

REPORTS

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ARMENIAN GENOCIDE – 100. FROM RECOGNITION TO REPARATION

The centenary of the Armenian Genocide has been commemorated by special sessions at different academic centers. In the number of partakers and the variety of subjects a special place occupied the International conference, titled “The Armenian Genocide – 100. From Recognition to Reparation” organized by the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and Yerevan State University. It took place on October 15–16, 2015: during the plenary and ten sessions about a hundred reports were presented in seven sections.

The conference was opened by Radik Martirosyan, President of NAS RA, which was followed by reading the welcoming addresses of President of RA, Catholicos of All Armenians, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, as well as by the welcoming speeches by Aram Simonyan, Rector of Yerevan State University and Kevork Bardakjian, President of the US Society for Armenian Studies.

Member of Academy of Sciences *Ashot Melkonyan* opened the plenary session (chaired by member of Academy of Sciences *Yuri Suvaryan*) with a report on the process of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the issue of restitution. He presented a detailed analysis of about two dozen resolutions of recognizing the Armenian Genocide, suggesting that the international recognition following the demand for territorial compensation on April 24 1965 deflected the struggle carried out for compensation from the righteous way that had been initially selected. Prof. Melkonyan stressed, that the most significant characteristics – exile from homeland, as a rule is not mentioned in the resolutions

condemning the genocide. The report by the Member of Academy of Sciences *Rouben Safrastyan* examined the situation whereby the mass murders of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were severely condemned in the joint Declaration by the three Entente countries on May 23-24, 1915 as well as the issues related to its preparation and adoption, in particular, putting forward and supporting the viewpoint that the general idea of the Declaration's elaboration was born in the Armenian circles, rather than the Russian diplomacy, as was the currently held view. Prof. *Edik Minasyan* presented a report describing the present stage of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, making notes at the same time on the changes of the Turkish public opinion on the wide-range discussion of the Genocide and removing the existing taboo on the subject. The speaker suggested to take measures in the Genocide Convention to secure the responsibility stipulated through genocide to exile the nation from homeland, as well as the associated compensation of losses with the appropriate legal support and implementation. *Hilda Choboian* (France) reviewed the issue of transitioning from the international recognition phase of the Armenian Genocide to reparations by the government of Turkey, focusing the listeners' attention on the developments of the German reparations program with regard to the Jewish case. The speaker emphasized not only the material components of the compensation, but also the need for the package of the moral measures, referring to the latest developments in the international law, as well as the possibilities in promoting the Armenian lawsuit and the possibilities of re-orienting the Western strategic interests. *Dora Sakayan* (Canada) presented Clara Sigrist-Hilty's (a Swiss nurse) handwritten reports on the Armenian deportations, which she witnessed during 1915-1918 near Keller, an important railway junction in Cilicia. The paper is based on Sigrist-Hilty's 100-year-old reports written in Gothic script. A German book is planned to be published in 2016, also in preparation are the Armenian and the English versions. *Michael Hezemann* (Germany) has presented about 2.500 pages of hitherto unpublished documents from the archives of Vatican.

During the sessions of the "History and Historiography" section fifteen presentations were made. *Vladimir Zakharov* (Moscow) demonstrated letters of the Bulgarian diplomatic mission, as well as reports and telegrams that are being introduced into circulation and can be used in judicial procedures. Reports by *Antonina Dolganova*, *Stepan Stepanyants* and *Victor Akopyan* (all three were representing Russia) were dedicated to the role of Russia in helping the Armenian refugees during WWI. In particular, it is shown how new life was being organized in Russia for the Armenian refugees as well as the way the appropriate archival documents were being discovered and introduced into the current circulation. To be

