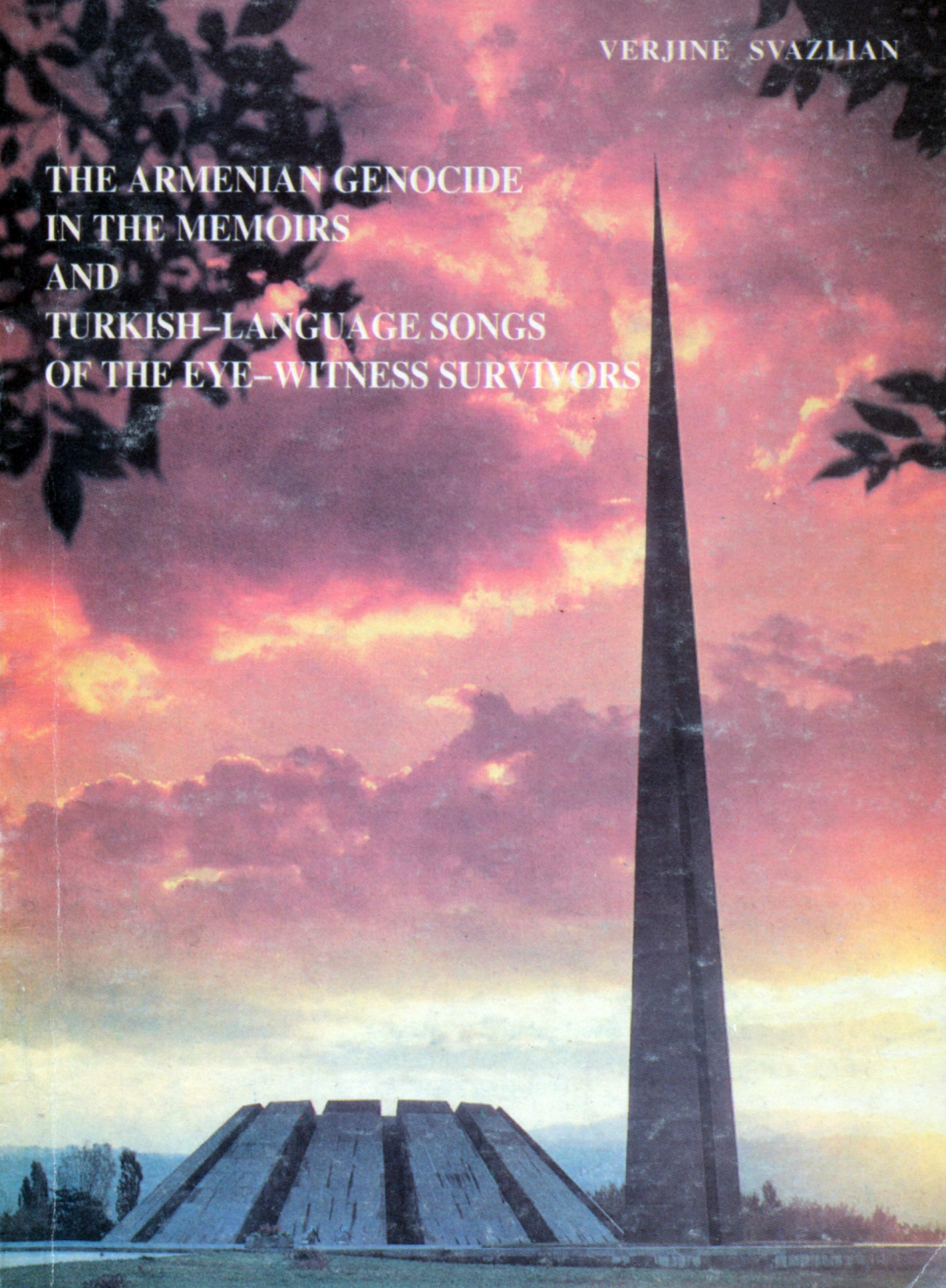


VERJINE SVAZLIAN

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE  
IN THE MEMOIRS  
AND  
TURKISH-LANGUAGE SONGS  
OF THE EYE-WITNESS SURVIVORS



REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
MUSEUM-INSTITUTE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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*Translated from the Armenian by  
TIGRAN TSULIKIAN*

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*The booklet includes the folk memoirs and Turkish-language songs of the 310 eye-  
witnesses miraculously rescued from the Armenian Genocide (1915) and exiled from West-  
ern Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia. Based upon historical and ethno-scientific data, the  
tragic life episodes of the Western Armenians, as well as their legitimate struggles for  
protecting their elementary right of survival are presented.*

*The booklet is intended for a wide circle of readers.*

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*Doctor of Philological Sciences, ethnographer Verjiné Svazlian  
writing down the tragic memoirs and songs  
narrated by the Genocide survivor, Mariam Baghdishian.*

### *Acknowledgments*

We wish to express our deep gratitude to all those, who, miraculously rescued from the Armenian Genocide and heroically facing cruel life conditions, have retained in their memory and have communicated us what they have seen and heard and thus saved from a total loss the collective historic reminiscences of the Western Armenians.

*The Author*

### *PREFACE*

A great number of scientific investigations, books and collections of official papers concerning the Armenian Genocide have been published in different languages, the great majority of which are based upon true historic documents. On the other hand, the memoirs and especially the popular songs (in particular, the Turkish-language songs) of the eye-witnesses rescued from the Genocide include, besides their poetic character, exact historical testimonies about those monstrous events; in spite of that, however, they have been almost condemned to inattention up to the present time. They are exact, because they have been created and narrated by ill-treated eye-witnesses, who have directly felt upon their own skin the horror of the massacres; they are, at the same time, vivid and emotional, since they reproduce the real experiences of the afflictions caused by the Genocide. In this respect, these specimens of oral tradition represent the historic reality in a deeper, more effectual and more impressive manner than the mere dull statistical facts and data of the official archival documents.

The ethnographer Dr. Prof. Verjiné Svazlian has, for a number of years, indefatigably investigated the memoirs and the Turkish-language folk songs depicting the events of the Genocide on the basis of the abundant materials (the original texts are summarized in the voluminous collections published recently: "Cilicia. The Oral Tradition of the Western Armenians". Yerevan, 1994 and "Genocide. Oral Evidences of the Western Armenians". Yerevan, 1995). She herself has written down from the aged male and female representatives of Western Armenians, who had witnessed and suffered the Genocide; moreover, she has skillfully put together their factual data with exact historical testimonies and has revealed the historical authenticity of the vivid

and emotional images of the reality reflected in the oral tradition.

These Turkish-language songs composed by the Western Armenians according to the idiomatic principles of the Turkish oral tradition, which are presented by the author with the original text and the adjoining translation, are the screams of the unheard-of suffering, of the protest, as well as of the heroic resentment of the people subjected to genocide, expressed with a live poetic language and images. They are new and undeniable testimonies addressed to the Turk historians and politicians of today who are denying the Genocide, in their own comprehensible language.

This study writes a new page in the history of the Armenian Genocide, it attests to the psychology of the afflictions of the Armenian people; it is of an extreme actuality owing to its contents and, especially in its English version, it will give the foreign readers and specialists access to the events of the Genocide from a new standpoint and its forthcoming publication will be the best gift for the 85th anniversary of the Genocide in the year 2000.

*Sarkis Harutyunian*  
*Editor, Doctor of Philological Sciences*

\* \* \*

During the past decades, interest toward the fatal events of the Armenian Genocide has grown, especially when Turkish historiographers tried to distort the true historical facts.

