

*PART TWO/DEUXIÈME PARTIE*

*ORPHAN AND REFUGEE PERIOD*

*LE TEMPS DES ORPHELINS ET DES  
RéFUGIÉS*



# The Armenians in Lebanon during the Armenian Genocide

**Hilmar Kaiser**

## **Nineteenth-century background**

A comprehensive history of the Armenian Genocide is still a desideratum. In response, case studies focusing on specific issues during the execution of the genocide or on certain regions have emerged as a tool in filling the gap at least partly. The present text follows this strategy. By focusing on a specific region, the important question about spatial specifics of the Ottoman government's genocidal policy can be properly addressed. In doing so, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress' (CUP) ideological motives will also be better understood.

What became known in Western chancelleries, as the "Armenian Question" in the 19th century was in essence a land question.<sup>1</sup> For a variety of reasons, like preserving a tax-basis, Ottoman law and government policies tended to favor continued small peasant landholding. Consequently, large-scale landholding formed more of an exception, notably concentrated in newly developed areas, than a dominant pattern of ownership. Naturally, this general trend was conducive to the preservation of Armenian village communities in historic Armenian districts. On the other hand, Armenian economic elites were able to benefit to some extent from the economic opportunities created by world-market integration and the emergence of new patterns of landholding in coastal regions like parts of Cilicia. Moreover, world-market integration opened an avenue for intensified Armenian trading and also emigration. Thus, remote village communities continued to supply at a most likely increased rate Ottoman cities and emerging agricultural plantation centers with readily available migrant labor. Labor migration often went beyond a seasonal pattern to become long term or even permanent. Thus, by the early 20th century, Armenian workers established communities in North America, adding another aspect to the multi-faceted international Armenian network that also included students and political exiles in the

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<sup>1</sup> For some preliminary discussion on the land question, see Janet Klein, *Power in the periphery: the Hamidiye light cavalry and the struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914*, Ph.D., Princeton University, 2002; Dikran Kaligian, "Agrarian land reform and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire", in *Armenian review*, 48, 3-4 2003 [2005], pp. 25-45.

West.<sup>2</sup> While many stayed abroad, those returning to their ancestral communities served as a conduit for new ideas. Not only new political ideas, but also new economic and technical knowledge thus became available.

By the second half of the 19th century, increased land use stemming from economic expansion together with a natural population increase and government-sponsored immigration created intensified competition for land. Kurdish tribal leaders grasped the new economic opportunities that were even more tempting when coupled with the use of force. Consequently, Kurdish elites joined new Muslim immigrants in the expropriation of Armenian lands and moreover created condition of serfdom thereby securing the necessary labor force at low cost. These illegal proceedings were sanctioned by the Ottoman authorities as weakening the Armenian element appeared in line with the government's policy of treating populations along religious lines and in view of potential Great Power aspirations. In other words, Armenians were seen as a political problem and therefore by and large disenfranchised. The Armenian political response was a weak auto-defense led by political organizations that were never a match for the state.

The advent of parliamentary democracy in 1908, did not bring the much-needed respite for Armenians in rural areas. Soon, the now ruling CUP allied itself with the old rural elites that had locally orchestrated the dispossession of Armenians. This inability for institutional reform together with the territorial aspirations of the Balkan States culminated in an Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars. The discussions of the peace settlements included the much overdue issue of Armenian reforms as well. International guarantees signaled nothing less than the total failure of the CUP's political course vis-à-vis the Armenians. A further weakening of the Armenian community through dispossession and low scale violence was no longer an option in peacetime. Now more than ever, maintaining Ottoman rule over Armenian districts appeared doubtful for the long run.

### *The genocidal solution*

In response, the Ottoman government embarked on an aggressive course. Concluding an alliance with Germany provided some reassurance and a hope of frustrating anticipated Russian claims concerning Ottoman-Armenian districts. An attempted pre-emptive strike against Russian Armenian provinces ended in total defeat leaving the Ottoman eastern provinces with

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<sup>2</sup> Kaprielian-Churchill, Isabel, "Kghi village educational associations in North America before 1915," pp. 317-338, in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Karin/Erzerum*, Costa Mesa, CA Mazda Publishers, 2003.

only very limited defenses. Further defeats following offensive strategies in Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and an Entente attack on the Straits and the Ottoman capital let the CUP turn its pre-emptive policy on the Armenians. On April 24/25, 1915, the Ottoman government began arresting a large part of the Armenian political, religious and economic leadership in the capital and throughout the provinces. The arrests incapacitated the Armenian communities and destroyed them as an active political factor, but they did not resolve the political problem: political repression did not eliminate productive Armenian communities and their claims to their own lands.

Finally, at the end of May, 1915, the CUP addressed the core of the "Armenian Question" in a comprehensive manner. A program was put in place and a special law produced a semblance of legality for the deportation of whole Armenian communities.<sup>3</sup> The law did not specify the details of the execution of the deportations. Two confidential administrative manuals regulated the expropriation of Armenian movable and immovable properties and their use by the government. Equally important was that the manuals formed the basis for a full-scale settlement program. In September, 1915, some of the contents of these manuals became the core of a new law on so-called "abandoned property." In sum, by May, 1915, the Ottoman government had decided to replace the Armenian population with settlers whom the government deemed suitable. This settlement program demonstrates that the deportations were not simply an emergency measure but intended as a permanent solution for the land question.<sup>4</sup>

The deportations created a huge "surplus population" without land and income that the authorities had to deal with. The Ottoman government was practically bankrupt and needed Armenian assets to finance the war effort. Thus, it was not realistic to provide for hundreds of thousands of Armenian deportees. Moreover, supporting deportees made politically little sense as survivors could raise future claims for damages. Consequently, the elimination of deportees became a pragmatic solution for the problem. The

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<sup>3</sup> For first results see Fikret Adanir, Hilmar Kaiser, "Migration, deportation, and nation-building: the case of the Ottoman Empire", in René Leboutte, ed., *Migrations and migrants in historical perspective. Permanencies and innovations*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang Verlag, 2000, pp. 273-292; Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanlari iskân politikasi (1913-1918)*, [in Turkish for *The Settlement policy for Muslims of the CUP (1913-1918)*], Istanbul, 2001; idem., "İttihat ve Terakki'nin etnisite araştırmaları" (in Turk., for The CUP's ethnic studies), in *Toplumsal tarih* 16, 91, 2001, pp. 43-50; Nesim Şeker, "Demographic engineering in the late Ottoman Empire and Armenians", in *Middle Eastern studies* 43, 3, 2007, pp. 461-474.

<sup>4</sup> Hilmar Kaiser, "Armenian property, Ottoman law and nationality policies during the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1916", in Olaf Farschild, Manfred Kropp, Stephan Dähne, eds., *The First World War as remembered in the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean* Würzburg, Ergon Verlag, 2006, Beirut Texts and Studies, vol. 99, xiv, pp. 49-71.

Ottoman government killed deportees mostly through massacres, starvation, exposure to contagious diseases, and death marching while a considerable number of suitable individuals were absorbed into Muslim communities.<sup>5</sup> Deportations were also an efficient tool to protect the bulk of Armenian property from destruction that had occurred during earlier massacres in the 1890s and after. Armenians were to be destroyed, not their assets. Separating Armenians from their residences did not, however, secure the surrender of all their movable properties. In response, the deportations were conducted to overcome this problem. During the initial phase most deportation caravans were rendered defenseless by massacring the majority of able-bodied male adults and teenagers. Along with these slaughters, the deportees had to pay ransom at specific locations in order to be left alive. Thus, within certain intervals the government secured huge payments in cash and valuables, like stones and gold, in exchange for a limited lease of life. Those who could not pay faced death. In this way, the government secured the gradual surrender of well-hidden assets while melting down the Armenian population. Keeping Armenian deportees in disease-affected locations further accelerated the killing process without any expense.<sup>6</sup>

Estimates on the impact of the death marches are preliminary. The death toll for the historic Armenian districts was horrendous, while deportees from Ottoman western provinces had considerably better chances for survival. Due to railway transportation, more aid, and stronger surveillance of the routes by neutral foreigners, many deportees arrived in northern Syria where they joined the deportees from the eastern provinces on their march into the desert. Soon, a line of concentration camps extended along the Euphrates. Like the *Ras ul Ain* camp, these became the graveyard for the vast majority of the deportees. Those who did not fall victim to starvation, dehydration, diseases and smaller scale killings were murdered in a series of large-scale massacres in the summer of 1916.<sup>7</sup>

Aside from exterminations, securing suitable candidates for turkification

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<sup>5</sup> In the *Marsovan* area Armenian specialists and their families were exempted from deportation and allowed to convert to Islam in order to keep the local textile production operational. For a register of these converts dated Sept. 1, 1915, see, BOA.DH.EUM.Kalemi Umumi [KLU] 10-1.

<sup>6</sup> Hilmar Kaiser, "A scene from the inferno. The Armenians of Erzerum and the Genocide, 1915-1916", in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah* [in German, for *The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*], Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik Schaller, eds., Zürich, Chronos, 2002, pp. 129-186.

