



THE GREAT
CRIME: AN
AINTAB DIARY

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This book was set in Alegreya Sans, which was created by Juan Pablo del Peral (2013). Additionally, Ram Iyer's "Fiction Novel" template served as the basis for and was modified to suit the needs of this book.

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*“Armenia is dying, but it will survive.
The little blood that is left is precious blood
that will give birth to a heroic generation.
A nation that does not want to die, does not die.”*

Anatole France (1916)

FOREWORD

The following memoir is the result of an undertaking that began in February 2015 when, simply by good fortune, the authors of this work met one another for the first time through a mutual friend. The first author discovered in the attic a bound notebook in Armenian, her native language, and, after reading through it, felt that this piece of history shed incredible light on her family and her lineage. On the other hand, the second author argued upon hearing this story that it must be shared with the world, and he spent many hours working fervently on editing, typesetting, contacting scholars, and researching. But what is the story contained here that we have been speaking of...?

This is the story of Arousiag Magarian—more precisely, this is the diary that contains the memories and experiences of Arousiag Magarian, the first author’s great aunt, during what has been defined as a genocide perpetrated against the Armenian people. The reader will find Arousiag’s experiences compelling and, most of all, human, as she navigates through complex emotions of anger, sadness, of moments of fleeting optimism while attempting to understand the violence, incivility, and danger surrounding her.

Most importantly, however, this is the story of a

survivor, the story of someone who managed to defy the seemingly perpetual threat to her existence—and, in doing so, has come to terms with her life through the act of writing. We do not believe she wrote this memoir with the intention to share it with others, but we have found her writing so captivating that we feel the world would be at an immense loss without the opportunity to hear her voice. We believe that you, the reader, will be similarly moved, and we invite you upon reaching the end also to consult the invited contribution by Dr. Ümit Kurt, which provides an extensive, fascinating historical account of the plight of the Armenians during the time of Arousiag's writing.

Arpi Poladian
Troy E. Spier

PREFACE

I will share two brief words regarding my birthplace, my hometown of Aintab¹: It is a beautiful town. The Armenian people were an industrious people and very proud of their churches with large steeples and ringing bell towers. The Aintabtsi² lived the simple life, and they were dealt a fair hand in Aintab.

Since my early childhood, the memories of my birthplace have been deeply imbedded in my mind. It has been many decades now, and I still have not forgotten my beloved birthplace, my wonderful school, and my dear teacher, Miss Araxi Jebejian. She was the rose in the garden of teachers. I was in the fifth grade, but I aspired to reach the educational level of my teachers. I loved attending Sunday school and going to the auditorium. I had a very enjoyable childhood with my beloved friends. Then, like a shiny falling star, it slipped away from me. My younger days became gloomy. My joyous days darkened when I reached the age of thirteen. My destiny from 1915 to 1919, my four-year story, is contained within this diary. This is our story. . .

A.N.M. (Arousiag Magarian)

¹The name of this town is also commonly represented as *Antep*, and it is located in present-day Gaziantep, Turkey.

²*Aintabtsi* refers to Armenian residents of Aintab.

INTRODUCTION

We were a well-respected, kind family in our town. Our family consisted of my grandmother, my father, and my mother. I had five brothers and two sisters. My father was a jeweler. We had quite a bit of land in the surrounding hills, where we had orchards of pistachios and olive trees, fields, and vineyards. My eldest brother was conscripted into the military, while another brother avoided the draft by being sent to study at the university in Beirut. My eldest sister returned home to help my mother after studying for a few years.

I attended school with the younger children and did so willingly. I was a bright student and one of the more well-liked students. At home, I found myself to be a nightingale or a gazelle. But this did not last long. Everything unraveled very quickly, and the exile began. My life was completely covered by a black cloud. The whole of the Armenians near and far began their new destiny of exile—toward Damascus, Hama, Homs, and even further beyond. But the Turkish began to modify the Armenians' fate. They started forcing us to march toward Der Zor³.

³Deir ez-Zor is found in present-day eastern Syria. The spelling here reflects the Armenian pronunciation.

TOWARD DER ZOR

The Armenians from Aintab were the first to march toward Der Zor. When it was our street's turn to participate, we began to prepare. As a result, my sister, who was engaged at the time, married her husband very quickly. Her parents-in-law came and retrieved her, and she had only been married for three days when we started our march. We walked for days, eventually reaching Bab, and stayed there for eight days. Then the orders arrived to have us continue moving. We walked and walked, arriving and staying for one night in Munbuj. The march continued the following day, and we headed toward Tel Ahmar on the banks of the Yeprad River⁴.

Before we had gotten there, we had already witnessed many negative experiences. People were robbed, beaten, exposed to the elements, and much, much more. I cannot write about it. We stayed there for another eight days, at which point new orders arrived: Any individual who could pay three Osmanian gold coins for himself would be transported by small boats on the river to Der Zor. Anyone unable to pay must continue to march to Der Zor, as there were not any horses or mules to rent, which could have been used to carry the physical burden. The poor Armenians were forced to carry their belongings and

⁴This is more commonly known as the Euphrates River.

walk. My father said that we would travel by boat. He paid twenty-seven pieces of gold for nine of us. They loaded us onto a boat, and we began our journey. Our boat comprised two or three families, and our caravan consisted of eighteen boats. We traveled to Der Zor via the Yeprad River. Eventually we arrived, but wild Bedouins attacked the boats and attempted to drown Armenians during the travel. After paying a lot more money along the way, we finally reached the black city called Der Zor.

As soon as we arrived, the soldiers approached us and gathered the men and boys. We were so upset at that time. There was so much crying and lamenting, and people physically struck themselves out of grief. We wondered what was taking place. What is going to happen? We became bitter.

Two to three hours after the men had been taken away, my brother, running toward us, returned with news: Do not be afraid. Our caravan will be permitted to enter the city. The men came back with permission slips, stating that we were free to stay and even rent accommodations. My father went and rented a place for us: a two-room house with one room for us and one room for the Panjarjian family. We finally moved into our rooms in the dirty Arabs' homes.

Soon after this point, my father—with Artin Panjarjian as his partner—rented a shop in the shopping district and opened a jewelry store. My brother was also able to find work easily. As he was fluent in Os-

manian⁵, he was hired by the biggest general store in town—Haji⁶ Sheik⁷—as a bookkeeper. We lived in this way for about two months, but life in that town was unbearable. Homeless Armenians were living in the streets, children were sold for one or two loaves of bread, and ten to twelve-year-old girls worked as servants or were given away in servitude. Then an illness came upon these people. There was unbearable pain and death. Every day gave rise to a new death.

The Reaper also visited our home and took our beloved father away from us. Our entire house was stricken by intense grief—everyone, except for me, that is. I became the caretaker in our home. During the following month, four people died in our home. Of all the people who had marched there, approximately half had perished during a two-month period. There was no longer a shop left for us, and it closed down. All that remained for me were my three brothers, and they slowly became better. In fact, my brother started working again.

The next two to three months were characterized by even worse conditions for the Armenians. The widespread hunger and illness increased. The sick were lying alongside the walls, and the homeless were dying in the streets. The orphans were forced to march

⁵This is the variety of Turkish spoken by the Ottomans prior to Ataturk's reforms.

⁶*Haji* is used colloquially to refer to a Muslim who has completed the hajj, the religious pilgrimage to Mecca.

⁷A *sheikh* is an Islamic scholar.

across the bridge. This all took place during winter, a very cold winter. These were the new circumstances for the Armenians. As a result, we put all of our faith in my brother: He was the only hope we had! At least we had a caretaker, a champion, a head of the household.

One day my brother said, “Mama, my Agha⁸ at work, Haji Sheik, told me that his wife wants to come over to visit you. What do you think?” My mother responded, “She’s welcome to come over.” Because they were from a town called Berejik, which is close to Aintab, they apparently spoke Turkish and wanted to visit us. My mother was unable to refuse such a request, and they arrived, all dressed up for the occasion, on the determined date. One would think that there was not any jewelry remaining in their home, that they were wearing it all for the visit, which struck me as typical of the Turks’ fashion. My mother felt obligated to receive them and welcomed them into our home. I made and served coffee with her permission. They were very thankful and expressed this prior to their departure. After eight days had passed, a lady arrived from that family. She was wearing a hijab and was speaking to us in Turkish. After she sat for some time, she started a conversation with my mother by saying, “Haji Sheik likes your daughter. Haji Sheik would like your daughter for his young son, Nouri

⁸This refers to a master or person in charge and comes from the Turkish language.

Efendi. If you will give her of your own free will, we would greatly appreciate it.” With a look of confusion, my mother responded, “What daughter? I don’t have a grown girl yet. My daughter here is barely thirteen years old. She is still a young girl.” The woman replied, “We won’t take her away yet. We will wait five or six months. Simply give us your word that you will give her to us, and they won’t force your hand.” After trying to convince my mother, the woman stood up, gave her word that she would come back in a few days, and left the house.

Yet, I was not present when these talks were taking place. I was outside with my young brother. When I saw the woman leave, I went inside and saw my mother crying and in extreme distress. I asked, “What is wrong, mommy?” I wondered if this lady had come bearing bad news about my sister. It seemed that my question made her even more upset. I went to my Aunt Merine’s house nearby and asked her to come over, mentioning that my mother was in bad shape. My uncle’s wife asked what happened, and I replied, “I don’t know! A Turkish lady came and left. I don’t even know what happened.” It was only much later that we found out what actually happened.

By the time my brother had come home, we understood what had transpired: that Haji Sheik had requested me for his young son, Nouri Efendi. My brother said, “I know what we can do! There was an Armenian military physician passing through the other

day, and he told me that he was going to Haleb⁹ with permission papers. I will search for him and see if we can send you to Haleb with him. Whatever the cost may be, we will pay it and announce that you have disappeared. We will begin a search for you and say that we found your body.”

My brother left immediately to find this physician; unfortunately, he found out that the physician had left the previous day for Haleb. It was at this time that my mother became dangerously ill. A few older ladies come over to help take care of her. In fact, it turned out that she was pregnant and in labor for the entire day. She gave birth on the following day to a stillborn baby boy. It was only twenty-four hours later that she also passed away and was lowered into the ground.

At this point, we were truly orphans without a mother or father to look after us. My mother’s sister and my uncle’s wife come and go, leaving me completely alone when they do. Then they decided that I could not be left alone to take care of my younger brothers, so they convinced my brother to get married. While my brother Avedis worked, there would be an adult with us. They were afraid for me. He married Nouritsa, a girl from Aintab, one month after my mother passed away. I think she was a little bit older than he was, but there was now another adult in the house—and a new friend for me. Nouritsa and I managed to take care of each other as if we were

⁹This is present-day Aleppo, Syria.

sisters. We poured all of our love into her: a mother's love, a sister's love.

After some time had passed, Haji Sheik called my brother and said, "Look, son, I will tell you this in confidence, but the situation for the Armenians is only going to worsen. Look at how many soldiers and guns have arrived. I do not want any harm to come to you. Give me your word that you will give your sister to my son, and we will work on hiding you. All the Armenians will be sent to the desert. You must understand the gravity of the situation. There will be no saving any of you, then. From your home they will take your sister, your wife, and more."

When my brother received this news, he had been married for only twenty days. Haji Sheik said, "I am telling you this out of love. Escape from what is going to happen. Give me your word, and we will hide you. There is a new Mutasaraf¹⁰ in town, and his orders are the following: They will start to march the Armenians to the desert in a few days. Son, I got this information from a reliable source and am telling you this in confidence. There is no escape."

My brother was unsure whether or not he should believe this information. He came home to his wife and shares the conversation with her. "Avedis, do not believe him," said his wife. "Haji is saying this simply to scare you, to force you to surrender your sister to them. He is lying."

¹⁰This is the equivalent of a governor or mayor.

Unfortunately, it was not a lie. The orders from the new Mutasaraf were spread throughout the town three days later. The word came that the Armenians were going to be sent back to their town. This blood-loving dog¹¹ called Zeki Pasha announced soon after he arrived that he had good news: There were no borders for the Armenians.

A few days had passed when we suddenly heard a lot of noise outside. We ran to look through the windows that overlook the street and wondered what was taking place. We were told that the new Mutasaraf was passing by. I also wanted to go outside to see, but I got there too late. I could only see him from behind with three others passing by. The people did not know that the person responsible for the execution of hundreds of thousands of Armenians was that dog: Zeki Pasha.

Bad news was slowly but surely delivered to us. Our neighbors used to come over and speak to us with sad hearts. My brother was the same way. His heart was broken, and he was unable to speak up. There were groups of soldiers roaming from street to street with their eyes open wide. The people would whisper, "This cannot be a good sign."

Well, it didn't take very long: Soldiers started raiding homes a few days later. Our house was also raided. The Titoians were staying at our house. They were ar-

¹¹This term was often used as a pejorative to refer to Turks, and it is found quite regularly in this diary.

rested and taken away, and we heard the following morning that they had also picked up Der Artin, Der Melkonian, and others who we did not know personally. After another day had passed, bloody shirts were brought and left at the doors. Just imagine the terror that we, the Armenians, experienced!

Announcements were heard across town on the same day. They were announcing that “Armenians on Hamide Street must leave in the morning and may not carry anything from home.” They could only bring with them a few days’ worth of food, just enough to ensure arrival in Resul Ain. From there, they would take the train, but everyone must leave. The same announcements were made on the second day on a different street. And on the third day, the same announcements on another street. Announcements were also made in Arabic that stated that great punishments would be received by anyone who hid Armenians in their homes, sold or purchased anything from an Armenian, or rented a mule or horse to an Armenian. Their house would be burned down, and they would be exiled alongside the Armenians. These orders came from Zeki Pashas, that dog.

The few months of rest that the Armenians had now come to an end because of that dog, Zeki. He questioned, “Why have the Armenians been permitted to have shops, work, and settle in homes in Der Zor?” He quickly gave the order that all Armenians must move to Resul Ain.

The final torture began for the Armenians in Der Zor. Every Armenian home was emptied. Every Armenian soul and body, crying out, started to walk. Many carried their young, and some lead their young by hand. Some were carrying as much as they possibly could, crying bloody tears all the while. Everyone hit the road in groups. The young punks of Der Zor were enjoying this show, pointing and laughing at the groups, grabbing their own necks and making sounds and facial expressions that resembled suffocation. Others pretended to have knives and to slash their own throats. I am having a difficult time describing the thoughts and feelings of what the Armenians were going through. I guess there is no reason to put these feelings on paper, as mere words cannot possibly express them.

The massacre had started. It took two to three months for the Exodus to take place.

My three brothers, Nouritsa, and I waited for our turn. My brother Avedis came home earlier than expected and started sorting through our household goods, all the while extremely sad. He sorted the priceless and valuable goods. Two Arab movers came and secretly carried away the rest. It turned out that my brother had sold them. The valuable items were taken at midnight by two trusted people we know, and they were taken to Haji Sheik's home. This included one sewing machine; three carpets; one trunk full of valuable linen; the silver; the gold that was shaped

into jewelry; a box of valuable, polished gems; three beds; and let me not forget to mention my mother's beloved knick-knacks: pearl rings, earrings, and other jewelry that was in the box with the polished gems. There were other household items, but everything was transported to Haji Sheik's house in the middle of the night. We were also supposed to go there and hide. My brother's wife was crying, and my young brothers' eyes were swollen. We had to go; otherwise, we would also perish. Finally, like thieves in the middle of the night, we were whisked away at eleven o'clock.

Haji Sheik had three wives, and we stayed at the youngest wife's house. There was a door right across from our house, and we quickly passed through that door, where we were met by Haji Sheik. He explained everything there, including the situation with the Armenians, to my brother, who then explained it to his wife. Oh, why did he bring us there? Anyway, we were hidden in the younger wife's house for the time being. My brother went to their big house, which was called Selamlek.

Nouritsa and I were extremely distraught. What do we do now? My two younger brothers, the new bride, and I were strangers residing in these people's house. I must admit that I was repulsed by the idea of staying in these Muslims' home. Since I was a child, I had always heard that Muslims do not have Chrism¹².

¹²This refers to the holy oil used in the Armenian Apostolic

I was told never to drink from their cups. I have hated the Turkish nation since the age of nine or ten. My grandmother used to tell us that the Turks killed my great uncle at the big massacre. And as for my aunt, who had been married for only two years, her husband was shot in the knee. It never did heal, and he lost the leg as a result. And after his six-month hospitalization, he left his child without a father and his wife without a husband.

I grew up hearing the stories of the massacre of Sassoon¹³ and Van¹⁴. The young girls were ravished in the Armenian villages. The Kurds raided their homes and took their belongings. My uncle, father, and older brother used to tell these stories. My uncle and brothers used to sing about it, too:

Clear up, wellspring.

Let me take water to the Kurd's son.

Clear up, clear up.

Let me take water to the Commander's son.

Wellspring, do you know what the Kurd does to us?

Church.

¹³This is sometimes also spelled as Sasun and Sassoun. It took place in 1894 and was a conflict between the forces of the Ottoman Empire and the militia of the Armenian resistance.

¹⁴This conflict took place in 1915 in the city of Van. Fought between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian militia, it resulted in the massacre of tens of thousands of Armenian citizens.

*He breaks us,
he persecutes us,
he murders us.*

*I opened my eyes and saw grief and disbelief.
Cowardly Kurd, oh, my groom was killed!*

*There was a time when we, too, could live freely.
We had our own kings.
There was a time when we lived freely
in the mountains and in the fields.
Freely we roamed.*

*We were deprived of a throne and glory, a free life –
Under the grip of the enemy's exploitation.*

Wellspring, now darkness has engulfed our world.

*Calamity, calamity,
massacre and terror
and darkness.*

*Clear up soon, so that I may take water to the Comman-
der's son.
Clear up, clear up. Let me take water to Khan Mourad.*

*But I never knew that they wanted their destiny to
be inherited by me. It concerned me that I thought*

so introspectively at such a young age. I did not even understand why my grandmother would grow upset when I sang this song in Turkish. With tears in her eyes, she would pull me close to her chest, kiss me, and say, “I wish you all the happiness in life, my girl. For your heart never to sadden. I wish for your heart never to experience true sorrow.”

In those days I didn’t understand the meaning of her words. It was only two or three years later that I finally understood. There were many events in her life that were hidden from us, things we simply did not know about. My grandmother’s words were cryptic. Sometimes there are words that men feel inside that the tongue cannot utter.

The philosopher says, “A man’s destiny is an open book, but to read it is impossible.”

Now we started to follow our destiny. But let me tell you, the saying “Whatever you hate will pay you a visit” is the truth.

We were hidden in Haji’s youngest wife’s house for ten to fifteen days, paralyzed with fear and over-run with constant tears in our eyes. We would often wonder, “What will happen to us? What will we do?” My brother is nowhere to be found. My brother’s wife is barely twenty-years-old. We love her like she is our own mother. She took care of us as if she were our own mother.

One day, my brother’s wife and I were sitting together—very sad, teary-eyed, and in thought. Con-

templating our situation, we spoke in Armenian to one another. In the front of the house where we were hiding, many Armenians would pass by in caravans. When we saw this, chills would descend upon us. That house was near the bridge. We watched through the keyhole. The Armenians were transported just like sheep are herded to the slaughterhouse. Our hearts could not stand for this. My brother's wife and I shuddered as we witnessed this. A mother had lost her child in the street, but the soldiers would not allow her to look for her child. Likewise, a child was separated from her mother, and the Turkish beasts would not allow this child to find his mother. We watched all of this happen with fear in our hearts, which felt as if they were drained of their blood. Oh, those days!

Emine, the servant of the house, seemed to hover over me during those days. She appeared as if she wanted to say something, but not a word was heard. Then one day this maid servant came over and said, "Why are you so sad and always crying? You two are very lucky. You have your freedom in our Agha's house. You see what is happening to your kind." Pointing at me, she said, "And you, you should be our Agha's son's bride. My lady (of the house) is making great preparations for you. You shall see! You are crazy to be sad and crying. Our Agha, Nouri Efendi, is young, and you will wed in just a few months!"

At the very moment that I heard this comment, I was extremely affected by it. I recalled my mother's

death. So, this was the cause of her distress! I became extremely ill that same day. In fact, I was stricken with a very high fever that left me confined to my bed for three days. All I wanted was my brother, but wherever he was hiding left him unable to come.

My brother's wife sent word for him to come, telling him that his sister was very ill. But it was impossible to come over! You couldn't even find an Armenian bird on the streets, or else they would be caught! Yet I was getting sicker by the day. My brother finally arrived five days later at midnight.

Who would have believed that this man was my brother! His face had become unrecognizable in those few weeks! As if he had gotten older! My handsome brother had suddenly changed! He had changed a lot! His clothes were changed so that he wouldn't be recognized as an Armenian. Oh, my dear brother. He sat next to me with a sad look on his face, and our bride, Nouritsa, told him later what the maid had told us.

My brother looked at me and said, "Sister, do not believe them. For now, you will stay here until these dangerous days have passed. Let's see what happens then. But there won't be anything like a wedding." He spoke to his wife and said what needed to be said. Then he saw my two brothers, and they started crying as he tried to leave. They were crying because they felt imprisoned. My brother explained to them that it was very dangerous for him to come there. "From where I

am hiding, I will not always be able to leave. Please be patient.” He got up, kissed our cheeks, and turned to his wife, saying, “If it is possible, I will return again soon.” Though I don’t remember him leaving, I became even sicker after that. Our bride told me later that I kept running to the doors, yelling, “I have to go to the Yeprad River.” I don’t remember any of that and was delirious for a month. There were no physicians who could be called and certainly no medicine. How did I get better? I don’t even know. I wish I had died then; alas, there was even more I was to endure.

My health gradually improved. Then we got word that the soldiers had found my brother and carried him off to jail. They came to us and brought this news. I don’t know what happened at that moment. I’m unable to explain. Haji Sheikh tried to console us. He tried so hard, but we were inconsolable. A messenger later arrived at our door with a letter written in my brother’s handwriting. It read, “With the messenger who brought this letter, please send a bed for me to sleep on.” Our bride quickly gathered a small rug, a pillow, and a blanket, and she had the messenger dispatched immediately. Another letter arrived the following day:

Dear Nouritsa,

I received the goods you sent. I thought I was going to be here for a few weeks as a consequence of Haji Sheikh’s request, but

it did not help. Tomorrow I must go to Sevkiet with a few other young Armenians. Stay well. I will be alone no matter where I go. If I escape I will come. If you were with me, I would not be able to escape. For now you are all safe there. See to it that you are brave. Dearest Nouritsa, take good care of my sister and brothers. You know our valuable goods are in Haji's house. You might be able to see me tomorrow from the rooftop as we cross the bridge. Kisses to all of you. Please pray for me.

Farewell,

Avedis N. Magarian

We took this letter and read it over and over again, losing our minds along the way. Imagine what we felt! Our bride said, "I also want to leave tomorrow morning with your brother. Where Avedis goes, I go. I will not allow him to be alone." She looked at me and said, "Dear sister, you are still weak. You cannot even walk from here to the bridge. The two little boys also cannot walk. For now, you will all stay here. Let's see what God will show us. Either we go together or you will stay here with the boys. But it's impossible for me to stay—I must go. What else can I do?"

The poor thing got up and started preparing to leave while crying. She prepared as much food as she could carry. She intended to leave early and join my brother. I was crying and the boys were crying. We

did not want Nouritsa to leave.