In this respect, the popular memoirs and songs of historical nature created under the immediate impression of the said events are, besides the published official documents, also of an important historico-cognitive value; nevertheless, they had almost not been written down and studied in Armenia for various reasons.

Beginning from the nineteen fifties, we have started, on our own initiative, to write down (and also to record) a great number of memoirs, diverse folklore materials and particularly historical talks and songs from the eye-witnesses rescued from the Genocide, deported from the Armenian-inhabited provinces of Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia and resettled in the Motherland. We have assembled the folklore materials concerning the Genocide in our twin books, whence the mentioned folklore materials are cited<sup>1</sup>.

Along with the memoirs (more than a hundred in number), written down from the deported-repatriated Western Armenians, numerous songs of historical nature have also been brought to light, which reproduce in a simple popular language the mobilization, the arm-collection, the deportation, the massacre and slaughter of more than 1.5 million Armenians organized by the Turkish government, as well as stirring and impressive episodes about the righteous and noble struggles of the Western Armenians.

These folklore songs have been created both in Armenian and in Turkish.

With regard to the Turkish-language songs, it should be mentioned that these songs are characterized by the following features:

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1. SYAZLIAN V., Moussa Dag. "Armenian Ethnography and Folklore", Vol.16, Yerevan, 1984; Cilicia. *The Oral Tradition of the Western Armenians*. Yerevan, 1994; *Genocide. Oral Evidences of the Western Armenians*. Yerevan. 1995 (in Armenian).

1. Created under the immediate impression of the appropriate historical events imposed on the western segment of the Armenian people, these songs are saturated with historicity.

2. Similar songs have been simultaneously created in different variants and modifications, a fact, which is an evidence of the popular character of these historic songs.

3. Although the said songs have been created in Turkish language, they are, however, of Armenian origin.

There are testimonies stating that in the past "those who pronounced an Armenian word had their tongues cut, consequently Armenians living in a number of towns of Cilicia (Sis, Adana, Tarson, Ayntap) and their environs had lost their mother tongue,"<sup>2</sup> or "the oppression and the persecution of the Turks were so severe that the Armenian-speaking Ayntap became Turkish-speaking like the other Armenian-inhabited principal towns of Asia Minor. And the last sharp, terrible blow to the Armenian speech came from the Yenicheris who mutilated the tongue of those speaking Armenian."<sup>3</sup>

The ethnographer Sarkis Haykouni, living at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, has described the political, economic and spiritual state of the Western Armenians of his period and has written: "The Armenian language was forbidden by Turk mullahs and the use of seven Armenian words was considered a blasphemy, for which a fine of five sheep was established."<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the popular Armenian song we have written down testifies also to that fact:

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

*Ah, alas!*

2. GALOUSTIAN Gr., *Marash or Guermanik and hero Zeytoun*. New York, 1934, p. 698 (in Armenian).

3. SARAFIAN G., *History of Armenians of Antep*. Vol. I. Los Angeles, 1953, p. 5 (in Armenian).

4. SVAZLIAN V., Sarkis Haykouni (Life and Work). "Armenian Ethnography and Folklore." Vol. 4. Yerevan, 1973, p. 35 (in Armenian).

*They opened her mouth and cut her tongue.*

*Ah, alas!*

since the school-mistress had dared to teach Armenian to the Armenian children.

The outrages became more violent during the forced deportations. It is not possible, of course, to exclude also the influences and the interactions of the spiritual cultures of the two peoples in the course of a prolonged co-existence.

The names of Armenian localities and people, Armenian words and expressions have been cited in these Turkish-language songs with their incomplete knowledge of the Turkish language.\*

These songs have been created at their appropriate time, they have been widely propagated, they have persisted passing from mouth to mouth and have been subjected to popular processing giving rise too different new versions.

All the arguments mentioned above provide grounds to ascertain that these Turkish-language folk songs of historical character have been created under urgent political circumstances representing the initial level of language amalgamation.

As for the narrators, they were Armenians exiled from their historical native cradle, who have been deported from Western Armenia (1915), Cilicia (1921) and from the Armenian localities of Anatolia (1922) as a result of the Genocide and the subsequent events.

\* In the original texts we have written down, it is possible, naturally, to observe deviations from the rules of Turkish language, as well as to encounter Armenian words and expressions in the Turkish sentences. It is distinctive, in this respect, that we have endeavoured to preserve in an unaltered form the information communicated by the narrators not only in its contents, but also in its form (language).

The materials communicated by the narrators are kept at the Folklore Archives of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, as well as at the Scientific Funds (Verjiné Svazlian Fund) of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.



As a consequence of these historical events, a considerable part of the Western Armenians has been annihilated, while those who have been rescued miraculously survived somehow, after being plundered and left destitute and exhausted on the roads of exile.

After surviving in different countries of the world, many of the eye-witnesses of these terrifying scenes have been repatriated to their Motherland, Armenia, from Constantinople, Greece, France, the Balkan countries, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and other colonies and settled in newly-built localities symbolizing the memory of their former native cradles such as Nor (New) Arabkir, Nor Kilikia, Nor Zeytoun, Nor Hadjn, Nor Marash, Nor Ayntap, Moussa Ler, Yedessia (Urfa) and others.

Numerous representatives of the senior generation of the repatriates (230 narrators), who were the eye-witnesses of that horrible tragedy, have remembered and told us with tears in their eyes their deplorable past and how the Turks had bestially cut to pieces their fathers and mothers and had violated their sisters.

Among our memorable narrators are Hovhannes Dudaklian and his wife Sima, Poghos Soopkukian, Serop and Grikor Gyozaian and Mariam Baghdishian from Moussa Dag, Karapet Tozlian, Hovsep Bshtikian, Eva Chulian and Gayané Atoorian from Zeytoun, Yevguiné Mayikian and Mayranoosh Vartian from Marash, Arshaluys and Hakop Djerdjians, Nuritsa Kyurkdjian and Gevork Hekimian from Ayntap, Claroohi Baharian and Gevork Gyozaian from Beylan, Khoren, Khacher and Nvart Ablabootians from Urfa, Satenik and Aharon Mankrians, Nazeni Satamian and Yervand Albarian from Hadjn, Soghomon Yetenekian from Mersin, Harutyun Alboyadjian from Fendedjak, Mariam Khalburdjian, Tagoochi and Garegin Turudjians from Harpoot, Azniv Teroonian from Tigranakert, Serpoohi and Petros Kikishians, Louise and Nazaret Varzhapetians from Arabkir, Satenik Guyumdjian from Konia, Armenik Yeganian from Van, Tagoochi Antonian from Bitlis, Siranoosh Tashdjian from Malatia, Sooren Sarkisian from Sebastia, Paytsar Yergat from Kayseri and many others from the Armenian-inhabited localities of Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia. Many

of them are deceased today; homage to their memory.

Following the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid's reign and the declaration of the 1908 Constitution, the Young Turks, who formed the government, adopted Sultan Hamid's massacre policy and professing the Pan-Turkish and Pan-Islamic ideology, endeavoured not only to preserve the Ottoman Empire, but also to annihilate and to amalgamate and turkize by force the Armenians and the other dependent peoples and to create a universal Pan-Turanic state.

Under these historico-political circumstances, the "Cilician night" was organized in 1909 in Adana, which remained in the memory of the Armenian people as "*Kıyma Adana*" (slaughtered Adana). Serpoohi Makarian (born in 1903) and Mikael Keshishian (born in 1904) from Adana have testified to that fact in their narratives.