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Kévorkian, "Le sort des déportés dans les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie", pp. 7-61 in *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine* 2 (1998); Raymond Kévorkian, "Témoignages sur les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie", in *ibid.*, pp. 62-215; *idem.*, "Autres témoignages sur les déportations et les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie (1915-1916)", in *ibid.*, pp. 219-244.

remained an important element of government policy. Very young male children were separated from their communities and brain washed. Girls and young women of childbearing age could easier be integrated into Muslim households, as they could, unlike a male, not assume a dominant position within a family. Temporary use of girls for child bearing was also acceptable as it secured their offspring for the government.<sup>8</sup>

There were, however, some exceptions. The Armenian communities of Smyrna, Aleppo, and Constantinople were deported only in part. The reasons behind these exceptions vary and have not been fully studied. It appears, though, that the relative size of communities outside the Armenian heartland appears to have been one factor in the government's decision making. For instance, Armenians in *Silifke* were exempted from deportation being numerically insignificant. In sum, the Ottoman policy of genocide maximized mortality among the victims while at the same time minimizing the loss of economic assets including human lives that were deemed useful.<sup>9</sup>

### "Beirut" Armenians

The Armenians of Lebanon did not resemble other Ottoman Armenian communities. They formed part of the socially most advanced sections within Ottoman society. Some were officials working in the various branches of the Ottoman administration; others belonged to the staff of semi-official bodies that acquired functions of the state like the Ottoman Public Debt or the Tobacco *Régie*. A few had entered liberal professions like for instance the well-known photographers - Sarafian brothers. A few families had managed to establish themselves among Beirut's merchant community, who put its mark on the life of the city. Between 1876 and 1912, the Christian communities became dominant in Beirut's social fabric. The most prominent families, like the Sursocks, formed part of international trading networks with branches in Alexandria, Constantinople, Paris, Rome, and other major European cities.<sup>10</sup> Ethnic, communal, religious, or linguistic boundaries appear to have formed no obstacle to the emergence of this new elite.

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<sup>8</sup> Ara Sarafian, "The absorption of Armenian women and children into Muslim households as a structural component of the Armenian Genocide", in *In God's name. Genocide and religion in the twentieth century*, Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, eds., New York-Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2001 viii, pp. 209-221.

<sup>9</sup> Izzet to Mersina District, Constantinople, Sept. 24, 1915 EUM Spec. 6 DH.ŞFR 56-136.

<sup>10</sup> Leila Fawaz, *Merchants and migrants in nineteenth-century Beirut*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1983, Harvard Middle Eastern Studies, 18, xiv, pp. 44, 93.

*Sectarian tensions were most visible among the poorer classes. Among the wealthy the gulf was narrower, since they were less apt to let communal affiliation stand in the way of economic cooperation and social and political action. Merchants still had more in common with one another than they had with their European counterparts. The economic changes of the period created a socioeconomic group that cut across communal lines.*<sup>11</sup>

These conditions were conducive for the existence of small but socially mobile groups like the Beirut Armenians. Being numerically insignificant, their economic importance outweighed by far their numbers. For the early 20th century, existing estimates suggest that the Armenian population numbered perhaps some 1,200 – 1,300 residents. Outside urban centers visitors could hardly expect to encounter an Armenian.<sup>12</sup> These estimates did probably not include migrant workers, students, and businessmen who had come to town without officially registering as residents. Their presence further accentuated the profile of the community as distinctly different from the social-make up of the Armenian heartland. The Beirut Armenians were generally better educated than the majority of the Ottoman population. It appears that a visible Armenian *Lumpenproletariat* did not exist like in other Ottoman ports and cities like Constantinople or Trebizond. The small community did not attract strong chain migrations and did not create its own recognized residential quarter. The Armenians were a small stone in the mosaic of Lebanese society and did not form a political factor to reckon with.

The absence of a compact Lebanese Armenian community most likely saved it from deportation. There was no need for extra-ordinary measures beyond regular police work. The businessmen and officials of Armenian descent and their families could not offer organized resistance as they were at the mercy of the government. On the other hand, being part of the administration provided them with some protection since a replacement had first to be found and thus some remained at their post as long as it was viewed to be expedient. For instance, railway and Ottoman Bank employees could continue their work, like Armenian Tobacco *Régie* officials were allowed to retain their positions for the time being. Generally, local Armenians were left

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>12</sup> Mesrob Krikorian, *Armenians in the service of the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1908*, London-Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977 xii, pp. 92-101.

relatively unmolested.<sup>13</sup>

Not surprisingly, controlling the movements and numbers of individual Armenians became a critical issue for the authorities. Some central government orders concerned Armenians traveling from Beirut by sea. On June 13, 1915, the Ottoman High Command decreed that no Armenian man or woman between ages of 17 and 55 was allowed to neither enter the Ottoman Empire nor to leave it.<sup>14</sup> Armenians, who were citizens of countries that had so far remained neutral during the war, were allowed to leave but could not return during the war like any other Armenian.<sup>15</sup> The Ottoman Ministry of the Interior's "Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants" maintained branches throughout the empire and was charged with the execution of the deportation orders and other tasks connected with it.<sup>16</sup> In Beirut, both the civilian and military authorities had to register arriving Armenians.<sup>17</sup>

The condition of those Armenians deported and arriving in Lebanon from the interior provinces was miserable. They suffered from the deprivations of the journey, de-hydration, starvation, diseases, and physical assaults. By August 15, about 3,000 Armenians were living among the antique ruins at *Baalbeck*. Many were sick and no medical assistance was available. Unburied corpses were lying around for days and weeks.<sup>18</sup> Most of the Armenian arrivals in the region around *Rayak* were actually destined for points further south like the *Hauran* or places in Jordan like *El-Salt* and *Karak*. In *Rayak*, about 4,000 Armenians had been temporarily quarantined under horrible conditions in two camps. The mostly orphaned children, young women, and elderly people lived in tents and suffered badly from *malaria tropica* and diarrhea. About 80% of the deportees were affected from the latter disease. The authorities' goal was to keep the military supply routes free from

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<sup>13</sup> Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)* [in Turk., for *Armenians in Ottoman documents (1915-1920)*], Ankara, Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1994 xl, p. 82 Aug. 17, 1915 EUM DH.ŞFR 55-48; Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Sept. 30, 1915 EUM Gen 600 DH.ŞFR 56-242. Minister to Beirut province, Constantinople, Sept. 16, 1915 EUM Spec. 5741 DH.ŞFR 56-36. Consulate General Beirut to Embassy, Beirut, Oct. 13, 1915 enclosure in Palavicini to Burián, Constantinople, Nov. 2, 1915 HHSStA PA XII 463 No. 92/P.C.

<sup>14</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, June 13, 1915 EUM Gen. 183 DH.ŞFR 53-334.

<sup>15</sup> Talaat to Beirut, Constantinople, Aug. 31, 1915 EUM Spec. 518 DH.ŞFR 55/A-15.

<sup>16</sup> IAMM to Beirut, Constantinople, Aug. 11, 1915 DH.ŞFR 54/a-375/1.

<sup>17</sup> Safvet (Deputy Minister) to Beirut, Constantinople, Sept. 27, 1915 No. 592 DH.ŞFR 56-187.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Krieger, *Zur Armenierverfolgung*, [in German for *On the Armenian persecutions*], Central Zionist Archives, Z, 3, *Zionistisches Zentralbureau Berlin 1911-1920*, No. 66 Abschriften von Dokumenten betreffend die zionistische Politik in Konstantinopel 1913-1918.

contamination. Nevertheless, despite all their sufferings and a high death toll, these deportees could consider themselves as being lucky. After all, they had been spared the death march into the Syrian desert and/or survived the massacre sites that lined other deportation routes.<sup>19</sup> In accordance with general policies, those who survived the quarantine and avoided further deportation were distributed among exclusively Muslim villages in the *Bekaa* valley. Children were separated from their parents and put in Muslim houses, isolating them from any outside contact. Pregnant Armenian women could also hope to be spared from further deportation. However, they, too, had to be transferred to and settled in places where no other Armenians lived. Their children were to become Muslim.<sup>20</sup> The isolation of these persons was furthered by a ban on local religious authorities to communicate with districts in the interior. The Austro-Hungarian Consulate General concluded that the systematic Islamization of these persons was intended.<sup>21</sup> Ottoman plans for demographic engineering are reflected in an order to Beirut authorities that had to provide a detailed map indicating the province's administrative division, its current and earlier population by nationality.<sup>22</sup> The collection of the relevant data was apparently slow as on September 7, 1915, Talaat reminded the provincial authorities to send the material immediately.<sup>23</sup>

By August, Beirut had a commission for so-called "Abandoned Property." Like in other parts of the country, the commission was also involved in the settlement of Turkish migrants. This showed that its functions included less the safeguard of the deportees' assets than spending the funds on government programs. The Ottoman government had two main objectives. Firstly, increasing the number of ethnic Turks in the area, and secondly turning nomadic and half-nomadic Turkish tribes into sedentary subjects who were easier to control.<sup>24</sup> In 1915, refugees from war zones had priority for receiving emptied houses out of "abandoned properties."<sup>25</sup> By March, 1916, however, Muslim refugees had to go to designated settlement areas in the provinces and districts of *Sivas*, *Diarbekir*, *Canik*, *Caesarea*, *Nigde*, *Marash*,

<sup>19</sup> The former Armenian governor of Mount Lebanon saw in the summer of 1915, Armenian deportees at *Rayak*. Ohannès Pacha Kouyoumdjian, "Le Liban à la veille et au début de la guerre. Mémoires d'un gouverneur, 1913-1915", in *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine*, Paris, 2003, p. 169-170.

