

Written Documents Concerning the Atrocities and Genocide Inflicted upon the Turks by the Armenians

The arms which had long been concealed in the Armenian and missionary schools and churches were taken out; offices of enlistment were raided and all their arms were seized; the bands which had armed themselves, obeying such orders of the Committees as "if you wish to be free, kill first your neighbor" started to conduct massacres and atrocities by attacking the undefended Turkish cities, towns and villages, undefended because all men were away on the frontline.

The Armenians, who had been known as late as yesterday as "loyal subjects", stabbed the Turkish army in the back, hindered the operations of the Turkish troops, cut their roads of supplies, ambushed and brutally killed the wounded soldiers, raped defenceless women and virgins by torturing, did not refrain from killing elderly people and children by torturing; plundered goods, money, animals and produce of the people; profaned temples, destroyed bridges and roads; set fire to all official buildings, burned whole towns and villages together with their inhabitants; and facilitated the Russian occupation of the country by rising up. The Armenians who had still been citizens of the Ottoman state thus betrayed their own state.

Atrocities and brutalities committed by the voluntary regiments serving in the ranks of the Russian forces were so harsh that the Russian Command felt itself compelled to remove some Armenian units from the front and sent them to the rear. Memories written by some Russian officers serving in the Russian Army openly testify to such atrocities. (TwerdoKhlebof: *Journal de Guerre du 2e Régiment d'Artillerie de forteresse Russes d'Erzérourm-Notes d'un officier Supérieur Russe sur les atrocités d'Erzérourm, Traduit du manuscrit original russe, 1919.*)

In the ranks of these voluntary regiments there were also a lot of Armenians banished by the Russian Government to Siberia for political reasons and Ottoman Armenians.

Among the chiefs of these regiments and armed bands, who were the most brutal and merciless enemies of the Turks, one may mention Karakin Pastirmajian, former member of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies for Erzurum, who had run to Russia at the beginning of the War and used the assumed name of "ArmenGaro"; Antranik (General); Shabash Orbelian from Zangezor; Captain Malik; Avan Han (General) from Karabagh; Tarananof brothers; Atabekof; the woman Monushak, archbishop Manucharian; Doctor Pashaian; Sarkis Minasian; Sarkis Parsehian; Shahrikian; Hajuk; Hrach; Zonrap; Murad (Hamparsum Boyacijan); V. Papazian, Ottoman Deputy for Van and one of the leaders of the Tashnaksutyan Committee. (*İttihadve Terakki Kongresi, 1332 Senesi. [The Congress of the Union and Progress, Year 1332]. İstanbul, 1332, pp. 13-14.*)

Whenever the activities of the Armenian Committees and of the Armenian armed bands are in question "it is seen that efforts were not made within the framework of a national liberation, but efforts were made in order to eradicate a race namely the Turks. It was but a unilateral blood feud. Isn't it clear enough that Armenian activities in the Ottoman territories had been from the start terrorist acts and a striving staged for the purpose of massacring, and committing atrocities and genocide? The violent character of all incidents involving Armenians which had begun with the individual terrorist acts under the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid, attempts to kill, uprisings and raids was intensified gradually till the total resurrection and combats recorded during the war. What is still worse is that Armenian terrorists were to begin to perpetuate atrocities when the Ottoman army was forced to retreat from Eastern Anatolia following its defeat at Sarikamish in 1915. When the Russian forces that had occupied Eastern

Anatolia were forced to abandon the area in order to go back home in 1917, Armenian bands systematically massacred the local people in Eastern Anatolia, as proven by historical documents, for almost a year from 1917 to 1918 when the Turkish armed forces entered Erzurum." (*Mim Kemal Öke: Ermeni Sorunu 1914-1923. (Devletin Dış Politika Araç Alternatifleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme). [The Armenian Question 1914 – 1923. (A Study on the State's Alternative Instruments of Foreign Policy)]. Ankara, 1991, p. 109.*)

Armenians are in the habit of presenting all their uprisings and the massacres they committed consequently as an act of legal self-defence resorted to upon the Government's resolution to relocate them. Yet, in fact, uprisings were not the consequence of the operation of relocation, but the relocation was the consequence of uprisings, atrocities and genocide.

It should be borne in mind that while all this was taking place the British and French fleets were forcing the Strait of Dardanelle and the Turkish troops were in battle against hostile forces on various fronts from Galicia to Eastern Anatolia and Iraq.

In the face of this situation, The Ottoman state held first a meeting with the Armenian Patriarch, deputies of Armenian origin and the notables of the Armenian community and made known to the participants that it would be forced to take necessary measures if the Armenian massacres and atrocities, which had assumed the proportion of a genocide, did not stop. As this warning failed to produce any changes, the Government closed all the Armenian associations on April 24, 1915 and arrested 2345 persons for activities against the state.