The following popular song saturated with expressive depth and descriptiveness has been created under the immediate impressions of those historical events.

*Hey, çamlar, çamlar, al açık çamlar!  
Her güneş vurınca sakız damlar,  
Of, of, Adana ırmağı leş ilan kanlar!  
İşte geldim sana kıyma Adana.  
Of, of, işte gördüm size, kıyma çocuklar!*

*Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars,\*  
The resin drips every time the sun strikes,  
Alas! Adana River is full of corpses and blood,  
Behold! I've come to see you, slaughtered Adana,  
Alas! I've seen you, massacred children.*

This was essentially the beginning of Genocide, when the Young Turks feverishly prepared the total extermination of the Armenian people waiting for a propitious occasion. That occasion presented when the First World War burst out.

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

*Pencereden yel geliyor,  
Bak dışarı kim geliyor?*

*The wind is blowing from the window,  
Look who is coming from outside,*

*\* With a view to preserve the exact meaning of the songs, the verse metres have not been maintained (Translator).*

Deste-deşte gül geliyor,  
Ölüm bana zor geliyor,  
Uyan sultan, zalim uyan!  
Kan ağlıyor cümle cihan!

Bunches and bunches of roses are coming,  
Death is hard to bear for me,  
Wake up, sultan, tyrant sultan!  
The whole world is weeping blood!

The awakening of spring, the picturesque scene of the “bunches and bunches of roses” is in sharp contrast with the horror of death (war) and the indifference of the terrible sultan (*zalim sultan*), the ruler of the country, in regard to the people’s fate even at a time when “the whole world is weeping blood.”

In fact, it was a period when the greatest mischief for the Christians, including the Armenians, living in Turkey were the mobilization and the arm-collection. On the pretext of searching “arms,” the Turkish policemen ravaged the houses of the Armenians, plundered their properties, arrested and killed many of them. The following Turkish-Armenian song has been composed on the occasion of similar events.

- Ulan gâvur\*, doğru söyle:  
Senin martın var imiş?  
- Hayır, efendim! İftiradır.  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.

-Hey! gâvur\*, tell the truth,  
Have you got a gun?  
-No, Mister, it's a lie,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.

And adds secretly in Armenian:

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

- Ulan gâvur, doğru söyle:  
Sen Serop\*\* paşayı tanırsın?  
- Hayır, efendim! İftiradır.  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim.

-Hey! gâvur, tell the truth,  
Do you know Serop\*\* pasha?  
-No, Mister, it's a lie,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen.

\* Special word used by the Turks to denote Christians.

\*\*Armenian national hero.

And adds secretly in Armenian:

*I know, I won't tell,  
I won't betray the Armenian nation.*

Under the pretext of mobilization, Armenian males aged from 18 to 45 were included in labour battalions and killed in secluded places according to special governmental instructions. The memoir related by Gevork Zoolalian (born in 1907) from Chanak Kalé is a testimony to that fact.

The Armenian youth forcibly drafted to the Turkish army had the presentiment that “That was the road to death” and in fact “lots and lots of Armenians were there.”

Ana! uyandır beni, gideyim talime,  
Aynalı martini alayım elime,  
Gitmege doğru vatan yoluna,  
Buna ölüm yolu, derler,  
Allah saklasın!  
Ermeniler çokdur, derler,  
Allah kurtarsın!

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

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

Odalar yaptırdım bir ucdan uca,  
İçinde yatmadım bir gün, bir gecâ,  
Tivenkim çadırdı asıllı kaldı,  
Cehizim sandıkta basıllı kaldı,  
Konma, bülbül, konma mezartaşıma,  
Şu gençlikte neler geldi başıma!

I had rooms built end to end,  
I didn't sleep in them a day, a night,  
My gun remained hanging in the tent,  
My dowry remained folded in the trunk,  
Don't perch, nightingale, don't perch on my grave stone,  
I had a lot of misfortunes in my youth!



And the mobilized Armenian young man implored the cruel Tcherkess to show mercy to him, otherwise "his new fiancée would become a widow."

Kıyama, çerkez, kıyama tatlı canıma: Tcherkess, spare my sweet life,  
Yeni nişanım var karalar bağlar. I have a new fiancée; she will be bound in black.

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

Tuzlu olur Stanbulun fıstığı, The hazelnut of Istanbul is salty,  
Taştan olur ermeninin yastığı, The cushion of the Armenian is stony,  
Kör olasın şu meydanın dostluğu\*, Cursed be this sham friendship\*,  
Aldılar nazlı yarım, duyan ağlasın, They abducted my beloved, let the hearer cry,  
Aman, aman, mayrik\*\*! Alas, alas, mayrik\*\*!

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

Haniya da benim tuz ekmeği yiyenler, Where are those who have eaten my salt and bread?  
"Ehbap ölmeden, ben ölürüm" diyenler. And those who said "let me die before my friend does."

Meanwhile his faithful Armenian friends

Tıglik\*\*\* Sarkis\*\*\*, Teghlik(jan) Sarkis\*\*\* and  
Taslak\*\*\* Misak\*\*\* vurulmuş, Taslak(jan) Missak\*\*\* were killed.

The Armenian soldier himself was imprisoned:

\* It concerns the Constitution proclaimed (but not realized) in 1908 by the Turkish government.

\*\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish version.

\*\*\* Armenian name.

Mapushanede üstümüze damlıyor.

It's dripping on us in the prison.

And his kinsfolk:

Anam da baş üstüne ağlıyor, My mother is weeping over my head,  
Beçara nişanım karalar bağlıyor. My poor fiancée is tying black.

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

Varın söyleyin anneme-damda yatmasın, Tell my mother not to sleep on the roof,  
Toros\* oğlum gelir diye And not to look at the road expecting her son  
yola bakmasın, Toros\* to return,  
Anama deyin-boğçam açmasın, Tell my mother not to open my bundle of clothes,  
Çuha şalvarıma uşkur dakmasın, And not to pass a cord to my woolen breeches,  
Gayrı ben silama varamaz oldum, I am already not able to help my Motherland,  
İskuhi\* nişanımı göremez oldum, Unable to see my fiancée Iskoohi\*,  
Daracık sokaktan geçirmez oldum. And not able to come out of this narrow path.

And the mother of the Armenian soldier cursed the mobilization, which was more like a massacre, since the young Armenians went away with the spring roses and nightingales, only forever:

Kör olasın sen, Enver paşa! You should lose your sight, Enver pasha,  
Ermeni cahel kalmadı, No more Armenian youths are left,  
Gitti gül, gitti bülbül, The rose and the nightingale went away,  
ne diyelim! what should I say,  
İster ağla, ister gül, ne diyelim! You may cry, you may laugh, what should I say.

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

\* Armenian name.

*Talaat paşa eşek gibi,  
Bıyıkları yular gibi.*

*Talaat pasha like an ass,  
His moustaches long as reins.*

The arrest of the Armenian intellectuals followed the mobilization and the arm-collection: it pursued the purpose of depriving the Armenian nation not only of its fighting force, but also of its leading mind. Almost all the intellectuals of Constantinople were arrested in one night and sent to the deserts of Mesopotamia and exterminated. Among them were the well-known lawyer, member of the Ottoman Parliament and writer, Grikor Zohrab, the poet Daniel Varoozhan, the historian-novelist Smbat Burat, the physicians Nazaret Taghavarian and Rouben Sevak, the great composer Komitas and many others.