<sup>20</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, May 15, 1916 EUM Gen. 203 DH.ŞFR 64-19.

<sup>21</sup> Consulate General Beirut to Embassy, Beirut, Oct. 13, 1915 enclosure in Palavicini to Burián, Constantinople, Nov. 2, 1915 HHStA PA XII 463 No. 92/P.C.

<sup>22</sup> Minister to Beirut Province, Constantinople, July 20, 1915 EUM Gen. 397 DH.ŞFR 54/a-51.

<sup>23</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Sept. 7, 1915 EUM Spec. 533 DH.ŞFR 55/A-115.

<sup>24</sup> Talaat to Beirut Abandoned property commission, Constantinople, Aug. 21, 1915 IAMM Spec. 471 DH.ŞFR 55-125.

<sup>25</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, June 19, 1916 IAMM, Statistical Dept. Gen. 6773, Special 296 DH.ŞFR 65-36.

and *Urfa*. They were not allowed to go to other areas. Kurds were earmarked for the western areas, while Muslims leaving the western theatres of war had to populate Kurdish/Armenian regions. The government's order suggests, however, that Muslim refugees preferred to go to the affluent city of Beirut than to emptied Armenian settlements with often destroyed infrastructure.<sup>26</sup>

By late 1915, the deportation of the Armenian heartland and western Armenian communities had been completed. The deportees were on the road for months and keeping track of them became an ever-crucial issue. The Ottoman government was in need of new data on the whereabouts of Armenians in order to implement its next steps. On January 5, 1916, Talaat requested the number of Armenians in Beirut province within two days.<sup>27</sup> The answer seemed to have been delayed as he renewed his order on January 16, 1916, demanding the data within 24 hours.<sup>28</sup> On February 3, 1916, Talaat informed the Beirut authorities that Armenians had begun traveling with locally issued permits. The minister gave strict orders that Armenians were allowed to travel or leave the locality they were in only with a permit directly issued from the Ministry of the Interior. Moreover, the order applied to Armenian converts as well, indicating the highly centralized decision-making that kept the deportation machinery in motion.<sup>29</sup> A precise count was, however, not easy to accomplish. Some Armenians and other refugees had either lost their identification papers or had bribed officials to obtain false ones. In response, all new arrivals were to be investigated and registered by the local authorities. The newly created files had to show the individual's present location, place of origin, spoken language, nationality, reasons for the deportation and settlement. Clearly, the central authorities were not only interested in the true identity of the Armenian but also tried to find out how the person managed to reach Beirut and which official might be implicated.<sup>30</sup> After all, most of the data were of no immediate relevance for the local authorities as following the registration, deportations of Armenians into the desert started. The deportations were, however, ill prepared, as the number of gendarmes escorting the caravans was often insufficient and obstacles were created. Again, the central government intervened and Talaat ordered the dispatch of sufficient gendarmes for the task.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Mar. 11, 1916 IAMM Spec. 1032 DH.ŞFR 61-267.

<sup>27</sup> Minister to Beirut province, Constantinople, Jan. 5, 1916 EUM Gen. 1 DH.ŞFR 59-217.

<sup>28</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Jan. 16, 1916 EUM DH.ŞFR 60-32.

<sup>29</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Feb. 3, 1916, EUM Gen. 920 DH.ŞFR 60-216.

<sup>30</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, June 26, 1916, IAMM Statistical Dept. Gen. 696, Spec. 308 DH.ŞFR 65-93.

<sup>31</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, July 12, 1916 IAMM Statistical 335 DH.ŞFR 65-194.

Following the major massacres in *Deir Zor* from July to September, 1916, the Ottoman authorities started a general count of those Armenians that were still alive. Outside some cities and some railway construction camps, no major concentration of Armenians did exist any longer. On September 23, 1916, Talaat ordered once more the Beirut authorities to provide detailed new statistics. It should show the number of Armenians, indicating whether they were long-time residents or new arrivals; if they had been left behind because they were *a)* Catholic or Protestant; *b)* belonged to soldiers' families; *c)* had converted to Islam; or *d)* remained behind by special order.<sup>32</sup> Now, the remnants of the Armenian community were to be investigated. Evidently, the government was concerned about the full success of its deportation program. Thus, the cumulative effects of various exemptions from deportation had to be studied and evaluated. But again the local authorities were slow in responding and Talaat had to once again send a stern reminder on October 29, 1916.<sup>33</sup> A month later, Talaat inquired about the number and gender of orphans and the number of widows who arrived to Beirut.<sup>34</sup>

Despite all prohibitions, Armenians continued to travel clandestinely or with permits and official control remained difficult to maintain. Repeatedly, Talaat demanded a count of all Armenians, whether they were established locals or had arrived from other places.<sup>35</sup> On May 16, 1917, Talaat reminded the Beirut authorities that neither converted nor non-converted Armenians were permitted traveling to Constantinople or must they leave their places of residence as it had happened before.<sup>36</sup> The next day, the Interior Ministry again urged for precise registration.<sup>37</sup> Armenians had to re-register and their identity cards being marked identifying them as Armenians even if they had converted.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Talaat demanded information on the reasons for not deporting Armenians.<sup>39</sup> Precise data on Greek and Armenian orphans in Beirut province as well as on the number of male and female Muslims and

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<sup>32</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Sept. 23, 1916 EUM Gen. 52520 DH.ŞFR 68-112.

<sup>33</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Oct. 29, 1916 EUM Gen. 53999 Gen.559 DH.ŞFR 69-120.

<sup>34</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Nov. 29, 1916 IAMM Gen. 11002 Spec. 634 DH.ŞFR 70-128.

<sup>35</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Feb. 11, 1917 EUM 2. Dept. Spec. 755 DH.ŞFR 72-210; Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Feb. 18, 1917, EUM Gen. 4041 Spec. 760 DH.ŞFR 73-29.

<sup>36</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, May 16, 1917 EUM Spec. 167 DH.ŞFR 76-151.

<sup>37</sup> Adbülhâdi to Beirut province, Mount Lebanon district, Constantinople, May 30, 1917 Gen. 203 DH.ŞFR 76-243/79.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Interior to Beirut province, Constantinople, May 22, 1917 Sifre Kalemî Gen. 186 DH.ŞFR 76-238.

<sup>39</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, June 20, 1917 EUM, Kalem-i Mahsus Spec. 248 DH.ŞFR 77-170.

non-Muslims were requested. Especially, how many persons had been settled or were to be settled.<sup>40</sup> These repeated counts cannot be explained with military necessity, the official justification for the deportations. On the contrary, they demonstrate that military necessity was minor consideration, if at all, but that demographic engineering and total surveillance was an imperative. Those Armenians that were deemed acceptable within the parameters of the government's assimilation program could obtain some support from the authorities.<sup>41</sup> But, still, they remained a concern for the authorities well into late 1917, and until the Ottoman defeat. In 1918, Talaat again requested the precise number of converted Armenians, the date of conversion, their social relations, and their present work environment. In other words, although the Ottoman authorities employed Islamist rhetoric, it nevertheless followed a nationalist Turkish strategy. Ethnicity was the critical identifier and not religion.<sup>42</sup>

The Ottoman authorities were not the only ones interested in detailed information on local Armenians. An international relief effort also tried to keep track of survivors since it was crucial for the efficient allocation of aid. Early in 1917, the German Consulate General in Beirut knew of 40 families in the city and about 200 families in *Saida* and *Zur*. The local authorities supported these families with food and work as they had converted to Islam. Non-converted families survived mostly clandestinely in the area. Of these, 17 families were in Beirut. A third was well off; another third had work, while the remainder was in need. 50 families survived in *Zahle* and *Dur e-Schuer*; half of them or about 100 persons were in dire need. The men could work and move about freely. About 500 £Tq. per month were needed to maintain them. Sarkis Kassabian, owner of the Yusufian & Kassabian Company from *Mersina* was willing to help with the distribution of relief.<sup>43</sup>

### Djemaal and the Fourth Army

In March, 1915, at the start of the deportations from the Armenian town of *Zeitun*, that is before the beginning of the general deportations Djemaal

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<sup>40</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, July 24, 1917 AMMU Statistic Dept. Gen. 18853 Spec. 309 DH.ŞFR 78-204.

<sup>41</sup> Abdülhâlik to Beirut province, Constantinople, June 20, 1917 AMMU Corr. Dept. Gen. 17056 Spec. 249. DH.ŞFR 77-168; Abdülhâlik to Beirut province, Constantinople, Nov. 11, 1917 IAMM 484 DH.ŞFR 86-45.

<sup>42</sup> Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Apr. 3, 1918 EUM. Gen 1024 2nd Dept. Kalemi Mahsus DH.ŞFR 86-45.

