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NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ARMENIA

**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
BY OTTOMAN TURKEY**

1915

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS

COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS



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The Scientific Council of the National Archives of Armenia
warrants the Publication of this Collection of Documents

Editor in Chief – Doctor of Historical Sciences **Amatuni Virabyan**
Compiler – Candidate of Historical Sciences **Gohar Avagyan**

Translator – **Levon Baghdasaryan**
Editor of translation – **Dr. Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian**

Maps by **Gegham Badalyan, Martin Martirosyan**

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The present volume of documents presents testimony of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide which, on the basis of indisputable facts, expose the plans and actions of the Turkish authorities directed at the extermination of the Armenian population in Western Armenia in 1915, the names of the organisers and the performers, the losses suffered by the Armenian population. They also present the self-defense put up by the Armenians, the emigration of the saved population to Transcaucasia and the losses they suffered on the road.

The collection is addressed to historians, political scientists, genocide scholars and those interested in the history of Armenia.

The book has been prepared on the basis of materials kept at the National Archives of Armenia.

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FROM THE EDITORS

In 1916, the Baku Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) took the initiative to plan and conduct a survey among the Armenian refugees who had fled to various places in the South Caucasus on the organisation and implementation of massacres of the Armenian population in the Western Armenia entitled “Chronicles of Sorrow” (“Vshtapatum” in Armenian). The purpose of the survey was to “establish the number of losses suffered by the Armenians in Turkey due to the recent war, determine the scale of material and cultural damage, as well as to draw up a stark picture of the horrors and persecution suffered by the Armenians.”¹

As part of the survey, the following main clusters of questions were asked:

A. a description of their former and current situation that included an indication of where they used to live, the number of the local population, both Armenian and non-Armenian, what and how much they used to own, e.g. cattle, sheep, wheat, etc, compilation of information on the local churches, monasteries, schools, cultural institutions, lost or destroyed antiquities, rare objects, manuscripts, etc, the present state of their villages;

B. the deprivation and difficulties the Armenians had to endure in the wake of the declaration of war to establish how the conscription of the Armenians to the Turkish army was conducted, how the Armenian property was confiscated or “donated” or exchanged (bedel in Turkish), how the Armenians were forced into unpaid compulsory work, the condition of Armenian soldiers in the army, whether there was pressure on Armenians to fight against the Allies;

C. the set of questions regarding the massacres and deportation was the longest and aimed to identify when the impending disaster was felt and how, whether there was evidence that it was planned beforehand, when and under what circumstances the massacres and deportations started, under whose leadership, on whose orders and by whom (army, Kurds, gendarmes, mob), the method and place of massacring the population, the number of victims, how different classes of the society were treated, the itinerary and destination of the deportees, the number of victims who died in the course of deportation, the suffering, rapes, forced conversions to Islam, etc, the attitude of other local ethnic groups during the massacres and deportation (Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, European), particularly the role and behaviour of German soldiers. It was also

¹National Archives of Armenia, Fund 57, List 1, Record 421, Page 94.

important to establish where the survivors of a given village were and in what condition, what real and personal property they had before;

D. the set of questions regarding self-defence aimed to establish when, why, how and through which means self-defence started, who the organisers were, how many people were involved, the sequence, duration and outcome of events, the number of losses, the relations between the resistance and the government during this period, the position taken by other local actors and the Europeans towards self-defence, whether there were individual, dispersed acts of self-defence, where and how;

E. Exodus and escape: in this section information was to be gathered on when and how the exodus start commenced, which routes were taken and under what circumstances, the deprivations, disease, persecution and aggression the deportees had to endure, where, the number of personal losses, where they were based at currently, whether there were repatriates, whether anything from their property and belongings remained intact, in what condition and in whose hands.

In the course of the survey, it was vital to collect documentary evidence:

I) Photographs: the factual events of savage brutality during deportations and massacres, evidence of every possible barbarity, the scale of destruction caused;

II) Documents: telegrams, letters, decrees, registers, flyers, posters of state and national institutions, diaries of officials and other similar written records, either originals or certified copies as well as important issues of Turkish newspapers.

II) Witness accounts by foreigners: letters, diaries, reports written and opinions expressed by consuls, missionaries and private individuals and other types of accounts, where possible accounts by Kurds and Turks have been included;

IV) Armenian witness accounts a) diaries, letters, memoirs of people who were well-informed or were well-placed to access information; b) the emotions of the victims, the verbal account of witnesses who were personally present.

In the latter case, the interviewers were advised to take note of the name of the witness, the name of the location, date and, if possible, to establish the names and numbers of the victims as well as the names of the criminals while logging the account. It was desirable to compile accounts of important events from several people who were not related to each other, it was important to make sure that the accounts were not skewed by any judgment or prescriptive philosophy. It was also imperative that the witnesses be deterred from allusions to literary works or making exaggerations; instead solely facts were to be clearly and concisely recorded under the relevant name and date.

V) Statistical data on the state of affairs before and at present, as verified personally by the interviewer on the spot.

VI) Maps drawn for the same purpose by the same people and once again after proper verification.²

Using the designed survey template, Haik Achemian and A. Hatsagortsian (Ashtarak, Aparan), Hambardzum Galstian (Nakhichevan), Suren Meloyan (Karavansara, Dilijan), Garegin Nerkararian (Echmiadzin, Surmalu), Shirin Yeghiazar Hakobian (Koghb), Nshan Tiratsuyan and Fr Grigor Ter-Grigorian (Alexandrapol Province, Shirak), Varos Sargsian (Kars), Garegin Turikian and Amatuni (Karin, Kghi), Vahan Petrosyan (Persian Armenia) and others³, who in some instances called themselves investigators and in other instances officers who compile materials and officers who record evidence, travelled to all communities in the South Caucasus where Western Armenian as well as Persian Armenian refugees lived, they visited orphanages in Baku, Tiflis, Dilijan, Ashtarak and other towns, they recorded the accounts of the survivors of the Armenian genocide on the details of the massacres that took place in their towns and villages. And in liberated Western Armenia, i.e. in Karin and adjoining provinces, the fact-finding activities were mainly undertaken by G. Turikian and Amatuni, at the same time a considerable number of self-written witness accounts are available from this region.

As mentioned above, the questionnaire was designed in such a way as to enable collection of accurate information on human as well as material and cultural losses. When a group of refugees from the same village would give accounts on what had happened in a given community, their accounts would often be compared with accounts by refugees from the same community who lived in other places.

The fact-finding activities were led by Rostom (Stepan Zorian) and benefited from the active participation of Andranik who in 1917 started publishing "Hayastan" daily newspaper in Tiflis, Vahan Totovents, Sebastatsi Murad, Fr Hakob Khachvankian.⁴

The fact-finding work was not an easy task and was beset with various difficulties, the first and foremost of which was the lack of resources and funds. We come across the following lines in Garegin Turikian's letter dated 7th December 1916 and addressed to the National Bureau in Baku: "I have spent 25 (twenty-five) roubles to cover the travel costs of Andranik's trip to Tiflis, so you can imagine the scale of costs I have had to cover to have this piece of work completed. I have not received any money for travel, wages or expenses. I am

²See NAA, Fund 57, Register 1, Record 421, pages 94-95.

³To date, it has not been possible to establish the names of the data collectors in Tiflis (one person), Baku (two people) and other places as they did not sign or initial the logged records or they used a pseudonym.

⁴See NAA, Fund 57, Register 5, Record 140, page 1, Fund 227, Register 1, Record 454, p 1.

hopeful that you will cover at least the expenses so as to enable me to carry on doing this type of work.”⁵

The fact-finding activities were undertaken in the course of 1916-1917, although accounts were known to have been logged in a later period. Specifically, the accounts of the mass execution of the Armenian population of Tandzot village in Ardanuch area of Ardvin District in Batum region by the Turkish troops in December 1914 were written on 6 February 1919.⁶

The recorded accounts, as seen from G. Turikian’s above-mentioned letter, were sent to the Baku National Bureau, part of the accounts were sent to Rostom personally and part of the accounts were sent to Andranik’s “Hayastan” periodical, these were then brought together in Tiflis to be grouped by categories and by themes.⁷

In terms of relevance to territorial-administrative units, the records were broken down into five groups: I) Van, II) Karin, III) Bitlis, IV) Tigranakert and V) Kharberd provinces. With the exception of Karin, all of the four registers of accounts have survived and been passed on to us. Each account is marked by a Roman numeral in accordance with the sequence of provinces as above and the serial number of each account is indicated by an Arabic numeral. The Van register consists of 109 accounts and the correspondence of the A. Vramian, the Armenian MP for Van province, with the local authorities and the Ottoman government (32 documents).⁸ Of the 109 accounts, 7 are missing (12, 72-76, 83), and A Vramian’s correspondence which was in Ottoman Turkish has survived in its entirety in the form of a handwritten Armenian translated copy.⁹ Although the Karin register has not survived, 68 accounts are numbered by Roman numerals, accounts numbered 11 as well as (10, 12, 20, 29, 40-41, 49-52, 65) are missing. The Bitlis register includes 77 accounts,¹⁰ out of which 4 are missing (2-4, 9). The Tigranakert register lists 4 accounts, which are available in full,¹¹ and the Kharberd register contains 22 accounts,¹² once again available in their entirety. Yet there are also 23 archive records (423-426, 428, 430-432, 434-436, 438-442, 444-449, 453) containing hundreds of accounts, which are not included in the afore-mentioned registers and these are accounts recorded in Yerevan province (Ashtarak, Aparan, Echmiadzin, Surmalu, Koghb, Nakhichevan) and Tiflis. This attests to the fact that only accounts recorded in or sent to Baku were numbered and logged on the registers, the non-numbered accounts were collected in Tiflis.

⁵Ibid.

⁶See “Herald of the Armenian Archives”, 2005, No 1:

⁷See NAA, Fund 227, Register 1, Record 468, page 35, Record 478, page 20.

⁸See Ibid, Record 469, pages 1-11.

⁹Ibid, Record 416.

¹⁰Ibid, Record 490, pages 1-7.

¹¹Ibid, Record 492, page 1.

¹²Ibid, Record 491, pages 1-4.

The accounts compiled in Baku were coded based on themes by marking numbers in the margins next to the relevant sections of the accounts. The explanation of these numbers has been preserved: 1.- the previous situation, 2.- military occupation and movement, ...5.- deportation decree and deportation, 6.- partial or collective resistance, ...8.- road to exile, ...10.- massacres and kidnapping on the road to exile, ...12.- suicide and resistance by women and 24 other similarly coded themes¹³.

Today it is difficult to ascertain the number of accounts gathered at the time, as no accounts are available from many places in the South Caucasus and Western Armenia, particularly in Yerevan and Van given that a large number of refugees were sheltered in Yerevan, and in Van and its environs about 30,000 Armenians lived in 1917. There is documentary evidence confirming that Z. Yesayan took some parts of the “Chronicles of Sorrow” with here abroad from Baku to use them for propaganda purposes. Rostom’s letter dated 3 April 1918 and sent from Baku to his colleagues in Egypt reads: “Mrs Zabel will tell you about our situation, although by the time she gets to Egypt it will have become historical material. Mrs Zabel is bringing the materials of the ‘Chronicles of Sorrow.’ It should be used widely for propaganda. She will work on this herself.”¹⁴ Today it is difficult to guess whether Z. Yesayan took with here the originals of the logged accounts or their reproductions. It is also known that the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted a resolution in his 10 January 1920 session to move the materials of the “Chronicles of Sorrow” from Tiflis to Armenia and to consign them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for use as deemed appropriate. The resolution reads:

“18. Hearing held: The same speaker¹⁵ reported on the activities of the committee investigating the losses suffered by the Armenian during the World War.

18. Resolved: To transfer the materials to the M[inister] of Foreign Affairs. To propose to transfer any other materials related to the “Chronicles of Sorrow” to M[inister] of Foreign Affairs.¹⁶”

Today the materials of the “Chronicles of Sorrow” are held in two funds of the National Archives of Armenia, i.e. those of the editorial office of “Mshak” newspaper and the Office of the Catholicos of All Armenians. It is difficult to establish how these materials found their way to the editorial office of the periodical published in Tiflis, however more than 700 accounts together with other documents from the editorial office of “Mshak” newspaper were moved to Armenia in 1920s and until 17 June 1946 were kept in the Party Archive of the

¹³Ibid, Record 468, pages 45-46.

¹⁴Central Archive of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, correspondence file 339-3.

¹⁵Refers to A. Khatisian, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

¹⁶NAA, Fund 199, Register 1, Record 118, page 5.

Armenian Communist Party Central Committee in an unregulated state and on the mentioned date were handed over to the State Archives of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

In undertaking the work of compiling this compendium, a decision was made to publish all accounts without exception in order to lay bare the massacres of the Armenian population by the Turkish authorities village by village, town by town.

The accounts were gathered from witnesses only one year after the massacres and deportations, hence are of great reliability and validity, consequently of great value for the comprehensive study of the Armenian genocide.

The compendium of is great historical and also a political value and significance today, as it proves yet again that the Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Young Turkish regime was planned and prepared beforehand.

The published documents are grouped according to provinces (vilayet), regions (sanjak), districts (kaza) and communities (nahie). The settlements are listed in alphabetical order. The documents that provide information on several settlements are listed in the beginning of the territorial-administrative units. Although documents in the appendices are not directly linked to the "Chronicles of Sorrow," these have been included in the compendium in view of the fact that these are witness accounts.

The archeographical classification of documents complies with the current rules. Each document has an editorial title, the date and location of where each account was logged. Where the date and location were established by the editors, these are taken in square brackets.

The language and style in documents have been kept intact, some orthographic corrections have been made, topographic and personal names have been verified. Where the text has semantic gaps, these are covered in square brackets.

The explanatory notes to each document include the archival data, indicate whether the document is the original or not and the method of reproduction. A small number of the documents were published before,¹⁷ however since this publication is qualitatively different from the previous publication, the explanatory notes do not refer to the fact of these documents having been published before.

The references of the compendium consist of notes on the content of the documents, a dictionary of dialect and foreign terms, a log of personal and topographic names, list of documents. Various dictionaries and published literature as well as many archival primary sources have been used in the preparation of the notes.

¹⁷ See "Chronicles of Sorrow: The Armenian Genocide through the Eyes of Witnesses," Yerevan 2005.

ON THE CURRENT LEGAL IMPORTANCE OF THE RESULTS OF THE FACT-FINDING MISSION ORGANISED AMONG THE SURVIVORS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

From the legal point of view, the activities aimed at compiling, pooling together and cross-referencing the accounts of survivors of the Armenian Genocide are invaluable in terms of presenting the full picture of the factual circumstances of the Armenian Genocide, bringing episodes of crime into sharp focus, substantiating the specific intention to completely annihilate the Armenian people, depicting the contextual elements of the Armenian Genocide.

The legal importance of such evidence is still relevant even today, on the eve of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, it may be confidently argued that the recent developments, i.e. increasing activity in the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide by parliaments of various countries, attempts at adopting draft laws providing for legal accountability for denying the Armenian Genocide, granting associated lawsuits (insurance, property, etc) related to the Armenian Genocide by the courts in various countries, the Armenian Genocide seems to have been reinstated in the legal domain. Undoubtedly, these trends are also linked to global developments, proceedings at the International Court of Justice of the UNO undertaken on the basis of the "Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," consolidation and development of the international criminal justice system and other similar developments.

In the context of these developments, compilation and organisation of legal documents and other similar materials on the Armenian Genocide that are of probative value gain more weight and importance.

From this viewpoint, the results of the "fact-finding mission" launched by the Baku Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) among the survivors of the Armenian Genocide that have been included in the present compendium are undoubtedly of great theoretical and practical significance.

The information in the compendium is of great importance first of all in the context of substantiating more thoroughly the undeniable fact of the Armenian Genocide and holding the legal successor of the Ottoman Empire accountable for the crime based on international law.

It is worth noting that the accounts contained in the compendium are consistent with the contemporaneous testimonies of witnesses and victims. As a rule, the interviewees were at the same time both victims to one or other aspect of the genocide, and witnesses of crimes perpetrated towards others.

The testimonies found in this compendium can be used to prove at least the following facts of legal importance for qualifying the crimes against the Armenians as genocide:

1. Specific intention to annihilate the Armenian ethnic and religion group in its entirety in the Ottoman Empire and its contiguous territories;
2. The perpetration of the following acts to deliver the aforementioned objective:
 - a. Killing members of the group;
 - b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group, including mutilation, rape, sexual assault or inhumane, humiliating treatment, including forced conversion;
 - c. Deliberately inflicting on the group such conditions of life that are calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - d. Forced transfer of children to other groups.

These acts took place in the context of a clear demonstration of similar behaviour directed against the persecuted group and coalesced into a behaviour that in itself could lead to the destruction of the group.

In addition to containing evidence of probative value, the accounts included in the compendium are immensely important in establishing the number of people living in Western Armenia and other Armenian populated areas of the Ottoman Empire and the number of people who died during the Genocide, the number of people who died as a result of trauma and injury after the genocide, the number of the wounded, mutilated and otherwise harmed.

The evidence can certainly be great relevance to task of assessing and summing up the scale of the material harm caused due to the Armenian Genocide as the accounts provide details of the production means, economic potential, number of educational institutions, churches, other buildings, cultural values, number of cattle, type and volume of harvested crops in the various settlements.

It is worth noting that thanks to the well-structured questionnaire developed by the members of the fact-finding group, the present compendium also includes materials on the material and financial contributions collected as a war-time tax by the Ottoman Empire from the Armenian settlements on the eve of and at the beginning of World War I, which in its turn may serve as a supplementary material for assessing the economic potential of the Armenian settlements.

The accounts comprised in the compendium are also important in establishing the identity of the immediate perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, a topic that often slips away from the primary focus of the Armenian researchers. Of course, as in the case of any other genocide, tens of thousands of direct perpetrators were also involved in the Armenian Genocide, the identity of many of these perpetrators is not even possible to establish. For this very reason, as a rule, both in theoretical and in practical matters, the attention is mainly focused on the

organisers, identifying the main perpetrators and holding them accountable. From this viewpoint, the accounts in the compendium that make note of the names of the many criminals can be of great legal importance in establishing the identity of the immediate perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, at least for those settlements that the accounts were received from, thus making the list of identified perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide more thorough and robust.

It is noteworthy that the team compiling the aforementioned testimonies strove to work as a real fact-finding mission or as an investigative team, which adds to the legal value of the accounts, as the facts recorded in them have been passed onto us not in the form of fragmentary memories but as part of a co-ordinated process aimed at documenting, compiling and analysing the factual circumstances of the genocide. It is not accidental that many of the accounts are marked out with a subtitle "massacre."

The analysis of the content of the accounts allows at the very least to draw the conclusion that the fact-finding mission had tried to establish the number of the Armenian population in the various settlements, the scale of the military tax collected from these settlements during the war, data on the number Armenian soldiers conscripted to the Ottoman army, as well as to describe the massacres, the ensuing sequence of events, to pool together the data on temporary shelters for the refugees and so on.

Additionally, the legal value of the accounts, the reliability and validity of the information provided by the witnesses are further bolstered by the fact that the information was gathered immediately after the events, the accounts were written directly by witnesses or were reproduced according to their verbal accounts.

The materials comprised in the compendium are also of interest in terms of establishing the level of involvement of the state bodies, armed forces and police forces of the Ottoman Empire in the Armenian Genocide and in clarifying the relations between the central and local authorities of the Ottoman Empire.

The accounts may have a great significance in revealing the contextual elements of the Armenian Genocide. Any testimony found in the present compendium may be viewed as a report of a separately committed crime, i.e. homicide, mutilation, torture, affliction of bodily or physical harm, rape, etc, however they all fit together into a overarching logic of genocide only if the contextual element of the genocide, the essence of which is that these criminal acts are part of a context where similar behaviour can be clearly demonstrated, in other words, these acts are interlinked.

From this viewpoint, the value of the accounts is indeed inestimable, as their analysis allows to expose the clear demonstration of a genocidal behaviour towards the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire and the neighbouring regions. The mirrored reports (of inhumane treatment of conscripted Armenian soldiers, use of census data for the purpose of assimilating the Armenians, invasion of Armenian

villages, separation of men and women and execution, forced conversions, forced transfer of children and women to other groups, stripping of victims, etc) found in the accounts received from settlements in various vilayets attest to the fact that in various vilayets of the Ottoman Empire the individual people involved in the Armenian genocide did not act independently from each other or without being informed of the actions by others, and were instead executing the shared genocidal intention in a co-ordinated fashion.

Certainly, it is worth mentioning that the accounts included in the compendium are not uniformly of the same value in terms of their probative value. Many of the accounts describe in considerable detail the course of events, point out the perpetrators of crime, mention the names of people who were killed or who died, others, on the contrary, are quite abstract, patchy, and brief. In making a legal assessment of the aforementioned accounts, it is important to take into consideration the age, sex, level of education and other characteristics of the people who testified, certainly the emotional state during the events or at the time of giving their testimonies.

By way of pre-empting the likely attempts at questioning the probative significance, authenticity and reliability of the materials included in this compendium by the official Turkish propaganda machine intent on denying the Armenian Genocide, let us reflect on some of the "vulnerable" aspects of the materials in order to do away any doubts that could undermine their probative value.

First and foremost, it should be noted that both geographically and chronologically the accounts refer only to the initial phase of the Armenian Genocide and capture facts and data only from those areas which in 1915-16 during World War I were either controlled by the Russian troops or were in the immediate vicinity, and mainly include the testimonies of those survivors of the Armenian Genocide who, as a result of the so called July withdrawal of the Russian troops, followed the latter to the South Caucasus. Of course, we should also take note of the important fact that the aforementioned testimonies were recorded in a period when the genocidal intention had not been executed in its entirety and even the data-gatherers did not have a clear conception of the real nature and the sheer scale of the tragedy.

Secondly, without any doubt, no one will argue against the assertion that the testimonies by themselves are not sufficient to prove facts related to a particular episode of the Armenian Genocide. The evidence should be assessed as a whole based on a comprehensive, thorough and objective analysis. Consequently, the alleged facts should be compared with other corroborating evidence, such as official diplomatic correspondence, official state documents, information held in military and other archives and analysed comprehensively, thoroughly and objectively as a whole.

From this viewpoint, before the critics can question the authenticity, reliability and validity of the documents at hand by arguing that these are mediated

testimonies, are one-sided or abstract, etc, they need to understand that the testimonies merely add to the probative evidence from numerous other sources.

It is important to make a reference to the battles and cases of self-defence consistently mentioned in testimonies by witnesses from various settlements in Van vilayet, which may serve as a pretext for the Turkish propaganda machine to justify the false claim that the Armenians fell victim to an imaginary "civil war," during which also many Turks died. In reference to this potential allegation, it should be clearly established that even the contingency of a civil war in itself cannot refute the fact of the perpetrated genocide. A vivid example of this dynamic are the events that unfolded in Rwanda in 1994, when in parallel with a military clash of intrastate nature, a genocide was unleashed. In other words, even the theoretical possibility of a civil war does not rule out the fact of the committed genocide. In fact, in the case of the Armenian genocide, there cannot be any discussion of a civil war, and as for battles or acts of self-defence, these cannot in any way cast a shade on the fact that the genocide took place for the simple reason that putting up resistance to criminals or taking relevant actions to save one's own life and that of family, even a self-defence or a revolt, cannot dilute the corpus delicti into another act either punishable or not. Such cases of self-defence have taken place during most genocides when rebellions flared up or self-defence was organised in settlements where the persecuted groups were concentrated in large numbers. Even in the case of the Holocaust, mankind has been witness to various episodes of self-defence, the best-known of which was the revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto between 19 April and 16 May 1943, which was brutally suppressed in bloodshed. Likewise, the cases of self-defence during the years of the Armenian genocide, which are often mentioned in the testimonies included in this compendium, cannot cast a shade or obliterate the fact that the Armenian Genocide was perpetrated. On the contrary, these cases may be one of the best proofs of persecution of the Armenians.

In summing up the above, we may confidently say that that the accounts included in the present compendium contain valuable research material. Together with the huge historical-political significance, the accounts will be of great interest to specialists engaged in legal research as the latter serve to establish in the episodes of the Armenian Genocide the elements of the corpus delicti of the crime as defined by Article 2 of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to expose the deliberate intention to perpetrate a genocide and bring together the contextual link among the various episodes constituting a genocide.

Vladimir Vardanyan
PhD in Public International Law

FOREWORD

The compiled documents presented in this volume are a description of the massacres perpetrated by Turks in Van, Karin, Bitlis, Tigranakert, Kharberd Provinces and in Persian Armenia.

On the eve of the First World War, Western Armenia was divided into provinces (vilayets): Van, Bitlis (Baghesh), Erzurum (Karin), Kharberd, Diarbekir (Tigranakert), Sebastia. There were large numbers of Armenians living in Trabzon and other provinces of Turkey.

The area of **Van Province** (vilayet) was 33.6 thousand square kilometres and was divided into two regions, Van and Hakyari.

The districts of Van region were Artske-Aljavaz, Archesh, Berkri, Gyavash (with Karchkan, Moks, Upper Karkar communities), Mahmudi, Norduz (Mamuret-ur-Reshat from 1913), Shatakh, Van (with Van-Tosp, Archak, Timar and Hayots Dzor communities). Hakyari region was comprised of Aghbak, Gyavar, Khoshab, Shamdinar, Julamerk districts.

On the eve of World War I, the population of Van Province was about 485 thousand people (Armenian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Turkish, Yezidi, Jewish, Caucasian Mountaineers, Gypsies, etc). In 1870s-80s, there were 250-300 thousand Armenians (making up approximately 60% of the population). However, the massacres of 1894-96 and emigration reduced the Armenian population of Van Province by about 50 thousand. Nevertheless, up until World War I, the Armenians were the largest ethnic group with 210 thousand people (about 43%).

Bitlis (Baghesh) Province, an administrative-territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, with Bitlis (Baghesh) City as its capital, was created in 1879-80. Before that, it was subsumed by Van, Erzurum and Diarbekir Provinces. In 1909, the province had four regions - Bitlis, Sgherd, Mush, Genj - covering an area of 27, 100 km².

Bitlis region was comprised of the following districts: Khlat, Bitlis, Datvan (Rahva), Aznavadzor (Gyozaldara), Tatic, Bayik, Motkan, Khizan. Sgherd region included the districts of Manazkert, Bulanekh, Vardo, Mush, and Sassoun. Genj, Chapaghjur, Khulp were the districts of Genj region.

On the eve of World War I, the province had a population of 500 thousand people. In 1882, the province had 250 thousand Armenian residents, however their number significantly decreased as a result of the Armenian massacres in 1895-96 and the ensuing emigration. Even so, about 240 thousand Armenians

lived in Bitlis Province in 1914. Bitlis Province was also home to Kurds, Turks (mainly of Kurdish origin), Assyrians.¹⁸

Erzurum (Karin) Province, an administrative-territorial of the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, with Erzurum as its capital, was established in 1514-1534.

Erzurum Province was one of the provinces of Western Armenia densely populated with Armenians. It consisted of Erzurum (comprising Erzurum, Baberd, Derjan, Basen, Sper, Tortum, Keskim, Khnus, Keghi districts), Yerzhnka (consisted of Yerznka, Kamakh, Kerchanis, Ghuzujan, Kurucha districts) and Bayazet (with Bayazet, Alashkert, Diadin, Karakilise, Antap or Dutagh districts): On the eve of the war, more than 200 thousand Armenians¹⁹ lived in the province.

Kharberd (Mamuret-ul-Aziz) Province, an administrative-territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, with its capital Kharberd, which was renamed Mezire in 1867, was created in 1847 by detaching districts from Diarbekir, Sebastia and Marash Provinces. In 1913, the province had three regions: Dersim (comprised of Khozat, Kzelkilisa or Nazemie, Metskert or Mazkert, Charsanjak, Chmshkatsak, Ovajek districts), Mamuret-ul-Aziz (constisted of Akn, Arabkir, Kharberd, Kapan-Maden, Papurke or Shiro districts) and Malatia (composed of Aghjadagh, Behesni, Hisni-Mansur or Adeyaman, Malatia, Kyakhsa districts). It covered an area of 37,800 km².

At the beginning of 20th century, it had a population in excess of 575 thousand people. The Armenians had always been the largest ethnic group in the province. The Armenians in Kharberd Province suffered great losses during the 1894-96 massacres. In 1912, the province was home to 204 thousand Armenians (35.4%). There were also Kurds (primarily Kselbashes), Turks, Assyrians, Greeks.

Diarbekir (Tigranakert) Province, an administrative-territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, with Diarbekir as its centre. At the beginning of the 20th century it had three regions: Diarbekir, Arghni or Arghana-Maden and Mardin. Its area was 47,220 km².

At the beginning of 20th century, it had a population of about 470 thousand people (Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Turks, Greeks, Jews, etc). About 150 thousand Armenians lived in Diarbekir Province in early 1880s, however their number severely diminished as a result of massacres and emigration over the following decades. On the eve of World War I, more than 130 thousand Armenians lived in Diarbekir.

Sebastia Province, an administrative-territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, within the territory of the historic Armenia Minor. Sebastia (Svaz) was its administrative centre. At the end of 19th century, the province had

¹⁸See Concise Armenian Encyclopedia, Volume 1, pages 531-532.

¹⁹See Concise Armenian Encyclopedia, Volume 2, pages 540-541.

4 regions: Sebastia (central region), Shapin Garahisar, Evdokia (Tokhat), Amasia, which in their turn were divided into 28 districts. Sebastia Province had 4761 towns and villages.

Based on the records of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, in early 1880s there were 670 thousand Armenians in Sebastia Province and Kesaria region (20-25 thousand Armenians perished during the 1895-96 massacres).

During the Armenian Genocide, most of the Armenian population of Sebastia Province were decimated on the way to Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor. Only 16,800 out of the province's 418 thousand Armenians survived.

Trabzon Province, an administrative-territorial unit of the Ottoman Empire on the south coast of the Black Sea with Trabzon City as its centre. It was created in 1519-1520. The borders of Trabzon Province were definitively drawn in 1878 after Ajaria was annexed to Russia. Its territory was 31.3 thousand km² (based on other sources, 32.7 thousand km²). It comprised 4 regions: Trabzon, Lazistan, Gyumushkhane and Janik. In 1910, Janik was upgraded to a status of a separate administrative-territorial unit, i.e. a "separate region."

Armenians are one of the oldest inhabitants of Trabzon Province. Until 18th century, they lived in large numbers in the eastern and southern regions, i.e. in Hamshen (Hamamashen), Kelkit (Gaylget) and Syurmeni districts, in Trabzon and other towns. As a result of massacres and atrocities by Turks in 18th century, a large part of the Hamshen Armenians were forced to convert to Islam (in 1914, there were hundreds of settlements in the aforementioned region with 150-200 Muslim Armenians who had preserved their language and ethnic way of life). After the massacres of 1895-96, there was a mass exodus of Armenians from Trabzon Province to the Russian Empire. On the eve of World War I, there were about 100 thousand Armenians living in Trabzon province.

The comprehensive study of the documents published in the compendium gives a clear picture of the preparation and implementation of the Armenian Genocide in Western Armenia.

Even before World War I had started, a *seferberlik* or a general conscription was declared, which applied both to Muslims and Christians, including the Armenians. Men of conscription age, i.e. between 20-23, were already in the army, hence the conscription started from enlisting men aged 24-27, followed by men aged up to 32 and then 45. From the start, the Armenian soldiers were in a very difficult situation; they carried out the most laborious tasks, were ridiculed and subjected to religious insults and various assaults. In 1914, they were disarmed and moved to "*amele taburi*" (labour battalions).

As a result of the conscription carried out in summer 1914, the Armenian population was left defenceless: Turkish officials and policemen became the rulers of villages emptied of their male population. Under the pretext of the war-time tax called "*tekalif-i harbie*," they started plundering the Armenian population,

confiscating everything - money, wheat, barley, bulgur, lard, cheese, bread, sheep, heifers, socks, gloves, moccasins, hay, manure, rope, wool, petrol and so on. At the same time, the population was required to provide war-time contributions or aid, *iyane*, which for each district was set to include 200 tinplates of kavurma and 250 poods (each pood was equivalent to about 16.3 kg) of melted butter, and for each village 10 sheep as well as wheat, barley, straw, hay.

The responsibility of transporting the collected tax as well as various military consignments, which was called *olam*, was primarily upon the Armenian population. Men who had not been conscripted, i.e. men aged above 45, even women, had to wade through deep snow towards the battlefield "carrying wheat, barley, cartridges, etc. on their backs."

However, the disaster was drawing near. In order to implement their plan, the Turkish authorities armed the Muslim population and, through beatings and mutilations, took away the arms from the Armenians.

The Armenians came into possession of a number of official documents about the Turkish plans to exterminate the Armenian population back in the period of self-defence battles.

The documents published in the compendium testify without reservation to the validity of the first element of the Turkish plan to exterminate the Armenian nation, i.e. complete destruction of the Armenian male population. They also provide detailed information on the tortures the Armenian population was subjected to during the massacres: many were skinned alive or their skin was torn off by tongs or skewers, dismembered, some were burnt alive and so on. The clergy were treated with particular severity, priests were killed through brutal torturing, their beards were torn out or singed, eyes blinded, tongues and noses cut off and so on. All possible means and instruments were used in killing people: rifles, bayonets, swords, knives, axes, pitchforks, sickles, spades, rope, stones, throwing into a pit, drowning in the river, burning, burying alive.

The documents also reveal the names of the organisers and perpetrators of the massacres.

The next element of the Turkish plan was the conversion of Armenian women and children to Islam, and in some places they succeeded in their plans. Under the influence of the horrors of the initial days of the massacres, some took this step, while many others preferred death to conversion.

Many residents of Armenian settlements fought for their lives against the Turkish regular troops and the enraged rabble swarming in their thousands. In some cases, the Armenian population succeeded in surviving the Turkish massacres thanks to self-defence. They engaged in self-defence both in groups and individually. Well-known among these cases was the self-defence in Sassoun, where Armenian fighters demonstrated exemplary bravery and self-sacrifice. The self-defenders did not always succeed. Quite often, due to

shortages of ammunition, they retreated while fighting a battle and were decimated together with other people.

It is important to reflect on a key issue: whether or not all of the Muslim population participated in the massacres or whether there were honest people among them who did not participate in the extermination of the Armenians, saved the lives of their neighbours and co-villagers or defied the genocidal policy of the authorities. There were such people and the survivors did not forget them.

The documents published in the compendium show that the massacres of the Armenians were mainly perpetrated by the Kurds, although in some instances Turks and Circassians also participated.

The Turkish government's policy of extermination of the Armenian nation followed the same pattern in all the provinces. At first, prominent people were arrested and, on the pretext of transferring them to another location, they were killed on the side of the road where they could not be easily seen, then there came the turn of men followed by women and children.

The compendium also includes testimonies by Greek, Assyrian, Turkish and Persian witnesses on facts of mass extermination of the Armenian population by the Turkish authorities.

To all intents and purposes, this is the first publication of documents that reflect the full picture of the 1915 Armenian genocide in the provinces of Western Armenia. A set of documents published together with the testimonies give a full account of the instances of self-defence by Armenians, thanks to which a part of the Armenian population was saved in Van, Mush, Sassoun.

The testimonies were gathered from the witnesses only a year after the massacres and deportation; hence these accounts are of considerable reliability and validity and consequently are of great value for the comprehensive study of the Armenian Genocide.

The compendium is of great historical and also political value and significance as once again it proves that the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Young Turkish regime was planned and prepared beforehand.

DOCUMENTS

VAN PROVINCE

No 1

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GAREGIN GEVORGIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF AVERAK OF VAN-TOSP IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 21, 1916
Igdır

According to Garegin Gevorgian (45) from the village of Averak of Timar district:

Averak had 182 households and 1,150 residents, a church²⁰ named St Stepanos, a school (newly built), 1,600 head of sheep, 1,500 head of cattle. The annual revenue of the village was 6,400 units of wheat and 10,000 trusses of hay.

Some part of the village was burnt.

All men of the age 20-45 from Averak were conscripted during the general *mobilisation* of July 20, 1914. If any conscript did not report on time, the policemen would burn his house without allowing any item to be taken out. For instance, policeman Mahmat Kafoyan (from Van) burnt Garegin Yeghiazarian's house, Sianos Manukian's house etc. During the *mobilisation* 250 units of wheat, 200 units of barley, 4 litres of oil, 8 units of bulgur, 80 sheep, 30 cows and 200 pairs of socks were forcibly confiscated (by the same Mahmat) from Averak. The policeman forcibly confiscated also 20 Ottoman liras. Karapet Harutyunian gave 41 Ottoman liras *bedel* and also one *kile* wheat as bribe to the abovementioned Mahmat to be exempted from military service etc.

On 7 April, 1915, 2,000 Kurds and regular army soldiers headed by Mahmat Bek from Van, *Agha* Bek from Kyoprikyoy¹, Sia Bek from Van (son of Kyamil Bey) and Arif Bek (from Turkashen), armed with three cannons and state-issue Mauser (small size) rifles attacked Averak at sunrise. The armed youth of the village resisted all day and after it got dark drew back to Van together with all the population. In all, 50 residents of Averak were killed in the fight.

On July 18, 1915 the residents of Averak emigrated to the Caucasus with the population of Van. At the Berkri pass they were attacked by the Kurds; 4 people were killed. In all 400 people died during the emigration.

²⁰ The church had two old handwritten Gospels – one was called Voskeporik (Precious) Gospel, the other Tagavor (King) Gospel. The church had also two gold crosses, 40 silver crosses, two silver cymbals and two silver flabella, two silver chalices, two silver censers etc.

At present residents of Averak live in villages around Yerevan. 20 men from Averak have returned to homeland.

Recorded by Garegin M. Nerkararyan

National Archives of Armenia, fund 227, register 1, record 426, page 10, original, handwritten.

No 2

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS HOVHANNES ZHAMKOCHIAN AND PETROS MANUKIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KURUBASH OF VAN-TOSP IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 19, 1916
Khalfalu

According to Hovhannes Zhamkochian and Petros Muradian from the village of Kurubash from Van suburbs (both are witnesses)

Kurubash had 120 households and 880 residents, a church (St Stephen), a school, 12 water-mills, an oil mill, 1,500 head of sheep, 1,000 head of cattle. The total annual revenue of the village was 6,400 Ottoman liras worth of wheat, grapes, hay etc. The church had an old manuscript Gospel as well as more than 2,000 Ottoman liras worth of precious vessels, silver crosses, vestments, etc.

Most of the village is burnt: the church, the school, the water-mills and the oil mill are burnt.

All men aged between 21-45 from Kurubash were conscripted during the general *mobilisation* of July 20, 1914. If any conscript was absent from home at the appointed time, the policemen would burn his house, confiscate for the benefit of the state all his movable and immovable property, rape his wife; for instance, police chiefs Palahasan from Kharberd and Kel Mehmet from Van raped Gaspar Yeghoyan's wife Margarit and subjected the village head Grigor Aghvastian and his assistant Hovhannes Hyusian to bastinado.

During the *mobilisation* 40 oxen, 16 carts, 400 units of wheat and barley, 5,000 trusses of hay, 60,000 *okas* of straw, 8 (eight) *litres* of oil, 100 sheep, 200 pairs of socks, 60 axes, 60 pairs of sacks were forcibly confiscated from Kurubash. They also exacted 70 Ottoman liras as "*khana*".

Since February 1915 the Van government stationed units of 100 soldiers as guards in three places around Kurubash. On April 3-4 they attacked Kurubash and finding no one in the village burnt the church and the school. The next morning 350 Kurds headed by Lezkin attacked the village and committed unheard atrocities, raped women and then killed them. A man from Vozm named Hambardzum was killed in a Kurubash field: his nails were torn off, his eyes were gouged out (his penis was cut off and put into his mouth).

In all 20 people were killed in Kurubash.

Note: Before the fight men from Kurubash had fled to Varag joining local self-defense groups.

The residents of Kurubash emigrated to the Caucasus on July 18, 1915. Near Berkri they were attacked by the Kurds; 10 men were killed, and they lost all their cattle and property. In all 300 residents of Kurubash died during the emigration.

Recorded by G.M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 26 and reverse, original, handwritten.

No 3

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MAKRUHI MELKONIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF PAKHEZIK OF VAN-TOSP IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

I, Makruhi Gevorgian Melkonian, from the village of Bakhezik in the Archak district of Van province, 33 years old, now live in Baku, Armenian Village, Nagornaya 10, N². The Refugee Committee supports me.

In our homeland I lived in our house with a family of 12 people. Now our family consists of me, my husband Gevorg, my brother-in-law Misak, his wife Gayané, his daughter Srбуhi, my other brother-in-law Sedrak, my father-in-law Melkon – in all 7 people.

My sons Ghazar and Hrand, and my mother-in-law Iskuhi were killed, in all 3 people; my daughter Nanik was snatched from my hands, in all 1 person; my sister-in-law Haikanush died, in all 1 person.

During the 1914 mobilisation, in our village, like all villages, the conscription was accompanied by beatings and violence. Policemen would visit us every day with new demands, *olam* and dues were innumerable; it was an ordinary thing

for them to take wheat, barley, hay, sheep, ghee, cheese, socks, draft and pack animals; since they had nothing, their demands were growing even more. We endured like all other villagers till the beginning of April 1915. After massacring the villagers of Archak and Kharakonis, the *kaymakam* of Saray massacred also the villagers of Kzljé and Nabat from where those held captive fled to our village. After seeing and hearing all this, we too decided to flee to Van and joining them we went to Van. We reached the village of Shushants and stayed there. Our men went up the mountains and joined the groups of Toros and Shirin, and we stayed in the village. After staying in the village for 8 days, at the dawn of the 9th day the Turkish troops and *millis* captured the monastery of Varag and besieged Shushants. The women and the boys – we all fled to the mountains, and those who were fighting put up a resistance. In the evening, when it got dark, the fighters moved to Aigestan. At night we hid in mountain gullies and crevices till the day broke. At daybreak the mob climbed the mountain and attacked us, ruthlessly massacring men, women and children. At that moment I, my mother-in-law, my sons – Ghazar and Hrant, and my daughter Nanik, were hiding behind a rock; when the Kurds noticed us they ran after us; we tried to run away but they caught up with us and without saying a word shot my mother-in-law and then caught me. They took Ghazar from me and cut him up with a dagger (she cannot continue because of weeping). They hit Hrant, took him off my arm and hitting him against a rock bashed his brains out. They took Nanik away from me and I don't know what happened to her. Then they did what they pleased with me... (she weeps). After torturing me they took me to other women, undressed us, leaving only our underwear and kept us till the evening, beating and torturing us. In the evening the policeman blew the trumpet, the Turks left us and went away. During the night, naked and bloodied and with weeping hearts we went to Aigestan where already fighting was going on. We found our men who had joined Shirin and Toros in Van. We stayed in Aigestan for about three weeks. The Turks fled and the brave residents of Van gained a victory. After that we returned to our village.

During the retreat of July 1915 we emigrated to Etchmiadzin where my sister-in-law Haikanush died. The rest moved to Baku and now we live in Armenian Village.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 20-21, original, handwritten.

No 4

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR VOSKEHAT AZOYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ARCHAK OF ARCHAK CLUSTER
OF VILLAGES IN THE VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

[1916]
Baku

I, Voskehat Azoyan, from the village of Archak of Van Province, aged 50, now live in Armenian Village near Baku; The Refugee Committee supports me.

In the homeland I lived in our own house; our family consisted of 13 people, now 12 (twelve) are alive, one died in Baku.

Since the mobilisation everything started to change; years of acquaintanceship between Armenians and Kurds instantly turned into enmity; the ghost of the forthcoming disaster was obvious for prescient people – this time Armenia would be the arena of hostilities.

The war started. The Turks were urgently transporting troops to the borders. When moving troops from Kotol Gyal³ they would always rest at Archak. Since there were no state military barracks, houses were regularly emptied. It was painful to see children being moved from one house to another in the middle of the night in winter for the police and troops.

In November 1914 I sent to Van my daughter-in-law with her two children, my daughters Heghiné, Seneké, Bersabé, Mariam and my son Armenak since it was more dangerous in the village. We knew from past experience that villages were more exposed to violence when something happened.

I, my husband Harutyun and my son Haikak stayed in the village; we couldn't all leave in order not to raise suspicion. In the autumn the retreat of Andranik's army from the Saray line and Khalil Bey's advance along the Vozm line enraged the Turkish government. Armenian deserters started returning home because their arms were taken away.

In the spring of 1915 the situation grew worse. Armenian deserters were being killed. The *mudur* would tell the villagers obliquely to take their wives and children as far from the village as possible. Many villagers listened to what he said and sent their children to Van a few days before the events.

There had been an order to exterminate Armenians, and here is a fact to prove that: nothing had yet happened in Van when the *kaymakam* of Saray (I don't know his name) arrived at my village with his detachment on April 5, stayed there as usual with his soldiers without any suspicious movements. At night, without any villager knowing, they left in an unknown direction so those in the village thought the danger had passed, but the same night they entered the neighboring Armenian village of Mandan and killed all the young people there

(Mandan is 7-8 *versts* to the north of Archak) with their swords in the silence of the night, not sparing even women and children.

This is another fact that comes to show that the Turks are perverting the facts trying now to convince the European states that "the massacres were the result of rebellion." Van had not started its self-defence. The disturbances of the Van self-defence started on April 7, whereas the *kaymakam* of Saray had settled accounts with Mandan on the night of April 6.

The same day they returned to our village at 4 o'clock in the evening. A terrible turmoil and wailing started. I jumped up from my place with head uncovered and what did I see? The village was besieged; the remaining men were running frantically under the hail of bullets trying to escape but in vain... The villains' trap closed in. There were corpses all over the village. The setting sun was unable to dry the blood. The *kaymakam* was walking proudly in his shoes that had become red. Finishing the job he moved with his detachment and Kurdish *Hamidiye* to Kharakonis to accomplish there what he managed to do in Archak and Mandan. They besieged Kharakonis the same day starting at 7 in the evening but their luck was dependent on their guns... he couldn't make it...

Let others tell about it, those who have seen it, and I'll tell what I saw with my own eyes. Let the historians record on the pages of the world history the bloody events of those days that we, the living corpses, witnessed.

We were wandering in the village like homeless birds unable to find each other. We were sent to the house of Karo from Van under the supervision of Turkish and Kurdish *millis*. Powerless are the pens of narrators to describe precisely and in cold blood those events... Little children, 3-10 years-old, were separated from their mothers to be taken to the slaughter house...; some 25-30 children were separated like that. Some mothers were shot because they didn't want to part from their dear children. [...]

There were so many innocent victims. Prayers were useless. God too had fled our village, He had definitely left with Andranik... because he had hot steel shards with him. So my Armenian people, remember from now on, where there is steel, there is almighty God.

Our tortures lasted for fifteen days, we were hungry, thirsty, our food was roasted wheat. We were like skeletons and were sent to Van where we found the rest of our families. We emigrated to Baku with the others where my daughter Mariam died. The rest are alive supported by the Refugee Committee.

For and on behalf of my mother: S. Harutyunian.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 437, pp. 24 rev.-26 rev., original, handwritten.

No 5

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ASLIK GHAZARIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF DAGHVERAN OF ARCHAK IN
VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

I, Aslik Ghazaryan, 30 years old, from the village of Taghveran in the Archak district of Van province, now live in Baku in Armenian Village at 12, Nagornaya No 12. The Refugee Committee supports me.

At our homeland I lived in our house where the family consisted of 8 people. Now there is only me and my sister-in-law.

My husband Manuk, my brothers-in-law Sion, Hayro and my father-in-law Hato were killed. My daughter Sona and my brother-in-law's daughter Paytsar died.

During the mobilisation the Turks came to our village and conscripted the young men. From our family my husband Manuk and my brother-in-law Sion were conscripted. After that they were coming to our village to take gold coins, then wheat, barley, hay, sheep, pack animals, oxen, cheese and other necessities. At the end of the autumn when Armenians were disarmed and started deserting, my husband Manuk and my brother-in-law Sion fled and after staying in Van for several days returned to the village. And so they were living like refugees sometimes in the village, sometimes in the town. After that the Turkish *olam* in winter was unbearable: they were coming, collecting hay, straw, wheat, flour and other necessities and sending to Archak and Saray throwing all this over men's and women's back. They had taken and had been using pack animals for weeks.

In the beginning of April 1915, after the *kaymakam* of Saray massacred Artchak, Kurds from Rahmen²¹ joined Kurds from other villages, attacked our village and killed all the men with bullets or daggers. The same day in our house they killed my father-in-law Hato and my brother-in-law Hayro with several shots; my husband Manuk and my brother-in-law Sion, who had fled to the mountains, were also found by the Kurds and killed. We saw their corpses near the village. After killing all the men they gathered all of us in the house of Ghazar from our village and robbed us leaving us only in underwear. Then they selected the beautiful women, more than 20 of them, and took them to some other place. After keeping them for several hours they let some three-four of them free and took the rest away, and we haven't seen them since. Those Kurds

²¹Rahmen is a Kurdish village two hours' distance away from our village Taghveran.

who stayed with us raped the women and committed all sorts of atrocities. None of us escaped this calamity, not even me and my sister-in-law.

After keeping us in the village for a day they sent us to Kharakonis. There we found the local captive women with whom the next day we reached Archak suffering a lot of unbearable torments and losses. I shared all the tortures they suffered. (She tells about the time they spent in Archak, about their sufferings before reaching Van, like the witness No 1 from Kharakonis⁴, since she was among them.)

After staying in Van for two weeks we were liberated in May and returned to our village where my daughter Sona and my sister-in-law's daughter Paytsar died.

During the July 1915 retreat we emigrated and came to Baku.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 18-19, original, handwritten.

No 6

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SATENIK PARUNAKIAN TESTIMONY ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHARAKONIS OF ARCHAK IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

Satenik Parunakyan, 30 years old, from the village of Kharakonis, now I live in Baku in Armenian Village at 12, Nagornaya No 20. The Refugee Committee supports me.

Our family consisted of 10 people: I, my husband Arshak, my mother-in-law, my mother-in-law's mother-in-law, my brothers-in-law Karapet and Atom, my sister-in-law Hripsimé with her three children – Varsenik (6 years old), Aghavard (3) and the newborn Vardanush. Only six of them are alive now.

Our village consisted of 300 households, all Armenians. After the war was declared, the Kurds started oppressing us a lot: they would take away our cattle. We would return to our houses after dinner in order not to stay in the fields after dark. The government would take *amele* labourers from us – a person and an ox from a household. They were working for three-four days and then returning home and they weren't killed. Most trouble was caused during conscription. My husband and my brother-in-law were taken to the army and my other brother-in-

law was taken to *amele*, and they kept him there all the time. However after 4 months they all ran away and came home.

When Saray was taken, my husband and brother-in-law for the first time took part in the fighting and fled after the Saray fighting.

After Easter, on Green Sunday⁵, when the *kaymakam* had surrounded Archak with his soldiers, our village was surrounded by the Kurds. All the men from Archak came to our village. They said that the priest was killed, that he was buried, that all young men were killed. We were afraid that they would massacre us too, so the village men gathered and decided not to allow the Turks and Kurds to enter the village and started preparing for resistance. All men with weapons took up positions around the village; women and children gathered in the church. Before that the residents of Archak, Mandan and Daghveran villages had come to our village. As for the residents of Azar, they had been already living in our village as refugees for two months. Their village was robbed and destroyed two months earlier. There were 100-150 armed men in all, armed with rifles and pistols. They were headed by Shirin Yeghiazarian. All the villagers were listening to them because it was "the committee."

Our village had a good position: on one side was lake Archak; Chanik was on the other side. There was only one approach road to our village, and our men positioned themselves there. The next day in the evening the Kurds started to approach our village and attacked at sunrise. The fighting lasted all day. In the evening the Kurds pulled back. At night our men gathered to take counsel: they couldn't resist for long. The next morning the Kurds would return with more forces and the fight would grow bigger. Taking into account everything we decided to leave the village and go to Van via Ghzljja. All the young men and fighters took whoever they could from their families and left for Van at night. Those who couldn't go stayed in the village.

Only two men were killed in the fight that day – Sakho from Mandan and Kakos from Kharakonis. Many Kurds had reportedly been killed.

The next day the Kurds again surrounded the village and started shooting. Getting no reply, they little by little approached our positions, then approached the village and finally entered it killing all the men they met. We had already left the church and were in the big house of Bazo's Vanes. There were few men with us, mostly elderly; we were mostly women and children. We were in Vanes's house and the men were in the cattle shed and had locked the door. The village head Giro (Grigor) was with us. The village head and Bazo's Ohannes hadn't fled from Kharakonis because they hoped that their Kurdish friend Ali Bek, who was the *Agha* of Mizr and who had saved them during the 1895 massacres, would save them again. Bazo's Ohannes with his daughters and 5 sons had gone to bring Ali Bek but all 12 of them were killed in the field. When the Kurds entered the village they came to the house where we were hiding and tried to open the

door. They were assuring us: "Don't be afraid, open the door, we are looking for men." We didn't open the door; they broke it and rushed in. A big group of armed Kurds entered our yard and began looking for men. During the third search they found the village head Giro, pulled him out and killed him in our presence. They undressed him leaving his corpse in his underwear. After finding the village head they started searching again, entered the cattle shed, pulled out 5 men from there and killed all of them in front of our eyes. They again entered the cattle shed and this time pulled out Kazar's Mko who was 15; he started begging: "Don't kill me, I'll give you money." When they demanded the money, he said the money was with his mother, and the mother was pleading: "For God's sake, don't say that I am his mother." The Kurds asked who Mko's mother was, and we said he had no mother. They killed him too with a sword in our presence.

We managed to save a boy, Nazo from Azar: we had changed his clothes, dressed him like a woman and gave him a baby as if it was his. That Nazo stayed with us all the time, reached Van safely but was killed there during the fighting.

The Kurds didn't do anything to women on that day; they were busy plundering only. The next day they gathered us and women from other houses and took them to the priest's house. There were corpses of men and children everywhere. There were no men among us. They were examining us and if they found a man they would take him away and kill him. They didn't spare even children; they would immediately kill any male child they found. Our boys had forelocks so they were looking at their heads and if someone had a forelock, they would immediately take them away from us and kill them. So we started to tear off the children's forelocks with our teeth (we had no scissors). They checked my children's heads several times but fortunately didn't notice anything, so they were saved. We stayed at the priest's house for several days. We had no bread, no other food. We were taking water from a well and feeding children with it. Many children died there of hunger. During those four-five days we suffered a lot of misfortunes: anyone among the Kurds would come any time they wished, day or night, taking away our silver and golden jewellery, searching us, taking everything they found, taking from us the clothes they liked, selecting the beautiful women and girls, taking them away and returning in the morning; some four-five women never came back. One day they gathered us all, took away anything that was left and sent us to Archak early in the morning. They surrounded us. Those who were a little late were beaten. When we reached the Archak river, they forced everybody to get into the river and cross it. The stream was strong and we couldn't cross it but they were forcing us. We were crossing the river with my mother-in-law and the water took her away. I had my two little children in my arms and my older daughter, 12-year-old Varsenik, was holding on to my skirt; the river took her away too. Many women and children got drowned in the river on that day. There were corpses everywhere, on the banks

or in the river floating away. Our neighbor's wife Antaram was trying to cross the river with her three children. One of them was drowning and grasped her mother. The situation was hopeless: the desperate mother was with her own hands pouring water into the drowning girl's mouth to get her drowned so she could save her two other children.

It was a cold day. The water was cold. We were all frozen. We somehow made it to the other bank, frozen and turned blue. My children were wet and frozen. I couldn't warm them up. *Aghavard* died on the way, on my hands. I buried her by the road. I reached Archak with only one of my children saved. The Kurds knew all of us. When we reached Archak, Shirin's family was with us. They took his 8-9-year-old son away from his mother, asked him a lot of questions, came back in two hours and took away the child's mother, little brother and sisters, 5 people in all, ruthlessly slaughtered them and threw them into the well. We stayed in Archak for about a month. The *mudur* would give us a daily ration of one barley loaf (weighing about one pound). We survived on it. Every night they would come, under the candle light, choose the pretty ones, take them away and return the next day. The *mudur* was trying to prevent that; he had assigned guards not to let anyone approach us but it didn't work; they were always coming, ignoring the guards. It lasted for a whole month. No one was saved from the visits of Turkish soldiers and *Hamidiye* Kurds. Many children were trampled during these night raids, there were almost no boys left with us.

Our place was horrible – we slept and relieved ourselves outdoors, in the yard, in mud and dirt and it went on for a month. After a month they gathered us and sent us to Van.

The *mudur* had written a letter to take us to the government office.

It was a long road and we were unable to walk: sick and hungry, many of us fell down almost lifeless and could not continue the journey. The *millis* accompanying us would beat them, kill many of them and leave them on the road. So we had many losses on our way to Van. Closer to Van there was a fight - Armenians were fighting against Turks; we were caught between two lines of fires. The Turks didn't accompany us anymore; they let us go into the Armenian part. We were already in a dark alley when the Armenians recognized us and let us into the town.

When we were going to Van, the Turks took two women away, but they managed to flee from them in a few days and join us. However, they didn't live long; they died in Van after a few days.

I found my family in Van. When the emigration started we too fled to Tiflis. My mother-in-law died upon arrival there. All the rest are alive now.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 22-26 rev., original, handwritten.

No 7
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR POGHOS AVETISYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF SEVAN OF ARCHAK IN VAN
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 12, 1916
Karavansara

Van – Archak - village of Sevan

Former state. 70 Armenian households, 45 Kurdish households. In the summer of 1914 the 70 Armenian households had 2,000 head of sheep, 1,000 head of other animals which were all robbed by the Kurds in the spring of 1915. There was an old building with architectural features for the church and a school.

Mobilisation. At first the names of the village conscripts were delivered by policemen. The policemen would stay in the village for days behaving licentiously, entering houses on different pretexts and even molesting the women. If the conscript they were looking for was missing, they would become even more licentious. They would have day-long feasts at the expense of the villagers, and if they were not satisfied with something, there were beatings and torture.

At the end of the *mobilisation* they wouldn't even demand legal documents - they would just enter the village and take away anybody they met, without paying attention to their age.

Requisition. They confiscated a great amount of straw, hay, fuel, barley, wheat, socks, gloves, sheep, ghee, bulgur without any payment; they just gave a promissory note instead. The villagers had to transport all this for days with their pack animals or, if they didn't have any, on their own back. On these occasions there occurred a lot of beating, torture and all kinds of abuse. Often, when they couldn't find men, they would force women to do this hard work. The Turks would express their hatred towards Armenians, blaming them for making friends with the Russians, for hiding weapon, for striving for a kingdom...

The massacre. The looming disaster was felt upon the declaration of war. The attitude of the Turks and Kurds towards the Armenians changed immediately: more licentiousness and hatred was felt. Preparations by the Turks were apparent to the naked eye. Cartloads of weapons were taken out from Van and distributed among Muslims. The government itself was providing abundant ammunition to the Turks and Kurds.

The massacres started in parallel to the April fighting in Van. The thugs were fellow Kurdish villagers headed by Rspi Salo and his minion Khasho. The massacres started upon the warrant of the governor of Van Jevtet Bey. One of the Turks from Van, Abdul Rahman, who was Hamat *Agha's* son and had land and

property, cattle and sheep in Sevan, was of primary importance in organizing the massacres.

The person who gave information about the massacre had experienced everything described here. He says:

"One day fellow Kurdish villagers convinced us to go with them to the town taking with us food and *Hamidiye* tezkere (official documents certifying age) since that was what Jevtet Bey had ordered. Some of the villagers having a foreboding about the intentions of the Kurds immediately hid in the pits and barns of the village, while 74 of us believing the Kurds, left the village surrounded by them. At first the Kurds showed no signs of enmity. On the contrary, they pretended to be friends, treated us to cigarettes and tried to win over our confidence.

Two-three miles out of the village, near a place called Plnkots Tsar, when we reached a gorge, they suddenly changed their attitude, started to swear and dividing into groups of three, surrounded us and started to consolidate. One group of them took the road to Van and surrounding it from three sides fired a volley. The Armenians fell one upon another like walnuts. After the first volley I started to run, my clothes were burnt in several places but thank God I wasn't hit. Reaching a white limestone I hid behind it. Others also tried to run away like me but the Kurds ran them down and killed them. They didn't notice me and passed by. Stooping behind the stone I was waiting for them to come, I was looking down and thinking that if they kill me, let them kill from behind, so that I don't see it. But they didn't notice me. They killed everybody but the village head whom they took back to the village. When it got dark I ran to the mountains.

The Kurds took the village head and returned to the village. They skinned him with a knife, blinded him and put him in the middle of the village with his head down and feet up. Then they searched the village, found the hiding men and immediately killed them. Then they gathered 20 boys aged 10, 12, and 15, took them out of the village and slaughtered them one by one. During the torture one of the boys tried to comfort the others saying that they were dying for our nation and faith.

They selected beautiful women and girls and put them into a house, sending the others to Van. The number of abducted women was about 20; nothing is known about them until this day.

They are as follows: 1) Tsovik, sister of the village head Karapet, wife of Khanes Atanes, aged 30 ; 2) Khanes Samvel's wife Garo, aged 35; 3) Tsovik's very beautiful daughter, aged 20, and her two younger sisters; 4) Varduhi – Khachatur Asroyan's daughter, aged 25; 5) Sirun, wife of Papin from Sharur.

The women who were sent to Van, tormented by the policemen and Kurds, threw their children into the river.

The village showed no resistance having fallen prey to deceit. They committed all kinds of atrocities to women even forcing them to strip themselves naked and move around in front of them.

The list of victims from the village of Sevan of Artchak in Van as complete as possible⁶.

The information is provided by local resident and witness Poghos Avetisian.
Recorded by Suren Meloyan.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 433, pp. 1-5, original, handwritten.

No 8

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS PRIEST GHEVOND SARUKHANIAN AND HIS WIFE ON THE MASSACRE AT THE ARMENIAN VILLAGES OF TIMAR CLUSTER OF VILLAGES OF VAN DISTRICT

September 21, 1916
Dilijan

Van-Timar

Villages massacred during the fights of April 1915:

Asparatsin (Mother of God Monastery) – 60 households; Darabek – 70 households, it had a church; Janik – 120 households, a church, a school; Sosrat – 65 households of which 35 were Armenian, a church, a school; Khayents – 110 households, a church⁷, a school; Trlashen – 110 households, a church, a school; Alyur – 400 households, two churches and a school; Marmet – 120 households, a church and a school; Kyusnents – 130 households, a church, a school, Kyochani – 100 households, a church and a school; Gyolu – 80 households of which 20 Armenian; Ererin – 130 households, a church and a school.

Upon declaration of war we suffered all kinds of pressures and hardships. There appeared some kind of anarchy: the policemen, soldiers, Kurds arrogantly and freely treated our villages like their own homes doing whatever they wished with our property and us.

First the mobilisation was carried out by legal conscription of men of appropriate age but later on it changed; they were invading our villages and taking away all men under the pretext of conscription.

Simultaneously they were collecting all kinds of food as war duties and donations: wheat, barley, hay, straw, bulgur, ghee, oxen, horses, sheep, carts, clothes, sacks, socks etc.

The villagers had to transport the collected food on their back or by pack animals crossing several days distance.

The massacre. After the declaration of war and particularly after the Russian troops and volunteer groups appeared at the borders, the attitude of the Turks suddenly deteriorated and bad news started circulating. Sometimes the Kurds would make threats of massacres. The doubts grew higher especially when the Governor of Van Jevtet Bey returned from the Persian front in April 1915. Our situation was growing more and more doubtful. The Turks were openly expressing their hitherto restrained hatred towards us. The event at the village of Pairak back on March 14 was one manifestation of that strained mood when the government used cannons against Armenians who were defending themselves from the Turkish and Kurdish mob. One could easily see how the government was secretly inciting the Muslim elements against the Armenians. Every day huge numbers of weapons were taken out from Van arsenals and distributed among the Muslim population.

The massacres started under the above conditions signaled by the Van rebellion.

Massacre at the village of Asparatsin. The Kurdish *agha* of Irishat village attacked the village with about 500 *millis* on April 8. About 30 armed men of the village resisted and for a while stopped Turks from invading the village but their resistance lasted only three hours. Due to their small number and lack of bullets the Armenians retreated and only a small number of them escaped while the majority, together with women and children, fell prey to the Turks' atrocities. The Turks freely entered the village and started slaughtering the people. Most of the village residents were exterminated: some were drowned in the sea²², others were slaughtered, some were burnt or killed by various tortures. Young women were abducted and raped. Only some villagers managed to reach the coast and escape to the nearest island of Lim.

Massacre at the village of Darabek. The fellow Turkish villagers were getting ready in advance to start the massacre. The events at Asparatsin served as an excuse. After finishing with Asparatsin, the mob split into two parts. One part went to Darabek and joining the local Muslims started the massacre. There was no resistance. About 30 men were killed as well as many women and children. It was announced in advance that Turks and Kurds should not hide Armenians but when a Kurd from Darabek hid two Armenians despite the order and they learned about it, they first killed the Kurd and then the Armenians.

²² Lake Van is meant.