also noted was the report by *Jasmine Dum-Tragut* (Austria). While searching the archives, she found the results of the studies by the Austrian scholars during WWI about the prisoners of war of the Armenian nationality. In those one hundred years old materials were six sound recordings among which there were Armenian patriotic songs. Interestingly, the researcher is currently trying to find the descendants of those POWs. *Ashot Hayruni*, who studied the role of Germany in the Armenian Genocide, presented a story on rescuing a group of Armenian women and children, contributed by Karen Yeppe, a Danish woman-devotee of the Armenian people. The report by *Anahit Khosroeva* is dedicated to the comparative analysis of the Armenian and the Assyrian genocides. That is significant not only from theoretical point of view, but has also great importance because of growing cooperation between the Armenian and the Assyrian communities in the different parts of the world. An interesting presentation was made by the Russian Turkologist *Viktor Nadein-Raevsky*, who is also a participant of the conferences on the Armenian Genocide, held in 1990 and 1995. He spoke about Panturkism as a ruling ideology in the Ottoman Empire, as well as about many practical issues associated with compensation.

The report by *Kevork Bardakjian* offered an analysis of the historical context of the rhetorical question uttered by Hitler on August 22, 1939: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?” based upon the newly published book by Stepan Ihrig “Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination.” *Gevorg Stepanyan* evaluated the massacres of the Armenians in Baku, 1918-1920 as a continuation and a component of the Genocide of Western Armenians, and as an implementation of the all-Turkish program. The research by *Knarik Avakian* was dedicated to elucidating the fact of the 4.000-strong Armenian volunteering movement in the Caucasus and Cilicia coming from US and the countries of Europe. The report by *Armenuhi Ghambarian* was also dedicated to the American reality. The researcher explored the evidence published in the American press in 1914-1923 on the Armenian Genocide, noting that it expressed both the US Government and an unofficial orientation on the tragedy of Western Armenians. *Balint Kovach* (Hungary) in his report described the interwar period and the activities of Hungarian Armenian organizations in four communities. *Hasmik Grigoryan* covered the Jihad factor at the time of the Armenian Genocide, showing religious intolerance and bigotry in their multiple manifestations of cruelty to those who are considered enemies. *Kristine Najaryan* insists on the need to teach the subject of the Armenian Genocide at school. *Vera Sahakyan* delivered a report on the premises for the formation of Special Organization within the Ottoman Empire (Teshkilat a Mahsusa) and its role in the course of the Armenian Genocide.

At the section “The Armenian Cause: the World Politics” were presented six reports: *Gerayer Koutcharian* (Germany) described the orientation of the German authorities towards the genocides of the Armenians and other Christian nations both in the past and at the present, noting that up until today, there have not been any extensive, scientific and positive assessment of the German measure of guilt, which in the society integrating the Turks and the generations of their Middle-Eastern Christian victims can result in serious consequences. The German responsibility for the Armenian Genocide was also covered by *Marie Rose Abousefian* (USA) who presented a collection of documents published by Wolfgang Gust in 2005 revealing the concealed one-hundred-year-old German responsibility for the Armenian Genocide and throwing light on the programmed Turkish policies aimed at obliterating the Armenian nation. *Christine Melkonyan* dedicated her report to the process of Genocide recognition started in the 1960s. The scientific community is quite familiar with the declarations by the Uruguay and Cyprus parliaments, however in the same year similar resolutions were adopted by the legislative assembly of the US State of California, followed by the “World Congress for Peace, National Independence and General Disarmament.” *Robert Tatoyan* touched upon certain new tendencies to minimize the number of victims of the Armenian Genocide, particularly seen in the book by the Turkish researcher Fuat Dündar “The Crime of Numbers. The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878 – 1918)” published in 2010. *Anush Hovhannisyan* in her report spoke about the discussions on the Armenian Question held in the Ottoman Parliament in 1918. *Manushak Markosyan* (Germany/Armenia) spoke on Armin Wegner’s detailed talk on “The Exile of the Armenian People Into the Deserts” (1919), stressed on its historic and political significance and contemporary evaluation.