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

In the vilayet of Van involved in war operations, the Turks had time, until the progress of the Russian troops, to exterminate on the spot thousands of Armenians and when the Russian army entered Van, accompanied by the Armenian writers Hovhannes Toumanian and Alexander Shirvanzadé, they became witnesses of bewildering scenes. "Nails had been hammered into the forehead of children," wrote H. Toumanian in his memoirs, "various body parts of live people had been cut and arranged in different patterns; games had been invented: people had been put below the waist in cauldrons and boiled so that the live half could see and feel...; they had cut with red-hot iron bars the various parts of the body and roasted them on fire; they had roasted live people; they had massacred children before the eyes of parents and parents before the eyes of children."<sup>5</sup>

And when the Russian troops retreated, a great number of Armenians,

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5. TOUMANIAN H., *Works*. Vol. 6. Yerevan, 1959, pp. 212-213 (in Armenian).

who had heroically fought in the self-defensive combats of Van, Sassoun, Moush, Shatakh, Shapin-Garahissar and other localities, migrated after them to Eastern Armenia.

The atrocities had grown to an unspeakable extent also in Harpoot, Pontos, Malatia, Diarbekir, in the Armenian-inhabited localities of Western and Central Anatolia: Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia and elsewhere. They exterminated everybody with an inexpressible cruelty, not sparing even the infants.

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

The Baghdad railway, which had a particular economic importance, passed through Armenian-populated Cilicia. This circumstance troubled the Turkish government, since the laborious and active Armenians living in Cilicia could, by their prosperous state, become predominant in Turkey's economy. The Armenian villages and settlements were scattered in mountainous Cilicia from Hadjn, Zeytoun to Deurtyol and their populations, although engaged in silk-production, carpet-making and other national handicrafts, had a sufficiently enlightened new generation owing to the presence of Armenian and foreign schools and colleges. Besides, the outrages and the massacres, which had started in many provinces of Turkey connected with the promised, but not realized, "Reforms" following the Russian-Turkish war in 1877-1878, had not completely exterminated the naturally freedom-loving Cilicians. Zeytoun, the eagle-nest of Cilicia, had, for a long time, become the burning-point of Turkish tyranny and it was high time to square accounts with the bold inhabitants of Zeytoun as well. The details of these events were divulged in the narratives of the eye-witness survivors from Zeytoun, Karapet Tozlian (born in 1903), Hovsep Bshtikian (born in 1903), Eva Chulian (born in 1903), Sedrak Gaybakian (born in 1903) and Gayané Atoorian (born in 1909).

The Cilicians, who were the worthy inheritors of the last Armenian Kingdom (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries) and had glorious traditions of the national-emancipatory struggle of the past, could once again fight in self-sacrifice, but this plan was hindered by the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahak Khabayan and many other Armenian notables, who, deceived by the false promises of

the Turkish government, called the Armenians to obedience, arguing that "a little movement could endanger all the Armenian population of the provinces of Turkey." The voluminous ballad "The black message came from the Catholicos" ("Gatoğosdan geldi kara haberi.") we have written down relates also about this fact. The government, as elsewhere, had collected in Cilicia the arms of the Armenians, had drafted the young men into the Turkish army, while the cruel officers and policemen robbed and plundered the helpless people and violated the Armenian girls and women. Unable to endure these humiliations, about twenty young men of Zeytoun, under the leadership of Panos Chakerian, had recourse to self-defence and opened fire. On the following day 300 notables of Zeytoun were carried enchained to Marash, some of which were sent to the gallows by the Turks and the rest were exiled. Thereafter Zeytoun was ravaged.

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

*Sürgünlük çıktı, köy boşandı,  
Benim kıymetli malımı türklere kaldı,  
Çoluk-çocuk yolcu olduk,  
Alan-talanı başladı.*

*The exile started, the village was deserted,  
My valuable possessions were left to the Turks,  
We set out infant and old,  
Robbery and plunder started.*

The armless, leaderless and helpless Armenian people were driven, with tearful eyes, from their native flourishing homes under the strokes of whips and bayonets. The genocidal policy initiated by the Turkish government had embraced almost all the Armenian-inhabited localities. The extermination of the Armenians was realized both on the spot and in the places of exile, in the deserts of Mesopotamia, especially in Deyr-el-Zor and Ras-ul-Ayn.

According to the information provided by our narrators, the massacre began in April, on Easter Sunday, the day of the crucifixion of Christ, so that the Armenians, too, would be worthy of the Passion of Christ. "The Armenians will dye their Easter eggs with their own blood," said the Turks, while

the affliction of the Armenians, turned into a song, resounded in a heart-breaking manner:

*Zatik-kiraki\* çadır söktüler,  
Bütün ermenileri çöle döktüler,  
Keçi gibi ermenileri kestiler,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!*

*They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki\*,  
They filled the Armenians into the desert,  
They slaughtered the Armenians like goats,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

And the indescribable tortures of the Armenians began:

*Ağaçlardan kuş uçtu,  
Yandı yürek tutuştu.  
Yanma, yüreğim, yanma!  
Bu ayrılık bize düştü,  
Bu muhacirlik bize düştü,  
Bu derzorlik\*\* bize düştü.*

*The birds flew away from the trees,  
My heart is on fire, blazing,  
Don't burn, my heart, don't burn,  
This separation was our fate,  
This emigration was our fate,  
This derzorlik\*\* was our fate.*

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

*Der Zor gidersem, gelemem belki,  
Ne ekmek, ne su ölürüm belki.*

*If I go to Deyr-el-Zor, I won't return may be,  
Without bread, without water I'll die may be.*

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

*Der Zor varmadan ermeni  
muhacirin oturmuş  
Hongur-hongur ağlıyor.*

*Before getting to Deyr-el-Zor,  
the Armenian exile sat,  
And cried his heart out,*

\* The Armenian words Zatik-Kiraki (Easter Sunday) have been used in the Turkish version.

\*\* Exile to Deyr-el-Zor.

**because the condition of the Armenian people was horrible:**

**Der Zor çölünde üç ağaç incir,  
Elimde-kelepçe, boynumda-zincir,  
Zincir kımıldadııkca-yüreğim incir.  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!**

**Three fig-trees in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
Handcuffs on my hands, a chain on my neck,  
My heart aches every time the chain moves,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!**

**The deported Armenians passed this death road barefoot and bloodstained, with thirsty lips under the scorching sun:**

**Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil,  
Kurşına düzdüler elli bin kişi:  
Meraktan döküldü milletin dişi,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!**

*Green grass did not grow in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
Fifty thousand persons were shot down,  
The people's teeth fell down from affliction,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

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

**Der Zor çölünde bürüdü duman,  
Amanım, yaman, hallerim yaman!  
İnsan ve yeşil boyandı kana  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!**

*The desert of Deyr-el-Zor was covered with mist,  
Alas! Alas! Our condition was lamentable,  
People and grass were stained with blood,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**The Armenian people were exterminated ruthlessly:**

**Der Zor çölünde çürüdüm kaldım,  
Karğalara tahin oldum, kaldım,  
Oy anam, oy anam,  
*halımız yaman!*  
Der Zor çöllerinde kaldığım zaman.**

*I rotted and remained in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
I remained and became a meal for the crows,  
Alas, mother! Alas, mother!*

*Our condition was lamentable  
At the time we were in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor.*

**Lonely and helpless were the Armenian people in their distress:**

**Der Zor çölünde yaralı çokdır,  
Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yokdur,**

*There are many wounded in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
Don't come, doctor, don't come, it's useless.*