Massacre at the village of Janik²³. After the fighting started in Van, the local government assured the villagers that there was no danger for them and kept them in the village. But soon the mob responsible for the Asparatsin massacre grew bigger and attacked the village. They entered the village without any resistance and started the massacre on the streets. It lasted for the whole day. There was no resistance at all. On that day 150 men were killed as well as many women and children. Some widowed women ran to the sea and managed to reach the island of Lim where they stayed till the Russian army entered Van.

Massacre at the village of Sosrat. The day when Ishkhan⁸ was killed, a Dashnak⁹ party agent named Sirun, in accordance with the order from Van, headed to the province in order to consolidate the villages before the fight started and organize self-defense. However, Sirun managed to get to Birkarip only and inform the neighboring villages with messengers about the order of the center. They hardly managed to consolidate villagers of Shagalty, Sosrat, Goms and Birkarip and advance to the island of Lim to take shelter there. However, near the location called Tasmalu Spitak Qar, the Turks attacked from the side of Janik and Asparatsin and besieged them. The fight started in the black rocks above the village Khzhishk, near the village Ater. The fight lasted a whole day; Armenians were little by little weakening but at that time the group from Aljavaz named "Kopit" with about 60 armed and brave fighters came to their aid from the island of Lim. They were Dashnaks. The fight recommenced, and the Turks were trying to occupy the Dursi Tan positions of the island of Lim and cut the Armenians' way for retreat. But the Turks were little by little weakening and started to retreat. Armenians manage to occupy the Dursi Tan¹⁰ position of Lim and the people crossed the sea and moved to the island. The enemy was forced to stop the fighting and retreat. Armenians lost 7 people in that fight, the Turks about 20.

Massacre of Kyochan village. Most of the men from this village had in advance fled to the mountains. The mob attacked the village killing everyone they met; several houses were burnt, the village was completely plundered.

Massacre of Alyur village. Two days before the fighting in Van began (April 4-5) villagers of Atnakants, Bayraq, Trlashen villages of Timar, following the order of the subcommittee, moved their families to Alyur to get ready for self-defense.

Due to the events of Khzhishk village ammunition was taken out from Van to give to the mob. Four young men from the village Lesk that was close to the town had in advance informed Atnakants village to organize an attack at the ammunition transport. With 22 armed men we stopped them at the old cemetery of Trlashen village; there were 25 Turks who showed no resistance, left the

²³Here was the residence of the head of the province – the mudur⁶⁴; the village was the centre of the province.

ammunition, the animals and fled. We captured about 8,000 cartridges for Mauser and Martin rifles¹¹, two horses, two oxen, one donkey, sugar, cigarettes etc... Along with the above ammunition we found also two pages of announcements in Turkish in red letters. After we had them read for us we understood that they said something like the following: "The Christians are fighting to exterminate the name of Muslim, all Muslims are fighting for their s[acred] religion, this war is a religious war, not a single Christian should be spared, do not spare Armenians, neither young nor old, slay them ruthlessly..." Then the duties of the Muslims before their faith and motherland were listed in detail. It threatened everyone who would oppose them and hide Armenians or other Christians. The announcement was signed "Enver." We gave these announcements to young men from Lesk to take to Van.

The policemen who fled went to Geolu village²⁴ where they were joined by the mob that attacked Khzhishk village. The *mudur* again sent policemen to Van for ammunition. In a day quite a big amount of ammunition was sent there accompanied with 150 soldiers. This time we didn't dare to attack them and they managed to reach Geolu without hindrance. In a day (on April 16) about 40 Kurds as a test attacked Khavents village and prepared to drive the sheep off. The residents had left the village beforehand, only 6 young men happened to be there. The Kurds were driving the sheep off and some of the soldiers accompanying them tried to enter the village. But when the Armenians fired their rifles they fled. The next day some 500 of them approached Alyur village and took positions at a distance of one mile. They also sent a word to the Turk residents of neighboring Ayants and Malakasm villages who joined them and besieged Alyur from the west and from the hill of St George monastery¹².

We had been preparing for resistance in advance foreseeing the coming danger. Our positions were at the gardens surrounding the village, on high houses where we had opened holes in different places.

The besiegers began approaching the village little by little, we showed no sign. Alyur was divided into two quarters – Eastern and Western. The Eastern group was headed by a young Dashnak named Suren Hovhannesyanyan, and the Western group by a man called Abisoghom who had been appointed a sub-commissioner by the Dashnak party cell of the village. People of about 800 households had gathered in Alyur village; some 160 of them were armed with regular weapons¹³ collected from villagers of Alyur and neighboring villages. Those armed with smaller weapons were positioned at the beginning of streets and in houses to protect people in case of an attack.

When the mob was quite close to the village, Suren from the Eastern quarter signaled to start shooting but the village head didn't allow saying that maybe

²⁴ The police centre of the province was here.

they didn't want to harm the village and just wanted to pass by and that the government could be trying our loyalty. Convinced by the village head's words we continued to keep silent. The Kurds and the policemen entered the village without hindrance and immediately started plundering and shot two people they met. The fighters from the Eastern group couldn't stand it any longer and opened fire. After the very first volley the invaders panicked and fled horror-stricken leaving 35 prisoners. They left the village, hurriedly took to their positions and started shooting non-stop and aimlessly. In the evening those who besieged the village from the east pulled back but those besieging from the hill of St George monastery went on shooting till the morning.

At night we had a meeting to discuss the situation. We considered several problems related to self-defense. It was decided to break some walls in the houses and open holes to facilitate communication. We also touched upon the fact that during the fight some Alyur villagers had left their friends taking shelter in hiding places prepared in advance. After dwelling on this problem everyone took an oath to firmly hold their positions and fight wholeheartedly.

At dawn the shooting stopped, and the mob that pulled back the previous evening returned and took their positions. After some time two Turks approached the village with white handkerchiefs in their hands and wished to get in. Most of the fighters didn't want to let them in but residents of Alyur with their village head and the Dashnak representative Abisoghom demanded to allow the delegates into the village. The delegates were from the neighbouring Malakasm village; they persuaded us not to fight saying that the government had no bad intentions about us, that the Kurds were behind those barbarities and they would be punished, that we were neighbors and didn't have to become enemies: "We don't care that you killed a couple of Kurds the previous day; is it worth worrying for those dogs? The government will never condemn you for that. So it'd be better for your village head to come with us to Geolu. There is the property and cattle robbed from you; the government has taken it from the Kurds. Let your village head come with us and bring everything back, stay quietly in your houses. This is the good will of the government and us. Some soldiers will come and protect your villages from attacks."

Under the influence of the village head Gyulamir, the villagers accepted the offer and demanded that the village head should go to Geolu with the Turks and conclude peace. While we together with the leader Suren wanted to wait foreseeing a possible trap, the local committee again spoke against us and we were obliged to obey.

Soon the village head left the village on horseback accompanied by the two Turks. At Geolu the Turks tried to win him over giving many promises and offered to take the property plundered a few days ago and return to the village but also taking some 50 policemen with him saying: "Keep them for a day, they

will go to the town the next day. Let some of them stay in your village and protect you." The village head agreed to all their proposals and returned taking the policemen with him. But the policemen didn't enter the village, only the village head came in and told us not to shoot; without telling us anything he hurriedly collected a large basket of food and took it to the policemen also signing a paper that the village was attacked by the Kurds and not the government.

On returning the village head Gyulamir announced that there were some 90 government soldiers who we had to feed and keep till the next day when they leave.

With the hope to somehow avoid fighting, the people believed Gyulamir's promises. Trying to win more confidence the Turks again resorted to a stratagem pretending that they didn't want to enter the village and asked for a place outside the village. A monastery named Narek was not far from the village. First the Turks were taken there to stay overnight but they didn't agree saying they didn't want to commit sacrilege riding their horses into a sacred place. So they suggested going to the village and all of a sudden, despite our anger and indignation, the policemen on horseback entered the village led by the village head; they were immediately followed by the mob – Turks, Kurds...

Upon seeing that, some of the fighters wanted to shoot both the village head and Abisoghom but the latter had strong supporters which made it impossible.

At that time Armenian fighters were at the positions. It was dark when the Turks entered the village and led by the village head were placed in houses. However, the village head was not content with that either and demanded that young men should come down from the positions and serve the "guests."

When Armenians from neighboring villages saw that it was impossible to fight and defend themselves, and understanding the scheme, they decided to leave to village but some of the Turks soon came out and took important roads under their control. Some 100 armed people from other villages, when realizing that they would be slaughtered, somehow left the village but later when they returned to see what was going on, they were arrested by the guards.

In the morning more Turkish and Kurdish forces arrived and entered the village without hindrance. They demanded that the village head Gyulamir should collect all weapons and gather all men. The village head collected one by one all the men and weapons and showed the shelters and dug-outs where people were hiding. Those dug-out were dug in vineyards, wells and very covert places. Thus he collected everyone and turned them in; as for the places he didn't know about, he would find them out by beating and torturing women. In such a way about 260 men were gathered and put in the building of the church under very strict control; they were not allowed out even to relieve themselves.

The prisoners wanted to escape by making a hole in the sacristy of the church but the village head again convinced them saying: "Have pity for the church, don't do it for nothing, there is no danger for you." After keeping the prisoners for three days, at night they took them out of the village to a place named Kakan-Pasek, tied them with ropes in groups and shot all 260 at a time with one volley. Only one of them, a young man from Trlashen named Gabriel Ayvazian, was saved in the following way.

Gabriel was tied together with his nephews; after the volley he fell down and appearing under the corpses was saved.

Note – Before the above killings in the village the Turks demanded the corpses of the Kurds killed on the first day of the fighting. The corpses were taken out from a pit shown by Gyulamir. The Kurds were enraged seeing the corpses and vowed to kill hundreds of Armenians for each killed Kurd. After taking out the corpses, they took off Gyulamir's clothes and shoes, knocked him down and started torturing him. First they cut out his eyes, then put a cat into his pants and beat him to death. Then they threw his corpse into the dump.

After killing the above-mentioned 260 people they returned to the village in the morning and started plundering and raping. Many men had hidden in the houses in women's clothes; they found them and killed in the village. They stayed in the village for whole ten days and committed various atrocities to women.

A former sub-commissioner named Sargis Mndoyan offered resistance and killed a policeman with a Semet¹⁴ pistol. He was caught and taken to their chief who asked Sargis what he killed the policeman with. Sargis showed the pistol and said: "With this." Asking a few more questions the chief ordered to kill him. They put him on the square, first cut his eyes out, then cut his two arms and torturing killed him.

After Alyur they massacred one by one Amenashat, Marmet, Jirashen, Annavank, Tsaktar and Khavents villages.

The massacre in Khavents occurred as follows: The policemen entered the village resorting to cunning: they gained the villagers' favor and stayed in the village for several days having a good time, feasting and playing cards with some villagers participating... But after Alyur was obliterated the policemen slaughtered all villagers one by one and plundered the village.

Note – Before the massacre of Sosrat the Turkish fellow villagers had a meeting to decide how to take Armenians by surprise and kill them; they decided to invite a couple of Armenians to pretend that they had gathered to think how to protect Armenians. They lulled the vigilance of the Armenians by this guile but a Kurd named Mhé informed Armenians about the scheme; however, they didn't believe him. The Kurd persuaded Armenians more than once to find a way out and leave the village but in vain...The massacre started and everybody was

killed. The priest of Sosrat who was hiding in the dump was taken out and shot by 25 bullets. Mhé saved some people and secretly took them to the coast from where they managed to reach the island of Lim.

Marmet – Armenians of Marmet went to the Turkish village Zeva, handed in their weapons to the Turks and asked for protection. A Kurdish mob leader named Fohrat reassured residents of Marmet of their support and sent them back to the village. After some time the Turks and Kurds besieged the village, captured 120 men, took them out of the village and killed them near Avet's water-mill between villages Marmet and Amenashat.

Yekmal – Residents of this village were not deceived and fleeing saved themselves.

Residents of Atnakants and Pajraq villages who fled to Alyur stayed near their villages after treason in Alyur having frequent clashes with a small number of enemies until the Russians came.

Incident at Payraq village²⁵

At the end of March 1915 minor clashes started between Turks, Kurds and Armenians in Van districts.

Payraq village which was close to Turkish villages had 30 households and some 850-900 domestic animals.

A day before the incident, rifle shots were heard at a Trlashen filed. Horrified villagers left their field work and gathered in the village. At that time there was a group of Dashnak young men in Payraq who had just arrived from the town who gathered the men from three villages (Trlashen, Payraq, Atnakants) and pursued shooter Turks. A fight started between our men and the Turks. After 12 hours of fighting we had one killed – Nalband Mkrtich from the town. Several Turks were killed. The Turks retreated killing 8 other Armenian on their way. After some time a cannon was brought. Armenians wanted to attack and capture the cannon but Misak's group from the town interfered and didn't allow it, to stop the expansion of the rebellion. Residents of the three villages retreated leaving their villages that were burnt by government forces.

Note – The first part till the moment when Turks entered Alyur with guile was told by the priest from Atnakan Ghevond Sarukhanian. The second part was told by his wife who stayed in the village till the very end of events.

Told by piest Ghevond Sarukhanian and his wife.

Recorded by Suren Meloyan.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 464, pp. 1-8, original, handwritten.

²⁵This incident is reported in my story.

No 9

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR AHARON GRIGORIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ASTVATSATSIN OF TIMAR
CLUSTER OF VILLAGES IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 23, 1916

Dallar

Aharon Grigorian from Surb Astvatsatsin village in Berkri district of Van recounts the following about the massacre at their village.

Our village had 70 households, 642 residents, 1,300 buffaloes, oxen, cows and horses, 1,500 head of sheep, 3,200 units of wheat and barley. There was also a church (Holy Mother-of-God monastery) and two schools. Now all the old objects of value, manuscripts and relics are plundered by Sleman Bey from Irishat and the mob and were burnt and destroyed together with the village.

Before the war started, the government made an announcement and sent in the lists of conscripts aged between 25 and 45 demanding that they report in 24 hours to the military authorities at the government headquarters. Those who did not report would be court-martialled and all subjects without exception would be punished most severely.

Twenty-four hours after the announcement everybody gathered together - all 120 men - and happily reported to the police chief Amar Bek and were sent to Van. After long wanderings there, as a result of an appeal by the Patriarchate, some 80 men aged 35-45 were temporarily released to take part in field works, and only retained 40 men aged 25-35 who were sent to Baghesh, Saray and Karin.

Two hundred and fifty units of wheat, 15 units of bulgur, 145 units of barley, 8 liters of ghee, 26 head of sheep, 140 pairs of socks, 85 pairs of woolen gloves, 120 pairs of *trekhs*¹⁵, 560 hens, 1,700 *oka* of baked bread, 50 cartloads of hay, 60 cartloads of straw and 1,500 *kurush* in cash were forcibly taken from the villagers as war duty.

The villagers left their house work and carried all this with their animals and in winter time, as *amele taburu* on their backs to the villages of Archak, Mollahasan and Janik and from there to Van, Baghesh, Pulanig and Manazkert. The collection and delivery of all that was done under the supervision of *chetés*. Their presence and licentiousness was the most unbearable thing for us. We got used to them slaughtering our chickens and sheep, feeding horses lavishly with barley and hay. During transportation the troops at Archak took away and slaughtered 12 oxen.

After finishing all those labours and servitudes, the government took another 45 people as *amele* to work on the roads between Berkri and Janik and we were providing food for them.

We received letters from conscripted men who were saying that they were living in unbearable and unfavourable conditions, staying hungry, thirsty, naked and barefoot for days and in their own clothes from the first day.

When war was declared, they wrote in their letters that they were disarmed and worked as *amele* at the Hasan Galay roads and trenches at the disposal of German engineers and officers. Thus, in their letters they would call their life as "Pharaoh's captivity" and "The Passion of Christ". All through the day they went hungry and thirsty and worked hard. At night they had no beds and were sleeping on the roads or in trenches. They had contagious diseases and no medical care, so many of them were obliged to run away and return to their homes.

After that the *kaymakam* of Berkri brought the Armenian villages under the control of 15-60-year-old armed Muslims allegedly because the country was penetrated by Russian spies. Therefore they summoned all the village heads to the government headquarters and announced the same thing: if a spy is caught in a village, all the cattle and property of that village will be confiscated by the government, the village will be burnt and the residents will be tried by a military tribunal.

Disarmament of Armenian soldiers, arming 15-60-year-old Kurds and Turks as well as such strict attitude and position of the government towards us was a proof of planned massacres.

On April 7, 1915 regular troops under the command of Zia Bey and the mob led by Sleman, Farhat, Arif and Shevki Khurshut Beys besieged the village and started killing all the villagers they caught - in all 150 women, children and men, including the 100-year-old priest of our village Gevorg¹⁶ and his brothers Grigor and Astvatsatur, also Davit, Grigor Muradian.

Some women were forcibly converted to Islam: Altun Soghomonian, Hripsimé Hakobian, Ogher Safarian, Altuz, Susan and Haykanush as well as 25 children aged 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7. They were taken by servants of Arif and Sleman Beys.

We were shocked by that unexpected attack. Soon we felt the shuddering effect of the planned massacre. Under the command of our fellow villager Smbat Aloyan, some 12 people including Daniel Davtian, Martiros Manasian, Harutyun from Gortsot took up arms and resorted to self-defense. During 6 hours of unequal fighting they killed several Kurds and regular soldiers. The enemy burnt the village. The Armenian fighters ran out of cartridges and were burnt in priest Gevorg's house. As for the rest of the residents, we managed to sail on a boat to the island of Lim and took refuge in the Lim monastery where we stayed for 30 days till the Russian and volunteer armies entered Van and occupied the

environs. We returned to our village and waited there. We started reaping and threshing. Soon the July retreat came. We abandoned the harvest and safely passed on to the Caucasus via Berkri. However due to unfavourable conditions on the roads 60 people got sick and died on route and in Etchmiadzin. We settled at various villages of the Ghamarlu region on the order of the Etchmiadzin "Fraternal Aid" committee¹⁷.

On March 15, 1916 the men returned to the homeland and received draft animals and seeds from the United Company¹⁸ and started peaceful work, but during the August retreat they returned to their former settlements. Now they have again started returning to the homeland.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 438, rev. of p.14 and p.16 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 10
TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR VARDAN GALUSTIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ERERIN OF TIMAR CLUSTER OF
VILLAGES IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 8, 1916
Blur

According to Vardan Galustian from the village Ererin of Timar cluster of villages (he was a witness, 42 years old):

Ererin had 180 households and about 1,000 residents, a church and a school named after Hovhannes (with a nice building). The annual revenue of the village was 5,000 units of wheat, 40,000 trusses of hay, 32,000 *litres* of grapes, 500 poods of walnuts, 5,000 poods of apples, 5,000 poods of apricots and other fruits. There was a cuneiform inscription under the church altar that remained under the ruins when the church was burnt. The church had 300 silver crosses, 3 silver-covered Gospels, precious vessels, vestments etc.

The church, the school and 70 houses were burnt.

A month after declaring the mobilisation on 20 July, 1914, all men aged 20-45 were conscripted from Ererin. If the conscripts were absent, their houses were burnt (e.g. Poghos Dumanian's house was burnt). Two hundred units of wheat and barley, 1,800 trusses of hay, 70 sheep, 100 *litres* of ghee and 28 Ottoman liras were confiscated from Ererin for the troops.

Grigor Chgnavorian and Grigor Hayrapetian who deserted from the Turkish army recount the following:

"The Turkish officers would ruthlessly exploit us, take away our money, cruelly beat us and abuse us."

Because of the incident on 13 March, 1915 at Aren village of Alchavaz, when the refugees from that village came to Ererin, 12 policemen headed by tax-collector Omar from Van besieged the village on the pretext of counting the sheep and seeing this some residents of Aren started shooting at them. The next day numerous troops came from Van and burnt the village without any resistance from the locals. On 23 April, 1915, on the mountain over the village, 35 armed young men from Ererin engaged in battle with the soldiers of the above Omar and a Kurdish mob. Eight of them were killed and within the village 17 men and another 9 in the labour battalions were murdered. Omar was acting on the order of Jevtet Pasha. Fazil Salakhian and Mushur Mahmatian from Malakasim, Urfut son of Kusho, Ummut from Amkuberd, Musen Mahmati, Hasan Dawutian and other Kurds raped most of the women in Ererin.²⁶

The residents of Ererin emigrated to the Caucasus on 15 July, 1915. On their way near the Berkri Pass they were attacked by the Kurds and lost 2,000 sheep and cattle. A woman, – Aslik Sahakian and two children, threw themselves into the river, another woman was killed and three girls were seriously wounded.

At present the residents of Ererin live in Blur, Etchmiadzin, Yerevan and Baku.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

Note – When the Kurdish and Turkish mob attacking the Dursi Tun¹⁹ of the Lim monastery saw that they were running out of cartridges, they asked for cartridges from the town which were immediately sent on Jevtet's order. When the tin containers with cartridges reached banks of the Sev River near Atnakan, four armed men from Atnakan attacked the policemen and seized the tin containers with cartridges in one of which there was a letter written by Jevtet with the following contents:

"We have declared Jihad²⁰. Do not spare any Armenian from now on regardless of their gender and age; ruthlessly kill all Armenians and other Christians."

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 426, pp. 3 and rev., original, handwritten.

²⁶If necessary, names of the raped women can be supplied. – Note by G. Nerkararyan

No 11
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GAREGIN HOVSEPIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF MARMET OF TIMAR CLUSTER
OF VILLAGES IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 27, 1916
Ghamarlu

Garegin Hovsepian from the village of Marmet in the Timar cluster of villages recounts the following about the massacre of their village:

The village of Marmet had 160 households and 1,340 Armenian residents.

It had 3,100 sheep, 3,270 different animals, 64,100 units of wheat, 25,150 units of barley, 20,800 units of rye etc.

It had one church²⁷, a school with two grades and a school library with about 2,000 books (novels and historical books) that are now plundered, ruined and burnt.

Before the war (1914) the government of Timar announced that 25-45-year-old conscripts should report in 24 hours to the Timar government head quarters from where they would be sent to appropriate locations. Those who did not report at the appointed time, would be punished as lawbreakers by the War Tribunal. Within 24 hours of the announcement we presented ourselves to the military authorities and were sent to Van. After 15-20 days of wandering in Van, those aged 35-45 were released. Some 35 men were sent as regular troops to Baghesh, Karin, etc.

In our village the government took military service exemption tax of 51 Ottoman gold coins and five and a quarter *kurush* from Hovsep Simonian,, 51 Ottoman gold coins and five and a quarter *kurush* from Petros Manian, 51 Ottoman gold coins and five and a quarter *kurush* from Yeghiazar Harutyunian, 51 Ottoman gold coins and five and a quarter *kurush* from Aziz Margarian, 51 Ottoman gold coins and 5 and a quarter *kurush* from Martiros T[er] Karapetian, 51 Ottoman gold coins and five and a quarter *kurush* from Aharon Davtian, 51 liras and five and a quarter *kurush* from Hakob Mkhitarian, 51 Ottoman gold coins and 5 and a quarter *kurush* from Hovhannes Antonian, 51 liras and five and a quarter *kurush* from Sedrak Minasian, 51 liras and 5 and a quarter *kurush* from Mkrtych Hovhannesian. However, after war was declared the government sent them all as soldiers to Karin without returning their money, and none of them has come back until today.

The government confiscated from villagers as war duty 340 units of wheat, 150 units of barley, 112 units of bulgur, 850 pairs of socks, 800 pairs of gloves,

²⁷The church was named after St. George.

1,200 pairs of *trekhs*, 520 sheep, 20 carts, 80 oxen, and 20 carters; none of them has returned until now. They also took away 40 *litres* of ghee, 5,000 eggs, 450 geese, 150 *litres* of fish and 15 horses.

The villagers transported on their animals all the goods confiscated from us to the village of Avants and stored them in barns. Then in the winter they moved everything on their backs to Khlich-Ketik, Saray, Baghesh and other locations for the soldiers.

Another 40 people were sent by the authorities in Janik to work as *amele* on the road between Van and Vostan. They were working for free and we had to provide for them since the government didn't give them any food.

At that time the government armed those 15-70 year-old Muslims able to carry weapons with Turkish-made Mauser, Egyptian and Martin rifles²¹, organised *cheté* groups and sent them to Armenian villages to collect goods for war. Beatings, torture, and persecution reached their peak. They were entering the houses of Armenians, taking away women's jewellery and in our village they even abducted Hakob Mkhitarian's 12-year-old daughter Piruz, Poghos T[er] Hovhannesyan's 13-year-old daughter Piruz, Pohgos Sultanian's 10-year-old daughter Margrit, Hakob Masikian's 20-year-old daughter (a widow) Margarit whose mother was killed too, Hovhannes Chuekian's 15-year-old daughter Altun, Harutyun Hambarian's 7-year-old daughter Almast. The abductors were completely unknown people, some said to be from Baghesh and Apagha.

After they had stayed in the village for two days and had been treated with hospitality, Mehmet Bey from Haytaran, together with his servants and mob numbering some 700 people, told the villagers on 8 April 1915 through the village head to gather in the church he had to read to them an announcement from the government.

Some 150 residents of the village presented themselves to the Bey who put them into the church and wanted to set them on fire but heeding the entreaties and wails of women tied them together, took them to the mountain called Zhamtan (a quarter of an hour's distance from the village) and killed them there. Among them were the village priest Hakob, the village head Hovhannes, village *aghas* Nshan, Galust, Martiros, Tovmas also Armenak (teacher) and Toros and Margar (church readers).

The next day regular troops headed by the *mudur* of Janik and Mehmet Bey with his servants besieged the village, plundered it, ruthlessly killing everyone they met – about 30 women and children- and burnt the village. Besides, the troops and the Kurds publicly raped Altun Anagian, Mkrtych's wife Sapri, Soghomon's wife, Galust Ter-Hovhannesian's wife Gyulizar. We fled towards Van. Some 25 people who had managed to escape the Turkish and Kurdish atrocities in the village were attacked by Kurds from the village of Zeven who smashed their heads with axes and stones at the gorge of Kchanits. The rest fled

to the village of Avants and were protected there by the local Armenians until the Russian and volunteer armies entered Van and occupied its environs. We returned to our village and started reaping and threshing. Then the July retreat occurred. We left everything and emigrated through the Berkri pass where we were attacked by Kurds from Zilan and Haytaran. About 100 women and 15 children (8-10 years old) were killed or died from fear; another 7 fell into the Bendi-Mahu river and drowned. They were: Arsen Poghosian, aged 10, Harutyun Karapetian, aged 7, Avag, aged 7 and his brothers Mkrtych and Karapet, aged 8-9, etc.

Three women – Nané, Marinos and Mariam, fell ill and died in a field near Apagha. One hundred people died in Igdirdir. Three people – Minas, Mkrtych and Vosken, died in Etchmiadzin.

The rest settled in the Igdirdir and Ghamarlu regions. On March 20, 1916 we returned to our homeland and after getting draught animals and seeds from the United Company started tilling the fields. However during the August retreat we left everything and returned without human losses. Now people have again started returning to our homeland.

Garegin Hovsepian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 438, pp. 24-26, original, handwritten.

No 12

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KARAPET DAVTIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHOSP OF HAYOTS DZOR IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 20, 1916
Mehrablou

Karapet Davtian from the village Khosp of Hayots Dzor in Van Province recounts the following about the massacre of their village:

The village of Khosp had 50 households and 250 Armenian residents, 2,100 units of wheat and barley, 1,200 sheep, 530 different farm animals.

The village had a church and a school building which together with the village were burnt by the mob.

Before the war the Turkish government announced that conscripts aged 25-35 should report in 24 hours. Those who did not report to the military authorities at

the appointed time, would be hauled before the War Tribunal and severely punished. The policemen came to the village, gathered all the men and sent them to Archesh and Berkri. After wandering there for a few days all except 40 were released.

They confiscated as war duties 230 units of wheat, 85 sheep, 15 litres of ghee, 20 units of bulgur, 60 pairs of hessian sacks, 50 pairs of socks, 45 pairs of gloves, 40 cotton coats. We transported all the goods confiscated from us on our pack animals - and in the winter on our backs - to Van, Archesh and Saray and stored there in barns.

Our conscripts were writing in their letters that they lived under very bad conditions, had almost no food, were in their own clothes from the first day and were serving in the army naked and barefooted. They asked for money from us in order not to starve to death. This situation continued until the declaration of war. They wrote to us that they had been disarmed and were working as “*amele taburu*” on the roads and trenches under strict supervision of regular troops in more unbearable conditions. They went hungry and thirsty for days, without bedding, without shelter, sleeping on wet and cold ground, ailing with contagious diseases so many were obliged to flee. We received no more letters from the others.

The harsh measures imposed by the government grew worse. The *chetés* would come every day, cruelly fustigate and torture villagers indiscriminately, collect conscripts and *amele* workers. They became an absolute scourge and affliction for the Armenians. They were slaughtering chickens and sheep, feeding their horses abundantly with barley and hay, everything for free; their licentiousness had no limits. All that continued until the very end.

On April 2, 1915 a Kurd named Mcho from Bzhnkert came and told the Kurds of our village that Ishkhan had been killed in Hirsch, and that Governor Jevtet had ordered for Armenians to be massacred. On April 7 the mob consisting of Kurds from the villages of Pzhnkert, Hirsch, Kyusn, Kghzi, headed by Satig *Agha* from Kyol-Pasan²² besieged our village and started plundering and killing everyone they met. Eighty people were killed including: the priest Martiros, the village head Aziz, the former village head Sargis, *aghas* Mkrtych, Tovmas, Hovhannes, Kacho and Hovsep. They raped and forcibly converted to Islam Manuk Azizian's 14-year-old daughter Varvar (Mehmet from Hirsch took her away), Srgo's wife Maran and his two daughters – Pto and Azniv, aged 6 and 10, respectively (Sleman Bek from Norduz took them away). The same Sleman Bek forcibly converted to Islam and took with him as a servant 12-year-old Movses Garoyan, Gaspar's 13-year-old grandson Aram and 10-year-old Vardan Sargsian. The rest, horror-stricken, took refuge on Lvaver mountain.

The next day the same mob, doubled in size, besieged mount Lvaver to implement their dark project, namely exterminate the Armenians. Our regional

committee²³ member Mkrtych Atovmian from Kem, considering the danger, rallied around himself some 70 brave Dashnak young men from Khosp and neighbouring villages. We took up arms and defended ourselves. After a day of unequal fighting we managed to break through tight Kurdish lines and at night together with our people made our way to Van. There we waited until the enemy was defeated and fled from Van, and when the Russian and volunteer armies entered Van and occupied its environs we returned to our still-smouldering and smoking houses, and after consigning to the earth the unburied bodies, started reaping the harvest. But then the July great retreat occurred; we left everything and emigrated to the Caucasus through the Berkri pass.

Due to the adversities of the route and extreme heat 40 people from our village fell ill and died in Etchmiadzin. The rest settled in the villages of Etchmiadzin, Yerevan and Ghamarlu regions on the instructions of the Fraternal Aid Committee.

On 20 March, 1916 we returned to our homeland and obtaining draught animals and seeds from the United Company started tilling the land until the August retreat when we left everything and returned to our former settlements. At present people have started returning to their homeland in groups.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 438, pp. 13–14 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 13

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GHAZAR MANUKIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KEM OF HAYOTS DZOR IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 8, 1916

Blur

Kem had 100 households and 777 residents, a church named St Thaddeus, a school (with a nice building), three water-mills, an oil-mill, 3,000 sheep, 1,000 cattle. The church, had three handwritten gospels, among them the Red Gospel and the Floriferous Gospel, many precious vessels, silver-covered Gospels etc.

The annual revenue of the village was 4,000 units of wheat, 500 units of flax and 30,000 trusses of hay.

On 20 July, 1914, when the mobilisation was announced, men aged 25-45 from Kem were conscripted. The houses of conscripts Hovakim Matevosian and Gaspar Manukian were burnt with all their belongings since they did not report to the military authorities. The houses were burnt by Saleh *Chaush* from Vostan,

Shavesh from Artamet together with the *mudur* of Artamet. In September 1914 the policeman Hasan from Archesh, having heard from Mkrtych Atovmian of Kem that the Russians had reached Pashqalé, informed the government about it and, Ayas, the *mudur* of Artamet, with 200 policemen besieged the village at night and started shooting. They fired non-stop for one hour without any riposte from the Armenians. However, after several people were killed (Margarit Sianosian, 10-year-old Movses Akhijanian and Andranik Gaplanian) the villagers were obliged to resort to self-defence. That self-defence fight lasted 5 hours.

After mobilisation they confiscated from Kem 175 (one hundred and seventy-five) Ottoman liras, 350 sheep, 120 oxen, six carts with oxen, 200 units of wheat, 150 units of barley, 400 pairs of socks, 200 sets of underwear, 30 *litres* of ghee, 30 units of bulgur, 600 trusses of hay, 150 cartfuls of straw etc. Sergeant Jajikhoghly Yagheb from Van, Ahmat *Chaush* from Khoshap and Nuri from Van took a bribe of 80 (eighty) Ottoman liras, 30 units of barley and six sheep from the village head Avetis Harutyunian to delay the conscription for 8 (eight) days.

On 5 April, 1915, the government troops (600 soldiers) headed by Chmuk Hussein *agha*, with one cannon and 800 *millis* (Kurdish) headed by Fayeg son of Rashit *effendi* from Van, Chelenk from Bzhnkert, Hassan bek son of Khalil from Zerinak as well as Turkish and Kurdish mob headed by Serheng son of Makhso from Khoshap, Pekar Smoyan from Aghasan, Lezkin son of Shagr *agha*, armed with one cannon and Turkish-made (small size) rifles attacked Kem (at midnight). The armed young men of Kem were able to resist until noon and then escaped. The population left the village and moved towards Angegh; - their losses were 110 children, 30 men and 60 women. Three of them – Galust Hovhannesian, Huno Muradian and Khacho Muradan took up position on a hill between Kem and Angegh to prevent the mob blocking the retreat of the village population. These three armed young men were killed but thanks to them the population of Kem managed to reach Angegh.

The Kem fighters Arshak Kakosian, Mkrtych Atovmian and Hovsep Khlghatian fought in the Angegh monastery for 4 hours and were killed only after they had run out of cartridges. They killed 7 enemies. The same day 8 fighters from Kem fought against the Kurdish mob for 5 hours on mount St Rider killing four enemies. Three of them were killed (Movses Verdoyan, Armenak Petrosian and Khosrov Navoyan).

The village was entirely burnt to ashes, together with the school and the church. All these Turkish and Kurdish mobs and government troops came to Kem on the direct order of the Van governor Jevtet. Twelve women were abducted from Kem. The rest were deported to Artamet. Twelve women and 8 children died during deportation.

The residents of Kem emigrated to the Caucasus on 18 July, 1915. Near Berkri they were attacked by Kurds. Six men and 8 women were killed, 16 children drowned. All their property and cattle were seized by the Kurds.

At present the people from Kem live at Blur and Hakhveris.

Note – A month before the Kem fighting Nury, son of Tahir *gha* from Sevagrak, and Abdul Aziz, son of Ali from Karavan, informed Ghazar Manukian and Mkrtich Atovmian that “the government has decided to kill all Armenian men and deport women and children to Arabia.” Those two Kurds had deserted from the Turkish army.

Recounted by Aleksan Paturian from the village of Kem.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, pp. 14–15, original, handwritten.

No 14

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SARA HARUTYUNIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF MASHTAK OF HAYOTS DZOR IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]

Baku

Sara Harutyunian, 25 years old, from the village of Mashtak of Hayots Dzor in Van Province, now lives in Armenian Village of Baku, 6 Nagorny N²⁴, and gets support from the Refugee Committee.

I lived in our village that consisted of 70 households, 15 of which were Kurdish and the rest were Armenian. Our family consisted of 4 members; they are all alive now.

In July 1914, when the European War was declared, the Turkish government mobilised all our men aged 25-45. But the first time, after they gathered everyone, they released them for 15 days to reap the harvest. After 15 days they collected everybody again and divided them into two different groups: those who were healthy, about 30 men, were sent to Erzurum as soldiers; and those who were weak and older than 25, were included in the police forces and sent to neighbouring villages to serve and guard. My husband Martiros was in those police forces.

After recruiting soldiers from our village they started collecting wheat, barley, ghee, cheese, cattle, sheep and other goods needed for the army. They did that four times and sent our men to the town. Though there were no killings at that time, but the torture, beating and tax collection were really unbearable. We were under this pressure till the Russian army entered Saray in November 1914. After that the government softened its attitude towards us. But when the Armenian soldiers were disarmed and most were sent home, out of 40 souls conscripted from our village only 2 came back. Nothing is known about the others until now. One of these two was my husband. This situation continued until April 1915 when, on the one hand, Vostan²⁵ was fighting with the villagers of Spitak Vank and, on the other hand, the authorities in Shatakh were fighting against their own people. Though there were rumours about massacres in our parts, at the same time the government had quite reassured us. For example, on April 6 our people had gone to Artamet to ask our district head about the situation. The district head had answered: “The Government punishes all the villages that did not obey; there is nothing for other villages.” On that basis our men came back and sat in their houses carefree until April 7 when Ishkhan (the revolutionary leader of Van) accompanied by government policemen came to stop the fighting in Shatakh. But after Ishkhan was killed halfway to Shatakh, we didn’t dare to go from village to village any more. On April 7 Husein *gha* from Gavash with 400 *milli* soldiers passed silently through our parts and headed towards Vostan. We didn’t think anything, but when they reached Bltents, which is about an hour’s distance from our village, they started firing. After an hour they entered the village and burnt it. The residents of the village had left for the town a day earlier. On that day they burnt three villages in three hours – Atanants, Bltents and Spitak Vank.

We spent that night in a neighbouring Kurdish village and sent two Kurds to Myulk to find out what was going on. But when the messengers returned they lied to us that “only the villages that rebelled against the government would be burnt.” We again believed them naively but at the same time we weren’t careless: at night we hid all our belongings, our men wanted to go to the town with their rifles but it was too late so they climbed the mountain and found shelter in a cave. At 8 o’clock in the morning we received a message from Kem asking for help. The mob from our neighbourhood had decided to proceed from that side so that people would have no way out. The well-known military leader Hatum bek with about 1,000 soldiers attacked Kem at dawn. Unable to resist, all the residents of Kem, including the armed men, left the village in broad daylight. Two thirds of them were killed on their way before they reached our village. After that all the armed men gathered in Ishkhanigom. Like the residents of Kem we too fled to Ishkhanigom, and the Kurds from our village went to the neighbouring Kurdish village of Myulk. People from about 20 villages gathered at Ishkhanigom. Our fighters set up positions and started fighting when the mob

reached the village. On April 8 we fought against the mob for the whole day. Hatum bek fired about 15 shells at the village but we Armenians had only one casualty (named Sargis) on that day.

When the Turkish troops were fighting against our men, a group of Kurds were scouting every corner to find and kill people.

After fighting which lasted until the evening, our fighters started running out of cartridges and decided not to stay and fight but to move to Van with all the population. Some 500 people gathered and headed to Van. When they reached St Vardan's gorge, the fighters changed their mind and decided to send women, elderly people and boys to Artamet and they themselves continue to Van. And so they did. My husband Martiros and my father-in-law Ter Mkrtych²⁶ were among those who went to the town. After parting from our soldiers we no longer wanted to go to Artamet. We, some 1,000²⁷ people, returned to our homes. We couldn't make it until night fall so we stayed at Ishkhanigom fields until dawn. At day break the mob besieged us and started plundering; they stripped all of us naked shooting on the spot anyone resisting. On that day from our village they killed Karakhanian Hovsep's wife and two sons – Hakob and Beniamin, Zrayan Murat's wife and two sons as well as countless women and children from other villages. After torturing and raping us for the whole day they let us go and we returned to our village. But they didn't leave us in peace: they were looking for men to kill them. Karakhanian Hovsep was taken out of his house and killed at his door.

Two days after the fighting the government troops left the village leaving us in the hands of our village Kurds. Kurds from Artamet would come to the village 2-3 times a day to plunder and severely oppress us. Twice a day they would take us out of the village saying: "We are going to send you to Artamet and from there to a faraway place to captivity." But when we reached the mountain, they would rape us and then release us. One day the Kurds came to the village and found the goods that we had buried in the ground. They also found five men in a cave: Amirkhan, Barik, Arslan, Aziz and Martiros. They took them to the village of Myulk and slaughtered four of them, keeping one of them, – Martiros, till the end of the fighting and then releasing him since he had a Kurdish acquaintance who didn't let them kill him. He came back and told us what had happened. After that they found another 8 men: Murad, Soghomon, Khachik, Hakob, Hambardzum, Petros, Gaspar, Galust and killed them. In 8 days about 100 men and women were killed in our village. Ten days later an Armenian armed group came from the town to take us there. There were about 100 of them and when they entered the village, the Kurds fled terror-stricken. We left for the town together with our soldiers. When we reached the village of Kurubas and had to ford the river, suddenly the Turkish troops from Kurubash besieged us. Crying and wailing started; mothers lost their sons, brothers- their sisters, relatives- their

relatives and finally everyone was trying to find a way out. The soldiers accompanying us took up positions and fought back. After three hours of fighting aid came from Varag. We were saved and headed to the town. I and my sister-in-law found my husband and my father-in-law in Van. After staying there for 15 days we were almost in despair when we suddenly noticed that the town was empty and all the Turks had fled. Then our soldiers attacked Turkish villages killing them all before the Russians entered Van. When the Russians came to Van, we returned to our villages and lived there for about a month. When the Russians retreated, we left everything and retreated with them, came to Etchmiadzin and from there to Baku.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 473, pp. 11-13 rev., original, handwritten.

No 15

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TARER TER AVETISIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF SURB VARDAN OF HAYOTS DZOR IN VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

I, Tarer Vardanian Ter Avetisian, from the village of Surb Vardan of Van Province, now live in Armenian Village of Baku, 6 Nagorny No 95, and get support from the Refugee Committee.

I lived in my village consisting of 30 Armenian households. Our family consisted of 7 members. Four of them are now alive: I, my husband Aleksan, my mother-in-law Piruz and my brother-in-law Stepan. My brother-in-law Karapet was killed, my brother-in-law's wife Sandukht and my son Khachik died.

Mobilisation: In the summer of 1914 (July 15) the government ordered all men aged 21 to 45 to report for conscription. All conscripted men from our village were taken to the army including my two brothers-in-law: Stepan and Karapet. After taking away the conscripts, policemen came to our village to take goods for the army: wheat, flour, ghee, cheese etc. They collected and took away quite a lot. Every now and then the government would send policemen to collect food. Thus they were torturing and plundering us in everyway. This continued until the autumn when the fighting in Saray occurred. When the Russian army reached there, the Turkish government starting disarming the Armenian soldiers and that is why many Armenians fled from the army and many were killed for fleeing. My brothers-in-law fled from the army and came to the village and hid

here until the spring (April 1915) when the government strictly demanded that the fugitive conscripts be handed over and the Armenians found it difficult to comply with that demand. Using that as a pretext the government started implementing its evil scheme.

Fighting started in April 1915. Shatak was already fighting, so was Vostan with its neighbouring villages (Atanants and Spitak Vank). On April 7 fighting started in Van and the very same day the mob started attacking our villages. Kem was the first village where fighting started, then people started fleeing to our village with the mob following and slaughtering them. On that day my brother-in-law Stepan went to Ishkhanigom with a couple of his friends where armed young men were already fighting against the Turkish army. My other brother-in-law stayed in the village until it was besieged. When the village was already in danger, he went out of the house trying to flee. Hardly had he left the house when he stumbled upon Turkish soldiers and started fighting with them. However, he was not able to resist and was brutally murdered. The Turks turned the village into a slaughterhouse; they didn't spare any male person over the age of 8. They gathered everyone at the seashore²⁸ and murdered them. They also killed all the women who were not beautiful and couldn't pay them a ransom. After raping the beautiful women they would either kill them or let them go. I was together with a woman from Khorgom when they came. They beat us and took us away. When they were taking me away I saw how they caught my 14-year-old cousin (my uncle's son) and wanted to cut his neck with a dagger. When I begged them a lot to spare him, they took the clothes off me and my cousin and let us go. However, in a few hours they caught him again and killed him.

I hid in a tree trunk with my friend. Then we ran to the church and started praying. We spent the night there. The next morning we fled to the village of Mashtak which was an hour's distance from our village. We stayed there for two weeks until 20 of our boys came from Mount Varag, gathered and took all of us to Van. After fighting with the Kurds for half an hour we reached the village called Kurubash where we again clashed with the Turkish mob. Our fighters were on foot and had few cartridges and the Turkish attack was powerful. The people were in utter despair; mothers lost their children, brothers-their sisters. The losses were very big, nevertheless our soldiers fought desperately against Turkish soldiers until aid came from Varag. Some 50 of our children were thrown into the river. A number of us, including me, couldn't escape. The Turks caught and kept us for 4 days. One day Jevtet bey came there, had 12 boys selected from among us and ordered to have them killed with daggers. First they cut their throats, then slowly other parts of the body until they murdered all 12 of them. Then they sent us to Van. We suffered a lot of persecution on our way: they would stop us, search, beat, rape and then let go. After a day we arrived in Van

where we stayed for about 20 days until our volunteers and the Russian army came. Van was crowded with villagers – hungry and thirsty. My brother-in-law's wife Sandukht and my son Khachik died, their deaths caused by fear and horror. After the liberation we returned to our village and started settling in our homes, but soon the retreat occurred and we fled to Etchmiadzin, then to Chardakhlu and from there to Baku. We live here now.

NAA, f. 277, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 36-37 rev., original, handwritten.

No 16

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SARGIS KAPUTIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KYOSHK OF HAYOTS DZOR IN
VAN DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 14, 1916
Yuva

Sargis Kaputian from the village of Kyoshk of Nortuz province²⁹ of Van recounts the following about the massacre of their village:

The village of Kyoshk had 25 households and 240 Armenian residents. It had 420 sheep, 260 different farm animals, 950 units of wheat, 540 units of barley etc. It also had a church which is now almost completely ruined together with the village.

Since the times of tyranny³⁰ our village was at the disposal of Mhé bey, from the race of the Alans, who lived in the village of Aghsin. Hence as always we, all the villagers, were exempt from conscription including during the 1914 war. In 1914 the (Nortuz) authorities using the brutal force of the policemen confiscated as war duty 70 sheep, 20 *litres* of ghee, 10 units of bulgur, 40 pairs of gloves, 30 pairs of *trekhs*, 20 pairs of hessian sacks, 30 oxen and made us transport military goods, ammunition and other things without paying us.

We transported all the goods confiscated from us on our animals and carts to Nortuz, Vostan, Saray and Berkri and stored them in barns.

Besides providing the goods, transporting them and serving the government for free, we were obliged to serve our bey and his servants because thanks to the bey we were exempt from military service. We had to leave our house chores and do all the other work so we could hardly do a quarter of our own reaping.

In the winter we, i.e. all men aged 14-70, had to do *amele taburu* transporting on our backs food and ammunition for soldiers for hours and days to Van, Saray,

Baghesh, Archesh, Khlat and other places almost naked, barefooted, hungry and thirsty living under unbearable conditions. But we managed to do all the work and endured all the suffering and oppression.

On 12 April, 1915, we were busy with our work when suddenly our bey's servants – Tmé, Ipo, Khaso, Gatr, Ahmé, Elo – in all 10 of them armed - came to our village and informed us through the village head that governor of Van Jevtet bey had instructed all beys and *aghas* to massacre the Armenians in their parts but Mhé wanted to protect his Armenians. They gathered us, 45 people in all, and took us to the bey's village and locked us up there in Elo's hayloft. After 4 hours we were released to eat in the houses of Armenians in the bey's village and go back to the hay loft. However we became suspicious because we were under very strict guard. Soon our suspicions proved to be right: my brother Margar who was serving the bey as a handyman had learned the truth and told us about the Kurds' insidiousness. After that with two friends we fled to Mount Seg where we wandered for 5-6 days. My brother came to find me and told us that the day after we had fled they murdered all 43 people in the hayloft and left their bodies in the open air, behind the hayloft. Our village head Hovhannes Melkonian and members of his son's family Martiros Hovhannesian and Tovmas Hovhannesian were among them. The Kurds had been secretly following my brother when he left the village, so they caught us and started searching the mountain where they found another 14 people from different villages who had found shelter at Mount Seg hiding from the Kurdish atrocities. They took us all to the village and locked us in the bey's stables. We had hardly rested when they took us to the bey's room. There was a mullah sitting there. The bey offered us conversion to Islam, but we refused, because the village head Hovhannes and his sons had converted to Islam but they were killed one by one after horrible tortures and dismemberment with daggers. The mullah also objected: "Because, - he said, - they are ready to do anything to save their life. Koran is against such conversion to Islam under fear or other similar circumstances," and he left cutting short his talk. We were taken back to the stable.

On April 25 the mullah Sayid came to Aghsin the regular troops and a huge mob. My brother said that the Russians had captured Van, the Turks were defeated and had fled. My brother was scared of them and came to us.

In the evening, after the sunset, the regular troops and the mob besieged the door of the stable and the ventilation hole in the roof. We climbed to the hole in the roof to run away but they had it under guard too. Under pressure of the mob we opened the door; they broke in with sickles, axes, scythes and similar tools and took us out in front of the haylofts. First they stripped us, then directed the guns at us and started waiting for an order. One of the servants of the *agha* who felt a special animosity towards me asked the mob to give me to him to kill with more torture. They agreed with pleasure. I was separated from my friends, and

we moved a few steps away. He started beating me with a stick. I understood that I was going to die in any case so I attacked him. He shouted: "He's killing me!" Suddenly everybody came running towards me and shooting at me but fortunately it was a dark and rainy day and I managed to hide in a ploughed field because I was unable to run far; my legs were weak and I fell down. After a long search they returned like a wolf pack and killed all 16 men with daggers, sickles and sticks. After they returned to the village, I had some rest and then climbed Mount Seg. I wandered there for 5-6 days in snow, storm and rain, hungry, thirsty and completely naked until I met some women from our village. I understood that the village was completely burnt and everybody was ruthlessly slaughtered. I took the women with me and headed to Hayots Dzor. Then the Russian and volunteer armies entered Van and occupied its environs and we stayed there until the great July retreat. We emigrated by the Berkri pass and were attacked by Kurds from Haytaran and Zilan but thanks to the resistance of our volunteers we safely reached the Caucasus - Etchmiadzin, where 30 people fell ill and died due to extreme fatigue and heat.

The rest, some 15 people, settled in the villages of Ghamarlu and Etchmiadzin regions and haven't returned to our homeland until now. Our lands are now in a state of abandon.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 435, pp. 1-2, original, handwritten.

No 17

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SANAM VARDANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE HAMLET OF BERKRI IN BERKRI DISTRICT OF
VAN PROVINCE**

August 6, 1916
Mazra

Recounted by Sanam Vardanian from Berkri district of Van province who now lives in the village of Mazra of Old Nakhijevan.

On 12 July, 1914, the government announced that all Armenian men aged 20-45 had to be immediately conscripted, otherwise they would be tried by the Military Tribunal. Thus all young men were put under arms.

Government officials started periodic plunder under the name of war duties. For example, they took away from our house 4 pairs of hessian sacks sewn

together, 1 roll of carpets, 1 felt cloth, 3 ropes, half a *litre* of ghee, 8 units of wheat, 12 sheep.

The Turks were treating us well until the Russians reached Kavre-Shame. After that the government sent a messenger to tell everyone to go about their peaceful business. In the evening 5 armed policemen broke into our house and arrested 7 men. All men in Berkri were arrested, in all 28 people, and taken to prison. The *kaymakam* and *muavin*³¹ of Berkri and the local officials were forcing Armenians to convert to Islam, renounce their wives who would then marry Muslim men, and they, in turn, would marry Muslim women. The Armenians refused. For 8 days they continued persuading Armenians to convert to Islam until Ali Bey, the *agha* of Bayazet with his *millis* burnt Archesh to ashes making hills out of bodies of murdered Armenians and then swarmed into Berkri. Ali bey convinced the *kaymakam* to ruthlessly kill the Armenians from elderly people to suckling babies so that "Armenians do not join their Keri³² when the Russians occupy Berkri."

We went to the *kaymakam* of Berkri, kissed his feet several times begging not to kill our men. The *kaymakam* said there was an order to ruthlessly kill Armenians. On the 9th day of the arrest the tied men were taken to the bridge, shot and thrown into the river. They cruelly murdered master Margar. However, the government gave police safe conduct document to the priest Ter Hmayak so that no one would harm him. The *kaymakam* handed over the priest to Khurshud bey of Malabat and ordered that no one should touch him. He ordered to move all the goods from the Ter Huskan Vordi monastery to that bey's house and told the bey that everything would belong to him if the land was left to them; otherwise he had to hand them over to the priest. The bey made a hiding place for the priest and kept him there. The *kaymakam* soon summoned Khurshud bey and demanding the priest back. He imprisoned Khurshud bey and demanded that he return the priest. The policemen took him away and murdered him at the Katnuk Spring. The Kurds from Malabat beat the half-dead priest to death with sticks till he drew his last breath. They filled his mouth with rubbish and threw him into the river.

Scared, we hid our children in the flour in the store room to save them from the Turkish atrocities. They gathered all women in one house with the intention of converting them to Islam. We were in a desperate situation when suddenly gunshots were heard from the side of the mountain. The Turks fled and the women were saved.

The rest of the people settled in different villages of Yerevan province. Those who live here are four households, 16 people, 4 of whom work. Nobody is returning to our homeland.

We were not allowed to take anything with us when retreating. We left everything: 55 units of wheat in the barn, altogether 2 sacks, 2 loads of flour, 3

buffaloes, 4 oxen, 5 cows, 4 donkeys, 7 calves and heifers, 45 ewes, 45 lambs and all home belongings.

Recounted by 55-year-old Sanam Vardanian from Berkri (she is illiterate).

NAA, f. 227, reg.1, rec. 424, p. 9 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 18

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR YALDUZ YEGHIAZARIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF GYUZAK OF BERKRI DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

I, Yalduz Ter Sargsian Yeghiazarian from the village of Gyuzak of Berkri district of Van province, now live in Armenian Village of Baku on 16 Nagornaya No 10; the Refugee Committee supports me.

In our homeland I lived in our house within a family of 6 people.

Only I and my daughter Siranush survived - in all 2 people.

My husband Khacho and my son Tigran were murdered - in all 2 people. My daughter Goharik died - in all 1 person.

Her account of the mobilisation of 1914, Amar bey coming to their village at the beginning of April 1915 and killing the men and the torments they suffered in captivity are similar to the testimony of survivor No 1³³.

In April 1915, the day when Amar bey killed the men of our village, 6 Kurds broke into our house and found my son Tigran in the hiding place and took him away. I followed them crying. The Kurd demanded a gun from my son. My son showed the place where he hid the gun and said to me: "Mother, for God's sake, take out the gun and give it to them so that they don't kill me." I gave the gun to the Kurd. At that moment two Kurds caught my brother-in-law Miro and brought him to us. The Kurds wanted to kill my son, I started crying and one of the Kurds demanded money to save my son's life. I gave him the 7 *mejids*³⁴ money that I had with me, and after taking the money the Kurd shot and killed my son. My son fell down floundering, uttered a sound and breathed his last. While I was sitting next to my son, the Kurds killed my bother-in-law Miro (she weeps and cannot continue her narrative). My husband Khacho had fled to the mountains with 3 of his friends. The Kurds searched the mountain, found and killed him too.

After that the Kurds gathered us women in one place, robbed us and sent us to the village of Gortsot. We went to Gortsot where the local young men were fighting against Amar bey. After 21 days of fighting they surrendered. I witnessed the killings of the villagers (her account is similar to that told by survivor No 1 from Gortsot³⁵).

After that they sent us to Berkri where we were given no place to stay either, so they sent us to the village of Pztik. After several days there, the Turks fled and the Armenian volunteers came and liberated us.

We went to our village where my daughter Goharik died.

During the July 1915 retreat we emigrated and came to Baku.

NAA, f. 227, l. 1, c. 472, ss. 12-13, original, handwritten.

No 19

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR DILBAR MKRTCHIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KORTSOT IN BERKRI DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]

Baku

Dilbar Mkrthcyan, 40 years old, from the village of Kortsot of Berkri district of Van province, now lives in Armenian Village (near Baku) at 15 Nagornaya No1; gets support from the Refugee Committee.

Before the war I always lived in our village of Kortsot. Our family consisted of 5 people – my husband, my two sons, one grandchild and me. No I am left alone: my husband and sons were killed, my grandchild Vazrik died.

My brother was our village head that's why I knew what was going on.

When the war started and the Turks began recruiting soldiers and *amele* labourers from us, the Kurds started oppressing us. In front of our eyes they were rustling our cattle and our sheep to their villages. The situation was deteriorating, so our villagers decided to go to the mountains to be free from the Kurds. We were getting ready. The *kaymakam* learned about it and called my brother, the village head, to Berkri Kalé (it was eight days after Easter). He told him strictly that nobody should dare run away to the mountains, that all villagers should continue their ploughing and sowing and those who didn't listen would be fined 5 gold coins. My brother answered that we were afraid of the Kurds and couldn't stay in the village. The *kaymakam* swore in the name of Muhammad that nothing

would happen to the Armenians. My brother believed him and returning to the village sent the town crier to announce that people should not be afraid and should continue their ploughing and sowing. Some six days after that event the *kaymakam* himself came to our village and ordered my brother to gather together all men since he was looking for deserters and that he would come back in three days to take them all and no one should dare fire at the troops, or "I'll massacre all the villagers." We had long before prepared special places dug under our barns to hide in if necessary. When on the third day the *kaymakam* was to come, all young men, 800 of them, hid there. When the *kaymakam* learned that the villagers had hidden, he took with him Ter Manvel³⁶, the abbot of Ter Huskan monastery, and 500 mounted soldiers and Kurds. Some of them entered the village and took up positions at the church, and the others surrounded the village. Ter Manvel and the village head had a discussion and decided that it was impossible to hide and it would be better for everyone to come out of the hiding places and tie a pelt on their back (all toilers tie pelts on their back) to show that they were poor labourers and were ready to go and serve the mounted soldiers. Some other villagers made arrangements to feed them all. When they finished eating and were full, they called the villagers and demanded 600 liras and 150 Mosin rifles. My brother, the village head, collected some 900 liras and gave them to the *kaymakam*. After taking the money they demanded another 100 liras. When the village head had difficulty in promising that, they caught him and started flogging him on the back and head, then gathered together some 60 men (the outstanding men of the what continue her story for a long time). At dawn they surrounded them all, tied them up and took them to the top of a hill. We, twelve women, appealed to the *kaymakam*, asking and begging him to spare us. Three of the women put their suckling babies under the feet of the *kaymakam's* horse as if offering them for sacrifice, to free at least 30 of the men, and the *kaymakam* told us not to be afraid and get back to our places, promising to free everyone. However, we didn't listen to him and followed them. Soon some 30 of the men were sent back as if a gift to the village. We continued following the other captives. My brother couldn't walk: his testicles were swollen and hanging; two Turks were carrying him by the hands. My brother turned to us saying: "Don't be afraid. I have a lot of gold with me; I'll be free with it." And he put the gold in the hands of the Kurd. They took the gold but didn't let him free. They took everyone to the gorge of Yeghvan Ravine and though it was away from the road we still didn't believe they would be killed. When they reached the edge of the ravine, they brandished a stick with a white kerchief, said their prayers and started tying up and shooting at them all. Those who were still alive they murdered with stones or tore their mouths and then cut their throats like sheep. Among those murdered were my son Khalo, aged 20, my son Khurshud, aged 18 and my husband Grigor...

We returned to the village. There were about 400 young men hidden in the village. They came out of their hiding places. The residents of our neighbouring villages – Gyuzak, Surb Tadeos, Kababik, Psti Gyugh, Kyoshk, Andzav, came to our village that day with their wives and children and decided to fight against government troops and the Kurds and not allow them to enter our village any more. The villagers were headed by Hakob, son of Gimro, Mesrop, son of Melo, and Korcho's Mirzo. They were all party³⁷ members. They took up positions around the village. The Turks and the Kurds attacked the village. We fought for 20 days and didn't let anyone enter our village. But the Turks destroyed the water-mills, cut off the water and hunger set in. We were hungry for 8 days but we were still fighting. It was no longer possible to continue. The villagers held a meeting to decide what to do. Mirakents Shapuh who once was a *mudur*, suggested surrendering but some others were against it. At night some 30 young men tried to escape to the mountains. Eight of them were killed in the fields. The others escaped to the mountain caves and somehow survived there. All those who were in the village gathered at the church and the priest administered communion to everyone. In the morning the Turks swarmed into the village. The Kurds were headed by Mamo Omar (the *agha* of Kyoshka) and Amal bek (son of Mahmat bek from Berkri Kala), and the soldiers were headed by the *kaymakam*. They surrounded the church, gathered up everyone and divided them into three groups: young girls and women, old people and men. They took the girls and young women for themselves (some 50 of them). One of them was my brother's daughter, Gyulizar. About 40 of these young girls and women returned after the volunteers arrived; we don't know what happened to 10 of them. But all those who returned died except one – Kazar's daughter - who is alive and married to the volunteer Arshak (she is now in the village of Ghamarlu near Yerevan).

All the men were put into the houses of Manuk *effendi*, Sahak *agha* and Chko. Shapuh's son, a young 20-year-old boy, was hiding in the village oil-mill. They surrounded the oil-mill and told him to come out and surrender but he wouldn't. They started shooting. He was fighting against the Kurds and killed 10 of them. When he ran out of cartridges, he came out of the oil-mill and tried to escape. They caught him near the spring, brought him near us and gouged out his eyes in front of us, then cut off his arms, then his legs and only at the end his head. They brought the other men, stripped them all, then called the women, made them stand in front of their husbands, ordered the men to dance in front of their wives and started shooting at them. No one was spared; they massacred everyone. Only one managed to escape but in order not to get into the hands of the Turks, he threw himself into a well and drowned there. All the corpses were thrown into the wells. We had hidden the priest among the women, dressed in women's clothes. They found him and holding him by his beard cut his throat. They also killed some old women and threw them into the wells. Out of 800 young men

only three were saved: Mado, a volunteer from Dro's detachment and two others. But the Russians came and hanged them at Berkri Kalé, and so the men of our village were eradicated. They had gone to Berkri Kalé to look for their goods and started fighting with the Turks. The Cossacks interfered and our men, not knowing that they were Cossacks, fought against them too. Ultimately they were hanged for shooting at Cossacks.

Some women were killed, those who stayed alive escaped to the mountains. It was impossible to live; we were starving. My grandchild Vazrik who was with me died of hunger in the mountains. The Yezidis who had attacked our village with the Kurds were oppressing us a great deal in the mountains. In a few days the Yezidis brought us the news that the Russians were coming, that volunteers had been seen near Berkri Kalé. After getting that news we came down to the village of Psti, and when the volunteers came they took us to Berkri Kalé where 8000 women were gathered. They started feeding and taking care of us and then placed us in different villages. Mado from our village, who was a volunteer in Dro's detachment, gathered us all and took us to our village. There were about 400 women and children, two elderly people and Mado in the village.

Before escaping to the mountains some women had left many of their children in Shapuh's house, about 32 of them. Dogs had torn all those children to pieces.

Answering my question if the Yezidis were really part of it, she said: "The Yezidis were mixed with the Kurds; The Yezidis killed 6 people before my eyes but when the volunteers came they pretended to be friends with us."

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 473, pp. 27-30, original, handwritten.

No 20

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SIMAM GHAZARIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF DERO OF ABAGHA IN BERKRI
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 6, 1916
Mazra

Massacre of the village Deru of Abagha district.

The narrator is Simam Ghazarian from the village of Deru in Abagha, now living in the village of Mazra in Old Nakhijevan.

On the Easter Monday of 1915, Mustafa *agha* from the village of Chubukhlu together with 45 *millis* besieged our village so that no one could get away, and deceiving the people said that he was going to take people to work. He selected

35 young men, made them work for one week and then murdered them at Archesh; only two of them managed to escape and were saved. He put 30 middle aged men into a house and then called the government troops from the village of Kaymaz who took our men to the plain named Bzrkhan³⁸. Despite blows falling on us, we followed them to that place where they were tied up in pairs and shot. They murdered Ter Gevorg, Ter Harutyun and Grigor Barseghian, the richest man in the village, after especially subjecting them to terrible tortures.

Mahmat *agha's* son, Mustafa *agha*, swore on the honour of the Prophet that if [Ter Harutyun] gave his money to him, his life would be spared. The priest brought a big bowl full of Ottoman gold coins and gave them to Mustafa *agha*. They took also his silver money. But *agha* kept his promise only for one hour after which they took the priest to the stream above the village, put a rope over his neck and tortured him until daybreak. They made the priest sit down, put the poison into his hand and turned to us saying: "Look at the priest, the big and the little, which shows who is the ruler and who isn't," and similar jeers. Then they cut Ter Harutyun's tongue, put the poison into his mouth and shot him. Two people took Ter Gevorg out of the house and shot him.

They took with them Ter Harutyun's daughter Haykush and a woman named Lucy Manukian. The latter with a baby in her arms refused to go. They cut the baby's legs with a sword and threw it down, tied up the mother, put her on a horse and took her away. They would come 3-4 times a day, strip us women and children naked saying that we had money hidden. The Russians soon came and the Turks fled having no chance to massacre the rest.