April 24th, which has been marked every year as the anniversary of the "genocide" by Armenians in various countries is this day when all the terrorists involved in anti-state subversive activities were arrested. Contrary to what was propagated, the claims have nothing to do with massacres. Those claims are unfounded and imaginary.

On account of internal and external dangers, the Ottoman state took some measures to defend itself, as any other country finding itself in a similar situation would have taken, and relocated the Armenians living in the areas close to war zones in safer areas. The law on sending and resettlement, passed in this respect, was dated May 27, 1915 and promulgated on the journal *Takvim-i Vekayi* of June 1, 1915. As has been pointed out by the Armenian historian Leo (Arakel Babakhanian) in his work *The Turkish Armenian Revolution* published in Armenian in 1934 at Paris, the Ottoman state "has used its right to defend its existence against Armenian organisations that had fomented and incited disorders and rebellions at the instigation of the Russians by relying on Russian arms." Besides, the operation of sending and resettlement was not a punishment, it was the resettlement of a minority group at a certain place for security reasons. The Ottoman government explained the reasons for this action in a White Book published in 1916 as follows; "Armenians betrayed. It is quite obvious. Besides they committed this treachery at a time when the government, thanks to the good will of which they had been able to keep their language and nationality and which had showed them respect and kindness all the time, was at a life or death war by stabbing in the back and maliciously striking at its vital points in an organised manner. The government had always been respectful to their rights and national traits. It let them free in their religious and national affairs. Yet it received betrayal and ill will in return. During the World War they have betrayed the country, instead of defending it, the country which had provided them with prosperity and riches. Rightly expecting an allegiance stronger than ever from all its population, regardless of race and religion, the state which had sacrificed thousands of its children in the battle fields in order to ensure its life and permanence was only justified and obliged to take such a measure against those who had attempted to occupy

the country from within and stab it in the back." (*Ermeni Komitelerinin Bmél ve Hareket-i İhtilâliyesi*. p. 288).

It is also true that the Ottoman government was careful to foresee measures for the protection of Armenians while they were being transferred. The orders and instructions issued for this purpose are to prove this point:

"The Armenians to be displaced must set out for their new places of resettlement, their comfort must be ensured during their travel, their lives and goods must be protected. Their feeding must be provided from the refugees' allowances from the moment of their arrival until their final settlement in their new homes. Their goods and lands must be provided to them by taking into consideration their previous financial state and the present needs. The government must construct houses to those who need them, and provide seeds, tools and equipment for needy farmers and craftsmen." (*1915 Mayıs tarihli Bakanlar Kurulu Talimatı. [Instructions of May 1915 by the Council of Ministers]. BOA, Meclis-i Vâkela Mazbataları, Vol. 198, Resolution No: 1331/163.*)

"needy immigrants should be given credits. The camps established for those who travel should be regularly controlled, necessary measures should be taken for the well being of the immigrants and moreover security and order should be ensured. Needy immigrants should be given enough food and their health should be checked every day. The sick, women and children should be sent by train and the others by mule, cart or on foot according to their strength. If any attacks whatsoever take place against immigrants during the journey or during the stay at camps, such attacks must be driven back." (*FO, 371, 9158/5523.*)

The archive documents prove that Armenian Committees and armed bands continued their efforts to establish an independent Armenia and went on with their massacres, atrocities and genocide even after the deportation.

Massacres, atrocities and genocide committed against innocent and defenceless Turks by Armenian organisations and armed bands can be grouped under the following headlines:

Inhuman atrocities and brutalities inflicted upon women, children and elderly people in the defenceless towns and villages which had sent their men to war; setting fire to houses, folds, far animals and produces; violation of women and girls; cutting of noses, ears and chins of innocent people; cooking torn pieces of corpses and forcing the relatives to eat them; making dogs eat the corpses; taking out of already buried corpses; piercing the wombs of pregnant women by bayonet and taking the foetus out; destruction and insulting of mosques and mausoleums; setting fire to official buildings; brutally killing of wounded soldiers returning from the front under torture.

The documents testifying to these inhuman savageries, atrocities and genocide are at the present kept in archives and libraries. Is it possible for the Turkish nation to forget all this savagery, atrocities and ignominious scenes full of shame for humanity? World public opinion can neither overlook all this. Acts and behaviour to the contrary infringes upon human law.

As one would readily agree, true historical information are to be drawn from original sources, namely archive documents. No history can be written without documents, and reality behind happenings cannot be brought to light.