~ 20 ~

**Allahdan başka kimseimiz yoktur,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!**

***We have no one but the Lord Himself,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith.***

**The mournful song of the Armenian people was changed into a prayer:**

**Çıka-çıkla çıktım yokuş başına,  
Neler geldi ermeninin başına!  
Hızor\* allah, hızor\*, yetiş!  
Ermeni milletini kurtar, geçir!**

*I climbed and rose to the top of the mountain,  
So many misfortunes fell on the Armenians,  
Hzor\* God, hzor,\* help us!  
Deliver the Armenian people, save us!*

The tragic condition of the people was contrasted with the radiant beauty of the nature:

**Sabahtan çıktım, güneş parlıyor,  
Osmanlı askyarı silah yağlıyor,  
Ermeniye baktım - yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!**

*I woke up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

**The desert air was saturated with the stench of corpses:**

**Der Zorun içinde nâneler biter,  
Geberinin kokusu dünyaya yeter,  
Bu sürgünlük bize ölümden beter,  
Dininin udrına ölen ermeni!**

*Mint has grown in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,  
This exile is worse than death for us,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!*

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

**Der Zorun içinde zincirli kuyu,  
Ermeniler içtiler zehirli suyu.**

*A well with a chain in Deyr-el-Zor,  
The Armenians drank the poisonous water.*

The social evil was complicated with a spontaneous one: the typhoid epidemic:

\* The Armenian word "hzor" (almighty) has been used in the Turkish version.

~ 21 ~

Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,  
Ermeni muhaciri tifoya düşmüş,  
Oy anam, oy anam,

halımız yaman!

Der Zor çölüne bulduğum zaman.

A row of apricot-trees in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
The Armenian exiles were infected with typhoid,  
Alas, mother! Alas, mother!

Our condition was lamentable,

At the time we were in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor.

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

Der Zor çölündâ uzanmış, yatmış,  
Kellesi yokdur, ki yüzüne bakayım.

He was sprawling, lying in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
He had no head so that I could see his face.

And their dull sighs of agony were heard:

Der Zor varınca koptu kıyamet,  
Bu kadar muhacir kime emanet?  
Ermeniye baktım-yaman ağlıyor,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!

The world turned upside-down in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
Who are so many exiles entrusted to?  
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

The corpses of the Armenians "dying for the sake of faith" were scattered everywhere and the Ottoman soldiers had become "butchers."

Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen kelleler gelmez hesaba,  
Osmanlı efratı dönmüş kasaba,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!

The place called Deyr-el-Zor was a big locality,  
Where there were uncountable cut heads,  
The Ottoman chiefs had become butchers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

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

Gide-gide, gidmez oldu dizlerim,  
Ağla-ağla, görmez oldu gözlerim,

Walking and walking, my legs were unable to move,  
Crying and crying, my eyes were unable to see,

Amanım, yaman halım pek yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.

Alas! Alas! My condition was too lamentable,  
At the time I was in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor.

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

-Şu dağın ardında ermeni kızı var,  
Gidin, bakın çantasında nesi var?  
-Güzel gözleri var,  
Sırma saçları var.

-There is an Armenian girl on the side of this mountain,  
Go and see what she's got in her bag?  
-She has beautiful eyes,  
She has silky hair.

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

Sabahtan kalktım kapı kapalı,  
Binbaşı geliyor eli zopalı,  
Uğruna bırakmış kör ve topalı,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!

I got up in the morning and found the door closed,  
The major came, a club in his hand,  
The blind and the lame spread before him,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

Karapet Mkrtchian, an eighty-year old Armenian from Tigranakert (born in 1910) has narrated us with emotion and with a trembling voice the images impressed on his childhood memory, murmuring at the same time the following lines:

Der Zor geldi bir Şekir paşa,  
Atını bağladı delikli taş,  
Ermeni sığmadı dağ ilan taş:  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!

A certain Shekir pasha came to Deyr-el-Zor,  
He tied his horse to the hollow stone,  
No room was left for the Armenians in the valley,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

"On the way to Deyr-el-Zor," he has continued, "they detached us, the children, and led us toward the valley and put us in a line. The adults were about three to four hundred and we, the children, were nearly as many. They made us sit on the green field; we didn't know what would happen next.

Breaking the line, my mother came several times to us, she kissed and kissed us and went back. We, my elder brother, my one-year old younger brother and myself, saw from a distance a row of women moving about, among which was our mother. When we came out of our house, our mother was dressed in national costume, a velvet dress embroidered with gold, her head was adorned with gold coins, on her neck was a golden chain, twenty-five gold coins were secretly sewn inside her dress on each side. When my mother came for the last time and kissed us like a madwoman, I remember, she was clad only in her white undergarments, there were no ornaments, no gold, and no velvet clothes.... We, the children, were unaware of the events happening there. In reality, they had taken off their clothes one after the other, had arranged the garments on one side, they had divested all the people of their robes, and they had cut their heads with an axe and had thrown them in the valley.... My mother came for the last time, kissed us and went away. In fact, she had given a yellow gold coin to the sentry every time she came to see us, her three little children, and to kiss us...."

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

*Sabahtan çıktım, çantama baktım,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya boynuma dağdım,  
Malımı-mülkümü devlete sattım,  
Haşlıgım tükendi, evlâdım sattım.*

*I got up in the morning and looked at my bag,  
Crying and lamenting I hung it from my neck,  
I gave all my possessions to the State,  
My money was consumed, my son given away.*

The 85-year-old Grikor Gyoalian (born in 1903) remembered with a feeling of infinite gratitude the kind old Christian-Arab woman from the village of Muhardi near the town of Hama, who distributed in secret every evening the rice she had cooked and the pieces of bread thrust in her belt to the Armenian orphans lying exhausted under the walls and then disappeared secretly in the darkness. The same fact has also taken a poetical form in the following song, where the child-deprived mother hurried to find her children sheltered in the Arab village:

*Yol ver, Habur\*, yol ver, geçeyim çölü, Khaboor\*, make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
Evlâdım çıs - çıplak arabın köyü. My child is in the Arab village, bare and naked.*

"It so happened," has narrated Harutyun Alboyadjian (born in 1904) from Fendedjak, "that the boys were put to flight, circumcised, forced to speak only Turkish, while the girls were raped, then either killed or taken as a wife for the purpose of ennobling their race."

There are numerous cases of forced apostasy in the historical testimonies we have registered.

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

*Türkler başladı evlad kaçmaya,  
Analar kıymadı üzû öpmeye,  
Baktım ki gizlice ağlıyor yaman,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermenil*

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

"It happened also," Eva Chulian (born in 1903) from Zeytoun has narrated, "that they kidnapped the children or the daughters from the mothers, they raped the young brides and the girls and then, tying them up, threw them into the valley or into dried wells and, setting fire to them, burned them all."

*Hayatın çeşmeyi buz gibi akar,  
Türk bacıları çadırdan bakar,*

*Ice-cold water is flowing from the fountain in the yard,  
Turkish women are looking at us from the tent,*

\* River flowing near Deyr-el-Zor.

Ermeni geliyor elleri bağla:  
Analar ağlıyor - çocuğum deyi,  
Gelinler ağlıyor - hocamım deyi,  
Kızlar ağlıyor - namusum deyi.

Armenians are coming with hands bound,  
Mothers are crying over their children,  
Brides are crying over their husbands,  
Girls are crying over their honour.