The survivors mainly live in the Yerevan province.

Narrated by an illiterate woman of about 40 from the village of Deron in Abagha.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 10 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 21

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR DAVIT FARMANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHACHAN IN BERKRI DISTRICT
OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 15, 1916

Yuva³⁹

Davit Farmanyan from the village of Khachan in Apagha recounts the following about the massacre in their village.

The village of Khachan had 100 households and 1,360 Armenian residents. It had 2,500 sheep, 1,240 other livestock, 72,000 units of wheat, 20,500 units of barley and rye.

It also had a church and a school that are now in a dilapidated state together with the village.

The tribal chiefs⁴⁰ from Haytaran had divided the Armenian villages of Apagha district between themselves like a priest's parish. Even under the Constitution⁴¹ we suffered killings, privations and oppression.

Our village was at the command of Patir, son of Mehmet bey from Haytaran, and as always - even at wartime - we were exempt from conscription. However, at the request of the *mudur* of Pazitagh Patirsent eight people as *amele* to work on the road built by the Archesh authorities. Using the bey as an intermediate the government collected as war duty from our village 220 sheep, 250 oxen with carts and all their accessories making them available for the transportation of food for the armies. They also took away 270 units of wheat, 120 litres of ghee, 50 units of bulgur, 100 woollen felts, 50 pairs of *trekhs*, 120 pairs of socks, 105 pairs of gloves and 50 carts of hay (one cart was equal to 70 Turkish *litres*). We transported all these goods with our means to Pazitagh and Ghaymaz and stored there in barns.

And in the winter we were carrying on our backs food and ammunition for the soldiers in Berkri, Khlich-Ketik and other places.

On 25 March, 1915 the *mudur* of Pazitagh came to our village with 15 policemen and after severely beating the village head Avetis, the priest Ter Mesrob and some other villagers collected the self-defence weapons of the village, in all 18 pieces. On April 6 the *mudur* with 15-20 policemen and *mudur* bey's son Amar with his 10 servants came to our village bringing with them 32 tied up villagers from Nazarové. He tied up and added to them 28 people from our village with me being one of them. At about 10 in the evening (Turkish time) they took us to Ghaymaz, near the confluence of Garasu and Phorakhané rivers⁴². First they stripped the priest of our village Ter Mesrob and said: "If you convert to Islam, you are free, if not, we'll kill you." Of course the priest refused, and they started plucking his beard, then with a yataghan cut off his limbs one by one and at the end they cut his head and threw him into the water. In the same way they tortured and killed our village head Avetis and the churchwardens Hakob, Grigor and Avag. Their fate was shared by the Nazarové villagers Asatur Hovsepian, Hakob Petrosian and Baghdasar Galoyan. My turn came. I was stripped like the others. The butchers were standing like angels of death waiting for the order. The sun had already set down. I slipped away from them and jumped into water. They started shooting. I swam with my powerless arms and made it to the other bank. Only 2 villagers from Nazarové followed my example.

The *mudur* leading the regular troops was joined by Mehmet and Patir beys from Haytaran with their people and a large mob. The next day, before dawn, they besieged the village and started plundering, shooting and killing indiscriminately; 350 people were killed. The rest ran to Tahar bey from Haytaran. The government ordered him either to kill them himself or to turn them over to the authorities. He did neither and was poisoned by the authorities and died. The people were scattered. After 5 days the Russians entered Van and occupied its environs. We returned to our houses and started reaping. However, the July retreat occurred and we emigrated by the Kzldizey route where we were robbed by the Kurds from Zilan and Haytaran who were Russian subjects. Patir bey from Haytaran who was sheltering at Mount Alakan attacked us near Kisan together with tribal chiefs from Zilan. Led by volunteers Arshaluys from Yerevan, Aram from Akhalkalak and Artash from Gandzak we resisted for one day, put the Kurds to flight and safely passed through. However 4 men and 4 women from Ghaymaz were killed.

Due to fatigue, fear and unfavourable conditions 80 people died on the road, at Ayrichar, and another 20 in Etchmiadzin. The rest of us were settled on the order of Fraternal Aid in the villages of Etchmiadzin, Karavansaray, Aghzitep and Ghamarlu regions.

In 1916 without any permission we went to our homeland; Patir bey, who had shed so much blood, presented himself as an obedient and peaceful person to the Russian government and took possession of the movable and immovable properties of the Armenians. We mowed the grass but when the August retreat occurred we left everything and returned to our former places.

NAA, f. 227, l. 1, c. 438, ss. 1-2, original, handwritten.

No 22

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ARAKEL GHARIBIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF ARCHESH AND
ALJAVAZ DISTRICTS OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 11, 1916
Karakhanbeglu

Narrated by Arakel Gharibian, aged 34, from the village of Norshenin Aljavaz, now lives in the village of Karankhanbeglu of Old Nakhijevan
On 21 July 1914 the government, by a special decree, called up for military service men aged 20-45. Those who failed to report would be tried by the

Military Tribunal. There were even some younger than 20 and older than 45. They were called up and forced into military ranks. As long as the government was clean-handed towards the Armenians, the condition of Armenian soldiers was bearable, though religious insults and arbitrary attitude were abundant. We don't know for what reasons the attitude of the Turks towards us suddenly changed – there was no lack of threats and beatings. Still in Berkri we, Armenian soldiers, were separated and disarmed which caused deep suspicions in us that the Turks had evil intentions towards us and for that reason when they wanted to move us to Van those of us who had a chance fled.

Those who stayed in villages were obliged to transport for weeks with their carts and oxen goods for the army to the borders. In the families without men, women were obliged to do that. The policemen would break into houses, seize and take away rice, cattle, sheep, ghee, cheese etc. Often the villagers who were transporting food for the army using their own means didn't come back together with their oxen. Usually they were murdered; those who were a little luckier would be saved only thanks to bribes or friendly Kurds.

Our villages were located along the Van-Berkri-Bayazet road axis and especially to Ghelech-Kyatukand that's why they suffered endless violence, oppression and deprivation. The province was made desolate in a short period of time. The bribe-taking policemen by a variety of promises took away the last property and then murdered everyone.

The massacre of Archesh started on April 7. The *kaymakam* himself led the slaughterers. Through deception the executor of the massacre together with his policemen and *millis* gathered all the men and boys of Artchesh military barracks, then took them tied up in rows to the edge of the gully, fired volleys at them, threw the bodies into the gully and covered them with sand. Among those murdered were the local priest (locum tenens of the diocese), master Haro with his sons and the blacksmith Hové with his sons.

The next day, on April 8, came the turn of Aljavaz. The *kaymakam*, his policemen and government troops raided the provincial centre and massacred everyone in Aljavaz; only 3 men were saved. The *mudur* of Sarisu started the massacre with the Kurds from the neighbourhood desolating some villages.

From the village of Verin Sipan that had 50 households, only one man named Seto was saved. Well-known people of the village were murdered: Melik Hové with his three sons; Yegho Margarian with his two sons, Haji Hakob (merchant), Avo Gyulamirian with his three sons and Saroyan Khcho with his two sons.

The villagers who were saved from the massacre found shelter in the mountains. They would go down to the village only at night to look for bread or other food stuffs; some of them then moved to the Lim Hermitage, and others to the villages of the Timar region until the Russians came.

During the July 1915 retreat at the Berkri bridge many residents of Aljavaz were killed during Kurdish attacks.

None of Aljavaz residents returned to their homeland. Now they live in the villages of the Yerevan province in the Gandzak province and other places.

Signature of the narrator— Arakel Sargis Gharibiants

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, pp. 20–21, original, handwritten.

No 23

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MKRTICH ALSANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF AKANTS-ARCHESH IN
ARCHESH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 23, 1916
Oshakan

Narrated by Mkrtych Aslanian (45), native of Archesh (Van), the only man saved from the Archesh massacre.

The former state of the village. The village of Archesh had 550 purely Armenian households and a Turkish population of about 2,500 households most of whom were engaged in land cultivation. The Armenians had two churches — St George²⁸ and St Thaddeus with two priests. We also had a primate - Ter Yeghishe⁴³. There were two primary schools in the village, one for Apostolic Armenians, the other for Protestant Armenians. Five to six hundred children of both sexes attended these schools. There was a library-reading hall named Yerkatian which had 1,500 books and 5-6 types of newspapers.

The village (only its Armenian part) had about 1,200 head of cattle (oxen and cows), 5-600 pairs of buffaloes, 1-200 horses, 300 donkeys, 300 carts. 250 ploughs, 5-600 wooden ploughs, 7-800 *halvars* of seed fields, a hayloft for 300 *bards* of hay, 20-30 water-mills, 1,200-1,500 vineyards and orchards.

Besides local villagers, some 300 traders from Van and Bitlis lived in Archesh and had shops.

The current condition of the village. Archesh is now completely desolate. The church of St George is burnt (by the Turks), and the church of St Thaddeus is demolished. All antiquities (manuscripts etc.) and church vessels are plundered.

²⁸ St George was a prominent place of pilgrimage.

The Armenian school was burnt by the Russians on the basis of some military plan. The Protestant school was burnt by the Kurds. All Archesh is burnt: the Turkish houses by the Armenians (after their retreat and before the Russian army entered the town), and the Armenian houses by the Turks and Kurds after the retreat of Armenians.

All the cattle were rustled by the Turks and Kurds. While retreating, the Turks took their things on our carts and pack animals and the rest, when Armenians retreated, went to the Kurds.

The number of men from Artchesh who were saved hardly reaches one hundred. Twenty of them were soldiers in the Turkish army and managed to flee to Van and be saved. Another 10 or so managed to hide here and there and escape. A woman, two girls and a boy have been captured; all other women, girls and children (under 10) were saved from the massacre.

Mobilisation and condition of Armenians and Armenian soldiers. During mobilisation the village supplied about 100 soldiers who could bear arms; ten were sent to Erzurum and nothing is known about them, and twenty were sent to the neighbourhood of Van and managed to escape to Van and be saved. Furthermore about 250 men were working on the road from Archesh to Ororan as *amele*, supplied with food and water. As for labour conscription as well as *tekalif-i harbiye* (war tax) for the army and *iyané*, they were usual things like in other places.

The massacre and its details. Before April 7, on the Feast of Annunciation, our Turkish and Kurdish neighbours treated us as usual. There were no rumours about the massacre. Only after the massacre did we learn that a month before there had been a telegram from Constantinople to our *kaymakam*: "Kill those dogs!" Being a decent man prior to that, the *kaymakam*, instead of harming the Armenians, ordered to poison and kill all the village dogs; and so it was before the massacre of the Armenians...

On April 7, at noon when everybody was at their usual work, suddenly policemen came to the market and called the primate (who happened to be sitting in a shop there), the priests as well as all craftsmen and shopkeepers to the town hall saying that the *kaymakam* had summoned them. After that the policemen went all over the village and the fields to collect the rest of the villagers by the census list they had in their hands.

Having a presentiment of the coming disaster, I immediately ran to the house of my Turkish neighbour Mukhtari Ali *chavush* whose wife Hamayil, a 40-year-old kind woman, hid me behind the bedding, under the rags (at that time nobody was at home but her). The Turks searched for me a lot but couldn't find me - neither in my house, nor in that Turk's house. Hamayil would swear and assure everybody there was no one in her house. At night Hamayil's husband came home and pressed her, if she had hidden anyone, to turn them out. Realising that

my hideout is not safe anymore, I left the Turk's house and hid in our pile of dry dung. But before that I told my family to bring a blanket in which I wrapped myself up and hid in the pile. Then they put some dry manure over me and 2 stacks of brushwood over my head for me to be able to breathe and not be seen. For the whole of 32 days I lived in my hideout. Every day my family would secretly bring food and water for me. The Turks couldn't find me.

When it got dark the messenger announced that no woman or child was allowed to go out into the street, otherwise they would be punished. The announcement was followed by gun volleys and heart-breaking screams of dying people. The Turks would often come to my hide out, sit leaning their backs against the wall of the pile and talk about their exploits. From their stories I learned that our priest (Ter Yeghiazar) and the primate (Ter Yeghishe), and all prominent Armenians were on the *kaymakam's* order to be slaughtered. And cut into pieces with daggers. Before murdering them, their beards would be removed by flaying their skin and displayed on the market wall as an ornament... Nshan *gha* Abaghian, a merchant from Van, who was also the secretary of the town government, asked the *kaymakam*: "Why are you committing such cruelties? What is our crime? What have these unfortunate people done to you?" The *kaymakam's* answer was: "The name 'Armenian' should be eradicated from the world."

The town inhabitants were murdered in the yard of the military barracks, most of them with cold weapons. Nshan *gha's* voice was heard who was begging: "For God's sake, kill me with a bullet." The villagers, tied to each other in groups, were taken out of Archesh (near Perel's water-mill, near the roads to Kharken and Ororan, Van and the orchards), killed by the ditches and thrown into them. Those killed at the military barracks were thrown the next day into those ditches. Those were the ditches where they had put the killed dogs...

On the day of the massacre the government carts started moving all the goods and items of value from the houses and shops of the merchants to the town hall. The houses of the native residents of Archesh were spared this sort of plunder. They were massacred by regular Turkish policemen - some 2-300 of them; the native Turks didn't touch us.

When the Russians approached, the Turks fled except for 10-15 wealthy ones like Haji Hasan *gha*, Ghahraman *gha's* son Shakir *effendi*, Sharif *effendi*, Chavush *gha's* son Mustaf [a] *gha*, Ibrahim *effendi* (a military leader), Ibrahim *effendi* from Ala-kyutap and others; they surrendered to the Russians but were ultimately released...

As soon as the Russian vanguard entered our village, my family came and took me away. I got out of my hideout and found barley for their horses and food for them before the army and the Armenian volunteers came to the village...

The retreat and losses due to it. On July 15-16, suddenly the Kurds from Zilan (Mikay, Hajidek, Hama) came and besieged the village. Local men from Archesh (some 10 people) and about 40-50 Armenian volunteers started fighting against them, defeated them and made them flee to the Kurdish village of Chakhr-Beg. The Russians didn't interfere in that fight.

The very next day the Russians announced a retreat. We had no time to prepare. We hardly had time to take our children, some food and leave in panic. Our cattle were in the fields, we had no chance to bring them in and put our loads on them. The first day of emigration we reached the Kurdish village of Arnis (on the road to Berkri). The next day we reached the Russian check-point at Berkri. From there in 3 days we reached Igdır where we stayed only for 2 days. Then we came to the villages of the Etchmiadzin and Yerevan regions. About 15 women and boys died on the road, and about 20 people in Igdır and Etchmiadzin.

Many people died this year. I don't know their exact number. Most of our villagers now live in Etchmiadzin and Yerevan.

What is written conforms to what I told.

I, H. Achemyan, sign instead of Mkrtich Aslanian who is illiterate.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 432, p. 12-17 rev., original, handwritten.

No 24

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR NUBAR RASHOYAN ON THE SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF AGHASAV IN ARCHESH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

September 1, 1916

Margara

Narrated by Nubar Rashoyan from the village of Aghasav of Archesh (about the massacre of the village).

One morning two weeks after Easter (1915) the Kurds from the village of Aghasav started displaying unusual movements involving comings and goings.

There were only two Armenian and 20 Kurdish households in Aghasav. Women asked the Kurdish women: "What's up?" The latter answered: "An order has come to kill all Armenians." Rashid *gha's* wife Faté handed weapons to his son Nuri Mehmet and said to him: "Here are your arms. There are three men among Armenians (Hambardzum Harutyunian, Movses Muradian and Manuk Yekmalian). Take them to the Russians so that the Kurds don't kill them."

And so it happened. At night Mehmet secretly took the three men out of the village and managed to get them to the Russian army.

The Armenians of the two households (women and children) stayed in the village among the Kurds but thanks to Faté they were safe. When the Armenian volunteers advanced, Faté fled and the women and children under her protection found themselves in the hands of the Kurds who indiscriminately raped the women and girls (even those aged 8-10) and all the boys of the same age (8-10).

This situation continued for nine days until the Russians approached. The Armenians fled to the (Kurdish) village of Chanchaghbyur where the Kurds took away their sheep and cattle. They went to Akants (Archesh) and after staying there for two weeks, emigrated during the July retreat (1915) by the Berkri-Abagha route to Igdır and from there scattered in the villages of Etchmiadzin.

What is written conforms to what I told.

Because of his illiteracy and at his request I wrote for him: Avetis Margarian from the village of Margara.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 449, pp. 8-9 rev., original, handwritten.

No 25

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR OVSANNA ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF BANON IN ARCHESH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 21, 1916
Bzovand Kulamaly

Ovsanna from the village of Banon in Archesh district recounts the following about the massacre of their village:

The village of Banon had 22 households and an Armenian population of 450; it had 1,050 cows, oxen and buffaloes, 1,500 sheep, 20,000 units of wheat, barley etc. Before the war the government conscripted 30 soldiers from our village. The police chief of Archesh took as bribe 70 sheep from Manuk Hakobian to release his son Mkrtych from conscription but a week later the police chief himself sent soldiers after him.

As war duties the government collected from the villages 200 units of wheat, 22 oxen, 40 pairs of socks, 30 pairs of *trekhs*, 22 pairs of hessian sacks, 30 ropes, 40 cartloads of hay, 30 cartloads of dry dung bricks, 400 *okas* of baked bread etc. They transported all that on our animals to Archesh and stored in barns.

We would always receive letters from our soldiers that they were living under very unfavourable conditions. They were hungry and thirsty for days, subject to impudent swearing and contempt of their officers. After war was declared, our soldiers were disarmed and used as *amele* labourers on the construction of roads, trenches and new buildings being built by the government, again without normal food and without beds at night, making them sleep on damp ground. Many fell ill and some died, therefore they started deserting the army.

In March the government took away 40 people from our village as *ameles* to work somewhere between Archesh and Ororan. Nuribek who was supervising and making them work hard made them dig a big pit and in order to divert attention made them put the dug up earth on roads. All 40 of them were murdered that month, among them – Martiros *agha*, Manuk, Hakob, Aleksan and Gabriel. Their bodies were thrown in the pit that they themselves had dug up a few weeks before. We went there in person and saw the bodies of many Armenians. In April Hamza from the village of Tuntras, Mrté from Muin together with their servants joined the *mudur's* policemen and besieged our village. They plundered everything, took away the cattle, murdered 50 people of both sexes and forcibly converted to Islam Manuk's daughter-in-law Jeyran, Khachatur's 14-year-old daughter Herko whom the Kurds from Tuntras and Yaghin took with them. They killed Hakob *agha's* daughter-in-law Nubar with her 3 children when she refused to do what they wanted. The oldest child was 5-6 years old. Hakob's daughter Antaram was 14 years old.

We fled to Archesh, the administrative centre. Every day the Kurds were robbing us and so were the policemen. After staying there hungry and thirsty for 10 days we fled to Zilanidzor (a Kurdish village). When the Russians advanced they exchanged us with their own people who were captured by the Russian army for theft.

When the Russians occupied Archesh, we returned to our houses and emigrated during the July 1915 retreat by the Berkri route. The Kurds from Zilan and Haytaran blocked our way. Our men, together with the volunteers, resisted and we passed into the Caucasus. Due to the fatigue on the road 20 people fell ill and died in Etchmiadzin.

Now we live at Yerevan, Etchmiadzin, Ghamarlu and other regions. No one has returned to our homeland.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 438, pp. rev. of 6-7 rev., original, handwritten.

No 26
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SUSAN MURADIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF GOZÉ IN ARCHESH DISTRICT OF
VAN PROVINCE**

August 10, 1916
Alighamarlu

Gozé had 70 households, 30 of which were Armenian and the remaining 40 Kurdish.

Though men aged 20-45 from Gozé were conscripted, they all returned home after being disarmed in the Turkish army.

On 7 April, 1915 more than 200 Kurds from Bayazet headed by Tamir *gha* Mhé (from Payn) attacked Gozé. They collected all men over 20 (some 50-60 of them), took them to the ravine called Goly Gom to the west of the village, stripped and tied them all up to each other and murdered everyone with daggers and rifles. The same mob badly wounded 10 women with daggers and threw them into a pit next to the village head Rasho's door. For more than 10 days voices of those women were heard from the pit until they finally died.

Only three women were saved from the village of Gozé. The rest were murdered and the women were captured.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 18, original, handwritten.

No 27
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GYULIZAR BEDELIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF KTRATS KAR IN ARCHESH
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

September 1, 1916
Margara

Narrated by Gyulizar Bedelian from the village of Ktrats Kar of Archesh (about the massacre of their village):

A few days after the Van self-defence fight started (7 April, 1915), the *ashirets* close to the villages headed by Mhé, Mirza *effendi*, Ozman, Mhé Tamir

gha, Mho, Dervish *gha*'s son Ozman, Pasha khan, Cherkez and other *ghas* attacked the villages of Artchesh.

They besieged the village of Ktrats Kar. The men of the village, some 40 of them, gathered at Murat *gha*'s house (a Turk living in the village) hoping that the Turk would protect them. Some others, who couldn't go to Murat *gha*'s house or didn't trust him, hid in different parts of houses, hideouts, storerooms, in flour and other places.

The Kurds came, took everybody out of the *gha*'s house, tied up their arms, took them out of the village to the bank of the Dalicha river flowing in the near the village. They stripped everybody and started shooting at them. After everybody had fallen down, the Kurds started stabbing everyone in the abdomen, heart and mouth and so those who were wounded and still breathing drew their last. After that, the Kurds returned to the village, searched every single house, checked the wardrobes, nooks and crannies and hideouts and if they found any men, they would slaughter them with a sword or a dagger, smash their head with stones or shoot them. Then they collected their bodies in a hayloft and burnt them.

While they were treating men so brutally, Murat *gha* opened the doors of his house for the terrified women and children welcoming everyone in his house. He fed them and took good care of them. The policemen and *Hamidiye* often threatened to burn the *gha*'s house and murder him if he hid any men. The *gha* was scared and turned in a few men he had hidden to the police. They were ruthlessly murdered. For two weeks Murat *gha* took good care of women and children saving them from the abuse of the Kurds who always demanded beautiful women and girls from *gha* who often come out and said: "Kill me! I won't give any family over to you." After two weeks, at the end of May, the Russians approached the village of Ktrats Kar. Seeing the Russians, the *gha* was terrified thinking they would kill him. He turned to the women he had saved: "For two weeks I successfully protected you from the Kurds. Now you protect me. Don't let the Russians kill me."

When the Russians approached, the women and children surrounded the *gha*, went to meet the Russians and asked them not to kill the *gha*. The Russians wrote on a piece of paper and gave it to the *gha* so that others would not kill him either.

The people stayed in the village one more week when suddenly the Kurds besieged the village. The women and children fled to Akants (Archesh) where they stayed for two weeks and when in July (1915) the Russians retreated from

Vaspurakan, the residents of Ktrats Kar migrated by the Berkri-Abagha route to the Caucasus.

The written account accord with my narrative. Because of illiteracy: Hayk Achemian (from Van)

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 449, pp. 5-8, original, handwritten.

No 28

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRE
OF THE VILLAGE OF SOSKUN IN ARCHESH DISTRICT OF VAN
PROVINCE

August 26, 1916
Upper Aynalu

Testimony of Mariam Petrosian (daughter of the village head, 40 years old), Voskan Hovsepian (55) and Yeghso Poghosian (35) from the village of Soskun.

Former state of the village. The village consisted of 8 Kurdish and more than 150 Armenian households. The Armenians had 5 flocks of sheep with about 2,000 sheep in each. The narrators had no information about other assets of the village.²⁹

Massacre of the village. There were almost no unusual events in the village before Christmas. Like in other places – military taxes, labour conscription, feeding the passers-by had become a law unto themselves. But when on the feast of Blessing of Water four soldiers from the village (Gevorg Petrosian, Sargis Gulanian, Ayvaz Tukhikian, Serob Sargisian) deserted to the Caucasus, a police officer from Archesh (they didn't know his name³⁰) with more than 30 policemen entered the village and started ruthlessly beating the parents of the deserters as well as the priest, the village head, the prominent men and all men of conscription age. They hanged Ter Simon (killed in Archesh) upside down in headman Garo's room from the evening until morning and beat him. They put a cat into his pants and beat it making it scratch and bite his genitals demanding the return and hand over of the deserters.³¹ They gathered all the young men of

²⁹ The men from the village live at Haytagh. One can get accurate information from them about the assets of the village and the number of its residents. The priest of the village lives at Mughanjugh.

³⁰ Abdel effendi and Mughtar effendi. Notes by residents of Haytagh.

³¹ The women recounting the story said that the second priest of the village, Ter Astvatsatur, was also beaten but he shouted "I am a fruit of your [Prophet] Mohammed," and was saved. He

conscription age in the headman's room and started ruthlessly beating them especially hitting their legs. The next day the snow was red from their bleeding wounds. The next day they took the priest, the headman and all men of conscription age (more than 200 people) to Archesh and put them in prison. After keeping them all in prison for about 3 weeks they released the priest and the headman and the rest were made to work on the Archesh road as *amele*.

At Shrovetide 11 soldiers (Tigran Mirkhanian, Movses Glurian, Nazar Potoyan, Simon and Toro Galian, Arshak Sardarian, Abro Shahenian, Rosho Shahenian, Movses Poghosian, Hako Khudoyan, Serob Muradian) deserted from Saray and came to the village. At Mid-Lent the same police officer with many policemen again came to the village and again beat the priest, the headman, the prominent men and parents of the deserters who, frightened, turned themselves in. After suffering the same tortures, they were taken to Archesh, imprisoned for a week and then put to work on roads as *amele*. In the evening of Holy Thursday the same police officer with the *mudur* and about 40 policemen besieged the village and started searching. They were allegedly searching for Armenian soldiers who deserted to Russia at the Feast of Blessing of Water. The police officer was furious and inflicted suffering on everyone with strokes of birch rod until dawn. His policemen and he himself would break the coffers, take the valuables, jewellery and money and if they found one single cartridge, they would turn that house into a mourning place; they wouldn't spare even the women. The police officer took Kishmish Petrosian, the beautiful wife of one of the deserters – Ayvaz Tukhikian, to his room where she fell victim to his and the soldiers' lust till morning when they let her go half-dead. Fifteen boys aged 15 had hidden in the church. The policemen took them out, beat them like cattle and tying up their hands put them into the headman's house. On Good Friday all the men of our village that they found, except 2 blind men and an 80-year-old man, together with the priest and the headman were taken to Archesh with their hands tied up and imprisoned for several days. They then released the 15-year-old boys and sent them back to the village, keeping the priest and the headman in custody. Those of conscription age were sent to work on the roads.

On the night of April 7, the Kurdish captain Mirza *effendi* from Kuzel (from the Sheikh ashiret) besieged the village with 60-70 mounted Kurds. The very same night the Archesh massacre occurred where all *soldier-ameles* from Soskun, with their hands tied, were slaughtered along with the priest and the headman. Manuk Petrosian from Soskun (son of the headman Petros) managed to escape from that

was never beaten again, nor was he arrested. During the massacres he fled to the Caucasus with his two brothers.

massacre with his hands tied (when they were taking him out of the prison)³² and returned to Soskun. He raised the alarm in the village and informed them of the criminal intentions of the government. Gathering about 40 men hiding in the village he went up Mount Gré-Gyol. But they couldn't go far because the day broke early. On the morning of April 7 Mirza *effendi* entered the village and started the massacre. They took all men from 10-year-old boys to 80-year-old men (even the blind and the old man who were spared the first time) out of the village and slaughtered them with daggers or shot them at the threshing floors. The women were only beaten when their sons were taken away but Gozé Poghosian, who was a very beautiful woman and had a lot of money, was raped at night and strangled; all her wealth was plundered (there were 30 gold coins on her alone). After the massacre at the village, Mirza *effendi* and his horsemen headed to neighbouring Armenian villages to continue the massacre. He didn't plunder the village.

Mahmat *gha* and Osman *gha* from Soskun (from the Kalk ashiret), who intentionally left the village during the massacre, as if to avoid the sin of being an accomplice in the massacre, entered the village after Mirza bey left. Their servants had stayed in the village to protect the cattle. Mahmat and Osman *ghas* sent their servants and armed Kurds who came to Soskun from other villages after the Armenian men who were sheltering at Gré-Gyol; they caught the Armenians and murdered them. Four of the Armenians – Manuk, Murat, Mushegh and Nato, who managed to escape and reach the village, were killed in the village.

Only Ter Astvatsatur with his two brothers and about 15 men managed to escape from the village. On the night of April 6, without telling other villagers they fled safely to the Caucasus.

When there were no men left in the village, the *ghas* gathered all the Armenian families in the house of the village headman Petros and kept them there under guard so that other Kurds do not approach them. They gave each family some flour to bake bread and go on living. The captives lived on that bare bread for the whole of 3 weeks without being allowed to go out or go to their houses. All valuables in the village were distributed among the Kurds by the *ghas*.

When the Russian army reached Gyavresham, the Kurds of Soskun left the captives and fled. The Armenians asked the *ghas* to take them with them since the Kurds from neighbouring villages could come and kill them but the *ghas* rejected them swearing and said: "There! Your Keri and your men have come. Get lost! Go to them!..."

³²The imprisoned Armenians, whose arms were tied had in advance secretly untied each other to be able to flee when taken out of the prison. However, when they tried to flee they were all shot, while Manuk Petrosian, whose arms were not yet untied, escaped hiding among the horses and fled taking advantage of the darkness. Six of his tormentors followed him up to the village cemetery frequently shooting at him but they couldn't catch him; only his clothes were pierced by many of their bullets.

The villagers of Soskun seeing that they were unprotected, left together for Archesh on the same day (at the end of April) and found shelter with the local women. Two Turkish policemen had stayed in Archesh protecting the village from Kurdish attacks. In 10 days the Russians entered Archesh. These two policemen from Archesh surrendered; their fate is unknown. During those 10 days families from Soskun survived on the food found in the houses of the Turks who had fled Archesh.

Families from Soskun stayed in Archesh for another 2 weeks and were moved to Batnots by the Russians. After 3 days they were returned to Archesh and stayed there for 2 more weeks until the July retreat.

They emigrated by the Berkri-Igdir route staying in Igdir for 3 days and in Etchmiadzin for 4 days. They were scattered in the villages of the Etchmiadzin region (Haytagh, Grampay, Upper Aynalu, Sardarapat and Igdir).

During the emigration many children lost their parents. The residents of Soskun passed into the Caucasus in separate groups. From the group of these narrators the following people died on the road: 2 children, in Margara, 2 women, 2 men³³, 2 children; in Etchmiadzin: 2 women, 1 boy; in this village: 2 girls.

Soskun is at present inhabited by Kurds.

What is written down is completely in line with what I recounted.

I sign on account of the narrators being illiterate:

Ghukas Petalian, intendant of the village of Upper Aynalu

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 445, pp. 20–27, original, handwritten.

No 29

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MANUK HARUTYUNIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF ARCHRA IN ARTSKE-ALJAVAZ DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 13, 1916

Kzltamir

Manuk Harutyunian from the village Archra of Aljavaz gave an account of the massacre in their village.

Just after the Van self-defence fighting started (7 April, 1915), when the soldiers of the village through ignorance sailed into the sea³⁴, Sia Ahmet *chavush*

³³They had returned to the village with the volunteers.

³⁴Lake Van is meant.

with 70 horsemen besieged the village, saying: "Let all men gather at Aslan's house, I have something to tell them. Keep yourselves busy, there's nothing special, be at ease." Most of the villagers, some 150 people, gathered at Aslan's house. Sia Ahmet had their arms tied to each other, surrounded them and shot them all. Seeing this calamity, the women, boys and everyone started running here and there. Some were captured. Bodies of those murdered were partially eaten by dogs. Some were thrown into pits and some were taken by their families and buried.

Archra villagers Ruben Harutyunian, Iskenter Muradian and Nshan Petrosian managed to escape the massacre by putting to sea in a small boat. The boat had no sail and would often drift in the open sea. When they approached the coast to take water or pick greens and clover or barley grains for food, the Kurds would shoot at them. When they had no water, Nshan and Iskenter would drink sea water. They would often weep with frustration. They had no cover in the boat, only a dry mat. To make fire they would shoot with their Browning pistol at the rags to burn them and so make fire, but in vain. They would dismantle the cartridges and use the gunpowder to make some flammable substance and using a flint would make a fire to warm themselves. They would often freeze in the boat for days. All this happened in April 1915.

What is written is in line with what I narrated. I sign for me and on behalf of my friends.

Iskenter Muradian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 434, pp. 16-17, original, handwritten.

No 30

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GASPARG SARGSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF ARCHRA IN ALJAVAZ DISTRICT
OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 13, 1916
Kzltamir

Gaspar Sargisian (27 years old) from the village of Archra of Aljavaz recounts the following:

The narrator was hiding in a cave (near a ravine) with some other people and saw how Turkish policemen and Kurdish horsemen were leading a group of women and children. The crowd approached. They were Armenian women and children from different villages. The crowd was stopped; two policemen took all

the children behind a hill and came back. They would forcibly strip all girls and women naked and make them stand in rows. The captives would weep, curl up with shame, sit down but the Kurds and the policemen forcibly made them lie down and raped them all by turns. Hearing their weeping and screaming, the men hiding in the cave were in utter despair but they could do nothing. When one of them saw that his 18-year-old daughter was among those being raped, in bitter grief he stabbed himself with a knife in the chest and fell down half dead. The abducted women and girls put on their clothes and continued their way weeping and surrounded with policemen. They walked round the hill and joined the group of children. Turkish policemen would rape handsome young boys. When the captive women asked the policemen: "Where are you taking us? Leave us in these fields to die of hunger", one of the policemen said: "We are taking you to Mush, to the German officers there to enjoy your beauty. We'll choose the beautiful ones and send to Germany, as for the ugly ones, we'll burn or kill them; such are the orders."

I find the written text in line with what I told and I sign: Gaspar Sargisian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 434, pp. 18 rev.-19 rev., original, handwritten.

No 31

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GYOZAL BANTOYAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF EGEDZOR IN ALJAVAZ
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 21, 1916
Basargechar

Aljavaz - Egedzor

Ten days after Easter of 1915 our village was filled up with the population of 6 villages - Beshnagomer, Jutgyakh, Tsaktsak, Akhsraf, Armizon and Archranits Vank. After learning about the Archesh massacre, the villagers were getting ready to fight. But Tahr *agha* from the village of Karashekh came and deceived everyone by saying he would take care of everyone. He took all the Armenians into his houses. In a few days the troops and the Haytaran *ashiret* came, besieged the village and taking men in pairs from Tahr *effendi*'s house murdered everyone - about 150 people. They included, from our village Miro with his sons and brothers - 7 people; Gzpo with his sons and others; from the village of Tsaktsak - Mesrop and others; from Archranits Vank - sons of Ter Khoren and others.

They stripped the women and children and tortured them. They took them out of Tahr *effendi*'s house and burnt it. We, the remaining women and children, fled to Artské and Norshen. For more than 25 days we were like vagrants, in constant suffering. More than 100 women and 100 children died in Norshen. The Russians came near the Ascension Day. From our village 15 women and children were murdered or died or were abducted. There were 20 households in the village. Seventeen people were saved of whom 2 men, who were dispersed. The village is in ruins; nobody went back. I live here in Basargechar. Household: 1; people at present: 2; losses after the retreat: 4 people.

Kozal Bantoyan from the village of Egadzor in Aljavaz.

Interviewed by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 31, original, handwritten.

No 32

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS KARAPET HAKOBIAN AND
SEDRAK MISAKIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF
KOCHERER IN ALJAVAZ DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 12, 1916
Oshakan

Most people from my village now live in Etchmiadzin. The priest is in New Bayazet; he could know better.

The former and current state of the village. Our village had 25 households of only Armenian population, about 400 sheep, 200 oxen, 20-30 buffaloes, 17 horses, 100 cows, 30 donkeys, land yielding 1,000 *khalvars* of seeds, 200 carts (*bards*) of rye grass, 10 vineyards, 15 ploughs, 20 carts, 3 water-mills.

Now all the wealth of the village has been robbed, and the village itself is burnt and desolate.

Massacre of the village. On the night of the Annunciation³⁵ the police chief Mehmet *effendi* came to the village with 20 policemen and said that all the men should go to the village of Aren where the *kaymakam* would read a royal edict on agricultural works. When the men, following Mehmet *effendi* left the village, they were all tied up before reaching Aren and together with the men from Guzel were all shot near Porki Gyol.. After leaving their bodies there for about 40 days

³⁵ Annunciation – celebration of the announcement by the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary of the good news. Celebrated on 7 April.

the Turks covered them with a thin layer of sand. After the massacre, all the women and children were taken to Aljavaz (Artské) where the beautiful ones were selected and taken captive and the ugly ones were distributed among Turkish households to keep. Our village had 6 boats; 4 of them were captured by the government, their sails were removed and their owners were murdered. But one boat escaped the pursuit and was saved. It, and another boat, were saved when the Russian army came. These two boats secretly came to our village (Kocherer) and took the families that had fled from Aljavaz to the island of Lim. Though the Turks attacked the boats and even killed some people, thanks to the resistance of the sailors we managed to escape and safely reached the island.

Near Aren 55 men from our village were murdered; 5 children and 3 women were abducted. Some 20-30 children died of hunger, another 15 people died during the retreat-emigration.

Currently there are about 35 males and about 55 females saved from our village.

They emigrated on July 15, with Van by the Berkri-Igdir route.

We have no information about other issues.

Signatures (Karapet Hakobian, Sedrak Minasian)

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 432, pp. 1 rev.-2, original, handwritten.

No 33

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR BAGHDASAR GHAZARIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KUZEL IN ALJAVAZ DISTRICT
OF VAN PROVINCE**

1916
Oshakan

Recounted by Baghdasar Ghazarian from the village of Kuzel in Aljavaz about their village:

Before the all-European war Kuzel had 20 households of exclusively Armenian population (all related to each other) of about 200 people (80 of them men). The village had 1,000 head of sheep and 500 head of cows, oxen, female buffaloes, horses and donkeys. There was an ancient church – Tukh Manuk. The church possessed liturgical vessels worth 150 Ottoman liras. There were also old manuscripts and books in vellum. During the pillage of the village the church was also robbed and destroyed. The Kurds forcibly took the priest Ter Poghos to a ravine and slaughtered him there. The village had a school with 20 pupils of both genders. The village is now completely destroyed, ruined and desolate.

Once war was declared – and following the call of a messenger all the men of the village were taken as soldiers to the village of Aren from where they were sent to Erzurum, Van, Saray and other places. Food, cattle etc. were first collected as war duty then as donations. At the end, when the villagers were unable to give anything, the Kurds and the Turks started breaking into houses and forcibly taking everything with violence, swearing and beating. During the cold winter people and pack animals were conscripted and made to do hard labour.

After the fighting started in Van (7 April 1915), in the evening the police chief named Rechap *effendi* besieged the village with his policemen. Through a messenger the following was announced: “Let every man come to the headman's house where they will be listed and the police chief will distribute barley seeds to them for sowing.”

All the men gathered at the village headman's door. They tied the arms of all men. When the tied men asked: “Why did you tie our arms?” they said: “We'll take you to Aren and from there send you to the army.”

They drove the tied men towards Aren but didn't reach it. By the lake near the above village they shot or slaughtered everyone. About 40 people were murdered. This massacre happened near Aren. At the same time the Kurdish mob attacked the village and after raping beautiful women and girls took them captive and converted everybody to Islam. The rest (women and children) were dispersed in the fields and mountains in despair and stayed there for 30 days feeding on edible plants and greens. When the Russians entered Aljavaz district, all these wandering Armenians gathered together and went on with their lives. When the Russians retreated, the people also retreated with them and reached the Caucasus. There are now 10 households with 50 people (7 men) from Kuzel living in Oshakan. The village has seeding land for 500 *khalvars*. When they fled their village, they left behind 500 *khalvars* of wheat. The residents of Kuzel are scattered all over the Kars province. The village of Kuzel had two sailboats worth 600 liras. The boats were sunk by the Turkish soldiers. The village had a water-mill worth 300 liras which is now completely destroyed. Each household suffered on average losses amounting to 250-300 liras. Distinguished for their crimes were Sia Ahmet (a Kurd), Hasan *agha* (a Kurdish tribal chief) and the famous Kyor Husein pasha gained notoriety for their crimes and on their order many villages were massacred and destroyed. After the first massacre (on April 7) 15 people fled to the sea³⁶ and hid in the cliffs (which were directly connected with the sea). They suffered from thirst, couldn't stand it anymore and send one of them to bring water. The Kurds noticed him when he left his hideout, caught him and threatened to kill if he didn't say where his friends were. He didn't say anything. They slaughtered him and threw his head into the sea. His friends saw

³⁶ Lake Van is meant.

a head in the water, recognised their friend from his hair and left their hideout for fear, trying to move to a safer place. The Kurds caught them, murdered them all and stripping them naked threw their bodies into the sea.

What is written is completely in line with what I recounted so I authorise Armenak Sedrakian to sign for me.

Baghdasar Ghazarian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 431, pp. 4 rev. –7 rev., original, handwritten.

No 34

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR NIGYAR PETROSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF NORSHEN IN ALJAVAZ
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 11, 1916

Tmbul

Recounted by Nigyar Petrosian from the village Norshen of Aljavaz; now she lives in the village Tumbul of Old Nakhijevan.

The conscription came about at the end of July 1914. The government police came and took one person from each household to serve in the army. Because of hard work, insults and threats these men would desert when the occasion presented itself. Only 5 men stayed in the army, and nobody knew what happened to them.

They would regularly rob us on the pretext of war duty. For instance, they took from us 2 Van pots⁴⁴ of bulgur, 20 Van pots of wheat, 40 head of sheep, 10 head of cattle, 12 *litres* of ghee. They took these after asking for our consent. Also a horse. Before the massacre they forcibly took away 200 head of sheep, 2 horses, 4 buffaloes, 10 cows, 20 oxen, 2 carts, 10 clay pots, 10 sets of beddings, 20 felts and all domestic movable property. After murdering my husband they took 100 Ottoman gold coins.

On the Feast of Annunciation in 1915 Musa *agha* from Chil-Kayni with his 100 Kurds attacked our village and with their rifles and pistols killed 43 men who didn't have a chance to flee. They took away 7 women and girls: 1. Maran Mkrтчian; 2. Gasparian Mariam; 3. Zakarian Atlas; 4. Sukiasian Jeyran; 5. Parian Paytsar; 6. Petros's daughter-in-law Herko; 7. Murat's daughter Azo. They took away the following men: 1. Mihran; 2. Misak; 3. Sargis; 4. Sahak; 5. Gegham; 6. Pokhan; 7. Minas.

They burnt the houses...

The Kurds plundered all the property of the Armenians. They took away all the wheat from the wheat pits.

Ten young men from our village had hidden in a cave out of the village. The Kurds learned about it, put fresh garbage at the cave entrance and lit it. Those in the cave died of heavy smoke. Their bodies were then taken out and cut to pieces by swords. Among them were also the priest of our village Ter Harutyun, Kalantar Aspaturian, Haso Petrosian, Arshak Ter Harutyunian etc. Prominent people of the village were also murdered: Vardan Petrosian, Gaspar Potikian, Aspatur Toroyan and Mkrtich Mukhsiyun.

We recently learned that 4 of the imprisoned young men were brought to Van. The Kurds brought them to the field to reap. Suddenly the Russians came upon them; the Kurds fled and the young men were freed. A lot of imprisoned Armenians (their number is unknown) from Aljavaz and neighbouring villages were also freed with them.

The residents of our village are dispersed all over the Caucasus.

The narrator is a 45-year-old illiterate woman.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 25 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 35

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS ARSHAK MELIK-GABRIELIAN AND GEVORG GASPARIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF LOWER SIPAN IN ALJAVAZ DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 12, 1916
Oshakan

Recounted by Arshak Melik-Gabrielian (aged 30) of Lower Sipan village of Aljavaz, son of the village headman, and Gevorg Gasparian (aged 45)

Most of the villagers live in Sardarapat.

The former and current state of the village: Our village consisted of 30-35 exclusively Armenian households. The village had 800 head of sheep, 300 oxen, 30-40 buffaloes, 100 cows and female buffaloes, 20 ploughs, 50 wooden ploughs, 50 carts, 7 vineyards, 10 orchards, 9 water-mills and countless lands.

The village is now completely ruined and deserted.

The massacre of the village: On Annunciation Day Haji Ahmet *effendi*, a member of the Aljavaz majlis (council) and a native of Aljavaz, together with

Suleyman bey, came to the village and assured the headman that there was no danger and if there was any they would protect the village. We waited until the evening when Gabriel Yaroyants (since murdered) from the village of Khorants came breathlessly, half-burnt and wounded with bullets, and said that all the men of Khorants were put into a hayloft and burnt and so we had to save ourselves. Some of our villagers wanted to take arms and flee but the headman didn't agree since the aforementioned Turks were his acquaintances and frequent guests at his home and he couldn't imagine that they could tell lies or break up their friendship. On that night we the men (only 30 were armed) fled to Mount Sipan where we lived in the snow for 25 whole days. When the day following our flight we went down to the village because we were hungry, we learned that the headman, his one son and his nephew were taken out of the village and murdered; a further 4 people were murdered in the village with sticks and daggers. Some of the women were captured; others fled to Aljavaz. The village was solely inhabited with Kurds. The Kurds we knew gave us food and saw us off saying that there was no more danger for the rest of the families. But that food cost us dear. Twelve people trusted their Kurdish friend and went to their houses and were all murdered. Six people were killed when bringing food from the village. Another 17 managed to reach Lim Island on boats belonging to the villagers of Kotcherer. Six people, after wandering in the mountains for a long time arrived at Diadin, then to Gharakilisa where they joined the Russian army, only to return to the village and find it completely ruined.

Everything written here about our village is in line with what we narrated.

Due to the illiteracy of Arshak Melik-Gasparian and Gevorg Gasparian, I sign: Sargis Galustian (a resident of Oshakan)

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 432, pp. 2 rev.-3 rev., original, handwritten.

No 36

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ANDRANIK MURADIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ATANANTS IN GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

Andranik I. Muradian, aged 10.

From the village of Atanants of Gyavash, at the Baku orphanage No 2.

a) Before the war our family consisted of only two (2) members: my mother and I.

b) My mother died of dysentery in our village.

The massacre of the village of Hatanants³⁷ of Gyavash.

It was before the April fightings at Van when a group of Turkish *millis* attacked our village. Our villagers fought against them for some time, then they took their families and retreated to Hayots Dzor. For 2 weeks we wandered in the mountains with villages from Hayots Dzor sometimes clashing with the Kurds.

Then we decided to go to Varag, where a large number of fighters had gathered from different places. A young man named Hovhannes came from Varag with a group of soldiers, fought with the Kurds in the mountains for quite a long time, broke through and entered the village of Mashtak and freeing about 200 people – women and children, took them to Varag. The sick stayed in the village; some died, others were killed. I didn't know them. We stayed in Varag hardly for two days because the Turks captured it. We were obliged to find shelter in the town, but the soldiers stayed in Varag and at night went down to Aygestan. On our way, at Shushants Field, the Turks surrounded and took us prisoners. There were only two men with us who tried to flee I didn't know them. The Turks gave chase and shot them. Then they took us all to the village of Sghgay and put us in a house – some 60-80 people. After a while a group of Kurds surrounded the house. I was dressed like a girl. Before they entered the house, my mother secretly put me into a *tonir*⁴⁵ closing it with a cover. After a few minutes I heard some loud turmoil, weeping and a gunshot. After some time, the noise abated, only the sound of weeping was heard. My mother moved the *tonir* cover aside and I came out. A man in woman's clothes was shot there.

My mother told me that the Kurds had come looking for the men, found that man in woman's clothes and killed him (I didn't know him). I thought the danger had passed. But I was sadly mistaken. It was night when the Kurds broke in the second time with candles in their hands. My mother was taken by surprise and couldn't manage to hide me like before. I was terribly scared. But since the first time the Kurds had thoroughly searched and had taken away all male children older than 1 year, they didn't suspect that there could be other male children left. So they didn't search again. I was saved. The Kurds had come the second time for suckling male babies under 1 year of age. I saw how they took two such babies from their mothers, put them on the floor and with a leg on their legs and holding their head with a hand, slaughtered them like sheep (I didn't recognise them). They impaled the last baby on the bayonet and went out laughing loudly leaving the mothers who had lost their babies wailing.

... We stayed in that detention place for three days; then the Armenian soldiers in Van learned that we were in the hands of the Kurds, so they attacked Sghgay

³⁷ Hatanants (a version of the name of the village of Atanants) was a purely Armenian village ear Vostan.

vigorously making the Kurds and Turks flee. They freed us and took us to Van where we stayed until the May liberation.

After liberation we returned to our village where my mother died of dysentery after 6 days. During the last retreat I emigrated with our neighbours to Etchmiadzin where I was placed in an orphanage.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp. 24-25, original, handwritten.

No 37

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SARA MURADIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF BOGHANIS IN GYAVASH
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

[1916]

Baku

Sara Muradian, aged 30, from the village of Boghanis in Gyavash district of Van province. Now I live in Armenian Village of Baku, 11th Nagorny, house number 30 and get an allowance from the Refugee Committee.

I lived in our village that had households⁴⁶ with my family consisting of 10 people – I, my husband Hakob, my brother-in-law Nshan, my daughters Aregnazan and Zanazan, my son Vahan, my brother-in-law Arpiar, my sisters-in-law Yeghso and Vosko, my mother-in-law Altun. Now we are 4 people.

At the beginning of the conscription all men aged 20-45 were taken to the army. My husband Hakob and my brother-in-law Nshan were also taken but they fled. We paid a fine of 15 gold coins and 5 units of wheat to the police to free our men. After that, when the conscription was over, the government started collecting cereal grains, ghee, cheese, clothes, hessian sacks, sheep, cattle and other things for the army. They came for 2-3 times until the winter and collected three quarters of what we had, and when the Armenian soldiers were disarmed, some of them returned; others stayed in the army and there is no news from them until now. Those who returned lived like fugitives. The policemen were coming after these fugitives every week causing a lot of trouble to us. Sometimes we would bribe and send them away, sometimes they would take away the people they wanted.

In the winter when happened number of clashes occurred between revolutionary soldiers and the Turkish government in the Belu village of our district and especially after the Russians reached Saray, the government came to an agreement with the Armenians and did not conscript us anymore. This

continued until the spring, towards the end of March. One day a policeman came from the village of Illi to go over to Pesandasht through Baradotik, but because the Armenians were not allowing any comings and goings there, the policeman was killed. It enraged the government and they sent about 200 soldiers to besiege the roads leading to our village and Baradotik. When the troops entered the village the young men fled and the old people stayed. Seven residents of the village, including my father Harutyun, gave service to them for about 20 days, and when the Van fighting began they murdered all 7 of them. During those 20 days the troops committed all kinds of violence – plundering, beating, raping etc.

When the Van fighting started on 8 April, 1915, Hyusein *agha* from Gyavash with *millis* attacked Gyavash on behalf of the government but didn't come to our village. A day after his attack our village was besieged by people from the village of Karkar, in the direction of the mountain called Haght, but the villagers of Karkar had already blocked that road. After fighting for a day, the villagers of Karkar couldn't resist any more and at night fled to Pesandasht. The next morning the mob attacked our village. The young and middle aged men who could flee, at night joined Levon from Pesandasht (Levon from Kharakan who resisted the government with a group of armed fighters for a month and saved the residents of Pesandasht from the massacre). The elderly, children and we, the women, stayed in the village in the hands of the mob. For the whole of 35 days, Gyol khan's son Khalit bey would come to our village with his group and plunder everyone. They murdered all males above 5 years of age that were in the village and divided our cornfields and houses between them.

Three times a day he would gather us, the women, and force us to convert to Islam threatening to kill those who resisted. He twice offered me conversion and when I refused he pointed his rifle to my heart in order to kill me but my children threw themselves on me and fainted. He left us and went away. Because of that my son Hohan died of fear a few minutes later. My brother-in-law was murdered before my eyes. Two-three times a day they would gather us and take us to the field, where they would strip everyone naked and rape. They took away even the smallest things. We endured countless sufferings before the Russian troops entered Van. When the Russian troops entered Van, the Turks from Van were already fleeing from our parts to Bitlis and when the volunteers occupied Vostan the Kurds from our village fled with their families taking with them my aunt's daughter-in-law and her brother. They haven't returned until today and we have no news about them. We stayed in the village until Keri's detachment⁴⁷ came to our village. After that we started collecting property that belonged to the Kurds. After we had been living quietly for a month, the Russian army retreated and we retreated with them to Etchmiadzin. From our family my sister-in-law Vosko and my mother-in-law Altun died on the way. My daughter Zanazan, my brother-in-

law Arpiar and sister-in-law Yeghso died in Etchmiadzin. From there four of us came to Baku and now live here in Baku.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 473, pp. 4-6 rev., original, handwritten.

No 38

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MARGARIT HAKOBIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF HARBERD IN GYAVASH
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

[1916]
Baku

I, Margarit Vardanian Hakobian, 27 years old, from the village of Arberd in Gyavash district of Van province, now live in Armenian Village of Baku, 11th Nagorny house No 30, and live on an allowance from the Refugee Committee.

I lived in our village which consisted of 45 households of which 30 were Armenian and 15 Kurdish. I lived with my family which consisted of 4 people. Now I and my husband Yeghiazar are alive; my son Abel and my daughter Gyulik died.

On 15 July, 1914, when the European war was declared, the Turkish government started the mobilisation of troops. For us the mobilisation was very hard. The government policemen that came for mobilisation oppressed us greatly. Beatings reached their peak, swearing was an ordinary thing for them. When during the mobilisation someone was late or tried to hide, the village would suffer a lot. They would burn the conscript's house, take away his property and imprison his close relatives, his mother and father, if he had any. Hambardzum Aspoyan from our village couldn't endure the conditions in the army, especially because he was seriously ill. After recovering he fled and returned to the village. The policemen came to the village, went directly to Hambardzum's house and put his father Aspo under surveillance. When they demanded from Aspo to turn in Hambardzum and he said he didn't know his son's whereabouts, they started beating and torturing him. After beating him they put hay around him, then poured kerosene on it and set him on fire. They burnt also the house of another man – Hokhan Gyuroyan, for failing to serve in the army. After the mobilisation they started collecting our wheat and ghee, cheese, sheep, cattle and everything else that was needed for the army. We suffered like this until April 1915.

When rumours about massacres were already rife, and our fellow Kurdish villager Pahram bek already realised what was going on, he told all our men to flee to the mountains. So all our men fled to Shitan which was already involved in fighting but was safe because Levon from Kharakan had prepared resistance groups.

The next day Jangir *agha* from Vostan took 200 people with him, came to our village and started ruthlessly murdering everyone above the age of 15. They didn't spare even those above 5. After committing atrocities for two days, before leaving our village they gathered us all, beat us out of the village and told us never to return there again: "You can go anywhere you wish," they told us. We wandered around all day and didn't dare to go back to our village. We went to my father's village of Bakhvants which was hardly half an hour's distance away. I directly went to my father's house and saw that my father Vardan, my brother Sargis, uncles Ghazar and Zatik were murdered at the threshold of his house. When I saw their bodies I couldn't stand it anymore. I started yelling and cursing the Kurds. When the Kurds heard my curses they attacked me wanting to kill me. Frightened I left my son Abel and fled. They wanted to kill my son but one of them didn't allow it. We stayed in my father's village for two days and were again sent back to our village. We stayed in our village for a day and then went to the village of Poghonis and begged Amar bey for a place to spend the night. We stayed there for two days. Then Pahram bek from our village asked Jangir *agha* to take us back to our village. Rape had become common by then. We lived like that until Keri's army entered Van and Vostan was taken. When Vostan was taken, some of the Kurds had already fled. The rest fled too and we were freed. I forgot to tell that when I left my son Abel, after two hours I felt safer and went to look for him. I found him near my father's house; he was trembling with fear. I took him but couldn't treat him; he was sick for 20 days and then died.

My daughter Gyulik died several days after Keri's detachment entered our village; she was exhausted from starvation.

After the Russians took over our district we lived in peace for a month, and when they retreated we fled with them to Etchmiadzin and from there to Baku and until now we live in Baku.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 37 rev.-38 rev., original, handwritten.

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HRIPSIME PETROSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF MOKHRABERD IN GYAVASH
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]

Baku

I, Hripsimé Petrosian, aged 35, from the village of Mokhraberd in Gyavash district of Van province, now live in Armenian Village of Baku and work at the 8th Nagorny Third orphanage.

I lived in our village which consisted of 100 households; I lived with my family consisting of 7 people: I, my husband Petros, my sons Vardges, Aram, Vahan, Barsegh and my daughter Arusyak. Now there are 4 of us. My husband was killed, my son Barsegh and my daughter Arusyak died of fear in the village.

Government taxes, *olam* and beatings were common things for us. Though there were no killings, the harsh measures and abuses were unbearable for us. Those among our men who were exempt from conscription- elderly men and boys- were taken to *amele* for days. They took away all we had - wheat, barley, hay, cattle, flour - everything.

The government sent a group of 30 policemen to our village to protect us from troops passing by and the Kurds. They indeed protected us until the spring (April). When the government started strictly looking for deserters and the Armenians didn't want to turn them in, the government started implementing its schemes. They first started massacring the region of Hayots Dzor and then arrived in our district. When our villagers saw the approaching danger, some of the young men fled to the mountains. The next day all the villagers gathered and went up the mountain; they stayed there for 4 days and also gave 6 liras to the chief mullah Tarvel of the garrison billeted in the village to let the rest of the villagers join us in the mountain.

Mullah Tarvel let us and we all went up the mountain. We lived there quietly for 2 days. On the third day when our men were setting up positions to fight under the leadership of Mukhsi [Murat] and Petros, the mob besieged us and the fight started. It lasted until midnight. Because of the snow the troops, together with the mob, retreated to rest in Nor Gyugh. When our men realised that they couldn't resist them the next day, they fled to Pesandasht at night. However, some of the men who were given no information by those fled, stayed on the mountain until the morning. The mob attacked us again and meeting no resistance moved closer selecting the men aged 10 to 100 and murdered them all, including my husband Petros. They murdered about 50 people. After killing the

men they turned on us, the women. They robbed us, stripped everybody leaving only the underwear and after torturing and raping us sent us back to the village. They kept us there for 8 days then made us leave the village. They forced us out of the village, chose 2 beautiful women, took them away, kept them for 4 days and then let them go. Thus they were torturing us like that for a month until the volunteers entered Van. I have to say that our garrison protected us quite well. When the volunteers entered Van, they got ready to retreat, and when the volunteers took Vostan we were freed and lived free for a month until the retreat. When the Russian troops retreated, we came with them to Etchmiadzin and from there we came here.

So from our family that consisted of 7 members, my husband was killed, my son Barsegh and my daughter Arusyak died of fear in the village, and now there are 4 of us.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp. 28-29, original, handwritten.

No 40

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HRIPSIME IGNATIOSIAN ON THE RESISTANCE PUT UP AND CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY THE VILLAGE OF TSHOGH IN GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

Hripsimé Ignatiosian, aged 38, from the village of Tshogh in Gyavash district of Van province; I now live in Armenian Village of Baku, in the house N⁴⁸ at the corner of 3 Nagorny and 7th Perevolny and receive an allowance from the Refugee Committee.

I lived in my village consisting of 60 households (Armenians). I lived with my family which consisted of 22 people: I, my husband Ohannes, my sons Azat and Poghos, my daughters Aghavni and Haykush, my mother-in-law Asmin, my brother-in-law Harutyun, his wife Aghavni, his son Haik, Sedrak, Khlo, Azniv, Paytsar, Falik, Hakob, my brother-in-law Abgar, his wife Varduhi, his son Khacho, his daughter Vardanush, my brother-in-law Nshan and his wife Aghavni.

During the mobilisation, though they took our men to the army and took most of our food for the army, they didn't molest us until October 1914. After that about 40 policemen and more than 20 soldiers came to our village to look for deserters when they were searching the houses they ran across Ghazar from the

village Mok who was living in our village; he had a 10-cartridge pistol on him, they chased him, he ran and hid in their house and started resisting. The troops besieged the village and in particular their house and fired several volleys on the house; the boy shot back from the house and wounded a couple of policemen. That caused the policemen to leave the village and directly go to Vostan. When they left the village Ghazar and his friends left the village and went to neighboring villages – Narek, Pshavank, Akhavank, Pakhvants etc.

The policemen went to Vostan and complained to the gaymagam about the rebellion in the village. Within two days the village was suddenly besieged by about 200-300 policemen. After firing a few volleys, when no resistance was offered, they broke into the village and started catching the women; they started beating my brother-in-law's wife Aghavny, my godmother Atran and our villager Ohannes's wife wanting to know the whereabouts of those who fought the day before; they even flogged their buttocks with heated, red-hot iron wires. After getting nothing from them, they gathered us, all the village women, beat us and demanded to tell where the deserted soldiers were. When they saw that we were not saying anything, they left us and started plundering the village; they took away the valuable things from the houses, then they ruthlessly slaughtered all our sheep and threw them on the street; after that the gaymagam sent the troops back to Vostan but he himself stayed in the village with several policemen, called the village head Marto and questioned him in details about the event. When the village head didn't satisfy him with his answers, he ordered to tie his arms and eyes, sent him to Vostan and from there to the town (Van). My brother-in-law Pokhan (who was village head's assistant) too was taken for questioning a couple of times but wasn't arrested.

So we suffered terrible tortures till April 1915 when Ishkhan was killed. The same day 10 policemen came to our village, called in my husband Ohannes, Marto's Elo and Aspatur, who were the chieftains, and demanded to turn in the village weapons. Our men said we had no weapons, so they tied their arms to send them to Vostan but the village youth didn't allow it. The Turks returned to Vostan and within two days came back, besieged the village and started firing volleys. When our men replied, they fought for a day and then drew off. The next day, joined by the mob from Khizan and headed by Hyusein *agha* from Takhman they besieged the village Narek and fought against them till the evening. When it got dark, villagers of Narek, Pshavank, Pakhvants and Akhavank, headed by Chatoyan Mihran and Abro from Norgyugh, drew off and came to our village. All these people went up Mountain Hiritcha and started fighting; the fighters were fighting and we, weeping and wailing, headed for Shitan. By the time we passed Mountain Artos, some 30-40 people died of fear and cold including the village priest Ter Mikayel. When we reached Shitan we saw that Levon from Kharakan with 3-400 soldiers had taken up positions and were ready to fight

against Turkish army. Levon came to meet us with his soldiers, properly placed us in Shitan villages and they took their stand at 4 dangerous outstanding places. Three days after we reached Shitan the fight started. They fought for a whole month without ever losing heart. Thanks to our daring and brave young men and their comfortable positions we didn't have any losses in 30 days. Once they were running out of cartridges and started losing heart but 7 young men managed to somehow reach Van and bring cartridges without any loss. When the fight was over, we sent 10-12 people to Harberd for news about our families. And when the volunteers entered Vostan, all the neighborhood became free land for us; my brother-in-law Nshan had stayed there too and was among those who went to Mountain Hiritcha to fight; seven of our men were killed there and Nshan was one of them.

We learned in the village that some of the villagers were taken prisoner and some were left in the village; we went to our houses and after living quietly for a month retreated with the Russian army, came to Etchmiadzin and from there to Baku.

The losses of our household are as follows: Nshan and my husband were killed; Khlo, my brother-in-law's wife Aghavny and my daughter Haykush and my brother-in-law's daughter Azniv died of hunger in the village. We came to Berkry where the mob besieged and attacked us: many threw themselves into the river to get rid of those torments once and forever; many were killed and those who could flee left all their belongings and fled. We were saved from that massacre too and reached Baku where we live now.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp.30-31 rev., original, handwritten.

No 41

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF GOMS OF KARCHKAN IN GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 29, 1916
Ghznvuz

Information supplied by Petros Manukian, Nazar Avetisian, Khachatur Muradian and Nshan Hovhannesian from the village of Goms of Karchkan about their village.

Former state of the village. Before the war the village of Goms had 70 households of exclusively Armenian population. It had 2,000 sheep, 1,000 head

of cattle, 70 ploughs, 250 wooden ploughs and 50 carts. The village annually produced 2,450 *khalvars* of wheat, 1,000 *khalvars* of barley, 7,000 carts of hay. The village church of St George had an ancient construction. The relics of the same saint were buried by the villagers before emigrating but when they returned afterwards and wanted to dig them out, the relics were gone. There were two priests: Ter Sahak and Ter Khachatur; both were murdered in the village.

Declaration of war and mobilisation. When the Pan-European war was declared, 11 men were conscripted from the village. Nothing is known about them to date. As war duty, the government took from the village 100 *khalvars* of wheat and barley, 30 poods of ghee, 100 poods of bulgur, 100 poods of cereal groats, 10 sheep from each household (700 sheep), 70 cows, 140 oxen, countless amount of hay and straw, 70 poods of baked bread (*sukhari*⁴⁹), 1,500 pairs of *trekhs*, socks and mittens, 70 pieces of felt and carpets, 400 Ottoman gold coins.