<sup>43</sup> Waldburg to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Apr. 7, 1917 A 11997 AA-PA Türkei 183/47 No. 237.

issued strict orders for the protection of the deportees.<sup>44</sup> During the following months, the commander intervened several times in favor of deportees. A member of his staff, Ali Fuat [Erden], claimed this policy was Djemal's own initiative. The general was unwilling to allow the deportees being massacred within his area of command. Instead they were to be sent and settled in habitable locations.<sup>45</sup>

In December, 1915, during discussions with German ambassador Paul von Metternich, Djemal indicated that he was uncomfortable with the central government's policy but carefully emphasized that the deportations were nevertheless justified.<sup>46</sup> In March, 1916, he confided to the German consul in Damascus that he would facilitate relief efforts on behalf of Armenians by accepting relief funds for distribution through his own administration; this would effectively by-pass strict orders from Constantinople to prevent the distribution of relief. The matter was, however, dropped.<sup>47</sup>

Djemal's own policy faced some stern opposition from officials of the central government active within his own sphere of influence. This opposition was rather effective as Hussein Kiazim Bey, an officer entrusted with Armenian matters, intended to resign seeing that his work had been regularly undone. He gave a frank account to the German consul in Damascus, a rather unusual step for an Ottoman officer.<sup>48</sup> The officials obstructing the relief work were local staff of the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate for the settlement of tribes and immigrants (*İskân-ı Aşâyir ve Muhâcirin Müdüriyeti or IAMM*). Moreover, all of these men were trusted party members of the CUP. The policy of these officials was that all Armenians had to die of

<sup>44</sup> Wangenheim to AA, Pera, Apr. 1, 1915 A 11644 AA-PA Der Weltkrieg Bd.105 telegram No.791. Rössler to Wangenheim, Aleppo, Apr. 12, 1915 A 14801 AA-PA Türkei 183/36 K. No. 39, J. No. 764. Ali Fuat Erden, *Birinci dünya harbinde Suriye hâtıraları* (in Turk., for *Syrian memoirs from World War I*), vol. 1, Istanbul, Halk Matbaası, 1954, pp. 120-121.

<sup>45</sup> Erden, *ibid.*, pp. 120-121. Djemal *Pasha* repeatedly had Muslim offenders hanged instantly for offenses committed against Armenians. *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 216-218; Metternich to AA, Pera, Nov. 19, 1915 A 33574 AA-PA Türkei 183/40 telegram No.2379; Metternich to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Dec. 7, 1915 A 36184 AA-PA Türkei 183/40 No 711.

<sup>46</sup> Metternich to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Dec. 7, 1915 A 36184 AA-PA Türkei 183/40 No. 711; Metternich to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Dec. 9, 1915, A 36483 *ibid.* No. 714.

<sup>47</sup> Metternich to Rössler, Pera, Mar. 28, 1916 J. No. 1056 AA-PA Konstantinopel 172 telegram No. 52. Metternich to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Mar. 29, 1916 A 8702 AA-PA Türkei 183/42 No.139.

<sup>48</sup> Loytved to Metternich, Damascus, May 30, 1916, copy enclosure in Metternich to Bethmann Hollweg, Therapia, June 19, 1916 A 16612 AA-PA Türkei 183/43 No. 311. Hussein Kiazim had been one of the founders of the CUP daily *Tanin*. Halidé Edib [Adivar], *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, New York- London, The Century Company, 1926, p. 400.

starvation or disease as long as they refused to become Muslim.<sup>49</sup> High-level party members also voiced this position. Behaeddin Shakir was a member of the CUP's central committee and a leader of the so-called "Special Organization". In this latter capacity he was charged with organizing massacres of Armenians.<sup>50</sup> On learning that Djemal's policies did not conform to his own work, Shakir made telegraphic representations with Djemal concerning the general's settlement policy. In response Djemal simply stated that this was nothing of Shakir's business.<sup>51</sup> Djemal, nevertheless, issued repeated orders for the protection of Armenians and continued the settlement program.<sup>52</sup>

Djemal's determination became publicly visible when he called on Hasan Amdja,<sup>53</sup> an officer with tense political relations to the CUP, to take over from Hussein Kiazim's work after the latter's resignation. Hasan Amdja arrived in September, 1916, at his new post and noted with surprise that Djemal Pasha was willing to confront these central government officials and CUP members head on. The newly appointed governor of Syria, Hasan Tahsin Bey, a member of the "Special Organization", formerly governor of *Erzerum* and implicated in the Armenian Genocide, continued the central government's policy and tried to neutralize Hasan Amdja.<sup>54</sup> The basis for Tahsin's maneuvers was that he was in charge of the civil administration while Hasan Amdja was military personnel and acted on military orders without full control of the civilian apparatus. In other words, Djemal Pasha was interfering in the civilian administration's operations and imposing his own relief effort countermanding the established policy. Djemal Pasha understood this opposition as a challenge to his supreme authority and issued

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<sup>49</sup> Hassan Amdja, "Les dessous des déportations. Souvenir du Circassien Hassan bey", in *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine*, 2, 1998, p. 229. The article is the reproduction of a French translation published by the Constantinople daily *Renaissance* in July 1919. The Ottoman original appeared in June, 1919, in the daily *Alemdar*. See also: Raymond H. Kévorkian, "Ahmed Djemal pacha et le sort des déportés arméniens de Syrie-Palestine", in Kieser, Hans-Lukas / Dominik J. Schaller, eds., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, Zürich, Chronos, 2002, p. 201, "...soigneusement décrite par Hassan Amdja, confirme que Djemal pacha était décidé à mener à bien son projet de réinstallation de ces Arméniens au Liban et en Palestine."

<sup>50</sup> On Behaeddin Shakir see Hikmet Çiçek, *Dr. Bahattin Şakir. İttihat ve Terakki'den mahsusa'ya bir Türk Jakobeni* (in Turk., for *Dr. Behaeddin Shakir – A Turkish Jacobin from the CUP to the Special Organization*), Istanbul, Kaynak Yayınları, 2004. This study has, however, little information on the Armenian Genocide and offers an apologetic point of view.

<sup>51</sup> Erden, *ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>52</sup> Erden, *ibid.*, pp. 121, 123. Falih Rıfki [Atay], *Zeytindâğı* (in Turk., for *Mount Olive*), Istanbul, Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1932, p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> See Hasan Amdja's picture in the Appendix p. 82.

<sup>54</sup> On Tahsin bey's activities in *Erzerum*, see: Hilmar Kaiser, *ibid.*, 2002, pp. 129-186.

an order on October 20, 1916. By this order, Armenian craftsmen were allowed to settle in larger Syrian and Lebanese centers. Hasan Amdja's authority over the civilian branch of government and his right of inspection were confirmed. Azmi Bey, the governor of Beirut opposed, however, the dispatch of deportees to Lebanon on grounds of insufficient means of subsistence in his province. His stalling policy won him time until the Ministry of the Interior issued strict orders that the military authorities must not interfere in the settlement of deportees, thus countermanding Djemal's policy.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the policy of distributing Armenians in Muslim villages remained the policy in the region under Djemal Pasha's control.<sup>56</sup> It seems that Djemal gave orders to register Armenian deportees as Muslim without the knowledge of the former.<sup>57</sup> In his memoirs, Djemal stated that he had settled up to 150,000 Armenians in Syria instead of sending them into the desert.<sup>58</sup> Dr. Nazim, another "Special Organization" leader and key CUP member, gave a slightly higher figure when he criticized Djemal's adjutant

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<sup>55</sup> Erden, *ibid.*, pp. 234-237. See also, [Adivar], *Memoirs*, p. 400. This interpretation differs from Raymond Kévorkian's views who asserts that: "*Mais rien n'indique que Cemal était opposé à la politique d'homogénéisation ethnique mise en oeuvre par son parti, incluant la liquidation des populations arméniennes. Son opposition semble plutôt relever d'une certaine rationalité militaire, consistant à profiter de la force de travail des déportés arméniens avant de songer à les liquider.*" *Idem, Le génocide des Arméniens*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2006, p. 840. Moreover, Kévorkian believes that Tahsin and Djemal were operating with identical objectives, *ibid.*, p. 833.

<sup>56</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay, "Pazar konuşması" (in Turk., for "Sunday talk") in *Dünya gazetesi*, Dec. 12, 1967, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> "An Adana Bible woman exiled to the Damascus region was much troubled to find that in the Govt. register there she and her husband had been given Turkish names and were recorded as Moslems. On their protesting to the Government, she was told this was something for which she had no concern, that it was purely a matter of Govt. policy. Later they understood it was done by Jamal Pasha's order for their protection. I wish give credit where it is due." Elizabeth Webb, *The Exiling of the Armenians. Adana District*, enclosure to Elizabeth Webb to Barton, Oberlin, OH, Nov. 14, 1917 Harvard University, Houghton Library, Cambridge, MA, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Western Turkey Mission 1910-1919, N-W. Webb later asked James Barton, the secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and a key organizer and administrator of Near East Relief, to delete this part from her account arguing that "... *I do not feel sure as to how general it was. Then Jemal Pasha is such a mixture of bad and good that one cannot tell at all what his motives may have been.*" Elizabeth Webb to Barton, Oberlin, Oh. Nov. 14, 1917, *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Cemal Paşa, *Hatıraları* (in Turk., for *Memoirs*), ed. by Behçet Cemal, Istanbul, Selek Yayınları, 1959, pp. 360-362.