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

Der Zor köprüsü dar dır-geçilmez,  
Kan olmuş sular-bir tas içilmez,  
Anadan, babadan vaz geçilmez,  
Dininin uğrına ölen ermeni!  
The bridge of Deyr-el-Zor is narrow and impassable,  
The water is bloody and undrinkable,  
It is hard to part with one's mother and father,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

It should be supposed that during this indescribable tumult, the parentless, helpless orphan children themselves have written the words of the following song:

Der Zor çölünde şaşıldım, kaldım,  
Yitirdim anamı, yitirdim babamı,  
Vay anam, vay anam, halımız yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.  
I stayed confused in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
I lost my mother and father there,  
Alas, mother! Alas, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor.

Or something more horrible had happened: they were compelled to leave on the road their aged parents who were unable to walk and to continue their way to death with tearful eyes and under the shower of whip strokes of the Turkish policemen. These details have been narrated and sung by Gayané Atoorian (born in 1909), a woman from the town of Zeytoun with a tattoo on her face and by many others:

Der Zor çölünde yoruldum, kaldım,  
Anamı, babamı yolda bıraktım,  
Vay anam, vay anam, halımız yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.  
I stayed weary in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor,  
I left on the road my father and mother,  
Alas, mother! Alas, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Deyr-el-Zor.

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

Yeşil kurban olayım geçen günlere, mayrik*!	Let me be a tender sacrifice to the past days, mayrik,*
Kırıldı kanatlarım, kaldım çölerde, mayrik*!	My arms were crumbled, I was left in the desert, mayrik,*
Anasız, babasız, mayrik*!	Without mother, without father, mayrik,*
Düştüm diyar kurbette, mayrik*!	I found myself in alien places, mayrik,*
Ya ben ağlamayım, mayrik*!	If I don't cry, mayrik,*
Kimler ağlasın, mayrik*?	Who will cry then, mayrik*?

That is why, in order not to deny their faith, not to become the wife of a Turk and not to bear Turkish children, the Armenian girls "threw themselves hand in hand into the river Euphrates," sang the memorable narrator Mariam Baghdishian and, remembering her sad childhood, wiped her tears:

Giden, giden ermeni kızları! Bir gün ölüm bize düşer, Düşmana avrat olmamaya, Yepratın içinde ölüm bulayım..	Armenian girls going, going, One day death will come upon us, Before becoming the enemy's wife, Let us find our death in the Euphrates.
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Soghomon Yetenekian (born in 1900) from Mersin has narrated us in his memoirs: "Three to four hundred people untied their belts, fastened themselves together and one after the other jumped into the river Euphrates; the current of the river could not be seen then, the corpses had risen to the surface and were piled up one upon the other like a fortress; the dogs got enraged by eating human flesh."

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

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish version.



Der Zor çöleri taşlıdır-geçilmez,  
Yepnat getin\* sular acıdır -  
Bir tas içilmez!  
Ermeni kan ile su da içilmez.

The desert of Deyr-el-Zor is stony and impassable,  
The waters of the Euphrates get\* are bitter,  
You can't drink a single cup,  
You can't drink water mixed with the blood of Armenians.

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

Meyvasız ağaclar meyvaya döndü,  
Muhacir gidenin yarısı dönmedi.

The fruitless trees became laden with fruits,  
Half of the exiles did not come back.

The people in despair have expressed their fury with malediction:

Şu muhacirlik icat eden  
Cennet yüzü görmesin!

Let the person who planned this deportation  
Be not worthy of paradise!

Or

Şu sürgünlük icat eden  
Cehennem yoluna kurban olsun!

Let the person who planned this exile  
Be sacrificed on the road to hell!

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

Atım bağladım delikli taşa,  
Kör olasın sen, Enver paşa!  
Sen olamayısın, sen gebereyisın,  
Şun\*\* - Talaat paşa!  
Ermenileri dağıttın dağlarda, taşa.

I tied my horse to the hollow stone,  
You should lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
You shouldn't have been born, you should perish,  
Shoon\*\* - Talaat pasha!  
You dispersed the Armenians in mountains and deserts.

\* The Armenian word "get" (river) has been used in the Turkish version.

\*\* The Armenian word "shoon" (dog) has been used in the Turkish version.

The deportation and the massacre had already embraced not only Western Armenia and Cilicia, but also the Armenian-inhabited localities of Eastern and Central Anatolia, in other words, the entire Ottoman Turkey.

The executioner of the Armenian people, Talaat pasha, was insolently boasting that he had solved the Armenian problem in a few months, something Sultan Hamid himself had been unable to do for decades.

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

In July of the same year (1915) almost all the inhabitants of the seven villages of Moussa Dagħ decided not to obey to the order of the disastrous deportation.

Movses Panossian (born in 1885), the 104-year-old participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagħ has communicated us the oath of the inhabitants of Moussa Dagħ: "I was born here, I will die here. I will not go to die as a slave; I will die here the gun in my hand, but I will not become an emigrant." This historical event has also been confirmed by Movses Balabanian (born in 1891) and Hovhannes İpredjian (born in 1896), who had also taken part in the heroic battle of Moussa Dagħ.

Everybody was filled with the feeling of protest and vengeance. Men and women, children and old people left their properties and ascended the unapproachable summit of Moussa Dagħ to withstand the attack and to fight against the innumerable soldiers of the enemy. During fifty-three days violent battles were fought under the command of Yessayi Yaghoobian, Petros Demlakian and Tigran Andreassian. Four serious battles took place during this period. The enemy concentrated new forces to chastise the rebellious Armenians. The provisions and armaments of the Moussa Dagħ people were exhausted. Being in despair and hoping to receive aid from the sea they joined white bedsheets together, they wrote on one of them "The Christians are in danger, save us!" and on the other they drew the sign of salvation of the Red Cross and displayed them on the mountain slope overlooking the sea.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, the French battleship "Guichen" passing off-shore in the Mediterranean Sea noticed them and slowed down its course. With a metallic box, containing a petition written in foreign language and hung from his neck, Movses Greguian jumped into the sea. He reached the ship swimming and, crossing himself, presented the letter to the captain. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, the French steamship "Jeanne d'Arc," escorted by British battleships, approached Moussa Dagħ and taking on more than four thousand inhabitants of Moussa Dagħ, transported them to Port-Said, where they were sheltered under tarpaulin tents.

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

The survivors still remember the way they learned the Armenian alphabet by writing the letters on the hot sands of the desert up to the time when the Siswan school, established by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, began to operate in some tents, in addition to the hospital and the orphanage.

The heroic Moussa Dagħ people who have fought for their freedom have poetically described their exploit as follows:

*Osmanlının askıyaları,  
Musa dağın igitları,  
Gelin, kızlar, çocukları,  
Uyan, musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!*

*The Ottoman soldiers,  
The braves of Moussa Dagħ,  
The brides and girls, the children,  
Wake up, denizen of Moussa Dagħ, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world.*

*Osmanlının bombaları,  
Musa dağın metanları,  
Bin - binlerce toplan,  
Uyan, musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!*

*The Ottoman bombs,  
The strongholds of Moussa Dagħ,  
The shells in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, denizen of Moussa Dagħ, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world.*

*Fransızın vapurları,  
Musa dağın duvaları,*

*The big French steamships,  
The prayers of the Moussa Dagħ people,*

*Bin- binlerce çocukları,  
Uyan, musadağlı, uyan!  
Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!\**

*Children in thousands and thousands,  
Wake up, denizen of Moussa Dagħ, wake up!  
You became famed all over the world.\**

The heroic battle of Moussa Dagħ shook the world; it demonstrated to the world the immense capabilities of a handful of people who have heroic traditions, freedom-loving souls and unanimous will power.