All those exempt from conscription were taken to *olam* works. Eighteen of them died (they were most probably murdered) while carrying out *olam* works with their carts and cattle. The women whose husbands were taken to the army were subjected to labour conscription. They had to carry on their backs 3-pood loads to Van and Baghesh. There were 32 women doing this sort of work.

When Turkish troops, policemen and Kurdish *Hamidiye* irregulars came to the village, the villagers had to feed them and their horses. When they were in the village beatings and rape abounded there.

The massacre. When the Van self-defence fighting started (7 April, 1915), the Kurd Hamza bek from Tikhtis came with 400 *Hamidiye* irregulars and besieged the village of Goms on April 10. They drove away all the village sheep and cattle, narrowed the siege and entered the village. They captured 35 men, tied up their arms with a rope, took them to Kancho's hayloft at edge of the village and shot them all. They then burned the hayloft and it collapsed on their dead bodies.

After murdering these 35 men, the Kurds started searching the houses murdering 18 women with swords (they extorted money from them, forced them to show the hideouts and tell where their husbands were) and 150 men aged 5-80. They raped all the beautiful women and girls of the village abducting 34 of them. To date there is no news about them.

Before the massacre, 50 armed men headed by Mr Vardan (from Urants) fled to the mountains. After the massacre, the village remained in the hands of the Kurds who would every day come to the village and take away the wheat and household things from the houses of Armenians.

Three days before the massacre, the aforementioned 50 men fled to Mount Gomats in order not to fall into the hands of Hamza bek who was conscripting men. Before the massacre, Hamza bek had taken a bribe of 200 gold coins from the village promising to protect the men. Mr Vardan's group of 50 hid in caves behind Mount Gomats for 15 days.

Self-defence. One day at the end of April 1915, the Kurds (from Zeve, Haytaran, Kok, Bazéas well as Hamza bek's men) suddenly besieged Mount Gomats chasing two brothers from Yeghegis – Okhan and Sahak. Our men (Mr Vardan's group) took up positions, and a fierce fight started. The group headed by their leader Vardan attacked the Kurds forcing them to leave their positions and flee. Four Armenians were killed in the fight – Soghomon Hakobian, Sargis Khachoyan, Khlo Hakobian and Vardan Sargisian, all four from Goms.

The group stayed on the mountain for 35 days until one day in the beginning of May a volunteer of Hamazasp's group from the same village – Movses Hakobian, came and informed them that the volunteers were approaching.

After the aforementioned fight the group left Mount Gomats by precaution and moved to the mountain called Berd near the village of Oghvantsts where they were again besieged by the Kurds and fought for about 10 hours (these events happened in the beginning of May).

During the second fight two Armenians were killed: Murad Hakobian and Polo Martirosian. After this second fight, the group went down to the village and took everybody (women and children) to the mountain. One evening a lame boy named Sargis Margarian (who was captured by the Kurds) came up to the mountain and said: "All the Kurds from Zevé have fled. The volunteers and the Russian troops are in our village. Come down, let's go and bring food from Zevé." Some 30 of the villagers went to Zevé and putting two days' supplies into the boats brought them for women and children. After they returned to the mountain, Mr Vardan with 40 men (among them men from the villages of Oghvants, Yeghegis, Khums, Sorb, Vank, Uran, Benkants) went to Benkants for supplies. When they were entering the village (at dawn) the Kurds fired two bullets at the group.

Then the Kurds hastily sent word to the village of Sorb where Turkish troops were stationed. Within the hour some 1,000 Turkish regular cavalry besieged Benkants firing volleys at our fighters who resisted fiercely. The fight lasted for 12 hours and was a violent and fierce one. By the evening, the group leader Mr. Vardan was wounded in the chest after clashing with an officer who was fiercely attacking Armenian positions.

The Armenians lost 20 men at Benkants (7 of them from Goms). When the Armenians saw that they couldn't resist any more, they fled to their mountain and after spending the night there, the aforementioned volunteer Movses Hakobian came and told them that the enemy was approaching. Mr Vardan and two other wounded men were taken to Van where Mr Vardan died and was solemnly buried at the Ararats cemetery. The other two wounded recovered.

The volunteers entered Goms. The residents returned to the village, stayed there for 5 days and when the volunteers retreated to Gyavash, they retreated with them and stayed in Gyavash for a month. The volunteers advanced again

and the people returned and lived in the village for another 15 days till July 19 (1915) when the Russians started retreating along the Caucasian front. In six days the villagers reached Van whose residents had already left. All the population of Karchkan and Gyavash gathered in Van and emigrated. They reached Chanik where they learned from volunteers that the Kurds had blocked the gorge of Berkri. The next night the people returned to Van and took the road to Saray to cross into Persia. They reached Archak and entered the gorge called Mahmatik⁵⁰ where the fighters leading the people clashed against 50 armed Kurds. A fierce fight started that lasted until the evening. Two Armenians were killed in the fight. The people continued but having no guides wandered all night in the mountains and unfamiliar places and at dawn again appeared at the gorge of Mahmatik.

At dawn a huge group of Kurds, about 500 horsemen, suddenly besieged the gorge of Mahmatik. Forty people headed by Arshak from the village of Yeghegis in Karkar resisted the Kurds for 6 hours until they ran out of cartridges. Before that they had told people to find a way out. People panicked and started running here and there. The Kurds started slaughtering, shooting at and wounding those they could catch. They raped beautiful women and girls and abducted them committing all sorts of atrocities. Six people from Goms were killed in the massacre; another 24 women, children and men were lost. They were probably murdered or abducted.

People scattered out fleeing in all directions. After three nights they reached the neighbourhoods of Saray where they lay down at a hayloft when suddenly the Russian army appeared at a distance. A volunteer with 3 Cossacks approached the people, took them to Saray, fed them and took them to Khoy from where Bishop Nerses⁵¹ of Atrpatakan settled them in Atrpatakan, Salmast and Khoy districts.

Six villagers from Goms died in Persia.

In the spring of 1916 most of the Goms residents returned to their village and started living quite comfortably, but when in July of the same year the Russians retreated, the villagers of Goms came to Caucasus and most of them now are in the village of Ghznavuz.

Everything written down is in line word for word with what we recounted, therefore we sign:

Petros Manukian

Khachatur Muradian

Nazar Avetisian

Nshan Hovhannesian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 447, pp. 1-8, original, handwritten.

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR AZNIV ASLANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHNDZORGIN OF KARCHKAN
IN GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

1916
Baku

Azniv M. Aslanian, aged 13, from the village of Khndzorgin of Karchkan, at the Baku orphanage No 3.

- a. Before the war there were (4) four members in our family: my father Misak, aged 35, my mother Khchmo (30), Azniv (13), my brother Nadro (4).
- b. I am the only one alive from our family.
- c. My father Misak (35) was killed in a fight at Mount Nemrut.
- d. No one is missing.
- e. My mother died in Etchmiadzin, in a hospital. My brother Nadro died of hunger in Akhlat.

It was the beginning of May. One night two young men came to our house: one named Mushegh, from Mush, and the other Knyaz, from Karchkan. Both had deserted from the Turkish army. My father charitably gave them shelter in our house. When the Karchkan authorities learned about it, they sent a notice to my father demanding both men. My father moved them to our neighbour's hayloft by precaution. After two days many Kurds on horsebacks warmed into our village and started forcibly collecting hay and barley for their horses. Mushegh and Knyaz thought they could be found and arrested, so they stole out of the hayloft and started climbing the mountain. The Kurds noticed them and followed them firing a volley. Mushegh was immediately killed; Knyaz resisted for a while but was surrounded by the Kurds and killed too. During the incident our men took their arms and went over to the village of Mzré. The killing of the two men was the beginning of the massacre. The Kurds returned to the village and robbed everybody, leaving us in our underwear. We (the women and children, 30-33 people) followed our men and went over to Mzré where we found protection from Shapap *agha*. After spending two days there, we moved on to the Armenian villages of the Bitlis region. Reaching the villages of Ktsvak and Tsghak of Datvan⁵² we found shelter under coastal cliffs. We were planning to sail to Van from there. It was night and we felt safe there. When day broke we saw numerous slaughtered bodies torn to pieces and scattered all over the cliffs. They were residents of the villages of Akhlat and Tsghak who had come there to get into boats and flee, but fell into the hands of the Kurds hiding there and were slaughtered. A wounded man from Tsghak who had hid behind a rock told us

about it. Terrified by the scene, we left the place and headed to Akhlat. We were at a three hour's distance from the town when the Kurds surrounded us. Our men, some 8-10 in number, fought until the evening but surrendered when they ran out of cartridges. My father Misak, aged 35, was killed in the fight. At first the Kurds were very polite towards all of us. They collected the weapons and said they were sent by the government to gather all Armenian men for the Turkish *amele*. They made our people bathe in the stream of the village of Urtap, change their linen and start on a journey. The moment of parting was heart-rending; everybody was crying. We didn't want to part as if we had some sinister presentiment that we would never see them again. We were forcibly parted from each other. We stayed there standing while our men were taken away. We followed them until they went down a ravine and disappeared. In less than five minutes rifle shots were heard from the ravine. There was no more doubt that they were murdered. We have no news from them to date. We were afraid that the Kurds could come back and murder us too, so we fled to Akhlat in no time. On our way we were joined by women and children from Tsghak and Ktsvak, some 30-35 people. We were not far from the town when we met an armed Kurd who drove us like sheep to a Kurdish village on the road. In a field not far from the village we saw some black spots at a distance. First we thought they were flocks of sheep, then when we approached we saw they were bodies of murdered people - mostly children. When the Kurds saw us they ran out of their houses and started stripping us of even our underwear. They selected good-looking women and girls - some 5-7 of them - and took them away. They were from Tsghak and Ktsvak -I didn't know them. The rest of us were divided between them as captives. We were working hard for them as servants. For instance, my mother was baking bread but they didn't give her food to eat. We lived almost on grass. My brother Nadro (aged 4) couldn't withstand starvation and died of hunger. The bread they gave us was so bad we couldn't eat it. For two weeks we lived there almost on grass. One day in a field we agreed to flee all together at night to Akhlat- some 50-55 of us. We were led to the government offices. To our surprise, we saw there some men from our and neighbouring villages who had been conscripted. They were standing in a row. I recognised one of them: our village headman Mesrop of Patur. In a while some Turks came with spades and picks in their hands and asked an officer who was standing there with some soldiers some questions. They left. Then they tied up the Armenians and took them, as well as us, out of the town. We saw there Turks digging a large pit with spades and picks. They gathered those who had been tied up in one place, made some 40 of them lie on the ground and slaughtered them with daggers. Then they immediately threw everyone into the pit and covered them. There were some half-dead people among those buried. They took us back to the town and locked us in a house. After two days, we noticed that there were no guards at our door.

We opened the door and came out. We saw no Turks or Kurds; they had all fled. After a few hours, the Russians entered Akhlat. We were freed. After two weeks the Russians suddenly retreated. We wanted to join them but couldn't; they were on horseback and we were sick and exhausted. The Kurds came again, more enraged and ferocious this time. We hid in nearby mountains. The Kurds were afraid to come closer because the Russians were at the village of Artské. We had very little food with us. We were feeding mostly on herbs. The Kurds caught some women and girls-20-30 of them - locked them in houses and set them alight (they didn't hurt young girls very much). In three weeks the Russians again occupied Akhlat and those of us who had survived (not more than 20 people) were saved from certain death. When the retreat occurred, I fled to Etchmiadzin with my mother and our villagers. My mother fell ill there with stomachache and was taken to hospital where she died.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp. 26-27 rev., original, handwritten.

No 43

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MARTIROS HOVHANNESIAN ON
THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF VANIK OF KARCHKAN IN
GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 12, 1916
Igdır

According to Martiros Hovhannesian (aged 37) from the village of Vanik in Karchkan district (he was an eyewitness)

Vanik had 50 households (exclusively Armenian) and 400 residents, a church dedicated to St George, a school (newly built), 1,500 sheep and 500 head of cattle. The annual revenue of the village was 4,000 units of wheat and 1,500 cartloads of hay.

In February 1914 the government conscripted from Vanik all men aged 15-50. At the end of July 1914 when the general mobilisation was announced, all Vanik men (aged 15-50) were already under arms. If any conscript did not report at the appointed time, the police would burn his house without allowing anything to be taken out. All his sheep and cattle, his movable and immovable property would be confiscated. Back in February 1915 Farso from Nahi, who had been appointed chief of the Kurdish *millis*, severely beat Israyel Sahakian (aged 50) and fined

him 50 Ottoman liras before releasing him despite the fact that Israyel was neither a village headman nor had he committed any crime. After announcing the general mobilisation, 85 units of wheat, 50 units of barley, 30 felts, 80 litres of ghee, 300 pairs of socks, 400 cartloads of hay were forcibly taken from Vanik. Eighty Ottoman liras were confiscated as *khana* (gift). Farso from Nahi carried out the confiscations. Two thousand five hundred trees were cut down.

On 10 April 1915, on the order of the governor of Bitlis 500 Kurdish *millis* armed with Turkish-made small size rifles and headed by Farso from Nahi attacked Vanik. All the village men had been conscripted so there was no resistance. The *millis* ruthlessly slaughtered the population murdering 70 children, 40 women and 112 men. They abducted 15 women and 10 boys.

The surviving population of Vanik emigrated to the Caucasus on 15 July, 1915. Only 15 men survived from Vanik; another 15 had already gone abroad. In all 23 residents of Vanik died during emigration.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f. 277, reg. 1, rec. 429, p. 3 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 44

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TANGIK AVAGIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF GOMER OF MOKS IN GYAVASH
DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

[1916]
Baku

Tangik Avagian, aged 11, from the village of Gomer of Moks, at the Baku orphanage No 2.

Before the war our family consisted of eight (8) people: my father, aged 35; my mother Manushak (30), me (11), Hasmik (13), Shushan (6), Aghasi (7), Misak (9). Now 4 of us are alive. My mother Manushak and Hasmik were killed in our village by Kurdish bullets; my father Avag went missing during the fighting.

The massacre of the village of Gomer of Moks.

Our village was inhabited exclusively by Armenians - about 300 households. After the events in Van the village youth went up the mountains taking food with them and staying there until the Russians came. My father Avag, aged 35, was

among those who fled. I haven't heard from him to date. It was at the end of April. The bek from our neighbouring Kurdish village (I don't remember his name) came to us and persuaded our villagers to go to their village. He promised to protect us from other Kurds who were allegedly planning to attack us. We believed him and all our people moved to their village. They herded all of us - about 60-70 women and children - like sheep in a house. We were allowed no contact with the outside world. After three days they opened the door and said: "The Russians have come, get out!" We came out and saw several Kurds who were standing by the door. They shot at us killing my uncle's wife Piruz, her son Tarmo (aged 9), my mother and my sister Hasmik. My brother Misak who was on my mother's back, was wounded in the leg but didn't die. My mother's right arm drooped from her shoulder and she died from that wound after three days. I fled and hid in a ruined house. The next day, when all the Kurds had fled, I came out from my hideaway, found my wounded brother with some women. The volunteers came in 8-10 days and took us to Vostan where we stayed until the first retreat.

During the retreat I together with my younger brothers Sedrak and Misak came with our villagers to Igdir where we were placed in separate orphanages.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, p. 6 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 45

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS AVETIS DAVITIAN AND GHAZAR BALOYAN ON LOSSES SUFFERED AT THE VILLAGE OF SPKANTS OF MOKS IN GYAVASH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

August 29, 1916
New Bayazet – Pashakend

Moks – Sipkants – 18 households.

Our chiefs collected the village arms and handed them in to the authorities (Murtula bey); 30 pieces of long and short arms.

On Ascension Day (1915) the volunteers, including Grigor, Trchun and Hambardzum, came and brought us over, leaving our belongings at Haghen. The sick remained in the village; nine people were killed – Avetis, Simon and women.

For two months, there were skirmishes every day between the Turks and volunteers. In the middle of July the volunteers retreated to Van. We followed them. The mob attacked us at the Putky monastery. About 200 people were killed. Many stayed at Moks and couldn't proceed.

We came to Van and crossed the Pantimahu bridge of Berkri. In the fields of Koshk Turkish and Kurdish horsemen attacked us and started murdering people with swords. We left everything and fled by the eastern mountains of Berkri. After 3 days we reached Kavre Shamin. There were volunteers there. In the fields of Koshk 35 people from our village were killed – Chato, Abraham, Ptan and others. We reached Etchmiadzin via Artsap and then came here without any belongings.

We have no news about the village; everybody is dispersed.

In all 35 people from 18 households have survived.

The narrators, Avetis Davitian and Ghazar Baloyan, live in Moks-Sipkants-Pashakand

Interviewed by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 44 rev., original, handwritten.

No 46

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR LUSABER TOVMASIAN ON THE SKIRMISHES AT THE TOWN OF SHATAKH IN SHATAKH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

[1916]
Baku

Lusaber Tovmasian

Native of Shatakh, at the Baku orphanage No 2.

Before the war our family consisted of 12 people: grandmother Shaghik, aged 70; myself, 14; my brother Davit, 18; Yeremia, 15; my uncle Baghdasar, 35; Zaruhi, 23; Yevgine, 7; a newborn baby; my other uncle Hovakim, 28; his wife Nvard, 26; Pargev, 6; a newborn baby.

The following people died in Yerevan of dysentery: my grandmother Shaghik, my uncles' wives Zaruhi and Nvard and their children, in all 5 people.

Two weeks before the April fighting in Van (on Green Sunday³⁸) on some military pretext the Turkish authorities in Shatakh arrested the local chief of the

³⁸In the Armenian Church the Sunday following Easter Sunday is called the Sunday of the World Church of the "Green Sunday".

Dashnaktsutyun Party, Mr. Hovsep Choloyan and his four friends. Four days passed after their arrest. On the fourth night, a Turkish night patrol ran across a deserter who emerged from a house opposite. They immediately fired at him. The man fled. His friends in the house retaliated firing back at the Turks. No one was killed that night, but it was the beginning of the fighting.

The next morning the Turks continued shooting aimlessly. Our side retaliated equally with aimless shooting. Foreseeing the danger, the Armenians moved the families who were surrounded by Turks to other Armenian-populated areas on the other bank of the river and started setting up positions. We had about 200 fighters who, in the absence of Hovsep, were headed by Samvel Mesropian and Tigran Baghdasarian Chanikiants. The fighting started at noon. The Armenians burnt the wooden bridge to stop the Turks from crossing to their side and took up positions on the stone bridge. Armenians had only one position on the Turkish side, that of Hovan *effendi's* house, where for two weeks our fighters attempted to capture the government offices but couldn't. Only one soldier was killed here – Abrekian Sahak. When our fighters saw that they could no longer resist the Turks who surrounded them, they left their position and moved over to positions on the Armenian side. The fight was getting fiercer with every passing day. Beaten and robbed Armenian women and girls were coming from nearby villages telling about their terrible sufferings, massacre of men etc. The Turks didn't touch them as they were coming over to join us. After 20-23 days had passed, our people tried to build a cannon. Levon Nalbandian who had served in the Turkish artillery company for three years and his father (who was a farmer) took a very sturdy log, hollowed it, tied it with iron hoops and telegraph wires cut in advance, and giving it quite a solid shape tried to shell the Turkish positions. There were two cannons, one big and one small. The big one was useless, but the small one at least managed to scare the Turks that we too had a cannon, though they had no idea what it was like. Old spherical iron bullets abundant in Shatakhs were used as shells. After the Turks saw that we had a cannon, they brought over theirs and started shelling our positions, but because our houses were made of stone, the cannons caused no harm. The Turks had occupied the building of our school which was on an elevation and caused a lot of trouble to us especially since that position was dominating over the water-mills and we couldn't take wheat there to grind. There was a village – Soghants – located above that building, on a hill slope. Our fighters went there at night and besieged the school building from there. It had some result but we couldn't dislodge the Turks from there because at night the Kurds and Turks besieged the village of Soghants and about 20 of our fighters were killed there. Only three men escaped and told everything in detail.

The fighting went on until the Turks retreated. Van was already liberated, but we were not aware of it until the vanguard of Dro's detachment reached us.

The fighting was still going on when a young man named Payloz who was arrested together with Hovsep, escaped from the Turks and told us how after several weeks of unspeakable tortures in prison, when the Turks took Hovsep and his four friends to the bank of the river to kill, he jumped into the river and being a good swimmer managed to cross the river and escape. He said that they first cut Hovsep's arms, then legs and then beheaded him; then they shot the others. During the retreat I emigrated with the others and reached Igdir where I was taken to the headquarters and placed in an orphanage. My grandmother Shaghik, Zaruhi, Nvard and the children died in Yerevan.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp. 22 rev.–23 rev., original, handwritten.

No 47

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE SELF-DEFENCE FIGHTING OF PESANDASHT CLUSTER OF VILLAGES IN SHATAKH DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE

September 1, 1916
Evjilar

Recounted by Nshan Muradian, Movses Azizian and Movses Sargsian from the village of Shidan of Pesandasht cluster of villages in Shatakhs district of Vaspurakan about their self-defence fighting

The self-defence fighting started in the village of Tagh of Shatakhs on March 27-28, 1915.

The Shatakhs committee sent a letter (signed by Samvel Mesropian) to the four villages of Pesandasht: "Occupy Mount Baradotik (Ardos branch) and don't allow the mob from Vostan to cross your boundaries." Fifty armed men from 4 villages of Pesandasht (Shidan, Kaynemeran, Aregh, Kaghazis) blocked Mount Baradotik. The committee ordered to cut the telegraph lines when the fighting started. One day (2 days after the Shatakhs fighting started) an employee in charge of repairing telegraph lines together with 15 armed policemen climbed Mount Baradotik to repair the lines. When they reached the part of the mountain where our soldiers from Pesandasht were positioned, the latter started firing at them. The policemen informed Vostan about the incident and a huge army of different forces – Kurds, policemen and troops, took up position at Barazhkut Hill just opposite Mount Baradotik. The two positions, those of the Armenians' and their enemies, were separated by a ravine. The mob took position behind the

Barazkut rocks and started firing volleys from morning until nightfall. Our soldiers retaliated with single shots.

The authorities drove about 8,000 people (mostly women and children) from Gyavash, Hayots Dzor and Timar to Pesandasht to cause starvation among the fighters. The newcomers settled in the four villages and were supplied with food there.

Forty Pesandasht fighters went to Shatak to help them and were very helpful there. Levon from Kharakan had passed from Hayots Dzor to Shatak to support the fighters. When the fighting and the massacre started in Gyavash, Levon with his group wanted to go via Pesandasht to Gyavash to support the fighters. Meanwhile, the fighters in Gyavash couldn't resist any longer and fled to Pesandasht where Levon was and where he remained until the end of the fighting.

For a whole month the enemy fought against the fighters engaged in self-defence. All their frequent attacks and firing volleys were in vain. Our fighters were in high spirits in their positions: – singing, dancing and good cheer were abundant. All that had a very bad effect on the enemy. After a month of useless attacks and firing, when they saw they couldn't defeat the enemy by their rifles, they brought three cannons from Vostan and started shelling the Armenian positions and simultaneously attacking them. The Armenians would fire at the attackers and kill several Kurds every time, forcing them to withdraw. The battle went on for 45 days. We had no losses until the Armenian volunteers arrived. Dro with his group moved to Shatak and Keri moved from Vostan to Gyavash. The Turks and Kurds had already fled.

Thanks to self-defence fighting lasting 45 days, the entire Armenian population of Timar, Gyavash, Kakar etc. as well as those of 7 villages of Pesandasht (Shitan, Kaynemeran, Aregh, Kaghazis, Gomer, Nar, Darents), – about 10,000 people - were saved.

After the Kurds fled, the people went to desolate Kurdish villages for trophies. The residents of Pesandasht gladly protected and fed the people who found shelter in their villages.

What is written is in line with what we recounted. Because of the illiteracy of Nshan Muradian, Movses Azizian and Movses Sargisian, signed by Haik Achemyan from Van.

NAA, f.227, reg. 1, rec. 449, pp. 13–16 rev., original, handwritten.

No 48

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS KHANO, SIHAN AND MATOS
MAHILIAN ON THE LOSSES SUFFERED AT THE VILLAGE OF
HASAN TAMRAN IN MAHMUDI DISTRICT OF VAN PROVINCE**

August 16, 1916
New Bayazet - Delikardash

Saray – Hasan Tamran.

At the beginning of December 1914 policemen from Saray came with Mahmat *agha* from our village, took the men of the village to the water-mill and murdered 8 of them, namely Mko, Gevorg, Yegho and others. We took their bodies to the Akhorik church but the *kaymakam* of Saray came and didn't let us bury them. The Kurds from our village made two women, one girl and four boys convert to Islam. The rest of us – women, children and several elderly people - were driven off to the snows of Karadar together with people from Akhorik. The village headman Murad and Sakha were murdered there. We were stripped; the good-looking were taken away. We crossed over the mountains to Mlhamlu in Persia. Many people mostly from Akhorik froze to death in the mountains. We were completely stripped naked in Mlhamlu. Karo and Gevorg were murdered there. We went to Mukhur and were tortured there too. Mztaba bey and Avtazak bey from Gharan fed us for 20 days and then sent us to Tatos Arakel⁵³. We stayed there until 1915. In June we returned to our village. Then came the retreat. We came with the villagers of Akhorik by the Yezdikhan route. We fought with the Kurds there. Husik from Akhorik was killed there. Through Shirin we had received Berdan rifles from the Van Armenian headquarters. We crossed over to Berkriand Igdirdir, then came here. Our village is inhabited with Kurds.

Households: 7; residents: 40; losses: 5.

Mko's wife Khano from the village of Hasan Tamran from Saray
Asho's wife Sihan and Mahilian Matos

Interviewed by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 3, original, handwritten.

HAKYARI PROVINCE

No 49

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS MINAS GEVORGIAN, KHACHATUR AVETISIAN AND SRBUHI ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF HURTUK IN KHOSHAB DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE

August 22, 1916
New Bayazet-Kolaghrlan

Khoshab – Hurtuk – 50 households

The 1914 mobilisation was forced with violence; Hovhannes was killed. People not returned until today – 1[person]. Panos's, Tumas's and some others' houses were burnt – 5.

Tehalif-I harbiye was taken forcibly – 12 sheep, 380 units of wheat, 100 units of flour, 30 litres of ghee, 40 litres of wool, 160 pairs of mittens, 60 pairs of hessian sacks, 30 oxen etc. *Olam* – to Van, Pashkalé.

A few days after the Easter of 915, Ahmet bey, sergeant of *millies*, killed several villagers from Akarak in the fields, and two people from Kolaghrlan came and told about the killings. We, men with and without arms, fled to the mountains; the *kaymakam* was in the village. Policemen started chasing us; a fight started. Islam bey from Zernak, Iprahim bey from Khachan and others came – about 400 soldiers. We had 17 fighters – Khacho, Tigran, Andreas et al. We fought and crossed over to Mount Hablasat; there were soldiers from Krely and Hndstan. Five of our people were killed in the fight – Abel, Hakob et al. We went down to Hndstan, crossed Mount Varag. We stayed at Biro Kalin⁵⁴; in 4 days we went to Varag and saw 7 killed bodies there, 3 were those of priests – Aristakes⁵⁵, Petros⁵⁶ and others. We stayed in Varag until the fighting at Koghpants and Shushants. It was around 25 April, groups from Varag drew off to Van; after staying in the mountains for 2 days we moved to Van; our women and children stayed in the village.

A different narrator – The men went fighting, we stayed in the village. [The Kurds] took away our property and started cauterizing women, demanding money, beating etc. They cauterized a woman – Sirmey, with a trivet, cut another woman's arms, murdered another one. After such tortures the Kurds left taking with them 11 women, a child – Tiruhy, and other villagers.

In the beginning of May they came and took us to Van, then we returned to the village. In about two months' time there was the retreat, we came to Van, Berkri. We crossed the bridge and appeared under a hail of bullets. We abandoned 1,800 sheep, about 300 farm animals with load and fled to Igridir and

then here. This spring we went to the village, it was inhabited. Casualties during the retreat – 27; current households – 20; people – 82.

Narrators of the first part– village head Minas Gevorgian, Khachatur Avetisian

Narrator of the second part– Barsegh's wife Srbo

Questioned by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 32, original, handwritten.

No 50

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR NSHAN HOVHANNISIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KREL IN KHOSHAB DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE

September 21, 1916
Dilijan

Massacre at the village of Krel, Van-Khoshab.

Former state. All Khoshab consists of 66 villages of which only 15 are Armenian: Salakhanay – 70 households of which 20 are Armenian; Zeynis – 60 households, 30 Armenian; Kasr – 90 households, 30 Armenian; Krtikan – 40 households, 10 Armenian; Klisé - 60 households, 10 Armenian; Sel – 60 households, Put – 40 households, 10 Armenian; Bhants – 45 households, 15 Armenian; Krel – 100 households, all Armenian; Akarak - 40 households, 10 Armenian; Urtuk - 60 households, all Armenian; Paka-Gaduk - 70 households, 20 Armenian; Kankvar – 60 households, 30 Armenian; Kasrik - 150 households, 20 Armenian.

The village of Krel had about 4,000 sheep and 1,000 farm animals. The village had a church and a school. The church building was built a few years ago with splendid arches; now it is in ruins.

Mobilisation. On the first days of the declaration of war men aged 20-45 were called by the register. Without any resistance, the people produced about 80 men who with music and flags went to Khoshab, the district administrative centre to report to the authorities. After checking them, the authorities sent them back giving them 15 days to reap the crops. However, before the end of that period, the policemen surrounded the village one day and this timedisregarding the age

of conscription gathered about 100 men and took them by force and under beating to Khoshab and from there directly to Pashkalé.

After the clash between the Turks and the Russians at the Persian front near the village of Khanikon 11 November 1914, Armenian soldiers were suddenly disarmed, the Turks started looking at the Armenians with some mistrust and looking for pretexts to torture, beat and shoot them. This attitude caused Armenians to start deserting the army individually and in groups. In this period most of the conscripts from our village deserted. According to their account, the Armenians were treated with extreme cruelty; beating and torture were usual things. They were secretly murdered. Suddenly some Armenian soldier would disappear; On the slightest pretext and suspicion they would be gunned down. Hunger, poor clothing, cold and hard labour were the lot of Armenian soldiers. Three men from our village – Kocho (aged 50), Yegho (60) and Payloz (25) - were beaten to death in the army...

Requisitions. The government announced that during the war all the property belonging to the people, their revenues, wealth and even families, belong to the state, and hence everyone had to do everything required in interest of the state.

After the declaration of war our doors were open for both official and non-official visitors. We had to give everything that was required. In this way they collected from our village and the province all horses, sheep, animals for slaughter and pack animals, carts, wheat, barley, ghee, wool, socks, *trekhs*, hay and straw, dry dung and firewood, bulgur and flour. Not a penny was paid for all this, just a promissory note allegedly to be paid in the future. They would even make us Armenians buy things we didn't have from the Kurds – ghee, blankets etc.

Since there were no men left in the villages, women were obliged to do hard labour, carrying food on their backs for 5 to 6 hours accompanied with beating and torture. On the pretext of looking for deserters, the police would often break into the village, wilfully search the village, burn the houses of deserters, slaughter for free dozens of animals to feast on, beat and bash without any restraint anyone they met. There were cases of abduction and rape in this period... When they managed to catch a deserter, they would bring him to the centre of the village and made the Armenians themselves kill the fugitive... They would call us traitors and supporters of the Russians.

Massacre and deportation. Starting with the autumn of 1914 when the volunteer regiments appeared at the Persian border and even entered Saray and started advancing towards Van but then suddenly turned back, the Turks started changing their attitude and looked at us with hatred. Soon all Armenian soldiers were disarmed in the army. Then the relations between us and the Turks and Kurds became very hostile. They would consider us traitors and supporters of the Russians and so would often express their hatred and hostility. Threats were growing day by day. The Kurds would often say: "Just you wait; spring will

come, we'll meet again..." They would always specify the time – on such and such day, after such time, in the spring etc. And everything happened as they had said... The government was secretly arming Muslims. A huge amount of weapons was taken to Turkish and Kurdish villages; everyone from young to old was being armed. We weren't unaware of that. There were Kurds who informed their Armenian friends about those plans...

In March 1915 the governor of Van, Jevtet bey, proceeded from the Persian border to Khoshab through Pashkalé, visiting Kurdish villages on his way and planning the massacre. After reaching Khoshab he summoned all Kurdish chiefs and leaders, gave them instructions and left for Van.

Soon after that the primed temperaments started manifesting themselves. The Kurds would openly say to us: "Another 8 days and woe to the Armenians, and if in these eight days the Armenians turn in their weapons and deserters, then only the leaders will be punished, i.e. killed. If not, there is an order to put all the Armenians to the sword... We are waiting for a telegram from Van; pray God, it's not late."

On the order of the Van Central Committee of Dashnaktsutyun, we the deserted soldiers would not stay in villages. We had moved over to the mountains in order not to cause trouble in villages. The instruction from the Dashnaktsutyun was to avoid skirmishes by all means...

The day on which the massacre started at the villages of Khoshab I was in the mountains together with other fugitives. About 100 non-fugitive and old people as well as unarmed fugitives were in the village together with women and children.

On 3 April the Armenians in the neighbouring Kurdish villages were massacred but we had no information about it.

The same day two of our villagers were ploughing when four armed Kurdish horsemen attacked and murdered them. Another villager saw that at a distance and immediately informed the village about it (the murdered villagers were Kostan Amroyan and Martyros Khanoyan). The village panicked. In the evening we came down from the mountain and realising the situation decided to leave the village and somehow reach Van. At night we - some 200 men - left for Van taking with us several beautiful women and girls.

On our way we passed through an Armenian village named Hurtuk with 60 households. Its residents, absolutely unaware of the imminent danger, were still in the village. We took them with us and went up the nearby mountain. Some 60-70 men from Hurtuk joined us; their women and children stayed in the village. We continued our way, passed the village of Hayots Dzor and took shelter on a hill near the village of Hndstan. Some villagers from Hndstan with their families joined us. Nothing happened until dinner time. The Hurtuk villagers who were left a little behind were attacked by Kurds (they were about 70); they couldn't

resist and fled until they reached us. The Kurds were still chasing them. We were forced to fight. The fight continued until the evening. In the evening the Kurds withdrew with two casualties. We went down to Hndstan, took the necessary supplies and headed to the village of Toni which was behind Varag. We stayed there for a couple of days, and soon the Van uprising started.

On 9 April, on the order of the Van Dashnaksutyun authority our armed groups prepared to attack from the rear and capture Varag where the government had placed 50 policemen. We advanced and approached Varag. After we took up positions, we heard shots from Varag. Then we saw policemen leaving the monastery and heading to the town. Without waiting we advanced and entered Varag.

In Varag we found two priests⁵⁷, one baker and three farm labourers murdered. The priests were murdered in their rooms. They were first shot and then hacked with daggers and swords (the narrator buried them himself). The baker was murdered with an axe, his head cut into two pieces. They had ripped one of the labourer's guts out. The other one was shot in the chest and then hacked.

We stayed in Varag for several days. Many people from Van villages that managed to escape the massacre joined us.

When the Turks captured the monastery of Karmravor and the village of Shushants, we were obliged to leave the monastery and go down to Van.

Recounted by a native of the village Nshan Hovhannesian

Recorded by Suren Meloyan

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 464, pp. 8-11, original, handwritten.

No 51

TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVOR NUBAR MARTOYAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHARATUN IN AGHBAK DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE

August 5, 1916
Shkhmahmud

Recounted by Nubar Martoyan from the village of Kharatun of Pashkalé who now lives in the village of Shkh-Mahmud.

In 1914, when the war was declared, - around July 23 - the Turks conscripted all men regardless of their age. None has survived, none has returned.

They took from us as war tax 2 rams, 4 loads of wheat, 2 sets of bedding, 2 pairs of socks, 2 ropes, 2 platefuls of ghee, 2 platefuls of cheese, 10 felt cloths. These demands were repeated every day.

At the beginning of the war the Kurds would often threaten us: "The Russians will come to protect you, but we will slaughter you. We won't allow the Russians to come and save you from us." So the massacres were expected any day. In October the Russians invaded Aghbak. At daybreak the Kurds broke into our village. There were several thousands of them. One of their leaders was Shahbaz *agha* from Jrub. There were no young men in the village; everybody had been conscripted. All the elderly and the young were shot. They murdered 4 people only from our family. They robbed everything from us, the women, taking away even our underwear.

In the middle of October Andranik's volunteers found us naked and terrified. They took care of us. Residents of remote villages were all massacred. Four children only from our family froze to death. There were plenty of women and children fallen along the roads frozen, unable to walk in mud. Thousands died. Hardly a third of the people made it to SalmaSt I have to say that only one person from our family of eight escaped thanks to our Kurd neighbour Khdir who hid him in his house.

A very small number of the people have returned to SalmaSt The rest live in different parts of the Caucasus. No one returned to our homeland.

Recounted by Nubar Martoyan who is an illiterate woman of over 45.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, pp. 6 rev.-7, original, handwritten.

No 52

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR BANAMSHAH OHANNESIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF HASPSTAN IN AGHBAK DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE

August 11, 1916
Tmbul

Recounted by Banamshah Ohannesian from the village of Haspstan of Aghbak who now lives in the village of Tumbulu (Old Nakhijevan)

Around 18 December 1914 the Russians retreated from the Pashkalé region. Not to fall victim to the rage of the Turks and Kurds, we planned to retreat a

week after the Russians, since the Kurds, together with the Ottoman troops, had already massacred Baz, Arak and Aghbak. At night we were getting ready to leave the next morning but before dawn the troops and the Kurds who had come from all over the neighbourhood besieged the village. Those who could fled by secret paths and saved themselves; others found shelter in the houses of Kurdish neighbours but were all shot or slaughtered with daggers and swords. The exact number is not known due to the state of panic but almost half of the men of our village that consisted of 100 households were murdered including the village priest Ter Vardan, the sexton Toros, some of the well-known rich men of the village: Poghos, Tigran, Kcho and Grigor.

They abducted about 20 beautiful women and girls. We don't know who did that since all of them – Turkish troops, Kurds, Kurd *agh*as - took part in the massacre and plunder.

Everything we had was plundered. We, the women and children that stayed in the village started on a journey, naked and hungry. On the road many died of frost exposure and starvation.

Some of our people have returned to the village of Mahlamin Dilman. The rest, about 30 households, live in different parts of the Caucasus.

The narrator is an illiterate woman of about 40.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 22, original, handwritten.

No 53

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MARIAM GHAZARIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF SORAN IN AGHBAK DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE

[1916]

Haftvan

Recounted by Mariam Ghazarian (aged 32) from the village of Soran of Aghbak province about the misfortunes suffered by her and her family.

Recorded by Vahan Petrosian – a teacher from Akhdakhana.

Our village was located in the south-western part of Bashgala and used to have 40 households (exclusively Armenian) but now thanks to the *agh*as of that same village (Kyamil, Osman and Tefik Haji Eomaroghli) there were only 4-5 Armenian households. Armenian men and women were humbly serving them day and night like

slaves for a piece of bread, to save ourselves from starvation. Twenty years ago our village had 5-6,000 head of sheep and about 500 head of cattle, horses etc., 378 load size arable land yielding 378 bales of crops, not a single inch of which remained uncultivated. Now we, the Armenians, didn't even have a cat or an inch of arable land. We even had to take our dead to the cemetery of Bashgalato bury 7 to 8 *versts* away. Everything was taken from us by force by the above *agh*as and suchlike. But it wasn't enough for them. Day and night they were looking for some excuse to drink our blood. They got the excuse in August 1914⁵⁸ when the Turks declared war against the Russians. At that time our family consisted of 8 people: my father Ghazar Abkoyan (aged 75), my mother Sona (55), my brother Simon (35), my husband Galust Sargisian⁵⁹ (45) and the rest were children. I don't remember exactly, but I know that they took as war *iyane* (allowance) twenty (20) Ottoman gold coins worth of wheat, bulgur and small articles because our men were millers for the above *agh*as. I remember, one day policemen came and demanded felt cloths that we didn't have at all. So instead of felt cloths they took a small pillow from under the head of my son. Nevertheless, our men weren't recruited as soldiers since, like I said, they worked for the Kurdish *agh*as. That same year my father gave a lot of bribes to the same *agh*as who were also government officials. Anyway, I don't remember of course, which month it was when the Russian army entered Bashgala and then retreated leaving us all in danger. I only remember it was a frosty winter morning when Tefik *agha* called out our men as well as all the other men of the village and said: "The government wants you for *amele taburu*... to build roads." And then we saw how our men, naive as sheep, gathered around him like they had done so many times for the *agha's* business. But hardly had they left the village when we heard rifle shots. We ran there; my father was shot and half-dead was begging: "For God's sake, don't kill my son-in-law, he has little children." But my father's entreaties were left unheeded. On that day they murdered all our men before our eyes and started plundering us taking away even the clothes we were dressed in. My father who knew three trades (he was a carpenter, stonemason and bricklayer) had instruments worth 10-15 Ottoman gold coins and a lot of utensils, about 100 gold coins – all that was gone. Gone were also 40 loads of wheat both ours and my father's. We, the poor women and children like waifs and strays, were left in the hands of the Kurds. One of the Kurds, an 80-year-old man called Haji Safo, made a woman from our village who had been married for 6 years convert to Islam and took her with him. The rest gathered in our house. Throughout winter days, we were going barefoot to the mountains to bring hay for the Kurds' sheep and at night with brown millet bread as our only meal we found shelter under the blackened ceiling of the same house without any clothes or mats to cover our little children who were weeping and crying of cold until morning. Anyway, the winter passed, the spring came bringing with it darker days and bitter sorrow. At that time my mother was alive which was some consolation for an unfortunate girl and my 4 small fatherless children. But one day we saw that Jevtet bey's army, which stayed in

Salmast for 4 months, retreated and moved to Bashgala. After that the Kurds' rage towards the Armenian captives grew. Jevtet bey ordered the troops to ruthlessly rape, rob and massacre the Armenians not sparing even 10-year-old girls. The Kurds and the sheikhs were waiting for such an order. Inflamed with rage they subjected us to countless unseen and unheard of atrocities. One night suddenly there was a knock at our door. I got up and asked who it was. They said: "Girl, open the door!" Frightened, I didn't open the door. Before I could tell my mother, the aforementioned bloodthirsty Tefik and his uncle Mustafa broke the door and burst into the room. Pulling my mother by her plaits and another woman named Nuno, who had been blind for 10 years, they dragged them out on the ground smashing their faces and saying: "Take out your gold or we'll kill you!" My unfortunate mother fell down at the Kurds' feet begging with tearful eyes: "Don't kill me, I'll show you the gold." Whereas the gold had already been removed in the autumn. In that way my mother was trying to save her life for us, the miserable ones. But all her entreaties and wailing were in vain. Five pistols suddenly fired at my mother's head. Her body collapsed on the ground. They pulled her by the feet to the edge of the village. There were lots of high rocks there. They threw her down the rocks. As for the blind woman, they had taken out with my mother, they put her alive into the hollow of some rock and piled rocks over her. The poor woman's painful moans were heard for two days. Thus several days passed when the Russian army again entered Aghbak. The Kurds and the Turks fled taking with them the Armenian boys who could work and carry loads on their backs. So 13 boys and women were taken captive. Some of us fled at night to the mountains to hide, leaving our little children at home. After the Kurds fled, we returned and found the children. We are now only three – I and my two little daughters and we live in the village of Haftvan of Salmast district.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 462, pp.1 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 54

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KHAMÉ HAREYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHANANTS IN JULAMERK
DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE**

August 3, 1915
Old Nakhijevan

Recounted by Khamé Hareyan, a woman of about 50 from the village of Khanas of Julamerk (of Van vilayet) who now lives in Old Nakhijevan

In the beginning of May 1915 the Assyrians from Tiar were massacred by the Kurdish mob.

Mar Shimun, the religious and political leader of the Assyrians⁶⁰, had already fled when he heard about the massacre at Tiar. Before leaving he had warned the Armenians including our villagers (from Khanas) to gather at Boghanis. After hearing about the massacre of the Assyrians we found it expedient to gather there. The Assyrians had left before we went there, but then they returned. The Kurds from the Artosh⁶¹ *ashiret*, Farashin and Julamerk attacked unarmed people who abandoned all their cattle, sheep and tried to save themselves. Hundreds of people, especially women and children, were slaughtered. Dozens of our armed men fought alongside the Assyrians in self-defence for several days. Hundreds of people were murdered there too, many drowned in water.

In this way people were murdered up to the confines of Pashkalé, where the Russian army defeated the Kurds putting them to flight.

The rest of the people emigrated to the Caucasus and are now dispersed all over Yerevan and its environs, Gandzak, Etchmiadzin and other places.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 2 rev., original, handwritten.

No 55

**TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVOR SHAHBAZ KHLOYAN ON THE
RESISTANCE AND LOSSES AT THE VILLAGE OF PAKAN IN
JULAMERK DISTRICT OF HAKYARI PROVINCE**

[1916]
Haftvan

Recounted by Shahbaz Khloyan, aged 60, native of the village of Pakan of Julamerk about the events he experienced. Recorded by Vahan Petrosian, native of the village of Haspstan.

In August 1914, when the Ottomans declared war against the Russians, I had a shop in the district named Tiar (Assyria). The district was exclusively inhabited by Assyrians and consisted of 10,000 households.

At that time I had goods in my shop worth 1,256 Ottoman gold coins. At home I had the following: 4 head of cattle, 15 head of sheep, 2 houses with all their comforts and adornments, 10 loads of wheat, home furniture, utensils and beddings - all together worth 5-6,000 roubles. The local government took from me as iyané (war donation) goods from the shop worth 56 gold coins, 2 loads of wheat, one load of barley, one load of bulgur, 2 head of sheep, 5 ropes, 3 pairs of

hessian sacks, 4 pairs of shoes, 3 pairs of gloves, 6 pieces of underwear, 4 *okas* of kerosene, 8 *okas* of honey, 8 *okas* of ghee. According to the law, this was taken from all the Armenians, of course proportionate to their property. We endured a great deal in the winter of 1914. Every day the local *kaymakam* (district head) would send policemen at night to the houses of the Armenians in the village upon the pretext of searching for deserted soldiers and hidden *fedayees*. These were just excuses for extorting money and all officials were doing that. Our poor villagers, those over the conscription age, spent their time in dark and damp cattle sheds of Julamerk as traitors to the state. I can therefore say that not only we, but also all our villagers as well as other Armenian and Assyrian villages, being caught between two fires, were waiting for our destiny day after day. As for the cattle, home furniture and utensils, they were all easily taken away from us. Since we had before our eyes the massacre of Bashkala, we were readily giving away everything only to save our lives. We endured one whole winter these calamities, but we didn't have any human losses until May 1915 when the Russian army again entered Bashkala. At that time, the local government allowed the local police and the Kurds to plunder and kill and rob. The policemen murdered a well-known merchant and landlord Babagyul Allahverdian, aged 57, and Davit, also a merchant, aged 27. Babagyul had three shops with goods worth more than 3,000 Ottoman gold coins. As far back as in the winter (1914) three of our villagers by the names of Tateos, Yeremia and Pokhik were selected and taken away to be murdered but they converted to Islam with their families saving their lives. Anyway, it was May 1915 when the Van people rebelled and the armies of Nazarbekov (general) and Andranik appeared in the Norduz district and chasing the Ottoman army reached the Levin district and then Julamerk. The Kurds and government officials caught off-guard took our sheep and cattle and fled. We had fled to the mountains in advance. We stayed in the mountains for three days and nights then took shelter in Mar Shimun's village of Gochanis which was on the north-eastern part of Julamerk, 20 versts to Bashkala. All we could do was to save our lives and those of our women's and children's, but we were absolutely naked and barefoot and bareheaded. I (Shahbaz) was at that time still in Tiar and nothing had happened there yet due to the great multitude of local population and inaccessibility of the mountains. Several times the Turkish troops and the Kurds attacked the region, but they (Kurds and Turks) couldn't do anything. They suffered several heavy defeats and withdrew crestfallen. When I arrived at Gochanis to be reunited with my family, I found my shop robbed by the Assyrians during my absence. There were goods worth 2,257 Ottoman gold coins and money that I couldn't take with me due to unsafe roads. I came to Gochanis and we, all the Armenians, deliberated and decided to go to Bashkala to save our lives, but we faced an obstacle there in the person of Mar Shimun of the Assyrians who had at that time

left for Bashkala to get armaments (weaponry) from the Russians and return, in order to crush the Kurds and to help us resettle on our ancestral lands. However, all those hopes were in vain and Mar Shimun's vanity dug a deeper grave for us, the poor Armenians of Julamerk. Indeed, within 10 days, one morning at daybreak we saw that the village was besieged by thousands of Kurds and government police troops. It was no longer possible to flee and escape. There was a fight that lasted for 7 hours. Some young men from our village fought courageously. They had deserted from the army after seeing how several of their comrades-in-arms were murdered before their eyes. They had deserted from Dutagh (Erzurum) the previous day and were it not for them, none of us Armenians would have escaped. After a 7-hour fight the Armenian brave men managed to break the Kurds' line and save the people, both Armenians and Assyrians, the latter 10 times more numerous than the Armenians. More than 20-30 people were killed in the fight: Armenians and Assyrians, women and children. On the day of the fight we came to an Assyrian village named Sevik which was 25 versts to the north of Gochanis. Here again we were blocked by the Kurds and there was another bloody battle. Many mothers fled bareheaded throwing their children into the water. A lot of Armenian and Assyrian women and children remained here – hungry, terrified, ill and wounded. We fled from there at night and crossing 30 versts reached the bank of the river Avarash (Sevjur). The current was terribly strong. It was a vivifying spring morning when we, the men, were getting ready to take off some of our clothes to take the children across the river to the other bank since there was no bridge. At that moment the Kurdish mob attacked us again. Two of our brave fighters were wounded: Vahan Allahverdian and Gevorg Vardanian. About 10 to 15 women and children drowned in the river and the rest almost half-alive and half-breathing reached a field near the village of Sorkhach (Karmir Khach) 6 versts to the south of Bashkala bullets from Mosin rifles could reach Bashkala from there. In the field of the village where we thought we were completely safe and sat down for rest, suddenly rifle shots were heard. Another big battle occurred in that field as a result of which many women and children died of fright. Iskuhi Abrahamian, a young maiden aged 16 died of fright. In short, from Gochanis (Mar Shimun's village) to Bashkala more than a hundred Armenian and Assyrian men, women and children were murdered. I have no idea how many Kurds were killed. I only know that 10 to 12 bodies of Kurds and policemen were left in Gochanis. After reaching Bashkala the people had only a couple of days to take a breath. There was an announcement from the Russian commander to retreat to SalmaSt Before we reached Salmast, both the local people and the refugees had fled to Russia. When we reached Khoy all the Christian population had settled in a Khoy field and in the village called Seydavar. Then there was the terrible

exodus from Van. As if our sufferings were not enough, a cholera epidemic started that took hundreds of lives.

Once there were 1,300 Armenians in Julamerek; now only about a hundred survive – all women and children. About 40 men were conscripted and the remaining 25 wealthy and prominent people were all murdered. The rest are dead by now. Our family before the war consisted of 6 members; only 4 of them have survived and we now live in the village of Haftvan of SalmaSt

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, pp. 42-43 rev., original, handwritten.

No 56

TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVOR NAZLU PETROSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF DIZA IN GYAVAR DISTRICT OF
HAKYARI PROVINCE

[1916]

Baku

I, Nazlu Yervandian Petrosian from the village of Diza in Gyavar district of Van province, aged 25, now live in Armenian Village of Baku, 6 Nagornaya No 32. The Refugee Committee supports me.

In our homeland I lived in our house. Our family consisted of 11 members. Now I live with my daughter Margarit, my mother-in-law Zardar, my brother-in-law Martiros, my sisters-in-law Gyulpehar and Shoghik, in all – 6 people.

My father-in-law Petros was killed – 1 person; my brother-in-law's wife Taguhi was taken prisoner – 1 person; my sons Movses and Nerses died – 2 people.

Because our village was part of a different province and far from the town, the 1914 mobilisation was extremely hard for the Armenians. They gathered all the young men of the village and periodically took them to the army. My husband Margar was conscripted too and there is no news from him to date. After that they started collecting gold coins and wheat from us. They measured the wheat in the barns and left enough quantity for home, taking the rest for the government. Those who resisted were beaten or killed. They would leave very little barley and gradually started periodically taking away hay, sheep, draught and pack animals, ghee, cheese, hessian sacks, carpets, socks and whatever else they wanted. This continued until the middle of December 1914 when the Russians and the Turks clashed at Julamerk. After that the Turkish government

resorted to cunning, disarmed Armenian soldiers under the pretext of *amele* and started torturing them. Those amongst Armenians who were smart fled and saved their lives. As far as we know, the rest who were kept for *amele* labour were murdered.

Some of the conscripts from our village fled to Van, others returned to the village and started living as fugitives. A big part of the rest stayed there as *amele* labourers.

During these fights a Kurdish tribe – the Shikaks, who lived on the border with Persia, immigrated to our region. The local government placed the Kurds in our houses and told them in our presence that they are the owners of everything that belonged to *flas*⁶² – the house and the possessions; that they could do as they wished. Then they turned to us and said: “The houses are not yours anymore; they belong to the Shikaks, so take good care of them or else...” A Kurdish family of 12 was brought to our house, so we and the Kurds started living under the same roof, of course, with a feeling of deep hatred. But what could we do? We had to put up with it.

After the Blessing of the Water⁶³ of 1915, they took the Armenians from our neighbouring village as *amele* labourers and brought them to our village. They supplemented them with more than 250 people from our village and then hoisted telegraph wires and other goods onto their backs (the village priest's load was tobacco) took them as *amele* to the Persian border, to the Gyangyachi field, where they tied up everybody's arms and murdered them. Before murdering them they tied the priest to a tree and cut him to pieces (the Kurdish witnesses told us about it). After murdering everyone they cut their ears and brought them to the *kaymakam* and the head of police as a proof that they did it. On the day the news about the murders reached the village, one of the policemen named Mushli Mamut went to the church with his friends, took out the big cross, hung it on the neck of their *gampr*³⁹, named it Khacho and started moving it round the village and telling us to worship our cross. After two weeks they again collected *amele* labourers from the villages of our region and brought them to our village. From our village they collected the men over 15 and giving them spades took them all, more than 350 people, to clean the snow from the roads to Bashkala and then took them as far as Khoshab. When they were crossing the River Khoshab they made Arakel, who was our village drummer, sit near the river and play the drum and they started dancing. Simultaneously they ordered selected executioners to slaughter everyone with daggers. So more than 350 innocent and obedient Armenians were slaughtered with daggers, including my father-in-law Petros. On that day they spared only the drummer's life like they promised, who upon his returning told some women in the village what happened. After a few days Arakel was lost too: we don't know where they took him and what

³⁹ Gampr – livestock guard dog.

they did to him. After that the Kurds living in our houses became the real masters over us and our houses and started torturing us as they pleased. The tax-collectors took away everything without leaving any means for living for us. The only thing they left was the cattle, which they came and took away at Easter.

We therefore lived under such unbearable conditions enduring the beatings and abuse of the authorities and neighbouring Turks on the one hand and those of the Kurds living in our houses on the other, until the Feast of Ascension of 1915. On that day Khalil bey retreated after being defeated by Andranik, and came to our village with more than 4,000 soldiers and Kurds. He ordered his men to enter the village and collect all male persons without exception. They entered the village, collected males aged 5 to 100 and took them to the village prison. Those who resisted or pleaded were immediately murdered, the rest were put into prison. They left children aged 1 to 10 there and took the rest to the nearby Kurdish village of Sokran where they made them dig the rubbish pit, murdered everybody and threw the bodies there. They didn't kill the boys aged 1 to 10 who were still in the village prison: the *kaymakam* and a Turkish sergeant pleaded with Khalil bey for their lives. After slaughtering all the men Khalil bey headed to Van with his troops. The mob that stayed in the village did whatever they pleased leaving nothing in the houses. After plundering everything they turned to us. They robbed us leaving only the underwear. Then they selected the beautiful ones and took them away for themselves - more than 300 women and girls including my sister-in-law Taguhi. We have no news about her until today. The rest suffered rape and very few escaped it. I suffered it [rape] too. Many of us hid in toilets and under ruined walls until they left. Tumasian Mariam had a daughter named Yeghisabet who became a chair for more than two hours and asked her mother to sit on her until the Kurds ran out of their raping passion that evening, then separated young women from the old and took them away; so she was saved in this way. At that same time I managed to hide myself in between the wall stones before that selection and joined the group of old women. In this way we spent another two days. Khalil bey returned from Van, brought the captive Armenian women from Pashkalé to our village, collected young women from our and neighbouring villages and together with the Kurds left the village (my brother-in-law's wife Taguhi was among them and we don't know anything about her). The old women were left in the village. After a week the Russian troops came, together with the Armenian volunteers. They saved us and sent us to SalmaSt My children Nerses and Movses died in SalmaSt Those of us who survived came to Baku and now live in Armenian Village.

Note: Rhan Hakobian from the same village⁴⁰ says: "Basé, the wife of our Kurdish villager Apo, told me about those 500 ears that were brought back. And

⁴⁰ For the testimony of the aforementioned R. Hakobian see NAA, f. 227, reg.1, rec. 421, p. 13 rev.

I was told about the priest's killing in Salmast by the Assyrian who buried the priest"

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 421, pp. 1-4, original, handwritten.

BITLIS PROVINCE

No 57

REPORT BY PRIEST GRIGOR TER-GRIGORIAN ON THE MASSACRES OF PLAIN OF MUSH AND SASSOUN

January 25, 1917

Dzithankov

Massacre at the Plain of Mush

Recounted by Smbat Khandilian Sekhliants from the village of Ziaret.

In the Plain of Mush, like in frontier provinces, firstly three times more than usual sharecropping dues were taken as well as the army supply (war tax or *zakhiré*), underwear, socks, gloves, *trekhs*, hats, ghee, cheese, cracked wheat, bulgur (cooked and dried cracked wheat), onions and potatoes, wheat, barley, flour, hay, straw, felt cloths, carpets, ox covers, hessian sacks etc.

Young men aged 17 to 25 were taken as soldiers and those aged 25 to 40 were recruited to carry loads and build roads. *Zakhiré* was collected by Haji Musa (a sergeant) and Ali *effendi* who were going from village to village with clerks and policemen collecting supplies for the troops. *Mudur* Bayram *effendi* was collecting conscripts. They demanded weapons -150 rifles - from Ziaret, but didn't get them.

When in the spring of 1915 the Russians took over Manazkert and Kop, the Ottomans invaded the villages of the Plain of Mush and started the massacre. After massacring the neighbouring village of Khabian, the troops moved on to Ziaret in the evening. The commander (the narrator doesn't remember his name) called 8 prominent men of the village, tied them to each other with a rope, pulled out the nails of their hands and feet as well as body muscles with pincers. They demanded 300 gold coins to free the tied men. The villagers collected gold from those who had and those who didn't have any gave their women's golden jewellery instead paying the demanded sum, but the men were not released. The soldiers with their rifles in their hands kept the tied men until dawn and beat them. They would pour hot water on them and beat them, then pour cold water and beat them again. In the morning when the troops moved to Holy Precursor,

they took the tied men with them and murdered them at Mount of Holy Precursor.

The troops besieged the Holy Precursor monastery. The prominent men of the neighbourhood and the clergy had found shelter in the monastery. They slaughtered everybody – the brotherhood at the monastery, the pupils with their teachers and those who had found shelter there. They wrapped abbot, archimandrite Vardan⁶⁴ in a shepherd's mantle and set him alight with kerosene, murdered archimandrite Yeghishe, the archimandrite known as 'kyosa' (because of his thin beard), *Ter*⁶⁵ Smbat⁶⁶ from Sordar, *Ter* Hamazasp⁶⁷ from Ziaret, Mr. Hakob, Mr. Sisak and Mr. Mambré (school teachers) and others. After the monastery they moved on and massacred the village of Sordar, then they broke into the village of Ziaret at the sheep milking time. Those men who learned about it fled. The rest, together with women and children, were gathered in two big cattle sheds and set alight with kerosene.

The narrator's family consisted of 20 members; only his two brothers survived. Only 12 men – and no women and children - survived from the village of Ziaret which had 350 households.

The massacred villages are as follows: Boglan, Guara, Sordar, Pazu, Ziaret, Baghlo, Meghti, Khabian, Goms⁶⁸, Tom, Norak, Sahak, Havran⁶⁹, Kemik, Derik, Tskhavu, Kravu⁷⁰, Artert, Akhchan, Sulukh⁷¹, Artghonk, Khashghaldgh⁷², Poghorgov⁷³, Verin Avzaghybur, Sheikhalan⁷⁴, Kurmeydan, Gomer⁷⁵, Ghzl-Aghaj, Sndznut, Blel⁷⁶, Tatragom, Klakhulé, Kardzor, Khorank, Jrik⁷⁷, Tornen, Pitar, Harinj, Mogonk, Tsabna, Harj-Vank, Ter Gevank⁷⁸, Sokhgom⁷⁹, Khober, Bklits, Hunan, Tsronk⁸⁰, Alijan, Sheikh-Brem⁸¹, Shekh-Usuf, Khardos⁸², Krtagom, Nerkin Avzaghybur, Shmlak, Frang Nor Shen (Armenian Catholic), Khas-Gyugh, Dvnik, Khars, Hay Ushtam, Vardenis, Drmerd⁸³, Hordank, Til, Hatsik⁸⁴, Avzut, Urugh, Ktsu, Ardghonk and the town of Mush.

The smallest village had a population of 100 households, the biggest consisted of 1,200 households (Ghzl-Aghaj, Khasgyugh, Halvarinj, Frang Nor-Shen, etc.)

Sixteen people survived from Havran (800 households), only 5 people (2 boys and 3 girls) survived from Ghzl-Aghaj (1,200 households), 1 man, 2 boys, 2 girls and 2 women survived from Hardonk (100 households), 12 people survived from Sheikhalan (600 households), 3 people survived from Kurmeydan (200 households) – a man named Yegho, a woman and a girl, and 12 people survived from Avzaghybur (200 households)⁸⁵.

The massacre was committed by the local Kurds and regular troops. When the defeated Turkish troops were gradually drawing back to the hinterland, the refugee Kurds from Alashkert, Bayazet, Manazkert, Bulanegh and other places invaded the Plain of Mush and received an order from the sultan to slaughter and massacre all Armenian villages. The Kurd, who didn't kill at least one Armenian, was considered *murtar* (unclean) and *haram* (forbidden by religion); no one

would eat with such a person. Those Kurdish *muhachirs* joined the regular troops and massacred the villages of the Plain of Mush. They would select beautiful women and girls from among those being massacred and set alight to take away and destroy the reSt When the troops were passing by the village of Ziaret to Holy Precursor, seven soldiers caught a 7-year-old girl near the village and raped her in turn until she died. She was Sandukht, the daughter of Mameli Kirakos from the village of Ziaret. About 4,000 young people who escaped the massacres (there were women and children among them) took shelter in the forests of Holy Precursor. From there they were following what happened to the people and saw how people were taken out of the villages in groups, brought to the banks of the River Euphrates and thrown into the water. One of those thrown into the water, Pepron, the daughter of Keos from Ziaret, swam in the water and hid behind a bush on the bank until the soldiers left. Her two girls and two boys were with her but they drowned in the river. When thrown into the water, mothers would hold their children's hands and together fall into the water.

Three days after the massacre at Holy Precursor the troops learned about the people who took shelter in the forest and besieged the forest The fight started in the morning and lasted until noon. When the defenders ran out of ammunition, the troops entered the forest and put everyone to the sword. Before the narrator's eyes (who was hiding in a pit) a Kurd named Bashé slayed *Ter* Hamazasp, the second priest of Ziaret (ordained in the Caucasus), through the nape of his neck. Hardly a hundred people escaped from here and most of them were murdered in different places. Some 30 boys, who escaped and hid in the forest, were obliged due to hunger to go to the Kurdish villages and surrender. They were all murdered by the mean Kurds except for the narrator and his brothers who after staying for a few days in some village and felt the imminent danger, and secretly fled to another village. Observing the same thing there, they fled again and thus frequently changing their places managed to escape and save their lives.

The self-defence was headed by Khojka Hovo, Rbe's Sargis from Ziaret, Moso from Goms, Aram Ghukeyan from Sordar and Hamazasp Mardoyan from Ziaret. When the massacre was going on in the villages of Holy Precursor, the commander of the troops Bayram *effendi* made an offer to the brave fighters sheltering in the mountains. He sent 2 to 3 letters informing Khojka Hovo that he was granted a pardon by the sultan, inviting him to lay down arms and go down with his friends. But they didn't believe him and didn't go down. Then they secretly went down to the forest, joined those sheltering there. Then there was the above clash with its unfortunate end caused by their running out of ammunition.

After the massacres more than 400 people from that region were displaced and taken to Diyarbakir. They loaded men with loads weighing 3 to 4 *poods* and drove the hungry and thirsty crowd out of their homeland. The displacement was

conducted by Bayram *effendi*, Omar *agha*, Hasan *effendi*, Sevdulla, Haji Ibrahim, Said *agha*, Rnus *agha*. Many of the displaced people died of torture, starvation and heat. The massacre and displacement occurred in July 1915.