Then we received news that my brother and three young Armenians were moved during the middle of the night. One of them was someone we knew from Aintab, one of the Zeytounians. We didn't know the other two. Thus, we were left alone and brokenhearted. Our pain multiplied. We had one older brother, who was formerly our caretaker, and now he was gone. A hopeless bunch of orphans, we were left without anyone to care for us in a stranger's house—and a non-believer at that.

Our conditions worsened with each passing day. They already took our brother. Our hearts were ripped from our chest in a single moment. What can I say? Our situation went from bad to worse, and we continued to hear day by day about what was happening to the poor Armenians.

After my brother was taken, approximately twenty to twenty-five days later, there was a large fight between two brothers at Haji Sheik's house. The older brother was Ahmed Efendi, and the younger brother was Nouri Efendi. This was such a fight that knives were drawn and the police ultimately had to intervene. While we were hidden, we heard these wild animals fighting and wondered what the fight was about. What was going on? We didn't know anything! Now, I can tell you what the fight was about: Haji Sheik had two sons. The oldest son, Ahmed, was married to one of Pasha's daughters, though I do not

know which one. He was married already for seven years and did not have any children. The thought had crossed his mind that he would take my brother's wife as his own. The younger brother also decided that he wanted the same thing. He thought, the 'girl' is sickly and still very young—I was that girl. Why should he wait? It would be better for him to take our bride. They very well knew that my brother and three young men were killed once they crossed over the bridge. But we didn't know it at that time. We still had high hopes that he would escape and come back for us. Both brothers shared the same thought and were unaware of the other's thoughts. Upon hearing that my brother was killed, however, they declared their desire to marry our bride. The younger brother said, "No, I want to marry her." In those times, it was so simple for someone simply to say, "I want her." This is because a domesticated dog or cat had more value than an Armenian girl or young woman.

Nouritsa and I were in our own misery when we heard the loud fighting taking place. Haji Sheik's house was in very close proximity to ours. His house was very large, and while the main entrance of his house was on a different street, the windows of our house overlooked his large courtyard.

There was only a single building that separated the younger wife's house and Haji Sheik's house. The fighting continued and grew louder. The two mothers of the boys did not agree with the older brother.

They said, “We only want the girl for Nouri. We hid their family because of this girl. We put our lives in jeopardy and hid them in our house strictly because of her. Now the boys are about to kill each other over the bride. We do not want the bride in our house. The brothers have now become enemies. We are not going to keep the bride hidden in our home any longer. She can go wherever she wants, but we do not want her here.” Nouritsa got up to leave the very same night that she heard this. I begged her, “Sister, please, where would you go? What will happen to me if you leave? I will go wherever you go. I will not be separated from you. On the other hand, what will happen to these two small boys?” They were both sleeping at that moment, so we had gotten up to leave. Haji’s youngest wife understood that I would not be persuaded to stay, so she called to me and said, “Let the boys stay here. We do not want you to leave, either.” I replied, “It is impossible for me to stay here without my brother’s wife. I will go wherever she goes, too.” She said, “Look, go to our Oda Bashi’s house¹⁵. We are familiar with the people of that house. Your uncle lives there, and there are also another four or five Armenians families there. That’s how they know about you. Now, they told me that you can go there for a few days while the brothers calm down.”

We departed that night around four o’clock in the morning, leaving my two sleeping brothers behind.

¹⁵An *Oda Bashi* is an inn-keeper.

We navigated the deserted streets in total darkness. Where were we going? We had no idea. We walked for a while—just as a murderer who is sentenced to death, but who somehow also managed to escape from the prison. We continually looked behind and in front of ourselves and suddenly heard what sounded like the beat of hooves. Terrified of being caught, we squeezed into a dark corner to hide. The sounds neared us. What did we see? Cheyden, the Arab water boy of our home from the time when my parents were still alive. Cheyden used to deliver the water to our home, and my mother treated him very well. When I saw this man, I immediately recognized him. He recognized me as well, stopping to ask, “Where are you going at this time of the night?” We responded, “We need a place to hide for now.” He said, “Come to my house. I’ll hide you. It is almost dawn, and the soldiers will catch you at this rate.” So, he took us to his house. There was an elderly lady inside. They lowered us in a priest hole and said, “Stay here. No one knows you are here. I will be back by noon.” Then he left.

What were we to do? Our bride and I stayed there. There was nobody who came or asked about us. After some time, we considered our situation, asking, “What will happen to us now? What should we do?” We pondered but thought of no answers to these questions.

Cheyden came at noon and brought us three pieces

of bread with some dates. He said, “Your parents and I have shared bread and salt¹⁶. I want you to stay in my house until these difficulties have passed.” We were just barely surviving. Thus, we spent the night there. Nouritsa said in the morning, “Dear sister, please go back to the boys. I will also find a place to go. If I get caught, it will be my fate.” We stayed there for twenty-four hours and were back on the street at the same time on the next day. Nouritsa turned to me and said, “I’m leaving now. Go walk over there.” She walked on the right side of the street, and I walked on the left. Crying, I said, “Oh God, where should I go? Without a caretaker and now an orphan, should I go back to Haji’s house?” That would be the same as being in Hell to me. I walked for a bit and then thought of the house where my uncle stayed, the house I had been told about. I changed directions and headed toward that house, reaching it early in the morning. After knocking at the door, the lady of the house opened it and, looking confused, said to me, “Why are you out walking about the streets? Aren’t you afraid? The soldiers will catch you! Who came with you?” I told her that I was alone, that I was sent there. I explained what had happened, and she welcomed me. This lady lived alone, and her husband is Haji Sheik’s Oda Bashi. She appeared to me to be fifty or fifty-five years of age. I decided to stay here for now, and the house had four rooms that were all rented to Armenians. Not a single

¹⁶This is a common tradition and invokes a sense of hospitality.

Armenian was left behind. They were all driven out of their houses and slaughtered. She was terrified on behalf of all Armenians and constantly cursed out those who were responsible for the Armenians' current plight. When the Armenians stayed at her home, she collected a good bit of rent.

I stayed there for three or four days when Haji Sheik's maid, Emine, was sent to retrieve me. She found me in that house and said, "My ladies are worried about you. They sent me so that I could ensure that you are well. They think highly of the Armenians. I will go back and let them know you are with Khali Zayneb." Before she left, she proceeded to tell us the tale of the two brothers and the events surrounding the slaughter of the Armenians. My hearted melted and my body started shaking as I listened. Emine continued, "Do you know what has happened to the Armenians? They separated the men and the women, stripped them of their clothing, stole any valuable items, and then cut open their stomachs to look for any gold that could have been swallowed. They are killing the men in front of the women. The women and children are crying so loudly!" Emine continued, "The pretty girls were already taken by the soldiers. Do you know Khali Zayneb? On our street, the soldiers picked up a pretty girl of twelve years. She was unable to speak, only crying out for her mother, "Mama, mama, mama. . ." Emine stood up to leave.

"Emine," I asked. "How are my brothers? What

are they doing?”

“What can they do? They are constantly looking for you.” They always ask, “Where is our sister?”

“Please bring my younger brother here. Let the other one remain.” She agreed and left, returning the following day with my younger brother, Yerevant, and a bag with plenty of bread and dates and five mejidie¹⁷ coins for me. She said, “Stay here for a few weeks, and then I will return to take you back. My lady gave me strict orders.” I bid her farewell and asked her to take good care of my older brother. “When I return, since everything we own is still there, I promise to reward you well for it.” She answered, “Your brother will not stay put. We cannot control him! He is always escaping and running out into the street, crying out, ‘I want to leave, too!’” My lady is so afraid the soldiers will get him, and it is such an annoyance for me. Finally, she gave her word that she would take care of my brother. I told her to ensure that my brother came with her the next time she returned, and she said that she would bring him the following week. She left. All I can think about is my brother’s life, wondering what his current circumstances are like. One person can hardly know the situation of another.

They continued to search for Armenians who were hiding in Der Zor. We were trembling from fear, as we knew they had no regard for the young, the old,

¹⁷This was the largest silver coin in circulation at one point during the Ottoman Empire’s existence.

or the sick. They gathered and transport them all at once.

There was a knock at the door one evening during that time. Khali Zayneb opened the door slightly and saw a beggar wearing a sack with a hole cut for one's head. It was a burlap sack, similar to an abaya, with two holes cut out for the arms to pass through. His legs were bare below the knees. He had a small satchel and a walking stick. Although he had a black beard about four fingers long, one could tell from his eyes that he was a young man. Khali Zayneb opened the door ever so slightly. Confused, she said, "Oh, God!" With a tremor in his voice, he told her, "I am not a beggar." Meanwhile, Khali Zayneb recognized him.

"Dikran! What has happened to you?" Dikran replied, "These have become our circumstances. May I please ask you for a favor? Would you go see Khalafentz, our landlord, and tell him that Dikran has returned? That if they leave their door unlocked for a single night, I might go there to rest, but will leave very early in the morning?"

Because there were Arab boys near the door, Khali Zayneb quickly allowed Dikran to enter. Then she left to find his landlord. By that time, I also recognized Dikran Jebejian, as he was the brother of my beloved teacher. I asked whether he had seen my brother, Avedis. He had not, so I asked about his sister. He said, "Please do not ask me about that." I later found out that she was ravaged, raped, tortured, and then

killed. I can still picture the angelic face of my teacher to this very day.

In a short time, Khali Zayneb had come back with the news that the landlord was waiting for Dikran. His family's belongings were at Khalafen's house, just as our belongings were at Haji Sheikh's house.

There was another knock at our door the next day around noon, though it sounded like someone was pounding the door. Zayneb was forced to open the door, and what did she see? Soldiers. They immediately stormed the house, stating that they were informed that an escapee had taken refuge in the house. Zayneb said, "There are no escapees in this house."

"Well, we have information that one entered this house last night."

Two of the soldiers started searching the house, but they did not find an escaped man. Instead, they found us: me and my young brother. They asked Zayneb, "And who are these? Who do they belong to? Where are their parents?" Zayneb replied, "They do not have parents. They belong to me."

"What do you mean they belong to you? They are Armenian. They cannot belong to you." One of them grabbed me by the arm and dragged me into the street. A soldier was on one side of me and was pulling me by the arm. My brother Yerevant clung to me, while Zayneb pulled me by the other arm. All three of us were crying and begging them to leave us alone, but this request was made in vain. There

was no escape. Zayneb begged, “Oh, God. Oh, God. Please have mercy on us. Leave the children. Please let them be.” The soldier would not listen and let go. Then another group of soldiers came closer. One soldier, who looked like the others’ superior, entered the house. When we saw him, we became even more scared—terrified, in fact. We were all trembling. It turned out that he was the leader of the squad. He ordered the soldiers to let me go, and they followed his orders. He turned to Zayneb and told her, “Look, these two will stay here until I return. Don’t you dare send them elsewhere. Don’t you dare hide them. Understand that I will burn you and your house if you do. They will be here until I return.” Then he made some other comments to Zayneb in Arabic, which I did not understand, and left.

Oh, the fear! The horror! Zayneb was terrified, and I almost died from fear. I felt like a timid lamb standing before a wolf.

This man returned in the evening. I was still shaking from fear. He spoke with Zayneb for quite some time in Arabic before he turned to me and said, “Look, I want to save you and your brother from exile to Sevket, but only if you want it. If you don’t want to be saved, then I must take you to Sevket. These are our orders. There is no difference between young or old. You must go with your own kind.” I did not know how to answer and looked at Khali Zayneb’s visage, hoping that she would guide me. But no, she

said and heard nothing. Regarding the Armenians' plight, Zayneb is of the same mindset: A dog does not eat another dog. Yet, I felt no hope from her.

I was about thirteen or fourteen at that point. What could a girl do? Without a home, without a guiding light, with fires on both sides of me? I desperately wanted someone to give me hope. But there was none. I cried, I pleaded, there was no help. I wondered, "If I were to escape and get lost, would my brothers escape, too?" Zayneb said to me, "Look, since it has reached this point, there is simply no way out for you. If you listen to us, considering this soldier wants to keep you, you will have escaped death. If you disagree, your situation will become worse. You know now the possible outcomes." I was left speechless. After talking for quite some time, I said, "You know best." At that point, the man stood up, removed some money, and gave it to Zayneb. Before he left, he said, "Spend this money on their needs." Let me not forget to mention: He also wrote a note and handed it to Zayneb. He said it was a possibility that her house would be searched again. Upon showing this paper to the soldiers, they would not enter her home. "I will not be here for a few years. I must go to Memouriet," he said. Ordering Zayneb to take good care of us, he stated, "Any expenses that they might incur will be my expenses."

I should mention that, as it turned out, some young Arab thugs were playing near Zayneb's house

a few days ago and had witnessed Dikran Jebejian entering our residence. These slum dogs had identified our house as one that harbored an Armenian. When they came across soldiers who were marching their watch, they ratted out Zayneb. That was all the soldiers needed to hear. What was to become of Dikran was to become of me, too. Yet, we remained with Zayneb for the time being. She took good care of us, but I had not heard anything from my older brother Sarkis. Eight days had passed before the squad leader had come back. Now we belong to him. I won't share anything further, as anything I say would only damage my reputation. I was uninformed, unaware of the ways of the world. I had a kind heart, a heart full of love. I loved my parents, my brothers, my family as a whole. I had no other thoughts apart from that of love, but all of my hope soon ended. I fell into a deep depression. I wish I were older. Perhaps I would have preferred to go to Sevket instead of being this man's fly, living an existence at his beck and call. I know that he will keep naïve, uninformed of the truth. I was left unaware of many other things.

A few days later, Emine, the servant, came by again. Khali Zayneb explained the situation to her. She told her everything. Emine was confused and shocked. She got up to leave and said, "I will explain the situation to my ladies." Then I asked her if she could please bring my brother Sarkis what we did, we were unable to restrain him. One day the soldiers

caught him and took him to Sevket. But he was clever and was able to escape. He returned, but it seemed that we would not be able to control him. So, they looked into the small boats on the river that move back-and-forth. Haji Sheik handed your brother over to them so that they can take him to Beregig. From there, he was to be taken to Aintab. He paid them a lot of money to get Sarkis to this destination. "It had been four to five days now." I said she was lying to me, but she swore it was the truth. So, I started thinking about this. I wondered what happened to Sarkis. Who should I ask? Now I lost him, too. Now there are only two of us left, including my six-year-old brother Yerevant and me.

What could I do? It was a time of horror. The Ottomans kept Der Zor under total control, threatening all Armenians and anyone who hid Armenians with the penalty of death.

There were some Arab women who came to Khali Zayneb's house and told us about the killings of the Armenians. See if you can hear and tolerate this: My heart used to melt. I cried and cried. The more my brother Yerevant saw me like this, the more depressed he became. When Zayneb saw the two of us like this, she would say, "Don't cry. You and Yerevant are saved. Thousands of people like you have been squashed under the feet of the Ottomans and their soldiers. You were meant for the same fate. Be thankful that you fell into the hands of Akram. You were saved." She tried to

console me, to no avail. My heart ached. Sivari Akram Chavoush, the soldier who was hiding us, was from an area called Konya. Their schedule was the following: three days in Der Zor and ten days out on patrol, as there was intense war in Baghdad. As a result, they go back-and-forth to Baghdad. They had finished their 'business' with the Armenians, and there were none of them left in Der Zor. The barbarous Turks accomplished what they set out to do. Now they have to answer to God. The blood of the innocent Armenians will not be lost, but I was hopeless and in despair. I thought that there wasn't another Armenian left in the world.

Every day from morning to night, Zayneb and I sat and stared at each other, but I was always in thought. I thought of my big brother Avedis and my younger brother Sarkis. I wondered what happened to them. I think of my brother's wife. It has been close to three months since I had received news from anyone. What about Sarkis? Did they toss him into the river and drown him? Did they kill him? Every moment of every day, my eyes are filled with tears.

With his head always hung low, Yerevant sees me sad, which makes him even sadder. As I said, Akram comes over two or three days each month and then leaves. One day when he came with a higher ranked official, he had a paper in hand and said, "Put your thumb print here." I asked, "What is this?" They said, "This is the official notice. This paper says that you

are one of us from now on. You belong to our race. If not for this paper, it is possible for the government to look for you. But this paper will keep you safe.” Akram turned and said, “This paper will go to the military court. That makes this a military decree. It is granted by the military court.” All hope is lost with this decree. My days are over. My world is dark.

Thinking of my sister-in-law, I ask myself, “Where is Nouritsa? Maybe I should find her. Is it possible that she might still be in Der Zor? Or perhaps she was caught and exiled?” These thoughts constantly run through my mind.

Months passed by until the doorbell rang one day. As I’m no longer afraid, I went and opened the door. A woman, whose face was covered, entered. When she uncovered her face, I knew at once who it was: Our bride, Nouritsa! She clung to my neck. She started crying, and I started crying. Finally, we went inside and she started to recount her story—where she stayed, what happened to her, etc.

She said, “When we were separated from each other, I walked for quite some time. I saw a young girl on a doorway. I asked if they were possibly looking for a maid. She went inside and asked her father, but I didn’t wait outside; instead, I slowly made my way into the courtyard. From inside the house a man came out to the courtyard and asked if I escaped from Sevket. I didn’t answer him, as all I could do was cry.”

The man turned to his daughter and said, “Fatima,

take this lady in. Let her help you.”

That’s exactly what I was hoping for,” said Nouritsa. “Behind the door was a small room, and the young girl asked me to sit there for a bit.” In a little while, what did I see? The man returned with his daughter and was dressed formally in a uniform. The man said, “You can stay in this house.” He gave me some orders and instructions, and then he left. I stayed with Fatima, but I was very afraid that the soldiers could come for me at any minute and take me away. However, Fatima reassured me: “Don’t be afraid. My father is Comser¹⁸ Ali Efendi. Don’t worry. No one would dare come here.” So, I stayed there.

It looked like there was nobody else in the home but Fatima, so I asked her where her mother was. She replied, “My mother died six months ago. Now I’m all alone. I have only my grandfather who suffered from a stroke and is now paralyzed. He stays in that room over there in the corner. We used to have many Armenian maids, but now there are none remaining. They all went to Sevket with their families.” So, I stayed there until now, but my mind was always on you.

I also shared my story with her about everything that happened. I was so embarrassed that I couldn’t even say Akram’s name, but she finally understood my situation. Nouritsa said, “Sister, It appears that all the evil, the suffering, the robbery, the slaughter,

¹⁸This is equivalent to a high-ranking officer or inspector in the police department.

the persecution, and everything else that has been committed against our people is our destiny.”

When she got up to leave, she said, “I came to see you. Next time, come to see me and bring Yervant with you.” She turned and grabbed Yervant’s cheeks and kissed him. Yervant was so happy. Yervant and I were happy that Nouritsa was alive, since death or disappearance were common occurrences during those days.

Again, Nouritsa requested for us to go visit her. I said, “We don’t know where you are, though.” She responded that she would send a maid to bring us over. I was surprised and said, “But you said you are the maid!” That’s when she explained that she had married the Comiser.

Then she left. Oh, my heart tensed up! I can’t save myself, let alone my brothers. I cry and cry. There are such trying times. “What destiny? What is happening to all of us? I wished they had taken me, too. But, on the other hand, my two young brothers would have also perished.” Day or night, these were my thoughts.

The months passed by in such a manner, slowly slipping away, yet I had fallen into a rut. I felt like I had fallen into a swamp, buried in quicksand—unable to change my circumstances.

Akram came over one day. I don’t even want to remember that dog’s name, but I must write it in this journal. He said, “I have two close friends who brought two Armenian girls with them, both from

Sevkiet. One is about your age, while the other is slightly older. If you'd like, I will take you to them." When I heard that they were Armenian, I retorted, "Of course, I want to go!" Upon hearing this, my spirits were lifted a little, believing we could befriend one another. One day he took me to them, and we got to know each other. The older girl was Boursatsi¹⁹, and she was married to Manougian. She was married for two years, and her name was Sultana. She was beautiful. The younger girl, barely fourteen-years-old, was from Adabachar.

We went to their house often and got to know each other as if we were all sisters. Sultana would tell us and cry. Her husband was the principle of an Armenian school. He was caught, along with the other school teachers, and imprisoned. "That's what happened. No one returned. Today, I am a dog soldier's woman.

The younger girl's name is Ovanna, and she also told me many stories. Her father and uncles were caught and taken away. The rest of them were driven toward Der Zor during the middle of the night. Some of them were unable to make the tough journey. Hungry and thirsty, most of them perished. By their arrival in Der Zor, only two or three of them had survived. Before coming here, a soldier had come and pulled her away from her mother's arms. Her mother was already taking her last breaths while she wept.

¹⁹This refers to someone from Bursa.

Their stories were plentiful and painful. I don't have the heart to tell you their stories, too. My story is painful enough.

There were ten to fifteen girls collected by the soldiers. Each one would tell her story and cry. On the other hand, they would remind me how lucky I was that my younger brother was still with me, that I know where my sister-in-law is, that she is able to visit me, and that I am not completely alone, unlike them.

My sister-in-law visited me all the time. She didn't leave me alone, and she also oftentimes took my brother to their house. I also went to her house frequently. Comser Ali Efendi and his daughter Fatima constantly told me I was welcome to consider their house as if it were my brother's house.

Sultana said one day, "There was a house near their house. Couldn't we move there?" Akram went and rented that house, so then we lived closer. From then on, we always stayed together, ate together, and often slept together in one of the houses, as the soldiers were out and often gone for weeks at a time. We were resigned to our fate and kept our spirits up, thinking that there were no Armenians left in the world except us.

Life has become extremely unbearable in Der Zor. The people were in such desperation that they started killing dogs just to have food to eat. The Arabs were collecting grass from the mountains, but even all the grass dried up. There was nothing left in that city. In

addition to the hunger, they suffered from disease: Cholera and typhoid became rampant, and twenty to thirty people died each day. There was no shortage of corpses. The disease did not spare us, either. My adorable brother, Yervant, also became sick. Within twenty-four hours, he also passed away. The pain I felt, all my hope, everything rested upon this brother. Since I had already lost Sarkis, the only happiness I felt was the sight of my brother Yervant, that I still had him. But God also chose to take him away from me. The pain of this loss hurt my heart even more, and to this day it has not subsided from my heart.

There was an elderly woman living nearby, about fifty or fifty-five-years-old. She was a poor widow and worked for everyone here-and-there, doing anything-and-everything. She even worked for us. We really couldn't tell which race she belonged to, but we didn't even bother asking.

It was a very sad situation. Sometimes, bread is delivered to us from the military soldiers. Sometimes, we shared the bread with this woman. She always cried when we gave her the bread. Sometimes, she would bring articles of clothing that she sold door-to-door. The girls bought these clothes, and, while I also wanted a dress, there wasn't one in my size. She promised to bring one later that would fit.

She came by a week later and said, "New dresses just arrived at the store. They won't allow me to take them out of the store to show you, but you could pick

out whichever dress you want if you went to the store.” If I wanted to, we could go to that place together. She started bragging about the dresses, mentioning that they were from Haleb. The other girls asked me, “Why don’t you go and pick out a dress you like?” Finally, I decided that I would go the following day with her before noon.

The next day, she took me into town. There was a large set of doors near the big town square, and there were two soldiers standing guard at the wide-open doors. She got closer to these doors and waved at me to follow her, but I didn’t want to go inside. She tried to convince me, “Let’s go through here. There is a doorway through here that goes to the store.” I was gullible and naïve. I had known the woman an entire year by that point, as she was our neighbor, we felt sorry for her, and we even called her Khale. I never expected malice from her.