In the two sessions of the section “Reflection of the Armenian Genocide in Arts” about twenty reports were presented dealing with different branches and genres of art. The most popular analyses were done in the realm of music. A generalizing review was presented by *Anna Arevshatyan*, whose subject was concerned with the reflection of the Armenian Genocide in the works by contemporary Armenian composers (Edgar Hovhannisyan, Edward Hairapetyan, Harutyun Dellalyan, Ervand Erkanyan, Ruben Sargsyan, Vahram Babayan, Tigran Mansuryan). A number of reports were dedicated to works by individual musicians. *Lilit Ernjakyan* reported on the outstanding American Armenian composer Alan Hovhaness and his coverage of the subject of Genocide with regard to manifestations of Armeniency in his music. *Lilit Artemyan* presented an analysis of the Armenian marine artist and musician Vardan Makhokhyan and his musical

composition “Lamentation of Armenia.” The first-night presentation of this work took place in Yerevan at a concert organized by the Institute of Fine Arts of Academy of Sciences, where it was performed by Ms. Artemyan. *Gayane Amiragyan* demonstrated certain genre and stylistic peculiarities of twenty-two folk songs dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. *Naira Grigoryan* analyzed the reflection of Armenian Genocide in Vardan Ajemyan’s music. *Anna Asatryan* spoke on the cruel destiny of the composer Hampartzoum Berberian and his works, particularly the requiem dedicated to the memory of Komitas. *Nazenik Sargsyan* gave a detailed analysis of the ballet “Komitas: Kroong Bnaver [The Nestless Crane]” by Anna Janbazyan, American choreographer of Persian Armenian ancestry. *Tatevik Shakhkulyan* suggested a hypothesis, that the so called “Turkish” music recordings, presented in 1936 to Hungarian composer Bela Bartok were in fact Armenian songs, and could be recorded at the beginning of the 20th century by Komitas. *Hasmik Harutyunyan* reviewed the manifestations of patriocid and national identity in musical compositions in vocal pieces composed in Shirak. *Anahit Bekarian* presented the Toronto performance in 2009 of “The Georgetown Boys” – a bilingual theatrical production based on an historical event – the arrival of a hundred of Armenian orphans in Canada and the contribution by the benefactor Levon Papayan into their Armenian education. *Karine Jaghatspanyan’s* report described the coverage of the Armenian Genocide in the piano music by the pianist and composer Hayk Melikyan based on a specially issued musical disk.

Several reports were done on the subject of the Armenian painters, both classic and modern showing the specific scenes of genocide. *Yvette Tajarian* spoke on thirteen pieces by Marko Grigoryan dedicated to the Jewish Holocaust as well as the latter’s use of soil, straw and clay as painting materials. The subject of report by *Lilit Pipoyan* was “Exodus” – a monumental composition by Suren Pipoyan. *Satenik Vardanyan* analyzed a little-known work by Eghishe Tadevosyan (1916-1918) “Crusifixion.” *Irina Garaseferjan’s* report dealt with the art by a French Armenian surrealist painter Leon Tutundjian. He was saved from the Genocide by miracle and always resorted to this subject in his creative work. *Margarita Kamalian* also reverted to French Armenian painters (Hrant Alianak, Levon Kiurkchian, Sargis Khachadourian, Edgar Chahine, Melkon Kebabjian, Vardan Makhokhian, Armenak Misirian, Leon Tutundjian, Zareh Mutaflan, Jean Carzou, Jansem, Vahe Hekimian, Rishar Sheranian, Tsatur Pztikian, Moris Ter-Margarian, Jean Kazanjian), whose compositions related to the subject of Genocide. *Vigen Ghazarian* presented a detailed analysis of the art by Arshile Gorky and its expression of grief and nostalgia.

Several reports were dedicated to the problems of genocide in other branches of art. Thus, *Arsen Hambardzumov* touched upon the theme of genocide in the film by Henrik Malyan “Nahapet [Patriarch],” examining the performance of the Patriarch’s image incorporated by the actor Sos Sargsyan. *Mane Mkrtchyan* gave a detailed presentation of the works of eighteen Armenian artists from the national pavilion of Armenia at the 56th Venice biennale. *Sara Nalbandyan* elucidated genocide documentation by means of documentary theater by analyzing the drama by Perch Zeituntsyan “The Trial Begins!”