There were 1 to 2 churches in all villages. Most of them had schools with 4 to 5 grades. The following were all destroyed: the monastery of Holy Precursor of Mush, St Aghberik⁸⁶, the monastery of Apostles, Matnevank, Sahak Hayrapet and Antania (probably Atanaginé).

Property in Ziaret:

Wealthy: 100 head of cattle, 1,000 head of sheep, 40 head of buffaloes.

Poor: – 15 head of cattle, 60 head of sheep, 6 head of buffaloes.

Wealthy: 5 to 10 horses, 60 to 100 beehives, 1,000 bushels⁴¹ of wheat.

Poor: 1 horse, 20 beehives, 50 bushels of wheat (8 *kots* = 1 *pood*)

Wealthy: 400 bushels of barley, 20 bushels of flax, 20 bushels of rice.

Poor: 20 bushels of barley,

Wealthy: 100 bushels of millet, 6 bushels of lentil, 30 bushels of peas, 400 *poods* of tobacco

Poor: 20 bushels of millet, 2 bushels of lentils, 10 bushels of peas, 100 *poods* of tobacco.

Wealthy: 1,000 baskets of grapes (1 basket – 6 *poods*), 50,000 watermelons and melonsetc.

Poor: 50 baskets of grapes, 10,000 watermelons and melons

The property of other villages could be considered close to this.

A small addendum about the Plain of Mush is contributed by Serob Harutyunian Mkhoyan from the village of Mgragom.

When the Russians captured Manazkert, the Ottomans fled to the South and the regular troops, *Hamidiye ashirets* and local Kurds joined up under the command of Haji Musa bek, plundering and massacring Armenian villages. They gathered the men of the village of Mgragom in two cattle sheds and set them alight. The women were taken to the neighbouring village of Ershter. Here women, girls and children from Mgragom, Khasgyugh and Ershter were put into 14 cattle sheds and set alight. Those who tried to escape from the fire were shot and their bodies were thrown back into the fire. The home of the narrator – Mkho from Mrgagom - was notable for its hospitality. The family consisted of 36 members of which only the narrator survived; the rest were burnt with other villagers.

The priest *Ter* Serob from Khas-Gyugh was murdered under terrible torture: they first gouged out his eyes, cut his nose and ears, pulled out the nails of his hands and feet, flayed his skin and then shot him. This was done by Haji Fero from Balak and Gulse Slo from Mush.

⁴¹ One bushel is the equivalent of one Ottoman kilé or 0.037 m³.

Villages added to the list: Irzak – 120 households, Mgragom – 70 households, Aligbun – 100 households⁸⁷, Ershter – 130 households, Kolosik – 50 households and Krdagom – 150 households.

Second addendum about the Plain of Mush

Recounted by Srapion Poghosian Aleyants from the village of Tsronk

No particular change was observed until November 1914, except that from the threshing floor they collected the annual *hasl* (sharecropping) three times (usually they were taking an eighth of the annual harvest; that year they took the 3/8ths) before the war arguing that the troops needed a lot of food. After that they were collecting the military tax, food supply and clothes for the troops, the land tax (*saleane*⁸⁸ or *amlak*⁸⁹): *ver-sorma* (give, don't ask what tax it is!) and *amele*.

Groups of load bearers were organised to carry food, clothes and military accessories (carrying loads on their backs for 7 to 8 days) as well as unpaid *begyar*⁹⁰ car transport. Many of the carts and *olam* labourers disappeared; people were robbed and murdered.

The following event was the signal for the massacre at the village of Tsronk. The village was ordered to produce 68 boy *olams* but only 66 reported because two boys had fled from the village. The fugitive boys went to the nearby Mount Sim (Mount Kosur) where other refugees had found shelter. The policemen in charge of conscription learned about the boys' whereabouts, went to Mount Sim and demanded their surrender. Sensing the danger, the fugitives shot and killed a horse to make the policemen leave. The latter went directly to Mush and reported the incident. Five hundred regular troops and 200 Kurdish horsemen came from Mush. They murdered 18 young men, burnt 150 houses and took 180 people to Mush prison. It happened during the days of the Carnival in 1915 (in February). The massacre was committed on the Feast of the Transfiguration by the troops of Musa bek. Men, women, and children were gathered in 4 houses and burnt, and they took the beautiful women for themselves⁹¹. The narrator's family consisted of 13 members; he was the only one to escape. Six people were burnt, his wife was taken away and the rest were murdered.

The narrator remembers the names of the following villages that were massacred: Tsronk, Hunan, Bglits, Orknots, Kudagom, Hatsik, Abulbuhar, Yerizak⁹², Ershter, Vardkhagh⁹³, Tsgyak, Artonk, Vardenis, Khars, Arnist, Musheghashen, Avzut, Srgolen, Mozak, Shekh-Usuf, Shmlak, Alvarinj, Berdak⁹⁴, Harakh, Havatorik, Mogunk, Aliznan, Sokhgom, Oghunk, Dzabna, Jrik, Karnen, Pitar, Alijan, Sulukh, Hakh-Chan, Hardyerd, Khash-Ghaltgh, Kar-Dzor, Gomer, Kikian, Herkert⁹⁵ (the narrator remembers more villages the names of which he had already given). The villages had 50 to 500 households with 5 to

35 family members in each. Very few people have survived and not from all households.

The nearby sanctuaries - Holy Precursor, St John, Matnevank, the monastery of the Apostles and St Aghberik with their brotherhoods, orphanages, schools and estates were plundered and destroyed.

There were attempts of self-defence in this region by groups of 30 to 40 people. The authorities entered into contact with them, deceived them and murdered everybody. For example, the group from Ha[va]torik trusted their offer, came down from the mountain, surrendered and were slaughtered. The emigration happened at the Feast of the Transfiguration (in July) by the Khnus-Basen-Kaghzvan-Koghb-Sardarapat route to Shirak where everyone has settled down.

Some details about the Plain of Mush

Recounted by Avetis Grigorian from the village of Drmerd

When the Kurdish refugees from frontier provinces of Bulanekh, Akhlat etc. overran the Plain of Mush, there were limited cases of plundering the Armenians but they were not allowed to openly kill and plunder villages because Musa bek from Khut and his two brothers Nho and Khasim beks, were against it. They were beks from the Plain of Mush and had a lot of villages and didn't want their property to be ruined like that of the Kurds from other districts. But this state of affairs completely changed after the meeting in Mush with the *mutasarrif* in July 1915. Musa bek and his brothers, the sheikhs of Til (owners of the village of Til), Mustafa from Vardkhagh (*ashiret*⁹⁶), Haji Fero from Balik, prominent Turks and Kurds from Mush, officials and heads of other *ashirets* were present at the meeting which discussed the government proposal to commit massacres also in the Plain. Some agreed with it, others didn't. After the meeting, Sifo Mstafi came to the village of Drmerd and disclosed what had happened. He said that he and some others didn't agree with the massacre, so he planned to have a meeting with the Armenians and the Kurds to make them take an oath on the *kyutap* (the Koran) and the Gospel and defend each other. (This Mstafi was the master and defender of Drmerd, Hargavank and Hushtum. The villagers were his people. The Kurds had divided Armenian villages among themselves and each owned several villages and protected his people when necessary). But that meeting didn't take place. Musa bek came to Khas-Gyugh with the order of the massacre and ordered all the Kurds to gather in Khas-Gyugh. Innumerable Kurds gathered around Khas-Gyugh on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the fast of the Feast of the Transfiguration. On Sunday they massacred Mushand in the evening the village of Khas-Gyugh. On Monday all these Kurds simultaneously broke into the villages and slaughtered everybody. Men were slaughtered on the spot. Women and children from several villages were gathered

in one place and burnt in houses and cattle sheds. Such collective massacres took place in the town of Mush, the villages of Alizman, Khas-Gyugh, Ershter, Kurtushtam (Kurdish village), Khars, Vardenis and Havzut. In Nerkin Avzaghbyur villagers heard something about Sunday and suspected that they would be massacred too, so on Monday they made an offering by slaughtering animals, fixed a vigil for everyone to taste the ritual meal at mass but during the mass the Kurds broke in and put everyone to the sword right in the church together with the officiating priest. The previous evening the priest *Ter Melik* from Drmerd had come there. During the massacre he was in the church and survived covered by bodies. When the Kurds left the village, he went to his village at night but when he approached his village he saw the Kurds massacring there so he hid in a nearby wheat field for three days. In the last morning when he raised his head to have a look at the village, the Kurds noticed him from the hill near the church and shot the unfortunate priest.

After massacring Khas-Gyugh on Sunday evening, they broke into Drmerd on Monday morning and started the massacre. The men who fled were saved; the others were slaughtered on the spot. The women thought there was no danger for them so they tried to help their men flee and escape, but stayed in their homes.

Those who fled and escaped the massacres had very hard times and after long wanderings managed to reach the Russian army or the Armenian refugees. The men of Drmerd who managed to escape hid in underground hideouts in the Krlshu Gorge (in the crack on the banks of the river-bed). They dug holes on the bank and going deep under the ground widened the holes enough for 4 to 5, up to 10, people and hid there. When entering the hideout they would take the turf on the entrance and close it from inside so the entry ways to these life-saving hideouts were never seen in the grass on the bank of the river. About 40 people fled from the village and took shelter there spending the days under the ground in silence, airless, hungry and in fear. At nights they would come out of their dens to breathe air and look around. In the afternoon of the massacre there was fierce shooting above the hideouts, since the people ran from the village in that direction and the Kurds followed them and slaughtered a lot of people near the hideouts. The enraged Kurds were racing on their horses over the hideouts and the fugitives were trembling in horror under the hooves of their horses. Those hideouts had served also the villagers of Drmerd who escaped *hamal-boluki*,⁹⁷ who didn't want to be taken into the army and used as load bearers. After spending three days underground they climbed up Mount Sev and stayed there for six days. Then some of them returned to their hideouts and some went in another direction. Soon the scattered villagers joined into a group of 43 people. Some in the group were suffering from hunger and lack of tobacco, including the narrator, but two newcomers were a boost to their spirits. These two newcomers found some *zhazhik* (cheese crumbs) when passing through a village. And this

handful of cheese together with water revived the weakened friends. Those who descended from Mount Sev dispersed after 5 to 6 days going to our troops on this side of the border. In their 33 days of wandering the narrator and his friends never ate any bread, only grains of ripe lentil and peas and wheat-ears. Some of them managed to escape, some were killed, others fell into the hands of the Kurds. The Kurds didn't kill everybody: sometimes they took care and saved the Armenians they knew, gave food to them, kept them and gave them the task of guarding their cattle. Thanks to such care Marto from Drmerd and his four friends were saved.

The narrator recounts the following specific events:

The boy hero

When the Kurds gathered women and children in a cattle shed in the village of Avzutto set them alight, Sanam, the wife of Mikayel Amroyan from Drmerd, was among them with her three boys. With her hands she broke the crossbeams in a corner of the roof, dug out the earth with her nails and opening a small hole helped her 16-year-old boy Hambo out of the ventilation hole in the roof. She herself stayed in the cattle shed with her two boys and was burnt. Hambo jumped down from the roof and ran. The Kurds noticed him and started shooting but all the bullets missed him, so the Kurds got on their horses and chased the boy for several days. The boy ran as much as he could but when he saw that the Kurds were getting closer, he climbed up a mountain and threw himself off a high cliff to die in order not to get into the hands of the Kurds. The Kurds clearly saw what the desperate boy did and thinking that the boy should have killed himself, returned back to the village. However, one of the Kurds thought about what the boy had done and decided to go and at least see the brave boy's corpse, but when he approached the boy to his surprise the boy was alive. When the boy saw the Kurd he gave a desperate scream and looked at him. The Kurd was surprised that none of the bullets fired by them had hit the boy. The boy then threw himself off a huge cliff to get killed rather than fall into their hands. He again stayed unharmed: only one of his teeth was broken. The Kurd took pity on the boy considering his deliverance and act of God. So he comforted the boy, put him on his horse, brought him to the village, took good care of him and would not allow anyone to touch him. When the Kurd was on his seasonal migration route down to Khut, he saw the boy off to the Russian troops that had already reached Mush. The brave boy now lives in the village of Dzithankov.

Mushegh from the village of Drmerd took his wife and four children and hid in the nearby field. The Kurds found them, murdered the man and took away the wife and the children. At night the wife of the Kurd who took the women to his home advised Salo (that was the woman's name) that she should flee, otherwise

she and her children would be murdered. The woman was hesitating: What to do? How to save all her four children? After some thinking, she took her two older sons (aged 7 and 10) and fled leaving her daughter (2) and son (4). They came to the village of Hushtum where a lot of Armenian women had found shelter. After some time, one of the Kurds wanted to take the good-looking and well-built Salo to his home. But at night Salo didn't want to yield, so the enraged Kurd hanged her with a rope from the ceiling, put his daughter to guard her and let him know when she died and he went to sleep. Somehow luckily for Salo the rope snapped and she fled. But the Kurd's daughter guarding her woke up her sleeping father. The Kurd got up, chased, caught and murdered the unfortunate Salo with an axe.

The water-mill child

A 7-year-old child fell behind from those who were fleeing. Wandering alone, the child reached a water-mill near Mush. The child went in and started living there by himself. He collected hay, covered the floor with it, put it over himself hiding under the planks. He fed on the remains of flour mixed with soil collected from around the millstone. When the boy ran out of flour he went to the town at night (he was scared of people and was hiding from them in daytime) to get something to eat. He lived like that until one day the Cossacks accidentally ran across him at the water-mill and took him to the town. On the way they found some chicken feathers on him and it turned out that the boy had caught a chicken in the town and had eaten it raw since he had no fire.

The miracle child

Manishak, the wife of Abré from the village of Drmerd lived in the village of Tshhak together with other Armenian women. When Manishak heard that the Russians were in Mush, she took her 8-year-old son Azat on her back and secretly fled from the Kurds to Mush. The Kurds learned about it and chased her firing a lot of bullets at the woman, none of which hit her, but her young son on her back got wounded in four places – on his face, elbow, arm and coccyx, though none of them was fatal for the child who was saved by a miracle. All the bullets safely passed through his body. The wounded child has already recovered and lives in the village of Dzithankov.

Events at Sassoun

Recounted by Martiros Hamazaspian Tumasian from the village of Germav in Sassoun (son of Tmo's Hamzé)

After the war started, supplies for the troops were collected in the same way as told about other places. There was an order to collect weapons but the residents of Sassoun didn't turn in any. No conscription was made here.

Although after the Constitution was adopted in Turkey Sassoun was required to provide soldiers, it did not supply soldiers for the army in peacetime on the grounds that they had been massacred 2 to 3 times during the last 50 years and if they provided soldiers there would be no men left to maintain a household. But after the onset of the war they started taking men upon the pretext of *hamal-boluki* and *amele taburu*.

In April 1915, when the Turkish troops from the south came to the aid of their troops in Manazkert, a number of Sassoun villages (Germav and others) were plundered by the House of Bego (*ashiret*), Yusuf, son of Habé, Hasan, son of Bshar Khalil Amar and Salim, son of Havaz. After that, residents of many Armenian villages, namely Shenik, Semal and Havatarik which was close to Mush, climbed up the mountains with their possessions. Up in the mountains they heard that Mush and its plain were safe and there were no massacres there. Therefore many families sent their women and children to Mush and they stayed in the mountain. On the Sunday of the Feast of the Transfiguration (in July) Mush and its plain were massacred. The meals prepared for the day were left on the tables, the *matagh*⁹⁸ was cooked, the pilaff ghee was melted and put beside. Mush was attacked from two sides: from the River Murat and the River Meghri, and was destroyed with gunfire. The locals headed by Haji of Koto, Mkrtych of Mcho and his brother Arshak put up a resistance but after two days of fighting the town fell due to gunfire destruction. The Turks were putting all the captives into houses and burning them. Those who tried to escape were shot. All the families that had descended from the Sassoun mountains perished here.

Those who managed to escape from Mush climbed up Mount Antovk and informed the 7 to 8 thousand residents of the Sassoun villages staying there about the massacre. V[ahan] Papazian with his friends was there, and Ruben⁹⁹ was in the village of Semal together with Toro, Mkrtych from Mush, Tigran from Alijan, Petros from Tsronk, Mkrtych, Elo and Khurshut.

The Turkish troops besieged Sassoun. Vahan took up position at Mount Kana with the people from the plain and Ruben with his friends and soldiers took up the Antovk positions. The troops and the *Hamidiye* headed by Suleyman *agha* (*Hamidiye* commander) and armed with cannons besieged them from all sides. The besieged people resisted for 30 to 40 days but after Isro, Mkrtych and other friends as well as about 3,000 people were killed, the Armenians despaired and started to disperse. Ruben with some 20 people joined Papazian and together - some 35 people - managed to somehow reach the Russian troops. People blame Papazian for this flight; had he not escaped furtively, he could have saved thousands of people with him.

In November the government issued a decree granting the Armenians an *afu* (pardon). All those who took shelter in the mountains and in other places came to Mush with their families. After four days it turned out to be a deception. Women

were gathered in houses and burnt; men were forced to work. They made them work in the ruins of the town taking out all the possessions that had been hidden away - house utensils, rugs, tableware, jewellery, gold etc. In the course of these works many men again managed to flee and go up the mountains.

After the massacres the escaped men stayed on Mount Antovk making huts and burning wood to keep warm, not at daytime in order not to give away their whereabouts, but only at nights. Some who had acquaintances among the Kurds went to work for and spend the winter with them. Some others were getting a little flour, bread and clothes from the villages they knew and living in this way at the Gelieguzan woods. These inhabitants of mountains were in such need of bread that they made *ghavurma*¹⁰⁰ of dead people's meat, ate it and many died as a result. They lived like that until January (1916) when the *mudur* Talib *effendi* came to Gelieguzan and learned that there were still people sheltering in the mountains. Exactly at that time the Russians captured Mush, and Talib fled with his people to Sgherd. The fugitives were saved and went to Mush.

The plundered and massacred villages were as follows: Germav - 55 households, Kop - 75 households, Irtsan - 30 households, Tapik - 50 households (30 Armenian and 20 Kurdish), Shushnamerk - 42 households, Geghashen - 40 households, Semal - 100 households, Shenik - 105 households¹⁰¹, Gelieguzan - 700 households, Aghbi - 200 households¹⁰², Hertink - 100 households, Spghank - 40 households, Yeghgard - 30 households, Talvorik - 80 households, Parkh - 50 households, Hakmank - 60 households, Tualink - 40 households, Hloghink - 70 households, Hartk - 50 households, Hosnut - 20 households, Korakhu - 30 households, Artghu - 20 households, Arkik - 30 households, Harkork - 35 households, Krdamank - 25 households, Gomer - 30 households, Hosner - 25 households, Kistagh - 30 households, Havgonk - 35 households, Tatank - 40 households, Chrtnik - 70 households, Mshgegh - 100 households, Khndzorik - 50 households, Talhur - 40 households, Taruk - 70 households, Psank - 30 households, Gornkes - 25 households, Khodztsvank - 35 households, Mkting (the village of Gevorg *Chavush*¹⁰³) - 110 households, Batsi - 50 households, Berm - 180 households, Galie-Gusonma - 35 households, Ishkhndzor - 100 households¹⁰⁴, Aliantsik - 75 households, Gelimsur - 50 households.

The following sanctuaries were burnt: St Aghberik, the monastery of Gomots, Khodztsvank, the monastery of Spaghan and Holy Precursor. The following priests were murdered: archimandrite Hakob of St Aghberik, archimandrite Stepan of Gomots monastery¹⁰⁵, the priest of Spaghan monastery (the narrator doesn't remember his name). Each village had its church which was destroyed together with the villages. About 10 schools were destroyed and the pupils together with their teachers were massacred.

Some part of the population, mainly women and children, were displaced to Diarbekir. The Kurds had also taken on some men for service but when the government officials learned about it, those men were murdered.

The remaining people emigrated to the Caucasus by the line Mush-Khnus-Karakilisa-Koghb-Talin and the village of Sogyutlu near Alexandropol, the first food distribution station from where they scattered all over the villages of Shirak to settle.

New addenda about Sassoun

Recounted by Gabriel Ghandilian Sharoyan from the village of Dahalaysé

After massacring Mush and its plain the Turks started the massacre at the villages of Sassoun. The men were put to the sword; the women and children burnt in groups in houses. The narrator's family consisted of 20 members; only 8 of them survived. The government issued an order that the Kurds who hid Armenians would be killed first, and then the Armenians. So both the troops and the local Kurds were ruthlessly massacring the Armenians.

The following villages were massacred: from Lower Sassoun: Dahalaysé, Sinamirg, Marnik, Havatorik. From Upper Sassoun: Kop, Germav, Irtsank, Tapik, Geghashen, Shushnamerk, Semal, Shenik, Hitink, Aghbi, Mktink, Gelieguzan, Gelignman, Gelimsur, Talvorik, Spaghank, Khndztsvank, Hardk, Hosnut, Parkh, Dvalenk, Hakmank, Hloghink, Tting, Harkork. Only the villages of Khodztsvank and Tapik had mixed populations of Kurds and Armenians, the others were exclusively Armenian. The biggest village had 200 households, the smallest 30. The biggest household consisted of 35 to 40 people, the smallest 7.

On average the possessions of the wealthy and poor households of the villages were the following:

Wealthy: 60 head of cattle, 5 horses, 1,000 head of sheep, 250 beehives.

Poor: 10 head of cattle, 50 head of sheep, 10 beehives. Annual harvest

Wealthy: 50 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of barley, 6 bushels of flax, 100 bushels of millet, 100 bushels of *klkil*, 10 bushels of lentils and peas.

Poor: 5 bushels of wheat, 3 bushels of barley, 2 bushels of flax, 20 bushels of millet, 10 bushels of *klkil*, 4 bushels of lentils and peas.

The massacres in Sassoun were committed by regular troops and *ashirets* headed by Sado from Shenstan (Balak *ashiret*), Selim from Aveys, Haji Fero, Haji Musa bek, Khan Avdul's *ashiret*, *ashirets* of Khian, Bakran, Lajkan, Rshtun, Bidir etc.

The women and children who escaped the massacre were captured and converted to Islam. Many of them converted to Islam to save their lives but when they had a chance they fled and were saved.

Compiled by priest Grigor Ter Grigorian

January 25, 1917

Dzithankov

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 480, pp. 1-10 rev., original, handwritten.

No 58

STATISTICS COMPILED BY KHAZO GRIGORIAN ABOUT SOME VILLAGES IN MUSH AND SASSOUN DISTRICTS OF MUSH PROVINCE

September-October, 1916

Alexandrapol province

Sassoun

There were about 100 villages in this region populated by Armenians. Though the Ghabljoz region is considered to be in Sassoun but in reality it is 3 to 4 days' distance away from Sassoun and the story of its massacre is independent of that of the residents of Sassoun fighting on [Mount] Antok. The following villages were mentioned:

Name of village	Armenian households	Kurdish households	Total households
1. Kermav	40	----	40
2. Kop	60	----	60
3. Irtsank	15	5	20
4. Tapik	20	15	35
5. Geghashen	40	----	40
6. Shushnamerk	35	----	35
7. Semal	80	----	80
8. Shenik	70	----	70
9. NerkinKelin	15	----	15
10. Ailantsik	30	----	30
11. Gelieguzan	300	----	300
12. Khtan	15	----	15
13. Aghbi	140	----	140
14. Hitin	100	----	100
15. Khotsetsvank	50	50	100

16. Yeghgard	15	----	15
17. Dzoror	15	----	15
18. Spghank	30	----	30
19. Talvorik (7 districts)	500	----	500
20. Hloghenk	20	----	20
21. Ishkhanadzor	100	----	100
22. Hagmank	50	----	50
23. Mktink	300	----	300
24. Petar	55	----	55

2,085 households Arm. 80 households¹⁰⁶ 2,165 households

There were about 2,080 households in 24 villages of Sassoun and in the 100 villages of the whole region there were about 5,000 households with 50,000 people.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, p. 25 rev., original, handwritten.

No 59

**TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVOR HOVHANNES ABRAHAMIAN
ON THE SELF-DEFENCE IN AND EMIGRATION FROM MUSH AND
SASSOUN**

March 1, 1917
Tiflis

Information about residents of Sassoun

When the war started, the Turkish government immediately conscripted the Armenians. In 1914 the *mudur* Talf *effendi* was sent with some troops to Sassoun to collect soldiers but saving some time, we held a meeting and decided not to give soldiers because they didn't recruit soldiers from Kurdish *ashirets* and were taking our young men away from us and sending them to fight with fewer than one in ten returning home. And since his attitude towards us was bad, he could order the *ashirets* or his troops to massacre the rest of the people.

The aforementioned *mudur* came a second time to Sassoun with his troops. This time on the order of the *mutasarif pasha* of Mush, he was accompanied by Vardan archimandrite¹⁰⁷, the *locum tenens* of our diocese, and again soldiers

were demanded. The chairman of our meeting Manuk Sharoyan told them that we would not give them any soldiers. He said we would give soldiers only after the neighbouring Kurdish *ashirets* provided soldiers first, otherwise we wouldn't. "How come, we are both subjects of the state but you don't demand any soldiers from them and strictly demand them from us?" They left. In December of the same year, the *mudur* again came and demanded people to carry food for the fighting troops. We didn't give any and he went away. In January of 1915 the same *mudur* with a lot of troops started going from village to village trying to forcibly collect men. First he went to the village of Shenik. Our men informed the leading people from Semal, Gelieguzan and other villages to decide what to do since they were inclined to use violence. Kirakos, the village headman of Gelieguzan, together with his friends went to Shenik to meet the *mudur* and tell him finally that we had no soldiers for them and didn't want to incur losses in vain. The *mudur* realised that he couldn't use force at that time and left without saying anything.

Thus the winter passed and the spring came. We realised that the Turkish government had found the pretext and the means to massacre us, taking advantage of the fact that all states were at war. Though we had started sowing, collaborating with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, Dashnaktsutyun), we were waiting for weapons and support to at least take revenge and die like real men.

The first skirmishes occurred at the villages of Kob and Karmav. The eastern Kurdish *ashirets* together with those from Balag, Bidir, Usuf Tun etc. united into a force of more than 2,500 armed Kurds and attacked the above villagers to plunder and murder them. When the Armenians realised that their forces were not enough to resist, the same night they asked for help from the Armenians of the western part. The same night, three hours before the dawn, the aforementioned Kurds attacked the above villages. But as luck would have it, there were ARF soldiers in the nearby village of Geghashen who took some local fighters and with some 80 people rushed over to help. The fight had already started and the relief forces gradually arrived: Mr. Koryun from ARF, 'Bloodthirsty' Mkrtych (from Mush), S. T. Karapet, Kirakos, Mr. Manuk of S. (Sharo) and others fought bravely for 8 hours. The Kurds started to flee. The Armenians chased them to their borders – a distance of 28 hours. We returned from the fight, took the residents of Kob (Talvorik) and Karmav together with their possession and settled them between the villages of Geghashen and Semal. I have to mention that we Armenians lost three people in the fight: a courageous giant from Gelieguzan named Grko and two men from Kob. The Kurds had 25 killed and another 30 wounded.

Between Kob and Geghashen there was a village called Tabk, which was partially inhabited by Armenians as well as 25 Kurdish households. Also the

mudur of Mush, Talf *effendi*, lived there with more than 30 policemen in the barracks. During the above-mentioned battle when they saw that the Kurds were defeated, they locked themselves in their barracks and kept silent trembling with fear. The Armenians wanted to attack and crush them but our leaders didn't let us arguing that direct revolt against the Turkish government wasn't expedient. But that was a mistake, and the sad thing was that the *mudur* had ruthlessly ordered all the *ashirets* and his troops to massacre the Armenians, not to leave a single Armenian on the Turkish land. They had already started massacring Armenians as we heard: Karin, Khnus, Bitlis, Tigranakert were destroyed and massacred especially after the Van rebellion. Certainly, they wouldn't spare us either.

Seeing that they wanted to wipe out the name of Armenians from the hinterland of Turkey we decided not to rely on anybody. True, we had a nation and enthusiastic Armenian friends but what was the use of it if they were far from us and couldn't help us?

We and the ARF, hand in hand, relying on our forces and our arms considered it better to die courageously than timidly bow our heads before such an arrogant and misguided nation that would not allow worship of cross and religion.

The fights had already started. We heard that the troops and the *ashirets* had attacked the villages of Plain of Mush to massacre the Armenians from the Friday to the Sunday of the Feast of Transfiguration and those who escaped had fled to the heights of Mount Kan. The Monday morning started for the Mush Armenians with a cannonade and gunshots. In some places they started resisting and after 4-5 days of fighting their plea for help reached us. Our groups immediately hurried to help them. We reached the Mush heights: Ghini peak, Gurtk and Zharat. But the sad fact was that the government troops blocked our way and we couldn't render assistance to them and they were exhausted and defeated. They were put to the sword or burnt or thrown alive in the water and drowned. Out of 15,000 people hardly 200 managed to escape and reach us. The fighting was going on everywhere day after day. Our people were at the lower reaches of Mounts Antok, Gebin and Michelni.

As long as the Russian troops were fighting, the Turks didn't bother us very much. But the sad fact was that in July¹⁰⁸ the Russians retreated. The Turks immediately turned all their forces at us, and we consolidated on Antok and Gebin peaks. Our commanders Mr. Ruben, Manuk of Sassoun and others were cheering up the people and encouraging them. After 5 days of non-stop fighting we were exhausted and defeated. We were scattered, left all our property to the enemy and fled. But the Turks had put up such cordons that no one managed to escape to Russia. From the beginning of the fight out of the 30,000 people that found shelter in the mountains just about 200 were killed, but after that (after being defeated) every day hundreds and thousands were murdered. Taking into

account that this would have a bad end (everybody would be massacred) and finding no other way out we again divided into groups and were forced to fight until July¹⁰⁹ 29. On that day, several fugitive Armenians were arrested but they were not killed; instead they were sent to us and found shelter in the woods, mountains and trenches. The Turks told them: "You have been granted a pardon from Sultan Reshad. Why are you hiding there and suffering from hunger and cold? Come down and surrender! There is an order to let you free, nobody has a right to say anything to you, you may be sure." This news was again sent by the local *mudur* Talf *effendi* and commander of the troops Murad bey.

We too thought that even if there was no pardon, according to the law, when you surrender and are taken prisoner, they would of course let you free. So with that hope we turned to the government to surrender beginning in September.

They kept silent and to assure the people sent them to reap the fields that we had sowed and store the grain in the barns as if to have food in the future. But we thought that they had their schemes and were just trying to win over our confidence. The people were gathered in the village of Tabk, where also the above-mentioned *mudur* and some government troops with their commanders Murad bey and Rza bey were stationed. Starting from September 27 they selected men, threw over their backs the wheat we had reaped and sent them to Mush saying only that the wheat would not be enough for you, take it there and the government would settle you in the villages of the Plain and provide you with subsidies to get along. After sending them, the weak men, the sick, the women and children - among them one of our officials Mr. Manuk Sh. from Sassoun wounded in two arms - were sent to the town of Mush under troop guard. After the men reached the town, the government sent more than 400 of them to Bitlis and put them to labour for the government. Another 550 were sent to Mush, Khnus and Kharberd. The rest were murdered by firing, putting to the sword or drowning in water. The above-mentioned Manuk Sh. and several priests were stripped and taken hungry and thirsty through the town streets, beaten, stabbed and spat at. "Where are you rescuers? Why don't they come?" They died in three days.

However some of us were still in Sassoun when we learned that bitter unbearable news. We again fled taking shelter in the woods and rocks. I have to note also that after Mr. Kirakos, the village headman of Gelieguzan surrendered, he and a man named Ove were sent to Mush accompanied by some policemen and a *chavush*. They were both murdered at a distance of 1 hour from Mush. They cut the head of Kirakos of blessed memory and took it to Mush to present it to the *mutasarif pasha* to vaunt themselves as pride of the Turkish nation for having murdered such people, in order to get good positions.

If any of the above labourers fell ill, he would immediately be murdered or thrown alive in the water to drown. People would escape from their labour sites,

from other places and secretly reach us. The number of fugitives reached 2,000. Winter came and it was impossible to make a living and find shelter. Some people mixed with mountain Kurds to live among them as Kurds. Others, who were natives of Sassoun and had fought against the government and *ashirets* for years, didn't have anywhere to go.

Living was hard those days; at night we would gather wheat-ears in the fields, and would wander at daytime. Among us there were people from the villages of Gelieguzan, Shenik, Semal, Geghashen and its environs, Haghbi, Hetink, Talvorik and their environs. We were still hiding in deserted places since the Turks hadn't left, but 2 to 3 times a week they were searching for us in order to murder us.

It was already autumn. The frosts started at the end of November. We were naked and had no beds to sleep on. We couldn't find food since we didn't know the roads and the locations of the troops. Though we had gathered some wheat at nights from here and there, it could suffice for a month only. Since we had no guide familiar with the area, we tried to secretly find someone among the Kurds who would take at least some of the people to the Russian side, but unfortunately we couldn't. We learnt that the residents of the village of Havatorik of Mush had secretly met their neighbouring Kurds Mshko Adi and Mahmat from Kchur and asked them to take them to the Russian side promising to pay what they wanted. The Kurds took 46 Ottoman gold coins for 45 men and one woman, put them at ease and took them to some building and said: "Stay here, when it gets dark we'll come and take you to the road to show you the way." But seeing their desperate situation those Kurds informed their *ashirets* that there were so many people in such a place. They put on their arms, besieged the Armenians and murdered all of them. Only a woman escaped who came to Sassoun, found us and told us about everything. We, the people of Sassoun, decided that since we had no Armenian guide and if we took a Kurdish guide we too might be murdered, it would be better to die in the rocks of our motherland of hunger and cold than get into the hands of people like that and be slaughtered without a trace.

What could we do to survive day after day? We lost all hope. Who would help us and give us food? It was December. We formed groups and would go at night to neighbouring Kurdish villages and secretly get sheep, cattle, wheat (buried in the ground) and live on it. Since December everything around us was covered with snow; we couldn't go anywhere and ran out of food. We would hardly eat once in three days. Soon that food was over too. There was so much snow that we didn't dare go around and search for food because the Turks and the Kurds could trace us. Besides, there were such inaccessible mountains that when we tried to pass by their lower reaches, there would immediately be avalanches that could have killed us. So we were trying to encourage each other and live on what

we could get waiting to see how God would help a handful of fugitive and hungry people.

Oh! Our condition was horrible and the situation was unbearable especially with regard to food. We had eaten inconceivable things like the meat of mountain beasts – wolves, foxes, cats, hares and among the birds – ravens, and anything else we could get. Secondly, we would go to the places where in summer, during the fights, sheep and cattle were slaughtered, dig through three *arshins*¹¹⁰ of snow to get their heads, legs and skins, to crush, boil and eat them. Thirdly, we would dig through the snow, find hay and grass roots and eat them. But still there was such famine that many people died of starvation. We were in such conditions that some people ate dead people's flesh and died in a week.

However, the iniquitous Turkish government wasn't satisfied even with that and spying on our location again sent troops to slaughter us but we managed to move up the mountains and to our positions and put up a resistance. They couldn't fight on the snow and withdrew.

On 20 January 1916, when the snow was a little frozen and not slushy, and people were starving of hunger and we had no alternative, we sent some young men to Kurdish villages a few hours away and they brought several sheep snatched from the Kurds. We lived on them for a while. We took shelter in the ruined village of Gelieguzan for the last time. The Kurds had informed the government that there were still Armenians here and there who permanently attacked and took away their sheep. After specifying our location, the government immediately sent 250 soldiers to Khulp where 350 horsemen from Kurdsih *ashirets* joined them and they attacked us on 24 January. We again took up our positions. It was our last hope - to fight and die; we had no chance to escape. The fight lasted about 24 hours; we suffered no losses. They only burnt some shelters we had built and returned to Mush. We thought they would return with more forces. But they didn't because the Russians had approached Mush province and were putting pressure on them. They could hardly flee to Shen, Kharberd and other places. We didn't know that the Russians were so close, but when the Turks left some men from Sassoun who were craftsmen in Mush they came on 3 February and brought us the news that the Russian troops were stationed in Mush.

Though we were exhausted from starvation and extremely weakened, when the voice of salvation reached our ears, we gathered our forces and thanked God for again giving us - a handful of people - our religion and the chance to see Christian Armenians. On our way to Mush when we saw that the Kurds from Khulp hadn't emigrated yet, we attacked the Kurdish village of Siok and after quite a long fight managed to snatch 30-40 sheep and returned to the village of Gelieguzan. The next day we sent some of our people to Mush, took some armed fighters and attacked the village of Tabk to kill the Kurds. After a short fight they

fled to the east to take shelter with the *ashirets* of Usuf House and Balag. We had no losses, but 8 Kurds were killed. We stayed there for more than 10 days, freed a lot of Armenian prisoners from nearby villages and headed to Mush.

In Mush with every passing day we made a living by taking trophies from the houses of emigrated Turks who had left everything when fleeing. Members of the national headquarters hadn't arrived yet. Though there were suspicions about the retreat, little by little we felt safer. We didn't stop; we took weapons from the Russian government and using also ours, together with the troops, went reconnoitring to Brnashen to take revenge on the Kurds. After several days of fighting we returned to Mush to reSt In addition we went to Kosor district twice to fight the Kurds who still rebelled against the Russians. There were over 90 exclusively Armenian fighters. The fight started. At first the victory was on our side and more than 160 Kurds, women and children were killed. After 8 hours of fighting the Kurdish cavalry of 1,500, not counting the foot soldiers, attacked our men who fought courageously but due to their smaller number they withdrew losing 40 killed. We never used to think about death, perhaps because only 10 of us were saved from 1,000. What was the use of our survival? We again took arms and went to Sassoun to reconnoitre. At first the Turks were defeated and fled to Pasur. The Russians chased them delivering powerful blows and the fight was over. At that time our groups were at Antok, Gapraghara-Khan, Michelin, Geghashen and Shatakhu Khor. On 22 July another fight started near Shen. Then the Russians retreated. We too descended from the mountains to Mush on the night of 24 July. At 8 o'clock we left Mush informing the few Armenians living in the villages to move to Khnus. The population of those villages crossed the Sulukh bridge over the river Murad and at daybreak reached the village named Krayu to have a rest. Our plan was to come to the aid of the Russians, push the Turks back and return to Mush together. But it didn't work. The enemy took over the bridge and we moved to Khnus. From then on we were getting supplies of food namely flour, sugar etc. until we reached the Shoragyal villages near Alexandrapol where we settled and went on living getting a fixed monthly allowance.

I, V. Hovhannes Abrahamian from the village of Geghashen of Sassoun, recorded this information with my own hand.

And I, N. Aghbalian¹¹¹, willingly copied this with minor corrections.

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 150, pp. 108 rev., original, handwritten.

No 60
**TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVOR NOYEMIK KHACHATRIAN ON
THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF TEGHUT IN KHLAT
DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

[1916]
Baku

Noyemik Khachatrian, aged 12
From the village of Teghut of Akhlat
At Baku orphanage No 2.

Before the war our family consisted of 19 members: my father Khachatur, aged 31, my mother Chichek, 28, myself, 12, my brothers Nazaret, 10, Levon, 12, Melkon, 14, my aunt's husband Peto, 44, his wife Zilo, 33, Abgar, 25, Leché, 13, Darvaz, 15, Azat, 9, Azniv, 28, Yavro, 12 and others.

Eight people of our family survived and now live in Etchmiadzin.

The following people were killed: Peto, 44, Khosrov, 16, Azniv, 28.

Six people died, every one of them in the village of Sultanmut.

My father Khachatur, 31, is missing. When the Circassians retreated they took him as a shepherd for their sheep.

Teghut is a village inhabited by about 400 Armenian households. Like other villages ours too was attacked by the Circassians. At the end of April our men took their arms and climbed up the mountain and fought against them for 8 days. They were about 30 to 35 people headed by Hakob (Bdo) of Teghut. When the Akhlat Turks learned that our men were still alive and were putting up a resistance, they climbed the mountains and brought them down by deception assuring no harm would be done to them. My father had hidden in the source of the St John monastery spring. When the villagers surrendered he followed their example. He was given the task of shepherding the flock of sheep. When the retreat occurred, the Circassians captured and took him with them. The first day they disarmed our men and the next day they tied their arms and took them to the sea⁴² shore together with us to make us witness the massacre. There they shot everyone and threw them into the sea. Some 30 to 35 people stood with their backs to the sea and facing their murderers and each one was shot with 2-3 bullets. Among them, from our family, were my aunt's son Petrosian Khosrov, 16, and his father, Petros of Sepo's Gro. Then they gathered all those who remained – the young, the lame and the invalids - in a house and left them there hungry for 4 days. Then they took them to the sea shore, tied them to the trees

⁴² Lake Van was meant.

and shot them. The last news was brought to us by a Turk who was regularly giving us the news.

They selected the young and good-looking women for themselves. They took away some 10 of them including village headman Bdo's daughter-in-law Nvard who had married recently. The young ugly ones were put into a Turk's house and burnt. My mother was among them. When the Circassians had gone to fetch kerosene my mother used the opportunity and fled to the village of Sultanmut. In a few days she and my three brother[s] died in one night. About 18 to 20 women were burnt. They were beating us, the survivors, demanding money. Those who had money, handed it over, those who didn't have suffered unheard tortures. They put a rope over the neck of two women (I didn't know them) who had no money to give, and strangled them in my presence. From there we fled to Sultanmut where the Kurds wanted to abduct my aunt's daughter-in-law Azniv. She resisted. One of the Turks fired his rifle right into her heart and she fell down and her son Azat, who was in her arms, fell down together with the mother but he wasn't hurt. Seven of our children died there in a week.

The next day when the Turks heard that the Russians were approaching Sultanmut, they left us and retreated.

After staying in Sultanmut for several weeks, when the retreat occurred, a volunteer and a Russian soldier put me and my aunt with her children into a van and brought us to Igdirdir where I was placed in an orphanage.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 468, p. 13 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 61
TESTIMONY OF RUBEN FROM KHLAT
ON THE MURDER OF HIS PARENTS

August 16, 1916
Yeghvard

A 10-year-old boy named Ruben from Khlata, who was liberated from prison only 2 months ago, was brought to Yeghvard. The boy's tongue has failed him and he can speak hardly a few words. When I asked him: "Where are your father and mother?" he rubbed his index finger to his thumb wanting to say they were slaughtered by the Kurds. I asked him: "Since when haven't you been able to speak?" The boy made me understand with signs that when his mother was raped before his eyes and then his father was slaughtered together with his mother, he

started shouting in a loud voice and running to and fro, and in half an hour his tongue failed him. An old Kurd took the boy with him and took care of him until the Russians came and he gave the boy to them. They brought the boy to the Caucasus and gave him to his fellow villagers.

Haik Achemian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 440, p. 1, original, handwritten.

No 62
TESTIMONY OF THE SURVIVORS MELO MANUKIAN AND
SAVGYUL SIMONIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF
TAPAVANK IN KHLAT DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

September 1, 1916
Margara

The former state of the village: - Before the war the village of Tapavank had 200 Armenian households. The village had 8,000 sheep, 5,000 farm animals, 300 ploughs, 400 wooden ploughs, 400 carts. Annually the village produced 1,000,000 *litres* of wheat and barley, 2,000 cartloads of hay etc. The village had 4 water-mills, 200 orchards with 40,000 trees.

The current state of the village: - The village is currently completely ruined and desolate, the houses are destroyed.

The village church - Mother of God, had an ancient building. There were 4 priests, *Ter Barsegh* was murdered. The following villagers had old manuscript Gospels: *Ter Barsegh*, *Ter Shmavon*, *Ter Ghukas*, *Ter Martyros*, Mkhitar Hovsepian, Yeranos Serobian, Hovh[annes]. Poghosian, Karapet Mkhitarian, Melo Manukian etc. The government frequently banned opening schools in the villages so the children were studying in cattle sheds.

All the Gospels were lost or plundered, only one - that of Sev Karo's Khacho - is now with the owner in Kars.

Mobilisation: - A hundred men were conscripted and sent to Erzurum and other places. Of these 100 only 1 person fled and escaped - Melo Manukian. All the rest were murdered or missing. The government took from the village as war tax 500 units (1 unit is 1 *litre*) of wheat, 150 oxen, 300 sheep, 1,000 gold coins, 2,000 pairs of *trekhs*, socks and mittens, 100 *litres* of ghee, 200 units of cracked wheat, 50 pieces of felt cloth, 100 ropes, 150 cartloads of straw, 150 cartloads of hay, 2,000 chickens.

A hundred men with their carts and animals and 150 men carrying loads on their backs went to Erzurum to do *olam* labour. None returned. They were either murdered or disappeared on route. Four conscripts paid 100 gold coins of *bedel* each to be exempted from military service but eventually they were all taken to the army and were murdered.

The massacre of the village: - In May 1915, when the Russians were advancing in all directions to Manazkert, two weeks before the Feast of the Ascension, a Turkish police officer – Hasan *onbashi*, came to the village with 12 policemen and collected 20 rifles. "If you don't turn in the rifles, we'll kill everybody," they said. At daybreak on the Feast of the Ascension the regular troops, the *Hamidiye* and the mob besieged the village. They attacked the people from all sides, ruthlessly shooting or slaughtering with daggers women, men and children. The villagers fled in panic to Mount Nemrut. The Kurds and the mob drove out the sheep, the cattle and plundered the movable property. The Kurds caught one of the men of the village, Avetis Abrahamian, and forced him to show the place of his cache. He showed the place of the church cache to the Kurds and was thus saved. He converted to Islam together with his family, stayed there for three months but then fled to the Caucasus. During the massacre the four priests of the village were taken into the church and slaughtered there.

Before the massacre the primate of Baghesh, Suren Archimandrite¹¹², sent a letter to the village in which he wrote: "the residents of Van were massacred because they didn't turn in their weapons. Don't even think of keeping one gun in the village; turn everything in to the government in order not to be slaughtered."

The villagers lived on herbs and snow on Mount Nemrut. The Kurdish horsemen started searching for fugitives in the mountains and killing them.

After the massacre, the Kurds abducted beautiful women of the village and took them away as captives.

One of the prisoners, Savgyul Simonian (30) recounts: "I was abducted several times. They made me strip and dance. I pleased them. Every night 10-12 Kurds abused me. After treating me like that one of them, named Amar from the village of Nist, took me to his house as a servant. I worked hard in his house. In the autumn I was reaping hay in the fields from morning till night, and labouring in the house and in the winter I was cleaning the snow from all over the house. I had two children, aged 13 and 10, whom the Kurds beat severely every day making them work. I stayed with them in this way until the Russians took Bitlis. The Kurds of Nist showed submission to the Russians. I took my two children and fled to the volunteers who brought us, together with other prisoners, to Alashkert. Now I am going to join my husband who lives in New Bayazet."

During the massacre of Tapavank 600 men and 700 women and children were slaughtered. One hundred women and 300 children were taken prisoner. One

hundred and fifty men (aged 7 to 60) and as many women and girls were saved. One hundred women and children still remain captive.

The massacre of the village was committed by Turkish policemen and Kurdish horsemen from the following *ashirets*: Hasnan, Sivk, Haytaran, Chukus headed by Ghasim bek, well-known Musa bek of Mush and Zaman khan.

What is written is in line with what I recounted: due to Savgul's illiteracy signed by

Haik Achemian (from Van)

Melo Manukian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 449, pp. 1-4 rev., original, handwritten.

No 63

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF TAPAVANK IN KHLAT DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

August 29, 1916
New Bayazet - Pashakend

Akhlat – Tapavank

Mobilisation of 1914 was accomplished with violence. Thirty people haven't come back yet. The houses of Pokhan, Haro, Ambro and several others were burnt - about 20 houses.

They forcibly recruited people for *tekalif-i harbiye* and for *olam* to carry loads on their backs to Bitlis, Mush, Khnus, Manazkert. Seventy people didn't come back.

On the last days of the Lent, Papo bey, the *mudur* of Prkhus, came with policemen and forcibly collected about 50 weapons.

The disaster. On the day after the Ascension Papo bey, Abdul Mejit with thousands of troops and Kurds came and besieged our village. At daybreak they slaughtered about 400 people – *T[er]* Barsegh, *T[er]* Shmavon, *T[er]* Ghukas, the village headman Aghajan, Minas *agha*, Hartin *agha*, Knyaz *agha* and others. *T[er]* Martiros was said to be murdered in prison. They also slaughtered women and girls – about 60 people, children and 7 to 8-year-old boys. They murdered 200 people and took away their possessions. Some fled to the mountains. They took about 400 people to the village of Avzutin Mush, where there were already hundreds of Armenians from other villages. They put them into houses and burnt

them. We who fled to the mountains took shelter in the fortress of Manazkert. Some women and children took shelter in the Kurdish villages of Paghché and Aghtat. When the Russians came they too joined us at Manazkert. At Feast of the Transfiguration the Russians retreated and we followed them through Alashkert to Igdir, Etchmiadzin, Yerevan and here. We have no news from our village.

The villagers who escaped are in the regions of Alexandrapol. Now we are 18 households here in Pashakend with 88 people.

After the July 1915 retreat, 43 people from 18 households died on the road – in Igdir and Etchmiadzin.

Witnesses to the people who were burnt in the village of Avzut of Mush

Hovsep Zatoyan from the village of Tapavank

Narrators: Hakob Mkhitarian, Galust T[er] Barseghian

Now living in Pashakend

August 29, 1916

Interviewed by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 51, original, handwritten.

No 64

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MISAK SEDRAKIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF PRKHUS IN KHLAT DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

August 8, 1916

Ashtarak

Recounted by Misak Sedrakian (aged 16) from the village of Prkhus of Akhlat, now an orphan in the Ashtarak No 1 orphanage

The massacre of our village started on the Feast of the Ascension of 1915. A month earlier, the Kurdish *mudur* of our village, Papo bek, came to our village with 14 policemen and about 20 volunteers and forcibly collected all the weapons. He said: "Give your rifles to us now; we'll give them to our fighting soldiers till the war is over. Then we'll return them to you." The town crier Nazar and the neighbouring Kurds who had sold rifles to the Armenians, had in advance told on those who had rifles. So on the basis of that list they collected all the firearms. The village youth had already been conscripted, so Prkhus no longer had means of defending itself.

The day before the Ascension, a Turkish sergeant came to the village and said that the Russians were approaching so it would be good if all men hid in the fields till the Kurds fled and then they could go back together with the Russians. We believed his words, took some food with us, went to the fields and hid there. Suddenly we saw that the village was besieged from all sides... Our *mudur* Bako bek was leading them. There was heavy firing. Many of our friends were killed in the field. In a little while the firing stopped. The town crier was calling from the marketplace: "Armenians, come and gather in the village! What happened was a misunderstanding. The Kurds are common *muhachirs* (migrants) and will leave the village tomorrow." Reassured by these words, many people returned to the village. The Kurds harnessed the Armenians' carts as if to bring their possessions from a faraway place to our village. They took with them all the old people and the youth they could find and left.

On Thursday morning firing started from all quarters. The Kurds broke in from all directions murdering the Armenians they came across. They destroyed the hideouts and put those hiding there to the sword. At that time I was in a hideout together with my younger brother, my cousins and two neighbours. When they broke the door, my mother came horrified to our aid but the Kurds murdered her before our eyes. My brother immediately climbed up the ventilation hole in the roof. When I tried to do the same, the Kurds hit me twice with a sword and wounded me. I fell down. One of the Kurds said: "This one is young, let's not kill him." They let me free and started plundering the house. I came out and saw my mother's corpse on the threshold. There were corpses all over the village. On the other side they were raping a young woman and forcibly abducting a girl. I ran away frightened and hid in a dry dung rick. The Kurds came and took me out, they stripped me and wanted to kill me but again one of the Kurds didn't let them of pity. I again got into a rick where I found a friend. I covered him with dry dung and stood up straight in the rick. The Kurds came several times, looked in but didn't notice anything and left.

In the afternoon the Kurds came across an armed Armenian in the upper part of the village who put up a resistance. They exaggerated the account of what was happening as they passed on the news to each other as if they were fighting against a whole group. After murdering the remaining Armenians of the village they started withdrawing. In the evening the Kurds came and poked the rick with a stick. This time they noticed me and my friend and took us out. They wanted us to show the hideouts. When we said we didn't know the places, they murdered my friend. One of the Kurds didn't let the others kill me saying he wanted to take me as a servant. My father was taken out of the hideout and murdered, my grandmother was wounded. My younger brother, dressed like a girl, had fled with my uncle's wife to another village and I had no news from them. Together

with the Kurd who had saved me we went to the village of Suchkhan. When his wife saw my condition she cried. She took care of me, gave me a bed. They renamed me Ibo so that I could not be recognised. When one day my saviour was out plundering, a mullah showed me the way and exhorted me to flee. I fled. On my way, near the village of Cheziré I came across 6 armed Kurds. I hid in tall grass till they passed by. Then I went to the shore of the lake Nazuk where I found my uncle with 11 others. From there we went to the Armenian village of Cheziré (which had a Kurdish population too) where we found 20 women and children from our village. Then the Kurds [attacked] Cheziré. We fled. A young man from Prkhus named Nsho-Nuro armed with a Browning pistol started resisting the Kurds, broke the encirclement and headed towards us. The Kurds started chasing him and suddenly surrounded all of us. Nsho-Nuro hid behind a rock and fought alone against the Kurds armed with rifles. The Kurds didn't dare advance any more. We took advantage of that fight and fled. Only one of us was killed. There happened to be an acquaintance among the Kurds who convinced his friends to withdraw and cause no harm to us. We spent that night at the Kurdish village of Khiartang. Nsho-Nuro came there too.

The government obliged the Armenians in Khiartang to return to Prkhus and bury the dead. All those who obeyed the order and returned were slaughtered. From Khiartang we went to the village of Khulik where we worked as herdsmen for the Circassians. Those Circassians hadn't yet killed any Armenians. But afterwards obeying the government order tied up 200 men with ropes, took them out of the village and turned them in to the troops who murdered them.

After a month the Russians occupied Khulik but unable to resist the counterattack of the Turks, retreated to Manazkert taking with them the Armenians. During this retreat I came with them to Igdir. I left my brother and sister in Etchmiadzin and went to Ghamarlu. Then I learned that they were moved to Ashtarak, so I came here too and was placed in the Orphanage No 1.

What is written is in line with what I recounted.

Misak Sedrakian from Prkhus

Orphan at the Ashtarak No 1 Orphanage

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 428, pp. 1-5, original, handwritten.

No 65

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR AGHAVNI HLGHIATIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF PRKHUS IN KHLAT DISTRICT OF
BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 9, 1916

Ashtarak

Recounted by Aghavni Hlghatian (aged 12) from the village of Prkhus, now an orphan in the Ashtarak No 2 orphanage:

On the Feast of the Ascension, when the Kurds attacked our village, my mother immediately put on old clothes over new clothes, put mud on my and my brothers' faces and dressed us in rags to make us look ugly so that we would not be abducted by the Kurds. My father had hid somewhere. The Kurds and their women caught my mother. The Kurdish women called their men: "Come here! There is a good-looking woman here..." My mother immediately threw her gold jewellery before the Kurds who let my mother go and started fighting each other for the gold. Taking advantage of the opportunity, my mother took me and my brothers and fled to Khlata. After wandering there hungry for a few days we returned to our village. My father had not yet been murdered. My mother dressed him in woman's clothes. The Kurds came, noticed that and wanted to murder him. We all threw ourselves on him crying, kissed the Kurds' feet asking them to spare my father's life. My mother realised she could no longer save my father's life in that way, so gave him some food and told him to flee to Russia.

My father hardly made it to the village of Khulik where he was caught by the Kurds who cut him into pieces by their daggers. But he was still alive and asked the Kurdish woman who had witnessed everything to take his bloody felt cloth to his wife so that she would lay their children to sleep on it. When the Kurds saw that my father could still speak, they fired a few bullets to his chest. My unfortunate father died with our names on his lips...

Then we went to the Kurdish village of Mzre, next to Khnus, which was already occupied by the Russians. One day my mother went to the neighbouring village for bread. Before she returned, the Kurds and the Turks attacked the fortress of Khnus. The Russians retreated. I and my brother followed them without waiting for my mother. On the way I got lost and out of hunger went to sleep under a rock. The [Russian] soldiers saw me and put me on a cart and took to Alashkert. I spent several months there, then was taken to Gharakilisé. There I lived with our villagers for a month or two and then moved to Etchmiadzin with the last retreat. And they

brought me here. After a while my brothers were found too and brought to me. They say that my mother is alive too.

Recounted by Aghavni Hlghatian from the village of Prkhus

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 428, pp. 7 rev.- 9, original, handwritten.

No 66

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS YEGHIAZAR GHARIBIAN AND
GHUTRAD AVETISIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF
PRKHUS IN KHLAT DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 19, 1916
Dvin Aysori

Yeghiazar Gharibian from the village of Prkhus in Khlata district of Baghesh recounted the following about the massacre of their village and how he had been a soldier in the Turkish army.

Our village consisted of 200 households and 2,700 people. It had 6,300 sheep, 1,800 various farm animals, 45,000 units of wheat (each unit is 2 *litres*), 20,000 units of barley and rye.

The village had a church¹¹³, a (missionary) school except the school and the church, the village was completely burnt.

In August of 1914 in accordance with the government announcement in 24 hours we, the men aged 25 to 45, reported to the Khlata military authorities from where we were sent to Baghesh under the supervision of the police officer Mehmet. After wandering there for 15 days, the men aged 35 to 45 were released, and the rest of us – some 150 people - were sent to Van where we stayed hungry and thirsty for 20 days. Then we were sent to Ghlich Gyaduk and were distributed among different companies of 99th Regiment of the 7th Army.

As war duty the government also forcibly collected from the villagers 20,000 units of wheat, 600 sheep, 10 *litres* of ghee, 40 head of cattle for meat, 50 carts and 100 oxen, 500 pairs of socks, 370 pairs of gloves, 100 cartloads of hay, 100 cartloads of straw, 120 cartloads of dry dung. We transported all this with our cattle, and in the winter also on our backs, to Khlata, Baghesh, Mush and Bulaneg.

The government took 65 liras, 5 and a half *kurush* military ransom from Stepanian Minas from our village for his son, 65 liras, 5 and a half *kurush* from Kamalian Sedrak for his son Benjamin, 65 liras, 5 and a half *kurush* from

Ghukasian Gurchen for his son Hamazasp and 65 liras, 5 and a half *kurush* from Trtoshian Abré for his son Gevorg. But as soon as the war started they were taken to the army.

With our army troops we stayed at Ghlich Gyaduk for one and a half months but we lived in miserable conditions: they were always making us work hard; they were oppressing us and were very strict with us. We spent our days naked, barefooted and hungry. And when Turkey declared war against Russia in October¹¹⁴, we were sent to Hasan-Gala and were disarmed in the presence of German officers swearing harshly at our religion, etc.

They separated us from the army and made us work on the roads and trenches under the supervision of regular troops. Our condition became more unbearable: we were working hungry, thirsty, naked and barefooted all day long, without any rest. At nights we were sleeping without a bed, on damp and cold ground. We fell ill and without any medical care many of us died. We were forced to flee.

In February 1915 the *mudur* of our region Papo bek accompanied by 25 policemen gathered the men of our village aged 15 to 60 – some 300 people - threw loads over their backs and sent them to Baghesh and from there to Karin. The *mudur* started using harsh measures and following pointers given by women collected in our village about 110 pieces of Mosin, Gras, Berdan rifles and different pistols and armed the Kurds. We then felt the imminent danger.

On 1 May 1915 all the village cattle was rustled off the field by Yusuf *agha* of Trtop in Verin Bulanekh, Nadir of Khiartang, Yaghub and Hayto with their servants.

The next day when the Russian troops advanced from the village of Ghlich Gyaduk and occupied Manazkert and part of Verin Bulanekh, Abdul Mejit and Kor Husein pasha from Haytaran fled with their servants, broke into Prkhus and joining the *mudur* slaughtered the women, children and men, in all 1,300 people, including Ter Hovhannes, his brothers Gevorg and Barsegh *aghas*, Serob, Pnoyan Matevos, Mukhserian Galo, Stepanian Minas, Khchoyan Gevo, Mkrian Sarhat, Mosian Hakob, Kamalian Sedrak and Mkre.

During the massacre 50 people fled from our village to Khiartang and took refuge with the Kurds. The Bulaneg authorities sent 15 policemen who gathered them, tied them to each other and murdered everybody near Trtop, on the shore of lake Nazik.

Ghutrad Avetisian from the village of Prkhus added the following:

During the massacre some people fled to Akhlata – to the government offices - and some others, including me, to Mount Yeghonak. More than 2,000 women and children from different villages came and joined us, including more than 400 women and children from our village. We wandered in the mountains for 15 days. We lived on edible herbs. Every day the Kurds and the policeman were attacking us. They completely stripped us. We were obliged to cover our nudity

with sheep skin. They raped and forcibly converted us to Islam. Our villager Gevorg *gha's* daughter-in-law Atlas was taken away by Kiamshzo, son of Nadir from Khiartang; Shoghé was taken away by Hamzo, son of fellow villager Mirza, the vegetable-grower; Nunik was taken away by Ipo from Cheziré; Barsegh *gha's* daughter-in-law Marmar was taken away by Izo, the vegetable-grower; Gevorg *gha's* 13-year-old daughters were taken away by Chachan from Cheziré; Kamalian Sedrak *gha's* daughter-in-law Nazik was taken away by Zipir from Chkhar; Mosian Hakob's daughter-in-law Mani was taken away by Mehmet from Khiartang; Serob's daughter Gino (aged 16) was taken away by *Chavush* from Bitlis; Srgo's wife Jeyran was taken away by a Kurd from Khiartang (I don't know his name); Mkho's 15-year-old daughter Mamir, Uko's 15-year-old daughter Azniv and Beghdehemios's wife Marmar were taken away by the mob. And we – hungry, thirsty, living on the herbs - were exhausted. Every day 2 to 300 of us were dying and we were unable to even bury them. The Bulaneg authorities sent policemen who gathered us and took to the village of Pionk of Nerkin Bulaneg where Khalaf *gha* protected us until the Russian armies occupied Nerkin Bulaneg. There were only 50 of us left then. We moved on to the fortress of Manazkert. We had hardly rested when the great July retreat occurred and we fled in the direction of Alashkert. Due to exhaustion and unfavourable conditions 20 people – women and children - fell ill and died on the road. The rest now live in Gzl-Tamir, Akhta, the Ghamarlu region and other places. In March 1916, our men returned to our homeland to start construction work but since there was no permission from the Russian government, they returned here to their former places.

Our estates are abandoned and the [village] is completely desolate.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 438, p. 5 rev. - 6, original, handwritten.

No 67

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR VACHAGAN PETROSIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF THE TOWN OF BITLIS

August 8, 1916

Blur

In accordance with what Vachagan Petrosian (aged 35) from Bitlis recounted: The general mobilisation in Bitlis was declared in July 1914¹¹⁵. All men aged 20 to 46 were conscripted to military service. If a conscript didn't report at the

appointed time, government would burn his house and confiscate all his property. During the mobilisation the policemen acting on behalf of the government would take from shops and houses any goods and things they wished. They confiscated 25 to 40 Ottoman liras from the wealthy as *iyané* (donation). This exaction occurred three times. More than 500 people paid as *bedel* 61 Ottoman liras each, but after 25 days they were beaten and forcibly taken to the army. They would make those who were exempt from military service due to age do all kinds of heavy work: they would throw over their backs food and ammunition and send them as far as Hasankala. Erzurum, etc. Those who couldn't carry their load were beaten to death by sticks.

Simon *chavush* from Artishen¹¹⁶, a young man from Bitlis and Misak, a sergeant from Arabkir, who had all deserted from the Turkish army after they were disarmed, recounted the following:

“At first they didn't discriminate much between Armenian and Muslim soldiers, but as soon as Turkey began to wage war against Russia, the attitude of the Turkish military towards us changed for the worse. We, the Armenian soldiers, were sent to the first lines of the front. Besides, we saw with our own eyes that the Turkish soldiers were firing at Armenian soldiers and killing them. At the end of May 1915 near Hasankala all Armenian soldiers were disarmed on the order of Enver pasha and distributed among labour battalions. And when Simon *Chavush* mentioned above asked captain ...tam (from Bitlis), who respected him, why they were disarmed, the latter secretly said to him: “There was an order from Enver pasha that there should be no Christian soldiers in our army. Besides this, your life is in danger, take care of yourself...”

When the governor of Van Jevtet retreated and came to Bitlis (in July) and saw Armenians there he said to the governor of Bitlis: “So there are still Armenians here?” He immediately ordered the census papers to be brought in and based on that list gather all males above the age of 15 and take them to the barracks. Then they would move them out of the barracks in groups, take them to Dukhanashen (between Bitlis and Sgherd) where they would murder them and throw them into the water. They took the others to the Shapuhian garden (the garden belonged to a wealthy Armenian from Bitlis), tied them to each other, made them stand in line, shot them and threw them into pits dug in advance (with many of the captives not even wounded or lightly wounded). In this way they eliminated the male population of Bitlis. They selected the women and children they liked and converted them to Islam. The remaining women and children were also taken in groups to Sgherd, stripped on the bank of the river, murdered with daggers and thrown into the river. Most of the small boys were thrown into the river alive.