Finally, I followed her into the very large courtyard, and there was another set of doors in front of us. The woman banged on the door with her first, and it opened. We entered to a garden full of flowers. On the left, there was a large fountain. The door opened, seemingly at her beck and call, so we entered it. There was a large, formal room inside, one that was fit for royalty. I looked around the room and said, confused, “Khale, where are we? This doesn’t look like a store!” She began to laugh and said, “We are here to visit.” At this point, a soldier walked in from the next room.

His uniform was covered with medals. Of course, I thought he was a high-ranking dog. As soon as he spotted us, he stood where he was and saluted us. He turned to me and said in gutter Turkish, “Ahlan wa sahlan²⁰, Hanim Efendi.” I was so confused that I looked from one person to the next. At that moment, I suddenly found the courage to turn to the soldier and speak my mind, yelling, “I don’t know who you are. You don’t know who I am. I understand now that you all tricked me into coming here. I’m not the kind of person you think I am. Yes, I am Armenian, the daughter of a destroyed people. But know that I’m no longer without a guardian: I do have a guardian! Just let it be known that you will not get away with what you’ve done here!” I turned back to the bitch and asked, “How dare you bring me here under the pretense of going to the store?” The soldier turned to me and said, “Hanim, anything you wish for or desire can be found here.” I concurred, “You have everything—all stolen from the poor Armenians! All their home goods, clothing, everything they had! Now you have it for sale. I hope all the money earned from these sales, with God’s help, will burn you like barbarians. This woman tricked me into coming here, a beast just like you! After doing everything you have done to the innocent Armenian girls and the young brides. After inflicting terror upon them and drinking their blood, haven’t you had your fill yet? Now that only a few of

²⁰This is an Arabic greeting to welcome someone.

us remain, you have started to come after the few? NO! That time has passed. You should well know that you will pay a high price for what you are doing.”

I turned to the woman and yelled, “You deceitful bitch! Open the door now!” I screamed this in her face, and she stood there like a mute puppet. The door was shut and locked immediately after we entered. I kicked it with my foot, but it didn’t open. I kicked it again and repeatedly screamed at the woman, “I told you to open the door now!” Up to that moment, she stood there as if she were deaf and dumb. Before I knew it, the beastly soldier became enraged, turned to the woman and said, “This isn’t the kind of girl I wanted. Open the door! She can go.”

I saw the doors open, and they threw me out. I took off just like a bird fleeing from his golden cage. It is very difficult for me to explain with words how I felt during those thirty minutes. It felt as if I had been detained for ten years by those beasts! Although white-faced, I felt victorious that day: I got out! Here, the words of a female poet are most fitting:

*Who said that woman is a weak creature?
That person is mistaken.
No, her victory is but a moment’s work.
The woman who suckled pure milk
is strong and full of grace.*

Only if I had this strength and control two or three

years! Alas, I was too late. I cannot turn back the clock. I was too young and too alone.

Finally, I got away. My knees were shaking, my heart was beating rapidly, and my throat became tighter. I started walking really quickly and arrived at my sister-in-law's house. I rang the doorbell and entered her home, but I was unable to talk. All I could do was cry! After I had calmed down, I explained to Nouritsa what had happened. Nouritsa responded, "Do not tell anyone what happened! Do not even tell Akram. I will let Efendi know about it. He will know exactly what to do."

I stayed with my sister-in-law that day, and Nouritsa recounted the story to Ali Efendi that evening. He said, "The punishment for this will be huge, because this is a military matter. When the husbands of these women go to war, what these women do has an impact upon his reputation and honor." When I told him where it happened and that the soldier was well decorated, Ali Efendi said, "Soldier or a prince, it makes no difference. I will teach him a lesson tomorrow."

So, I stood up and went home, but my blood was boiling. What is happening to me? Why must I face these trials? I didn't realize that such dangers existed in this world!

Nouritsa came over on the third day, and she was very happy. "Did you see them take that bitch away?" She told me the next day that Ali Efendi went directly to the military commander and informed him about

what happened. He also referenced the soldier by name: Yousbag Osman Bay. He was also punished for his part, but the bitch was taken away (Imam Evie). This woman was working, but only had work here and there, and she resorted to being underhanded the rest of the time. Pretending to be selling the stolen clothes, the bitch was doing things, mostly tricking young girls. But now she was punished! Fifteen days after this incident took place, Akram came back from Baghdad. We didn't tell him anything about this. We kept it a secret from him.

Now, the war ended. The Turks lost to the English, and the Armenians were spared any additional torture. The barbarous Turks got what they deserved, but we had suffered along the way. . .

The Turks began to escape towards Ankara. Now the Turks were in the same boat as us! The goods that they had, they tried to sell in the streets. Young and old alike, people were in the streets. And items that cost one hundred coins would be sold for much less; the Arabs would not even pay five coins for them! They were in such a shape that it was worth seeing them. Within twenty-four hours' time, there was not supposed to be a single Turk left. Not one single member of the military or one civilian Turkish soul! The Turks also ended up in the desert—with no vehicles, only donkeys and mules. They quickly left, believing that the enemy was coming.

Comprising thirty-four soldiers and fifteen girls,

we also hit the road toward Ankara. We traveled four or five days, walking with military mules, before finally reaching Ourfa. Once we entered the city limits, we started walking toward the center of town. Everyone had picked up speed and was walking quickly, but I had fallen behind toward the back. As we entered the gates of the city center, I saw an old man who was watching us curiously. It's easy to tell that I am Armenian. This old man approached me as if he knew me, and I looked back at him curiously. He turned to me and asked in Turkish, "My girl, where are you coming from?" I replied, "From Der Zor." Shocked, he looked back at me, noticed the other girls, and asked, "Are there any Armenians in your group?"

"Yes," I said. "I'm Armenian!"

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"I'm Aintabtsi. I am Khouyomju Nazar Magarian's daughter."

"Really? You must be kidding me! Do you realize you have relatives here? Your morakouyr²¹ is here," he exclaimed.

This conversation took place in the blink of an eye. It took place as we walked and ended as we walked.

²¹Maternal aunt

The last words that I heard from this man were the following: “I will go and give them the good news.” Then we separated from one another. I only discovered later that this man’s name was Aintabtsi Ohannes, and he is known by my family.

We remained in town for about an hour. Then the local government finally decided to send us to another location. We were so tired and needed to rest badly. Finally, we were led to a place called Khara Koyoun.

Like the Armenian refugees, we stayed there. The soldiers went into town to get food. As time had passed, Sultana and I had become quite close. In fact, whenever we sat anywhere, it was always together. Waiting for them to return, we saw two men running toward us from a distance. One was the old man I had seen before in Sedai. My other was my Kerair²² Ayyazian, who had been searching for me. Even from far away, I was able to recognize them! I felt as if I was going to be rescued! As they got closer, he greeted and said, “Oh, my girl! My girl! Let’s go. Let’s go see your Morakouyr. She is waiting for you—and quite impatiently.”

I asked, “Well, Kerair, I don’t have permission to come along with you. Could she come see me, please? If [Akram] gives me permission, then I will gladly go with you.”

“I’ll go back and send over my son Artin, and you will come back with him. I ran over here to see you

²²Uncle

and left my shop open!"

On one hand, I asked Sultana, "What if the beast called Akram says no? What should I do?" Sultana turned and told me, "These kind of people, well, I don't think he will allow you to go, especially since these people are your relatives."

While we were having this discussion, the men came back from shopping. I waited a little bit and said, with a tense longing in my voice, "You know, Akram, my relatives are here. My aunt is here, too."

"Really?" he asked, surprisingly without sounding upset.

As we talked, my cousin Artin came by. He greeted us but his face became white when he saw the dog named Akram. Yet, he held himself together and asked, "If you would grant permission, I would like to take my sister to our home." Akram replied, "I cannot leave her alone. Have your mother come here to visit her." Unfortunately, Artin was unable to insist and was forced to leave.

About one hour later my cousin returned and said, "My mother and father send their regards. If you wish, you may also come to our house." He was suddenly ready to go, even before I had time to stand up! "Let's go, then," he said. I'm sure it was because we missed our comfort, we needed to rest, and we were exhausted.

Then we got back on the road, finally arriving at my aunt's house. As we went to enter the house, my

heart was beating rapidly. If a knife were to cut me, there wouldn't be a single drop of blood spilled. When my aunt and I saw each other, we immediately became faint. Someone brought orange blossom water for us to sniff; this way, we were able to regain our composure. My aunt said, "I'm not going to let you go. You must stay here with me." Akram agreed to stay at my aunt's house.

Akram and Artin went back to bring our horse and saddle bags. Taking advantage of their absence, I told my story to my Morakouyr. I said, "Look, I am not worthy to cause you any trouble, but the lack of a mother's love is what forced me to come here." My aunt understood what I was saying. While hugging and kissing me, she said, "My girl, if an angel were in your place, the fate would have been the same. Yet, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, my young girl, what else could you have done? What has happened is done. When I saw this beast, I also grew scared. What could you have done by yourself? It is terrifying to face such creatures. So many brave Armenians were unable to conquer them and escape. You, a weak, young girl, what could you have done? Oh, my sweetheart, sweetheart." She kept repeating and crying, "Oh, my sweetheart, here, we heard everything. Our hearts and spirit are melting, but we could do nothing to change the situation. We thought of you night and day! Two young Armenians had escaped from the massacre in Der Zor, and even the stones cried when

they told the stories of the slaughter.”

I asked what had happened to Feride, my sister, and my aunt said, “She remained in the town. We received word that your brother Sarkis was taken to Aintab, and he is now with your sister.”

I responded, “I am so very happy to hear this news! Then he reached my sister alive and well!”

We were in the middle of this conversation when Artin and Akram returned.

We were now staying at my aunt’s house in Urfa.

The Armenians who lived in Urfa came over to see me. They would contemplate ways to help me escape from the tight grip of this man. My cousin Artin and the local youth would stomp their feet in frustration, proclaiming, “How can we hand our girl over to our enemy? To such a barbarian? To carry her away? What has already happened is in the past, but it is impossible for her to be free now.”

They would have similar talks regularly, but they were unable to come up with a solution. One offered to sneak me away. Another offered to complain to the governor. But they were all simply throwing out ideas, yet not a single one sounded good. They thought that everything would be better if they just got me away from him.

I voiced my concern, “You are correct. I also hope to God that I will one day be freed from that dog’s hands, but it’s very dangerous. There are only Turks around here. Even hundreds and thousands of Arme-

nians together do not have the value of one coin. Rest assured that if I were somehow freed from this animal that the outcome will not be good. These people are used to spilling blood! This dog will know that you were responsible for my disappearance. In fact, they decided that they will leave tomorrow. They are planning to go to Ankara. Before he leaves, however, he'll make sure he visits your shop and home, pulling the trigger on anyone he meets. My freedom will be worthless by that point, and then we will carry that burden with us for the rest of our lives! It's more responsible for me just to go with him. Have faith in me: Wherever I go, even if I end up in hell, I will get my revenge. And then I will return to my country, my home, because my veins are not yet drained of Armenian blood!"

The older men gave heed to my words. My aunt hugged and kissed me again. "Oh, my smart, brilliant sweetheart!" While crying, we decided that we refused to let our spirits be broken when the time came to take our different paths. We stayed with them in Urfa for a total of five days. Thirty-four soldiers and fifteen girls, we started our travel the next night around 10 P.M. without the government's permission. Among themselves they decided that they would go to Ankara through Aintab, and I was unbelievably happy to hear that. There were no borders along this route, and I was hoping that I, being familiar with Aintab, could find a way to escape.

So, now we were on the road—walking night and day. Finally, we arrived in the outskirts of Aintab. Because we had two pistachio orchards there, this village—Kever Jebel—was very familiar to me! The trees covered a very large area, and I can't remember exactly how many olive, fig, and sumac trees there were. Maybe 1700? I'm not sure. A year before the massacre began, my dad had brought my grandmother and me here for one month. I was so familiar with the orchards that even if I ended up there today, I would still recognize the area.

As we approached Kevev Jebel, we decided to rest there for an hour before continuing our journey. But let me tell you, they would ask for a village guide to show us the way every time we reached another village. So, they found a guide through this village as well. When we passed beyond the edge of the village, we started walking alongside my family's orchard. I was unable to contain myself! I was so impatient that I asked our guide, "Emmi, bou pesdeghlar kimin der?"²³ The guide wasn't afraid to answer. "Antabli kouyoumjou Nazaren der. Ama sahibleri hep mouhadjer getdiler."²⁴ I was unable to ask about that, but I did ask how far away we were from Aintab. He replied, "It is about six or seven hours away."

I was so excited about the possibility to escape,

²³"Uncle, to whom do these pistachios belong?"

²⁴"It is Goldsmith Nazar's from Aintab. But the owner have all migrated now."

that I spent a great deal of time contemplating how I could. How should I do it? Maybe when I enter Aintab? Hours passed, and I counted them impatiently.

I don't know how much further we walked, but we reached another village and I asked the guide for the name. He told us that it was called Gureniz. The sun was setting by then, and we resolved ourselves to spend the night there. The name of this village seemed so familiar—probably because my dad had customers in all of the surrounding villages.

So, we settled down in this village for the night, and we stayed in pairs in the houses. Sultana and I stayed in one house. The homeowner showed us our space, but I didn't know what to do! I also asked him how many hours it would take to walk to Aintab, and he told me that it was three hours. Yet he kept glancing at me. The homeowner's wife, daughters, and two young sons were sitting together, talking, and wondering, "Where did these people come from? All the men have horses, guns, and young girls with them." The homeowner's wife turned to us and asked, "Where are you all from? Where are you going?" Sultana told her that we were coming from Der Zor, and the man spoke up, "From our Aintab? Many Armenians went to Der Zor." I could no longer hold back! I turned to him and said, "I am also from Aintab!"

"Whose daughter are you?" he asked. I told him my father's name, and he looked at me in shock.

“Sen Kuyumju Nazaren Kheze sen?”²⁵ His face had the look of distress. “Just yesterday I was at your sister’s house! I had taken raisins and walnuts from her to sell. I was at your house last night this time! We dined together. Your sister is always crying over you. Your sister Feride is living in your dad’s house. Your brother Sarkis is with her. Your sister always has tears in her eyes for you. She has heard that you are alive. She wishes every day that you were in her care.”

This villager turned to me and exclaimed, “Oh! Oh! Just yesterday at this time—we were together!” I was so envious of him. I wished it had been me, that I had been with my sister and brother. I wanted to be with them so badly! The man’s wife points to her jewelry and says, “These are the work of your father. We will never forget him.” And then they started asking me about my family, so I explained everything that happened to us.

Standing alongside his two sons, the villager turned to me and said, “We will not allow these people to take you. We’ll accompany you to your sister. We will get you there safely.” On one hand, I wanted to go; on the other hand, I wasn’t sure that I could trust them. And, worst of all, Akram could easily scare them into handing me back over. I thought to myself, “They are all dogs! I must be patient and bide my time.” Sultana said, “Sister, it will be worse if you go with these people. Akram has a horse. You won’t be able to outrun

²⁵“You are Goldsmith Nazar’s daughter?”

him—he'll catch up with you. They won't be able to save you, then! It's also not good for us."

After hearing this advice, I turned to the villager and said, "Emmi, these guys are dangerous people. I'm afraid that if I were to leave with you, that these men would destroy you and your village. It's best if I write a letter that you can give to my sister, describing how we met."

The man responded, "Yes, you are right. These men are soldiers, and we won't be able to deal with them. It would be extremely difficult." He brought me a piece of paper and a pencil. I wrote a few lines before it was wet with my tears. This was the first letter in the last four years that I would send to my sister. It had already been a couple of hours by this time, and the soldiers were still busy with their horses outside. I took advantage of the opportunity and began to write my letter.

My dear sister and brother,

With these two lines, I will try to make you understand how hopeful I am that I am nearby. If there is a way for me to escape or be set free, I will come to you! I have not yet had the opportunity, but rest assured that I will come with God's help even if they took me to India! Do not give up hope that I will return one day. My dreams of being with you will come true. My dear sister and brother, your love and kisses will calm my burning heart. Please pray for me, my sweethearts.

The man who delivers this letter to you will describe my circumstances. I send you my best wishes.

Loving you with all of my heart,

Your unlucky sister,

A.N. Magarian

I told the villager many details. I also told him that I was elated that my brother had reached my sister's home.

Soon after, Akram came in and informed us that we were not going to sleep in this village after all. Instead, we would continue our journey despite being exhausted. I found out later that I was the reason we didn't spend the night in that village. Sultana asked me, "Didn't I tell you that you can't escape from here? Because one of the dogs here overheard our conversation, he reported it to Akram."

So, we got back on the road that night and walked until morning. By the time we finally stopped to rest, they told us that we had gone ten hours beyond Aintab. Slowly, so slowly, I lost all hope. Instead of getting closer to my loved ones, I was taken away from my beloved birthplace again.

A villager named Khourshoud Agha informed us that the Armenians in Gavurdag were dangerous and that it would be dangerous to cross that area. We

were given strict orders not to speak Armenian, so we continued our journey. We reached the village of Khourshoud Agha and rested there that night. By evening on the next day, we arrived in Gavurdag and rested there for a bit.

We were to continue our journey, and they informed us that the road would be dangerous one hour ahead. We were directed to walk without uttering a word. We were told to walk in formation, because the Armenian Fedayi²⁶ was in these mountains. We needed to cross the mountains carefully. In the event that we came across some of the members of this militia, we were not to speak a single word in Armenian. They made it clear that the first bullet fired would be felt by us if we disobeyed. These instructions were repeated to us to ensure that we understood the potential consequences.

We continued the journey at night. The horses were very well trained, and they could not be heard at all during this march. They always seemed to prefer to travel the less frequented roads, and we didn't know why—at that point. We realized the real reason only later: The horses and weapons belonged to the military, and these individuals had taken both without permission.

We continued marching in this fashion until we reached Osmaniye. Without passing through any

²⁶The Fedayi was an armed militia developed to defend Armenians from persecution and death.

other villages, we continued to Bahje Deord. We always took deserted roads, reminiscent of a fugitive's path. We neared Adana and passed the Gihon River, but we always stayed far away from the cities and towns.

The soldiers who were with us slowly started going their separate ways. Three or four left us near the villages around Adana. Near Tarsus, another two or three soldiers. Near Mersin, five or six more left. Every soldier was returning to his own hometown, and we ultimately reached Silifiye. By then, there were only two girls remaining: Sultana and me. It appeared that we were the ones who traveled the furthest. We continued for another two days until we reached the village of Mut, near Konia, which was mostly inhabited by Jews. Another three or four hours stood between us and our village. By this point, it was just the two of us and Sultana's soldier. They stayed with us that night, but they marched further to their village the following day.

Sultana and I believed the entire time that we were heading to a city. And what did we see? A tiny village, very far from civilization! You would think that they had never seen an outsider before. The village consisted of fifteen to sixteen huts—it was as far as possible from any other town! Sultana and I would often ask ourselves how we would live with these people. It felt as if we were thrown into a deep well. There was no hope left for us. We were at the bottom of that

well.

Sultana and her soldier stayed in our hut for one day. She and I walked for a bit toward the orchards and told each other, “We are in such a place that we don’t have hope to escape from. No hope at all! Sister Jan.” We alternated between moments of tears and conversation, unable to come up with a solution. What were we to do? We were thinking that we would be in a town or a city, and there would have been hope of an escape there. But here? Far away from civilization?

After talking for a while, I told her, “Look, sister, we cannot lose all hope. They say that there are many Jews around here. Maybe one will come to this village? Or maybe yours? I swear, if one of us meets one of them, they won’t forget us. And we won’t forget to mention each other to the Jew. In fact, they say that a Jew is a kind of Christian, too. Maybe he will have a solution and help us escape.” We promised this to one another, and then we exchanged hugs and kisses. The next day, early in the morning, they left for their village.

Now I was left alone to live with these dogs. I didn’t know a soul there. I was hoping that there would be at least one person to give me hope or to console me—alas, there was nobody. Like it or not, I have to accept this life. Also in our home was Akram’s mother, who was blind in both eyes and needed my help with everything—going out, coming in, sitting,

and getting into bed. That was the first struggle to bear. He had a widowed sister with two older daughters, both of whom were deaf and mute. These are the people who lived with me.

Let me not forget to mention another order from Akram. If anyone were to ask me which nationality I am, I must say that I am Alman Khezem, a German girl, because they had great admiration for the Germans. And that's exactly what I did. Everyone who asked me was told that I was German. Nobody realized that I was Armenian.

As a result, I became a member of that family. We rose early in the morning. They had one cow and three or four goats, and we needed to take them to graze. They also had two giant dogs! Their food also had to be prepared daily.

We needed to retrieve water from the creek three or four times per day. We had to walk quite a far distance from the village to get firewood. I was never able to carry the wood, so I tied a rope to the bundle, wrapped the other end around my hand, and pulled it. It was torturous, exhausting work—until I figured out this solution. Yet, there were many other chores to be done. Most of these were completed by me and the deaf sisters, while their mother occupied herself with the orchard and vegetable garden.

I should mention my clothing. The blue Entari that I wore when we left Der Zor was sewn to be worn for traveling. I felt like an Arab, since I wasn't permit-

ted to wear anything else. "This is a village here," his sister said. "You are now a villager. You cannot wear town clothing. You will embarrass us." They made me tie a wide belt to my middle, put sandals on my feet, and wear Khozor Lezek. Then I became one of them. I accepted this outfit simply because it kept the villagers from expressing interest in me.

But I wasn't able to eat their food. They made bread with cornmeal and flour every day, so I took it to the garden while it was still hot and ate it alongside a piece of cheese and green onion. Honey was plentiful. After eating the bread and onion, I used to take a spoonful of honey.

This is what my life had gradually become. Three months. Four months. But I was gaining strength by the day. The deaf girls were entertaining, or rather, the way they communicated was entertaining.

There was one recurring thought that consumed my mind: "I wonder if I would have any luck at all ever to end up back in my own town. I wonder if I would ever see my sister and brother again." I used to pluck the petals of the daisies. "Will I? Will I not?" If the petals ended with the former, then I would be very happy on those days. My inner voice reminded me, "Of course you won't remain here." And I certainly didn't want to, either! I refused to give up hope. With the water jug in my hand, I would go to the creek and recall memories. Oh, I used to remember my younger days with my dear parents! I used to sing

Barzier Aghpyur²⁷ and others. There was a time that we were free. Oh, I used to be happy, without a care. I happily went to school. Oh, my parents used to say, “When you graduate from your beloved school, we will send you to Bolis for your higher education.” All because she sensed that I truly enjoyed and desired to study. Alas, a thousand pities that our hopes and wishes turned to ashes. The horrible storm of 1915 eradicated the majority of our dreams.

Achks patsi, suk ou shivan, yes desa, zouloum, zouloum moot ou khavar er bader. I realized today that this song was written for me. *Bardzir, bardzir shun tourkeroun chour denim.* I would close my eyes and sing while the wind blew through my hair. I remember my younger days. What luck! What had destiny brought me these days! Just this jug—full of water, my eyes full of tears. I would grow tired and sit under the trees, wondering, “What will happen to me? When will I meet my end?” I used to pray.