The section “Theory, Memory” presented eight reports. In the subject of remembering should be noted the report by *Natalya Ablazhey* (Russia). She reviewed the letters written by Western Armenian repatriates in Stalin’s exiles, where they were comparing their situation with the massacres implemented in Ottoman Empire. *Hranush Kharatyan* talked about the events followed the assassination of Aghasi Khanjyan and how and why the waves of repressions hit mostly the Western Armenians, wherein she perceived certain tendencies. *Hayk Sahakyan* made an attempt to apply sociological research and its quantitative statistical methods for the measurements of collective memory of the Armenian Genocide. *Verjine Svazlian* addressed the issue of the Armenians’ self-defense as seen by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide. *Gayane Shagoyan* regarded the genocide as a meta-narrative of a traumatic memory, examining its manifestations within a monumental culture, in a system of perceptions, putting forward an idea that if an event is ethnized, it is better remembered. In his report *Harutyun Marutyan* discussed the issue of rescuing the Armenians by the Turks and Kurds. When this rescue is regarded within the comparative genocide studies, in particular Yad Vashem Institute of “Righteous Among the Nations,” then the real cases of rescue are radically diminished. *Lilit Yepremyan* reverted to the psychological nature of the genocide that was rather scarce in the study of the Medz Yeghern. *Albert Musheghyan*, discussing a few analytical articles in the press of 1910s, came to the conclusion that the disaster of 1915 was not unexpected. The section’s reports abounded in an idea that the factor of the Armenian Genocide continues to retain its up-to-dateness not only in social and political occurrences, but also in the culture of human memory.

Eleven reports were read during the two sessions of the section titled “Reflection of the Armenian Genocide in the Literature.” Two of those had a very extensive coverage. *Mihran Minasyan* traced the subject of Armenian Genocide in the Arab literature, *Lilit Grigoryan* – in the works by the French Armenian writers. M. Minasyan noted that the written witness accounts by Arabs on the massacres are very few: there are only fifteen texts on the Cilician massacres, but on the subject

of genocide there are dozens of novels and stories, while among the theatrical performances two pieces stand out. L. Grigoryan mentioned around a dozen French authors and their works of fiction which however had been published before 1920. The author also reviewed a number of pieces by the French-writing and Armenian-writing authors. *Avetik Isahakyan* gave a detailed account of the role played by the great Armenian writer Avetik Isahakyan in activities of “Armenian-German Society” (1914-1939), particularly in the publication of the journal “Mesrop,” as well as in collecting a great number of eye-witness accounts and documentary evidence with regard to the Medz Yeghern. The joint report by *Anahit Jijyan* and *Nerses Kocharyan* is concerned with the discovery of the social and psychological aftermath of the Genocide. The report by *Hasmik Margaryan* discussed the methods of teaching the subject of the Armenian Genocide at high school of general education. Other reports dealt with the references to the Armenian Genocide in the works by individual authors. Thus, *Inga Avagyan* talked on unpublished memoir by Aghasi Makaryan “From the History of Our Family” (1976); *Knarik Ter-Davtyan-Arevshatyan* – about the monograph “History of Annihilation of Minor Armenia and Its Great Capital Sebastia” (1924) by Karapet Gabikyan; *Ani Avetisyan* shared her views on the ways of representing the city of Kars in the novel “Snow” by Orhan Pamuk (2002); *Shushan Khachatryan* stressed on the theological manifestations of the massacre in the literary pieces by a number of Armenian writers; *Zbigniew Szmurło* (Poland) talked about the story by the Polish writer Zophia Nałkowska “Choucas” (1926); *Rubina Perroomian* (USA) discussed the experience of the second-generation of Diasporan Armenians to resist assimilation as reflected in the literature covering the collective psychology of the nation.