In his book "The Forty Days of Moussa Dagħ," Franz Werfel has artistically depicted in vivid colours the exploit of the Moussa Dagħ people. However, the world did not pay attention in due time to the alarm raised by the famous Austrian writer and a greater evil, Fascism, was born.

Subsequently, the heroic self-defence of Urfa was organized in October, 1915, under the command of Mkrtitch Yotnekhpayrian and Harutyun Rastkelenian. The whole Armenian population of Urfa rose; they fought like one man for twenty-five days and nights uninterruptedly.

*Urfa büyük-ayrılmaz,  
Dibi gayım-dağılmaz,  
Urfanın igitları  
Hiç bir yere bulunmaz.*

*Urfa is large; it cannot be separated,  
Its ground is firm; it cannot be dispersed,  
The braves of Urfa,  
Are alone of their kind.*

Nevertheless, the Turkish government sent a regular army and cruelly suppressed the resistance of the devoted heroes of Urfa. These historical events have been narrated by two of the survivors of Urfa, Khoren (born in 1893) and Nvart (born in 1903) Ablabutians.

In the days of the First World War, in 1916, two of the allied countries, England and France, had signed a secret agreement (Sikes-Picaud) that, in case of the defeat of Turkey, Cilicia, having two millions six hundred thousand hectares of arable and fertile lands, would pass under the supervision of France. The English and French authorities had agreed with the Armenian National delegation that, if the Armenian volunteers would fight against Tur-

*6. SVAZLLAN V. Moussa Dagħ. "Armenian Ethnography and Folklore." Vol. 16. Yerevan, 1984, p. 132 (in Armenian).*

key, the Armenians would enjoy ample political rights after the victory and the Armenian volunteers would constitute the garrison of the towns of the newly-formed Autonomous Armenian Cilicia.

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

The Armenian volunteers, filled with a feeling of vengeance for their innocent martyred kinsfolk and defying death, defeated the Germano-Turkish armies and won the magnificent victory of Arara, near Palestine. The French command-in-chief praised the brave Armenian legionaries. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 1918, General Allenby sent a telegram to the President of the Armenian delegation, Nubar Pasha, saying: "I am proud to have the Armenian regiment under my command. They fought courageously and had a great share in the victory."<sup>7</sup>

The treaty of Sèvres, signed after the war in 1920, provided that the Entente countries should establish a supervision over Cilicia and that the Turkish troops should have been already evacuated from Cilicia.

Encouraged by these events, numerous Armenian exiles, miraculously rescued from Deyr-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn and other living cemeteries, gradually returned and re-established in Cilicia. With hope and faith with regard to the future, they began to restore the ravage and to cultivate the abandoned orchards. The Turks, however, succeeded in coming to an agreement with the Allied states and urged the French to evacuate their peace-maintaining forces from Cilicia.

Ignoring the Treaty of Sèvres and taking advantage of the indecision and weakness of the French military administration, the Turkish forces and the local bandits directed their arms towards the Armenian population of Cilicia: starting from January 1920, they launched an attack on the Armenian localities of Cilicia.

7. KELESHIAN M., *Sis-Register. Beyrouth, 1949, p. 599 (in Armenian).*

During the violent battle which lasted for twenty-two days, the eleven thousand Armenians of the town of Marash were slaughtered and burned to ashes:

*Maraşa Maraş derler, yaman, yaman!  
Maraş, bu nasıl Maraş derler?  
Maraşın içinde kilise yanar,  
Kilise içinde ermeni yanar!*

*Marash is called Marash, alas!  
Marash, how do they call you Marash?  
When they burn a church in Marash,  
And they burn Armenians in the church.*

One of the eye-witnesses of these tragic events, Yevguiné Mayikian (born in 1898), has narrated us how the thick grease of the burnt Armenians flowed down the threshold of the Forty Martyrs' Church built on a hilltop. Subsequently, the living eight thousand residents of Marash, together with six thousand Armenians from Urfa were forcibly deported to Aleppo, Damascus, Beyrouth, Jerusalem, Baghdad and to the regions of Anatolia found under Greek domination.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1920, the Turks besieged Ayntap. The life of about ten thousand Armenian refugees from Ayntap and eight thousand from Sebastia, who had just re-established and found peace there after the end of war and the armistice, became once more turbulent. A self-defensive resistance centre was created on the spot under the leadership of Adoor Levonian. These historical events have been narrated by Gevork Hekimian (born in 1937), who communicated us the following song he had heard from his mother:

*Adur paşa! Kalk seni,  
Çam çırayı, yak seni,  
Türkler hücum ediyor,  
Kamavorlar\* arş edin!*

*Adoor pasha, wake up!  
Drop your bombs, quick!  
The Turks are attacking,  
Charge with your kamavors\*.*

In the meantime, the commander-in-chief of the occupation of Cilicia, Gozan oghlu Doghan bey, besieged with his innumerable soldiers the town

\* The Armenian word "kamavor(s) - kamavor(lar)" (volunteers) has been used in the Turkish version.

of Hadjn; the town had initially an Armenian population of 30-35 thousand, of which only six thousand had been rescued from the Genocide.

*Doghan bey de geldi girdi Hacina,  
Yazık oldu sana, Koca Hacin,  
Orada Kapişti epeyi bizim malımız,  
Ayak altına gitti tüm bizim namusumuz,  
canımız.*

*Doghan bey came and entered Hadjn,  
How regrettable for you, immense Hadjn,  
Our possessions were pillaged there,  
Our honour and soul were trampled  
down there.*

In the enemy's opinion, the destruction of the Armenian citadel of Cilicia, Hadjn, and the extermination of the Armenians presented no difficulty whatsoever. The inhabitants of Hadjn, however, were resolute. They formed the superior council of the self-defence of Hadjn under the leadership of Karapet Chalian and elected as the defence-commandant officer Sarkis Djebedjian, General Andranik's comrade-in-arms. Hadjn and its environs were divided into four defence regions. Trenches were dug. Everybody was in fighting trim. The 132 guns were distributed to the 1200 males aged 16-50, who were capable of taking up arms. Subsequently, 300 more guns were obtained, but these were also insufficient to fight against the Turkish army, which was armed with the inexhaustible Bolshevik ammunition. This fact was testified also in the memoir narrated by Hovsep Bshtikian (born in 1903) from Zeytoun.

That is why the Hadjn people, who were in great need of arms, waited impatiently for the help expected from abroad through the National Union of Adana; the help included not only arms and ammunition, but also new fighting forces. Nevertheless, no help was received and the condition of the population of Hadjn became desperate. The lack of ammunition distressed the heroic people of Hadjn and famine compelled them to eat dogs, cats and mice. This fact has been narrated by Aharon Mankrian (born in 1903), a survivor from Hadjn. Meanwhile, the enemy concentrated new forces. The French military representatives conducted an equivocal policy and, though they had promised to provide provisions and ammunition for the self-defence of Hadjn, they not only broke their promise, but informed also the Turks

about the organization of the self-defensive plan of the Armenians. After prolonged and obstinate battles and a heroic resistance which lasted for eight months, the Turkish forces were able to destroy and to burn down all the stone houses of Hadjn by artillery cannonade. Hundreds of valorous combatants fell on the fortifications, thousands of Hadjn denizens were cruelly massacred; only 380 persons succeeded to accomplish a breakthrough and escaped the terrible encirclement of fire.