“Dear God, I am all alone. I only have you, dear God. If it’s at all possible, grant me my wish. Just let me go back to my birthplace, my father’s house. Let me kiss the threshold, to quench my thirst to return to our home, to tell my sister and brother of my pains. Then let me be done. Dear most powerful healer, please hear my prayers. If only I could fulfill this need! Dear Mother Mary, you are my mother. Have

²⁷This is the same song mentioned earlier about the Kurds’ impact on the Armenians. Some of the lyrics in Armenian are provided in the subsequent paragraph.

mercy on me. I have no one else. Mother of abandoned and orphaned children. You are my God—have mercy on me.”

This is how I lived for four months. Then, thank God, my prayers were answered one day.

Akram’s sister came in and said, “Gelin! Gelin!” They called me by that. They neither knew my name nor bothered to ask what it was. “What’s up, Ablā?”

“You know, today there are tinsmiths who have come to our village. It has been four years since they were last here. But they are here today! Have you seen how black our pots are?” I pretended that I didn’t understand what she was saying. “Who is it that is here?” The sister turned to me and said, “Gavour ghajajenair!” I muttered to myself, “Oh my God, what is this lady talking about? Dear God!” We very quickly gathered the plates and pats before carrying them away.

Now, the problem is how to see these people! The evening came quickly, and the brother arrived at home. She told him that Markar, the tinsmiths, was there. He inquired about whether Akram’s military days were over and if he is home now. She told the man, “I said yes, about four months now,” Akram said. “I’ll go see them for a bit.” He got up and walked out the door, along with my hopes. I wondered if there would be a way for me to see these people, too. It crossed my mind to write them a note, but these people didn’t even have a pencil or a piece of paper! Then I thought

of Akram's military notebook. I searched for it and found it in one of his pockets, in addition to a very small piece of a pencil. Now I needed to wait for an opportunity to write a couple of lines.

Akram returned approximately an hour later from his visit. I impatiently wanted to find out what happened. Finally, without any notice, I blurted out, "Where do these people come from?" He replied, "Sulifiye. They used to come here regularly about four or five years ago, but they haven't been able to since the deportations began. They used to come by and sell items as well as retin our plates and pots." Akram turned to me and said, "This Markar's niece lived on our street in Der Zor with the Arabs. Her name is Zohra. If you remember, she is from our area."

"Didn't she come over to our courtyard on a few occasions?" I asked, shortly before realizing, "Exactly! This Markar is the girl's uncle." He said, "I let them know that this young girl is with the Arabs in Der Zor. I told them which street she lives on. Markar told me that he received news shortly thereafter that of the twenty-one members of my family, only my niece survived. Her name is Zarouhi, and she had become a bride five months ago."

"You know, Aro. . ." That's what Akram always called me. "What?" I asked. "Ghalayji Markar asked me if I didn't perhaps also take an Armenian girl. I asked him what in the world I would do with an Armenian girl." He lied to them about me! He told them that he

took a German girl, not an Armenian girl! I was paying close attention to each word that came out of his mouth. He turned to his sister and said, “Tomorrow, they will return our plates and pots. Tomorrow, you will take their meal over to them.”

I was so happy to hear this conversation. Maybe I’d be able to see them, too! I might be able to give them the letter I was planning to write. So, I woke up early the next morning and started writing this letter:

Dear Fellow Armenians,

Do not believe that I am a German girl—I am Armenian! My name is Arousiag Magarian. This man brought me here from Der Zor. I beg of you, if possible, to free me. Let me tell you about this Akram. He is a soldier who deserted his post. He has a government-issue gun, a machete, 350 bullets, and a horse. All of this belongs to the government. And, just a little further from where we are, there is another Armenian girl just like me. Her name is Sultana, and she is in a village called Chamelja. That man is an Arab named Mehmet, and he also deserted his post. If you would, please find a solution to save us both.

Your poor sister,

Arousiag Magarian

I found out later that these tinsmiths also wanted

to see me. Hearing Akram speak about me, they suspected that there could not possibly be a German girl in Der Zor. The girl he brought back, they decided, certainly is an Armenian girl. They wanted to see me face-to-face. I kept going back and forth to fetch water, but they didn't have the nerve to approach me. At the same rate, I was never left unattended. So, with my letter finished, I was waiting for the opportunity to give it to them.

The sister cooked Keshkek—or Harisa—that day, which is a highly sought-after meal for tinsmiths. She told me to cut up some onions, so I prepared them as instructed. I considered the letter and how I could get it to them. I cored a hole in one of the onions and stuffed the letter inside. Then I finished preparing the food, so that the sister would deliver it promptly.

Before I knew it, Akram arrived home early from work! He said that he finished with his work, but I was to add more food, as he would be going to eat with the tinsmiths. This wouldn't do! I quickly removed the onion containing my letter. While he left with the food, I was left with my letter. "What do I do now? What do I do now?" I asked myself. The tinsmiths would stay in the village for five days. Today was now the fifth day, and I didn't have the chance to get the letter to them! My heart hurt deeply.

The donkeys were loaded, and they were all standing near the creek, as if they were waiting for me! Waiting for me at any moment to fetch the water. And

what did I see at the very moment that I reached the creek with the deaf girls? The men were ready to leave, but they weren't moving. I walked toward the creek, and I noticed one of them also walk toward it. At the head of the creek, there was also a village girl fetching water, yet my eyes were fixated upon the tinsmith. Although he was nearing the creek, he didn't dare get too close to me. I thought that he might suspect I was Armenian, and I recalled Akram's conversation—that these men wanted to see me up close.

So, he came to the water, cupped his hands, and scooped some water to drink. Then, while washing up, he asks me quite loudly, "Girl, are you Armenian or not?" His motions reminded me of prayer. I called out, "Yes! I am Armenian!" I sat on the ground and acted as if I were removing a thorn from my foot; instead, I was carefully placing my letter under a nearby rock while he watched.

Both of the deaf girls were with me, but they didn't understand what transpired. I approached the water again, and I noticed the man retrieve my letter inconspicuously before walking to the trees. I went a little further and sat down as if to finish removing the "thorn" from my foot, instead simply sitting on the ground. I remained there for a few minutes with this "thorn" and motioned to the deaf girls that they should head back, also motioning that I would come along as soon as I removed this "thorn." As the girls started walking, the man moved closer to me and

said, "My girl, we are not going to leave you here for more than ten to fifteen days." During these few minutes, I told him many things. But I also saw the deaf girls looking at me from a distance—waiting for me. So, I stood up and started walking home with them.

Those damn deaf girls! They made their mother understand that I had talked to the tinsmiths. She informed Akram that night that I "spoke to the infidels." Both brother and sister got vary angry at me. "How dare you talk to the infidels?!" Akram became very, very angry. I told him, "Your man came over to drink water and asked me if I came from Der Zor and if there were many Armenians there." I told him that I wasn't sure, and that was the end of the conversation! They turned to me in anger, and the dog said to me, "You have no right to talk to that man!" I will squash you like a bug!" But none of this talk really mattered, as I had already told Markar what I needed to. That was all I thought about. I wondered whether these Armenians would be able to do something to help me.

Days and weeks passed. There was still no news! I found myself saying, "Why should these men even care about me? My situation is dangerous." This is the way I think. "Poor Armenians. How could they face these Turkish dogs?" This is all I think about these days. Twenty to twenty-five days had gone by.

Akram had fields outside the village, so he was not in the house one rainy day. He had gone to plow the fields. There were apparently large containers

of tobacco in our house, but I was not aware of this. Abla, scared, came over to me and said, "Gelin, there are three horsemen coming this way. They must be searching for the tobacco. Look! They are headed right toward our house! Quickly! Quickly! Where should we hide this tobacco?" She was crying and shaking. I took the tobacco and found a space behind the door to hide it. Shortly after this, the three horsemen arrived at the front of our door. The village chief was with them, and they asked where Akram Chavoush was. His sister told them that he was not there, so they asked where his rifle and ammunition were. She turned to them and reiterated, "We don't have such items here."

"Of course you do! We will search for it." They immediately entered the house and started searching everywhere. They quickly found the ammunition and a machete. Then they went to the barn and found the rifle. Turning to the sister again, they asked her where the horse was. She was honest this time and told them it was with Akram.

"Good, now where is the Armenian girl?" The sister looked very confused. "We don't have an Armenian girl here." I wasn't out of their sight, so they looked in my direction and asked, "Who is this, then?" Abla turned to them and replied, "She is a German girl."

"Well, we don't know if she is an Armenian girl or a German girl. We have orders from the government that you must go to court." They turned to me and

said, "Alright, girl, we are going to take you with us." I was struck with fear this time, "No! I won't come along!" They told me directly, "It isn't up to you. We have orders." There was no choice. But the sister said that she would not allow it, since Akram should be here when it takes place. They said, "Akram Chaboush will come along, but we are staying in the village chief's house. Tomorrow, you and Akram better be ready to come with us." Akram came over that night and assessed the situation. We started our journey the next day and went to the village of Mut, whose inhabitants were all Jewish as I had previously witnessed. We were taken to their city hall, and who did I see there? Sultana and her husband! They had arrived only an hour prior to us. Similarly to us, their house was also ransacked. Everything was confiscated. The court had already heard their testimonies, and now they were waiting for us to give our testimony.

Now it was our turn. They called Akram first, and, after questioning him, they called me forward. I went into the room, and there were five or six people sitting there. They asked for my first name, last name, and place of origin. I told them that I was Aintabtsi. The consular asked the officials how many days it would take to get there. One said, "It is close," and the other said, "It is an easy road to travel." I was listening to them, and, based on the way they were talking, I felt that they would get me to Aintab very quickly! That means I will never have to see Akram's face again.

Finally, the consular turned to me and asked, “You say that you are Aintabtsi, but this man said he brought you from Der Zor. Why were you there?”

I became irate! “Why? Why? Have you not heard the news? Don’t you know what happened to the Armenians?” The consular turned again to me and asked, “Do you want to return to your hometown?” Frustrated by the question, I replied, “Of course I want to go back to my hometown!” Upon hearing my response, one official turned to the others and said, “This girl is an educated city girl. She cannot live with these uneducated villagers!” I became braver after hearing this comment. I thought this was it—that I would not see Akram’s face ever again. They asked me plenty of questions, and the transcribers were attempting to write down every word that came from my mouth. I would finally be free!

They called Akram back and told him, “You and your friend will go to Silifke. Your court martial will take place there. The same soldiers who brought you here will also take you to Silifke. And there your trial will be heard.” Akram looked confused when the consular looked at him and said, “This girl will also return to her own home.” Akram looked even more confused now. “She is a civilized girl. She does not want to live in your village, and she cannot be expected to.” The dog became outraged at that moment! If he had not been afraid of the consequences, I’m sure he would have killed me on the spot. Fortunately for us, we

were standing in city hall. He started giving me murderous looks. Well, Sultana and I left the city hall with our guardian soldiers and began our journey toward Silifke. As we started walking, Sultana and I were talking about what was happening. We didn't quite understand it. Sultana asked me what I said in court. "The consular asked me if I wanted to go back to my hometown, so I said that, of course, I wanted to!" Sultana looked at me, "Why? Why did you say that? Now you are going to be in more trouble! What happened has happened. Look at where you are. Look at where your hometown is. Who is going to take you all the way to Aintab? Who knows what these people are thinking?" Our conversation continued like this.

The soldiers were also talking, and they mentioned that the English arrived in Adana. Apparently, they are giving the Turks a hard time. They are going around, collecting the Armenian girls who were taken by the Turks, and saying that they will return them to their hometowns. But they have built a brothel and are taking all the girls there! Sultana and I hear this, and Sultana tells me, "I told you something was up. Do you not hear what they are saying?" Meanwhile, Akram was still shooting daggers at me and would not utter a word. Sultana wanted me to retract my statement to the consular, but Akram didn't think I would do it. He continued to look at me like I was the enemy.

Now I was starting to second-guess myself. Why

did I say what I said? They could also see that I was rethinking my words. They turned to me and said, “When we are in court, you could always tell them that you changed your mind, that they scared you into admitting a falsehood, that you’re happy in the home you have now, and that you choose this village to be your home. Then you can turn around and go back.”

I recognized that Sultana wanted me to pursue this course of action. She was older, about twenty-five or twenty-six. And me? I wasn’t even seventeen yet! I realized after this talk that Akram’s face was starting to relax.

When we finally reached Silifke, we entered the court house immediately. The soldiers who brought us there handed us over to the court, and they called us inside. Sultana was first. After they finished, it was our turn. I entered the room, my heart trembling. The judge would pose the questions, and he opened the books before reading my name. He asked, “Do you want to go back to your hometown?” Scared, my voice faltered, “I apologize, Efendi. When they surprised me and took us to court, I became confused and agreed. But now? No, I don’t want to leave. I’m happy in the home where I am now.” He followed up my response with many more questions.

“How did these guys escape from Der Zor?”

“I don’t know. You need to ask them.”

“I asked them. Now I want to hear it from you!”

I want to understand. Do these horses that they are riding belong to them? Or to the government? They claimed to have bought them with their own money.”

“I don’t know anything about that. You should ask their friends.”

“Why? Where there others with them?”

“Yes. They weren’t alone. There were thirty-four of them. All thirty-four were similar and had guns, horses, and Armenian girls.”

“Give me their names.”

“I don’t know their names. You will have to ask them.”

Akram and his friends were called back in, and the judge began to question them intensely now.

“You didn’t travel alone, so where are all of your friends?”

“We don’t know!”

“How do you not know?! You will give me their names!”

They realized that they would not be able to leave without providing the names, so, one by one, they gave every name and village. The transcriber quickly wrote this information down, and the judge told them, “You can leave now. When I send my word, you will return.”

They were given their horses, and we returned to our villages with those same soldiers who accompanied us to the courthouse. Akram and his friends were happy, believing that they had gotten away with

it. Sultana was with us, and her soldier had convinced her that he was going to take her to Bolis²⁸ to live there—she was ecstatic! But me? Again, I was hopeless, with a sad heart, and confined to the same life.

Fifteen days passed.

The same horsemen came over to the house again with news that we must go back to the court in Silifke.

Akram conceded, “Fine, I will come, but I am coming alone.”

They replied, “That is impossible. The order is that you must come together.”

So, we made the journey to Silifke and entered the courthouse. There were benches in the courtyard, and we sat there briefly. But there was an awful lot of activity in the yard, and I found out later that there were a lot of Armenians eavesdropping on us there. The young man who sold pastries was apparently Armenian. Although we didn’t realize it at the time, he sent word to Markar after overhearing what Akram was saying.

Akram tried to convince me that we would go to Ankara when everything was completed at the courthouse, that he was going to take a government position. “Ankara is a good city,” he said. “It has many fields and orchards in the village.” He tried to convince me, “I will sell the land and we will go.”

The young pastry man did not leave the vicinity. They called us in, finally. He was prompted before me.

²⁸Istanbul

They asked him about our escape, the roads we traveled, how he came by me, and many other questions. His answers were all being rewritten.

“You have been back for four or five months. Why is it that you have not yet handed the weapons over? Due to that alone, you are found guilty. So are your friends,” the judge declared.

Then he turned to me. “Where are you from? Do you have anyone in Aintab? How old are you?” I answered everything honestly, sharing my father’s name, my surname, my sister’s name, and my brother-in-law’s name. Every detail was transcribed. The judge said, “When I send my word, you will return. For now, however, you may leave.” Once again, we left with the same soldiers and returned to our village.

Talking with the soldiers, Akram wondered to himself, “Who told on me to the government? If only I find out who the culprit is, I swear I will drink his blood!” He suspected a few people from the village and imagined himself finding and killing the traitor.

By the time we arrived in the village, Akram was extremely angry and ordered his sister to tell these soldiers when they came back in a few days that he had gone to Konya. “Let them go and look for us in Konya!” He also made his friends repeat the same information.

Another fifteen days passed. I was busy with work in the front of the house, and what did I see? Three to four soldiers on horses. As usual, they stopped in

front of me. I should mention that we don't have a house with a courtyard. In fact, we didn't even have an outer door to the street. This was just a simple village. So, they actually stopped directly in front of me. I didn't have a chance to enter the house and call the sister beforehand. They asked me about Akram's whereabouts. By that point, Akram and his sister had already stepped out. He didn't have a chance to hide and for her to lie about his location. The soldiers reminded me that we must leave for Silifke again early in the morning.

I should inform you, reader, that Silifke was quite a distance away! It takes two days and one night to get there from the village. This was the third time we were making the journey already. I heard a thousand curses about this, and they were aimed at the person who betrayed him and at those who required this journey again.

Anyway, we started our journey and reached Silifke as usual. When we reached the town, we got off the horses and walked toward the courthouse. We had four horses—three for the soldiers and one for us. While four other horses were walking down the street, two doors facing each other opened up. A woman came out of the one door but waited for the four horses to pass. As I got closer to her, she whispered to me, "Do not be afraid, my daughter. Be strong. We will protect you."

I was surprised! Why did this woman say this?

How did she recognize me? My face was covered!
How did she know who I was?

It was before noon. The soldiers accompanying us sent word that we had arrived, and we were called in about an hour or two later. Who did I see upon entering? An Armenian priest was sitting near the judge! I was so surprised. I had not seen the face of a priest for four years now. I felt that my strength had been restored at that moment. Now I understood the Armenians' involvement in this matter. The priest uttered his first words to me: "Uncover your face, Arousiag, so that I can see you." I was still shocked. Before I knew it, the village's visiting tinsmith, Markar Aga, entered from the adjacent room and pulled the veil off my face. Very happy and full of laughter, he looked like he had found a long lost friend—and then the questions started.

"Why did you change your story the first time you came here?"

Very quickly, I reminded them that Akram was at the door. They told me, "Have no fear." But the judge ordered everyone to step away from the door. Then I explained in a few words that I didn't know that they were involved and that the people with us said something else. Markar said, "We suspected that was the case."

The judge opened a piece of paper and began to read. The priest turned to me and said, "My daughter, listen to this."

Aintab

Haroutyoun Magarian

Sarkis Magarian

Tanael Chakmajian

Hagop Poladian

*Feride Poladian*²⁹

All of these names were read aloud! And my age—I was born in 1904. All the people listed above have declared that they want their girl back! The judge of Aintab also gave his permission. This note and the judge's signature empowered me. When this was read aloud by the judge, you would have thought the entire world belonged to me! I was utterly ecstatic!

Meanwhile, Markar stood up and went very quickly to the room from which he came. Certainly there must have been an exit from there. The judge told me to speak to Akram for five minutes and to tell him that I would depart immediately on orders from Aintab. I shied away from this proposition, but the judge told me, "You are required by law to see him, but do not be scared." With my hand forced, I went out and found Akram waiting for me. Although I was happy inside, I pretended to be sad.

"Have you heard? The judge from Aintab has sent

²⁹Haroutyoun was the brother who was sent to Beirut. Sarkis was the brother who continually ran away. Tanael's relationship to Arousiag is presently unknown, and no light is shed on this connection in the diary. Hagop is her brother-in-law, and Feride is her sister.

word, and they are forcing me to return.”

“How can they force you back?” He asked.

The judge came out at this moment and commanded me, “Hurry up! I must send you back to Aintab quickly. This is an order.”

Akram turned to him in response, “What kind of order is that? I don’t agree with this! Up to this point, I have devoted seven years of my life to the military. Is this my reward? There is no law that says you can take someone’s family by force!”

The judge turned to him, “She must go because she is Armenian.”

And again that dog refused to concede. “Really? Well, I will send a request to Bolis and tell them what kind of laws are followed here!” The judge responded, “You know your business, but this is the way it will be today! These are my orders!” Then he turned to me and, pretending he was angry, pointed toward the building before shouting for me to walk.

I walked back to the courthouse and toward the room where the priest was. And who did I see? An Armenian woman was waiting with a wimple for my hair. “Throw away that cursed fereje,”³⁰ said the priest. I removed it and gave it to the doorman to give to Akram. It was at that moment that I saw the governor order Akram to be placed under the control of the guards. I was finally able to breathe freely. The priest asked me to thank the governor, so I turned to him

³⁰This is Muslim garb used to cover the hair and face.

and took his hand. The governor said to me, “I am going to give you a letter. You will have no difficulties along the way whenever you show this letter. You will be taken to where you need to go—and without any expense to you. But if you’d prefer, I can send my soldiers with you all the way to Aintab.”

I thanked him profusely. “Thank you very much for your kindness, Efendi. Now that our priest is here, I will be in his care.”

“Very well. It is your decision, but take these three gold coins with you to cover any expenses. God willing, I will come to Aintab and visit you. We will have coffee and recall how we were able to free you!”

Then the priest and I said our goodbyes before going out to the inner courtyard. On the one hand, I was terrified. And on the other hand, I was embarrassed. I didn’t look to either of my sides until the priest motioned for me to do so. When I did, I saw the soldiers surrounding Akram. He was just standing there, watching us like a wild beast!

And at that moment, I remembered the house where we were hiding. He entered the house, grabbed ahold of my arm, and dragged me out while saying, “Hi-den khenzer enigler!”³¹ My brother grabbed me around the other side and screamed and yelled. At this very moment, all of the memories came back—so I spoke up.

“What is your fate now? Where are the thousands

³¹“Come on, children of pigs!”

of Armenians you drove to be slaughtered? Where are the girls like me? Orphaned and left without a guardian? What about those you imprisoned? Today is my day to take revenge. Right now, a simple glance from me feels like arrows shot through your stone heart. But you, like a wolf caught in a trap, can only watch your prey taste freedom!”

Then we smiled from cheek-to-cheek and happily walked away. The priest, the Armenian woman, and I left the courtyard together. There were many curious onlookers. But I was finally free! I was no longer afraid of the people watching me.

When we reached Markar’s home, we entered the house and saw that the city’s Armenian population had congregated there, as if they were awaiting our arrival, as if people were returning from Jerusalem after having undertaken a pilgrimage. There was no limit to our happiness! All of the women were hugging and kissing me. Everyone was asking me about Der Zor, about what happened to all the Armenians there. I was amazed that there were even this many Armenians left in the world! In fact, Silifke had 100-125 Armenian homes, a small church, and a priest. All of the Armenians formed close, loving relationships with one another. Silifke is a lovely city!

The Armenians had not been driven out of this town. Actually, only one family had left: Markar Aga’s sister. Because they had gone out of town for their daughter’s wedding, their travel documents were writ-

ten to Adana. At that time, the exile began and their names were called. The two in-laws were exiled together to Der Zor. Of the twenty-eight people, only one girl is left: Zarouhi. A bride for only five months, Zarouhi was now taken by a forty-year-old Arab. The rest of the family perished. Markar Aga had already heard—from Akram—that his niece was alive in Der Zor, but she now goes by the name Zahre.

I had already seen Zarouhi, who lived on our street. Akram used to say that she was from our area. Markar Aga's family now knew from me that Zarouhi was alive, and that I had seen her personally. They kept asking me questions about her and contemplated if she would manage to get away one day like I did. So, now they have replaced Zarouhi with me in their minds and hearts. They showered me with all of their love and affection, as if I were their Zarouhi!

With sandals on my feet and no personal belongings, I was still dressed like a villager at this point. I had quite a bit of gold: a gold cordon, ten pure gold coins, and some other adornments. These were all stolen from the Armenians. Only in my ears did I have a pair of earrings made by my father. All of the other gold was kept by Akram's sister, but I didn't care about that. All I could think about was finding a way to become free. I just wanted to escape! The clothes on my back were enough, and so it all came to pass.