Ali Fuat [Erden] for settling 200,000 Armenians.<sup>59</sup> Hasan Amdja estimated that about 200-250,000 Armenians arrived within his army's area. Evidently, he did not include in his estimate those deportees that were sent eastwards into the Syrian Desert.<sup>60</sup>

### *Aintoura*

The Ottoman orphanage at *Aintoura*\* was an Ottoman response to western and Armenian relief efforts that had focused on Armenian orphans in Aleppo and other Syrian towns. Beatrice Rohner, a Swiss member of a German Christian aid organization stood at the center of this work, depending mainly on donations from the U.S. and Europe. When she came to Aleppo in December, 1915, her original plan had been to work among the Armenian deportees in the lower Euphrates region. Djemal Pasha, however, prevented her from doing so and instead offered her to organize at Ottoman government expense the care for Armenian orphans in Aleppo, first with a house of 300 children. From the start the governor of Aleppo, Mustafa Abdulhalik [Renda], an infamous official and strongly implicated in mass murder, opposed her work and used various means of obstruction to frustrate her efforts. Nevertheless, Rohner succeeded in extending her work and keeping the growing orphanages operational even after the government stopped its material support. By December, 1916, Rohner cared for about 1,000 children.<sup>61</sup> She had the children, however, only temporary in her care. Within weeks after Rohner had started her work, the Ottoman government began

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<sup>59</sup> Erden, *ibid.*, p. 124. On Nazim see Ahmet Eyicil, *İttihat ve Terakki liderlerinden doktor Nazım Bey 1872-1926* (in Turk., for *Doctor Nazim Bey 1872-1926 – one of the CUP leaders*), Ankara, Gün Yayıncılık, 2004. This study is particularly weak on Nazim's role during the Armenian Genocide.

<sup>60</sup> Hasan Amca, "Meşrutiyet devrinin 'Çerkez Hasan'ı hayatını anlatıyor" (in Turk., for "Circassian Hassan narrates his life during the constitutional period") in: *Akşam gazetesi*, Jan. 26, 1955, p. 3. Hasan Amdja's dedicated service was also noted by Mustafa Kemal Pasha [later Atatürk], who commended him on his work while strongly denouncing perpetrators. Atay, *ibid.* In 1919, he strongly denounced the CUP's extermination policy; Atay, "Süleyman Nazif Beyefendi'ye: peki! yüz binlerce Ermeni'yi kim öldürdü?" (in Turk., for "To Suleiman Nazif Beyefendi: very well! who killed the hundreds of thousands of Armenians?") in *Alemdar*, April 5, 1919, no. 104-1414.

\* *Editor's Note*: see pictures in the Appendix, pp. 79-81.

<sup>61</sup> For Rohner's own re-collections see Beatrice Rohner, "Unter heimatlosen Armeniern in Aleppo" [in German for "Among the homeless Armenians in Aleppo"] in *Evangelisches missionsmagazin*, Basel 63, 1920, pp. 338-344, and "Pfade in grossen wassern" [in German for "Paths in great water"] in *Sonnenaufgang*, Frankfurt a. M. 36, 1933-1934, pp. 14-15, 21, 30-31, 38-39, 45-46, 54-55. For more details see Hilmar Kaiser, *At the crossroads of Der Zor. Death, survival, and humanitarian resistance in Aleppo, 1914-1917*, in collaboration with Luther and Nancy Eskijian, Princeton, NJ, Gomidas Institute, 2001, xvi.

planning the transfer of Armenian orphans to other localities. Talaat advised the Aleppo authorities that no children should be sent to Constantinople, instead the town of *Sivas* was deemed suitable. The *Sivas* authorities were told that 500 orphans had been assembled in Aleppo while upkeep would be financed by the Ministry's refugee budget. The expedition of the children was however, delayed, as the promised funds did not arrive in Aleppo in time.<sup>62</sup> Although Rohner could count on the support of the German Embassy in Constantinople, the authorities terminated her efforts when they deported all children under her care on March, 13, 1917.<sup>63</sup> The partial transfer of Armenian children had already started earlier, gained pace in July, 1916, when the Ottoman authorities began closing orphanages run with western relief funds. The children were sent to Ottoman government institutions. Prominent among those was *Aintoura*.<sup>64</sup>

It appears that the children from an orphanage in the Syrian town *Hama* were first to be sent to Lebanon.<sup>65</sup> From Rohner's Aleppo orphanage 70 children were sent to Lebanon. Most of the other children had escaped or were too sick to be transported. As the government demanded the delivery of 400 more children, it took children from other orphanages and also from the street. In the end Rohner dressed 400 children with relief money and made them ready for transport. When Rohner asked why the authorities took her orphans first, Abdulhalik answered that her children were the best fed and most cleanly dressed. If the children were in a bad condition the authorities would have to explain what happened with the funds for their upkeep.<sup>66</sup> German Consul Rössler summed up that the government's intention was to Islamize the children.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Talaat to Sivas province, Constantinople, Feb. 22, 1916 IAMM 159 DH.ŞFR 61-79; Abdulhalik Bey to the Ministry of the Interior, Aleppo, Apr. 2, 1916 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-43; Talaat to Sivas province, Constantinople, Apr. 15, 1916 IAMM No. 154 DH.ŞFR 61-20.

<sup>63</sup> Rohner, Aleppo. Rohner could leave the Ottoman Empire only after a thorough inquiry on the part of the Ministry of the Interior. Deputy Minister to Aleppo province, Constantinople, Nov. 11, 1917 EUM Spec. 17 DH.ŞFR 80-121. Deputy Minister to Marash district, Constantinople, Oct. 11, 1917 EUM 5. Dep. DH.ŞFR 80-123. On German embassy support for Rohner see Ministry of the Interior to Aleppo province, Constantinople, May 6, 1916 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 21-8. See also Deputy Foreign Minister to Ministry of the Interior, Constantinople, May 3, 1916 Political Dept. 81703/326 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 20-58 (1).

<sup>64</sup> Already in 1920, Aram Andonian stressed the importance of *Aintoura* as part of an empire-wide turkification program. Aram Andonian, *Documents officiels concernant les massacres arméniens*, Paris, Imprimerie Turabian, 1920, pp. 127-128.

<sup>65</sup> Rohner to Peet, Aleppo, Aug. 4, 1916 copy ABCFM, New York.

<sup>66</sup> Rössler to Bethmann Hollweg, Aleppo, Feb. 14, 1917 A 8613 AA-PA Türkei 183/46 K. No. 21 No. 299.

<sup>67</sup> Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, Mar. 4, 1917 J. No. zu 390 Sekr. AA-PA Konsulat Aleppo Telegram No. 19.

The history of *Aintoura* orphanage is closely linked with the name of the prominent Turkish writer Halidé Edib [Adivar]. Although being a leading proponent of Turkish nationalism, Halidé Edib nevertheless opposed the government's extermination policy. In her memoirs she claimed credit for a successful effort by the Turkish Hearths, a Turkish nationalist organization, to save Gomidas Vartabed, an Armenian deportee who was arrested on April 24, 1915.<sup>68</sup> When she gave a talk at the Turkish Hearths in Constantinople in 1916, opposing the killing of Armenians, she clashed with Ziya Gökalp, the Kurdish ideologue of Pan-Turkism. He was a member of the CUP's central committee and responsible for the mass murder. Not surprisingly, Halidé Edib's relations with the CUP central committee grew worse and she was strongly denounced by party members.<sup>69</sup> Despite their strong disagreements, Halidé Edib found it advisable to later emphasize her friendship with the late Gökalp. After all by 1916, he had become a dominant ideological reference for Turkish nationalism. "He very often came to visit me in my house in Fazli Pasha, and we enjoyed an intellectual friendship until 1915, after which differences in educational as well as in political principles drew us apart."<sup>70</sup> The encounter must have been intense, as she claimed that some CUP circles tried to have her punished for bringing up the Armenian deportations. Talaat, however, interfered and stopped the effort.<sup>71</sup> Ziya Gökalp remained not the only CUP leader, Edib clashed with. During one of her trips to Lebanon, she met Behaeddin Shakir at the train station in *Adana*. Complaining to her host, Falih Rifkî [Atay], she denounced Behaeddin Shakir as what he was, a killer. The latter, for his part, warned Falih Rifkî about Edib's personality.<sup>72</sup>

Describing her first visit to *Aintoura* in the company of Djemal Pasha and other Turkish intellectuals like Hamdullah Suphi, Halidé Edib used her words very cautiously. Being aware of accusations against her, she claimed that the children in the orphanage there had already been given Turkish names. She claimed that Djemal had supposedly told her that the Armenian orphanages were full and no further funds for new orphanages were available. Out of mercy, the general had accepted Armenian children into the *Aintoura* orphanage, which had originally been established for Kurds and Turks only. Moreover, Djemal supposedly was not only

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<sup>68</sup> [Adivar], *ibid.*, 1926, p. 374.

<sup>69</sup> [Atay], *ibid.*, 1932, p. 60. See also Yahya Kemal [Beyatlı], *Siyasi ve edebi portreler* [in Turk., for *Political and literary portraits*], Istanbul, Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü, 1968, pp. 35-37.

<sup>70</sup> [Adivar], *ibid.*, 1926, p. 317.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388. An undated letter from the BOA confirms that Adivar had at least at some point good relations with Talaat. Halidé Edib to Talaat, n. p., n.d., DH.KMS 65-46.