The town of Ayntap, which had heroically resisted intermittently for 314 days, was captured by the enemy, as well as the ancient capital of Cilicia, Sis, the heroic town of Zeytoun, the town with a historic past, Tarson, the commercial centre Adana and various other localities of Cilicia inhabited with Armenians, since the French government, breaking its obligations as an ally, handed Cilicia over to Turkey by an agreement signed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1921, in Ankara, condemning the Armenian population of Cilicia to the danger of massacre.

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

After the forcible deportation of the Armenian population of Cilicia, it was the turn of the Armenians of Anatolia, whose majority had been ruthlessly massacred during the Genocide in 1915 and those who were miraculously saved continued their existence in the Armenian-inhabited localities under Greek domination and especially in Izmir.

In 1922, the Turks burnt down also the Armenian and Greek quarters of Izmir, driving the Christians to the seashore.

Smbyl Berberian (born in 1909) from the town of Afiongarahissar has sung with tearful eyes the following dirge relating about this mass tragedy:

*Karadenizde - fırtına,  
Al ırtını sırtına,*

*A terrible storm on the Black Sea,  
Take your property on your back,*



Mayrik\*, düşman geliyor!  
Kızın kalmış yoluna.

Mayrik\*, the enemy is coming.  
Your daughter was left on the road.

That horrible event, which was accompanied by pitiless plunder and massacre, has been recorded in the memory of western Armenians as the "calamity of Izmir." An eye-witness of these events, Arpiné Bartikian (born in 1909) from Afiongarahissar remembered with emotion that the Turks had burned the Armenian quarter of Izmir in the first place. And she continued: "There was fire behind and water in front of us. Only those who gave their last gold coins and ornaments to the Turks to save their lives were rescued from this hell-like turmoil, while those who had no means, threw themselves into the sea waves and, defying death, tried to swim to the ships anchored at a distance and bearing European flags, which would carry the homeless Armenians to unknown destinations."

Thus, the Armenian Diaspora was created as a historical reality; nevertheless, the dream of the lost Homeland still continues to fume in the memory of the Armenian people, inasmuch as it is the collective memory of the people constituting their history, and it is impossible to defile the people's history.

In this respect, the Armenian folk memoirs and the Turkish-language songs entrusted to the generations, become, owing to their historico-cognitive value, testimonies, artistic, yet reliable, objective and evidential documents illustrating, in a simple popular language, the historic events and the Armenian Genocide.

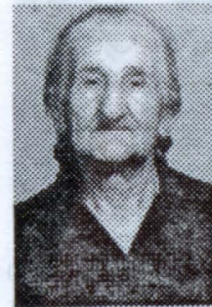
\* \* \*

\* The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish version.

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EYE-WITNESS SURVIVORS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE



Abelian Hovhannes  
(1903, Kessab)



Abikian Ovsanna  
(1893, Ismit)



Ablabootian Khoren  
(1893, Urfa)



Ablabootian Nvart  
(1903, Urfa)



Aghatchrakian Sirarpi  
(1909, Constantinople)



Aladjadjian Adriné  
(1923, Constantinople)



Alboyadjian Harutyun  
(1904, Fendedjak)



Atoorian Gayané  
(1909, Zeytoun)



Azarian Haykoohi  
(1908, Adabazar)





Baghdishian Mariam  
(1909, Moussa Dagh)



Balabanian Movses  
(1891, Moussa Dagh)



Bartikian Arpiné  
(1903, A.Garahissar)



Bshtikian Hovsep  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Daghavarian Verjin  
(1898, Sebastia)



Danielian Kirakos  
(1923, Balou)



Ekizian Grikor  
(1921, Malatiá)



Gaybakian Setrak  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Gyozealian Grikor  
(1903, Moussa Dagh)



Halapian Tagoohi  
(1912, Marash)



Hekimian Gevork  
(1937, Aleppo)



Ipredjian Hovhannes  
(1898, Moussa Dagh)



Keshishian Mikael  
(1898, Adana)



Khatchatrian Mkrditch  
(1907, Sh.Garahissar)



Kikishian Petros  
(1906, Arabkir)



Kikishian Serpoohi  
(1909, Arabkir)

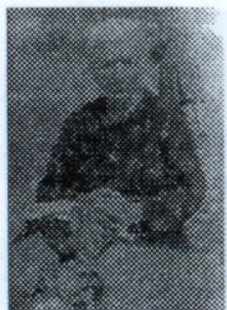


Kyurkdjian Nouritsa  
(1904, Ayntap)



Martikian Harutyun  
(1899, Harpoot)

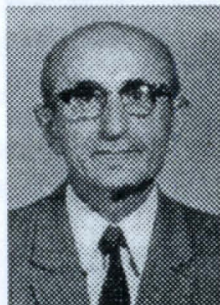




Mayikian Yevguiné  
(1898, Marash)



Mkrtchian Karapet  
(1910, Tigranakert)



Momdjian Aram  
(1909, Marash)



Panossian Movses  
(1885, Moussa Dagħ)



Paronian Hovhannes  
(1890, Eskishehir)



Petrossian Arshakouhi  
(1903, Yozghat)



Sarkisian Souren  
(1902, Sebastia)



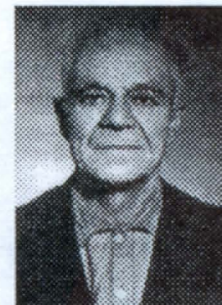
Satamian Nazeni  
(1926, Aleppo)



Silian Baroohi  
(1898, Nikomidia)



Tchaparian Yeranoohi  
(1912, Adana)



Tchiftchian Gevork  
(1909, Moussa Dagħ)



Ter-Yeghishian Taghoohi  
(1926, Beyrout)



Ter-Mkrtchian Mariam  
(1903, Erzroom)



Tozlian Karapet  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Vartian Zabel  
(1902, Marash)



Yergat Paytsar  
(1897, Kayseri)



Zoolalian Gevork  
(1907, Chanak Kalé)



Zoolalian Shake  
(1914, Constantinople)





### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Verjiné Svazlian, ethnographer and folklorist, was born in 1934 in Alexandria (Egypt) in the family of the writer and public man Karnik Svazlian, himself an eye-witness survivor of Turkish tyranny.

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

In 1956, she has graduated with honours from the Department of the Armenian Language and Literature of the Kh.Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical Institute.

Beginning from the nineteen fifties, she has, on her own initiative, started to write down and thereby saved from a total loss the various folklore creations communicated by the repatriates forcibly deported from Western Armenian, Cilicia and the Armenian-inhabited provinces of Anatolia, as well as the narrated memoirs of the eye-witness survivors of the Genocide.

Starting from 1958, she has worked at the M.Abeghian Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. During her post-graduate studies, she has been a M.Abeghian grant-aided student.

From 1961, she has worked at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and, from 1996, also at the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

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

### Publications:

"Sarkis Haykouni. Life and Work." Yerevan, 1973 (in Armenian).

"Armenian Folk Tales." Scientific Multivolume Edition (in Armenian):

"Artsakh-Utik." Vol. 6, Yerevan, 1973;

"Taron-Turuberan." Vol. 12, Yerevan, 1984;

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"Cilicia. The Oral Tradition of the Western Armenians." Yerevan, 1994 (in Armenian).

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"The Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians." Yerevan, 1997 (in Armenian).

"The Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians." Yerevan, 1997 (in Russian).

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

She has participated in republican and international conferences, discoursing upon folklore, ethnography and the Armenian Action.

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**

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