Note – A day before the massacre in Bitlis, a well-known resident of Bitlis, Okhikian Armenak, Vardan from Khizan and Karapet from Urtap were hanged.

M[ukhsij]¹¹⁷ Jirjiz gave gold equal to his weight to the government to spare his life but after they took the gold he was killed. Regular troops, policemen, the Kurdish and Turkish mob participated in the massacre.

Poghos Hovhannesian and Mushegh Yeranosian from Bitlis who had witnessed the massacre of the town, confirmed that the information is true.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 13 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 68

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SARGIS KARIPIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF PAS OF TATIK IN BITLIS
DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 29, 1916
Khalfalu

In accordance with what Sargis Karipian (aged 38) from the village of Pas in Tatik cluster of villages of Bitlis recounted:

Pas had 70 households and 420 residents, three churches, one water-mill, 500 sheep, 1,100 farm animals. The annual revenue of the village was 2,000 Ottoman liras worth of wheat, barley, walnut etc. The church had three manuscript Gospels.

Pas has currently not been burnt yet.

On 20 July 1914 all men of Pas aged 21 to 41 were conscripted. If any conscript did not report at the appointed time, the government policemen would burn his house and confiscate all his property.

During the mobilisation in Pas, they forcibly collected and took away 100 units of wheat, 10 units of barley, 500 trusses of hay, 200 trees, 30 ox hides, 35 sheep and 25 to 30 liras.

Those men from Pas who had not been conscripted were taken to places at two days' distance to work for free on state roads.

In May 1915 Reshit and Mghtë, sons of Fazka Khalil from the village of Kharit in Khizan, Haji Telo, Fazka Sarmanand Shamé came to Pas at night and started plundering the village, saying: "There has been an order from Germany that no Armenian should stay alive. Give all your possessions to us since they

won't be yours anymore..." At the end of May, 200 Kurdish horsemen headed by Suleyman *agha* from Alashkert attacked Pas whose population had the previous evening sought refuge with the Kurd *agha* named Mrato Reshit at the Kurdish village of Kzhdonik. The attackers found four blind men in the village (M. Hovhannes, Kirakos Margarian, Hovhannes Sahakian, Avetis Minasian) and murdered them. Afterwards when they learned that the residents of Pas had found shelter in Kzhdonik, they attacked that village demanding from Reshit *agha* to turn in all the residents of Pas together with their cattle and sheep. But Reshit *agha* gave them only the cattle and put up an armed resistance killing two of them. At that time all the Kurds from Kzhdonik except Reshit *agha* left the village saying: "Reshit will have us all slaughtered because of the Armenians. Why should we have to protect them?"

Reshit turned out of the village all the Pas villagers (about 300 souls) who had no money. They fled to the Armenian village of Mochkonk which had not yet been massacred. However after eight days the Kurds from Kharit attacked Mochkonk, slaughtered some part of the population. The rest fled to Kharit where they were converted to Islam (about 300 people). Then the Kurds applied to the government to get their approval, but the authorities (in Bitlis) rejected their application and ordered the killing of the islamised Armenians. So the Kurds of Kharit headed by Reshit Fazka Khalilian and sheikh Fazka Sarman, took the Armenians from the village and slaughtered them all (300 people) in the forest named Khozerut.

Only 6 (six) men and 3 women survived from the village of Pas: another four women were forced to convert to Islam in Sgherd.

Note: There were only 8 Armenian villages in Tatik district:

	household	residents	survivors
1. Mochkonk	50	400	5 men 20 women
2. Klok	60	410	4 men 6 women
3. Gighr	40	320	5 men 3 women
4. Tsghkam	40	280	3 men 1 woman
5. Vanik	60		4 men 9 women
6. Sasik	35	280	3 men 5 women
7. Vostin	40		15 men 10 women
8. Pas	70	420	6 men 3 women

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 25 and rev., original, handwritten.

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS ASPATUR BRUTIAN AND SARGIS GALUSTIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHULTIK IN BITLIS DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

Baghesh, village of Khultik

[1916]

Massacre and the end – The village of Khultik which was two hours' distance to the south of the town had 500 households – Armenian Apostolic and Protestants, two-storied stone houses with a population of 3,500 – all civilised craftsmen. The number of craftsmen was as follows: 200 linen weavers, 150 potters, 150 coarse calico weavers, 50 shopkeepers, 50 blacksmiths, shoemakers and other craftsmen, 4 priests, 1 pastor, 3 teachers, 400 school¹¹⁸ pupils – 300 boys and 100 girls who could read in 4 languages – Armenian, Turkish, French and English. The wealth of the residents ranged from 100 to 20,000 gold coins; the wealth of the church amounted to 50,000 gold coins. This is how the Ottomans put an end to all this: in 1914 when the war started men aged 20 to 50 were conscripted from Khultik. Some of the villagers were taken to the army, some (potters and linen weavers) were left in their houses to weave linen and make pots and clay pipes for the barracks. In 1915 the Russian troops reached Van. On May 10 [the government] collected the weapons saying: "Turn in your weapons so that you don't do something wrong and get killed. The sultan has granted you a pardon, he won't reprimand you. He needs you and you are loyal to him." Thus by deception the Ottoman dogs finished everything in the town and its provinces before the Russians reached the town. They didn't tell anything to our village and Parkhand. Only when massacres happened in the town did the villagers take fright and fled from the village. Fifty of those who fled were murdered. They didn't tell anything to those who stayed in the village. There were 800 soldiers and Kurdish volunteers in the village but beyond the village there were hundreds and thousands of Kurds. After that we lived in permanent danger for 22 days. It finished on 1 July when a policeman came from the town with a letter at 8 o'clock in the morning. He gave the letter to the commander who read it in their language. It was from the governor, in three lines: finish everything and come soon. The commander immediately sent the Kurdish volunteers all over the village to gather everybody from the age of 10 to the oldest residents, checked the names by the list to make sure that no one was absent. The young ones were put into one house, those who were middle aged into another house and the old ones into another one. They had been told to bring ropes with them under the pretence that they were to carry pipes to the town. First they stripped the young and tied them up in groups of 50. The soldiers and

the Kurdish volunteers mounted their horses, took them half a *verst* out of the village and shot them. In this way they murdered everyone in groups of 50 in two hours. When the men were brought out, the commander mounted his horse and left the village telling the Kurds: "I give the village with all in it to you, by the grace of your sultan. Do as you wish." Thousands of [Kurds] attacked the women and children like beasts, plundering and murdering them, burning the houses, abducting beautiful women and children. Those who managed to escape and hide, later died of hunger. During the massacre two men and a woman drowned themselves, 2 women and a child threw themselves down the bridge. A woman was murdered, her 2-year-old boy stood over her calling her name; she didn't answer. The boy starting crying and called the Kurds: "Sir, sir, my mom is asleep here, she won't wake up." The Kurds came closer, saw that the boy's mother was killed and left without saying anything. The last person who was saved – Smbat Martyrosian - recounted that he was taken by the Kurds to their village. "After some time we returned to the village and entered a house. There was a bed. I raised the edge of the blanket. There was a dead decaying woman, a little boy lay beside her and a little girl beside him. I called her, she didn't answer. I called again saying: 'I am Armenian, don't be afraid.' The girl opened her eyes, looked at me and got up. But the boy was dying. We left them and went away with the Kurdish *agha*. We went to the water-mill to take the mill instruments. Four children – 2 girls and 2 boys - ran and hid there. We looked at the water-mill stones and saw that they were so much licked over that they looked as if they had been washed with water. When the Kurdish *agha* saw that, he started weeping. He took the 4 children with him and took care of them for a month. Then they died."

Sargis Galustian. There were 24 of us, who fled to the mountains. We took shelter in a cave for 5 days. The Ottoman troops were not far from the cave. One night we went to the fields, gathered some wheat-ears and brought to the cave to eat. The soldiers found out we were in the cave because there was grass all around the cave¹¹⁹. They came, first fired into the cave and then said: "Come out, we have nothing against you." One of us was killed by the door, 23 men went out, 6 of us stayed in. They asked if anyone else stayed in the cave. A boy said that his father and another man. So the father too went out. One person was left. There were 5 of us, we couldn't decide who would go out; otherwise we would all be killed. One of us said: "Give me a gold coin, and I'll go out." We gave the gold coin. He went out and swore that no one was left in the cave. They slaughtered them all. At night we fled and reached the Russian army.

Thirty people escaped from our village. Four of them died. Some of them joined the volunteers and four were killed. In the spring of 1916, when Baghesh was taken, another 5 women and 10 orphans escaped. Some people say there are still about 100 women and children in Kurdish villages.

Aspatur Brutian from the village of Khultik, aged 40. None of his 3 boys is with him. He says that they were all taken captive, including his wife Haikanush, his sons Garnik, aged 10, Eduard, aged 5 and Shmavon, aged 3.

Aspatur Brutian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 490, pp. 23-24 rev., original, handwritten.

No 70

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR BAGRAT PETROSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KARB OF GYOZALDARA IN
BITLIS DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 12, 1916

Igdir

According to the narrative of witness Bagrat Petrosian (aged 42) from the village of Karb of Gyoaldara in Bitlis:

Karb had 60 households and a population of 1,500, a church called St Simon¹²⁰, a school, two water-mills and an oil mill. The church had 15 manuscript Gospels, 12 silver crosses and four silver-bound Gospels. The annual revenue of the village consisted of 64,000 units of wheat and barley and 60,000 *bards* of hay. The village had 1,580 sheep and 1,800 farm animals.

At the end of July 1914 men aged 18 to 30 were conscripted from Karb. All the conscripts had to take a 10-day food supply with them. One-seventh of the food supply in their houses was confiscated. If any conscript failed to report, his house was burnt together with all its contents, and the sheep and cattle were confiscated. For example, Ghazar Hokheyan wasn't at home at the appointed time, and his house was burnt with all its contents confiscated. They did the same to Manuk Hovsepian, Hovsep Gasparian, Mikayel Srapionian, Vahan Baghdasarian, Minas Soghomonian and others.

Vardan Hakobian (from Karb) and Nazar Simonian who had deserted from the Turkish army, recounted the following:

"The Turkish officers made us work hard, left us hungry for days and posted us guards for whole nights. Even the most common soldiers were cursing our religion and all our sacred things. In February 1915 they disarmed all Armenian soldiers, gathered them in a Yerznka gorge called Tsakkar, made us dig in different places and after we had dug enough, they made us get into the pits we had dug and shot us in the graves dug by our own hands. After we saw our friends murdered like this, we managed to flee at night."

In the beginning of May 1915, about 10,000 Kurds, Turks and Turkish regular troops headed by Ali *effendi* from Bitlis, Nasl *effendi*, Davaz *agha* from Kotom, Fazka Hasan from Shikrn, Kulin from Mzr attacked Karb and 10 villages of the Gyoaldara region. Seventy armed men of Karb put up a strong resistance for four days in a gorge called Joj, but when they ran out of cartridges and their strength gave out due to hunger, they broke the encirclement but only six of them escaped. They were headed by Vahan Baghdasarian, Levon Aspaturian, Soghomon Shahbazian and Poghos Mkhitarian who are alive now. All the population of Karb as well as that of Gyoaldara were taken to Biltis where they were all murdered together with the local population.

Only six men survived from Karb. Another 54 men from Karb had earlier left to go abroad and their whereabouts are not known.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 20 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 71

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MKHITAR MIRZOYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF TOP IN BITLIS DISTRICT OF
BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 26, 1916

Etchmiadzin

Top had 35 households and a population of 300, a church named St Sargis, a school, a water-mill, an oil mill, 1,000 sheep and 400 farm animals. The total annual revenue of the village amounted to one thousand six hundred (1,600) units of wheat, 2,000 *bards* of hay. The church had two ancient manuscript Gospels and a manuscript medical book, two silver chalices, a golden cross, etc.

The village is currently burnt.

At the end of July 1914 all men of Top aged 18 to 45 were conscripted. If any conscript did not report, the police would burn his house with all its contents, confiscate his property and rape his wife. For example, Shevket *effendi*, a *mudur* from Van, ordered the burning of Aslan Amirkhanian's and Hovhannes Sahakian's houses, confiscated their property and left their wives at the mercy of policemen.

During mobilisation the authorities took from Top 40 units of wheat, 6 litres of ghee, 15 sheep, 5 oxen, 70 pairs of socks, 15 Ottoman liras as *iyane*.

On 17-18 May 1915, 1,000 Kurds headed by Farkho and Sleman *aghas* from Alashkert attacked Top. Since the men of the village had earlier withdrawn to the mountains, they could only find 10 men in the village whom they tied up to each other and murdered. After staying hungry for 10 days, the twenty-eight men who had found shelter in the mountain went down to the Armenian village of Khart. Nasl *effendi* from Bitlis was there at that time and he sent 18 of them to Bitlis. The other 10 together with a dozen of villagers from Khart stayed in the village for 40 days when one of Nasl *effendi*'s servants – Hacho, informed them that they would be slaughtered the next morning on the order from the government. After receiving this information they fled with 5 of them being killed during the flight.

All the women and children from village were displaced and, whipped by policemen, were driven to Sgherd, where they were all thrown into the river from a bridge. Ten women and children were captured and taken to the village of Alberd where they were made to convert to Islam.

A woman from Top named Salué has seen with her eyes how the village headman Kirakos and the priest *Ter* Movses were slaughtered on the mountain (the mountain next to the same village). First they were shot and then their heads were crushed with daggers and rocks. The village headman's body was cut into pieces.

Only 10 people survived from Top (six men)⁴³.

Three of the survivors have returned to our homeland.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f.227, reg.1, rec. 423, p. 29 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 72

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TOROS MRTOYAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ANDII TAGH OF KHUT-BRNASHEN IN MOTKAN DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

September-October, 1916
Alexandropol province

Khut region – Andii Tagh

They had 100 head of cattle and 1,000 sheep, 100 *kilés* of wheat (1 *kilé* is 8 units), 20 *kilés* of large kernel millet, 30 *kilés* of millet and a church named after

⁴³ Another 20 people (from the same village) had earlier left for Russia.

St Stephen. They had no school. When they left, the village was intact (April 1916). Nobody has returned and they have no news about the current condition of the village.

The mobilisation was carried out here in the beginning of January 1915. In all, 15 men were conscripted from the village. At first they took 4 people one of whom died of illness in the army. The other three fled but froze to death on the roads. The second time 7 people were conscripted 3 of whom died of cholera in the army. The other 4 deserted and returned to the village but were the first to be slaughtered during the massacre. The third time they conscripted 3 men one of whom – Magsut Khazhoyan - was killed by Turkish soldiers when he was trying to flee. The other two were missing. The last one – Apro Serobian - was taken to the army and there has been no news from him. After the conscription of men aged 20 to 25, it was the turn of older men, but the (local) Kurds defended the Armenians and wouldn't let them to be taken away. When the authorities came to take away the Armenians, the Armenians went up the mountains and the neighbouring Kurds came and stayed in their houses to prevent any plundering. They would tell the officials that the Armenians had left but they didn't know where to. They would give something to the official, some bribe, and see him off. Once they gave 6 Ottoman gold coins - the second time 30 head of cattle and sheep. The last time they gave 12 *kilés* (100 units) of wheat. They would then take from the Armenians what they had given to the Turks.

The Kurds were defending the Armenians and sending them to plough and sow their land free of charge.

The situation in the entire region of Khuti was the same as in this village. In this period the government didn't take the Armenians for labour service. There were no forcible confiscations or "donations".

There had been fears of massacres before too, but when the local Kurds came and told about the massacres at Bulanekh and other regions, the Armenians went through terrible times, waiting for the imminent disaster day after day. A month before the massacre, the government placed guards, called *kordo*¹²¹, in the villages. According to the government, they were to protect the Armenians from oppressors and plunderers.

On the Sunday of the Feast of the Transfiguration Mush and the Plain of Mush were massacred, followed by this village (Andii Tagh) the day after... Before everyone else they murdered the 4 deserters mentioned above. Misak Khachikian was shot by the son of Asef Kurchan when he came out into the street completely unaware. Tomas Makarian was murdered by Bekir Alikhanoghli. Avo Asaturian was murdered by Chempalo Khaléoghli and Sargis Manukian by Chempalo Chelepioghli. The general massacre started after that. The local Kurds would lead the *Hamidiye* regiments and instruct them who to murder, in the street or elsewhere. In the houses they murdered

each and all – women or men, old or young. Those villagers who managed to escape fled to the mountains. When night fell, Karapet Khachikian went down to the village to know the results of the massacre and get some food. He entered the house of the village priest and counted 16 corpses – all with their throats cut. The Kurds chased the Armenians also in the mountains and murdered many of them. To get the others out of their hideaways, they falsely announced a pardon from the sultan and caught many women and children. They slaughtered the men and handed the women and children over to the government; they were taken out to Datvan – a day's distance away - and left there unharmed. And also four beautiful young women were taken away from the village. Those who stayed in the village survived the winter in the most frightful conditions, feeding on roots dug up from the ground and animal carcasses. The last 100 people scattered around and parted from each other. Many found shelter with the Kurds they knew until the end of March 1916 when the Russians entered Mush, and the Armenians who had been scattered here and there were reunited and found each other in Mush. One hundred people out of the village population of 400 came to Mush - the rest had been massacred in the village or in the mountains or died of illnesses. They stayed for 3 to 4 months in Mush where 20 more people died. From Mush they would go to the villages, to find and eat wheat which had been hidden away. In July 1916, when the Russians retreated, the survivors emigrated through Alichan, Charphor, Maghalesor, Knusberd, Chaurmen, Gharabudagh, Kharkharut and reached Karakilisa in the Basen district. One man, one woman and one child died on the road. They experienced many hardships on their way to Karakilisa – hunger, thirst etc., but they reached a feeding station there and ate their fill. The remnants of the village now live in the village of Artik – about 60 people - in Shirvanchukh¹²² and Khnus. They had brought no possessions with them. All the movable and immovable property was left in the village: the Kurds seized everything. Nobody has been to the village and nothing is known about its current condition.

Recounted by Toros Mrtoyan from the village of Andii Tagh.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, pp. 22 rev.-24, original, handwritten.

No 73
TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KIRAKOS MKHOYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF MTSU IN MOTKAN DISTRICT OF
BITLIS PROVINCE

September 3, 1916
Nors

Recounted by Kirakos Mkhoyan from the village of Mtsu of Bitlis, who now lives in the village of Nors in Nakhijevan

The massacre in our village started on 15 May. At the end of April and the beginning of May, Haji Rashid and Haji Murad started rustling the sheep and cattle from our and other villages. On 15 May Haji Rashid and Haji Musa and Sheket (Haji Faris) came to massacre our village. The *agha* of our village, Haji Farho, to whom we paid duties every year (6 to 10 roubles a year, also ghee, sheep etc. depending on the income) wanted to save us from the massacre, but was not able to resist the above Kurdish *aghas* who had more than 4,000 soldiers. On the night of 15 May our village was besieged. Some of the Kurds informed their friends to flee and escape the massacre. For example, a Kurd named Kunjo told us to leave as soon as possible before they broke into the village... They slaughtered 50 people who couldn't flee undetected. They murdered the wealthy men of the village, namely Manuk Kutikian, Petros Mirzikian, Shgho Mirzikian. The massacre was committed with guns and cold arms. They tightly tied the victims' arms, made them stand in line near the water, shot them and threw them into the water carefully checking not to leave anyone alive.

Women were murdered with daggers; the beautiful ones were abducted. The children suffered the same fate.

We lived in our *agha* Haji Farho's house until Bitlis was taken. At night we fled and came to Bitlis. On our way the Kurds fired at us: a woman and her child were shot to death. We, three men, reached Bitlis unharmed and on 28 May we crossed over to Caucasus.

Recounted by an illiterate young man named Kirakos from the village of Mtsu.

Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 2, original, handwritten.

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MKHITAR HAZROYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF SHEN AND NEIGHBOURING
VILLAGES OF KHUT-BRNASHEN CLUSTER OF VILLAGES IN
MOTKAN DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

September 15, 1916
Khanvali

Khut region (Bitlisvilayet), village of Shen

There are about 20 mixed Kurdish-Armenian villages in this region:

1. Shnist	47 households	40 Armenian	7 Kurdish
2. NerkinShnist	23 households	3 Armenian	20 Kurdish
3. Akrak	20 households	20 Armenian	--
4. Taghavank	44 households	40 Armenian	4 Kurdish
5. Shen	40 households	40 Armenian	--
6. Pichonk	15 households	15 Armenian	--
7. Taghudzor	30 households	15 Armenian	15 Kurdish
8. Gilonk	13 households	10 Armenian	3 Kurdish
9. AndiTagh	35 households	20 Armenian	15 Kurdish
10. Tashtadem	25 households	15 Armenian	10 Kurdish
11. Hoshut	32 households	30 Armenian	2 Kurdsih
12. Gtsank	20 households	10 Armenian	10 Kurdish
13. Lontrdzor	10 households	10 Armenian	--
14. Enkuzek	15 households	5 Armenian	10 Kurdish
15. Aruk	10 households	5 Armenian	5 Kurdish
16. Gost	13 households	3 Armenian	10 Kurdish
17. Plokan	25 households	15 Armenian	10 Kurdish
18. Shahverdi	5 households	5 Armenian	--
19. Hantikdzor	16 households	6 Armenian	10 Kurdish
20. Zrava	22 households	2 Armenian	20 Kurdish
Total	460 households	309 Armenian	151 Kurdish

Village of Shen

The villagers were poor, they were the serfs of Safar, the Kurdish bek of the village. The land wasn't theirs. They had 200 head of cattle, not a single sheep, 100 *kilés* (1 *kilé* is 5 pots) of millet, 60 *kilés* of wheat and 20 *kilés* of *kkil*.

Together with 3-4 neighbouring villages they had a church, St Stephen, which was a small and poor church. They had no school. Nobody has been to the village and there has been no news from there.

Influential Kurdish beks Safar and Chezo defended the Armenians and did not allow the government to conscript them or plunder their property or oppress them in other ways. When the policemen would come, the villagers would flee to the mountains and the Kurds would protect the village and wouldn't allow it to be plundered and robbed. The government could not subdue it, conscript men, force confiscations or take away goods as donations.

On the Feast of the Transfiguration in 1915 when the massacres had started in the Plain of Mush, Khnus and Bulanekh, the people were waiting here to be massacred. But the influential Safar bek came to the Armenians and calmed them down, saying that he would not harm them and would not allow others to touch a hair on their head. In that period many villages escaped massacres due to local, influential and humanitarian Kurdish notables who defended the Armenians at any price until 26 March 1916, when hearing that the Russians were approaching, the Kurds fled inland from the Mush region, leaving all their cattle and property.

While the Kurds were protecting the Armenians, they took all their food supplies to their houses saying: "As long as you are alive, come and eat with us and if we can't protect you and they massacre you, in that case let your supplies stay with us instead of other Kurds or government officials." They left only the livestock.

Four people were killed from this village: Sero Hovhannisian and his brother Abré, Karo Karapetian and his brother Avdal. A young Kurd, son of Avchalil Rupadol, took them out of the village saying there was some work to do and shot them with a pistol.

In this region just as there were Kurds who protected the Armenians, there were also villages that were massacred in their hands or on their guidance and tips in the hands of police and soldiers. In other villages the Kurds handed over only the village notables to the police or the mob who murdered them.

In the beginning of April 1916, after the Kurds fled, Armenian volunteers came who helped the people to emigrate to Mush. They stayed there for 2 months living in the fields and on black large kernel millet buried in pits which they dug out and used to make bread. When it became impossible to find food in the town, they went to the villages of Drmet and Avzaghybur in the Plain of Mush collecting and eating ripe wheat-ears. They stayed there for about 2 months. In August of 1916 the Russians retreated and the people were obliged to flee. They travelled for 3 days, day and night, and reached Khnus and Aros. At that time 6 of the villagers – Hasrat Mukhsian and his wife Feto, Argo

Muradian and his 2 children aged 4 and 1, and Mariam Muradian stayed in the village to bury the reaped wheat but the Turks came and murdered them.

During emigration the villagers took with them 30 head of cattle. They left one part of the the rest in the village and fled, and the Cossacks and Russian soldiers seized and ate the other part in Mush.

During these 3 days of flight to Khnus they suffered unheard privations: they had absolutely no food, they were moving non-stop – hungry and thirsty and sleepless at nights; they were afraid that the Turks would go for them so they didn't sleep. Fifteen people died of hunger, cold, illnesses caused by lack of sleep and fatigue. On the way from Khnus to Kaghzvan they were met by representatives of Armenian organisations who fed and took care of them until they reached the Russian land. Another 15 people died on the way from Khnus to Kaghzvan and before the people were dispersed in the villages. Some people went blind because of dust and sweat, including Mkhitar Hazroyan (aka Aghrut).

After staying in Kaghzvan for 2 days they went up the bank of the Yeraskh¹²³ river, then sailed up the stream on a boat and spent the night in a railway station (he doesn't remember the name) from where they scattered around the villages.

In all 40 people from this village were killed or died of illnesses. Now they live in the villages of Khanvali (one household) and Jajur.

Nobody has returned to the village and nothing is known about its current condition.

Recounted by Mkhitar Hazroyan from the village of Shen.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, pp. 20 rev.-22 rev., original, handwritten.

No 75

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR AVET GASPARIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KASHAKH IN MOTKAN DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE

August 22, 1916
Ilan - Chalan

Information given by Avetis Gasparian from the village of Kashakh in Motkan district of Bitlis about their village.

The former condition of the village: – Before the European war the village of Kashakh had 30 [households] of Armenian population. The village had 1,500 sheep, 1,000 farm animals, 50 ploughs, 2 water-mills, 100 wooden ploughs. On

average, each household consisted of 35 people. The village church of St James was an ancient one. The priest, *Ter Sargis*, was murdered during the recent events. The church property (vessels, etc.) was worth 200 Ottoman gold coins. The children of the village attended the school at the village of Kndzu which was 2 hours away. Annually Kashakh produced 5,000 *halvars* of wheat and barley and 5,000 cartloads of hay.

There were about 10,000 willows and poplars in and around the village.

The current condition of the village: – The village is currently completely ruined and desolate; the houses are destroyed and burnt.

There are 366 springs in Kashakh.

Declaration of war and mobilisation: – Immediately after the declaration of war, Turkey carried out a mobilisation. Suddenly one night policemen besieged the village and capturing 76 men took them to Datvan, then to Bitlis and from there to Erzurum. Out of these 76 men only 19 escaped; the rest are missing until now and nothing is known about them.

The villagers were doing forced labour (*olam*) with their carts and animals: going to Erzurum, working on the roads, etc.

Many of those doing forced labour were missing or died unable to endure the hard work.

The government took from the village, as war tax, 100 sheep, 20 farm animals, 50 *halvars* of wheat, barley, 20 *poods* of ghee, 200 cartloads of hay, 100 cartloads of straw, 1,200 pairs of *trekhs*, gloves, socks, 2,000 chickens, 200 pairs of spoons.

Massacre of the village: – In the middle of May 1915, when Vaspurakan was occupied by the Russian army, the Turkish policemen and the Kurds (500 people) headed by Haji Rashid, Farho and Khlo-Jnto *aghas*, besieged the village at night. In the morning they gathered all the men of the village – 250 people - and said to them: “The Russians are approaching. We suspect that the Armenians might rebel, so we'll take you somewhere to keep.” They divided the men into three groups, took them to the Ormzu gorge (near the village), Kanach Aghbyur and the village of Sesar and slaughtered them all. Only 10 men escaped from the whole village: Avag Minasian, Astur Poghosian, Avetis Gasparian, Elo Shahenian, Grigor Markosian, Luso Vardanian, Movses Minasian, Martiros Haroyan, Davo Haroyan, Hové Markosian.

After the men were taken away and slaughtered, the Kurds and the Turks broke into the village raping the beautiful women, girls and boys, rustling the sheep and the cattle and plundering the movable property.

The horror-stricken women and children went to Bitlis and settled down in front of the governor's residence. He looked out of the window and yelled in rage: “Gather these dogs and deport them to the interior provinces!” The policemen gathered the women and children and sent them to the interior

villages. On their way they were subjected to different acts of violence. They were taken to interior provinces (near Sgherd) where some of them were slaughtered, thrown into the water and the beautiful ones were converted to Islam. Only 10 men and 5 women escaped from the village with a population of 1,500. They now live in the Etchmiadzin region. These fifteen people escaped as follows: the Kurds took them to their village where they were converted to Islam and saved. When the Russians approached Bitlis, the Kurds doubted the conversion of the Armenians and wanted to slaughter them. But the Armenians managed to flee and join the Russians, and when in July of 1915 the Russians retreated, they came with them to the Caucasus.

What is written is in line with what I recounted so I authorise Haik Achemian to sign for me.

Haik Achemian (from Van)

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 444, pp. 5-7 rev., original, handwritten.

No 76

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR AVETIS TER-NERSESIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KHARKHOTS IN KHIZAN
DISTRICT OF BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 21, 1916
Gharakilisa

Information given by Avetis Ter Nersesian (aged 55), village headman of the village of Kharkhots in Khizan district of Baghesh

The former condition: – The Khizan district had 3 clusters of villages (*nahies*) with three *mudurs*, and the *kaymakam* resided in Karasu. The clusters of villages were as follows: 1. Shnidzor-Proshents with 16 Armenian villages; 2. Sparkert-Mamrtank with mixed Kurdish and Armenian villages, mostly Armenian; the *mudur* residing in Nerkin Hivruk; 3. Khorors with a Kurdish majority. The village of Kharkhots was in the Shnidzor cluster of villages and was hardly half an hour's distance from Proshents. It had 42 exclusively Armenian households.

The village had 1,500 head of sheep, more than 500 head of cattle (no buffaloes), 2 horses, 10 mules and 20 donkeys, each household had an orchard, a garden without fruit trees and vineyards, 4 water-mills, 2 oil mills, 30 ploughs,

40 wooden ploughs, 35 carts. The village annually produced 1,600 *halvars* of cereals (200 *halvars* of *ushr*¹²⁴ was paid), 2,000 *bards* of hay. There were 500 beehives in the village.

Some villagers had earlier emigrated to Varna (2 people), Poti (2 men) and Constantinople (1 man).

The village had a church named after St Sahak the Light Yielder. It was a vaulted, stone-built triple-vault church with three apses containing the relics of St Sahak, St George and St Christopher. It had two priests (*Ter* Hovhannes who is alive and *Ter* Hovsep who died in Ashtarak). On the outskirts of the village there was also a chapel called Tuxh-Manuk. The church had numerous ancient manuscript Gospels, some of them on parchment, a golden chalice, crosses, liturgical vestments and many vessels that were buried in the church, under the slabs.

A school with two rooms, 50 mixed pupils and two teachers.

The village abbot (archimandrite Petros, murdered in the monastery) resided in the Holy Cross monastery of Khizan appointed by the Catholicos of Aghtamar⁴⁴.

The current condition – Kharkhots is currently inhabited by the Kurds only. There are no Armenians there; their return is forbidden. The church altar and the ambries are destroyed. All the church vessels, manuscripts, antiquities, etc. were plundered or ruined.

Mobilisation and the condition of the Armenian population after that: – From 1908¹²⁵ until the Turkish-Russian war the village had provided about 70 soldiers of whom only 3 fled to the village and were saved. Another 20 people were taken in April to the Banoti gorge (on the road to Baghesh) and slaughtered by the Turkish troops. Only Khalo Sosoyan, badly wounded, escaped, made it to the village and told about that heinous crime. However, during the retreat from the village, when he realised he couldn't walk (there was an infestation of maggots in his wounds), he committed suicide cutting his throat with a sickle. Besides the regular conscripts, the men of the village were being used to carry loads for the army. They worked along the Baghesh-Mush-Bayazet line. About 25 of them were murdered in Baghesh, another two were beaten to death with sticks in winter (Mkho Manukian and Vardan Mirzoyan: they were ill and couldn't carry loads on their backs so they were murdered for that reason).

War taxes: - The villages paid as war taxes 20 sheep, 3 carts with 6 oxen, 200 *halvars* of barley and wheat, 40 *poods* of ghee, more than 1,000 eggs, 110 pairs of socks, 100 pairs of gloves, 20 pairs of *trekhs*, 20 *poods* of

⁴⁴ Catholicate of Aghtamar (1113-1895) with part of Vaspurakan under its jurisdiction, was independent of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Khachatur II Shiroyan was its last catholicos.

honey, 60 hessian sacks, 70 ropes, 40 felt cloths etc... Since the village was on the Baghesh-Karkaru road, the villagers had been feeding the passing Turkish and Kurdish troops for weeks.

Massacre and emigration: - Until the fighting started in Van in April, the Kurds from the neighbouring village of Khizan treated us as usual. But after the Van fighting started, the Kurds would frequently threaten Armenians with massacres. Everything grew much worse especially after the fighting involving revolutionaries in Karkar. Persecuted by the Turkish soldiers, the local revolutionaries of Karkar went to Khizan and found shelter in the houses of the Armenians. The government started searching Armenian villages, severely beating and torturing the Armenians demanding to turn in the revolutionaries and weapons. The two priests¹²⁶ of Kharkhots were tied up to each other and severely beaten. About 20 weapons were confiscated from the village as a result of that search. The villagers were obliged to hide all their armed men in the mountains (Mount Balazhu) during the day and bring them down to the village at night. However during the subsequent days there were persistent rumours of a massacre. As a result all revolutionaries no longer came out of the villages. All kinds of relations between the Kurds and the Armenians were broken up. In the beginning of May, after Van was taken, suddenly the Kurds and the Turkish troops surrounded mountains around the village and rustled all the sheep and cattle. There were about 60 armed men in Kharkhots on that day headed by Mnatsakan and Mikayel from the village of Pakhor of Khizan. They moved the whole village to Sparkert and they themselves blocked the enemy's way (in front of Balazhu) and started fighting. The people safely made it to Sparkert. Armenian volunteer regiments were already there (Dro's regiment). Lato from Vozm and Chatoyan Mihran were there too. From the village only 4 shepherds were killed who were with the sheep. The fighting between the Armenians and the Turks and Kurds lasted for 3 days. The volunteers went to help our fighters. After staying in Sparkert for 3 days the villagers of Kharkhots emigrated with the volunteers to Moks, where they stayed for 2 days, then moved on to Vostan where they stayed until the July retreat from Van. The enemy chased the retreating volunteers and the people up to Moks.

During the Van retreat villagers of Kharkhots were a little late and when they reached the village of Tiramer, the gunshots were heard from Berkri. They had hardly started crossing the bridge (it was at night) when the Kurds took over the bridge. Those who lagged behind were murdered or drowned in the Bentimahu. More than 20 villagers of Kharkhots were killed or drowned there. The others made it to Igdir-Etchmiadzin and were then taken

to different places (New Bayazet region). About 200 people died during the emigration. The survivors hardly make a third of the village population.

What is written is in line with what I recounted.

Avetis Ter Nersesian, village headman of Kharkhots

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 445, pp. 6 -10 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 77

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GEVORG AMIRKHAH ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF SHEN IN KHIZAN DISTRICT OF
BITLIS PROVINCE**

August 12, 1916

Igdir

According to Gevorg Amirkhan (aged 31) from the village of Shen in Khizan: Shen had 60 households and a population of 447, a church¹²⁷, a school, a water-mill, 1,400 sheep and 400 farm animals. The total annual revenue of the village was 400 units of wheat, 100 liras worth of fruit, etc. The church had two manuscript Gospels called Tsaghik Gospel and Karmir [Red] Gospel.

Men aged 20 to 50 were conscripted from Shen in the beginning of July 1914.

At the end of May, 1,200 Kurds (the leader's name is not known) attacked Shen and ruthlessly slaughtered its population. The mob was armed by government-issue Mauser rifles. Many of the women were branded with red-hot irons to turn in their hidden money, others were murdered with rocks. In all, 10 people from Shen were taken prisoner by the Kurds from Khizan and four women were converted to Islam. In all, 70 people were saved.

The villagers of Shen emigrated to the Caucasus on 18 July 1915.

Currently they live in Panik and some others in Salmast in dire need.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 21, original, handwritten.

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TOROS HOVHANNISIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AND SELF-DEFENCE AT THE VILLAGES OF
SPARKERT CLUSTER OF VILLAGES IN KHIZAN DISTRICT OF
BITLIS PROVINCE**

[1916]
Bitlis, Sparkert

Former condition: - All Sparkert consists of 47 villages, 27 of which were Armenian with some Kurdish population.

Villages with large Armenian population were: - Sev Kar – 18 households, Chazhvan – 50 households, Upper Kotents – 40 households, Lower Kotents – 20 households, Hoghant – 20 households, Hivruk – 50 households, Nerpan – 15 households, Lvar – 15 households, Pazents – 80 households; Vank – 4 households (Holy Mother-of-God monastery of Pazenits), Tagh – 15 households, Kighis – 20 households, Tandzis – 15 households, Dasht – 20 households, Mat – 18 households, Matatsmen – 12 households, Dalars – 25 households, Dusu – 40 households, Harkin – 12 households, Husp – 30 households, Khoyt – 20 households, Patranants – 15 households, Lower Hivruk – 35 households, Suzants – 15 households, Harnjik – 25 households, Sori – 40 households, Past – 60 households (everybody was slaughtered, only 2 boys escaped) Berdak – 18 households.

Many of the above villages were very close to each other. They had churches and schools. The village of Past was surrounded with Kurdish villages and because of that it was completely slaughtered. The above villages are now in ruins.

Declaration of war:

Mobilisation: - When the mobilisation started, the governing *mudur* of the region summoned the village headmen and demanded a certain number of conscripts. The headmen objected saying they couldn't provide the required number because most of the conscripts were absent from the villages due to emigration and other reasons. Upon hearing this reply, the *mudur* ordered to tie up the headmen, give them a good beating and torture them. Then he made the headmen gather all the men aged 20 to 45. The headmen had to obey the order and gathered quite a big number of men and delivered them to the *mudur* who sent them to Baghesh and from there to Van. After reaching Van some of the men managed to flee but were arrested again. More than 25 men were conscripted during the first mobilisation. None of them returned. They were all sent to Erzurum and exterminated.

Confiscations: - A great quantity of socks, mittens, sheep, mules, ghee, cheese, eggs was taken from us as war taxes and donations without any payment.

During the requisition our villages underwent every kind of cruelties and licentiousness. They would take anything that caught their eyes. Besides requisitions and outright plunder, the policemen would for trivial reasons stay in our villages for days demanding special treatment, hearty meals and feasts. Our appeals to the government were left unanswered. And if they reacted we would be found guilty and be punished.

Massacre and deportation: - The unrest started in February 1915. A month before that, the government secretly armed the neighbouring Muslims. In January about 500 "kochar" soldiers headed by Malasharifi Majar (sheikh Sait Ali's cousin) were brought and placed in Verin Hivruk, Pazentsi and other villages. Then they started committing unspeakable licentiousness in the villages: slaughtering dozens and hundreds of sheep, beating and torturing people, plundering and burning houses for the authorities to see.

Lato from Vozm, the Dashnak activist in our region, wrote a letter to the *mudur* about the lawless acts committed and demanded an end to the licentiousness. The *mudur* ordered Majar to leave the village with his people, but Majar didn't obey. However on the second order from the *mudur*, Majar was obliged to withdraw from the villages.

It was in this period that they again started harshly demanding conscripts from us. On Lato's order several old men were sent to Baghesh as *amele* labourers. Thus the winter passed and the Van fighting occurred.

The Kurds started making hasty arrangements. Our leader Lato realised their intentions and started preparing the Armenians. Our entire region had 120 fighters armed with Martini¹²⁸ and Mosin rifles.

But we were unaware of the fighting in Van; we didn't know who fought there, what was the situation in Van and during all those 30 days we were in a state of anticipation. The Kurds were in the same state with the difference that they were getting daily news from Van and didn't do anything waiting for the outcome.

On Lato's order our soldiers took up positions beyond the village controlling the places from where attacks could be launched. But one day, due to severe frost, it was impossible to stay out of the village in the mountains. At the request of the soldiers Lato allowed them to spend that night in the villages.

However, exactly that morning the Kurds and the Turks retreating from Van attacked the village, but our soldiers quickly managed to block the route and did not allow the mob reach their goal.

After 2 hours of non-stop shooting the Turks were obliged to retreat. At that moment the governing *mudur* of the region came up, negotiated with Lato and

suggested stopping the fight. Lato agreed since they had a prior agreement with the *mudur* not to kill each other.

At that time the volunteers had already reached Moks, but we were unaware of it. Lato left 60 of the soldiers in Sparkert, took the others and headed to Moks. There were some volunteers there already. There in the village of Harnjik a large number of Kurds had taken up positions and were showing strong resistance to the volunteers. Lato joined the volunteers and in one night they managed to break the resistance of the Kurds and dislodge them.

Dro moved on to Sparkert together with Sergeant Gazar. He summoned all Kurdish leaders and demanded that they turn in their weapons but they didn't agree. While Dro was getting ready to apply harsh methods the retreat occurred.

At night the volunteers entered the villages and made the people leave their homes and emigrate to Vostan, next to Vanik. After staying there for about three weeks, at which time the emigration from Van also occurred, we moved on to the Caucasus through the Berkri pass.

Near Berkri we were attacked and incurred considerable losses. Some were killed, many others especially women and children fell into the river and drowned. We reached the Caucasus nearly naked - we lost all our property, even the sheep and the livestock.

Many people died in Etchmiadzin of hunger, illnesses and privations.

Self-defence: - The Dashnak activist Lato from Vozm headed the self-defence. From the very beginning he started negotiating with the government trying to keep the peace.

Though there was not much fighting in Sparkert, realising the imminent danger we were in an armed state from January to May. All 120 soldiers were from our village.

The Armenian village of Past with 60 households, surrounded with Kurdish villages, was the only one in Sparkert that was massacred. The Kurds took the Armenians of the village captive and moved them to Lower Hivruk.

When Dro learned about Past, he captured 30 people together with a *bek* named Apterahman from the Kurdish villages of Hand and Nors and took them to Moks. He informed the Kurds that if they released the villagers of Past, he would release the imprisoned Kurds. Just at that time two young men from Past came and said that all their fellow villagers had been slaughtered by the Kurds in the following way: they took all the population of the village - women, children and men - to the bank of the river, beheaded them and threw them into the river. The narrators threw themselves into the river and escaped.

Dro was angered with this news. He ordered the captured Kurds to be taken out, stabbed with bayonets and thrown into the river.

Soon after Lato, who did so much for the residents of Sparkert, perished.

When our people emigrated and reached Vostan he decided to return to Moks but our soldiers didn't follow him. He went to a Kurdish village named Petar (300 households) accompanied by a sergeant named Trchun. Reaching the village he positioned Trchun and his soldiers in front of the village and taking several fighters attacked the village. The Kurds came out of the village, gained the rear of Trchun's positions and made him retreat. With Trchun's retreat Lato was encircled in the village with a few fighters. They fought to their last breath and were killed.

Narrator - Toros Hovhannesian from Sparkert

Recorded by Suren Meloyan

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 461, pp. 1-5 rev., original, handwritten.

SGHERD PROVINCE

No 79

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MARTIROS HOVSEP KEROYANTS ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF DEH IN ERUN DISTRICT OF SGHERD PROVINCE

August 7, 1915

Panik

According to the narrative account of Martiros Hovsepian Keroyants (aged 50-60) from the village of Dehin Barvar province¹²⁹:

Deh had 300 (three hundred) households and 2,500 residents, two churches (St John¹³⁰ and Holy Mother-of-God¹³¹). There was a manuscript book written in red letters in St John's church (it is not known what book it was).

The village had a school, 5 (five) water-mills, 7,600 (seventy-six hundred) sheep, 1,500 farm animals, 250 mules and horses, etc.

The mobilisation was announced (in Deh) at the end of July 1915. All men aged 18 to 50 were conscripted (in all, 700 people). If a conscript fled, the men from his household were arrested instead.

Three months before the massacre in Deh, Mahmet *gha* from Sharnakh, son of Ali *gha* from Aroh, Jankir *gha* (from Gharham), Ibrahim *gha* from Eroo had told Martiros Hovespian Jafariants, Kharip Kazarian and Murad *effendi* (he was assistant to the *kaymakam*) from Deh: "We are going to massacre you."

When the Turks retreated from Van, on the orders of Jevtet (governor of Van) the mob attacked Deh (on 15-16 May) and ruthlessly slaughtered all the people – from children to old people without distinction of sex. During the massacre 100 (hundred) people were forcibly converted to Islam and placed in the Kurdish village of Aroh. Only twenty men managed to escape and reach Van. Currently five of the survivors are in the Caucasus (their whereabouts is unknown). The other 15 have become volunteer fighters⁴⁵.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 12, original, handwritten.

No 80

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS VARDAN GALOYAN AND MIRZO BHARIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF VOZM IN BARVAR DISTRICT OF SGHERD PROVINCE

August 10, 1916
Gyotakbulagh

On 10 April 1915 the troops and the Kurds, about 4 to 500 people headed by Rabha *agha* from Sgherd and Mahmat Rashit *agha* from Parva, suddenly came to the village. Armed and unarmed men went up the mountains on the instructions of the village headman who thought that nothing would happen if there was no resistance. But the mob broke into the village and started burning and plundering the houses. Thirty-five people were murdered: T[er] Sahak, Paghto, Soso, Martiros and others. The people fled to the mountains. Thirty-one women and children were taken captive. After staying in the mountain (at monasteries) for a day, we all went to Moks. The women and children stayed there. All the men moved to Shatakh. Sixty-five of them were armed. After fighting in Tsitsants and Chnok, we moved - headed by Hovsep Shayinian - to Moks to help the Armenians who were fighting against the Kurds. Then we headed to Mamrtank to help Lato who was fighting against the sheikhs of Khizan. Our families were there. Sergeant Tigran Kamalian from our village was

⁴⁵Thirty households from Deh were protected and saved by the son of Karmir agha from Sharnakh and are currently with that agha. Another nine households had found shelter with Jankir agha from the village of Nivla and Dahr agha from the village of Dahr.

killed there. We took the people from Moks, Mamrtank, Sparkert and Karkar to the villages of Gyavash and Vostan.

The population of Van emigrated. We followed them – from Vostan to Van and Berkri. The Ottomans and the Russians were fighting there. The Russians and Dro's army retreated; the Ottomans started slaughtering the Armenians. We fled; 4 of my people were killed. Many people were thrown into the river. I passed through the mountains to the plain of Abagha where the Russian army was.

Nobody has been to the village. We came here without possessions.

Vardan Galoyan from Vozm who now lives in Gyotakbulagh
Mirzo Bharian
August 10, 1916

Interviewed by Shirin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 430, p. 1 rev., original, handwritten.

No 81

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MURAD HARUTYUNIAN ON THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF AVIN IN SHIRVAN DISTRICT OF SGHERD PROVINCE

August 15, 1915
Igdır

According to the narrative account of witness Murat Harutyunian (aged 25) from the village of Avin in Yerun province¹³² of Bitlis:

Avin had 30 households and 200 residents, a church named St Simon (Shmavon), a water-mill, 400 sheep and 500 farm animals. The church had 10 to 15 old manuscript Gospels. The total annual revenue of the village was 1,000 units of wheat, 100,000 trusses of hay and 1,000 *poods* of walnuts.

On 10 December 1914 all men aged 20 to 55 were conscripted from Avin. If the conscripts didn't report their houses were burnt, their movable and immovable possessions were confiscated and their wives were raped.

On 10 June 1915, 400 hundred Kurds headed by Mahmat Emin, Ahmat khan, Fatah bek and Avdi bek attacked Avin, meeting no resistance. They gathered all the men, women and children, took them out of the village to a place called Boder. The women and men were tied up to each other, 20 in a group, and murdered (shooting into their ears or foreheads) with small-size rifles and ten-

cartridge pistols (six people with one bullet). They murdered the small boys and girls by hitting them against the rocks and bashing their brains out. Everybody was slaughtered there and only five men and two women escaped.

Avin is currently inhabited by the Kurds.

Note: First of all they murdered the village headman Melkon Barkhoyan and then *Ter* Petros tied up to each other.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, p. 24, original, handwritten.

No 82

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR BERKHO AZOYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF GNDZIK IN SHIRVAN DISTRICT
OF SGHERD PROVINCE**

August 15, 1916
Igdır

According to the narrative account of Berkho Azoyan (a witness, aged 41) from the village of Gndzik in Erun province¹³³ of Bitlis:

Gndzik had 55 households and 600 residents, a church named St Stephen, two water-mills, 800 sheep and 600 other farm animals. There were manuscript Gospels in the church as well as an old manuscript encyclical with the picture of the Holy Virgin Mary; a few years ago an English consul took it away. Near the church, in the cemetery, there was a stone two *arshins* long and four spans wide which had cuneiform inscriptions on its two facets⁴⁶.

The total annual revenue of the village was 2,000 units of wheat, 7,000 *poods* of walnuts, 20,000 trusses of hay.

The village is currently not burnt but has been destroyed.

In December 1914 all men of Gndzik aged 15 to 45 were conscripted. Houses of those who failed to report at the appointed time were burnt.

Three hundred units of wheat, 200 sheep, 100 *poods* of ghee, 200 pairs of socks, 200 sacks, 100 Ottoman liras were forcibly confiscated for the troops from Gndzik.

⁴⁶The English consul of Bitlis priced the stone at 200 Ottoman liras but the village priest T[er] Gorgiz didn't agree to give it away.

On 10 June 1915, 400 Kurds armed with Turkish made Mauser rifles (small-size) and headed by Mahmat Emin, Ahmat khan (from the village of Fezker), S[ala]hedın son of Seyit Ali attacked Gndzik. The villagers couldn't even try to put up any resistance since their weapons were collected a month earlier. The mob ruthlessly slaughtered the residents of Gndzik. Boys under 7 and women were taken captive and drowned in the river Bohtan (Tigris). Only six men and fourteen women and children survived from Gndzik. They are currently in Igdır.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, re c. 423, p. 22, original, handwritten.

No 83

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KHACHIK VARDANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF NABAYIN IN SHIRVAN DISTRICT
OF SGHERD PROVINCE**

August 15, 1916
Igdır

According to the narrative account of Khachik Vardanian (a witness) from the village of Nabayin in Yerun province of Bitlis:

Nabayin had 40 households and 300 residents, a church named St George, a water-mill, 900 sheep and 500 farm animals. The church had 15 manuscript Gospels. The annual revenue of the village was 3,000 units of wheat, 10,000 trusses of hay and 50 *litres* of honey.

On 20 December 1914 all the men of Nabayin aged 15 to 45 were conscripted. If the conscripts failed to report at the appointed time, their houses were burnt, their property was confiscated and their wives were raped: thus Mustafa *effendi*, the policeman from Mush, Smayil *effendi* from Gals, Hasan *effendi* from Sgherd and others raped Hakob Kakosian's wife Nergiz and Farso Muradian's wife Gino, etc.

Vardan Harutyunian, who deserted from the Turkish army, recounted the following:

"The Turkish officers greatly discriminated between us and the Turkish soldiers. They would keep us in separate rooms without giving food for days, whereas they would give food to the Turkish soldiers. They would throw heavy loads on our backs and make us carry them as far as a distance of 24 days'

journey. The Turkish soldiers were always threatening to kill us, Armenian soldiers, etc.”

On 10 June 1915, 200 Kurds headed by Ghasim Osman khan (from Kochar Mahmar) and armed by Turkish-made Mauser rifles, attacked Nabayin and meeting with no resistance gathered the people and murdered them all with pole axes, axes and double-bladed axes (a type of axe). Khalit Ahmatian from the village of Arit murdered Garnik Kirakosian with unprecedented tortures: he first skinned his back alive, then he gouged his eyes with a knife, cut off his arms, pulled off his teeth and Garnik was still alive. Then he cut him into pieces with a dagger and put the severed parts into his trousers. The same Khalit Ahmatian with his nephews took four men – Abro Buloyan, Rasho Buloyan, Karapet Hokhanian and Hokhan Karapetian - to the Kurdish village of Derken and burnt them there alive. “Accept our religion and we'll free you.” But Abro replied: “This fire is better than your religion. Our Lord suffered, I'll suffer too.”

They would cut open the bellies of pregnant women, take out the babies, stick them on a pole and shout that it was “an Armenian flag”. They did that to Sayid's daughter Nergiz, to Seyran (Poghos's daughter), to Khzmo Harutyunian, etc. They would put small boys on the ground, put their heads on a rock and bash their brains out with a bigger rock.

Only three men, a woman and a boy survived from Nabayin.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, pp. 23 and rev., original, handwritten.

MUSH PROVINCE

No 84

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HAKOB KHOJIANTS ON THE EMIGRATION AND MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF MANAZKERT DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Emigration from Manazkert.

Narrated by Hakob Khojiant from Manazkert.

After the war started, here too sharecropping dues were collected more than usually as well as the *tekalif-i harbiye* (war tax), as mentioned above, the mobilisation and the weapons and *hamal boluki* (labour groups).

When in the spring of 1915, at the beginning of April the Russians reached Ghlich-Gyaduk, the Kurds fled taking with them the cattle of Berd¹³⁴ and neighbouring villages, whereas Avdlla bek and Husein bek, the sons of Ibrahim bek from Manazkert, gathered the population of these villages in their village of Akner and protected them saying that Abdil Majit and Husein pasha were coming and could slaughter them all. Thus the residents of the villages of Manazkert district – (Berd) Egnakhoja, Voghjin, Khan-Oghli, Kharaba-Ghasmik, Rzaghighamsi, Noradin, Sultanlu, Rstam-Gyaduk, Ghotanlu, Derik, Tondras, Yekmal, Latar, Sheytan-Ave, Ghara-Ghaya, Molla-Bad, Tolaghash and Bagran were saved. One hundred households were saved from Berd, and 50 to 250 households from each of the other villages. The father and grandfather of Avdlla and Husein bek shad likewise protected the Armenians during other Russo-Turkish wars.

When the Van and Manazkert retreats occurred, the residents of these saved villages emigrated from their homeland to Caucasus by the Ghutagh-Karakilisé-Igdir line and settled mainly in the Alexandrapol province.

They suffered the same losses of property as shown for Karakilisé of Alashkert since the villagers of Alashkert and Manazkert have the same occupation and almost the same belongings and property.

Even in such fortunate developments there were still losses caused by Haji Hamden bek who slaughtered 30 men from Duknuk, 70 from Noratun, 20 from Kharaba-Ghasmik, 10 people from Tolaghashshi, 20 people from Marmus, 30 from Banzten, 30 people from Rstam-Gyaduk. Sait, son of Nado, murdered 20 men from Molla-Mstafa and 30 people from Ghotanlu. All these murders were committed on the order of Haji Hamden bek, commander of the troops and Hamidiyé, who, ordered to take the young people of the village, when they were fleeing from Ghlich-Gyaduk to Khnus, under the pretext of *hamal boluki*. They gathered everyone, made them stand in line on the bank of the river Murat near the Kurdish village of Ghlichlu and shot them. Some died from the bullets, others drowned in the river. Some managed to escape hiding below *pools*¹³⁵ under the water.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 476, pp. 4-5, original, handwritten.

No 85

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS MARTIROS SARGISIAN AND
SARGIS KHACHATURIAN ON THE FORCED EMIGRATION AND
LOSSES OF THE VILLAGE OF MARMUS IN MANAZKERT DISTRICT
OF MUSH PROVINCE**

August 30, 1916
Zeyva Hayi

Information given by Martiros Sargisian (aged 35) and Sargis Khachaturian (teacher) from the village of Marmus of Manazkert.

The village had 40 Armenian and 50 Kurdish households. The Armenians had 1,000 head of sheep, 500 head of cattle, 20 buffaloes, 20 horses, 10 donkeys, 20 ploughs, 100 wooden ploughs, 50 carts, 2 water-mills, 2 oil mills, 1 cracked wheat pounder. The village produced 3,500 *halvars* of wheat and 2,000 *bards* of hay.

The village had a brick church named after St John with one priest, a one-room school with 30 pupils of both sexes. There was an ancient dilapidated monastery near the village named after St Sahak.

The current condition of the village: - The village is currently completely destroyed and desolate. The villagers now live in Gosh, Sardarapat, Oshakan and here.

Mobilisation: - After the Ottoman Constitution was adopted, 14 men were conscripted from the village; only two fled and were saved, the rest are missing. The year the war started, 24 people from the village were taken as *amele* labourers; all came back to the village. They were made to carry supplies on their backs for the armies in Khnus and Erzurum.

War tax: - As war tax the village paid 30 head of sheep, 40 oxen, 10 carts, 1,000 *okas* of ghee, 200 pairs of socks, 100 pairs of gloves, 5 ox hides, 2,000 pots of wheat, 14 felt cloths, 20 sets of bedding, 40 hessian sacks, etc.

Massacre and emigration: - When the Russian army entered Dutagh, the Kurds from the village of Marmus took the cattle and carts of the Armenians and moved to Baghesh, telling the Armenians to make their men flee to the mountains in order not to be harmed by other passing Kurds. Only the village sheikh Fazil's son sheikh Hasan stayed in the village who put the Armenian families into a large house and taking his rifle protected them until the Russians came. The men took shelter on Mount Kartafin. A day after entering Manazkert, the Russians reached Marmus. Only then noticing the arrival of the Russians Sheikh Hasan loaded his 5 oxen and took to the road. But the Russian Cossacks chased him and seized his oxen and the load. Only due to the Armenians' requests did they spare the sheikh's son who then fled. No one was murdered in

the village; there was not a single rape or abduction. The residents of Marmus stayed in their village until the July retreat. The village emigrated through Dutagh - Kahmur - Dashli Chay - Mosun - Igdir route. From the village of Margara they were taken to the above villages without entering Etchmiadzin. No one died on the road. But many people died in the village last year. Ten men and five women died in this village.

What is written here is in line with what we recounted.

Due to the illiteracy of Martiros Sargisian from the village of Marmus, I sign for him:

Sargis Khachaturian - teacher from Marmus

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 446, pp. 17-19, original, handwritten.

No 86

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SALVI MARGARIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF APRI IN BULANEKH DISTRICT
OF MUSH PROVINCE**

August 20, 1916
Bash-Aparan

Salvi Margarian (newly married, aged 25) from the village of Apri of Lower Bulanekh who had been abducted and taken captive by the Kurd Arif - *kholam* (servant) of fellow villager Sheikh Slé, and taken to Mush, recounts her sufferings in the following way:

It was the Feast of the Transfiguration Wednesday when Musa bek's Kurds joined those of our village and slaughtered the men of our village. Then they started selecting the beautiful women of the village and ruthlessly murdering the ugly ones. I fell to the Kurd Arif's lot who was our sheikh's *kholam*. He ordered to follow him otherwise he threatened to kill me too. My husband had already been murdered in the village, so having no other way out I obeyed his order and took the road to Mush with them.

The number of the Kurds was gradually growing. The first day we reached the Armenian village of Khashkhalidagh in the Plain of Mush, passing through the Armenian villages of Ablbuhar, Tsonk, Sheikhbrim, Herkert and Sulukh. Except in Sulukh, after murdering all the men from other villages before my eyes they put the women and children into hay lofts and burnt them with kerosene and hay. When we, imprisoned Armenian women, were weeping moved by the heart-rending yells of the burning people, the Kurds were angry at us and threatened to

burn us too if we continued weeping... Those who tried to flee from the fire were shot on the spot. After slaughtering the men of Sulukh, they took the women and children to the bridge, threw them into the river and drowned everybody.

They massacred the villages as follows: they would first surround the village, then they would tighten the ring of the encirclement, break into the village and start the massacre without sparing even little children.

After reaching Khashkhaldagh, the Kurds left us there and went to take part in the massacre of Mush and other villages of the Plain. We stayed in Khashkhaldagh until the harvest time. During the harvest time Musa bek's and sheikh Slé's Kurds scattered over the Armenian villages of the Plain and started harvesting the Armenians' ripe fields. The Russians had already retreated from Manazkert (in July). In winter we moved to the Armenian village of Khosh-Geldi of Bulanekh. In that period all the Kurds were having a sumptuous life: besides harvesting the fields of the Armenians, they were taking over their wheat pits, sating with their ghee and cheese, sheep and cattle until the Russians again broke into Manazkert. The Kurd who abducted me was killed in that fight; the other Kurds had no time to take everything with them and fled in panic leaving us there. The Russians entered the village. There were 20 women and 10 little children with me in the village of Khosh-Geldi. We crossed ourselves and making the Russians understand that we were Armenians, were saved. The Cossacks took us to the Russian commander in Liz. He delivered us to the local headquarters of the Armenian volunteers. We stayed there for 20 days feeding on their meals. At Easter they moved us to Alashkert and we were scattered around from there. I came to Igdir with some volunteers and when I learned that my sister was in Bash-Aparan, I came here to my sister.

What is written here is in line with what we recounted.

Due to the illiteracy of Salvi Margarian, I sign for her and with her consent:

Nazaret Sargisian

From the village of Derik of Manazkert

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 442, pp. 4 rev. - 6 rev., original, handwritten.

No 87
**TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRE
AT THE VILLAGE OF APRI IN BULANEKH DISTRICT OF MUSH
PROVINCE**

August 20, 1916
Bash-Aparan

Information given by Havso Margarian (aged 40), Kyulizar Karapetian (aged 50) and Salvi Margarian from the village of Apri of Lower Bulanekh: -

The former condition: - Before the war the village had 40 Armenian households and 300 Kurdish households. Fifty of the Kurdish households were sheikhs and fakhis¹³⁶ whose chief was sheikh Slé.

The Armenians had 200 sheep, 200 buffaloes, 600 head of cattle, 4 horses, 40 donkeys, 70 carts, 4 ploughs, 80 wooden ploughs, more than 800 thousand⁴⁷ cereals annually, more than 1,200 *bards* of hay, about 40 vegetable-gardens. The village had a church named after St James with the relics of St James, two priests one of whom had died and the other - Ter Nerses - was murdered during the massacre. There was a "Karmir" [Red] Gospel in the church.

The current condition of the village: - Sheikh Suleyman has destroyed the village church as well as all the houses of the Armenians. The village is now desolate. There are almost no men to return to the village. The Red Gospel has been captured by the Kurds. All the wealth of the village - sheep and cattle, beddings, clothes etc. has been plundered. Even women's clothes have been taken away.

Mobilisation and military service: - More than 40 Armenians were conscripted all of whom except for 4 deserted and returned to the village but they were murdered during the massacre. One of the above 4 managed to flee to the Caucasus (Mkro Gasparian, now in Tiflis). Grigor Ter Nersesian was taken prisoner by the Russians. Besides regular soldiers, the other men of the village were used as beasts of burden to Hasan-Ghala, Erzurum, etc. From each household the village gave to the army one *oka* of ghee, 5 pairs of gloves, 5 pairs of socks, 5 pairs of *trekhs*, 1 felt cloth, one pot of salt, 1 *halvar* of wheat flour, 1 *halvar* of barley, 2 oxen, 3 sheep, many chickens, 10 pots of cracked wheat and bulgur, etc. The village suffered a lot from the Turkish army since it was on a main road.

Massacre and emigration: - In 1914-15 on the order of Sheikh Slé the Kurds of the village would now and again murder Armenians, but it was done so frequently that their number almost reached 20 that year. On Monday of the

⁴⁷ The unit of measure is missing in the original.

Feast of the Ascension the Armenians from the village of Verin Bulanekh managed to flee with the Russian army to Manazkert and Derik. The villagers of Apri also tried to flee, but the Turkish army immediately blocked the bank of the river Aratsani, destroyed the bridge and prevented their flight. Since that day, until the Monday of Feast of the Transfiguration the Turkish army fought against the Russians. The villagers didn't dare leave their houses. People didn't go to the water-mill; they were grinding wheat with manual mill-stones. On the Monday of Feast of the Transfiguration the Russians crossed the river and attacked the Turks. The retreating Kurdish army of Musa bek and Slébe sieged Apri and demanded all men of the village to gather and go to dig positions outside village. But hardly had they walked out of the village (at 10 minutes' distance), when they were tied up with ropes and strangled. One of the strangled, a youngster who accidentally didn't die, fled to the village. The Kurds doubted that not all the strangled were dead, so they stabbed everyone with bayonets. The fugitive youngster was killed too.⁴⁸ Then it was the turn of the women and children of the village. The ugly women and the children were murdered, and the beautiful ones were taken captive. Those who had escaped the swords and the bullets were put into a hayloft, hay and kerosene was prepared to burn them when the news of the Russians advancing reached them. The Kurds left everything and fled, having no time to complete their crime. The Russians entered the village, freed the rest of the people and took them to the Manazkert fortress. From there, together with other refugees, they reached Etchmiadzin and were placed in the following villages: Hamamlu – 4 households, Bash-Aparan – 1 household, Etchmiadzin – 3 households, Tiflis – 2 households, Kars – 1 household, Jermalu (Kars) – 1 household. In all, about 80 people survived: twelve men who had in advance moved to the Caucasus are now volunteers. There are also 11 boys up to 10, and 3 elderly men. All the rest are women and girls. There are now 27 women and girls in captivity as well as about 15 boys up to the age of 15. Two women were recently freed from captivity.

What is written is in line with what we recounted.

For the above three women, with their consent I sign:

Nazaret Ter Sargisian

from the village of Derik of Manazkert

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 442, pp. 7-10, original, handwritten.