I took the Ketejen off my head and gave it back. I didn't need that cursed thing! Now I'm at Markar

Aga's house. Before I knew it, a cobbler came by to measure my feet. Some seamstress girls also came by and made me a new dress, undergarments, a couple pairs of socks, and a wimple for my head. They did everything that needed to be done—and very happily! Every household invited us over.

Four to five days passed, and the priest returned. “Let’s go, my girl. The governor wants to see you.”

“Why does he want to see me?”

I started doubting his intentions, and I told him that I did not want to go. He said, “Don’t worry. Just come with me. They have brought two of your friends to court today, and three others yesterday. They have denied being Armenian, and have instead identified themselves as Turks. We need you to identify whether they are Turks or Armenian. I already inquired about why he was requesting you.”

So, off we went to see the governor. When he saw me, he exclaimed, “What wonderful changes! See? Now you look civilized!” I replied, “It’s due to your graces that I have seen this day. I thank you sincerely, Efendim.” The governor responded, “This wasn’t of my doing. It was Markar Aga, and your own intelligence is why you are now free.”

He continued, “I asked the priest to have you come. I have brought in two of the soldiers you traveled with, and I had them bring their women. They swear that they are Turks by birth. They admitted that they came from Der Zor, but they still claim to be Turks. For the

time being, I have sent them back to their homes, but we have detained the soldiers here under close guard. Three more girls were brought in today, so I called you to identify them by nationality. They are in a room downstairs right now. Go take a look, and let me know what you think.”

I was led downstairs by a guard. When I went into the room and saw two girls with their faces covered, who did I see? One was an Adabazartsi³² named Shnorig, and the other was a Neidetsi³³ named Verkin. Now, I was full of courage today. I went directly to them and uncovered their faces. “Verkin! Shnor! It’s you!”

“No, we don’t know you. We are Turks. We are Turkish girls. You freed yourself. You have no business with us! We have already heard of your escape and that you betrayed us. If you ever end up in their hands, they will rip you to pieces. Isn’t it shameful now? Not only will they have to pay a fine, but they will also go to jail!”

I turned and said, “Now your hearts are aching. They should have taken pity on us; instead, they slaughtered our race! This is the chance for us to escape. Why would you stay with these beasts?”

“We are satisfied with our lives.”

“Fine. Since you are happy with your lives, go! Get lost! Let people like you not be a part of the Armenian

³²Someone from Adabazar

³³Someone from Neide

race.”

And as I started to walk toward the door, I turned to make one final comment. “I hope you do not regret this later. This is your only opportunity.” Then I left. The priest was waiting for me upstairs, and the governor asked me which race the girls belonged to. “They are Armenian, but they are denying it. I recognize them well.” The governor turned and said, “I know now what I must do.”

A message was sent that very same day to twelve of the soldiers, and they were ordered to present themselves to the court for trial. This was because they had abandoned their posts and taken military weapons illegally. It had already been five months since they left, but they had not bothered to check back in with the military.

“If this girl did not inform us about their activities and whereabouts, we never would have known about all the guns and ammunition.”

The priest asked the governor what became of Akram, and the governor told him, “He has been imprisoned since that fateful day. As his friends are being rounded up, new trials are taking place.”

The priest and I left the hall and returned home. I was deliriously happy. And the rest of the Armenians in Silifke? They were even happier than I was! Markar Aga heard in town from the Turks that people were calling the governor an infidel. They said that he would not have done what he did for us if he were not

an infidel. These were the conversations being had in town among the Muslims. They were now calling this man the infidel governor.

It was time for Markar Aga to explain the tale of my life. "Look here, my girl. When we arrived on the first day in your village, Akram came over to see us. The conversation led to a discussion of his military service. He said that he was stationed in Der Zor for four years. He claimed to be a Chavoush³⁴ in Souvari. Then I understood that he was participating in the massacre of Armenians. I asked a few questions, and he answered a few. I inquired about my sister's family. He said that only my niece Zarouhi had survived, but he knew whom she was with. He mentioned that Zarouhi was with a local Arab man, which prompted me to ask him, 'Akram, haven't you yourself taken an Armenian girl?' I was trying to get him to talk."

He looked in my direction and exclaimed, "What would I do with an Armenian girl? It's too dangerous to associate yourself with them! I took a German Turk and brought her here." Then he stood up and left. Right then, my son Aram asked, "Father, do you believe this man has brought a German girl with him? Where would he find a German girl in Der Zor? This girl must be Armenian. Oh, father, who knows whose heart is broken?" We thought about this and started inquiring in the area. If only we had the opportunity to see this Armenian girl! We saw you from a distance,

³⁴Sergeant

but you were never alone. Aram stood up once to get closer to you in order to find out, but we didn't permit him to ruin a better opportunity later. But then you came on the very last day to the creek. We were waiting impatiently for you to fetch the daily water. And that's when I came near the water, took your letter, and shared a few words with you. Because of that event, we decided that we were going to help you escape somehow, no matter what it required! I hid that letter as if it were the holy bread for communion. I kept it to my chest, close to my heart. I would take out the letter daily and re-read it. 'I'm an Armenian girl. Help me escape.' What kind of people would we be if we didn't hear your plea for help? My son-in-law Haroutyoun, Aram, and I would talk about you. Actually, you were always the topic of our conversations. Even my wife and daughter discussed you. 'Father, for the love of God, you must help this girl escape regardless of who she might be.' Every day was the same."

He continued, "Together with a few Armenians and our priest, we would brainstorm how we could possibly accomplish this task. We imagined Zarouhi in your place—we would want to rescue her! You had already written in your letter that these men abandoned their military posts and carried weapons with them. We decided that these guns would be a good excuse and thought we should go directly to the governor, so that no harm would come to anyone. This was

a good excuse to catch Akram. This way we might succeed. Let me also tell you, my girl, that we knew there was going to be a lot of back-and-forth, but we were watching out for you from a distance. You were never alone! We considered how this would end. We knew that they would try to scare you and convince you not to cooperate with the governor. But thank God we received what we wanted. You became our cause! There was a good chance of a successful rescue. Aram kept saying that, if it would be at all possible, he was willing to go to rescue every single girl one-by-one, plucking them from the clutch of their oppressors. He was constantly angry, but let's give thanks that our governor is a good man. He doesn't look or act like a Tajik³⁵. It was as if he had Armenian blood flowing through his veins. A Turk would not have done what this man has done for us. He was sent to us by God; otherwise, this would not have been an easy task because of the Turkish government. The Tajik call this governor an infidel."

"You didn't know, but the French had already entered Adana, and the governor pledged his allegiance to the Armenians."

Then they would tell me, "It's enough that we rescued you." I stayed there for ten to twelve days, and

³⁵This is actually a mistake on the part of the author. An ethnic Tajik typically speaks Tajiki, which is a form of Persian that belongs to a separate language family than Turkish. However, she intended to call attention to the Turks with a different, albeit inaccurate, descriptor.

I was getting really anxious. When were they going to send me? With every passing day, it felt like an entire year! I wanted to go to see my brother and sister. And they were saying to me, ‘We don’t want you to leave. You can stay and be our daughter.’ One day the priest came over from Mersin and told me that a Saro Hagopian has arrived from Aintab and would return in one or two days. He is the most appropriate person for Arousiag to travel with.”

When I heard this, I became so happy and excited—and I would travel with a fellow Armenian! In two days’ time, the trip was organized and I separated from them with thankfulness in my heart. We started with toward carts toward Saro Hagopian’s house in Mersin. I stayed there for one day before traveling to Adana the next day on the steam engine. A man was sent from the Armenian community to accompany me to the train station. They handed me over to Mr. Souren with a letter, who himself was also headed to Adana. After we got off the train at the station in Adana, Mr. Souren took me to the prelacy, and there were two other Armenians there. I pulled out and presented the letter. One of them said to the other, “Take her to Apgarian.” I thought that this was the name of a family, and we were off. When we arrived, I saw a very large building, guarded by an Armenian at the door, filled with Armenian girls. He told me to enter.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but I soon found out

that you didn't have permission to leave after you entered that place. I was so confused when I entered the building. Everyone was disgruntled! They were crying, whining, and cursing the people who had brought them there. Each one was in a specific condition.

Where should I go? What should I do? Where should I sit? I didn't know anything! Just like everyone else, I withdrew myself to a corner. Nobody told or asked me anything. The day quickly became night. It was the month of April, and the weather was still cold. Where would I sleep? I didn't even have a piece of cloth to lay on! The girls who were there before me had put down one blanket each. I had a tiny package with me, so I put it on the bare floor and used it as a pillow. I spent half of the night asleep and the other half awake, silently listening to the others there. "Why did they bring me here? To imprison me? Oh, what conditions are these! It's been a month since they forcefully brought me here and left me in these circumstances." Everyone complained.

To be honest, I also became frustrated. I went to the guard the next day and told him to take me to the church. I said, "There is a place I need to be." He lifted his cane and yelled for me to get back inside. Once again, I withdrew myself to a corner, and my eyes filled with tears before spilling over!

One hour passed. Two hours passed. And what happened next? The man from the prelacy who took

my letter was standing in the courtyard calling out my name. I quickly rushed over to him. He told me, "The people from the prelacy are asking for you." I left with that man very quickly and went to the prelacy. I went upstairs and a professor sat before me. I had no idea that he was the Bishop Moushegh! He had my letter in his hand and asked, "Are you Arousiag Magarian?"

"Yes, Holy Father," I replied. Then he read the letter. He looked at me and mentioned, "Very good, my girl. You have accomplished a great deal. You should not have been sent to Apgarian. We wish that they were all like you." It was written in the letter that I was the one responsible for the imprisonment of the soldiers who returned from Der Zor. I explained briefly what had happened, and he put his hand on my shoulder before saying, "We will make sure you have safe passage to Aintab."

They pulled out a chair for me to sit on. Around that time, the man named Zeki Pasha was caught and thrown into jail. Apparently he was denying his identity, saying that he was from Der Zor. They had been searching for someone who had seen him, someone who could possibly identify this dog. The bishop inquired whether I could recognize him if he were standing before me.

"No, Holy Father. I have never seen his face. I only saw his back."

"Well, if there is someone who can recognize him,

there is a large reward for his identification!”

Then they called for a man who arrived shortly thereafter. The bishop said, “You will take this girl to Haleb. The train leaves at 17:00 today. She is to be handed to Sarkis Efendi Khratchian.” So, he ordered this man, one of the community leaders, to accompany me. While they were making the arrangements, they added to my letter. The bishop turned to me and gave me two gold coins. I thanked him, and he kissed my eyes. It was finally time for us to leave, so we went back to the train station. I’m sorry, I forgot to mention the man who was escorting me: His name was Dikran Mardagian, and his family lived in Haleb.

Our journey began. We reached Haleb the following evening, and his wife welcomed us at his home. I stayed there that night and went to Sarkis Efendi Krajian’s house the next day. These people lovingly opened their arms to me. I stayed there for three days. Mr. Karajian said, “Arabaji³⁶ Sanos Kevork drives between Haleb and Aintab. He will be here in a few days. Kevork is a reliable and trustworthy man. We will send you with him.” And sure enough, he came three or four days later. When he saw me and understood who I was, he became delirious with happiness! “I’m your uncle,” he declared. “I’m your brother-in-law’s sister’s husband! Your sister Feride, your brother Sarkis, and your brother-in-law Hagop are impatiently awaiting your arrival!”

³⁶This is the name given to a cart driver.

I didn't realize that I was related to Sanos Kevork! This kind man took care of me and shuttled me to Aintab. By that point in time, the Armenians were free. The English were there, and the displaced Armenians were returning to their homes. I also returned to Aintab.

I immediately went to my father's house. I kissed the threshold and entered the doorway. It felt as if every family member were already inside! Unfortunately, that was not the case: The house was empty and in mourning. The Turks had broken in and crumbled us, but my brother-in-law Hagop had repaired much of the damage that they had caused.

My sister, brother-in-law, and brother had now moved into my father's house. My sister said that my presence had brightened the house, but my heart didn't brighten anything! I always remained sad and in mourning. My heart was heavy. I wanted to lift the spirits of my relatives, but this isn't possible when the strings of one's heart are shattered into pieces. To make matters worse, some of the residents of Aintab would gossip about me. Instead of counseling and helping me, they would spread rumors behind my back. "Aman, she came from Der Zor. Do you think she can go back there? It is shameful! How embarrassing!" They always gossiped. "Who knows how it is that she came to escape?" I understood what they meant when they made such remarks. They looked at each other when they spoke these words. Smirking

at one another and pursing their lips, they acted as if they were sorry for me and could feel my pain. But I was embarrassed. I always cried and couldn't be consoled, saying, "I have become their scapegoat."

Fortunately, the intelligent and understanding people would give me advice. My brother-in-law, my grandmother, my sister, and my cousins would console me by saying, "You are the crown on our head. You are this family's most valuable gem!" Sarkis always told me that I was priceless.

Fathers Der Nerses, Tavukjian, and Der Karekin Guldalian used to come over and gets statements from me concerning the time when I was in Silifke, the letter from the governor, and the trials in Silifke. They would say, "We need to have an official record of such matters, about the struggles of the Armenians." And Father Karekin would tell me, "Arousiag, my girl, I will dedicate this book to you, because you are the bright star that set." Der Karekin put everything in writing, and it wasn't long after that time that he left for America.

Dikran Jebejian used to come over and see me, too. He would ask me about what happened in Der Zor after he left. I mentioned that people came looking for him one day after he left; instead of finding him, they found me and my younger brother Yervant. Hearing this story brought sadness to him. "What could we have done, sister? This must have been our destiny." He remained sad. If anyone asked him about his sis-

ter, Miss Araxi, poor Dikran would cover his face with both hands and say, while spilling his tears, “I don’t want to talk about that.”

There was a bride I met in Der Zor, a neighbor, who was also from Aintab and taken by the soldiers. Her name was Maritza, and she lived on the same street where the church was. She was older, maybe about twenty-five. She became ill while in Der Zor, and she was the one who told me about Miss Araxi’s murder. She said that they grabbed Miss Araxi from her brother’s arms. The Chechen dragged her from his arms, took her a short distance away, and did many vile things to her. After she passed out, they simply killed her. Maritza told me many stories like that. It is very difficult for me to write about that, and this was the reason that Dikran Jebejian did not want to talk to anyone about it.

So, this was it: Our Armenian nation’s one and a half million innocent souls were slaughtered, both the young and the old. The charming Armenian girls, women, and innocent children spilled their blood. Their innocent spirits will not be laid to rest by the barbarian Turks. The owls³⁷ that used to sit upon the roofs of the Armenian homes had now left and will forever perch upon the Turks’ heads.

Excluding Der Zor, the other displaced Armenians began to return to their homes, mostly because the English had arrived. Little by little they were able

³⁷Owls are considered to be a bad omen.

to regain peace. This peace didn't last long, and it started again in Aintab. This became the fate of the Armenian people, and the sorrow returned. But I thank God for delivering me from the hands of these savages. I'm grateful to Markar Aga of Silifke, only by whose efforts I was saved and returned to my people. If I were to die now, I would not care, because I have rejoined my dear sister, brother, my kin, and my other relatives. I achieved my goal of being reunited with my loves ones. May God grant everyone's wishes as he has granted mine.

A.N. Magarian

EPILOGUE

Dear Readers,

God granted me a new life. I married Samuel Iskenian in 1922. My brother Sarkis and I remained in Haleb for a while. In fact, he attended school there for two to three years. We stayed in Haleb for five years. Then, in 1927, we arrived near the city of Mosul, Iraq. At the time of my writing, my brother is now the father of nine children. I have one son and two daughters. They have all married, and I have grandchildren—thank God!

Please excuse all the misspellings. As I only attended school for four years, my writing skills are weak. Please correct my errors.

My respect to you all.

This book chronicles four years of my life. I do not have the heart to write anything more.

Arousiag Magarian

A POEM FOR AROUSIAG

Your family quenches their thirst
by longing for you, our shooting star.
Bright Arousiag, my priceless sister,
you were a flower in need on your native land.
A rose bud you were that wilted too soon.
Your spirit is pure, my sweet sister.
Do not lose hope, for a new life you will find –
full of recognition and fame. Wait a little more.
Bright star of mine, my priceless sister,
I wish from the depths of my soul, my sweet sister,
that your life may always be joyful and happy.

Der Karekin Guldalian

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ümit Kurt

During the First World War (WWI) the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire were either persecuted on the very spot, which was the fate of many of the men and male youths, or deported to the deserts of modern-day Iraq or Syria in the south. Along these deportation routes they underwent massive and repeated depredations—rape, kidnap, mutilation, outright killing, and death from exposure, starvation, and thirst—at the hands of Ottoman Gendarmes, Turkish and Kurdish irregulars, and local tribespeople. The Ottoman army was involved in massacres. The kidnapped and other surviving women, and many orphans, were then “subject to enforced conversions to Islam as a means of assimilation into the ‘new Turkey’.”³⁸ Together, these events comprise the Armenian genocide. The primary perpetrators of the genocide were the leaders and central committee of the “Committee of Union and Progress” (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*; CUP), the ruling faction in the Ottoman government. This genocide also happened to the Armenians of Aintab, modern-day Gaziantep, fifty-five

³⁸ Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.

kilometers to the west of the Euphrates and forty-five kilometers to the north of the modern Turkish-Syrian border. Arousiag Magarian's birthplace and hometown, comprising industrious Armenians who were very proud of their churches with large steeples and ringing bell towers, was subject to this total destruction. On the eve of WWI, the demography of Aintab was the following: various Armenian, French, and British sources provide estimations of the Armenian population of Aintab in 1914, which vary between 30,000 and 37,000.³⁹ According to Turkish sources,

³⁹Papken Gulesserian, "Hayeren yev turk lezun [Armenian and Turkish language]," *Datev* (1929): 32. *Datev* is a religious yearbook, published in Aleppo, Syria. Also see Yervant Babayan, ed., *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots* [History of Aintab Armenians], Vol. III (Los Angeles, CA, 1994): 11-12; *Nor Aintab*, 13 (1972): 33-35; Archbishop Ormanian, *Hayots Yegeghetsin* [The Armenian Church] (Antilias, 1952): 210; Krikor Bogharian, "Aintabi Hayots Tivi: Nakh Kan Hamaşk A. Baderazmı [The Number of Aintab Armenians: Before the World War]," *Hay Aintab*, 10 (1969): 59-61; "Bogharian, Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis," in *Tseghasban Turke. Vgayutyunner Kaghadz Hrashkov Prgvadzneru Zruytsneren* [Genocider Turk: Testimonies Composed from the Accounts of Armenians Who Miraculously Survived], ed. Toros Toromanian (Beirut: Shirag, 1973), 122; Kevork A. Sarafian, *A concise history of the cultural, religious, educational, political, industrial and commercial life of the Armenians of Aintab* (CA, Los Angeles: Union of the Armenians of Aintab, 1957), 11. Some authors also give 30,000 as the number of Armenians in Aintab before the deportation. See Yeghia H. Dolbakian, *Ayntabn u Ayntabahayı* [Aintab and Aintab Armenians] (Yerevan 1992), 40; A. Gesar, *Ayntabi Koyamardı* [Aintab Self-defense] (Boston: Hayrenik), 18; Raymond Kévorkian & Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris: Editions d'Art et

the total number of Armenians was between 20,000 and 30,000.⁴⁰

d'Histoire ARHIS, 1992), 318-23; M. Abadi, *Türk Verdünü Antep'in Dört Muhasarası* (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Kültür Derneği Yayınları, 1959), 11; FO 608/77, *British High Commission in Istanbul*, 28 May 1919. On the other hand, Kevork Barsumian, another Armenian author, reports that the number of general population of Aintab in 1913 was closer to 80,000, with Armenians composing 36,000. The information on the 1915 population Barsumian provides—based on Necati Bey, who held an official position at the General Registration Office—is extremely dramatic. Barsumian claims that in 1915, 42,000 Armenians were deported from Aintab. If we add to this those who were not deported, the number would be around 47,000. Barsumian, *Badmutyün Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyün 1898-1922* [History of the Aintab Armenian Revolutionary Federation 1898-1922] (Halep: Tigris, 1957), 16.

⁴⁰Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population (1830-1914): Demographic and Social Character* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Madison Press, 1985), 176. Stanford Shaw has also given the same population statistics with regard to the 1914 population in Aintab. However, with regard to the number of Armenians, Shaw has estimated the number as 14,466, only by taking into consideration the number of Gregorian Armenians. He did not mention the number of Catholic and Protestant Armenians. Stanford Shaw, "Ottoman Population Movement During the Last Years of the Empire, 1885-1914: Some Preliminary Remarks," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 1 (1980): 205; Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918*, Vol. 1 (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 2005), 655; Uğuroğul Barlas, *Gaziantep Tıp Fakültesi Tarihi ve Azınlık Okulları* (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Kültür Derneği, 1971), 13; Hulusi Yetkin, *Gaziantep Tarihi ve Davaları* (Gaziantep: Yeni Matbaa, 1968), 39.

The Deportations Begin

Along with Arousiag Magarian and her family members, the deportation of Aintab Armenians began in early August 1915,⁴¹ which was rather late in comparison to other regions. The first incidents broke out in the towns of Dörtyol and Zeitun in the Cilicia Region in mid-February 1915. Dörtyol, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, was a critical location in terms of military landings.⁴² Using the pretext that Armenians were in collaboration with foreign submarines, Cemal Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army and Minister of the Navy, ordered an operation against the Armenians of Dörtyol, leading to the arrest of 1,600 men.⁴³ After this operation, fighting broke out with Armenian draft dodgers from Zeitun who had taken refuge in the mountains.⁴⁴ As these clashes continued, in a coded wire dated February 26, 1915, Cemal Pasha made a proposal to Talat Pasha,

⁴¹BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 1.

⁴²Fuat Dünder, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878-1918)* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 72.

⁴³Kévorkian, "The Extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk Regime (1915-1916)," *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, [online], published on 3 June 2008, URL: <http://www.massviolence.org/The-Extermination-of-Ottoman-Armenians-by-the-Young-Turk-Regime> (accessed 14 July 2014).

⁴⁴*Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918*, Vol. 1 (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1995), 55.

Minister of the Interior, to deport Armenian families from these two locations. In his response, dated March 2, 1915, Talat Pasha ordered the Armenians to be “sent to the locations that had been set for this purpose,” adding:

It is necessary not only to let develop conditions that might lead to revolution or revolt, but also to act forcefully and speedily in areas where Armenian operations and activities increase, and to extinguish every incident, with effective and definitive methods, together with the local causes that have caused the incident.⁴⁵

The first formal decision for deportation was issued on April 8, 1915, following an exchange of coded wires between Enver Pasha, the Minister of War; Talat Pasha; and Cemal Pasha.⁴⁶ In a wire sent to Enver Pasha, Cemal Pasha said, “The transfer of Konya, of those whose residence in Zeitun and Marash is

⁴⁵BOA.DH.ŞFR 50/141, Ministry of Interior/Public Security Directorate (EUM) to Adana, 2 March 1915; Taner Akçam, *Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 175. For a broader discussion of the February 1915 deportations from Dörtyol, İskenderun and the later ones from Zeitun and Marash that occurred in March and April, see Akcam, *Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 146-47; 159-61.