<sup>72</sup> [Atay], *ibid.*, 1932, p. 61; and Konuşması, p. 2.

comfortable that these Armenian children would return to their community later on, but even hoped that no child would forget its own nationality. Edib did not immediately take over *Aintoura* and returned to Constantinople in September, 1916. Two months later, Djemal urged her to take over the schools he had established in Syria and run *Aintoura* where now 800 children were concentrated. This number rose to 1,200 by September, 1917.<sup>73</sup> Edib accepted and asked Yahya Kemal [Beyatlı] to join her team, but he declined the invitation.<sup>74</sup> Edib's claims are to some extent supported by the American Board missionary Harriet Fisher. In May, 1917, Fisher had taught for one month at one of Halidé Edib's schools in Beirut. She noted how the Turkish nationalist writer strongly condemned the extermination of the Armenians. With her frank statements she not only tried to distance herself from her comrades but also demonstrated that she was fully aware of her elite status. She explained that her faction within CUP had not been in favor of the killings but did not carry the day. *Aintoura* had at that time about 1,000 children, mostly Armenians. Fisher quoted Halidé Edib "their names are changed (to Moslem names) but they are children; they don't know what religion means. Now, they must be fed and clothed and kept safe." The words echoed what Djemal had supposedly said, but they did not convince Fisher, who wondered what would come after the war. Moreover, Fisher knew that many of the children had been taken from Beatrice Rohner's orphanage.<sup>75</sup> Such doubts were fully justified. Falih Rıfki emphasized that both Djemal and Edib pursued a conscious Islamization or Turkification policy as opposed the killing campaign associated with people like Behaeddin Shakir.<sup>76</sup>

Halidé Edib's self-portrait as a concerned humanist does not account for the direct involvement of the Ottoman central authorities. Her husband, Adnan Bey, a member of government, supervised her travel arrangements.<sup>77</sup> The central authorities provided financing with funds coming from the same budget that financed the turkification program: the funds of the IAMM. The Ministry of Interior assured both the Syrian provincial authorities and Djemal

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<sup>73</sup> [Adivar], *ibid.*, 1926, pp. 428-431, 452. The network included a boarding school, a teachers college, and a primary in Beirut as well as other primary schools in Damascus and Mount Lebanon. Erden, *Suriye Hâtiralari*, p. 272.

<sup>74</sup> [Beyatlı], *ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>75</sup> Statement of Harriet J. Fischer in James Barton (compiler) *Turkish atrocities. Statements of American Missionaries on the destruction of Christian communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917*, Ann Arbor, MI, Gomidas Institute, 1998, pp. 164-165 xiv.

<sup>76</sup> [Atay], *ibid.*, 1932, p. 64.

<sup>77</sup> Adnan to Halidé Edib, Constantinople, Jan. 10, 1918 DH.ŞFR 83-77; Adnan Bey to Ismail Hack, Constantinople, Feb. 25, 1918 DH.ŞFR 84-156; Adnan Bey to Cemal Bey (Health Director), Constantinople, Mar. 11, 1918 DH.ŞFR 85-86.

on the funding and emphasized the special status of *Aintoura*.<sup>78</sup> In refusing financing from the budget of the Fourth Army, Talaat also limited Djemal's influence over the institution to some extent and assured uniformity within the turkification program.<sup>79</sup> Thus, postwar claims by Djemal that he maintained *Aintoura* out of his military funds need some qualification.<sup>80</sup> The provisioning of the orphanage appears to have been complicated. Provincial authorities had removed equipment and other materials that needed to be returned.<sup>81</sup> Supplying the orphanage remained, however, always a problem that attracted the special care of the central authorities. Adnan Bey and Halidé Edib intervened repeatedly from Constantinople with the provincial authorities, requesting their attention to matters concerning *Aintoura*.<sup>82</sup>

On one occasion, in March, 1917, Halidé Edib congratulated Djavid Bey for becoming again Minister of Finance. She used the opportunity to give Djavid an impression about the situation of Armenians in Syria. The region had become the only place where Armenians were allowed to survive and thus many were living in utmost poverty. In one of her schools, she had accepted deportees into an adjunct building. The people had survived in the desert living on plants until Djemal brought them in. While the Municipality gave them a meager allowance, Halidé Edib's teachers had opened classes for the children. She singled out the cases of a twelve-year-old girl who had seen her parents starving to death and that of a man who had lost his speech-seeing his son murdered by his side. Such cases numbered by the hundreds and thousands. Halidé Edib reported how her orphanages were filled with traumatized children while on her travels in the region she saw endless misery. Posing a rhetoric question, she expressed her hope that the new

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<sup>78</sup> Talaat to Suriye province, Constantinople, Feb. 12, 1917 IAMM Corres Dept. 13196 DH.ŞFR 72-215; Deputy Minister to Fourth Army Command, Constantinople, Apr. 30, 1917 IAMM Gen. 15509 Spec. 38 DH.ŞFR 75-271.

<sup>79</sup> Talaat to Fourth Army Command, Constantinople, May 9, 1917 AMMU Gen. 15759 Spec. 41 DH.ŞFR 76-69.

<sup>80</sup> Ahmed Djemal Pasha to Hörth, n. p., n. d., AA-PA Nachlaß Göppert VI, 5. In a 1917 report on the Fourth Army's achievements, the army claimed that Halidé Edib worked in coordination with the army, while the financing came from the provinces. *The political and administrative accomplishments of the 4th Army from its foundation to September 27, 1917* in, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, genelkurmay başkanlığı, Armenian Activities* in the Archive Documents 1914-1918, vol. 7, pp. 330-331, Ankara, Genelkurmay Askerî Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2007 xi.

<sup>81</sup> Talaat to Lebanon district, Constantinople, July 9, 1917 İdare-i Umur-ı Dahiliye Müdiriyeti Gen. 11114 Spec. 17 DH.ŞFR 78-70.

<sup>82</sup> Adnan to Ismail Hakki Effendi (Lebanon governor), Constantinople, Mar. 3, 1918 Sihhiye Umumiye Dept. DH.ŞFR 85-267; Halidé Edib to Ismail Hakki (Beirut governor), Constantinople, Aug. 1, 1918 DH.ŞFR 90-2; Adnan Bey (Minister of Sanitation) to Ismail Hakki (Beirut governor), Constantinople, Aug. 6, 1918 DH.ŞFR 90-55.

cabinet would end the cruelties and killings and respect the human rights of Armenians. Halidé Edib did not forget to add that she needed more supplies for her schools, adding that her correspondence was censored.<sup>83</sup> Her representations with Djavid Bey had some impact as he passed the letter on to Talaat, indicating that Djavid might have shared her opposition to the government's anti-Armenian policy at least in part.

The turkification program ended with the Ottoman defeat. On December 1, 1918, a former American Board missionary, Bertha Morley, took over *Aintoura* as part of a Red Cross assignment.<sup>84</sup> Morley and her team had followed the British advance north through Palestine before she took over *Aintoura*. A week later, on December 7, 1918, she described her observations upon her arrival at the orphanage:

*...about 650 children, of whom 150 are Kurds and the remainder Armenians. They have been here for three years. Many of the Armenians were first gathered by missionaries and native pastors in various places, then were taken away by the Turks, brought together here, given Turkish names, and were being made into Moslems as rapidly as possible, - punished severely for, speaking in the Armenian language.*

Later, the situation improved through Halidé Edib's work but deteriorated again in the final phase of Ottoman rule. Before the arrival of the allies, children had received no food for three days.

*They are the most pathetic little creatures I ever saw, - some of them just skin and bones. (...) Most of the children are without stockings and shoes, warm clothing, combs, brushes, spoons are not even provided in the dining room, nor is there a cup, nor towel for the whole lot. In the bath and hospital there are half a dozen or so towels, I am told. (...) We can't get eggs and only a little milk; no wonder our hospital is full, about 100 in it alone,*

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<sup>83</sup> Halidé Edib to Djavid Bey, Beirut, March 14, 1917, in, Murat Bardakçi, *Talât Paşa'nın evrak-i metrúkesi. Sadrazam Talât Paşa'nın özel arşivinde bulunan Ermeni tehciri konusundaki belgeler ve hususî yazışmalar*, Istanbul, Ernest Yayınları, 2008, pp. 149-151.

<sup>84</sup> Harriet Morley, *Not by bread alone. The life of Bertha B. Morley written for her foster family*, n. p., College Press, 1967, pp. 21-25.

*and that it doesn't get empty.*<sup>85</sup>

It appeared that "the children had been obliged to speak Turkish, under pain of *bastinado* if they spoke Armenian." Evidently, the children had not been as happy as Edib tried to portray their situation. Morley described the facilities with some detail: the orphanage had a bathhouse, hospital rooms, and a pharmacy. The children had been organized into four groups all under a *bash-chavush* (overseer). While children suffered under famine conditions, they still fared better than the average Lebanese village population. The claim that all of Rohner's orphans survived the war appears, nevertheless, doubtful given the number of losses at *Aintoura*.<sup>86</sup>

*Aintoura* became a show place for the Red Cross and well known as many groups visited it. As children were returned to their communities their number declined to 600 at the time the orphanage closed in June, 1919. By that time the search of Armenian children had become part of a concerted effort. The occupying Entente forces and western relief organizations started locating Armenian children in government orphanages and private houses. Soon they had collected 1,620 in a village near Beirut.<sup>87</sup> Armenian families and orphans remembered Halidé Edib's role with contempt, denouncing her claims to a western liberal educational tradition. Instead, they point to her Turkist beliefs and her CUP allegiances. She did not act to save the Armenian community but to destroy it by means more suitable for the purposes of her own political goals.<sup>88</sup>

In certain respect, *Aintoura* was an unusual location for such a center. While it fulfilled a principal pre-condition for being selected - the absence of other Armenians - it nevertheless was exceptional in that it was located in an Arabic speaking region, and not a non-Turkish speaking one. A lack of suitable buildings in other areas cannot be a reason for this choice as the Ottoman authorities took over foreign institutions everywhere in the empire.