⁴⁸ Note – Hako Ghukoyan (Baghé's Hako) escaped from among those who were stabbed and came to the Russians. He is in Gharakilisa now. He is better informed about the events in the village.

No 88

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HARUTYUN TER MOVSISIAN ON
THE MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF ATKON IN BULANEKH
DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE**

[1916]

Ghzi-Chakhchakh

Village of Atkon, Bulanekh district of Bitlis province

Harutyun Ter Movsisian has taken shelter in the village of Ghzi-Chakhchakh.

He recounts:

Our village had a church and a school without a building. There were 150 households of Armenians and a few households of Kurds who were forcibly made neighbours to us in recent years. During the war I too was taken into the forced labour service. My load was 2 pots of food that I had to carry on my back from Kop to Hasan-Ghala-Erzrum. The work was so hard and unbearable that it was better to die. I decided to either die or escape. I fled and returned to my village. I was hiding in a corner of our house and it lasted for three months. Though it was harder than in a prison, I was still with my family and in case of necessity I could protect them if the rumours about the massacre of the Armenians proved to be true. Our fellow villager sheikh Masud went to the district administrative centre to check the rumours about the massacre of the Armenians and returning back he said: "Armenians, the Russians have already occupied the village of Liz and are approaching us. We have to move our families to a safer place. You take care of yourselves." We Armenians got excited, some of us didn't believe the sheikh, others believed him and helped the sheikh and other Kurds with man power and loaded carts. We fled to Liz but found no Russians there: the Armenians from several neighbouring villages had gathered there. It turned out to be an infernal plot to displace and slaughter us. Those helping the sheikh with his move were murdered with the bullets of his servants. The next day when we returned to our village, we found 205 corpses of men in different parts and houses of the village. Not a single head of cattle was left and nor any possessions; everything was plundered by our Kurdish neighbours.

We stayed in Liz from the Feast of Ascension until the Feast of Transfiguration. The village was protected by the regional chief Khalif *effendi*. Liz being a military camp was surrounded by numerous Turkish soldiers and Kurdish volunteers. All the Armenians were working for them from morning till night: women were baking and cooking, or making clothes and socks. But every day 10-15 Armenian men were taken away and did not return. One day the shepherds brought news that they had seen the corpses

of the murdered men and had buried them... This carnage was repeated several times and we were seized with horror, but there was no way out. I had to flee and I fled to the village of Pionk which was still inhabited. After 3 days a policeman opened the door of my shelter and noticed that I was a fugitive. I escaped with great difficulty and 3 gold coins of bribe. After 4 days soldiers surrounded the village and gathered all the Armenians at the Khalif *effendi*'s mansion. I had no chance to flee and was arrested. They took me there too. When they finished gathering the men, the troops surrounded the men and drove them to Liz but said nothing to the women. We were placed in a 4-room building. At night we were kept under guard. Exactly at midnight several soldiers with lanterns in their hands entered our shelter, took us out one by one and started tying us to each other. I was almost the last one to be taken out. In the darkness I saw the bloody corpses of those who had been murdered, their near-death crazy convulsions, I heard their grunts and roars and seized with horror I was petrified. I immediately felt several stabs of cold weapons on my body and fell down next to the others with the rope on my neck but didn't faint. Though I was badly wounded, more dangerous was the reeling of my murdered friends fighting against death, their dragging that was pulling the rope which nearly strangled me. I pretended to have been murdered... The action was over. I heard the voice of their commander who ordered to bring 50 carts and take away the corpses, put into the trenches dug in advance and cover them. I did my utmost to take the rope off my neck, crawled in the darkness and unnoticed by the guards fell into the neighbouring (ruined) cattle shed. I hid in a corner and saw and heard how the corpses were moved to the trenches. I searched all the corners of the cattle shed and found a pit which was definitely prepared as a hideout for the owner. I got into that pit and stayed there for nine days. With the help of some children I contacted my sister Nikyar who was married in Liz and occasionally I received some food from her. When the Russians took Liz I was saved and came to the Caucasus during the retreat. I have 6 wounds; one of them is caused by a sword, the others by a bayonet. I have lost two sons, my uncle's wife and son and many of my relatives.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 35 rev.-36, original, handwritten.

No 89
TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SEROB STEPANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF GYABOLAN IN BULANEKH
DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Serob Hovsep Stepanian (aged 25) from the village of Gyabolan of Bulanekh who was taken prisoner by their village sheikh Msto and managed to flee and join the Russians, recounts about his period of captivity as follows:

In order to tend his numerous sheep, sheikh Msto spared me, my younger brother, my three cousins, my two sisters and my mother. We went with the Kurds up to the environs of Mush, to the village of Khashkhaldagh and then to Hardert. When in February the Russian army advanced to Mush, I fled to the Russians but my relatives stayed and I have no news from them.

When I was in the Plain of Mush (with the Kurds) I saw how the Kurds and the Turkish policemen were destroying the hideouts and searching the wells in Armenian villages, taking out those who were hiding there and murdering or throwing them into the river. There were women completely naked only with a rag to cover their privates, who were wandering and looking for food. But the Kurds didn't spare even them: they gathered them all, took to the village of Gyumgyum in Vardo district and burned them.¹³⁷ In the village of Yerizak (in the Plain of Mush) I saw a 3-year-old child who crawled to the spring to drink water and then return to its mother murdered on the threshold of their door, put its head on her and slept ... A Kurdish boy fired three times from his pistol at the child but the bullets didn't hit it. We left the wretched child in that condition and went away.

In the village of Atkon the Kurds caught a 70-year-old woman, knocked her down, filled her mouth with soil and poured so much water on her that the old woman was suffocated... "Let her perish little by little," the villains laughed.

In the village of Khashkhaldagh the Kurds told Serob the following story: "In the village of Jrik near Mush an Armenian man (his native village wasn't known) hid in a house with his wife and was shooting at us (more than 70 Kurds) with his Mauser pistol. He killed 3 of us. Then when he had only 10 cartridges left in the pistol, he came out of the house with his wife, broke through our lines and ran away. We managed to shoot him on his back and he fell down. His heroic wife immediately took out her husband's dagger, killed herself and fell down on his body... We were astonished and enraptured..."

Serob had heard this story from several places.

What is written here about my captivity and what I witnessed is in line with what I recounted.

Due to Serob's illiteracy:
Signed by Nazaret Karoyan from Van

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 425, pp. 17-18 rev., original, handwritten.

No 90

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MOVSES HARUTYUNIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF LIZ IN BULANEKH DISTRICT OF
MUSH PROVINCE**

[1916]
Pirvali

Village of Liz

Bulanekh district of Bitlis province

Movses Harutyunian Amiriants who took shelter in the village of Pirvali recounts:

On the threshold of the war the Turkish government carried out solid military preparations. It carried out mobilisation, sent the “*Hamidiye*” to the borders and declared war against Russia. Since we, the Armenians, had soldiers in the Ottoman army we were sure that the government would have a good attitude towards us and would not call us “insidious people”, but we were sadly mistaken. First they disarmed the Armenian soldiers and murdered them in groups, then slaughtered the Armenian people. Taxes and duties went beyond the limit: they would harness people to skis, throw 2 *kot*¹³⁸ [16 kg] loads on their backs and make them cover big distances to reach military destinations in Hasan-Ghala-Erzrum.

Our village headman was ordered to ensure that each household give to the government one *litre* of flour, the same amount of bulgur, one *oka* of ghee, socks, shirts, *trekhs*, underware and other necessities. By continuously taking away everything, they completely deprived us of living: draught animals were taken by the government to carry loads, cows and sheep were slaughtered for the troops. When the Russians took Alashkert, the panic-stricken Turks and Kurds from that region were settled in our villages and we took care of them with our bread and water and everything until their second retreat.

Before the war our village had 4,000 head of sheep, 2,000 cows, 1,000 female buffaloes, 1,500 buffaloes, 2,500 oxen, 500 horses and 1,500 head of small livestock. Many of our villagers owned barns: we were paying *bahra*¹³⁹ – 1/7; during the war we paid them a quarter and at the end they were just forcibly

taking anything they could find. If any of the Armenians doing labour service fell ill on the road, he was either beaten and forced to carry the load, or he was left on the road to die (the Kurds would later strip and murder him). Baghdo Karapetian from our village was killed like that at a location called Hazrat's bridge, together with his 12 friends – Hovhannes Karapetian, Kolan Lavandian, Hako Iskanian, Lavand Umeyan and others. Our *mudur* was regularly summoning us to meetings and exhorting us to stay loyal to the government and support it with all our possessions.

The news about the massacre of Armenian soldiers reached us when the Turks retreated and put the environs to fire and sword. Our *kaymakam* from the village of Kop fled and came to our village, convinced that the Russians had approached. I fled with 39 of our villagers and surrendered to the Russians hoping that the Russians would immediately save our village from the Turkish atrocities. After 35 days our neighbour Mr Baghdasar Zuloyants also fled with 4 of his friends to us and told about siege of the village, forced labour and regular massacre of men. For forty days running under those circumstances the women were preparing food for the soldiers: – bread, ghee, cheese and different meals. Millers were working in the water-mills grinding flour. On the fortieth day the town crier summoned the Armenians to a meeting – everyone from the age of 8 to elderly residents and of course the men. They were informed that they should go to Mush. Not far from the village they separated 20 wealthy Armenians, including my father, took 20 gold coins as ransom and freed them for two days. The rest were tied up with ropes, murdered with swords and bayonets and thrown into pits dug in advance. After two days my father, Harutyun Amiriants, and the other 19 Armenians were summoned again and murdered in the same way. Only one of them, Mkhitar Ter Tumiants, escaped hiding among the women who immediately placed him in the hideaway where the owner of the house Hako Chanjiyants was already hiding. After the massacre the women found a path out of the village and helped them to flee. The chief of Cossacks arrested Ter Tumiants and Chanjiyants out of suspicion but Tigran from Yerevan who was a member of the Armenian headquarters in Manazkert freed [them].

The women and children were told that they would be taken to Germany, that they had asked for them and it would be safe there for them. This situation continued for 6 days during which there occurred many rapes due to which many of them died, including Khazal Gevorgiants. On the sixth day the women and children were divided into 3 groups and placed in 3 cattle sheds to burn them and not deliver them to the approaching Russians. At night the women heard from their shelters some noise, clatter of horses' hoofs and neighing – from the direction of Mush. “Some of those who were fleeing were yelling, asking for bread, getting it from the holes in the doors and leaving. In the morning the village calmed down, we dared come out and saw neither the Turks nor the

Russians. After a while Cossack scouts appeared but we took them for Turkish Circassians and ran and locked ourselves in our houses. But some of the women had been to Russia and they recognised the Cossacks, so we came out and welcomed them. The Cossack regiments and other troops arrived. They promised us freedom and advanced. But the very next day they returned and told us about the retreat. That too was terrible..."

During the retreat they came through the Kop-Derk-Manazkert-Igdir route. Some of those who escaped died of hunger, others of contagious diseases. The village is currently ruined. If someone escaped from our village that was thanks to our *mudur* Khalif *effendi*: he left the village during the last days in order not to witness the massacre of the Armenians. He was from the village of Pionk.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 36 rev.- 37 rev., original, handwritten.

No 91

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR NOYEM NOREYAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KOGHAK IN BULANEKH
DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Ghzi-Chakhchakh

Village of Koghak, kaza of Bulanekh of vilayet of Bitlis

Noyem Noreyan who took shelter in the village of Ghzi-Chakhchakh, recounts:

Koghak had 300 households, only 100 of them were Armenian. Still before the war our Kurdish neighbours were oppressing and plundering us; and the government wasn't restraining them. No action was taken on our complaints, and we remained unarmed and powerless against our spoiled enemies.

Our village had a church¹⁴⁰, a school, 3,000 head of sheep, 1,000 oxen, 500 buffaloes, 300 female buffaloes, 1,000 cows and more than 1,000 small livestock. From the beginning of the war our men were taken away in different directions as soldiers and reserves; the rest had to carry ammunition. So gradually emptying the village from men they started involving women in the above forced labour. Our Kurdish neighbours were exempt from these works since they gave volunteers and had other privileges. It was the Armenians who were oppressed, exploited, kept captive and ruthlessly plundered. Our belongings did not belong to us as soon as they caught the eyes of officials or soldiers.

When the Russians approached our region, the Kurds surrounded our village and started their atrocities: they raped beautiful women and girls, abducted many of them, including me. I was abducted by Amr *agha* from the Mullah Amr tribe. He lived in Mush and took me to his house. My mother Rndé and my sister Khumash joined me there. They killed my mother as "useless" but kept me and my sister. We stayed in that house for seven months doing all kinds of chores but they gave us almost stale bread. When the Russians retreated, Amr took us back with his family to our native village of Koghak, and when the Russians advanced again, Amr couldn't move to any safe place so he surrendered and became a Russian subject. I considered myself free and complained to the Russians against the Kurd who had abducted me. But they did nothing to him maybe because he had become a Russian subject.

My brother-in-law Tigran found me and brought me to the Caucasus.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, p. 21 rev., original, handwritten.

No 92

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HOVHANNES ZAKARIAN ON THE
MASSACRE AT THE VILLAGE OF KOP IN BULANEKH DISTRICT OF
MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Tiflis

Hovhannes Zakarian, aged 13, from the village of Kop, now lives in Tiflis in the Tsiranavor orphanage

When the war started, the Turks from our village (it was a mixed Armenian-Turkish village) took their families and fled. Then the armed Turkish men returned and stayed in the village. At that time I lived in my uncle Mkro's house as a shepherd. I was an orphan; my father and mother had died 7 years earlier. My uncle Mkro was 35 years old and he was conscripted. His wife's name was Mariam and she had a baby.

Every day the Turkish soldiers would come to our village to go to the battlefield. One day two Turkish soldiers came to our house, ate and drank and stayed for two nights. They took me to another house and stayed in our house with my uncle's wife. When the Turks left, I ran to our house and saw my uncle's wife sitting next to the *tonir* and crying. She said she fell ill. That happened in winter of 1915, about the Feast of Carnival. My uncle's wife stayed ill in bed for two months.

One night in the spring of 1915 the *ashiret* of Haji Musa bek broke into our village and started slaughtering and plundering the villagers. Some of our villagers fought against the Kurds and killed some of them. The Kurds started to flee. I and my uncle's wife who was ill went out of the house at night and fled in the direction of Manazkert. My uncle's baby died on the road. The Kurds and the Turks chased us. Fifteen of our villagers headed by Knyaz fought back and accompanied us to Manazkert. It was Friday; it was the time for the 1915 spring sowing. My uncle's wife stopped on the road as she couldn't walk anymore and I stayed with her for about two hours. She lay on the ground weeping and suffering. After two hours she died and the Kurds started approaching me. I fainted. When I opened my eyes I saw that one of our village fighters, Altun Hovhannes, had put me on the croup of his horse and we were fleeing to Manazkert. In Manazkert we met the Russians and the Armenian volunteers.

The Turks came and besieged Manazkert at the end of May. The Russians started retreating. I mixed with the retreating people but the Russians were mounted and fled quickly and we couldn't catch up with them on foot. I was walking and I had wounds on my feet. I was able to flee only to the Khamur gorge near the River Murat.

I and two of our village children, Vostanik and Khachatur, remained on the road near the riverbank, where we found a cart. We got into the cart, but when the Russian rear guard passed us they threw us into the River Murat together with the cart. We stayed on the cart from morning till night and had no hope to be saved. Cannonade was heard from behind but we couldn't get off the cart in order not to fall into water.

We stayed there until two mounted volunteers came and seeing us stopped their horses. They put us on their horses and rode on. The Turks were already very close and had we stayed a little longer, they would have murdered us. We advanced and at the end of July reached Igdir. From Igdir we walked to Etchmiadzin together with our villagers. I stayed in Etchmiadzin for 15 days, by the walls of the Etchmiadzin monastery, in open air. The monastery feed us.

One of our villagers, Habet, who had volunteered recognised me and took me with him to Tiflis. Now I live in the Tsiranavor orphanage.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 40-41, original, handwritten.

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRE
OF THE VILLAGE OF HAMZASHEIKH IN BULANEKH DISTRICT OF
MUSH PROVINCE

August 30, 1916
Ali Beklu

Information presented by Mkhitar Bsharian (aged 35), Arstam Alexanian (30) and Murat Hakobian (35) from the village of Hamzasheikh of Bulanekh about their village:

The former state of the village: - Before the war the village of Hamzasheikh had 380 Armenian households. The village had 10,000 sheep, 10,000 head of cattle, 1,000 buffaloes, 1,000 horses, 100 ploughs, 450 wooden ploughs, 300 carts, 3 water-mills, 2 oil mills, 40 vegetable-gardens, 20 orchards with 10,000 trees. The village produced annually 78,000 units of wheat, 34,000 cartloads of hay.

The village church¹⁴¹ was ancient and made of stone. It had two priests – *Ter* Hovhannes and *Ter* Gabriel (both were murdered). The following villagers possessed Gospels: Khachik Malikian – the Merkeros¹⁴² Gospel which is now saved and is in the village of Ali Beklu (near Etchmiadzin) with its owner; Hareyan Mosik – an old manuscript Narek¹⁴³ (lost); Khacho Grigorian – Tsaghik Gospel (plundered). The village had a two-storied school with 10 rooms, 2 teachers and 170 pupils, and an annual profit of 100 Ottoman gold coins¹⁴⁴.

There was a library in the village that received 4 different newspapers and had 1,000 books. It was founded by the efforts of Misak Isonjian.

Current state of the village: - The village is currently completely ruined and desolate, the church is ruined, the school is burnt and the houses are destroyed.

Mobilisation: - When Turkey announced mobilisation, 100 men were conscripted from Hamzasheikh of whom only 10 fled; the fate of the remaining 90 is unknown (they were probably murdered).

As war tax, the government took from the village 5,000 units of wheat, 380 sheep, 100 head of cattle, 8 horses, 6 donkeys, 47 buffaloes, 7,460 cartloads of straw, 10,000 cartloads of hay, 200 *litres* of ghee, 10 ox and 10 buffalo hides, 500 pairs of mittens and socks, 400 pieces of felt cloths and blankets, 100 mattresses.

The policemen and *chetés* divided the men of the village who were exempt from military service into two groups and took them away to do *olam*. The villagers were carrying canon shells on their backs as far as Kyoprikyoy, and from there to Hasan Ghala (near Erzurum). The villagers were taken to different fronts with their animals and carts often with loads weighing 3-4 *poods* on their

backs. Eight men from the village died while doing *olam*. Many others caught cold and fell ill.

The massacre of the village: - On the Feast of Ascension of 1915, at daybreak, suddenly a huge crowd of the Kurdish mob started approaching the village. The residents of the village fled in panic trying to save themselves. They fled to the nearby village of Simon inhabited by Circassians. The Armenians from the village of Shirvansheikh also took shelter there. The Circassians willingly welcomed the Armenians from both villages and taking arms attacked the Kurds who were persecuting the Armenians. About 400 men, women and children were murdered in the village. The Kurds were ruthlessly slaughtering everyone they came across. Then they gathered all the corpses and burnt them in haylofts. The Kurds plundered all the movable property, the wheat and rustled all the cattle of the village. The Kurds were mostly from the following *ashirets*: Chipran, Hasnan, the *ashiret* of Abdul Mejit (from Alashkert), Bilik, etc.

The villagers of Hamzasheikh and Shirvansheikh found shelter with the Circassians (in the village of Simon). The Circassians willingly welcomed their Armenian acquaintances. The Armenians lived in Simon for 40 days, serving the Circassians (with farm work) and working with them. On the morning of the Saturday of the Feast of the Transfiguration (July of 1915) suddenly 10 Turkish policemen and 30 Kurdish horsemen came down to Simon and said to the Circassians: "If any of you dares to hide an Armenian in his house, we'll slaughter you all; or if within two hours you do not hand over all the Armenians in your houses or let them flee, we'll kill you together with them." So the Circassians were obliged to hand over to the policemen the population of two villages; but still they hid about 100 men.

When the Kurds came to Simon and demanded that the Circassians hand over the Armenians, they deceived them saying: "We are going to take them to the village of Lez[k]. The Armenians are granted a pardon. We'll give food to everybody."

The Kurds and the policemen took the population of two villages to the bridge of Zughr over the Murat river (near the village of Teghut). They murdered the men and threw them into the river. The same was done to the women and children. On that day 100 men from Shirvansheikh and 350 men from Hamzasheikh were murdered on the bridge.

Some of the mothers were treated in the following way: they made the mothers take their children into their arms, shot them and threw them into the river. After the massacre the Kurds made two Armenians bring water with buckets from the river and wash the blood off. Then they murdered the cleaners too and threw them into the river. Some of the women and children managed to flee from the bridge and went to live with the Circassians. After some time the policemen went to the Circassian village of Simon and demanded the Armenians. This time they took 28 Armenian men and murdered them near the village of

Gharachoban throwing their bodies in the river of Khnus. During the massacre on the bridge, the Kurds selected the beautiful women and girls and took with them. After some time the Russians approached and the Circassians fled taking with them many of the Armenians who had found shelter with them (women, children and men). The rest of the women, children and others went to Manazkert where they stayed for eight days. Then the July retreat of the Russians occurred; the villagers went to Etchmiadzin where 45 of them died. Now most of the villagers live in the Alexandropol region and in the village of Ali Beklu.

We find the written account in accord with our narrative so we authorise to sign: due to the illiteracy of Mkhitar Bsharian, Arstam Alexanian and Murad Hakobian,

[Signed] Haik Achemian (from Van).

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 447, pp. 20-24, original, handwritten.

No 94

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR PRIEST MIKAYEL TER-SAMUELIAN
ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF SHIRVANSHEIKH IN
BULANEKH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE**

[1916]
Arazgegh

Father [Ter] Mikayel Ter Samuelian who found shelter in the village of Arazgegh.

I am the priest of the congregation of the village of Shirvansheikh. The Ottoman Constitution didn't bring us happy days either, although we, the Armenians, supplied soldiers in vain to the Turkish army. The Armenian soldiers were always scolded and given despicable tasks. We gave one seventh of our revenue as tithes. During the war the government raised the tax to half of our revenue and it was taken forcibly or as a "donation".

When Russia and its allies were waging war against Germany, Turkey though neutral was feverishly getting ready for the war. It gathered the *Hamidiye*¹⁴⁵ cavalry and its infantry, the *retifs*¹⁴⁶, the *ittihat*¹⁴⁷ and *mustahaviz*¹⁴⁸ *fedayeen*.

Our village had 180 households with 2,000 inhabitants. We had about 2,000 oxen, 2,000 buffaloes, 3,000 cows, 4,000 sheep, about 100 horses, 100 donkeys and 1,000 head of small farm animals. All this was lost during the feverish *olam*¹⁴⁹ labour, first with carts, and afterwards by carrying loads on our backs. The carts and men taken by the government had no chance of return; they were either robbed and murdered, or

exhausted, fell ill and perished. Others were shot by their guards. Some died suddenly or froze to death. Only those who bribed the police were saved, fleeing and hiding in the mountains. As I was a priest, they were content just by insulting me, but from our family they took away my brothers. They were forcibly extorting money from wealthy people. We learned about the inevitable war with Russia from the newspapers. They wanted to make use of the German military support and take centuries-old revenge on Russia. They called us – the Armenians - “an insidious nation” insisting that we would certainly betray the Turkish government and support Russia. That is why we were always afraid of that government. By giving everything to the government we were drained of all resources, deprived of all working hands, and the government even started taking women to carry loads. I have personally seen 15 women from the neighbouring village of Liz who had to carry food to Hasanghala-Erzrum. Their route passed through our village. We considered it an honour for us to bribe the guards and release the women; our young men carried the load instead. We learned very late that the Russian forces had taken Manazkert which was 6-7 *versts* from us, separated by the Murat River¹⁵⁰. During this panic period the Turks and the Kurds rustled our buffaloes and oxen with no one paying attention to our complaints. The cupidity of our *kirvas*¹⁵¹ grew. Through a policy of stick-and-carrot they took away all our cattle, property and whatever we had. They murdered four men – brothers Gegham and Melik Ghazarians, father and son Harutyun and Misak Matosian. They were murdered by Nado from Bilik. We – I, my brother and his son hid in the room where the Gospels were kept. People started fleeing to the neighbouring village of Hamzasheikh where government troops were stationed. The plunderers broke into that village too with the same ferocity, abducting many women and girls. Hasan *agha's*¹⁵² son Ahmad abducted our neighbour Kahrubarkh Manishak; Mamad abducted Chichak as well as Lusik. We again fled to the Circassian village of Simon. Musa bek¹⁵³ invited us on condition that he would protect us from the Turks and we would protect them from the Russians. After three days they said that the Russians were coming and they could no longer protect us. The same night I, Movses, Hovsep, Baghdasar and some 100 men fled and joined the Russian army. Musa bek faithfully protected my family and sent them to me to Manazkert. The rest of the people were murdered on the bridge called Zughr and thrown into the water. Then the July retreat occurred and under the protection of the troops we came to Kaghzvan; others went to Etchmiadzin.

Our village is now in ruins. Recently some have returned; one of them – Ghazarents Gevorg, was killed in the Kurdish village of Molla-Mustafa. I saved and brought with me the “Tsaghik” Gospel which is handwritten.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 18 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 95

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ZAKAR AGHA MARGARIAN ON THE
EMIGRATION AND LOSSES OF THE VILLAGE OF KAKARLU IN
BULANEKH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE**

September-October 1916
Alexandropol province

Bulanekh region

Bulanekh is divided into two parts – Upper and Lower Bulanekh, with about 30 Armenian-populated villages.

The Upper Bulanekh is more to the north, close to the Russian border of Alashkert and includes the following villages:

1. Latar	220 households	70 Armenian	150 Kurdish
2. Kakarlu	200 households	196 Armenian	4 Kurdish
3. Piran	80 households	50 Armenian	30 Kurdish
4. Khachlu	40 households	4 Armenian	36 Kurdish
5. Kharapshaher	70 households	55 Armenian	15 Kurdish
6. Kop (residence of the <i>kaymakam</i>)	600 households	450 Armenian	20 Kurdish 130 Turkish
7. Yonjalu	300 households	300 Armenian	
8. Blur	120 households	40 Armenian	80 Kurdish
9. Merbar	43 households	40 Armenian	3 Kurdish
10. Mejetlu	150 households	145 Armenian	5 Kurdish
11. Votnchur	150 households	150 Armenian	-
12. Teghut	160 households	160 Armenian	-
13. Shervanshegh	140 households	140 Armenian	-
14. Hamzasheikh	200 households	197 Armenian	3 Circassian
15. Gharaghel	210 households	210 Armenian	-
16. Sheikhyaghub	200 households	200 Armenian	-

There was a massacre at Upper Bulanekh, in the villages of Hamzasheikh, Shervanshegh, Kop and Gharaghel. Hardly a tenth of the population survived in the first two villages. One hundred and fifty people were massacred in Kop. Gharaghel was saved thanks to self-defence, giving only about 100 casualties. Other villages had negligibly small casualties, but they lost almost all their property and belongings: they could save very little from the Kurds and later on

their way they were plundered by the Cossacks and Russian soldiers so they reached Russia with negligibly small part of their possessions.

Lower Bulanekh is more inland and includes the following villages:

1. Liz (the <i>mudur</i> resides there)	350 households	345 Armenian	5 Kurdish
2. Apré	200 households	50 Armenian	150 Kurdish
3. Gyabolan	60 households	20 Armenian	40 Kurdish
4. Mollakend	100 households	30 Armenian	70 Kurdish
5. Pionk	80 households	40 Armenian	40 Kurdish
6. Hatkon	80 households	65 Armenian	15 Kurdish
7. Prkashen	70 households	68 Armenian	2 Kurdish
8. Khoshgyaldi	150 households	147 Armenian	3 Kurdish
9. Koghak	300 households	60 Armenian	246 Kurdish
10. Akrak	60 households	50 Armenian	10 Kurdish

Upper and Lower Bulanekh had 4,333 households – 3,282 Armenian, 921 Kurdish and 130 Turkish.

Upper Bulanekh had 2,883 households – 2,407 Armenian, 346 Kurdish and 130 Turkish.

Lower Bulanekh had 1,450 households – 875 Armenian and 575 Kurdish.

Total: 4,333 households – 3,282 Armenian, 921 Kurdish, 130 Turkish.

The massacres in all the villages of Lower Bulanekh took place with all their horrors, calamities, subtleties, Kurdish atrocities and barbarity.

Upper Bulanekh

Kakarlu

The 200 households of the village had 2,000 head of cattle (buffaloes, cows), 150 sheep, 40,000 pots of wheat, 1,000 pots of flax. There was a church – St George - and a school for 60 boys (the village bore its expenses). Currently the Turks have burnt 4 to 5 of the 200 houses of the village, destroyed the walls of the others and burnt their wooden parts.

About a month after the Pan-European war was announced – in August - Turkey carried out general mobilisation of men aged 20 to 38. The villagers requested the *kaymakam* of Kop and the *mutasarrif* of Mush to give them time to finish the field works but they were rejected. Seventy people were sent to Kop. They were registered there and given 70 *kurush* travel expenses each. Some of them were sent to Mush, others to Erzurum. Along with the mobilisation, the government started requisitions and labour service. In the same month of August – during the thrashing - the *kaymakam* of Kop came to the village and demanded 8,000 pots of wheat and barley, 50 sheep, 50 *poods* of ghee, 300 pairs of socks,

300 pairs of gloves, 50 sets of beddings (blankets, mattresses and pillows), 40 felt cloths. These requirements were met within one and a half months. They were giving promissory notes for the goods signed by the *kaymakam* or the army supplier adding that if they won the war and the land remained in their hands, the government would pay the price of the goods by those promissory notes. In the process of collecting the goods, the headman and his assistants were severely beaten for being slow. So were all those villagers who could not provide the required quantity because they were poor. The villagers were forced to transport the goods to Kop from where for 4 months on end they were transporting food, clothes and other goods to Mush and Erzurum on their carts and animals, in the winter snow and storm. Groups of 10 to 15 carts or load bearers were accompanied by mounted policemen who were incessantly beating, cursing and threatening the villagers making them walk through snow to keep up with the horses. Three men from this village put their loads down to have a rest but the policemen went for them and shot them dead accusing them of having the intention to flee. The policemen were torturing the Armenians intentionally: their goal was to murder the Armenians by torturing them or by ascribing some crime in order to take possession of their oxen and carts, take them to the town and sell them. Thus 10 men from this village, unable to endure the beatings by the policemen, the cold and hunger on the road, left their oxen and carts and fled. By that time, during the last 4 months 11 people from the village of Karkarlu had been killed: Misak Safarian, Levon Hakobian, Sahak Mkhoyan, Misak Poghosian, Mher Martoyan, Arpik Melkonian, Mkho Gasparian, Margar Martoyan and others (he doesn't remember). Ninety-six carts with 192 oxen and 300 hessian sacks had been captured.

The Armenian soldiers were given weapons and were trained only for 3 days. After 3 days they were disarmed. Some of them were made to work on the roads in Mush, others (in Erzurum) had to carry loads on their backs from Kyoprikyoy to Katfan – 3-4 days' distance. Unable to endure the cold, hunger and beating on the road, the Armenian soldiers (some 40 people) bribed the policemen and fled back to the village. The rest – about 30 people - died on the roads or were murdered by the troops or the police.

One of the prominent villagers, *Zakar agha*, who was a court official in Kop and was respected by the Armenians, the Turks, the Kurds and the government, turned to the *kaymakam* of Kop Husein Faig *effendi* and proposed to organise *cheté* groups also from the Armenians (like it was done with the Kurds and the Turks) and fight against the Russians. The *kaymakam* thanked him for that patriotic move of the Armenians and promised to apply where necessary and get the orders to form Armenian groups. After 20 days *Zakar agha* enquired again for a reply but the former *kaymakam* was transferred to a different position and his successor *Esat bey*¹⁵⁴, his assistant and the mufti answered that they were

aware of the issue: "Poghos pasha¹⁵⁵, your catholicos¹⁵⁶ and the mayor¹⁵⁷ of Tiflis have invited Andranik¹⁵⁸ from Bulgaria and have formed groups to fight against us. We don't trust you any more: if we give you arms, you will fight against us at the battlefield." When Zakar *gha* proposed to organise groups, he was hoping to raise no suspicions against the Armenians and maybe to alleviate the oppressions and persecutions, since he had heard from his acquaintances within the government circles and the high ranking military that there were plans to massacre the Armenians.

At the end of April 1915 (on the 28th), the wounded Circassian sergeant Musa Kazim on his way home came across Zakar *gha* and told him that the Russians would reach Manazkert in 10 to 15 days and he advised him to somehow pass over to their side since it had been decided to massacre all the Armenians (starting with children) all round the country. He would be killed too; there would be no exceptions for high ranking officials. After two days the commander from Ghlich-Gyaduk who was appointed to Baghdad (and was replaced by Haji Hamti *bek*) came to the village of Kakarlu to the house of Khalid *gha* from the Hasanan *ashiret* and said in the presence of Zakar *gha* (taking him for a Kurd) that the government had lost its trust towards the Armenians and had decided to massacre them indiscriminately – young and old. He warned them to be careful and not spare or protect the Armenians because the government would hang those who do.

Some 8 to 10 days after that, on the Ascension Wednesday, the Russians entered Manazkert. On Monday and Tuesday the *Hamidiye* soldiers were incessantly moving along the village taking away their families. They tried to enter the village of Kakarlu and massacre the Armenians but Khalid, chief of the influential *ashiret* of the village, armed his men and protected the Armenians threatening not to spare the *Hamidiye* if they harmed the village. While protecting the Armenians Khalid *gha* was repeatedly saying that he was afraid the government would hang him for protecting them. On Wednesday the *Hamidiye* retreat ended and there were no more troops. The next day (on the Ascension Thursday) the people hurriedly – some taking their sheep, cattle and necessities, others completely empty-handed - headed for Manazkert to join the Russian army. And Khalid, the Kurdish *gha* of the village, took 100 pairs of oxen from the villagers to move to the village of Khulik in Akhlatu province. He later returned the oxen but the villagers had already emigrated.

They stayed in Manazkert for 2 months. Bread and food were abundant. At the Feast of the Transfiguration of 1915 the Russians retreated; the Turks were already approaching Manazkert. The people were taken by surprise and immediately started to flee. In the evening they reached the village of Burni-Bulagh. There were about 30,000 people from the Bulanekh, Manazkert and Khlat regions. They rested there for 3 hours and then caught up with the

retreating Russian troops, the string of wagons and the Cossacks. The people left or lost their carts, oxen and sheep there and taking their children by their hands started walking amid the wagons and mounted soldiers. Many children ended up under the horses and the wagons. The Cossacks and the wagons were driven directly onto the people throwing them all into the River Euphrates. Many women left their children and fled, others threw themselves into the river. On the second day they reached Sheikh Zelan Getik, then Khamur, Gharakilisa, Tashgalé, Ichkilisé, Diadin, Kor Musun and in 10 days arrived in Igdir. Some people had sheep, others some flour and bread. That was the food of more than 30,000 people for 10 days. On the road the Cossacks rustled the sheep and the cattle of the refugees, threatening to kill those who opposed; some did oppose and were really killed. Some people died of hunger: there were people who ate nothing until Igdir and were fleeing incessantly – from morning until night. There were corpses of people – children, the old and frail, women and men all along the road from Manazkert to Igdir. Out of just 800 people from the village of Kakarlu more than 100 died on the road; another 60 died of epidemic diseases in Etchmiadzin and its environs. The rest are now in Yerevan (Akhta, Bashgegh, Taycharukh, Ptghni), Hajikhalil, Gyoaldara, Yeganlar, Ghulichan, Parnigegh, Ghazarapat, Shishtapé, Duzkharaba. They had brought with them some 50-60 head of sheep and about 100 head of cattle. At the end of May 1915 some people returned to the village and then came back: three houses were burnt, all the household stuff and the furniture as well as the wheat buried in the ground was taken away. The rest of the houses were destroyed and burnt by the Russian troops.

Recounted by Zakar *gha* Margarian from the village of Kakarlu

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, pp. 1-4, original, handwritten.

No 96

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ASTVATSATUR HAKOBIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF ARTONK IN MUSH DISTRICT OF
MUSH PROVINCE**

August 31, 1916
Lower Khatunarkh

Narrated by Astvatsatur Hakobian from the village of Artonk of Mush:
(The man was not confident enough to give information on the former state of the village, the sheep, the cattle and other things...)

The massacre of the village: - On the Feast of the Transfiguration of 1915, on Monday, Musa *bek's* troops and the Kurdish mounted *Hamidiye* suddenly besieged the village of Artonk.

First they gathered all the men of the village – some 150 people - took them to the hayloft of Kiko's Mughu, shot them all and then burnt the hayloft over their corpses. The people started running to and fro in panic. The Kurds chased them slaughtering or shooting all those they came across.

The women and children were taken to the village of Avzut where thousands of women and children were gathered from different villages of the Plain of Mush.

The policemen and the *Hamidiye* locked the crowd (women and children) in the vast stables and cattle sheds of Malkhas who was well-known in Avzut for his wealth. Then the Kurds and the policemen surrounded the stables and the cattle sheds, put easily flammable firewood in front of the doors to the stables and cattle sheds and set them alight. The doors started to burn. The crowd inside started wailing loudly begging for help. The acrid smoke of the straw filled the buildings of the haylofts; many people suffocated. The cattle sheds and the stables blazed with crackling noises, their roofs collapsed on the crowd inside together with burning wood. The haylofts, the cattle sheds and the stables were burning for 24 hours and collapsing on the victims who had all died – burnt or half-scalded.

Those who dared to climb out of the flames and through the windows of cattle sheds or haylofts trying to save themselves were all either slaughtered or shot.

Self-defence: When the village was besieged, 25 men – Artin, Hovik, Sargis, Gro, Baghdasar, Aram, Mkrich, Abgar, Ruben, Khachik, Gevorg, Karo, Kirakos, Vardan and others, took shelter in Sargis Poghosian's house and armed with two rifles started fighting against the troops and the Kurds who, after a long exchange of fire, when they saw that they could not quell the fighters, set the house alight (the position of the Armenians). The Armenians made a hole in the wall of the burning house and fled to Hovik Khachoyan's house. The Kurds thought that the house burnt down together with the fighters and left. When it got dark the fighters found shelter in the reedy fens near the village of Artonk where people saved from the massacres of the villages of Vardenis, Artonk, Avzut, Musheghashen, Mozik, Arnist and a number of other villages had taken shelter.

The armed men took up defence positions around the reedy marshes to stop the Kurds attacking the reed fields and slaughter the people there. For 10 days the people lived in those swampy reed fields with sun above their heads and water under their feet. At night they were going into the fields, gathering wheat grains from the unreaped fields, boiling and eating them or crumbling them and getting along with it. The Kurds knew that there were people in the reed fields but they didn't dare to attack since they knew there were fighters among them.

Ten days after the Feast of the Transfiguration the Russians approached the Plain of Mush (Nazarbekov's army) but soon they retreated taking with them the people who escaped the massacres and reaching Igdir by the Archesh-Berkri route. After the massacre the Kurds captured 25 men (10 of them were freed in the spring of 1916) and 50 women whose children were all murdered. In the spring of 1916 there occurred a fight between the Kurds and the Armenians near the village of Khotnkan. The Kurds – 6,000 horsemen - were from the Zilan gorge. Eleven men from Vardenis, 10 from Artonk and 220 from Sassoun were killed in the fight. Some 200 men from Artonk survived the massacre. Most of the residents of Artonk now live in the Alexandrapol region.

The written account is in accord with my narrative. Due to illiteracy signed by Haik Achemian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 448, pp. 8–12 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 97

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR JAVAHIR AVETISIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF BOSTAKEND IN MUSH DISTRICT
OF MUSH PROVINCE**

August 31, 1916

Artashat

Javahir Avetisian from the village of Bostakend of Lower Bulanekh¹⁵⁹ of Mush recounts the following about the massacre of their village:

The village of Bostakend had 350 households with 1,550 Armenian inhabitants and 8 households with 60 Kurdish inhabitants.

The Armenians had 3,500 sheep, 2,300 different farm animals, 90,000 pots of wheat (one pot is 2 Turkish *litres*) and 60,000 pots of barley, etc.

The village had a church¹⁶⁰ which is now completely ruined.

In 1914 the government recruited 400 soldiers from our village and took them to Mush and from there to Erzurum.

The government took from our village for the army 30,000 pots of wheat, 450 sheep, 200 *litres* of ghee, 1,500 pots of barley, 150 cows for slaughter, 200 carts, 400 buffaloes and oxen. They also took 150 men to Mush to carry ammunition and food for the troops to Erzurum, Basen and they never came back. They were as follows: Arakelian Avdal, Nersisian Saghatel, Knyaz Paghoyan, Mimeyan Avdal, Sardarian Grigor, Tono, Mkro, Knyaz the *zurna*¹⁶¹ player, Vrdeyan Nuto and others. They also took away 450 *litres* of wool, 850 pairs of socks, 750 pairs

of gloves, 900 pairs of *trekhs*. The *chetés* shot with a rifle Mné's Petros's pregnant cow and took away the hide. They took away from the field the cow belonging to Sardar's Grigor. They tied up the legs of Mneyan Serob's ox, skinned it alive without slaughtering and took away the hide. They took away 500 ropes, 40 horses, etc.

The villagers carried all these confiscated goods in carts to Mush. In winter the men aged 12 to 60 carried all this on their backs as *amele* from Mush to Erzurum under the supervision of *chetés*. Twenty people died on the road due to beating by *chetés* and harsh conditions: Gegham Avetisian, Kyaram Arakelian, Avdal Arakelian, Tonoyan Simon and others.

The *chetés* broke into the houses in broad daylight, raped the women and abducted the girls; for example, the *chetés* from Mush entered the house of Pahgo's Plech and raped his daughter-in-law Voski, Vrdé's Marto's daughter-in-law Ano, Vrdé Simon's daughter-in-law Nikar, Mneyan Nerses's daughter-in-law Khasé. They forcibly converted to Islam master Petros's 14-year-old daughter Gyulnaz and murdered Petros and his wife Kisho because they opposed.

All the men were conscripted or taken to *olam (begyar)*; only the women and elderly people were left. Arpo's Seyit severely tortured and beat Vrdé's Marto's wife Kisho, Vrdeyan Mro's wife Shushan, headman Movses's wife Nikar, Pazoyan Poto's wife Shushan and collected the self-defence weapons of the village – 80 rifles and pistols. Their servants insolently broke into the houses taking away the women's jewellery and putting a scare into us.

We didn't get any letters from those conscripted and none of them deserted until today.

In May of 1915 we learned that the Russians had entered Bulanekh-Kop. Sayit, Satin and the regular troops from Mush invaded our village. They rustled all the cattle from the fields; they broke into the houses plundering the property and ruthlessly shooting all those they came across. In all, they murdered 356 people – women, men and children - including priest T[er] Harutyun, headman Hakob and *mejlis*¹⁶² members Mkrtych and Arakel. Sayit's servants forcibly converted to Islam and took with them Gorgé's daughter-in-law Voski, Tité's daughter-in-law Girto, Salvik's daughter-in-law Srбуhi, Chutmé's daughter-in-law Margrit and Saroyan Ghazar's daughter-in-law AlmaSt The Kurds took 60 women and children to the bridge of Zghran over the River Murat and threw them into the water. The rest of us fled in different directions, to the mountains and gorges, living on herbs until the Russians occupied Lower Bulanekh. By the Manazkert and Alashkert route we passed to Etchmiadzin from where, on the orders of the "Fraternal Aid", we were placed in the Etchmiadzin, Igdır and Ghamarlu regions. Only 30 people survived from our village.

In 1916 4 to 5 men returned to our homeland but the Kurds who slaughtered us and fought against the Russian army, had become [Russian] subjects and had seized our village and property as peaceful people; they killed three of our peaceful villagers, the rest returned here.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 435, p. 5 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 98

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TOROS SIMONIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF GELIEGUZAN IN MUSH
DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE**

August 16, 1916

Koghb

According to the narrative of Toros Simonian (a witness, aged 47) from the village of Gelieguzan of Sassoun:

Gelieguzan had 247 households and 2,035 inhabitants, four churches¹⁶³, 12 water-mills, three schools, 13,550 head of sheep, 2,932 head of cattle. There were three manuscript Gospels in the churches. The total annual revenue of the village was 220 Ottoman liras worth of wheat (2,735 units), 600 to 700 *bards* of hay.

In August 1914 the government called up for military service the Gelieguzan men aged 20 to 50. However, the villagers replied that since they were surrounded by *ashirets* and could be attacked by them any moment, they wouldn't give soldiers if the *ashirets* were not conscripted as well. Three months after this event three policemen (from Melkoigali) were killed by the Kurds from Khiank. The government blamed the murder of these policemen on the villagers of Gelieguzan, arrested the prominent people of the village, hanged six of them and put three in prison. The hanged people were as follows: Ghazar Hovhannesian, Habet Kirakosian, Sahak Doneyan, Ghazar Areyan, Yegho Poghosian and Hovhannes Poghosian. The imprisoned people were as follows: Khacho Mkoyan, Aro Mkoyan and Aram Gorgeyan. The inhabitants of Gelieguzan immediately lost their trust in the government because of the hanging of these six innocent people and didn't give any soldiers.

In June 1914, 4,000 government troops and 6,000 Kurds headed by Kor Sleman *agha* (from Khiank), Husein *agha* (from Ghulp), Haji Rashid *agha* (from Farkhn), Sagif *bek* (from Farkhn), Khati *bek* (from Hazrov), *Haji*¹⁶⁴ Mahmat (from Batkan), Sleman *agha* (from Alman), Genjo Papur (from Mus), Usfé Hapé (from Shekotan), Salimé Havé (from Betar, Musa and Khasim *bek*[s] (from

Khut) attacked Gelieguzan and Mount Andok⁴⁹. Since the population and the armed men from other villages of Sassoun had gathered at Andok and Gelieguzan, they put up strong resistance for about a month and the mob could do nothing: during that month only 7 Armenians were killed. But when the Russian troops retreated (in July), the Turkish government sent 12,000 troops and a 15,000-strong Kurdish mob to help the mob that besieged Andok and Gelieguzan (with 4 cannons and 2 machine-guns) and after incessantly shelling the Andok positions they overran the Armenian positions and slaughtered the 20 to 25 thousand people that had found shelter there. Some of the Armenian fighters fled to other mountains and forests where sporadic fighting continued. When the government saw that they couldn't eliminate all the Armenians from Sassoun by force of arms, they made an announcement promising to pardon all those who would surrender. So the people who took shelter in the mountains came down to the village of Dapik and surrendered to the district head. The district head sent them all to Mush where the children and women were thrown into the River Euphrates, and the men were sent to Bitlis where they were tied up and shot. About 150 people from those taken to Mush again fled to the mountains. Only 250 people survived from Gelieguzan.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 439, pp. 1 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 99

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR RUBEN VARDANIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF GOMS IN MUSH DISTRICT OF
MUSH PROVINCE**

1916
Tiflis

Ruben Vardanian (aged 12) from the village of Goms near the town of Baghesh has a father who had moved to Tiflis before the massacre. Now they live in Tiflis at 15 Khojavank Street. Ruben studies in the 1st section of the Havlabar parish school for refugees.

⁴⁹Besides the aforementioned leaders, there were other prominent villains – Mhé's Amar (from Khiank), Sleman Malahasani (from Khiank), Haji Sharo (from Bagran) Slo Prahim (from Harkor), Telo Khshmanian from Boghk etc.

He recounts about the mobilisation and the massacre as follows:

Fourteen men from our village (30 households) were conscripted and they never returned. Everything was quiet in our neighbourhood before the fighting in Van. We gave everything the government demanded from us. When the fighting in Van started, the Turks came and gathered 40 people from the village as *amele*, took them near of Dukhan near Baghesh, murdered them all and threw their bodies into the river. Only one person escaped, named Kirakos, who is now a baker in Tiflis. He himself recounted.

Then at the end of Easter (in the middle of April) 10 to 15 policemen came to our village. They told us that the *hukmat* (the government) wanted us all. We started weeping. In the morning, they surrounded the village and some of them broke in, gathered everyone, women and children and drove them out. They shot those who tried to flee. Two people were killed there. After starting off, the policemen killed another four people who tried to flee. They also caught a man and cut off his head with a sword. After walking for some time we were returned back to our village which was full of people from other villages. Turks from the town (Baghesh) had come who selected beautiful women and girls and took them away. Our friend Rasul came, selected my mother, my three brothers and me and took us to Baghesh to keep in his house. We stayed there for a month. Once I went to our village with the Turkish children to look for food and goods. All the houses in our village were destroyed; the wooden parts were taken away. There were corpses in the church, around it and in the yard; the Turks counted 80 corpses of women and children.

After a month Rasul demanded that we convert to Islam but when we refused he turned us out. Those other Turks who were also sheltering Armenians took their cattle and possessions and turned them out or murdered them. Rasul took us to a Kurdish village and left us there. The Kurds left us alone in the forest. We stayed in the mountains for three days and because of hunger returned to the town. We met our acquaintance Rashid who took us to his house and kept us for three months. My mother was baking bread for him. Rashid was conscripted and we left his house. We again found ourselves among the Kurds. Two policemen caught us and took us to the *hukmat*. There were other Armenian women there too, about 40 in number. The next day they sent us to Sgherd with 10 guards. There were corpses and bones all along the road. Near a mountain one of the policemen took a child from its mother and crushed it hitting against a rock because the mother couldn't walk. After some time another policeman crushed the head of a 10-year-old boy with a stone: his feet had swollen and he couldn't [walk]. We reached a Kurdish village at night. Early in the morning they took us to the road. Iso (Isahak) aged 12 from our village couldn't walk, so the policeman shot him and pulled his body to the gorge. Before reaching Sgherd the policemen murdered another woman, tied two children, aged 6 to 8, to the tails

of the horses and rode to Sgherd. We reached Sgherd and stayed in the stables for two days. At night they woke us up and said that they were going to kill and throw us into the river. My mother, with my 4-year-old brother permanently on her back, took us and we fled taking advantage of darkness. We stayed in the mountains for 8 days hungry and thirsty. We went down to the town again to a Turkish acquaintance of ours named Ahmad. After keeping us for two days Ahmad took us to the Kurdish village of Shekh-Nok and ordered them to keep us. We stayed there: my mother was baking bread, my brother Artashes, aged 14, and I were tending sheep. After a week a Kurd from Balkan took me to his village to tend his sheep. After one day he turned me out because I didn't speak Kurdish. I returned to my mother. The next day Ahmad came and took me to his house to tend his sheep. I stayed there for six or nine months, I don't remember. The Russians came and took the town. The next day a Kurd came and said that the Russians had ordered to turn over all the Armenians. Ten people from Balkan and 25 people from Shek-Nok were turned over. I ran to find my mother but it turned out that when she tried to flee to the Russians, the Kurds killed her and my three brothers.

The Russians put us on carts and sent to Mush where I was placed in an orphanage. After a week we were sent to an orphanage at Oshakan, near Etchmiadzin. My father was a volunteer. After a month or two, he found and brought me with him to Tiflis. My father is a labourer now; he takes care of me and sends me to school.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 423, pp. 32-33, original, handwritten.

No 100

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GHAZAR POGHOSIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF ZIARET IN MUSH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Narrated by Poghosian Ghazar, aged 45, from the village of Ziaret of the Mush region

The village of Ziaret had 270 exclusively Armenian households, engaged in agriculture.

Economic state – Well-to-do, with annual revenue per household of 150 to 500 Ottoman gold coins; 15-300 heads of sheep and cows per household.

Community property – one stone-built¹⁶⁵ church, worth about 800 Ottoman gold coins.

A school, stone-built, worth 400 Ottoman gold coins, with 5 sections, 60-70 pupils of both sexes, 2 teachers with annual wages of 60 to 70 Ottoman gold coins¹⁶⁶.

In July 1915, seven prominent men of the village were arrested and taken to the monastery of Holy Precursor, to the *mudur*. Halfway the policemen demanded 100 gold coins to release them. They returned to the village, took the money but the policemen still took them to Holy Precursor and shot all 7 of them halfway. The next day Kola Sayit came with 15 policemen to arrest all the men who fled to the mountains. They gathered the women and children and drove them out to the Kurkura bridge, where they started murdering them with bayonets. Many threw themselves into the river and got smashed up.

The men that took shelter in the mountains were about 700 and only 70 of them were armed. They fought desperately for about two months. At night they would go down to Kurdish villages to get provisions. Hunger was causing too much hardship. Because of hunger many went down to the fields, were caught and shot. Many fell in the battle. Hardly 17 people could hold out and join the approaching Russian army saving themselves. Out of these 17 who were saved, Ripé Sargis and Paghlua Ovo stood out for their courage.

The number of the victims from the village of Ziaret was about 4,970 people¹⁶⁷; only 17 survived.

Poghosian Ghazar confidently gives the following information about the villages of their region:

Kurd Meydan	-	50 Armenian households	no survivors
Shekhan	-	160 Armenian households	5 survivors
Khoronk	-	60 Armenian households	1 survivor (Kerovb)
Sahak	-	7-9 Armenian households	1 survivor
Sordar	-	60 Armenian households	1 survivor
Bazu	-	80 Armenian households	5 survivors
Kheypian	-	160 Armenian households	7 survivors
Meghti	-	50 Armenian households	3 survivors
Khzlaghach	-	260 Armenian households	7 survivors
Tsntcnud	-	60 Armenian households	1 survivor
Don	-	60 Armenian households	11 survivors
Artkhonk	-	70 Armenian households	1 survivor
Herkert	-	60 Armenian households	no survivor
Misak <i>gha's</i> village	-	30 Armenian households	no survivor

Derik	-	40 Armenian households	1 survivor
Tskhavu ¹⁶⁸	-	80 Armenian households	3 survivors
			47 [survivors]

L. Matanian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 14 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 101

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SANAM HOVHANNISIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF YERSHTER IN MUSH DISTRICT
OF MUSH PROVINCE**

[1916]
Mavrak

Sanam Hovhannisian from the Plain of Mush of Bitlis province who now lives in the village of Mavrak

This last Russian-Turkish war was a disaster for us, the Armenians. It took away everything we had – by law or by force. Then they selected and took away the men – all the men; some for the army, some for *olam*. *Olam*, which was both despicable and hard, was left to the Armenian people: one person had to carry 2 pot loads, two people – 8 pots with one ski, to Erzurum-Hasan-Ghala. They took away only from our house 1 horse, 6 sheep, 4 oxen, 10⁵⁰ of almond oil, 12 pairs of socks, 2 hessian sacks, 1 carpet, 1 *kulab*¹⁶⁹, 2 *kilés* of barley, 2 *kilés* of wheat, 1 *kilé* of bulgur... The rich were giving proportionately more. Repeating this several times they completely deprived us of any living. In addition, there were no working hands to take care of the household with daily work.

On the Feast of the Transfiguration, as Armenians, we too were getting ready to attend to our national duties and enjoy the holiday but it turned out to be a black day. We saw that the Armenian quarter of the town of Mush was on fire. The neighbouring villages of Khasgyugh and Mkragom were burned too. The Kurds from the neighbouring village of Deghdz came and said that there was an order to massacre all the Armenians and if we wanted to escape, we should go to their village. Mamad Ali was among those Kurds. We were obliged to move to Deghdz with all kith and kin. The next day the same Kurds said: "Armenians, the

government troops are coming from Mush burning everything and killing everyone, especially the men. You men flee to the mountains and hide there. We can protect the women and children." When the men left the village, the armed Kurds followed them and dishonestly started murdering them: thus, our newly anointed priest was martyred together with his flock in the mountains of Deghdz. Many of the women, like me, fled to the mountains in panic and witnessed the agony of our beloved ones. They murdered my husband Poghos, my son Avo, my grandson Grigor, my brother-in-law's sons Musho and Gegham. The Kurds took us captive for 3 days on the order of Musa *bek* from Khvner. Then they brought many Armenian women and children from the town of Mush, [the monastery of] Holy Precursor to Yershter and burnt them there. They moved towards Bitlis, gathered the Armenians and burnt them in Avzut. My married daughter Haikanush and her son Karapet were among them. They raped the beautiful women and girls, converted to Islam and took them as wives. Our turn came too: the soldiers demanded from the Kurds to turn over the Armenians they gave shelter to. A Kurdish woman somehow helped me and my daughter-in-law Nikyar to flee to the mountains and saved us. Eighteen of us survived, the others, together with the Armenians from other villages of our region, were burnt in the following houses of our village: 1. my brother Haro's; 2. Haké's hayloft; 3. In Mero Arakel's hayloft; 4. Koké Ohan's house; 5. Grko's house; 6. Haré's house; 7. Hakob's hayloft etc., in all, in 24 buildings. After burning them and after the houses collapsed and the fire went out, they sieved the ashes looking for the valuables that the burnt people had hidden – gold, silver, etc. When the danger passed, we came down from the mountains and surrendered to our "guardians" and were kept captive in their houses all summer. We were working hard for them and getting a piece of stale bread for that. I had also saved my son Avetis giving him to serve the Kurds but, alas, after some time I lost him...

In the autumn Musa *bek* with his troops again gathered the Armenians who had found shelter in the houses of the Kurds and the Turks. This time we were turned over to the executioners by our guardians. They shot my son Avetis and other escapees in front of my eyes. Then they beat me with the butt of a rifle and drove me forward. On the road, one of our neighbouring women had birth pangs and could not go on walking with us. One of the soldiers named Mamad slashed her head with a dagger, then cut her womb open, stuck the baby on his dagger and threatening us with it drove us out. Our neighbour Harut's wife Yeva was pregnant too and she was carrying on her back her 3-year-old daughter. The child was crying of hunger, after eight days of hunger the mother had no milk in her breasts to feed her and was barely able to drag herself after us. The policeman ordered her to sit and breastfeed her daughter. The poor woman sat down, the policeman himself took out the woman's breast and put it into the girl's mouth, and then he walked away a little distance, took aim at them and with one sudden

⁵⁰ Unit of measure is not given.

bullet put an end to the lives of unfortunate mother and daughter... We were told many such stories and our hardened senses were completely deprived of any ability to react.

We were supposed to be taken to Kharberd-Genj¹⁷⁰ when we reached the Kurdish village of Krana at night. We were placed in a sheep shed. We were altogether 362 women. We had 2 boys with us, 18 grown up girls, 6 teenagers and 2 sucklings of both sexes. Two policemen selected two beautiful young women and made them sleep outdoors by them. We heard how they were encouraging each other while doing their beastly acts... We couldn't bear this disgrace. To find a way out I looked around and found a fireplace vent in the wall going to the roof but it was covered with a stone slab from above. I climbed up, took the slab off and got out. I started running like a lunatic without even knowing where to; I just wanted to get away from the village. So in this way, I was hiding at daytime and fleeing at night, feeding on herbs and I reached the mountains of Sassoun. In some sheikh's village named Lachkan a Kurdish woman took me captive and kept me in her house for 2 months. In that village I met Mart Aso's daughter-in-law Ano from the village of Harjavn. She too was a refugee captive like me. Then, after my urgent entreaties, I[z]zo, the husband of my mistress, took me to Mush to our acquaintance Kyarim. Kyarim gladly accepted me and kept me for two month for the sake of our friendship. In February, the Russian troops approached Mush, and Kyarim wanted to send his family to Sassoun for safety. For a reason unknown to me Kyarim was absent from the house for a couple of days. The government ordered to gather all the Armenians who were kept in the houses in the police station. They took me too, but Kyarim came and took me out. I told my landlady that I had hidden my wedding clothes and my jewellery in a safe place, and asked her to allow me to go and bring everything at night; since I was going to stay with them, it was a pity to lose all that... The Kurdish woman put her son with me. Taking advantage of the darkness, I fled. I reached the Kurdish village of Khasgyugh and came across a Kurd. First, he wanted to kill me but then he spared my life and took me to a Kurdish village named Kolosi. There a generous Kurd condemned the Kurd who had captured me and released me. I returned to the Kurdish village of Deghdz and found my daughter-in-law Nikyar whom I had left in my acquaintance's house. When I heard that the Russians had taken Mush, my daughter-in-law and I fled at night and reached the Russian army. On the road when I first met a Cossack, I explained our situation and our wish. He pitied us, dismounted from his horse, put my daughter-in-law on the saddle and when I got tired on the road he sometimes put me on the saddle too. In this way, we reached Mush. We stayed there for quite a long time. My son Arshak was a volunteer in the army and was in the town at the same time but we were both unaware of each other. Then the Armenian headquarters sent us together with other survivors to

the fortress of Khnus. We stayed there in an orphanage for a month. My volunteer son learned about our deliverance and about our whereabouts and found us. Arshak was the husband of my aforementioned daughter-in-law. When the first time the Kurds wanted to rape my daughter-in-law, we both resisted and the enraged Kurd broke the front teeth of both of us. That explains their absence. That is the one thing that comforts me after losing everything – that we were not dishonoured... The headquarters sent us to Kaghzvan and from there to Kars. We escaped from the Turkish hell paying with the lives of 26 victims from our household only.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, pp. 25-26 rev., original, handwritten.

No 102

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS DAVIT MELKONIAN AND HMayAK MATEVOSIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF KHASGYUGH IN MUSH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

August 9, 1916
Ashtarak

Information provided by the Ashtarak Orphanage No 3 orphans Davit Melkonian (aged 16) and Hmayak Matteosian (aged 15) from the village of Khasgyugh of Plain of Mush about the massacre of their village

The massacre of our village started on 28 June, 1915, on the Sunday of the Feast of the Transfiguration. The government had beforehand, by deception, collected the weapons of the village. The day before the massacre Ghasim and Musa *beks* came to the village with a group and told everyone to get on with their work and they left for the town to get instructions from the government.

The *agha* of our village – *Haji Fero* -had a few days earlier placed 4 to 5 armed Kurds from Palik in the house as if for their security. There were also some unarmed Kurds among them with hessian sacks (certainly for plundering). But after Ghasim and Musa *beks* arrived and then left, *Haji Fero* simply told the Armenians that the government had ordered to drive the Armenians out of the village and turn them over to the government threatening to cut the heads of those who would keep the Armenians. So the Armenians should take care of themselves.

On Sunday morning, the village was suddenly besieged and strong shooting started. Then they gathered all the men and announced that they would be given releasing papers so that nobody would persecute them anymore. But the next day in the evening, they tied everybody to one other (more than 700 men), took them

to a large pit near the village, murdered them one by one and threw them into the pit. On Sunday, when the men from our village were taken away, 400 men brought to our village from Mush were put into a house and were set alight. They searched the hideaways of the village and murdered those they found. Our women and little children were gathered on Thursday and taken to the village of Yershter where they were told that they would be sent to Germany as captives. However, many of the women had a presentiment about the imminent disaster and left their children on the streets of the village not to see their death with their eyes. All those who were taken to Yershter were burnt. They also made the Armenians gather the children from the streets and throw them into pits.

Some of the villagers managed to flee to Sassoun. One of the narrators – Davit Melkonian, was among them. After Sassoun fell and most groups left Sassoun, Davit stayed there hiding in crevices until Mush fell. After the Kurds fled, he went down to Mush and joined the Russians. The second narrator – Hmayak, fled to *Haji Fero's zozans* (summer pastures)¹⁷¹ where many residents of Khasgyugh had found shelter. Sadig *bek* from Khasgyugh took Hmayak to his village and after keeping him there for 2 weeks, a Kurd took him to the village of Alagyaz of Bulanekh. He stayed there until Mush was taken. When Hmayak heard about it, he fled to Mush.

The written account is in accord with our narrative.

Davit Melkonian

Hmayak Matteosian

From the village of Khasgyugh

Orphans from the Ashtarak Orphanage No 3

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 428, pp. 9 rev.- 11 rev., original, handwritten.

No 103

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KHACHO GRIGORIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF SHUSHNAMERK OF SHATAKH IN MUSH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

September–October 1916
Alexandropol province

Shushnamerk

This village with 35 exclusively Armenian households was about half an hour's distance away from the village of Tapk where the *kaymakam* resided. The

village had 150 head of cattle (oxen, cows), 1,500 sheep, 10,000 pots of cereals (wheat, barley, millet). They were cultivating vegetables (turnip, radish, Jerusalem artichokes), orchards (apples, pears, plums, walnuts, etc.) There was a church in Geghashen (St Stephen) and a school for 35 boys (The United Society funded it). The children of Shushnamerk also attended that school. There were manuscript and printed books in the church.

Shushnamerk as well as all the other villages of the Sassoun region have been burnt and razed to the ground.

Before the war as well as after the war was declared the Armenians from Sassoun didn't give any soldiers to the government. On the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God¹⁷² in 1914 Talip *effendi* who was residing in Tapk came to the village with 12 policemen and demanded a lot of things but the villagers gave only 500 pairs of *trekhs* and socks, 500 ropes, 5 litres of twisted [wool, cotton], 20 litres of ghee and 15 sheep. After 20 days, the same *kaymakam* came again with a lot of soldiers demanding recruits, wheat, barley, etc. However, before that the villagers had received an instruction from Mush to refuse to give soldiers to the government and satisfy their demands because, they said, whether you give or not, they would massacre you. From that day on the *kaymakam* was coming to the villages several times a month and repeating his demands but was always leaving empty-handed.