⁴⁶James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916: Document Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce* (Princeton, N.J.: Gomidas Institute: Taderon Press, 2000), 636.

deemed to be harmful, is absolutely necessary,” because “otherwise the enemy’s landing” in this area would “make it necessary to station many troops in this area.”⁴⁷ The deportations from Zeitun started on April 8, 1915, with the departure of thirty-four Armenian notables and their families.⁴⁸

These deportations were not carried out for the purpose of extermination; rather, they were strategically motivated and result of political concerns. The transition from strategic to genocidal deportations occurred during the Van Uprising on April 19, 1915. Due to Armenian resistance and the fear of an enemy landing in Gallipoli, the final destination of deportations was changed from Konya to quasi-desert ar-

⁴⁷For the 9 April 1915 coded telegram, see The Archive of Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE) cl.2287, ds.32-12, n.1-37, Documents sur les arméniens I, Présidence du conseil direction générale de la presse et de l’information cited in Dündar, *Crime of Numbers*, 71-72.

⁴⁸*Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, 81 (1982), doc 1823, Cemal Pasha to Enver Pasha, Jerusalem, 10 April 1915, telegram 3108 cited in Hilmar Kaiser, “Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915,” *The Journal of Genocide Research*, 12 (2010), 180; NA/RG 59, 867.00/761, Report from United States Consul in Aleppo, J. B. Jackson, to Ambassador Morgenthau, dated 21 April 1915, in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, ed. Ara Sarafian (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004) 10; Kevork A. Sarafian, ed., *Badmutyun Aintab Hayots*, Vol I (CA, Los Angeles, 1953), 1019.

eas of Syria on April 24, 1915.⁴⁹ Because “a collective presence” in a place like Konya, where the Armenians of Zeitun and Marash had been exiled, “would after a while lead to a coordination of activities with local Armenians,” orders were issued “not to send other Armenians to that area [Konya] in addition to those sent up now.” Instead, “those, whose expulsion from places like İskenderun, Dörtyol, Adana, Hacin, Zeitun, or Sis [was] deemed necessary” were to be sent to the southeast of Aleppo, as well as Der Zor and Urfa.⁵⁰ On the same day, house raids and arrests of leading Armenians began in Istanbul and then spread to other provinces. Including many Hunchak and Dashnak members—as well as cultural, intellectual, educational, and church leaders—these arrestees were sent to central Anatolia, where the majority of them were killed.⁵¹

On May 9, 1915, orders were sent for the deportation of all Armenians from Zeitun, as well as Furnuz, Kaban, and Alabahçe.⁵² Armenian resistance in Van

⁴⁹Dündar, *Crime of Numbers*, 75.

⁵⁰BOA.DH.ŞFR 52/93, EUM to Cemal Pasha, 24 April 1915.

⁵¹DH.ŞFR 52/95, EUM to all governors, 24 April 1915. Two days later, Enver Pasha gave orders to the commanders that all Armenian organizations had to be closed; see ATASE cl. 2287, ds.32-12, f. 12-1 in Documents Sur les Armeniens, v. 1, Presidence du conseil direction generale de la presse et de l'information, 75-87 cited in Dündar, *Crime of Numbers*, 74, footnote number 42.

⁵²BOA.DH.ŞFR 52/286 coded telegram from EUM to the Provincial District of Marash, 9 May 1915 and also see

followed by the arrival of the Russian army on May 19, 1915, led to the widening of the deportation's scope.⁵³ On May 23, 1915, new regions were added to the deportation list. According to the list of instructions received by Cemal Pasha, the Armenian population was to be removed from:

(1) The provinces of Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis, (2) Besides the provinces of Adana, Mersin, Kozan, and Cebel-i Bereket, the population of the cities of Adana, Sis, and Mersin. (3) The provincial district of Marash, besides the population of the city of Marash. (4) The town and villages inside the counties of İskenderun, Bilan, Cisir-i Şuğur, and Antalya, besides the central county of the Aleppo province.⁵⁴

The blanket deportations of April 24, 1915 and May 23, 1915 signified an intensification of the anti-Armenian measures, escalating during the summer of 1915 into genocidal destruction.⁵⁵ On June 21, 1915, the CUP

NA/RG59/867.4016/95 from Henry Morgenthau American Ambassador, Istanbul to the Secretary of State, 20 July 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, 98; for the number of Armenians deported from places like Haçin and Dört Yol, see BOA.DH.ŞFR 52/338, EUM to Adana, 12 May 1915.

⁵³ Bryce and Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, 100.

⁵⁴ BOA.DH.ŞFR 53/94 coded telegram from Minister of Interior Talat to the commander of the Imperial Fourth Army, 23 May 1915.

⁵⁵ Donald Bloxham, "The Beginning of the Armenian Catastrophe: Comparative and Contextual Considerations," in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah: The Armenian Genocide*

government issued new orders to deport “all Armenians, without exception” from Trabzon, Diyarbakır, Canik, Sivas, and Ma’muretül’-aziz.⁵⁶ However, Aintab did not become an “area of displacement” until at least July 1915.⁵⁷ In fact, in a coded telegram sent by Talat Pasha to Cemal Pasha regarding the deportations, Aintab Armenians were not specified among other Armenians who would be expelled from Aleppo.⁵⁸ How-

and the Shoah, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2002), 101-28.

⁵⁶ BOA.DH.ŞFR 54/87, EUM to Trabzon, Ma’muretül’-aziz, Sivas, Diyarbekir and Canik, 21 June 1915; BOA.DH.ŞFR 54-A/97 coded telegram from EUM to the Province of Trebziönd and the Provincial District of Canik, 24 July 1915; BOA.DH.ŞFR 54-A/100 coded telegram from EUM to the Provinces of Erzurum, Adana, Bitlis, Aleppo, Diyarbekir, Sivas, Trebziönd, Mamuretülaziz, and Van, and to the Provincial Districts of Urfa and Marash, 25 July 1915. See also Dünder, *Crime of Numbers*, 90-91 and Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity*, 232. On 20 July 1915, Talat Pasha asked all governors and mutasarrıf (district governors) to prepare maps and statistical tables of the ethnic composition of all villages and neighborhoods. See BOA.DH.ŞFR 54-A/51, 21 July 1915. In the well-known ‘Black Book of Talat Pasha,’ Talat Pasha provided detailed figures for cities in every province and provincial district on the numbers of Armenians. This book was published by Turkish journalist Murat Bardakçin 2008. See Murat Bardakçin, *Talat Paşa’nın Evrak-ıMetrukesi: Sadrazam Talat Paşa’nın Özel Arşivinde Bulunan Ermeni Tehciri Konusundaki Belgeler ve Hususi Yazışmalar* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2008), 76-77, 89-94, 101-4, and 108-45.

⁵⁷ *Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918*, 152; Azmi Süslü, *Erméniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı* (Ankara: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1990), 112.

⁵⁸ BOA.DH.ŞFR 53/94 coded telegram from Minister of Interior to Fourth Army Commander, 23 May 1915; *Arşiv Belgeleriyle*

ever, Aintab was ultimately included in the deportation scheme at the end of July.

The Road to Deportations in Aintab

In late March 1915, Aleppo Governor Celal Bey reported to Cemal Pasha that some Armenians living in the Muslim quarters of Aintab were discretely moving their belongings to the Armenian quarters; this news created great concern among the Muslim population, who feared the Armenians could revolt. Cemal Pasha informed the Ministry of the Interior, which in response ordered the Aleppo province to make the following announcement in Aintab on March 29, 1915:

No Armenian shall be allowed *tebdil-i mekan*[change of place]; those who have done so shall return to their prior neighborhood; the properties, lives, and honor of the population loyal to the Government shall be protected against any attacks, and the slightest assault by the Muslim population against any Armenian, even if they were revolutionaries or rioters, shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action.⁵⁹

Aram Andonian,⁶⁰ an Armenian journalist, noted

Ermeni Faaliyetleri, Vol. 8 (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE ve Genelkurmay Denetleme BaşkanlığıYayınları, 2008), 3.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Aram Andonian was an Ottoman Armenian journalist and intellectual who had survived arrest and deportation in late April 1915. He found refuge in Aleppo. During the war, Andonian had already begun collecting information on the Ottoman

that by taking advantage of the incidents in Zeitun and Marash as early as March and presenting Aintab Armenians as a harmful element, the leaders of Aintab's CUP club—led by Ali Cenani, the parliamentary deputy for Aintab; Fadil Bey, the former district governor of Kilis; and HacıMustafa Bey, a prominent Kilis notable—repeatedly appealed to Istanbul, hoping to obtain a deportation decision for the Armenians of Aintab and Kilis.⁶¹ However, Şükrü Bey, the Aintab district gover-

government's annihilation campaign. In 1918 he obtained telegrams from a Turkish official named Naim Bey (who worked in an office in Aleppo on issues connected with the settlement of Armenians) that included orders concerning the killing of Armenians. They were first published in French, titled *Documents officiels concernant les massacres arméniens*, M. S. David-Beg, trans. (Paris, 1920) and subsequently in English, titled *The Memoirs of Naim Bey* (London, 1920; 2nd repr., Newton Square, PA: Armenian Historical Research Association, 1965). The Armenian translation was published in 1921; see *Medz Vodjiru* [The Great Crime] (Beirut, 1921). After WWI, Aram Andonian resided in Aleppo and stayed at the Baron Hotel for a while. In his duration of staying at the Baron Hotel, he received numerous letters, personal/private papers, diaries, notes, and other documents from genocide survivors regarding their experiences during the deportation. Andonian collected and classified these materials province-by-province and district-by-district. Aintab was one of the districts. Andonian also produced one of first analytical publications on the Armenian massacres. In this article, I will substantially employ Andonian's file on the deportation and elimination of Armenians in Aintab. Andonian then became the first curator of the Nubarian Library of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) in Paris. Andonian's files are available in this library.

⁶¹BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 3.

nor, and Hilmi Bey, the Aintab military commander, notified the central government that there was no valid reason for deportation.⁶² As a response to Şükrü Bey and Hilmi Bey's opposition, Ali Cenani Bey, Fadıl Bey, and HacıMustafa Bey organized provocations with the assistance of their Marash counterparts.⁶³ They sent telegrams to the central government claiming that Aintab Armenians attacked mosques with weapons, killed Muslims, raped Muslim women, burned down Muslim houses, and plundered their prop-

⁶²Ibid., 3. Another Armenian witness Krikor Bogharian (1897-1975) from Aintab, who was deported to Aleppo then Hama and finally to Salamiyya alongside his entire family and also kept a diary about his deportation life from 29 July 1915 to 6 December 1916, notes that Şükrü and Hilmi Beys—although Unionists—were opposed to deporting Armenians altogether. Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 121-22. Sebuğ Aguni also emphasized that Aintab was another location whose district governor, Şükrü Bey, opposed the Turkish central government's plans of persecuting and especially deporting the local Armenian community. Sebuğ Aguni, *Milion mıHayeru Çarti Badmutyumi* [History of the Massacre of One Million Armenians] (Istanbul: H. Asaduryan Vortik, 1920), 310. Sebuğ Aguni was the former editor of the daily *Zhamanag*. He was the first to publish a global study of the massacres, basing his work on a large number of documents at the Patriarchate disposal.

⁶³In fact, it was clear that as Wolffskeel, chief of staff to Fahri Pasha, confirmed that certain circles in Marash sent a blatantly "made up telegram" to Istanbul in which they affirmed that the Armenians had "occupied a mosque" and "began to kill the Muslims." Kaiser, ed., *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel Von Reichenberg, Zeitun, Mousa Dagh, Ourfa: Letters on the Armenian Genocide*, Letter to his wife, 24 April 1915 (London: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 14.

erties.⁶⁴

Hilmi Bey requested Cemal Pasha to punish the provocateurs, whereas Unionists argued that Hilmi Bey was an Armenian sympathizer.⁶⁵ Celal Bey reported that this situation caused great panic among Aintab Armenians, who, in light of his investigations, feared *umumi kital* (general massacre).⁶⁶ Upon these developments, Cemal Pasha sent Fahri Pasha, the second in command in the Fourth Army, to Aintab in April 1915 so that he could investigate the situation in person. Police searches of the Armenian neighborhoods failed to provide confirmation of these accusations.⁶⁷ In fact, the American Consul of Aleppo, Jesse B. Jackson, noted that Fahri Pasha announced to Aintab's leading Muslims, in the presence of Christians, "If any Muslim frightened Christians [Armenians] or in any way treated them unkindly, he would himself hang him even if the offender were his own brother."⁶⁸ He also conversed in a very friendly way

⁶⁴BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 4.

⁶⁵Ibid., 4.

⁶⁶BOA.DH.ŞFR 52/48, Ministry of Interior to Aleppo Province, 20 April 1915; BOA.DH.ŞFR 468/54; BOA.DH.ŞFR.II.Şube, 10/89, 21 April 1915.

⁶⁷BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 4.

⁶⁸NA/RG 59, 867.00/761, Report from United States consul in Aleppo, J. B. Jackson, to Ambassador Morgenthau, 21 April 1915, in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, 12; "Miss Frearson's Experiences and Observations in

with the Christian leaders in Aintab.

After Fahri Pasha left Aintab, the situation worsened. Ali Bey, a ranking member of *Teşkilat-ıMahsusa* (Special Organization)⁶⁹ and *çetebaşı* [bandit leader] was summoned by Ali Cenani and arrived in Aintab in late April with a squadron of *çetes* [bandits], who organized plunders and committed the first murders outside the city.⁷⁰ On April 30, 1915, the first raids

Turkey,” *The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (hereafter ABCFM) 16.9.6.1, 1817-1919. Unit 5, Reel 670-7.1.20, Vol. 2, Part 1, 10.

⁶⁹The Special Organization emerged primarily out of the experience of the CUP in the Tripolitanian and Balkan wars. As an early type of unconventional warfare organization, the SO, which officially existed from 13 November 1913 to 30 October 1918. Its operations included the recruitment, training, and supervision of armed groups tasked with conducting asymmetric warfare to weaken enemy morale and fighting strength. The Special Organization also engaged in small-scale intelligence activity aimed both at strengthening solidarity among Muslims and revealing internal and external threats to Ottoman interests; see ATASE, First World War Collection (FWW); file (F): 1846, dossier (D): 79, index (I): 13/4 cited in Polat Safi, “History in the Trench: The Ottoman Special Organization – Teşkilat-ıMahsusa Literature,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48 (2012): 89-106. Units of this organization played in executing the deportations, boycotts, and massacres directed at Ottoman Christians during the WWI; see Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 38-39; Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011).

⁷⁰BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 5.

took place inside the city.⁷¹ To obtain the supposed weapons and ‘harmful’ writings, houses of prominent Armenians, including Dashnak and Hunchak members were raided, but nothing incriminating could be found.⁷² Nevertheless, many Armenians were arrested. Another wave of house searches was conducted on May 1, 1915, and ten men were arrested and brought before the court martial in Aleppo.⁷³ Additionally, thirty leading political figures from the Armenian community were sent to Aleppo for interrogation. Eighteen were sent back to Aintab following their questioning.⁷⁴ Ultimately, no incriminating evidence was found, and all were ultimately set free. House raids and individual arrests of intellectuals peaked with the collective arrests of two hundred

⁷¹Ibid., 5; Aguni, *Milion mıHayeru Çarti Badmutyuni*, 310.

⁷²Ibid., 5.

⁷³Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1020; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 121-22; BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 4; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun* [Diary of Miserable Days], ed. Toros Toramanian (Beirut: High Type Compugraph – Technopresse, 1991), 66, 69; Aguni, *Milion mıHayeru Çarti Badmutyuni*, 310; Barsumyan, *Badmutyun Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyun 1898-1922*, 49; “Hırant K. Sulahian 1871-1949,” *Nor Aintab*, 13 (1972): 11; Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 606.

⁷⁴Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 122; NA/RG59/867.4016/95, from Henry Morgenthau American Ambassador, Istanbul to the Secretary of State, 20 July 1915, in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, 98.

people on May 12, 1915.⁷⁵ Celal Bey helped to release most of those apprehended.⁷⁶ Some detainees were released on the same day, and others were freed after a few days.⁷⁷

Aintab Deportation

Aintab Armenians witnessed the deportations before their own exile. As house raids and police searches continued, they saw the first convoy of three hundred women and children from Zeitun pass through the city on May 3, 1915.⁷⁸ These deportees had suffered greatly on their way to Aintab. Some were injured, their wounds infected and their clothes in tatters.⁷⁹ Miss Fearson, a missionary, noted that Armenians managed to create a relief committee for the deportees. John Merrill from the college and Dr. Hamilton from the hospital, along with the hospital's nurses, also made great efforts to aid the exiles, many

⁷⁵Sarafian, *Badmutyün Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1020; Bogharian, *Orakrutyün Darakiri Gyankis*, 121.

⁷⁶BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 6.

⁷⁷Sarafian, *Badmutyün Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1020-21.

⁷⁸Ibid., 1019; Sarkis Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Ozeri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep* [Hot and Cold Days of My Life: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep] (Halep, 1983), 54; Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 606.

⁷⁹Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Ozeri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 54-55; Bogharian, *Orakrutyün Darakiri Gyankis*, 122; Stina Katchadourian, *Efronia An Armenian Love Story* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute Books, 2001), 126.

of whom—children included—were suffering from serious knife wounds.⁸⁰ More deportees followed. Jackson, the U.S. Consul of Aleppo, observed:

From Zeitun, 350 families, or about 2,000 persons, have been sent to Marash and from there to Aintab, and are expected to arrive in Aleppo about May 1915, to be sent to Meskené, while about 250 or more families are expected to follow before 20 May to report to the Governor of Aleppo.⁸¹

Convoys of deportees from Zeitun, Marash, Elbistan, Gürün, Sivas, and Furnuz filled Aintab until June and July 1915.⁸² From Aintab, they were sent south toward Syria.⁸³ All deportees were in a similar destitute condition. As Arousiag Magarian notes in her diary, “People were robbed, beaten, exposed to the elements, and much, much more. I cannot write about it.” En route, Armenian girls and boys had been kidnapped, women’s belongings and money had been

⁸⁰ Report by Miss Fearson, a missionary in Aintab, written in September 1915 after her departure from Turkey in Bryce and Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, 541-50; James L. Barton, *Turkish Atrocities: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Gomidas Institute, 1998), 107.

⁸¹ NA/RG59/867.4016/72, Jackson to Morgenthau, Aleppo, 12 May 1915, No 276, in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, 41.

⁸² Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 122; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 65; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 63.

⁸³ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1019-20.

plundered, and they had been raped publicly with the active complicity of gendarmeries and government officials.⁸⁴ All deportees were kept in the Kavaklık neighborhood, fifteen minutes from the city center, near a spring where they had to pay gendarmeries a quarter of *mecidiye* (five *piasters*—the smallest denomination of Turkish currency) per glass of water.⁸⁵ By bribing these gendarmeries, Aintab Armenians tried to supply themselves with food and water. Although Aintab Armenians bore witness to this distress, they did not consider the possibility that they could face a similar fate.⁸⁶ Gulesserian, an eyewitness, described this state of mind with this striking passage:

In spite of everything that was happening around us and in spite of all the facts standing right in front of our eyes, the number of those who buried their head in the sand like an ostrich was not small. These people

⁸⁴ BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 9; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 63; Karnig Panian, *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenia Genocide* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 39; *Germany, Turkey and Armenia, A selection of documentary evidence relating to the Armenian Atrocities from German and other sources* (London: J. J. Keliher and Co., Ltd. 1917), 71; NA/RG59/867.4016/80, from Henry Morgenthau American Ambassador, Istanbul to the Secretary of State, June 26, 1915, in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, 68-69.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 9; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 55-56.

⁸⁶ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1020; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 56.

convinced themselves that they were happy, and they were trying to deceive themselves into believing that a similar deportation was not possible for Aintab and that nothing bad would happen to them.⁸⁷

Previously, Armenians had relied upon the honesty and kindness of Celal Bey, Şükrü Bey, and Hilmi Bey, hoping to continue to be exempted from the deportations.⁸⁸ Finally, though, this period of self-deception passed when Cemal Bey, CUP's Aleppo General Secretary, arrived in late June, accompanied by a few propagandists. The Unionist cadre had apparently embraced the mission of convincing the local notables to repeat their requests for a deportation order. Thus, Cemal Bey succeeded in pressuring local CUP members and other Muslim leaders to send new slander letters to Istanbul.

On June 21, 1915, Walter Rössler, German consular of Aleppo, reported that Celal Bey would be removed from his post due to his refusal to deport Armenians.⁸⁹ Nine days later, in a reshuffle of governor-

⁸⁷Ibid., 1020.

⁸⁸BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 7.

⁸⁹AA-PA, Konsulat Aleppo, Paket 1, Vol. 1, J. No 1311, Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, 21 June 1915, telegram 9 cited in Kaiser, "Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915," 193; Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, 21 June 1915 J. No. 3790 AA-PA Konstantinopel 169 telegram 9; Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, 21 June 1915 J. No. 3799 AA-PA Konstantinopel 169 telegram 10 in Kaiser—in collab-

ships, Bekir Sami Bey became governor of Aleppo, while Celal Bey was appointed governor of Konya.⁹⁰ On July 5, 1915, Celal left Aleppo.⁹¹ On July 17, 1915, Şükrü Bey informed the Ministry of the Interior that no Armenian had *harice çıkarılmadı* [been deported] from Aintab.⁹² Dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Aintab, Talat Pasha replaced Şükrü Bey with Ahmed Bey on July 26, 1915.⁹³ Around the same time, military commander Hilmi Bey also resigned from his post.⁹⁴ On July 29, 1915, a ‘positive’ reply was received from

oration with Luther and Nancy Eskijian, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915-1917* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, Taderon Press, 2001), 15.

⁹⁰Kaiser, “Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915,” 193.

⁹¹AA-PA, Konsulat Aleppo, Paket 1, Vol 1, J. No 1437, Rössler to Embassy, Aleppo, 5 July 1915, telegram 33 cited in Kaiser, “Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915,” 193. On the other hand, Aram Andonian in his Aintab file emphasized, “Aintab Turks collaborating with Unionists in Aleppo succeeded in removing the honest, charitable, and reasonable governor of Aleppo from his post.” BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 8.

⁹²BOA.DH.ŞFR 480/53, 17 July 1915.

⁹³BOA.DH.ŞFR 54A/113, 26 July 1915. Şükrü Bey was appointed to district governorship of Çankırın 27 July 1915. BOA.İ.DH 1515/1333, 27 July 1915. His official appointment decree was promulgated in *Takvim-i Vekayi* on 21 August 1915. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, No. 2266, 1.

⁹⁴According to Aguni and Andonian, the mutasarrıf Şükrü Bey and military commander Hilmi Bey resigned so as not to have

the central government, and Aintab was added to the deportation list.⁹⁵ By the time Ahmed Bey reached Aintab on August 23, 1915, the deportations had already begun.

Once they received the news, the local Young Turks held an emergency meeting and prepared the list of Armenians who would be deported.⁹⁶ Rössler notified his superiors the next day that the order to deport Armenians from Aintab and Kilis “had just been issued.”⁹⁷ The American representative passed this news along to his ambassador a few days later, adding that the order also applied to Antakya, Alexandretta, and Kesab.⁹⁸

At the same time, on July 29, 1915, all of the prominent members of the Armenian community gathered in CUP Armenian deputy Hırand Sulahian’s house to discuss the deportation decision.⁹⁹ In this meeting,

to carry out the deportation order as a final blow to Aintab Armenians. Aguni, *Milion miHayeru Çarti Badmutyuni*, 310; BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 4.