Writing a hypothetical history without taking archive documents into account; passing a judgement about a certain period of time and attempting to exploit historical facts for political purposes is not compatible with the impartiality, scientific objectivity of history writing and scholarly honesty. Owing to the failure to explain the social and political aspects of the Armenian question and the unfounded Armenian claims in the light of first hand original archive

documents, the works that appeared so far have always been unilateral and antitürkish in character.

The Armenian researchers and the so-called scholars employed by Armenians who had been allowed to make researches in the Turkish Archives, in particular in the Ottoman Archives, now say that the documents that they have claimed to exist are kept close to them since they could not find any documents in the Turkish archives confirming the Armenian claims and try to create a public opinion in their favour in the scholarly circles. The Armenian claim for a genocide are unfounded and deprived of a documentary basis. What prompts the Armenians to put forth such claims is nothing but some political desires. The claims are all political.

"The Ottoman archives" are open today for the use of all researchers of every nationality as they were yesterday. As many as 4000 foreign scholars have been doing research in the Ottoman archives. In addition to the research work done by thousands of foreigners on original documents, those documents related to the sending and resettlement were also published in Turkish as well as in English and were presented to the use of foreign researchers. As it is very well known by the true scholars doing archives researches, the archives do not produce documents on order to please Armenian researchers.

Among the Armenian historians there is not a historian of Ottoman Armenians. This is a major deficiency for the Armenian historians. Instead of learning Turkish and then studying the Ottoman archive documents and publications, they prefer offering historical interpretations on the basis of some unfounded claims.

In the present work, referring to the documents in the Russian and western archives, reports and works of western diplomats and writers, reports and writings of the members of the impartial Commission of Investigation composed of foreign journalists who had fixed on the spot the atrocities and genocide perpetrated by Armenians by means of photographs as well as to the original documents in the Ottoman archives, which the Armenian and pro-Armenian researchers deliberately overlooks* (See for the originals of the documents concerning this subject) I shall put forward the archive documents concerning the atrocities and genocide inflicted upon the Turkish people.

Setting out the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against the Turkish people by the Armenian organisations and armed bands in the light of archive documents is undoubtedly a most realistic way to put an end to the one-sidedness in this matter and to show to the world opinion that the notorious Armenian claims are ungrounded.

It is of course impossible to mention thousands of documents concerned with the subject being kept in the Ottoman archives in the present work. Therefore I shall be content with providing some samples only. Summaries of the documents are first mentioned in the text and the footnotes related to them referred to the copies of the original documents attached to the text.

* - Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920). [Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915 – 1920)]. Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994, 1995.

- Hüseyin Nazım Paşa: Ermeni Olayları Tarihi. [History of Armenian Incidents]. 2 volumes. Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994.

- Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezalimi (1906-1922) (Armenian violence and massacre in the Caucasus and Anatolia based on Archives, 1906-1922). Vol. I-IV. Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994-1998. All of these works, with the exception of the 3d and 4th volumes of the last mentioned, were published by the Directorate General of State Archives when it was in charge of the author İsmet Binark. In these works it is firmly established in the light of authentic documents that the Armenian claims of genocide are unfounded, that Armenians have not been subjected to genocide, on the contrary the Armenians carried out a systematic genocide to Turks. The documents reproduced in the present work have been taken from the first and second volumes of "Armenian violence and massacre in the Caucasus and Anatolia based on archives 1906-1922".

Copies of the archived documents concerning the atrocities and genocide, which constitute the main source of the work, are included in order to show the scientific objectivity and truthfulness of the work. Transcriptions of certain documents are also added. Photographs showing the inhuman atrocities and genocide inflicted on the defenceless Turkish people by the Armenian organisations and armed bands as well as the excavations of mass graves are also included.

Before proceeding to setting out the documents relating to the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against innocent and defenceless people in Anatolia and the Caucasus during the First World War by Armenians, let me mention the following news published in the number of the journal "Novoye Obozrenye" dated

September 6, 1905:

"New skirmishes at Baku.

P.T. A. reports from Baku.

The Armenians attacked and slew all the Muslims engaged in commerce and living in the Armenian quarter of the town Shusha on August 16. They set fire afterwards to a quarter of 40 houses. A Muslim group of 100 people headed by a Han, entered the Armenian section in order to calm down the people and, attacking on Armenians, wounded many of them and took prisoner the remaining. Armenians wounded the governor Baranovsky who had come to help. Muslims took the wounded governor to the town, and, being aroused, began opposing Armenians' aggression. When Muslims as many as half the Armenians arrived from neighbouring villages to help, the Armenian priests who had remained quiet till then got out to request that use of force should be stopped. Muslims stopped firing instantly but Armenians continued shooting. Thereupon Muslims assailed. The parties continue to kill each other. Every part of the town is burning..."