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<sup>85</sup> Extracts from a letter from Miss Bertha Morley, Antura Orphanage, Dec. 7, 1918 enclosure in Mary Webb to Case, Hartford, Conn., Jan. 29, 1919 ABCFM, Central Turkey Mission, 1910-1919, Letters N – W. Harriet Morley gives slightly lower numbers: out of 630 children, 460 were Armenians and the others Kurdish. Morley, *ibid.* Barton gives the same total as Bertha Morley, "...in 1918, Near East Relief took over Antoura, where the 650 children remain of the 2,000 whom the Turks tried to turkify". James L. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief (1915-1930). An interpretation*, New York, Macmillan, 1930, p. 75 xii.

<sup>86</sup> Harriet Morley, *ibid.*; Karl Meyer, *Armenien und die Schweiz. Geschichte der schweizerischen Armenierhilfe. Dienst an einem christlichen volk*, [in German for Armenia and Switzerland. *The history of Swiss aid to the Armenians. Service to a Christian people*], p. 110, Bern, Blaukreuz-Verlag, 1974; Rohner, "Pfade", p. 14.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Library, Geneva, League of Nations Archives, R 638.

<sup>88</sup> Stepan Dardooni, "Seminarian, deportee, and legionnaire" p. 210, in Paren Kazanjian, *The Cilician Armenian ordeal*, Boston, MA, Hye Intentions Inc., 1989.

More importantly, the case of *Aintoura* has to be seen in view of local conditions existing at the time. Mount Lebanon suffered a killing famine. The region did not receive sufficient grain shipments and soon the poorest classes were hit. The Ottoman government established a monopoly for grain trade from which only some prominent local merchants and the governor of Mount Lebanon profited. The monopoly bought grain at low prices in Syria. Enjoying transport privileges on the railway lines the supplies were easily and cheaply transferred to Lebanon. Here the grain was sold at high price with Ali Münif Bey, the governor since August, 1915, and his two principal associates, Ibrahim Sursock and Nedjib Asfar, realizing spectacular profits. Münif Bey alone made allegedly 20-30,000 £Tq. He spent a considerable part of his time in Beirut, gambling and enjoying the company of known female socialites. His organizing lavish festivities for Djemal Pasha during the latter's visits demonstrated his indifference.<sup>89</sup> By early 1917, according to conservative estimates, Lebanon had lost at least 25% of its population due to death or emigration. One German physician estimated the number of dead with at least 150,000. Whole villages were empty, not even a dog alive. The population of the Mountain had shrunk by 50%.<sup>90</sup>

In other words while being unable or probably unwilling to supply the population with sufficient grain the Ottoman government established in killing famine circumstances, an orphanage. Without need it increased the population to be supported by well over 1,000 persons.<sup>91</sup> Thus, the turkification program and the establishment of Turkish language facilities within the region of Mount Lebanon were more important than the survival of the local Arab speaking population.

The small number of Armenian refugees in the area of Lebanon attests to the effective surveillance of the area that was undoubtedly aided by its topography. Only few routes allowed entry and these could be easily watched. People without proper identification had little chance to pass the controls unnoticed. Despite of all this, some Armenians managed to reach this

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<sup>89</sup> Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, Beirut, July 10, 1916 A 20991 AA-PA Türkei 177/13 K. No. 86. J. No. 1483; Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, Beirut, Feb. 27, 1917 A 9742 AA-PA Türkei 177/14 K. No. 28 J. No. 426, see also Krieger, *Zur Armenierverfolgung*. Ali Münif's recollections do not give any further insights into his tenure in Lebanon. Taha Toros, "Ali Münif Bey", in *Hâtiralari* (in Turk. for *Memoirs*), Istanbul, Isis Yayınclık, 1996 vii.

<sup>90</sup> Dr. Krieger, *ibid*.

<sup>91</sup> Lebanese remembered the killing famine with bitterness attributing callous remarks to Djemal Pasha. One time, when he was facing starving local children begging for food he is said to have remarked: "*This is not genuine hunger. Genuine hunger is when mothers devour their young.*" Najwa al-Qattan, "Safarbarlik: Ottoman Syria and the Great War," pp. 164-73, in Thomas Philip, Christoph Schumann, eds., *From the Syrian land to the states of Syria and Lebanon*, Würzburg-Beirut, Ergon Verlag, 2004, Beirut Texte und Studien, Bd. 96, vii.

relatively isolated region. Apparently, intact local networks turned Beirut and Lebanon as one of the few places of refuge for high-profile Armenians that had remained within the empire. Thus, after being forced to leave Aleppo the Mazlounians obtained permission to stay in *Zahle*. Aram Andonian, a deportee of April 24, 1915, survived the later years of the war in Beirut and Lebanon.<sup>92</sup>

In 1918, an Armenian deportee working for the Arab mayor of *Roum Kale* near *Biredjik* was sent on a mission to Lebanon.<sup>93</sup> Khoren Kouyoumjian using a false name was equipped authentic identification papers that allowed him to travel in the area. In *Zahle*, which was a checkpoint for travelers to Beirut, he found two families from his neighborhood in his hometown *Zeitun*. On the train to Beirut he met an Armenian traveling with false papers. With his help Kouyoumjian contacted the Armenian doctor Bahadourian and met former classmates of St. Paul's College of *Tarsus*. He quickly understood how under diverse conditions, Armenians managed to survive in Beirut. While the Sarafian Brothers continued their business and Prof. Harutunian taught at the university, others were less lucky. Baidzar Berberian was a woman from *Rodosto*. In *Rayak* she was separated from her family and was abducted by a Turkish officer who took her to Beirut where she had gone into hiding. Kouyoumjian himself, most likely a member of the militant Armenian underground recalls:

*The next day I went to the Sarafian brothers and told them how, in Aleppo, it was arranged that a certain young woman would gather the names of kidnapped women in harems and give the names to a certain watch dealer. I asked if such an arrangement could be made and they would be willing to receive the names from the appointed young woman. Without any hesitation, they rejected the suggestion and insisted that I should not send any woman to them. It was too dangerous, they thought. I could not convince them.*

The hesitancy of the Sarafian Brothers was, however, not without reason. In 1916, they had come under suspicion to shelter Sempad Krikorian, a wanted Armenian activist from *Bitlis*. Talaat instructed the local authorities to apprehend and send him directly to *Deir Zor*. While the authorities arrested

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<sup>92</sup> Andonian, 1920, *ibid*, pp. 13, 29. The Mazlounians were deported by a direct order from Talaat. Talaat to Aleppo province, Constantinople, Aug. 15, 1916 EUM Spec. 1147 DH.ŞFR 67-9.

<sup>93</sup> Khoren K. Davidson, *Odyssey of an Armenian of Zeitoun*, with a Foreword by Aram Saroyan, New York, Vantage Press, 1985, p. xiv.

the suspect and sent him to Aleppo, it turned out that he had no contact with the Sarafian Brothers. The denunciation, however, showed how delicate was the situation in Beirut for any Armenian.<sup>94</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The experience of Beirut and Mount Lebanon during the Armenian Genocide differs from the experience of the empire's Armenian regions insofar that no large-scale massacres took place. The authorities did not need to take recourse to open slaughter, as no compact Armenian population existed. The absence of a sizeable and established Armenian community qualified the area as a location for the government's turkification programs that targeted Armenian children and to some extent women as well. As the Armenian Genocide was an integral part of the Ottoman turkification program for the non-Turkish districts of the empire, it is important to understand the shape this program took in Lebanon. The decision to establish an orphanage in a killing famine area throws serious doubts on the Ottoman government's claims that the famine was not a deliberately brought about disaster. Even if one would accept that the government had no resources to save the villagers of Mount Lebanon, it could have saved hundreds of them by abstaining from abducting Armenian children from western relief orphanages in Syria. The funds expended on the children would have been a most welcome aid to the starving local population. Edib's misrepresentation of *Aintoura* as a humanitarian effort should also be seen in connection of this killing famine. Edib was right that most orphans survived, but only so as Turks, and with the use of torture or worse if necessary. In this calculation, the non-Turkish population of Mount Lebanon had no place like the Armenian peasants did not have one. Thus, the Lebanese killing famine and the Armenian Genocide both form part of one policy. The underlying logic

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<sup>94</sup> Krikorian was denounced on the initiative of Aleppo governor Abdulhalik (Renda) who used a go-between to secure the cooperation of the Ministry of the Interior in the investigation. The Ministry took the lead. The local authorities in Beirut found out that Krikorian had traveled to Beirut with an official travel permit issued in Aleppo. In Beirut he engaged in trade with raw cotton, residing with some Greeks. Major Aziz to [?], n.p., n.d., DH.EUM. 2 ŞB 19-16 (2); Talaat to Aleppo province, Constantinople, Mar. 5, 1916 EUM Spec. 230 DH.ŞFR 61-181; Talaat to Beirut province, Constantinople, Mar. 5, 1916 EUM Spec. 71 DH.ŞFR 61-189; Minister to Beirut province, Constantinople, Mar. 22, 1916 EUM DH.ŞFR 62-78; Azmi Bey (Beirut governor) to Ministry of Interior, Beirut, Mar. 11 1916 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-16 (3); Azmi Bey to Ministry of Interior, Beirut, Mar. 23, 1916 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-16 (4). See also, Ministry of Interior to Beirut Province, Constantinople, Mar. 5, 1916 EUM DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-16 (5); Ministry of Interior to Aleppo Province, Constantinople, Mar. 5, 1916 EUM DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-16 (5); Ministry of Interior to Beirut Province, Constantinople, Mar. 22. 1916 DH.EUM 2 ŞB 19-16 (1).

was nationalism, not racism. In Lebanon as well, Armenians deemed suitable and useful had good chances for survival at the cost of losing their identity. Thus, the total destruction of the Armenian community in historic Armenia was not necessarily equivalent with the killing of all Armenians.