⁹⁵ BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁷ Telegram from the German consul in Aleppo, Walter Rössler, to the embassy in Istanbul, 30 July 1915 in *Archives du génocide des Arméniens*, doc. 125, ed. Lepsius, 119-20 cited in Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 606-7.

⁹⁸ Letter from the Consul Jackson to Morgenthau, 3 August 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, 169.

⁹⁹ Barsumian, *Badmutyün Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyün 1898-1922*,

Dashnaksutiun was represented by Armenag Maksudian, Toros Merjenian, and Arshag Kalusdian; Dikran Sebouh Tchakmakdjian¹⁰⁰ represented Huncakian. Barsumian, a Dashnak supporter, took notes at this meeting:

Our suggestion was that we should defy the order and take up arms; but unfortunately our call was not heeded and in the end we were forced to remain silent. . . Towards the end, Avedis Kalemkarian¹⁰¹ said that weapons must be taken out of their hidden places

49; 204-6. Vahe N. Gulesserian, ed., *Huşamadyan Avedis Kalemkeryani* [The Memoir of Avedis Kalemkeyan] (Beirut: Dıbaran Der Sahagyan, 1965), 58. In his memoirs, Avedis Kalemkarian, who was one of the participants of this meeting, gave 28 July as the date of this meeting.

¹⁰⁰Dikran Sebouh Tchakmakdjian (1894-1964) was deported first to Hama and then Lebanon. In Lebanon, Dikran Tchakmakdjian painted Cemal Pasha's portrait and gave it him as a present. Thanks to this present, Cemal Pasha protected him. *Badmutyün Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. III, 933; Kévorkian *et al.*, ed. *Les Arméniens de Cilicie: Habitat, Mémoire et Identité* (Presses de l'université Saint-Joseph, 2012), 154; Sarafian, *A Briefer History of Aintab*, 299.

¹⁰¹Given *vesika* (certificate) by Cemal Pasha's order, Avedis Kalemkarian and his family were safely sent to Damascus. Cemal Pasha personally knew Avedis's father and protected him. On 1 December 1917, Avedis Kalemkarian was hired in a construction factory in Damascus by Cemal Pasha's order again. He obtained a 'military certificate' and worked this factory until the British occupation of Damascus. In his memoirs, Avedis himself gave credit to Cemal Pasha for his effort to protect his family from being sent to Der-Zor. Barsumian, *Badmutyün Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyün 1898-1922*, 49; *Huşamadyan Avedis Kalemkariani*, 58-63; p. 70.

and people must get ready to resist. The attendees of the meeting put pressure on him and he had to succumb to their decision.¹⁰²

On July 30, 1915, fifty Armenian families were ordered to leave Aintab during the next twenty-four hours,¹⁰³ and the deportation began on August 1, 1915.¹⁰⁴ The Armenians of Cilicia, in general, and Aintab, in particular, were deported to three places. The first group was sent to the Der Zor region in the Syrian

¹⁰²Barsumian, *Badmutyuyun Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyun 1898-1922*, 49-50; 204-6. Balabanian attended this meeting and he attested Barsumian's remarks, see Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 58; *Huşamadyan Avedis Kalemkeryani*, 58.

¹⁰³Sarafian, *Badmutyuyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1022; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 70; Katchadourian, *Efronia An Armenian Love Story*, 126; BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 7; *Huşamadyan Avedis Kalemkeryani*, 56; Barsumian, *Badmutyuyun Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyun 1898-1922*, 49; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 58.

¹⁰⁴Different dates are given in memoirs regarding the exact beginning of deportations of Aintab Armenians, see. BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 7; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 122; 126-29; *Badmakirk Nazaryan Kertasdani (1475-1988)* [The History of Nazarian Family (1475-1988)], ed. Elie H. Nazarian (Beirut, 1988), 184; Katchadourian, *Efronia: An Armenian Love Story*, 137; Kersam Aharonian, *Huşamadyan Medz Yeğerni* [Memoir of the Great Crime] (Beirut, 1965), 46; Barsumian, *Badmutyuyun Aintabi H. H. Taşnaksutyun 1898-1922*, 204; Aguni, *Milion MıHayeru Çarti Badmutyuyun*, 311; M. Arzumian, *Hayasdan, 1914-1917* [Armenian, 1914-1917] (Yerevan, 1969), 438.

desert; very few survived. The second group was sent to the region of Hama, Homs, and Salamiyya, located in the central part of the Syrian desert. Except for very young and old deportees, the majority survived thanks to local Arabs. The third group was sent to the region of Jebel Druz and the desert areas of Jordan, and most survived.¹⁰⁵

Deportation of Gregorian Armenians

The town crier announced the deportation order on the morning of July 31, 1915. At first, only Gregorian Armenians were deported. On August 1, 1915, fifty families (approximately four hundred Armenians)¹⁰⁶ departed with light belongings, locking their doors and leaving behind nearly all their assets.¹⁰⁷ The first convoy was not given any time to take their money

¹⁰⁵Yervant Babayan, ed., *Pages from my diary/Archpriest Der Nerses Babayan* (Los Angeles, 2000), vi; Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. III, 18.

¹⁰⁶Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 71. As opposed to Bogharian's and Tavukjian's accounts, Gulesserian gave the number of thirteen affluent and well-known families and other people from the Gregorian community who formed the first convoy of deportees. See Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1023. Additionally, according to Miss Frearson's accounts, the first convoy of Aintab Armenians were sent away on 30 or 31 July 1915. "Miss Frearson's Experiences and Observations in Turkey," *ABCFM* 16.9.6.1, 1817-1919. Unit 5 Reel 670-7.1.14, Vol. 2, Part 1, 4.

¹⁰⁷Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1023.

and valuable possessions. According to the instructions, each family was expected immediately to pack a few of their belongings, and they would be allowed to take food, bedding, jars, clothes and blankets with them.¹⁰⁸ On the same day, rumors started to spread: This exile was only for three or four months; the deported people would be sent to places like Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, and Homs; no one would be managing the convoys; and only individuals suspected of subversive political activities would be deported.¹⁰⁹

The first convoy, consisting primarily of notable and affluent families such as Jebejians, Demirdjians, Pirenians, Kabakians, Kurkchuians, and Leyelekians,¹¹⁰ along with members of the deportation relief committee,¹¹¹ left the same day for Aleppo, after which it continued on to Hama. Walking in a line, these deportees proceeded to Akçakoyunlu, the railroad station closest to Aintab, with their carts, hired camels, and other draught animals. Essentially, Akçakoyunlu was a transition camp for many Armenian deportees. According to the directions of *İskan-ıAşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyeti* (Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 924.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1023; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 122.

¹¹⁰ Like other above-mentioned families, the Leyelekians were a rich and prominent family of textile manufacturers. They lost everything during the genocide. Shusan Yeni-Komshian Teager, *The Krajians of Aintab*, (Belmont, MA, 2007), 51.

¹¹¹ Report by Miss Fearson, written on 11 April 1918 in Byrce and Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 543-44; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 136.

and Refugees, hereafter IAMM), they were initially transferred to Aleppo and then distributed to various districts and towns of Syria. At this station, they were housed in tents under close surveillance, only nine hours from the desert area to which they would be sent.¹¹² In charge of the convoy, Yasin Effendi accompanied them from Akçakoyunlu to Aleppo.¹¹³ He was responsible for attacks on deportees in Sazgın village and Akçakoyunlu station. After WWI, he escaped to Ankara, joined Kemalist-nationalist forces and became a deputy for Aintab.¹¹⁴ As this convoy was making its way from the western side of Aintab, *çetes*—comprised of four hundred men and led by Ali Bey, Yasin Bey and HacıFazlızâde Nuri Bey—set off from the east side, intending to assault them in the nearby Sazgın village, where deportees would spend the night. Fortunately, these *çetes* departed later than the first convoy and missed most deportees. However, they were able to catch Nazaret Manushagian, a

¹¹²Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1026.

¹¹³In his diary, Bogharian describes Yasin Effendi (Mehmet Yasin Sani Kutluğ, 1889-1973) as a man who seemed kind but sometimes treated deportees cruelly and punished them with the whip he carried around in his hand. Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 127.

¹¹⁴Yasin Kutluğ was also a member of the *kuvay-ımilliye* (nationalist forces) in Halfeti, a town of Urfa, in April 1920 and played an active role in the war between Aintab nationalist forces and French military units in 1920-1921. Yasin Kutluğ, "İstiklal Savaşı'ndan Hatıralar," *Gaziantep Halkevi Mecmuası*, 25 (1940): 12; *Başpınar Aylık Edebiyat ve Kültür Mecmuası*, 31 (1941): 7, 8, 13.

member of the municipal council who fell behind the convoy, whom they murdered.¹¹⁵

Two days after the first convoy left Aintab, another wave of house raids took place. On the grounds that Armenians had connections with people outside the Empire's borders, many houses and shops were turned upside-down; consequently, seven people were arrested and sent to prisons in Birecik and Aleppo.¹¹⁶

On August 7, 1915, the second convoy of fifty Armenian families was deported.¹¹⁷ On the same day, çetes, this time formed by peasants from the villages of Tılbaşar, Mezra, Kinisli, Kantara, Ekiz Kapı, Bahne Hameyli, and Sazgın carried out attacks on deportees. These çetes were led by Emin Effendi, the manager of Ziraat Bankası.¹¹⁸ The second convoy was systematically pillaged by çetes less than a day's march

¹¹⁵BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 8; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 71.

¹¹⁶Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1023.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 1023. Meanwhile, Krikor Bogharian gives the date of 4 August 1915 as the departure of the second convoy of Armenian deportees from Aintab. Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123. Also, Bogharian mentions that the second convoy was composed of approximately eighty Armenian families. Ibid., 123. In addition to that, according to Tavukjian's diary, the second convoy was comprised of fifty-five families. Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 72.

¹¹⁸BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 8; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123.

from Aintab.¹¹⁹ Assigned to protect the deportees, Kurd HacıNuri collaborated with these çetes and beat Nazar Nazarian, a wealthy Armenian and permanent member of the city council, to death.¹²⁰ As deportees from this second group were able to take their valuable belongings with them, the attackers looted a huge amount of money and jewelry. On August 8, 1915, the second convoy reached Akçakoyunlu, setting up tents to wait for the train.

Following the departure of the first and second convoys, discrimination against the remaining Armenians prevailed in Aintab. An Armenian jeweler disappeared, and her body was found in a well a few days later.¹²¹ No official investigation was conducted. Two Armenians from Muş and an Armenian from Aintab were killed at the mill of Deputy Ali Cenani. The politically motivated public prosecutor selected Aintab

¹¹⁹Ibid., 8; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 72; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 57; NA/RG59/867.4016/148, Letter from the Consul Jackson to Morgenthau, 19 August 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, 207. Another report to Morgenthau on 3 August 1915, Jackson notes “Now all Armenians have been ordered deported from the cities of Aintab, Mardin, Kilis, Antioch, Alexandretta, Kesab, and all the smaller towns in Aleppo province, estimated at 60,000 persons.” NA/RG59/867.4016/126, Letter from the Consul Jackson to Morgenthau, 3 August 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, 169.

¹²⁰Ibid., 8; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 72.

¹²¹Ibid., 8.

Armenians as scapegoats and found them guilty of the crime.¹²² Women were raped and then taken to harems in the city. The mukhtar of Aintab's Tılfar vilage murdered six Armenian children by throwing them off a mountain.¹²³ Çetes operated on a regular basis between Aintab and Nizip, robbing and murdering all deportees who crossed their path.

Meanwhile, the third convoy departed on August 8, 1915. This convoy was composed of one hundred families from the Kayacık and Akyol neighborhoods.¹²⁴ Similar to the deportees from previous convoys, these people headed out with carts, camels, and other draught animals early in the morning. After spending the night at Sazgın village, they were led to Akçakoyunlu.¹²⁵ The fourth convoy was led from Aintab on August 11, 1915.¹²⁶ This convoy consisted of more than one hundred families, many of them well-off, from the Kayacık, İbn-i Eyüp, and Kastel Başıneighborhoods.¹²⁷ Priest Nerses Tavukjian, Prof. Armenak Chamichian,

¹²² Ibid., 9.

¹²³ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁴ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1025; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 72. Kayacık and Akyol were two neighborhoods where the majority of the Armenian population resided. Even today, its original features have been preserved, including its architectural fabric as well as Armenian schools and churches. Said schools and churches are now used for other purposes or have become private property.

¹²⁵ Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 124.

¹²⁷ These were neighborhoods where most of the Aintab Armenians resided.

Gregorians, and dozens of teachers were also included in this convoy.¹²⁸ The convoy reached Akçakoyunlu in two days. The fifth convoy set off on August 13, 1915.¹²⁹ This was a convoy of over 120 families (approximately 1,200 people) from Eblahan and Akyol.¹³⁰ When the fifth convoy arrived in Akçakoyunlu, Bogharian, one of the deportees in this convoy, described the scene he witnessed in his diary:

The fourth convoy and deportees from other regions were gathered here, waiting for the train. Therefore, our convoy had to wait for these people to be sent away first. We stayed in tents but the heat was scorching; dust and straw were everywhere. We had food to

¹²⁸Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 123. Nerses Tavukjian was born in 1873 at Aintab and received his early education at the National Armenian Schools of Aintab. He was the most prominent clergyman in Aintab. He was deported to Hama in 1915. Like Bogharian, he also noted his entire daily experiences in his diary throughout the deportation. His diary, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, was published. He died in Aleppo in 1934. On the other hand, Armenag Chamichian was a graduate of Vartanian high school. He earned degrees in history and philosophy at Harvard in 1912. Chamichian became the president of Cilicia College on 27 August 1912. He passed away in Hama from typhus on 25 December 1915. Sarafian, *A Briefer History of Aintab*, 39, 275; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 153; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 105.

Ibid., 124.

¹²⁹Ibid., 124.

¹³⁰As in Eblahan, Armenians and Muslims resided together in Akyol. However, the Armenian population was higher in number within this neighborhood.

eat but our water was limited. . . We were waiting for the train. But the train never returned from the East with empty wagons.¹³¹

On August 23, 1915, the sixth convoy reached Akçakoyunlu.¹³² There were around 120 Armenian families from Kayacık, the neighborhood of Surp Asvadzadzin (St. Mary) Church, Eblahan, İbn-i Eyüp, and Kastelbaşı. Unlike other convoys, those who came from Aintab included men, women, and children over ten years old.¹³³ From Akçakoyunlu, the first two groups were sent to Damascus. The rest were held in a transit camp surrounded by barbed wire while waiting to be loaded into stock cars for transport to Aleppo. These deportees were later sent by foot to the region of Der Zor.¹³⁴ Surprisingly, Aleppo Governor Bekir Sami Bey—in a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior—claimed that deportees from Aintab, Kilis, and the province's border regions were sent only to Hama, partly by train and partly overland.¹³⁵ As of August, to prevent them from fleeing, all Armenians were prohibited from leaving Aintab unless a deportation

¹³¹Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 124-25.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 128.

¹³³NA/RG59/867.4016/148, Letter from the Consul Jackson to Morgenthau, 19 August 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, 207.

¹³⁴Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1026; BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab," 9.

¹³⁵BOA.DH.ŞFR 486/7, 29 August 1915.

order was issued for them.¹³⁶

Deportation of Catholic and Protestant Armenians

On August 3, 1915, Talat Pasha ordered that Protestants and Catholics be exempt from deportations. On August 11, 1915, he annulled the exemption for Armenian Catholics in the provinces of Adana and Aleppo and ordered their deportation.¹³⁷ However, with a general and secret regulation dated August 19, 1915, Catholics and Protestants were again exempted from deportation (both the initial exemption order of August 3, 1915, and this subsequent reinstatement resulted from German pressure and public opinion. Despite that, these groups were also deported.¹³⁸ This regulation also stated that they would be deported if they behaved suspiciously or if they lived in areas with very high concentrations of Armenians.¹³⁹ As of

¹³⁶FO 371/4241, From Vali of Aleppo to mutasarrıf of Aintab dated 21/08/1915, No: 4410, Code No: 25.

¹³⁷Kaiser, "Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915," 200.

¹³⁸Akçam noted that orders to the provinces that "they [Catholic and Protestant Armenians] not be touched were produced for German consumption and quickly rescinded by follow-up cables." *Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity*, 375.

¹³⁹BOA.DH.ŞFR 55-A/23, EUM to Adana, 2 September 1915. See also BOA.DH.EUM.V.Şb. 15/19, 14 July 1915 and BOA/DH.ŞFR 55/92 coded telegram from EUM to the Provinces of Hüdavendigâr (Bursa), Ankara, Konya, İzmit, Adana, Marash, Urfa, Aleppo, (Der) Zor, Sivas, Kütahya, Karesi (Balıkesir),

August 24, 1915, the population of Protestant Armenians in Aintab was approximately 5,100¹⁴⁰ and that of Catholic Armenians around 300.¹⁴¹ The new district governor, Ahmed Bey, launched the deportation process of Catholic and Protestant Armenians immediately after his arrival on August 29, 1915. Ahmed Bey was “a harsh man who spread terror all around” and held “radical opinions towards Armenians.”¹⁴² It was during his term that the route of the deportation was changed from Aleppo–Hama–Hauran to that of Meskené–Der Zor.¹⁴³

According to Talat Pasha, Aintab was still the center of activity for Armenians, referring to it as ‘Little Armenia’ and considering it to present a serious threat.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the deportation of Catholic and Protestant Armenians was also deemed necessary.¹⁴⁵ Only

Niğde, Ma'muretül-aziz, Diyarbekir, Karahisar-ıSahib (Afyon Karahisar), Erzurum, and Kayseri, 29 August 1915. This telegram reports “Protestant and Catholic Armenians are not to be deported.”

¹⁴⁰BOA.DH.ŞFR 485/48 and BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube 73/18, 11, Aleppo Governor Bekir Sami Bey to Ministry of Interior, 24 August 1915.

¹⁴¹Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1026.

¹⁴²Katchadourian, *Efronia: An Armenian Love Story*, 131; BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintab,” 9.

¹⁴³Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 125; BNu/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintabi,” 5.

¹⁴⁴BOA.DH.ŞFR 488/33, Aleppo Governor Bekir Sami Bey to Ministry of Interior, 8 September 1915.

¹⁴⁵BOA.DH.ŞFR 55-A/174, 9 September 1915.

after the Gregorian Armenians were expelled did the authorities issue the order, on September 19, 1915, to deport a few hundred Catholics of Aintab, which constituted a significant percentage of the small community of 350–370.¹⁴⁶ On the same day, another announcement was made:

i) No Armenians shall stay in Aintab; ii) Among Protestants, only the notified shall leave, i.e. those with a Protestant husband or an Armenian wife shall stay. Those with an Armenian husband or a Protestant wife shall leave; iii) *Vesika* [Certificate] holders who are exempt from deportation must have them approved; iv) Those issued with a deportation order but still remaining in Aintab shall be deported; v) The government shall only help the poor.¹⁴⁷

The implicit addressee of this announcement was the Catholic Armenian community and its leader, Der Vartan Vartabed Baghchedjian. In late September 1915, Father Vartan and his community were taken to Akçakoyunlu. At the station, Father Vartan was visited by a delegation of Armenian Catholics from Aleppo. The delegation hoped to take him to Aleppo, but he refused to leave with them, saying, “I set off with my congregation and I will accompany them to death.”¹⁴⁸ A report sent by American Consular Jack-

¹⁴⁶Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1026.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 1026.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 1026-27; A. Gesar, *Aintabi Koyamardı*, 26-29; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 125; Aguni, *Milion mıHayeru Çarti*

son in Aleppo to Henry Morgenthau, American Ambassador in Istanbul, on September 29, 1915, noted that “[i]n Aintab, before the deportation, there were seventy-five Catholic families; after the deportation there were none! Twenty of them were located in Aleppo; fifty-five in Bab. The situation of Catholic Armenians in Aleppo was fair, whereas in Bab, it was miserable.”¹⁴⁹ Eventually, all Catholic Aintab Armenians, including Father Vartan, were sent to Der Zor.

By late September, three-quarters of the Armenian population had been deported.¹⁵⁰ After the official announcement of Protestants’ exemption from deportation,¹⁵¹ the majority of the Protestant community carried on with their normal lives. They even held a thanksgiving service, at which a Protestant Armenian leader stated:

Now that we are permitted to stay in our city we must be very careful to give no occasion of complaint to the Government. If they ask for our sons as sol-

Badmutyuni, 311.

¹⁴⁹NA/RG59/867.4016/219, 29 September 1915 in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, 314.

¹⁵⁰Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1027.

¹⁵¹On 15 August 1915, the Ministry of Interior requested data on the number of deported and remaining Armenian Protestants. *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)* (Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları: Ankara, 1995), 75-76; BOA.DH.ŞFR 55/20, EUM to Erzurum, Adana, Angora, Bitlis, Aleppo, Bursa, Diyarbekir, Sivas, Trabzon, Konya, Harput, Van provinces, Urfa, İzmit, Canik, Karesi, Afyon, Marash, Niğde, Eskişehir districts, 15 August 1915.

diers, we must give them up without murmuring; if for money, or goods, or clothing for the soldiers, let us give as if we appreciated the privilege of staying in our homes. Let us show them that we are loyal to the country. Let no one take into his home a child or any one else who has been told to go, whether they be of those passing through the city as refugees or from among our own friends and relatives in the town. Let us show to the Government that will do all that is asked of us.¹⁵²

However, in early October, Ahmed Bey and his henchmen organized raids on Protestant houses and made numerous arrests.¹⁵³ This entire process gradually weakened Protestant Armenians' belief that they would not be deported. Around mid-October, Ahmed Bey mobilized the remaining Armenian men between the ages of sixteen and twenty and assigned them to a labor battalion that was put to work on the *Bagdadbahn* (Baghdad railway) construction site in Rajo.¹⁵⁴ In

¹⁵²“Miss Frearson’s Experiences and Observations in Turkey,” ABCFM 16.9.6.1, 1817-1919, Unit 5, Reel 670-7.1.17, Vol. 2, Part 1, 7.

¹⁵³Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1028; Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 125. Prof. Lutfi Levonian, Babikian Badveli Kharalambos, Mihran Halladjian, Dokmeci Nerses (a famous Hunchak), the Protestant priest of Kayacık Church, Hovhannes Hasırdjian, Manase Andonian, Abraham Hoca Levonian and Sarkis Balabanian were among the Protestants who were arrested. Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Oreri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 66.