The Section “Legal and Socio-economic Problems of Eliminating the Aftermath of Genocide and its Compensation” listened to nine reports. *Garabet Moumdjian* (USA) regards the Ottoman laws on “Abandoned Properties” as proof of the phenomenon of Genocide. *Garnik Safaryan* presented the problems of legal liability for the Armenian Genocide regarding its state-sponsored planning and detailed programming, with complete involvement of the entities of government administration etc. *David Davidian* suggested a method of calculating the genocide-caused losses showing them to be currently amounting to 3 trillion US dollars. *Armen Marukyan* had a detailed discussion of the possibilities of consideration of the question of the Armenian Genocide in the context of Turkey – World force centers contradictions. *Irina Gayuk* (Ukraine) reported on the perception of the genocide in the context of global trends of development of the modern civilization making comparisons between the Armenian Genocide and Holodomor. *Suren Zolyan* presented the analysis of statements about the Armenian

Genocide by the US Presidents commenting on their semantic structures and their pragmatic orientation. *Levon Shirinyan* tried to re-examine the Treaties of San-Stefano and Berlin (1878), as well as their consequences with regard to the Armenian massacres and the genocide, while in the Dardanelles the defeat of the Entente forces was stipulated by the absence of will to strengthen the Russia's power. The speaker suggested to explore the Armenian Cause not only as a component of the Oriental Cause, but as the Turkish Cause within the International/European reality. *Emil Ordukhanyan* noted in his report that the genocidal activities of the Ottomans are also derived from their old traditions, since among the Turks the nationalist and racist stereotypes had been shaped long ago bringing forth a specific priority of the anticultural archetype of behavior. According to the analysis by *Hayk Sukiasyan*, the Armenian policy of the Ottoman Empire had been greatly influenced by the German geo-strategic thinking in contrast to the concept of "Middle Europe," and that the ideas emerging in this way can be transferred to the top military and political strata of Turkey.

The section "Cultural Genocide – 'White Massacre'" listened to eight reports. *Davit Kertmenjian* described the abandoned Armenian monuments in Mush area and their main protection problems. He suggested to transform the territory of St. Karapet Monastery of Mush into a center of exchange for educational programs and to create a virtual museum for that former religious center. *Anahit Astoyan*, following the discussion of the problem of the seized church property and cultural values, noted that it is impossible to calculate the losses of Armenian cultural treasures that was amassed and kept in Armenian churches and monasteries for centuries and to assess their scientific, historical and artistic value. *Armen Karamanyan* (Australia) having surveyed the vitality of the country's Armenian community, came to the conclusion that the disciples of the Armenian College who are not members of foreign organizations and show their continued presence in the life of the community, retain the capacity of maintaining and strengthening their Armenian identity, and that one of the circumstances stipulating this situation is the factor of the memory of the Armenian Genocide. *Rimma Mirumyan* believes that in the course of centuries the vital activities of the Armenian nation has been implemented by their creation and development of the high-level forms of culture, so that the Armenian national culture has been capable of fulfilling the function of ethnic preservation. Thus, the Armenian Genocide was essentially a policy designed to obliterate the manifestations of Armeniency like "nation" and "culture" in the Armenians' historic homeland. *Marianna Harutyunyan* reporting on the crosstones of Djughha in Nakhijevan being abused by the Azerbaijanis noted that the last years have seen a considerable effort in those stones being replicated and

reerected, which process is taking place both in and outside Armenia. *Anush Ter-Minasyan* showed architectural details of churches within the monasterial complex of Khtskonq, describing the dilapidated St. Sargis Church as a monument to the crime against the elevation of human soul, the humanity and the cultural values. *Armen Kazaryan* (Russia) noting that on the Turkey's territory the massive destruction of Armenian relics was done mostly in 1950-60s, proceeded to the architectural analysis of the Cathedral of Mren. *Lilit Hovhannisyan*, speaking about the historical-juridicial peculiarities of contemporary phase of the removal of consequences of the Armenian Genocide, underscored the current defects in the Genocide Convention and the problems of their elimination.

Summarizing the work of the symposium and putting a high value on its significance, *Yuri Suvaryan*, Academician-Secretary of the Division of Armenology and Social Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia, noted the high activity of the young generation of scholars, as well as the situation, whereby, in contrast to the previous conferences, the pivotal role in this one was played by the idea of compensation, the awareness of the need to focus attention at reparation of the damages so as to develop the appropriate legal and political mechanisms of suggesting a certain toolset for compensation. He expressed a hope that the forthcoming scientific conferences will be directed to the subjects of this order.