After the war, Djemal tried to present himself as the protector of deported Armenians within his sphere of influence.<sup>95</sup> Officers, who enjoyed his trust to a certain degree, have confirmed his support for relief efforts. Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, Ali Fuat Erden, Falih Rifkî Atay, Hassan Amdja described his compassionate reaction to the sights of Armenian suffering. The permission for relief work in Aleppo and parts of the Fourth Army area had, however, been obtained on the initiative of German officers and civilian circles.<sup>96</sup> The general's humanitarian credentials appear less impressive as he threatened to intensify the authorities' anti-Armenian policy if U.S. consulates in Beirut and Aleppo would continue to support Armenians with funds.<sup>97</sup> This suppression of unwanted relief was fully in line with the wishes of Ottoman central authorities that kept a close watch on these activities.<sup>98</sup>

Djemal's consent to some foreign relief work among Armenians was not necessarily in contradiction to Ottoman central government policy. In fact, it served the purpose. The permission allowed the continuous influx of additional hard gold currency to the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the cooperation facilitated Ottoman surveillance of the effort. On a more cynical note, the Armenian and western orphanages kept the Armenian children long enough alive until Ottoman institutions like *Aintoura* were ready to takeover the children. Thus, it was probably not surprising that German institutions in

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<sup>95</sup> Ahmed Djemal Pasha to Hörth, n. p., n. d., AA-PA Nachlaß Göppert VI, 5; Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines türkischen staatsmannes* [in German for *Memoirs of a Turkish statesman*], 2nd ed., München, Drei Masken Verlag, 1922, p. 294.

<sup>96</sup> Kaiser, *ibid*, 2001; see also Friedrich Frhr. v. Kreß von Kressenstein, *Mit den Türken zum Suezkanal* [in German for *With the Turks to the Suez Canal*], Berlin, Vorhut-Verlag Otto Schlegel, 1938. Kress did not comment on Armenians in Lebanon or in Beirut.

<sup>97</sup> Morgenthau to Jackson and Hoskins, Constantinople, Nov. 29, 1915. Confidential enclosure in Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, Nov. 29, 1915 U.S. National Archives II, Record Group 59 867.48.227.

<sup>98</sup> The authorities of Beirut were, for instance, asked to provide further information on German and American activities in this matter. Evidently, the Ottoman-German alliance did not influence such a negative assessment. Minister to Beirut province, Constantinople, Aug. 11, 1915 EUM Spec. 4987 DH.ŞFR 54/a-370. People involved in relief work like the pastor of the German Lutheran church in Beirut communicated with the German authorities, appealing to them to stop the extermination of the Armenians. Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, Nov. 26, 1915 J. No. 6858 AA-PA Konstantinopel 171 telegram No 177. In 1916, circles at the US Embassy suggested him as the local representative for a Near East Relief center. Metternich to Loytved, Pera, Mar. 20, 1916 J. No. ad 3409 AA-PA Konstantinopel 99 telegram No. 97.

Beirut were allowed to retain their orphans at least until November 1915.<sup>99</sup>

Djemal was, however, willing to confront the central government and risk open conflict with even the CUP's most powerful party bosses over Armenian deportees when the matter involved the general's supreme authority within the Fourth Army's region. For instance, the Armenian deportees at *Rayak* were under military authority and not civilian - thereby removing them effectively from the Ministry of the Interior's deportation machinery. Moreover, Djemal demanded full compliance with his orders from all civilian officials. When his orders clashed with the Ministry of the Interior directives, the officials played for time and it seems that Talaat's intervention overruled Djemal's authority. Thus, it appears that the military's role was at times second to that of the internal security forces. Nevertheless, the military remained a critical element in the execution of the deportation.

Most likely, the Ministry of the Interior succeeded in maintaining its central role as it was in charge of the elaborate registration and supervision system that kept the deportation process in motion. The military authorities lacked such information and therefore were at times relegated to a secondary role.

Therefore, Djemal could not dismiss the Ministry of Interior policies for a very long time.<sup>100</sup> More importantly, however, was that both Djemal and his entourage and the CUP wing associated with Bahaeddin Shakir and Talaat agreed on the destruction of the Ottoman Armenian community. While differences were about the methods used and not the final objective, it meant the difference between life and death for at least tens of thousands of defenseless Armenian victims.

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<sup>99</sup> Hoffmann to Embassy, Alexandretta, Nov. 8, 1915 J. No. 284 AA-PA Konstantinopel 172 No 944 enclosure in Rössler to Metternich, Aleppo, Jan. 3, 1916 A 2889 AA-PA Türkei 183/41 No. 10. Already after the Adana massacres of 1909, Djemal had demonstrated his full understanding of the usefulness of western relief work and funds when he re-directed funds to the establishment of an Ottoman government orphanage for Armenian children that had lost parents during the massacres.

<sup>100</sup> The case of Syria does not appear to be unique. An undated order to the 5th Kolordu obtained by British occupation in 1919, unequivocally stated that the military should not interfere in the operations of the civil authorities unless asked to do so. United Kingdom, National Archives, Foreign Office 371/4172/31307 *Calthorpe to Balfour*, February 10, 1919 No. 135/1264. While this order appears to establish a pre-eminence of civilian authorities in the execution of deportations, it does not, however, mean that the Ottoman military was not a critical factor during the deportations. The case of the *Amasya* deportation suggests that the military was involved in deporting Armenians. While the police forces deported 5,498 Armenians by August 8, 1915, from *Amasya*, 1,983 Armenian men had been deported by September 3, 1915, from *Amasya* as soldiers. See, *Amasya deportation statistics*, Sept. 4, 1915 enclosed in Ahmed Muammer Bey (Sivas Governor) to Ministry of the Interior, [Sivas], Sept. 9, 1915 DH.EUM.KLU 10-7.

## Sommaire

### **Les Arméniens du Liban durant le génocide arménien**

L'objectif de ce chapitre est de montrer la réalité du génocide arménien en se penchant sur le cas des Arméniens du Liban. "La question arménienne" du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle était une question de terres et de territoires. Dans la seconde moitié du siècle, la croissance démographique et l'expansion des terres cultivées augmentaient la pression sur la demande de terres agricoles. Les élites kurdes s'alliant aux immigrants musulmans entreprirent d'exproprier les Arméniens de leurs terres.

L'affaiblissement subséquent du groupe arménien convenait aux aspirations politiques des autorités ottomanes.

L'arrivée au pouvoir des Jeunes Turcs en 1908 ne change guère la situation. Les élites au pouvoir s'allient aux usurpateurs des terres arméniennes. Cette politique (après la défaite de 1912 dans les Balkans) aboutit à la solution du génocide ; au mois de mai 1915, le gouvernement ottoman avait déjà décidé de remplacer la population arménienne par des colons turcs, comme solution permanente aux réclamations des Arméniens. De plus le régime en banqueroute, avait besoin des biens arméniens pour financer la guerre. Il fallait donc non seulement déporter les Arméniens mais aussi les éliminer par tous les moyens disponibles, y compris la turquification.

La communauté vivant au Liban, peu nombreuse, était formée de fonctionnaires, de membres des professions libérales, de marchands. Jugés non dangereux, ils étaient néanmoins sous surveillance.

Des déportés se trouvant dans de très mauvaises conditions, arrivaient à *Baalbeck* et à *Rayak*. Les enfants et les femmes enceintes étaient isolés et remis à des familles musulmanes.

Vers la fin de 1915, la déportation des Arméniens des "terres arméniennes" était complétée. Même ces déportés étaient sous étroite surveillance et à la demande de Talaat ils devaient être sans cesse comptés et fichés. La politique de Djemal Pacha consistait à déporter les Arméniens, à les islamiser, mais non à les éliminer physiquement.

L'orphelinat "ottoman" d'*Aintoura* fait suite à l'œuvre que Béatrice Rohner initie à Alep. Les Ottomans préférèrent réunir les orphelins sous leur contrôle à *Aintoura* dans le but de les turquifier et de les islamiser. Halidé Edib, écrivain, en est nommée la directrice. D'après certains témoignages (et ses mémoires), elle était opposée à la politique d'extermination des Arméniens. En septembre 1917, *Aintoura* abritait 1200 orphelins. En 1918, après la défaite ottomane, *Aintoura* est pris en charge par Bertha Morley du Bureau des Missionnaires Américains.

C'est alors que l'on apprend que les orphelins avaient été forcés à parler le turc. Tous n'avaient d'ailleurs pas survécu. En 1919, à la fermeture de l'orphelinat, ils n'étaient que 600.

Plutôt que des déportations et des massacres, les Jeunes Turcs ont pratiqué une politique de turquification envers les Arméniens du Liban.