¹⁵⁴Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1028.

fact, Ahmed Bey was so adamant about the removal of all Armenians from Aintab that he did not hesitate to confront the local elites who protected certain Armenians for their own benefit. For example, on October 19, 1915, he discovered that Ali Cenani Bey was hiding Bedros Ashjian¹⁵⁵ and Sarkis Kradjian,¹⁵⁶ two

¹⁵⁵Bedros Ashjian was a brilliant businessman, the owner of vast acreage of pistachio groves who amassed enormous wealth. He greatly supported the church, schools, and charities. On 21 November 1915, he was settled in Aleppo. This was arranged through the medium of Aintab Deputy Artin Boshgezenian. Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 148. Bedros Ashjian died in Alexandria, Egypt and lost all his wealth as a result of the Armenian genocide. Sarafian, *A Briefer History of Aintab*, 289. Artin Boshgezenian also intervened on behalf of many Aintab natives who were settled in Salamiyya, and his interventions bore fruit. Sarkis Krajian, Hırand Sulahian, the Basmajian, Ghazarian, and Ashjian families and Hagop Karamanugian were given the right to settle in Aleppo through Artin Boshgezenian's personal efforts. *Archives of the Haigazian University Library*, "Krikor Bogharian's Archives," "The Natives of Ayntab in Syria" (unpublished manuscript) by Krikor Bogharian, 3. Hagop Karamanugian (1863-1939), in *Ayntabiana*, Vol. 2 in *Mahardzan: Mahakrutyunner, Tampanaganner yev Gensakragan Noter* [Funeral Monument: Necrologies, Funeral Orations and Biographical Notes] (Beirut: Atlas, 1974), 422; Vahé Tachjian, "Gender, nationalism, exclusion: the reintegration process of female survivors of the Armenian genocide," *Nations and Nationalism*, 15 (2009): 61.

¹⁵⁶Sarkis Effendi Krajian (1872-1929) was a leading citizen of Aintab who greatly contributed to charity and public service. He was a highly educated, intelligent, and successful business man. He was also very active in Armenian civic affairs and a member of both the Municipal and National Provincial Councils. He was one of the founders of the Athenagan School

prominent Protestant Armenians, in his farm and therefore reported Ali Cenani to İsmail Canbolat Bey, the Director of General Security.¹⁵⁷ This case also reflects that slight conflicts between Ottoman officials and the local elites could arise.

On November 20, 1915, Protestant pastors were arrested, and house raids increased.¹⁵⁸ All coffeehouses and other places where people congregated were shuttered and curfew was imposed.¹⁵⁹ Circumstances deteriorated further when Colonel Galib Bey, comman-

in Aintab, serving on its board for many years. As a member of the Judicial Court, he was fairly active. In 1904, Sarkis Efendi was married to Zarman Nazaretian, the third daughter of Garabed Nazaretian, a member of one of the most notable and wealthy families in Aintab. He had two villages, Küçük and Büyük Kızılhisar, and also owned extensive pistachio groves. His other pursuit, Krajian and Co. Manufacturers of Embroidered Handkerchiefs, founded in 1896, was a philanthropic venture to help destitute women who were victims of the 1895 massacre. Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. II, 763; Teager, *The Krajians of Aintab*, 21, 55, 57.

¹⁵⁷BOA.DH.EUM.KLH 5/48, 19 October 1915; BOA.DH.EUM.KLH 5/48, 21 October 1915. The same Ali Cenani Bey seized the entire supply of fat in Aintab in November 1915. This situation led to a big problem in procuring fat for the military unit in the district. Thereupon, the Aintab district governor bought a certain amount of fat from Ali Cenani to meet the needs of the military and informed the general-governor of Aleppo Province. The general-governor also informed the Ministry of Interior about this situation. BOA.DH.İ.UM 16-63/40-3, 15 November 1915.

¹⁵⁸*Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 32.

¹⁵⁹Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1030.

der of a military reserve battalion from Urfa, arrived in Aintab on November 30, 1915.¹⁶⁰ After meeting with Ahmed Bey, he gathered Armenians around the Armenian cemetery and kept them there.¹⁶¹ Central Turkey College was emptied on December 2, 1915.¹⁶² Positioning armed troops and cannons to elevated vantages in Aintab, he ordered his soldiers to decimate the Armenian neighborhoods that were still inhabited.¹⁶³ Galib Bey held certain Aintab Armenians responsible for the October Armenian rebellions in Urfa and aimed to use this as a pretext for the deportation of Protestant Armenians. However, *Askerlik Şubesi Reisi* (Draft Office President) Yusuf Effendi, military commander Osman Bey, and Mayor Sheik Mustafa Effendi disagreed with Galib Bey's plan.¹⁶⁴

Despite this disagreement, on December 15, 1915, the officers registered the names of Armenian Protestants who would be deported.¹⁶⁵ On December 19, 1915, the first convoy was sent via Akçakoyunlu to Der Zor.¹⁶⁶ It was followed by the second, third, and

¹⁶⁰ *Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 32

¹⁶¹ Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Ozeri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 73.

¹⁶² *Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 32.

¹⁶³ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1033; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Ozeri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 73.

¹⁶⁴ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1033.

¹⁶⁵ *Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 34.

¹⁶⁶ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 1035; Balabanian, *Gyankis Dak u Bağ Ozeri: Ayntab, Kesap, Halep*, 73. The report by Elvesta T. Leslie, an assistant to the American vice-consul in Urfa (report by 11 April 1918) in Barton, *Turkish Atrocities*:

fourth convoys until December 23, 1915.¹⁶⁷ Aintab's Protestants had ample time to learn what deportation to Der Zor meant and did not hesitate to mobilize all their means to be deported through the Homs–Hama–Damascus route instead.¹⁶⁸ On December 24, 1915, it was announced that deportations would be suspended until January 1, 1916.¹⁶⁹ They recommenced on January 4, 1915, when the fifth convoy was sent away.¹⁷⁰ Of six hundred Protestant families in Aintab, two hundred were deported,¹⁷¹ the majority of whom were annihilated in Der Zor.¹⁷² In total, the number of Aintab Armenians who had been exiled exceeded 20,000 by January 1916.¹⁷³

By February 1916, the deportation of Armenians from Aintab—especially Protestants—was still underway. On February 7, 1916, in his ciphered tele-

Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917, 107, gives 14 December as the first convoy's departure date.

¹⁶⁷ *Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 35.

¹⁶⁸ Report by Miss Fearson, written on 11 April 1918 in Byrce and Toynebee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 546-49.

¹⁶⁹ *Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 35.

¹⁷⁰ Yervant Kuchukian, *Haryur Jam Ayntabi: Huşer yev Dibaivorutyunner* [100 hours in Aintab: Memories and Impressions] (Beirut, 1958), 21.

¹⁷¹ Sarafian, *Badmutyun Aintabi Hayots*, Vol. I, 552. Sarafian stated that out of 5,500 Protestants in Aintab, 2,450 survived.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 548.

¹⁷³ BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube 73/73, Governor-General of Aleppo Mustafa Abdülhalik Bey's to the Ministry of Interior, 10 January 1916.

gram, Ali Suad Bey, the district governor of Der Zor, informed the Ministry of Interior that 2,500 Armenians from Aintab and İzmit had arrived in Der Zor.¹⁷⁴ On February 8, 1916, he relayed that 1,440 Armenians from Aintab, Tekfurdağı, Karahisar, and Akşehir had arrived.¹⁷⁵ On February 26, 1916, Ahmed Bey ordered the registration of fifty more families for deportation, who then departed two days later.¹⁷⁶ On February 29, 2016, twenty-five more households were deported. On March 3, 1916, a population census was taken, after which it was announced that the Armenian population was still too high, and thus more Armenians would be deported.¹⁷⁷ On March 16, 1916, two more families were deported.

Father Nerses Tavukjian and his family—his wife Anitsa, their two sons, Nerses (11) and Kevork (3), and their three daughters, Mariam, Tshkhoyn (known as Dudu), and Shoghagat—were deported from Aintab alongside the third convoy on August 8, 1916. This convoy included more than one hundred wealthy families together with all teachers.¹⁷⁸ In his diary, Tavukjian notes that they arrived at Akçakoyun railroad station

¹⁷⁴BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube. 69/6, 7 February 1916; *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)*, 122.

¹⁷⁵BOA.DH.ŞFR 508/36, 6 February 1916; BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube. 69/7, 8 February 1916; *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)*, 123.

¹⁷⁶*Hay Aintab*, 7 (1966): 37.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷⁸Father Nerses Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, p. 72.

on August 12, 1916; left Aleppo on August 13, 1916, via train; and arrived in Hama on the same date.¹⁷⁹ Father Nerses and his large family took up residence in a khan on their very first day in Hama. Shortly thereafter, they rented a house. When they arrived, there were already some 12,000 Armenian deportees from Kığı, Aintab, Marash, Gürün, Fındıcak, Kilis, Kesab, Hajin, Kebusiye and Musa Dağıarea in the town and its environs in Hama.¹⁸⁰ Some eighty to one hundred of these families had already found shelter in houses in the town; all the others were living in tents pitched on the hill.¹⁸¹ Since Father Nerses was a priest, he was better acquainted with the deportees' condition than others. In the line of his duties, he was in almost daily contact with them, especially with the most wretched and helpless among them. Analyses and descriptions of the exiles abound in the pages of his diary. In Father Nerses's view, the Armenians in the worst state were those who had arrived in Hama from localities in the more remote provinces, such as Kayseri, Tokat, Amasya, Sivas, Samsun, Kığı, Gürün and Ehneş in relation to Aintab, Marash and Kilis.¹⁸²

Adult males were rarely found in these groups. The men had been exterminated on the deportation routes. The others—in particular, women and chil-

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 74.

dren —had been pillaged, and many had lost everything they had. When they finally set foot in Hama, these people were exhausted and demoralized.¹⁸³ It was in their ranks that hunger and disease swept away dozens of lives every day.¹⁸⁴ On August 26, 1915, Tavukjian states that four thousand Armenian deportees, strictly comprising women from Findıcak and Mardin were brought to Hama under horrible conditions.¹⁸⁵ People were following each other like “ants and it was clear that in the eyes of officers/ security officials these people were worth less than domesticated animals.”¹⁸⁶ What shocked and, at the same time, moved Tavukjian was the indifference of these miserable deportees to what happened to the bodies of their own relatives. Deaths due to famine and disease had already begun to occur at a merciless pace among them, and they had become feeble, powerless creatures, so that they no longer had the ability or the will to bury their dead.

In the same way, in her diary, Arousiag Magarian also mentioned even worse conditions for the Armenians: “The widespread hunger and illness increased. The sick were lying alongside the walls, and the homeless were dying in the streets. The orphans were forced to march across the bridge. This all took

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

place during winter, a very cold winter.”

Exempted Groups

To provide minimal services and meet the army’s needs, the authorities decided to exempt three main categories of Aintab Armenians from deportation.¹⁸⁷ The first, composed of 370 people, was made up of craftsmen employed in a factory that was responsible for furnishing the army with clothing, shoes, and ironware. The second consisted of sixty-five to seventy pharmacists,¹⁸⁸ dentists, jewelers, goldsmiths, tinsmiths, kettle-makers, veterinarians, tailors, masons, painters, saddlers, and bakers, accompanied by their families. As Muslims lacked these skills, these artisans were considered valuable assets.¹⁸⁹

In the third category were the families of soldiers, officers, and medical officers who had been drafted into the Ottoman Army.¹⁹⁰ The number of families

¹⁸⁷Gulesserian, “Dasnmeg Egheragan Dariner Ah’nt’abi mēch, 1908-1919,” pp. 1036-37.

¹⁸⁸Pharmacists in Aintab were nearly all Armenians: Manuk Kendirjian, *Eczacı* (Pharmacist) Nerses, EczacıPuzant, Hagop Bezjian, Topal Asadour, EczacıSamuel, EczacıAnnikian, EczacıDikran, EczacıSabis; see Göğüş, *İlk İnsanlardan Bugüne Çeşitli Yönleriyle Gaziantep*, p. 301.

¹⁸⁹Gulesserian, “Dasnmeg Egheragan Dariner Aynt’abi mēch, 1908-1919,” p. 1038; Bogharian, *Orakro’wt’iwn Darakir Geanqis*, p. 125; Nazarian, *Eghernēn Verabrogh H’o’wsher*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁰*OsmanlıBelgelerinde Ermenilerin Sevk ve İskanı*, p. 215; BOA.DH.ŞFR 55/18, the Ministry of Interior to Erzurum,

falling under this category was somewhere in between thirty to thirty-five.¹⁹¹ From the large Armenian pop-

Adana, Angora, Bitlis, Aleppo, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Sivas, Trabzon, Konya, and Van provinces, and Urfa, İzmit, Karesi, Afyon, Kayseri, Marash, Niğde, and Eskisehir districts, 15 August 1915; Bogharian, *Orakro'wt'iwn Darakir Geanqis*, p. 125. There were Armenian military physicians from Aintab who served in the Ottoman Army—thereby, their families were exempted from deportation—such as Hovsep Hahdessian, Vartan Piranian, Albert Apelian, Aram Der Boghossian, Hovsep Yenikomshouian, Movses Kupelian, Avedis Nakashian, Avedis Jebejian, Yervant H. Khrlopian, and Movses Babigian; see *ABCFM* 16.9.6.1, 1817-1919, Unit 5, Vol. 2, Part 1, Reel 667, No 288. Avedis Jebejian (1876-1952), one of those military physicians, kept a diary regarding his experiences within the army. After serving in Gallipoli, he was sent to eastern Anatolia to continue his service. His family was first deported to Aleppo and then brought back to Aintab, as Jebejian was serving as a military physician for the Ottoman Army. In his diary, he also described the destitute conditions of evacuated Armenian houses in the eastern vilayets. For his diary between 1914 and 1918, see Avedis Jebejian, *Osmanean Gal'seragan Panagi Sbah': Pzhishg Awedis Je'be'jeani Orakiry 1914-1918* (An Officer in the Army of the Ottoman Empire: Doctor Avedis Jebejian's Diary 1914-1918) (Beirut, 1986) and also for his biography; see *Badmo'wt'iwn Ah'nt'abi Hah'oc* Vol. III, p. 796. For a comprehensive biography of Avedis Nakashian; see “Doktor Avedis Nakashian,” *Hah Ah'nt'ab* 10 (3-4): 1969, pp. 8-12.

¹⁹¹Gulesserian, “Dasnmeg Egheragan Dariner Ah'nt'abi mëch, 1908-1919,” p. 1039. Although there were telegrams sent by the Ministry of Interior to provinces and provincial districts regarding the deportation-exempt status of family members of ranked Armenian soldiers who officially served in the Ottoman army, in reality, this was not put into practice. Families of Armenian soldiers—some ranked as high as captain—who served in the Ottoman Army on various fronts, were also deported. One such example is Captain Movses Babikian, a

ulation in Aintab, only around two thousand Armenians were permitted to remain.¹⁹² Among them, thirty families converted to Islam and thereby managed to stay.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, those Armenian converts were regarded with suspicion as late as 1918.¹⁹⁴

Main Perpetrators

It is important to note that the extermination of Aintab Armenians was carried out with the active participation and strong support of both Muslim local notables and provincial elites. They helped to create the 'necessary' socio-political atmosphere to convince central authorities and facilitate the deportation of Armenians. The prospect of obtaining Armenian riches was one of the key factors that prompted

native of Aintab, who was on duty in Dardanelle as the Operator of the 44th Mobile Hospital of the 24th Division. His whole family was deported to Der Zor; see BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube 35/34, 27 October 1916; 5 November 1916; 30 November 1916; 12 December 1916; 14 January 1917 and 14 February 1917. Another example is Captain Hagop Efendi, son of Ohan, who commanded the 63rd Regiment of the 2nd Company of Kastamonu Gendarmerie Regiment. His aunt and sisters were expelled to Hama; see BOA.DH.EUM.II.Şube 49/2, 12 February 1918.

¹⁹²Bogharian, *Orakro'wt'iwn Darakir Geanqis*, p. 125.

¹⁹³Aguni, *Milion my Hah'ero'w Ch'arti Badmo'wt'iwny*, p. 311.

¹⁹⁴Well into 1918 Talat Pasha maintained his grip on converted Armenians and Syrians by having their names, manners of conversion, and lives after conversion registered. BOA.DH.ŞFR 86/45, 3 April 1918; DH.ŞFR 87/259, 23 May 1918.

them to take part in this genocidal process. These local actors enriched themselves vastly through the acquisition of Armenians' properties, allowing them to enter a new wealthy social stratum.

Among those who helped orchestrate the deportations, certain names come into prominence. The deportations were supervised by a *Sevkiyat Komisyonu* (Deportation Committee) presided by Ahmed Bey,¹⁹⁵ a district governor, and included Bilal Hilmi, a judge; HacıFazlızâde Nuri Bey and Ali Bey, leaders of the squadrons of çetes; Mollaşeyhzâde Arif, the mufti; Sheikh Ubedyet; and Haciağazâde Ahmed, a local notable.¹⁹⁶ Alongside members of the *Sevkiyat Komisyonu*, other local state officials who bore responsibility for the deportations, slaughters, and plunder

¹⁹⁵Appointed to the post of Director-General of Police at Istanbul, Ahmed Bey left Aintab on 23 March 1915. Talat Pasha promoted him due to his 'success' in deporting Aintab Armenians. BOA.DH.ŞFR 520/18, 17 May 1916; According to the memoirs of Naim Bey, Ahmed Bey became the Chief of Police of Istanbul on 14 May 1916; see FO 371/6500, "Ahmet Bey," Malta No. 2724, Interned 02/06/1919, Native of Bursa, Appointments; "British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals" in *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals*, 110. Actually, before being appointed to Istanbul, Ahmed Bey was recommended to Cemal Pasha by Talat for the position of Assistant Governor of Syria province. BOA.DH.ŞFR 62/190 and 62/194, 1 April 1916.

¹⁹⁶BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, "The Deportation of Armenians in Aintabi," 11-17. Aram Andonian provided the full list of those who played a primary role in the deportation and destruction of Aintab Armenians as well as enabling the seizure of their movable and immovable properties.

were Mustafa Effendi, president of the municipality; Besim Bey, head of local treasury; Bilal Hilmi Bey, a judge; Kâzım Efendi, an official in the Census Office; Eyup Sabri Bey, officer in the *Tapu İdaresi* (Register of Deeds Office); HacıYusuf, a secretary in the Department of Finance; Kemal Bey, a commander of gendarmerie; Bulaşıkzâde Müftü HacıArif, general secretary of the CUP club; Bülbül Hoca Efendi, the former mufti; Mehmed Efendi, the sheikh of the bazaar; Habibzâde Mustafa, an *ulema* (Muslim scholar); Batamzâde Mehmed, an *ulema*; Fahreddin Hoca, the first secretary of the court; Major Bekir Bey, commander of the regiment of Kızılhisar; Kâsım Bey, a member of the general staff; HakkıBey (Kelloş Hakkı), regimental secretary; Hamid Bey, a municipal physician; Kerim Bey, a judge; Kâsım Bey, a magistrate; Emin Effendi, director of the Agricultural Bank; Izrapzâde Vahid, a secretary of the *Evkaf* [a religious charitable institution]; Mahmud Effendi, the municipal treasurer; Şahin Hafız Effendi, director of a Turkish orphanage; Talipzâde Arif, head of the district governor's cabinet; Fevzi Effendi, Körükçü Hafizzâde Mustafa, and HacıSabitzâde Ahmed, police lieutenants; Muşluzâde Mehmed, a sergeant in the gendarmerie; Necip Effendi, BazarbaşıMehmed, and Emin Effendi, officials in the Tax Department; NaçacıAli, an official in the Correspondence Office; Abdallal Agha, a court official; HacıHalil Effendi, a commander of the gendarmerie; HacıEfendi Oğlu, prison warden; Ömer

Şevki, a lawyer; Ahmed Effendi, an imam from the Kozanlı township of Kozanlı; Sheikh Mustafa Baba, an imam from the Alaybey township; Sheikh Mustafa Babaoğlu, a çete leader; Hafız Ahmed Effendi, mukhtar of Alaybey; Ali Cenani Bey, a parliamentary deputy; Rıza Bey, Ali Cenani's brother and influential member of the CUP club; Dayızâde Sadıkoğlu Hasan Sadık, a Unionist leader; and Taşcizâde Abdullah, president of Aintab's CUP club.¹⁹⁷

This wide range of actors—officials and representatives from both central and local groups—demonstrably indicates how effectively the center and the periphery were coordinated in implementing the deportation of Armenians and the seizure of their properties. The involvement of these names also points at the level of social support that underpinned the genocidal policies in Aintab.

Conclusion

The exact number of deportees, the total death toll, and the number of survivors of Aintab remain un-

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 11-17. Sebuğ Aguni also gave a list of names of Turkish officials and civilians mainly responsible for the deportations, massacres, and plunder of Aintab's Armenian community. Included—apart from Ahmed Bey and Ali Cenani—were Nuri Bey, Municipality President Sheyh-Oğlu Mustafa, Mennanzâde Mustafa, Hüseyin Cemil, Celal Kadri, Kelloş Hakkı (who also had had an instrumental role in the deportation of Malatya Armenians), mukhtar Ahmet, and others. Aguni, *Milion mıHayeru Çarti Badmutyuni*, 312.

known; however, it is estimated that the number of deported Armenians from Aintab was approximately 32,000,¹⁹⁸ with 20,000 perishing as a result of genocide¹⁹⁹ and 12,000 surviving.²⁰⁰ Those deported via the Homs–Hama–Damascus route were more likely to survive as the majority had converted to Islam.²⁰¹ A great number of Aintab Armenians, mostly Gregorians, were deported to Salamiyya, a district of Syria Province in the southeast of Hama, where—thanks to the efforts of district governor Necmeddin Bey—a large number were able to survive.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 20.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 20. According to missionary reports, there were about 20,000 Armenians in Aintab “who were exiled, and about 10,000 were drafted, so that the population of the city is about 30,000 less than it used to be; but in place of them we have about 12,000 refugees, women and children, who are entirely dependent on relief.” *ABCFM* 16.9.6.1, 1817-1919. Unit 5, Reel 667, Vol. 2, Part 1, No 274.

²⁰⁰BNU/Fonds A. Andonian, P.J. 1/3, file 4, Aintab, “The Deportation of Armenians in Aintabi,” 20. According to a report prepared and sent by Admiral Bristol to the United States Secretary of State immediately after WWI, the number of Armenians who were not deported from Aintab was 12,000. NARA 860J.01/341 in Kemal Çiçek, *Ermenilerin Zorunlu Göçü (1915-1917)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000), 194.

²⁰¹Bogharian, *Orakrutyun Darakiri Gyankis*, 139, 186, 189, 191, 192; Tavukjian, *Darabanki Orakrutyun*, 141, 148, 178. Krikor Bogharian, his mother and siblings, and Der Nerses Tavukjian’s wife and children also converted to survive in Salamiyya. After his conversion, Bogharian changed his name to Şahap, had this name added to his registry and it was noted at the register office that he and his family were converted.

²⁰²Ibid., 154-55.

As far as the organizational character and the role of the actors in the deportation process are concerned, it is clear that close coordination and collaboration between central authorities and various local actors existed in Aintab. In fact, administrative, political, local, and civilian agents acted far more efficiently than the central authority. In this regard, Aintab can be seen as a microcosm in the unfolding of the CUP's genocidal policies. Without enormous efforts put forth by these diverse local actors, it would have been impossible for the central CUP to carry out the expulsion of Aintab Armenians and their ultimate dispossession. For parts of the local population in Aintab, the acquisition of Armenian property was a strong incentive to participate in the anti-Armenian measures. The prospect of personal enrichment served effectively to implicate and integrate the local collaborators within the process of forced displacement and destruction.

The Armenian genocide remains one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century. As Arousiag noted, "one and a half million innocent souls were slaughtered, both the young and the old. The charming Armenian girls, women, and innocent children spilled their blood nation." It also remains, I believe, among the most poorly understood sets of events that have too often been manipulated to serve revisionist nationalist agendas. I hope that Arousiag Magarian's diary contributes to a better understanding of these

terrible events and the ways in which they have been used and misused over the last century.