The last time on or about the New Year of 1915 the same *kaymakam* came and asked the villagers to give at least load bearers to the government. He said: "You are our subjects, help the government to defeat the enemy so that it doesn't come and occupy our land and take away our honour and land." He said: "The Armenians are safe under the Turkish government's wing; they are free and have lands. If the Russians come, they will abuse the sanctity of your family you are so zealous about. Help our government to defeat the enemy and after that, you will be duly rewarded. In that case we shall protect you also from the Turkish police and the Kurdish *ashirets* – from their oppression and plundering."

At that time, 8 people and 4 oxen were given from the villages of Shenik, Semal, Geghashen, Shushnamerk. Seventy people were taken to Mush where loads weighing 2 *poods* were thrown on their backs and accompanied with police guards they were sent to Hasan-Ghala, together with a caravan of 1,500 people brought from the plain and other regions. It was winter, and the porters were walking waist-deep in snow, in the rain, snow and storm. They had no warm clothes; many of them were barefooted and nearly naked because the soldiers heading to the battlefield were taking off their new *trekhs* and warm clothes as well as knives, watches, etc. They were given no food on the road. If they managed to get some warm meal in a village, that was something very fortunate. After walking in the rain the whole day, when they would reach some village, instead of taking them to the fire to dry their clothes and warm themselves, they

would be put into haylofts where they would shiver in the January cold until morning in their wet clothes, and many of them would die. In the morning their loads would again be thrown over their wet backs and their endless trip would continue. Those who couldn't endure these torments, were catching cold, falling ill and dying. When they were stopping for a moment to take a breath or to do the deed, they were shot and killed accused of having the intention to flee. In the evening when they would reach some village, the policemen would offer to release them to their village for money. The naive Armenians would give all the money they had with them but the moment they would go out of the hayloft or some other place they were kept in, another policeman would shoot and kill them.

Ten of the 70 porters from Sassoun died on the road; the rest fled and came back to the village. Many of them fell ill because of the tortures suffered on the roads and died later. All eight men from Shushnamerk returned but two of them, Gevorg Ghazarian and Sargis Kirakosian, fell ill in the village and died.

The winter passed. At Easter, the Kurdish *ashirets* attacked the village of Aghbi, rustled the sheep and the cattle, passed Mount Tsovasar and were on their way when the young men of the village armed themselves and chased the Kurds to take back their sheep and cattle. Twenty-five Armenians were killed in the fight and the Kurds had no casualties because they had taken up positions in crags, fighting from behind the rocks, whereas the Armenians were in the open space. The Armenians went to Tapk to complain to the *kaymakam*, but he paid no attention to them. The *kaymakam* Talip *effendi* had personally visited the *ashirets* and had incited and exhorted them, for the sake of the holy religion and Muhammad, to attack the Armenian villages of Sassoun and freely slaughter and plunder. He had told them that the government had decided the Russians would soon come and they would have to leave the region, so before retreating they had to slaughter those rebellious, *khayin* (insidious, disloyal) *giaours*¹⁷³. He told them: "You do everything; I'll pay no attention to their (Armenians') complaints." Friendly Kurds told and warned the Armenians about this. Indeed, when the Armenians complained to the *kaymakam* about the plundered property and 25 people killed, he said he couldn't restrain the *ashirets*. Some 15 to 20 days after that the same *ashirets* attacked the villages of Kermav, Kop, Iritsank and Tapk murdering 50 people and taking away all the sheep and cattle as well as all the household stuff. The villagers again complained to the *kaymakam* and after it had no consequences, one of the prominent men of Kermav, Stepan, went to Mush to complain to *mutasarrif* but he was arrested there. This time the villagers sent all the women and children of the aforementioned 4 villages to Mush to demand protection and compensation from the government but they didn't return to the village either: they were taken out of Mush and slaughtered in a gorge. After 2 days, Stepan as well as other prominent Armenians were taken

out of the prison to the village of Aliznan, where they killed them with bayonets, poured kerosene over them and set them alight. These events happened on the Feast of the Transfiguration (1915) and simultaneously the massacres of Mush and the Plain occurred. Two hundred Armenians who miraculously escaped from Mush reached Sassoun and told about those dreadful events. After that, the Armenians left their villages taking only the sheep and the cattle and climbed Mount Gyavesharifkhan. They stayed there for 2 days without any fighting. The entire population of eight villages – Kermav, Kop, Iritsank, Tapk, Geghashen, Shushnamerk, Semal and Shenik, as well as the 200 people who fled from Mush and the Plain, were there. There were *ashirets* 1 to 2 hours away who were following the Armenians and waiting for the support of other tribes and troops to attack them. The Armenians were putting up guards day and night to follow the movements of the enemy and not to be taken by surprise. On the 4th day of climbing the mountains, in the morning the troops and the Kurdish *ashirets* moved towards the mountains. They were burning the villages with kerosene and moving on shooting. There were many men among the villagers but only 250 of them had arms. The villagers had bought the weapons long ago from the Turks and the Kurds they knew. There were 4 to 5 types of rifles – Turkish-made, Greek and German Mauser, etc.

The Armenians with their arms in their hands, ready in their positions, waited for the enemy to approach close enough, started firing at them and the battle began. The Armenians resisted the troops (around 2,000 soldiers) and the *ashiret* mob for 3 days. But when the enemy received new troops, cannons and machine-guns from Mush, the Armenians decided to leave that place and climb Mount Antok. We hoped to hold out there for a while until maybe the Russian could come and rescue us. About 300 people were killed in 3 days of fighting on Mount Gyavesharifkhan. On the 4th day, the Armenians left the mountain and climbed Mount Antok where some 40-45,000 people had gathered from other villages of Sassoun. Together with the newcomers, there were about 50,000 people there. About 10,000 of them were men able to bear arms but, alas, only 900-1,000 of them had arms.

Antok was first surrounded by the *ashirets* who didn't dare to attack the Armenians. Three days after climbing Antok from Mount Gyavesharifkhan, in the morning the aforementioned enemy with 12,000 troops and many *ashirets*, cannons and machine-guns surrounded Antok and attacked the Armenians. The Armenians were courageously resisting at the beginning but when the cannons and machine-guns started mowing down the fighters, they despaired. Nine fighters out of 10 on the positions were killed in an instant by cannon fire. After resisting for 3 days, the Armenians couldn't hold their positions and fled. In the evening of the third day the enemy entered among the Armenians and started the massacre. All that night until daybreak, they massacred the Armenians – men, women and children. The next day

they continued chasing and massacring for 3 days. Those who escaped hid in hideaways, dense forests, caves and under the rocks. About 30,000 people perished in 3 days of fighting and massacre. With the intention to take people out of the hideaways, they persuaded Hovhannes (Olo) Martoyan (captured) from the village of Shushnamerk that the war with the Russians was over, that the sultan had announced general amnesty and those who surrendered would not be punished, and those who didn't would be caught and executed. They sent that man (aged 40) to the Armenians who had found shelter at Antok hideaways to convince and bring them down to the government. Barely 40 to 50 people out of 15-20,000 did not believe him and stayed on the mountain. All the rest went down to the village of Tapk and surrendered to the government representative, *kaymakam* Talip *effendi*. After the Antok massacre, the *ashirets* gathered all the sheep, cattle and possessions of the Armenians and returned to their villages. The troops stayed in Gelieguzan, Shenik and Tapk for a while and then headed to the battlefield after the Armenians surrendered to the government.

One of the reasons the people surrendered to the government was that they preferred the doubtful deliverance to the definite death of starvation. The people were going down to the field at night armed, collecting wheat, and taking it to the mountains where they were pounding and eating it. However many people fell ill and died because of that insufficient food. Besides, the winter was approaching.

In the village of Tapk the *kaymakam* sent the people to reap the harvest for one month. Then the Armenians carried the reaped wheat on their backs to Mush to government barns. While the men were working on the fields, taking 5 *kurush* per person, on the 10th day after surrendering the *kaymakam* took 1,500 women and children to Mush as if to place them in villages and take care of them. But instead, they locked them in some buildings for 3 days without bread and water. During that time the soldiers and the policemen were going into the buildings, raping the women, selecting the beautiful ones and taking them home, taking away all their money and going away. After 3 days, they were taken out of those buildings, taken to the Plain of Mush, the village of Blél, locked in cattle sheds and burnt with kerosene.

After finishing the field works the people – about 15 to 20,000 in number – were put into the Mush prisons, men and women separately. After keeping them in prison hungry and thirsty for 3 days, they drove the women to the bank of a river – 2 hours' distance from Mush – and threw them into the water. The other part was burnt, of course, and before that they were raped. As for men, they were used as *amele* (labourer groups). They were taking Armenians to the houses of Mush Armenians destroyed by cannon-fire, making them excavate the ruins and look for money and other goods. Then the men were twice taken out of Mush, to Khnus, to carry food for the troops. Those who were ill were taken aside and

killed. The 100 sick people in Tapk were similarly taken out of the village and murdered in a gorge. When the Russians took Khnus, the Turks gathered the remaining 3 to 4,000 residents of Sassoun, took them out of Mush to the village of Karnets, murdered them all in a gorge and fled to Bitlis because the Russians had already approached Mush. The 2 to 300 people remaining in Bitlis were put in a building. Then they brought ropes, divided them into groups of 50, took them out, tied them up and murdered them. Three people escaped by making a hole in the roof. One of those three is now here – Arshak Kirakosian from Gelieguzan. The whereabouts of the other two is unknown.

During the massacres, the Armenians were doing everything possible to save themselves. Many took advantage of the darkness and fled to the mountains; many bribed the soldiers and fled; others made holes in the roof or the wall and fled to Sassoun when the guards were asleep. Many people fled like that, and 600 residents of Sassoun climbed the mountain during the winter frost. They spent the winter there in the most severe conditions. At first, those who had money or weapons were giving them to the Kurds they knew, taking a pot of wheat and feeding on it in the mountains. But when they ran out of money and weapons, they dug out dried grass roots from the ground, [eating] dried carcasses of dead animals and even the flesh of their dead friends. Those who ate human flesh would suffer for about 8 days, grow thin and die. About 100 people were saved by secretly hiding in the houses of their Kurdish acquaintances until the Russians came.

About 240 people from Sassoun went to Gelieguzan and somehow putting the burnt houses in order, started living there. However, when the *kaymakam* of Tapk learned about it, he took 100 soldiers and drove the people off the village murdering 2 women, 3 children and burning the village. In winter, the policemen were going up the mountains, hunting down 4, 5 or 10 people a day, bringing them down, robbing and then murdering them.

In February, the Russians reached Mush. The Turks and the Kurds fled to the hinterland, and the Armenians surrendered to the Russian army in groups or one by one. They stayed in Mush for 4 to 5 months – from February to the beginning of July. They were feeding on cereals and ready-made meals found in the houses of Turks who had fled. The nation¹⁷⁴ had given them half a *pood* of wheat per person and 3 roubles. Food was abundant in Mush and everyone was full. The Armenians were at the vanguard of the Russian army.

About 200 people from Sassoun had reached Mush. During the July retreat the Russian government took the weapons from the Armenians. The Russians were stationed in the Plain of Mush and the Armenians went to Khnus and joined the 6,000 refugees from Sassoun, Khnus, Khut and other places. Everything was quiet on their route. Representatives of Armenian organisations gave them bread, tea, sugar, meat, meals, etc. They stayed thirsty for only 2 days. Many died of

diseases on the road. Twelve people escaped from the village of Shushnamerk – 9 men, 2 women and one girl. About 900 people escaped from all Sassoun who now are in the village of Ghasmalu. Nobody has returned to their village from Russia. The village is burnt and razed to the ground. And the property was taken by the Kurds long ago.

Recounted by Khacho Grigorian from the village of Shushnamerk

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, pp. 25 rev.– 30 rev., original, handwritten.

No 104

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ABRAHAM GRIGORIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF VARDENIS AND NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES IN MUSH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Massacres committed by bloodthirsty Musa *bek* and Abdul Machit in Armenia

When Russia declared war against Turkey, these *beks* started demonstrating their barbarities to the miserable Armenian people. They gathered Kurds from everywhere and formed a big army each to fight against the Russians. Their intention was not only fighting against the Russians but also plundering the poor Armenians.

Months passed on. When the Russians started advancing into the Armenian hinterland, the brutal Kurds started slaughtering and plundering unfortunate Armenian villages.

At the end of April 1915, when the Russians approached the fortress of Khnus, the bloodthirsty Musa *bek* started displaying his arrogance all over the villages of the Plain of Mush. He gathered *ashirets* from all over – Khut, Motkan and Kosor – to form an *alayi*¹⁷⁵ to fight against the Russians. One Saturday evening, by deception, he came and passed through Vardenis with a 800-strong Kurdish mob and 150 policemen and went to the Kurdish village of Aghbienis which was very close to us. In the morning, he sent a man to Vardenis demanding the village registers to settle the accounts with the government. At 9 o'clock the village was suddenly besieged from all sides and they started plundering and robbing. There was shouting and yelling all over. My nephew Khachik, aged 4, scared of the Kurds, ran to his mother and said: "Ma, where

shall I hide for the Kurds not to slaughter me?" "Don't be afraid, son. God is great; the Russians will come soon and save us from this *zulim*¹⁷⁶."

They gathered the young men of the village in the school building and started torturing them one by one. Lucky are those who neither saw nor heard that! The beast Musa *bek* turned Vardenis into a ruin by the evening. They collected 20 to 25 rifles, 1,000 cartridges and emasculated 6 to 7 men who died in three days. They tied the rest to each other and took them to Mush to hand over to the government.

Some pregnant women suffered miscarriage for fear of the Kurds.

Barely a week had passed when the callous Abdul Machit massacred the whole region of Aghlat. Then he retreated to the Mush region and brutally massacred some villages there – Khuli, Kamurj, Tsaghken, Prkhus, Metsk, Koltan and Tapavank.

They brutally massacred, plundered many Armenian villages turning them into ruins and ashes; they raped beautiful girls and newlywed brides, murdered young children; they forcibly took babies from their mothers and in front of their eyes slaughtered them, hit them against the rocks and threw many of them into deep pits. Many girls committed suicide in order not to fall into the hands of brutal Kurds. Even a dirty Kurdish brat, who had never seen an Armenian in all his life, took for himself 2 or 3 beautiful and adolescent Armenian girls aged 12 to 15.

The remaining Armenians – the elderly – were driven off to the Plain of Mush – hungry, barefooted and naked. They wandered over there for a while and were then burnt together with the population of the Plain of Mush.

On 1 May – the morning of the Ascension Thursday – the bloodthirsty Abdul Machit moved from the Akhlat region to the Plain of Mush. At 9 o'clock in the morning 30 to 40 mounted Kurdish mobsters broke into our village of Vardenis to put it to the sword and demanded from the headman 20 to 30 yokes of oxen to take their *agha* [Abdul] Machit home. At the same time, the Kurds broke into the village and started rustling the cattle; firing was heard from everywhere, people started fleeing back and forth. At that time the men of Vardenis – Hasrat with some of his friends – had already hidden in Khandel's house in a corner of the village.

When the plundering started, the Circassians who lived close to our village and the Kurds from Gesan arrived and soon threw Abdul Machit's forces out of the village saying: "If it's about plundering, we are closer and we shall not give you our share."

When the village herds were driven out, the wife of the village bell-ringer Jnto, who had a cow, went after her cow. When she climbed the mountain, away from the village, the Kurdish youngsters attacked the poor woman and told her:

“Take off your clothes and give them to us!” But she refused. And they shot her in the back and killed her on the spot. So Abdul Machit took away 1,800 oxen that belonged to poor Armenians and moved on to the village of Gyoli Glukh inhabited by Armenians and Kurds. They gathered the miserable Armenians with their families and young children with their mothers and by deception put everybody into a house and after keeping them there for 4 days, on the order of bloodthirsty Musa *bek* and Abdul Machit, they burnt all the Armenians to ashes. In the village of Musheghashen the brutal Ibrahim *bek* tied 40 to 50 men to each other and slaughtered them all. Ibrahim *bek* took Gro’s son Avdal from Musheghashen to his place by deception, tied him with a rope to a tree and started killing him cruelly, for 12 hours cutting him to pieces alive from feet to head. When the poor man’s shouts and yells were reaching the sky, he was saying: “Where are your Russian uncles or your brothers? Let them come and free you.” They did the same in the Armenian village of Avzut. It is unbearable to write about our pains and besides, who shall I write for when nobody is listening to our intolerable pains? Today we are here and nobody hears us. There were massacres in many places but our pain is different: for example, people from Van or Alashkert, they came here with their families and possessions. They are heard today. Whereas we who suffered the tortures and lost our property, lost our fathers, mothers, etc. we are not heard. To be continued

Abraham Grigorian from Vardenis

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 490, p. 13-14 rev., original, handwritten.

No 105

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ALMAST MKRTCHIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF KR DAGOM IN MUSH DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

1916

Ghzi-Chakhchakh

Village of Krdagom in Mush district of Bitlis province
Almast Mkrтчian now living in the village of Ghzi-Chakhchakh

The massacre of our village occurred at noon on the Sunday of the Feast of the Transfiguration. Before the massacre of the village my husband Sedrak, my son Nerses and my brother-in-law Kerob together with some other men from our village fled to join the Russians and save themselves, but since the roads were blocked, they came back but were murdered. My daughter Bersabé, aged 12, was

taken away by a Turkish policeman. During the massacre I too was wounded in our house in 4 places: in my head by a dagger; in my abdomen in two places; in my left thigh in one place. My head wound was ruining my eyesight. I made a medicine from herbs and flowers and recovered a little. We wandered in the mountains and fields for 5 weeks feeding on herbs and anything else we could get... We returned to the village and hid in *muhachir* Khalil's house for the whole winter. In the middle of Lent the Russians occupied our villages. I, my son Tigran, aged 7, and my daughter Zmrukht, aged 10, surrendered to the Russians. They took us to Khasgyugh and from there we passed to the Caucasus through Manazkert and Sarighamish. The Turk that took care of me was a charitable and honourable person and took care of me like his sister. Eventually the Turks killed him because of me. When the soldiers learned about me, they came to kill me but he did his best to save me. The last time he applied to the chief of their village and said: “If you don't intervene and the soldiers take away the Armenian woman from my house I'll tell on you that you keep Armenian women and sleep with them.” This is how I was saved the last time.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 454, p. 27 rev., original, handwritten.

No 106

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MKRTICH TOROSIAN ON THE NUMBER OF SURVIVORS FROM THE MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGES IN THE CLUSTER OF VILLAGES OF UPPER KHARZAN (Khabljoz) IN SASSOUN DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

[1916]

Khabljoz – Sassoun

There were about 200 villages populated with Armenians in the district of Khabljoz. The remnants of the population of 20 of these villages climbed up Mount Maratuk and saved themselves. The villages are as follows:

1. Patrmut	70 households	30 Armenian	40 Kurdish
2. Hatni	130 households	60 Armenian	70 Kurdish
3. Hrut	30 households	20 Armenian	10 Kurdish
4. Koshak	10 households	5 Armenian	5 Kurdish
5. Pirshenk	15 households	15 Armenian	----
6. Tzi	20 households	5 Armenian	15 Kurdish
7. Dzoraghbi	24 households	4 Armenian	20 Kurdish
8. Rikonk	10 households	5 Armenian	5 Kurdish

9. Aruidots	50 households	5 Armenian	45 Kurdish
10. Tnketsk	20 households	10 Armenian	10 Kurdish
11. Kotrfer	20 households	10 Armenian	10 Kurdish
12. Kartser	25 households	20 Armenian	5 Kurdish
13. Oghngej	14 households	4 Armenian	10 Kurdish
14. Gomk	5 households	5 Armenian	----
15. NerkinTagh	22 households	7 Armenian	15 Kurdish
16. Mshkatar	17 households	15 Armenian	2 Kurdish
17. Hovgegh	10 households	10 Armenian	----
18. Nadopa	11 households	10 Armenian	1 Kurdish
19. Talidzor	20 households	5 Armenian	15 Kurdish
	523 households	255 Armenian	268 Kurdish

NAA, f. 227, l. 1, c, 452, s. 30 rev., original, handwritten.

No 107

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR STEPAN HARUTYUNIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF MIJGYUGH IN SASSOUN DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE

August 16, 1916
Koghb

According to the narrative of Stepan Harutyunian (aged 23) from the village of Mijgyugh of Sassoun (he was an eyewitness):

Mijgyugh had 52 households and 900 inhabitants, a monastery (Holy Apostles¹⁷⁷), a school, a water-mill, 4,000 sheep, 500 head of cattle, 52 mules. The annual revenue of the village was 900 units of wheat, 1,000 *bards* of hay.

Most of the village was set alight.

On 20 July 1914 the Mijgyugh men aged 20 to 60 were conscripted. The house of the conscript who didn't report on the appointed time was burnt and his property was confiscated.

Sixty non-conscripts from Mijgyugh were used as unpaid labourers.

On 12 May 1915, 1,000 Kurds and 500 government troops headed by Abdul Aziz son of Genjo son of Papur, Hapé's Yusuf (from Shego), Selim from Jalal, Shakmeran from Bekar and Sevdo son of Haytar (from Danir) attacked Mijgyugh. The armed young men of the village heroically resisted the mob for (60) sixty days. The village headman Sharo Mrtikian, T[er] Gaspar Simonian,

Gevorg T[er] Khachaturian, Harutyun Ghazarian, Melkon Makarian and others were killed in the fighting. After resisting for 60 days the villagers of Mijgyugh withdrew to Mount Andok where they put up resistance for another 20 days and then moved to other mountains. Due to intermittent fighting only 31 people survived out of 900.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

Note: The events in all the villages of Sassoun were almost the same so there is no need to describe them one by one. I'll only give the number of victims by villages:

	Household	Population	Survivors
Kndzorik	35	500	25
Jortnik	25	450	40
Kajarenk	20	350	6
Tatuk	22	400	2
Dalhor	15	200	11
Baloyink	8	80	8
Marsto	15	250	1
Dashbatrik	8	80	-
Tsokar	2	30	1
Gorngez	8	100	1
Psank	11	200	6
Gomk	25	400	10
Mzra	5	60	10
Chim	3	40	3
Pshut	12	150	-
Mktenk	31	500	25
Batsi	15	150	10
Havkunk	8	200	10
Shushnamerk	35	350	14

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 439, pp. 4 and rev., 2 rev., original, handwritten.

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MKRITCH TOROSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF PIRSHENK IN SASSOUN
DISTRICT OF MUSH PROVINCE**

September-October 1916
Alexandrapol province

Village of Pirshenk (Sassoun)

The village of Pirshenk had 15 exclusively Armenian households with 400 inhabitants, 150 head of cattle (oxen, cows), 15 mules, 2,000 sheep, 2,000 pots of wheat and *klkil*, 800 of which were taken every year by local influential Kurds. They had a pitiful church – Holy Cross – and a school for 15 to 20 children. Nobody has returned to the village and nothing is known about its current condition. When they were leaving in March 1916, the houses were at least not damaged though plundered and emptied.

The Armenians from the aforementioned villages of the Ghabljoz region didn't provide any soldiers thanks to the protection of the local Kurds. The government managed to recruit some from other villages but almost all fled and returned to their villages.

When they came demanding conscripts, the villagers climbed the mountains, and Areg the headman bribed them and sent away saying there were no more men in the village, that they had left for Aleppo, Adana and America. After that, they were coming quite frequently and were sent away in the same way – by bribing – until 1915 when the men were conscripted and after that the massacre began.

The government officials took away 20 gold coins, 15 sheep, 100 pairs of socks and *trekhs*, two and a half *poods* of ghee for army needs. No one was taken for forced labour service; there was no violence and no oppression. The Kurds and the Armenians were then in peace with each other and protected each other against the government.

After the confiscations carried out under the name of “donations”, the Armenians started waiting for an imminent massacre, but they expected it to be unsubstantial and fragmentary as it happened in those places since old times. That's why they were expecting conflicts and fighting.

Khalil's Jemil and Hapé's Yusuf, chiefs of the Sheko *ashiret*, were telling the Armenians in March 1915 that the government had instructed them not to keep Armenians and generally not to protect and show friendly attitude to the Armenians since by the decision of the German king the Armenians had to be destroyed for 2 to

3 years running until their lineage is completely eliminated. So any Kurd who would hide Armenians would be hanged. So the Kurds who were peacefully coexisting with the Armenians started plundering the Armenians in broad daylight taking away their cattle and goods. They were saying: “Since you will be slaughtered, it would be better if we take your property, not the others.” In March 1915, when there were no rumours of massacre yet, the Kurds took away all the cattle, sheep and property of the aforementioned Armenian villages. They said: “If you stay alive, we'll return it. If you die, we'll have it, not the Turks.”

The massacre started first in the town of Hazzo (Hazo) where out of 200 Armenian households hardly 100 people survived whose whereabouts is unknown now. The ringleaders of massacres were *ashiret* chiefs Sheikh Abdul Rahman from Sarmant, Kencho's son Abdul Aziz from Mush, Ghatr from Zakr. These chiefs alone and their people massacred the Armenians of the town of Hazo. One evening at the end of March 1915, they surrounded the town and ordered the Armenians to come out as if to be taken to a safe place with the *ashiret* of Zakr. They took the people out of the town and slaughtered half of them there. The rest were taken to the river of the village of Norshen (an hour's distance), shot there and thrown into the river.

After that the aforementioned thugs convinced also the chiefs of Sheko *ashiret* Khalil's Jemil and Hapé's Yusuf, and Khalil's Abdul Aziz chief of the Sassoun *ashiret* to attack the monastery of the Holy Golden Auricular of the Apostle Peter, rustle their cattle, plunder the monastery and murder the congregation and about 40 people who felt the imminent disaster after the massacre of the town, took up arms and found shelter there. The monastery was on the slope of a mountain, with a fence and quite reinforced.

The Kurds came and demanded cattle and sheep from the abbot Archimandrite Stepanos Baghdasarian. The abbot gave them some and sent them away. In a few days they came back and took some more. The last time they came to the monastery with a large crowd and sent 10 people to bring the abbot to them. But one of those ten people knew the abbot and notified him not to leave the monastery and firmly lock the doors. So he did. The Kurds were enraged and shot down the golden cross on the dome of the monastery. The other chiefs attacked the monastery with many Kurds and regular troops. The Armenians resisted for 40 days. Eventually, after the Kurds had cut their water, they could no longer go on and left the monastery at night and headed towards Andok to join the people of Sassoun. A man named Grigor couldn't flee on time and was killed by the Kurds. Sharo Mrtikian was called by the Kurds to the door as if to pass a message for the besieged but was shot in the head and killed. Three of the Kurds were killed too.

Right after taking the monastery (2 May, 1915), the Kurds attacked the village of Pirshenk. The villagers noticed them at a distance, took their families and

climbed up the mountains in order not to be surrounded. The enemy entered the village and murdered the 4 people that had stayed there – Todo Krpeyan, Gaspar Musheghian, Marké Tonoyan and Khacho Gevorgian. By that time, the neighbouring Kurds attacked and threw the mob out of the village. Later the same chiefs would often attack the village and the villagers would again flee to the mountains (Maratuk). The Kurds were breaking into the village, plundering and capturing some victims and leaving. The last time the Armenians noticed the Kurds and fled again. This time the Kurds chased them up the mountain. There was a fight. Fifteen Armenians were killed and 10 Kurds (on the Feast of the Transfiguration of 1915). After that the Armenians, finding that living in big groups was dangerous, divided into groups of 3 to 4 and dispersed all over Mount Maratuk into dense forests and caves feeding on herbs they were familiar with and stray sheep or cows, but they had no bread. The Kurds were permanently searching for the Armenians. They would often come across armed Armenians and fight them or they would come across unarmed men, women or children and capture them. The Armenians had no leaders; everyone was by himself, wandering with a rifle over his shoulder. Four-five months passed in this way. Winter came and it was impossible to stay in the mountains due to both cold and lack of food. The remnants of the aforementioned 20 villages – some 6 to 7,00⁵¹ [sic] people – started dying of diseases, due to cold, hunger and dirty conditions of living and were eventually reduced to only 2,500 [sic]. Besides, the Kurds, falsely announcing an imperial pardon, hunted down many people and murdered them.

In the winter many Armenians went to the Kurds they knew, handed over the money and weapons they still had and asked for protection. The Kurds everywhere took in the Armenians and kept them until spring. Only in Ghabljoz did the troops learn there were Armenians among the Kurds, captured 100 people and murdered them. A Kurdish clan chief, – the *vizier* of the Zpotun *ashiret*, as well as brothers Zkon and Dervish took in about 1,500 Armenians, kept them and they are still there with them. The troops went there several times to murder them but Dervish fought back, killed some soldiers and made them withdraw.

Of the 400 villagers of Pirshenk only 170 survived who went to the Sheko *ashiret* chiefs Yusuf and Jemil and handed over their money and weapons. The Kurds pledged to keep them only until spring. They were fed very badly; some of them died (25 people). They were cultivating their lands from morning till night.

In the spring of 1916, in March, when the Armenians heard about the approaching Russians, they fled and hiding during the day and moving at night made it to Mush in 5 days. There they worked for the Russian soldiers for 2

⁵¹ The original reads 700, should be 7,000.

months. Every 11 people were given 3 pots of *klkil*. About 120 people from Pirshenk made it to Mush. Another 35 people died of diseases on the road and in Mush. During the 1916 June–July retreat of the Russians they emigrated and reached Kaghzvan in 15 days. The trip was safe. Armenian organisations gave them food and clothes. Now 85 people live in Artik, another 25 have stayed with the Kurds.

Nobody has been back to the village and the current condition of the village is unknown to them.

Recounted by Mkrtych Torosian from the village of Pirshenk

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 452, pp. 31-33, original, handwritten.

GENJ PROVINCE

No 109

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HARUTYUN SARGISIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE VILLAGE OF ARTKUNK OF KHINAK IN KHULP DISTRICT OF GENJ PROVINCE

August 1916
Koghb

According to the narrative of Harutyun Sargisian, headman of the village of Artkunk from Sassoun district (he was an eyewitness):

Artkunk had 32 households and 300 to 380 inhabitants, a church named after St James, a school, a water-mill, 4,500 sheep and 100 head of cattle. The church had many manuscript Gospels. The total annual revenue of the village was 4,000 units of wheat, 3,000 *bards* of hay and 200 *litres* of honey.

Currently the village is reduced to ashes.

On 15 July 1914 all the men of Artkunk, aged 22 to 45, were conscripted. If any conscript did not report, his house was set alight and all his movable property was confiscated.

During the mobilisation the government requisitioned 1,000 units of wheat, 100 *litres* of honey, 100 units of barley, 10 oxen, 100 sheep, 200 pairs of socks. They also exacted from the village as “*iyané*” (donation) 4,000 Ottoman liras. The non-conscripts were always taken to *olam* (forced labour service).

On 7 April, 1915, a Turkish and Kurdish mob of 1,000 people, headed by Suleyman *agha* from Khian, Hammut *agha* from Khian and Amar's Sleman *agha* from the same village attacked Artkunk. Meeting no resistance, they slaughtered 100

men, all the women and children with rifles, daggers, rocks and by setting them alight⁵². Suleyman *agha* put 40 men and women into a house and set it alight.

Only 7 men, 3 boys, 7 women and 3 girls survived from Artkunk.

Recorded by G. M. Nerkararian

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 439, p. 3, original, handwritten.

ERZRUM PROVINCE

No 110

CHRONOLOGY COMPILED BY SURVIVOR MISAK AGHBALIAN ON THE DEPORTATION OF THE POPULATION OF KARIN

Events at Erzurum
as recounted by the witness Misak Aghbalian

The deportation of the Armenians of the Plain of Karin and Basen started on 1-15 May, 1915. On 5 May, the *chetés* had the Russian chapel demolished. It was located in the Armenian cemetery and was built during the Russo-Turkish war of [18]78.

On 23 May, the government informed 165 Armenian households that they had to emigrate to Mosul. The 165 Armenian households informed the prelacy about the government order and had their names put on a list. About 25 to 30 of them hired 200 horses and on 3 June moved to Kharberd via the Kghi route. Afterwards the remaining 165 households moved to Yerznka on 6 June by carts via the Bayburd route. They safely reached Yerznka. Later on information was received in Karin that the emigrants had reached Suruj.

On 8 June the government again gave notice to 500 households to leave the town within a period of 8 days. On the 15th, the 500 households moved to Yerznka via the Bayburd route.

⁵² In almost no village of Sassoun were there self-defence fights. All the armed men of Sassoun gathered at Mount Andok and fought collectively against the mob of about 30,000 Kurds and Turks supported by the regular troops with 30 cannons, 20 machine-guns and soldiers armed with (small-size) Mauser rifles.

On 20 June, the craftsmen (1,250 households) were ordered to leave. On the 25th, they too left Karin via the Bayburd route. One hundred households of widows and orphans were left who were also ordered to leave the town on 6 July. In 8 days they left too.

On 15 July, Bishop Smbat was also made to leave to Yerznka¹⁷⁸.

On 16 July, all the Armenian doctors and surgeons left. Ten households of craftsmen were left in the town.

On 2 December, the belfry was demolished.

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 107, p. 23, original, handwritten.

No 111

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR POGHOS VARDANIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF ARMENIANS OF KARIN

October 2, 1916
Karin

The order came that we too had to leave the town. We loaded the carts and moved to the town gate (Constantinople Gate). There they checked everyone's pass, took the women in one by one and searched them for weapons and then ordered us to pass through the town gate. Two gendarmes were searching the men at the gate and a third one was checking the number of people and if it matched the number in the pass we were allowed to leave through the town gate. After finishing the procedure, we too were ordered to drive our carts. So we left the town and headed to Ilicha. That night we spent in the village of Kez, 1.5 hours' distance from the town (end of May 1915).

The next day the gendarmes ordered us to set out. We were already about 50-60 families there. Two gendarmes were standing on the road collecting pass money – 1 *kurush* (8 *kopeks*) per person. We passed them and after 2 hours we were on the northern part of the Ilicha bridge. On the other side of the bridge the families that had started before us had put up tents. We settled next to them. And so families were coming from the town and gathering there.

One evening at sunset, a gendarme ordered the men to get out of the *barkhana*¹⁷⁹ [camp] and go to the sergeant (*bashchavush*¹⁸⁰) who was standing with a paper in his hand. Almost all the men were there already. The sergeant announced that an order had arrived for us from the Military Council that he had to read to us and standing on a high place, he read the following:

A. Our Military Council and His Excellency the Governor have issued an order that all the population of Erzurum shall be taken without incurring any damage to an appointed place (but he didn't name the place).

B. If any drunk is found in the *barkhana* who disturbs the people's rest they shall be immediately taken to the Military Council and shall be severely punished.

C. If a weapon is found with someone, they too shall be taken to the Military Council and their family shall be killed.

D. If anything belonging to soldiers (clothes etc.) is found with someone, they shall be taken to the Military Council.

He read a number of similar orders and afterwards assured us: "No damage will be done either to you or to your property." We all shouted in one voice: "Long live the King!" applauded and dispersed returning to our families.

The next day we rested. There was a woman with her boy aged 5 to 6. She was holding his hand and wandering around to collect firewood and *atar* [dry dung] to burn. Bent to the ground she was moving towards a barley field where three Turks were reaping barley and talking to a gendarme standing by. The woman hid in the irrigation ditch to hear what they were talking about. The Turks asked the gendarme where they were taking those *giaours* who go so happily as if it was a wedding.

The gendarme answered: "We have to take them to a place which has been decided." The Turks asked: "Where is this place that has been decided." The gendarme said: "There is forestland between two towns. We have to kill them all there." One of the Turks said: "Look how happy and cheerful they are. It doesn't occur to them what awaits them."

When the woman heard this, she immediately hurried to the *barkhana* [camp] and recounted what she had seen and heard. But no one paid attention to her words saying that our governor had reassured us and would provide our security.

The next morning we were told to set off. Everybody made their arrangements. Ten gendarmes were in front of the first cart, the rest were in the middle and at the end. We were heading to Yerznka. We passed Ilichia in 15 minutes. I met a friend on the road who was sitting and watching. He told me: "I am sitting here since the very first cart and waiting for the last one. I want to see how many hours long our *barkhana* [caravan] is." I sat next to him. It was two hours long. We advanced a little and then it started to rain until Evrenli Khan where we halted. The rain stopped. It was dark already. At night the crier said that we would start off early next morning. We went to the caravan committee⁵³ to say that we couldn't walk the next day and ask for a day of reSt The

⁵³ Members of the committee included Altunian Garegin, Melkon Patikian, T. Shilayan and others.

committee was ordered to have a day of reSt The next day the sun was shining brightly and its warmth dried whatever had been made wet by the rain. The same day an army officer rode by on a horse, saw a girl at the spring and wanted to take her with him. The case was immediately reported to the committee and the issue was settled down by the gendarmerie commander.

The same evening they announced that we had to start off the next day.

The beginning of our caravan started to move. Nothing happened on the road to Ashkala. In the evening we stopped to the west of Ashkala and the next day an Armenian soldier from Karin named Pailak (he had converted to Islam) who was serving for Mirkiz, a commander from Ashkala, approached us. He saw a girl and wanted to take her with him. But the committee prevented that too. Our committee decided to collect 200 gold coins for the commander so that such cases did not occur again. The money was gathered and given to him.

Another caravan came from Erzurum and settled at the eastern side of Ashkala. On the third day another caravan came and on Monday one more. The two new caravans joined us. After staying there for 5 days, the order was given to move on again. We entered a small gorge and then climbed out of it. There were soldiers and an officer standing there demanding passes from everyone. Those (men) whose names were not listed were sent back to Ashkala. About 70 to 80 young men were separated like that from the whole caravan. They were taken to Ashkala under military guard. When the caravan settled down for the day, the sun had already set down and we halted 10 minutes away from the gorge. The young men, who were separated and imprisoned, were taken away. A young man named Hovhannes, who was a blacksmith, somehow managed to escape and join us. He said that at night they would take away 10 people from the prison and murder them.

The next day we moved to Prnakapan. Nothing happened on the road; just one cart had broken and the ox had died; so they fixed the cart and caught up with us. By that time we had already halted near Mount Kop.

We had a day of rest near Mount Kop. The next day two more caravans joined us. The next day they joined us and started climbing Mount Kop. We reached the top of Kop, we were ahead of everyone else. Then everybody started shouting to stop, because there was some danger. So we stopped, and our commander ordered the gendarmes to climb up the mountain and if there were any dangerous people there, to immediately shoot them. While we were scared waiting there for the danger, at the end of the caravan people were terrified (later we heard the following about what happened).

Like we mentioned above, many of the gendarmes were in the middle and at the end of the caravan. The gendarmes at the end divided into two parts; one part went to the higher places of the mountain and hiding there, started firing at the end part of the caravan. The rest of the gendarmes started firing at them but

always in the air. It lasted for 15 minutes. The terrified people begged the gendarmes to shoot stronger to scare away the enemies.

The fighting quietened. The gendarmes who were with the people told them to give money to them since they had used so many cartridges for them. And they put a *yapunji*¹⁸¹ on the ground for everyone to put money there. After quite a lot of money was collected, they took it away. But there were no casualties.

The gendarmes that were with us received an order and went down, and we started advancing. The same evening we halted at the bottom of Mount Kop. After spending the night there, we started off in the morning heading to Maten where we halted on the right bank of the River Euphrates and noticed human corpses there. From Maten we went to Bayburd where we stayed for 4 days. We went to the town to replenish the stock. On the 3rd day the governor of Karin visited us and walking around the caravan ordered the names of poor families to be written down to give them food and, true, he sent 200 *litres*⁵⁴ of bread in carts. Somewhere near Bayburd we lost 5 villagers from Dzitogh of Karin who took the oxen to the pasture and didn't come back. We reported this to our commander. After long searches, we found neither them nor their bodies, so we were not sure if they were dead or had fled.

The Catholic Armenians from Khotorjur reached us there and halted by our caravan but we were not allowed to communicate with them.

We went on moving towards Yerznka. After three days we were at the bottom of Mount Spnkor, one hour to the south of Yerznka. It was very hot there and we had some problems with water. After staying there for a day we harnessed the carts again and passed through the Armenian quarters of the town that were completely desolate, with all the doors open and no population. Soon we passed the caravan of the rich and halted at a 5-minute distance from them. The rich had been waiting there for 9 days, and we learned everything there. One day two old Kurdish men approached the spring where the Armenians were taking water and told their young men: "They are taking you to murder you like they did with the Armenians from Yerznka and neighbouring villages, Trabzon, Kimishkana, Baberd, Erzrum and other places. Come with us and we'll save you." Our young men cursed them and said: "You have murdered the Armenians and now you have come to cheat us too?" They immediately told the gendarmes about it, beat the Kurds up and made them go away.

A shoemaker boy named Yervand Kloyan from the Yerznka military workshop came and confirmed what the Kurds had said, but the rich didn't believe him either saying that "the governor had promised us to ensure our security."

⁵⁴ Litre, lidre – unit of weight equal to 12 pounds or 5,5 kg.

After staying there for 13 days, on the 14th day the rich were told to start off. Early in the morning the rich started their journey along with the last two caravans that joined us as well as the one from Khotorjur. It is impossible to describe the evacuation of the Khotorjur and our two last caravans. The rich, who had made their arrangements still in Yerznka, started off immediately. So did the Khotorjur caravan. As for the last two caravans who were poor and their transportation means were provided by the government and/or Armenian organisations and the deal was up to Yerznka, their carriers were discharged and returned back. There were 800 carts from Svaz among them (the cart drivers were Armenians) and the government immediately made them transport their food supplies, and all the household stuff of the families was left unloaded in the field somewhere near Yerznka. All the gendarmes broke into the camp and started whipping the people, cursing them and shouting "Move forward!" One of them was begging them, saying his son was left behind, but the gendarmes said they didn't know such things and whipped the man on the head and drove his oxen. To save his life the poor man left his boy and followed the gendarmes. Quite a few such heart-breaking and barbaric episodes occurred. After the caravans left Yerznka their camp presented a labyrinth of houseware to the viewer – chests, blankets, beddings, copperware, pillows that were scattered all over the plain. The same evening we were ordered by our commander to go to the town to replenish the provisions. We left the camp and were heading to the town accompanied by a gendarme. We were passing by the chaos left by the last caravans. When we reached that place crowded with household stuff, I suddenly heard a voice: "Brother Poghos, please, they left me here and went on. Take me with you." When I heard the voice, I stopped and started looking around. I could see no one. But the voice called again. I moved forward to the voice and saw a paralysed boy of 12 to 15 in bed whom I knew. His name was Tamanian Vahan - he was our neighbour. I approached him: "What is it Vahan? Why have you stayed here?" The boy said weeping: "The gendarmes gave no time to my father to put me on the horse. He begged them but they wouldn't listen. When he started pleading, the gendarmes hit him with the butt of the rifle and broke his head. My father saw that death was close and my mother, sister and father went on crying and leaving me here." I had to go so I told him: "Vahan, I am going to the town. When I come back I'll take you to the camp." We went to the town, purchased what we needed and returned. Again the same voice. I replied: "In a minute." I went to our camp and told one of his relatives that Vahan was left behind. They went after him and brought him to our camp. The same evening the crier shouted that we were starting off the next day. We took what we could and left the rest there. The next morning we started advancing towards the Kamakh gorge. It was 11 kilometres from Yerznka and we barely made it in three days. The first two days of the journey were safe and without any losses. On the third

day we had to pass through the Kamakh gorge. The road there was 10 metres above the River Euphrates on the slope of a mountain. It was so narrow that two carts could not pass through it at the same a time. Near that pass I was left behind. At that moment, a gendarme approached me and taking me by the hand wanted to throw me into the river. I immediately held on to him. The gendarmerie sergeant (*chavush*) saw that and shouted to let me go. The gendarme obeyed and went away swearing. The sergeant caught up with me and said: "How many times did I tell you not to fall behind?" And we advanced talking like that. After we left, the gendarmes picked women from some carts and threw them into the water after taking away their money. The wife of Luysparonian Mkrtych with her two boys, aged 3 and 10, were among those thrown into the water. A wounded boy named Karapet, aged 18, reached us. So did his friend Artavazd Berberian, aged 19. Through the committee, we informed the commander about it. He made enquiries and said that the Kurds did it and sent the aforementioned two wounded men, accompanied by a gendarme, to the Yerznka hospital.

The losses of that day were 70 to 80 people. We halted on the bank of the Euphrates near Kamakh. At that time almost all the caravan of the rich had passed through the Kamakh Bridge, only several carts were left behind. We wanted to catch up with them and make enquiries but the gendarmes categorically forbade it. We stayed there for two days and heard that 160 men were separated from the rich and were imprisoned in the Kamakh church. Again we attached no importance to that news. On the third day we again started off. Those with horses, mules, donkeys as well as those on foot were the first to pass over the Kamakh Bridge. Carts went over it with difficulties. So the gendarmes were taking 19 *kurush* – 1 *mejitiyé*¹⁸² – per cart to help them cross the bridge, and 1 *kurush* per person on foot or on horse. Our caravan safely crossed the bridge, took the Ekin road and reaching the Chil Khoroz Gorge halted there. After much suffering and thirsty moments we slept a quiet night. The next day we were ready to start off. We asked and they said we were not going and all the people stayed with their families. My friend and I were walking over the upper side of the gorge when we heard a rumour that men will be separated from the caravan. We didn't believe it and hurried to the camp. No news. After a while I wanted to go with one of my relatives and bring his cart which had remained on a hill having rolled into a small crevasse. We climbed quite a bit. We met a gendarme whom I knew. I told him to join us promising 2 gold coins. He said: "I can't join you even if you give me 10 gold coins. I have an important [job]." We went on climbing hopelessly and met another gendarme who was guarding some carts left there. We promised him 1.5 gold coins to help us; his partner said OK and we paid 25 *kurush* prepayment and the rest we agreed to pay on our way back. After the two gendarmes had talked separately, the one that was coming

with us told us to go ahead and charged his rifle. Our friends were people with life experience and they realised what was going on. They told the gendarme we were not going and told him to keep the 25 *kurush* for troubling him and returned to the camp. Within a matter of an hour after we returned several young Armenian men started shouting that men should separate and after a lot of men had separated the *chetés* came in and started separating men aged 10 to 100. I shouldn't forget to mention that an exception was made for the members of the committee and the crier. The separated men were located 20 metres away from the camp.

I forgot to tell that before starting the separation the soldiers, gendarmes and *chetés* surrounded the mountains from four sides. The women thought they were going to shoot us, so they wanted to come to us but the gendarmes would not allow them, so the women were standing in a line confused and waiting silently.

An officer started dividing the men into two parts. Those who were old or unable to work properly were sent back to the camp. The younger ones, aged 14 to 55-60, were sent to Kamakh. So everybody was grouped and waiting. When they finished with the men, the old and the infirm were ordered to go to the camp. The women approached them to find their beloved ones among them and when they didn't, they returned to their former place. We were ordered to walk in pairs to Kamakh. When we turned our faces to Kamakh the women made a bit of noise and moved forward to us and the soldiers and the gendarmes armed with bayonets tried to stop them pushing them with bayonets. The women's voices reached the sky. Shouts were heard in the camp, the wailing of the women, everything was confused. Anyone can imagine what sort of scene that was, so the men who were unable to bear it any more made [the gendarmes] take them away quickly. We were on our way back to Kamakh. We were about 900 to 1,000 people accompanied by about 150 *chetés* and gendarmes. We were walking in disorder. The gendarmes accompanying us on four sides on our horses started robbing us on the road. They took away Avetis Saroyan's and some others' golden watches and money. Near Kamakh a gendarme approached me and said that the sergeant wants a gold coin. I said I had no money and he left. We told about it the officer who had separated us and had made friends with us and he issued an order that no one had the right to demand money or take something from us. And he told them they were guards (*muhavafasa*) and had to walk on the sides and he even wrote down the names of the gendarmes who had taken away our friends' watches and money to return them. Within an hour we had already passed the bridge and were moving by the state road to Kamakh which had only one road. When we reached the first building, which was a stable, they made us stop and counting 300 men locked us in that stable appointing soldiers and gendarmes armed with bayonets all around the stable. The stable had three small windows which were not enough to provide air for the

prisoners. We were standing inside in tight squeeze. The stable was very small and its floor was all in horse manure. It was [impossible] to move; in an hour all the prisoners bathed in sweat. We asked the gendarmes at the door to open the door a little to get some fresh air and we assured him that no one would move and we also promised a small amount of money. The gendarme agreed and taking the money opened the door but our friends who were in need of fresh air started moving towards the door. The gendarme saw that he couldn't restrain the men anymore and started pushing them back with his bayonet and locked the door.

Night fell. It was very uncomfortable in the prison. The sweat was flowing down like water from everybody's forehead. Some even took off their coats to wring them. Everybody wanted water. The gendarmes were bringing water from the Euphrates in tin kerosene pots and giving it to us through a hole in the lower part of the stable door, getting 8 to 16 *kopeks* (1-2 *kurush*) for each cup. But only those close to the door could make use of it. Those at the far end of the stable couldn't drink water. It was impossible to sleep and we were waiting for the dawn. The day hadn't broken yet when the prisoners thundered the air with a church ceremony (reciting the hymn "Morning of Light"). The day broke. The gendarmes already knew about the plan to murder us. They were looking for some excuse. The gendarme at the door said: "Those who want to go out can give two *kurush* and go out." It was obvious that everyone wanted to go out. At first 8 men went out and when they returned they said they were robbed. But I didn't pay attention to that and paying 2 *kurushs* went out with the second lot. When we went out with 5 friends, three soldiers armed with bayonets took us from the prison door down to the bank of the Euphrates and after we did our deeds behind a *kahve*¹⁸³ and wanted to go back they stopped us and started searching us. They took quite a lot of money from my friends. When my turn came, two soldiers searched me and took 138 *kurush* but didn't find the 14 gold coins tied on my back and returned us to the prison. We hadn't reached the prison yet when a gendarme said to me: "Hey, take off your shoes." "I'll be barefooted," I said. "Put on mine," he said. "Yours are old," I said. "You won't wear off even the old ones," he said. When I heard this, I took off my shoes without any resistance, put on his old ones and went to the prison. An hour later the commander who had separated us came and ordered everybody to come out. We went out, he ordered to bring water for us; we drank. After breathing fresh air for a while, another gendarme sitting by the stable door wrote down our names one by one and asked questions: Where are you from? Which quarter from? How old are you? Then they again put us back to the prison. The rich and their friends who were imprisoned in the church were in a much worse condition. One hundred fifty of the rich men promised 2,000 gold coins to free them and send them back to their caravan. The Turks agreed and made them sign cheques

for 2,000 gold coins. Then at night they took them out one by one and robbed them taking away everything, even their cigarette cases, the new clothes and shoes like they did to Ter Azarian Vardan, Lamiyan Hmayak, Aram Chilingarian and many others leaving them in their underwear. Two hours after we returned to the prison, the officer who had separated us called 2 of our people and told them: "You will be taken to work on the roads. The gendarmes might rob you on the road. So gather all the money, watches etc. that you or your friends have, write down everybody's names and bring it to me. When you reach the appointed place I'll give them back to you." Our friends came and told us about the officer's offer and we gathered 14 gold coins, 14 watches and rings and took them all to the officer. An hour passed and we were all sitting in the prison and thinking about our future. One of our friends was looking out of the window. He turned to us and said: "Friends, they have already taken the spades and picks there to dig graves for us." Everyone expressed his opinion about it but we couldn't come to any conclusion. After half an hour they took out the rich who were kept in the church and passed them by our prison. Our friend turned to us and said: "Guys, they are already taking out the rich tied up in order to murder them." Our other friend who was behind the door and was watching from the hole under the door turned to us confused and stuttering and said: "They brought a lot of ropes to tie us up." When people heard this, those behind the door tried to move back but couldn't.

The gendarme put the key into the lock and the door opened. Two *chetés* came in, took two men out holding them by their hands. The door was locked again. After tying up the two men they returned and it went on like that. I shouldn't forget to say that they had tied up our arms and those of the rich very differently. Both their arms were tied and they were tied up next to each other in a way that it made it hard even to move. As for us, we were tied up in pairs by the arm one after another. One tied up group consisted of 15 to 30 men. Those among our friends who were two brothers, one among us and the other in the church, the brother who was with us would climb up the window trying to find his brother among the men passing by tied to each other to say farewell. For example, Vahan Chanchikian said farewell to his brother Petros Chanchikian. Many others did so too (on 18 July). The prison was almost empty, 20 young Dashnak party members were left who wanted to be tied to each other and die together. They were Vagharshak Zurikian, Kosti, Shah-Armen, Chanchikin Vahan, Petros Baghdikian and many other friends. We too were taken out and tied up. After 10 minutes the prison was empty. After tying us up, they ordered "Forward!" (*ireli*). Each tied up group was accompanied by an infantry soldier and a horseman. We too joined the caravan of tied people and reached the bridge we had crossed with our parents 2 days previously. We crossed the same bridge the third time and headed first to the south and then to the south-east We were

[moving] along the bank of the Euphrates all the time. When there were small streams we were getting into them and drinking water with our hats. Those who were tied up very tightly couldn't walk fast, and the gendarmes were cursing them and hitting them on the head saying "Forward, *giaours!*" (*ireli gyavurlar*). Soon we reached a small summer house where Chefer from Epilhint – who commanded our massacre – was standing. His horse was tied to a tree and he was smoking a cigarette. There was also an old Turk who was gathering the shoes of our friends and piling them on each other under a tree. We passed that place and started climbing a hill. After walking for 10 minutes our friends were taken to a gorge that stretched to the Euphrates. There was another gorge to the east of that one where we halted. After waiting there for a while, Chefer – the commander of our murderers – came on a horse, examined us and ordered us to raise our arms which were tied. We obeyed. When they saw that a young man named Ghazar, aged 30, had cut his rope, he called him up and turning to us said: "Those who do not obey the king's orders are punished like this." And he ordered the gendarmes to kill him with bayonets. The gendarmes immediately carried out his order and the young man was executed in an instant. Then he turned to us and said: "I am appointed by the government to guard you on the road. This is what happens to those who do not obey our orders." Some of our friends were convinced by Chefer's cheating tongue and didn't allow their friends to make the rope a little loose to give the arm some rest. After that Chefer ordered the gendarmes and *chetés* to stand behind us and charge their rifles. The gendarmes obeyed and standing on a line started waiting for the villain's order. But Chefer considered that it was too high and the bullets might not hit the victims, so he called a gendarme and after disappearing for a few minutes came back and ordered those that were on the upper part of gorge to climb up the hill. The gendarmes took them to another gorge and started murdering them. Those men were from the rich class. Vardan Ter-Azarian was one of them. He turned to us and said: "Guys, they are already taking us away to murder us. Good-bye to everyone. Those who stay alive say hello to those who ask about us." After saying this he was taken away with his bound friends. And so they were taken away to be murdered in bound groups. It was already 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we started hearing the shots in volleys. And we knew that our friends were being murdered.

They were drawing their last breath there and the *chetés* started collecting money from us. When they came to us, the handkerchief in their hands was full of money. They took the head cloth of one of our friends and started putting money there. When they came to us, they started grovelling: "What can we do? It is a government order. We are just employees, we can't do anything and this money that we are collecting, we are going to give to your parents in the caravan."

On the other side of the hill the same action went on. With every rifle shot we would say, "One more died." It was evening; there were hardly 10 bound lots left in the gorge at sunset. Chefer saw that it was getting dark and by killing one by one it would take too long and decided that all the rest would go there together. The order was immediately carried out and we started moving to our grave where hundreds of corpses were half-dead swimming in their blood. We reached the place and were ordered to sit down. I had a small knife on me with which I cut the rope and rested my head against the ground in the gorge. I was waiting for the death from the right-hand side. The commander made the gendarmes stand in line on a hill to the left (it was barely 3 metres high) and ordered to shoot. The bullets were flying towards us. They fired some 300 to 400 bullets but hit very few people. The survivors saw that by shooting from so far away the bullet might hit them in a way as to make them suffer more, so they shouted in one voice: "Come closer and shoot at our heads so that we die faster." Exactly at that moment Karapet, son of H. Melkon from Karin, started shouting cursing in Turkish the religion of the chief of *chetés*, his beliefs, [the Prophet] Muhammad and the chief's wife, etc. adding: "If you hit us, nothing will be left to you." Chefer replied: "If nothing is left to us, so let nothing be left to you." (If the house is burnt, let nothing be left to the mice). And the Dashnak group shouted: "Hit the Dashnak party members, they won't spare you." They received the same reply. Chefer ordered to put the bayonets on the rifles and kill us with bayonets. One of the *chetés* said: "Let's get that *giaour* and flay him." But one of the soldiers approached him and after murdering him with a bayonet turned to his partners: "I could kill him only after stabbing him exactly for 50 times¹⁸⁴." Chefer ordered to start killing with bayonets. Twenty gendarmes came down from the upper part of the gorge stabbing everyone with bayonets. By that time I had no wounds but the friend I was tied to, named Yervand, was wounded the second time and he started going up and down and sobbing but the rope with which he was tied to his friends didn't let him stand up properly and he eventually fell on me and covered me from chest down. His blood flowed all over me dying my clothes in red. And so he died protecting me from the bayonet stabs. They started stabbing everyone the third time in order not to leave anyone alive. Chefer was standing on a high place and was encouraging them: "Hit them, let your arms be strong. I'll give you your bounty in Kamakh. But make sure that no one stays alive. If even one stays alive, we will be in trouble." When they approached me, a gendarme stretched his bayonet to me and stabbed me several times on my left arm. One of the stabs pierced through my flesh and when he pulled the bayonet out the warm blood started flowing over my body. I didn't move, and one of the gendarmes told the other "He has kicked the bucket," and they went up stabbing everyone. Some other young men were alive too. After the third round was over, the gendarmes passed by us and gathering

around Chefer started telling him about their exploits to get more rewards. One of the gendarmes turned to the corpses and said: "Residents of Karin, get up, I have brought cold water. Who wants to drink?" They wanted to see who was alive to go and murder him. When they heard no reply, they added: "*Giaours*, the water of Kamakh is warm for you, you don't like it, you want that of Erzurum. So here is cold water for you, etc."¹⁸⁵ Chefer gave a few orders to our guards and they left for Kamakh (which our guys named Kambakh¹⁸⁶). Within a matter of 20 minutes after Chefer had left us someone started shouting from the above: "Take my golden ring and kill me with a bullet. I have too many wounds and they torture me." A gendarme approached him and taking the ring out of his finger told his friends: "Some of these *giaours* are still alive. Take the spades and the picks." They started breaking the heads of the corpses. Exactly at that moment I raised my head and saw someone fleeing jumping over the corpses. I recognised him: it was Toros Vasoyan from the village of Ishkhu of B[asen]. I called after him but he seemed not to hear my voice and carried on. So I too jumped up from my place and we started fleeing together to the River Euphrates. On our way we met two of my friends from Karin but we went on without stopping. Rifle shots were heard from the gorge with the corpses that thundered the air. We thought they were shooting at us, but no. They were shooting all the time after Chefer left and before we fled to either frighten anyone who had stayed alive and stop them fleeing or they were scared themselves. And we, four friends, were fleeing down the gorge towards the Euphrates and came to a part where we had to jump from a high rock with a lot of sand below it. Without even thinking that it was dangerous, we jumped one after another. There were two friends below that rock, who had fled earlier and were resting there. When they heard our steps, they shivered thinking [the soldiers] were chasing them to murder them. But when they saw us, they were happy and suggested we should rest there too. They were Yervand Gloyan from the village of Kan and Harutyun Mnatsakanian from the village of Dzitavogh. But I said that we were still in danger and suggested that we should advance a little and then reSt My friends agreed with me and we, six wounded men, started off always speaking in low voice and encouraging each other. In half an hour, we were at the bank of the River Euphrates. Those who had serious wounds wanted to drink water there but I told them it was harmful. We continued our journey along the left bank of the Euphrates to the east and were discussing where to go to save our lives. After discussing many ideas, Toros suggested that we go to Tersim, to the Kurds where we could live freely. Everybody agreed.

After walking a little more we halted near the water. It was a moonlit night. My friends had many wounds. When the wounds cooled down, they started hurting. I unfolded the head cloth of one of our friends, tied up the wounds and then told them: "Guys, you must know that we are still in danger. So let's

continue our journey and we'll pass the Kambakh bridge today and climb Mount Tersim. It is safe there."

The night was almost over and we, six wounded men, continued our way. We had hardly walked for half an hour when our friend Toros lay down on the sands of the Euphrates bank. I approached him: "Toros, get up, let's go. The Turks might come and kill us." "I can't walk. And if the Turks come I'll throw myself into the water." I thought I couldn't be helpful to him, so I left him and his two friends and went away with Yervand and Harutyun. After advancing a little we reached some rocky place. We were barefooted, bareheaded and the night was cold and we were wounded. Despite all difficulties, all three of us were in a hurry to cross the aforementioned bridge and climb the mountains where we could find free life. After advancing a little more we appeared in a wheat field by the Euphrates. Passing through the field we were trying to keep close to the Euphrates since we thought that the house of the owner of the field could be nearby and seeing us he could attack us and we could throw ourselves into the water. Within a matter of 10 steps we saw a village with some light from the fire. The dogs started barking and there was someone encouraging the dogs. I saw that the danger was approaching and told my friends to get into water and go ahead to protect ourselves. We kept walking paying no attention to the dogs and their owner's voices. I had seen some military barracks somewhere but due to the darkness I couldn't decide where exactly it was to avoid it. We got out of the water and entered an orchard with many trees. From the verge of the orchard we noticed the barracks. Without coming out of the trees we started watching attentively to see if there was anyone. Nothing could be heard. We came out of the trees and hurriedly passed exactly in front of the doors of the barracks. After advancing a little we climbed a mountain where Yervand lagged behind. Harutyun and I kept going and in an hour entered a gorge that was going down to the Euphrates. We decided to spend the night there. The moon spread its light all over and we could see around a little. There were no roads. In front of us, on the other bank of the Euphrates there was a staging post building. I was sure, there were soldiers there. We both hid under a rock and went to sleep.

In the morning we woke up when the sun was already high in the sky. It was hot at noon and we were thirsty and wanted to smoke but we were not hungry, though we hadn't eaten for two days. My friend told me: "I can't stand thirst any more. I'll go down and drink from the Euphrates." I tried hard to convince him that by going down he could endanger the lives of both of us. He didn't agree with me. So I told him: "If you dare to make a single step, I'll kick you down the rocks." When he saw I was serious, he yielded. At that moment a sparrow rushed over our heads. We were both scared and thought someone was approaching us, but there was nobody. I climbed up a rock in a way not to be seen and looked

around: there was no road and no man around. I returned to my friend and calmed him down.

My friend said that his wound hurt badly. The bullet had seriously damaged his left shoulder. I opened the wound and tearing my shirt cleaned the coagulated blood, took out the small pieces of bones and tied it up again without washing. Then we slept for a while.

It was evening. The last rays of the sun were still scattered over the tops of mountains.

It was the Turkish Ramadan¹⁸⁷ (fasting). The soldiers went in to have dinner. We continued our journey through stones, thorns and branches. We were barefooted, our feet hit the rocks, were pricked by splinters, broken stones hindered our walking. But despite all these obstacles, we kept going. We finally reached the "Kambakh" Bridge. There were fruit trees on the bank of the Euphrates. We searched hard but unfortunately couldn't find any fruit on them. Through the same trees we noticed a cigarette light on the other bank of the Euphrates which was neither getting stronger nor dying out. We were a little confused thinking there were gendarmes there who had noticed us and were waiting. After hiding in the trees for a while, we eventually dared to leave our hideaway and continue our way. Within a matter of 100 steps, we saw a worm on the ground that was shining and thought that the light we saw was the same. At midnight we were on the right-hand side of the bridge. We cautiously crossed the bridge and headed to the mountain which was Mount Tersim. There was a cold spring under the bridge. We wanted to drink water but didn't because there seemed to be some shadows there. Later we learned that those shadows were our friends.

We climbed the mountain through twisting paths and forests. We had barely climbed a quarter of the mountain when suddenly footsteps were heard. We were confused but the voices advanced to the gorge and disappeared in the trees. They were Armenians. We kept on climbing and lay down under a tree off the road and had a good sleep. The sun was quite high in the sky when we woke up and continued our way. We felt quite free. We had barely climbed half of the mountain when I had a discussion with my friend. I wanted to pass over the mountain to go to the Kurds who were freer, but my friend saw a village and insisted we went there. After some bickering, I too agreed to go to that village. We walked to the village. We reached the road taking to the village (named Hovik) where a man named Khelil came upon us with a sickle in his hand. I told my friend that he was coming to slaughter us. The man approached us and ordered to follow him to the forest. We went there and sat under the shade of the trees. Then he searched us and found nothing. My friend got excited and started weeping. The Kurd and I wept too. Excited Khelil calmed us down and said we were free. We told him about our misfortunes. We asked for bread. He

immediately went to the field and brought some barley bread on a *sqj*¹⁸⁸. After we had finished eating, he said: "Go to the village, to the house with an open door and ask for bread. After you are full, go by that road (he showed the road) and you will get to our tents." We did as he said and went to that house where they gave us bread, pilaff and a yogurt drink. After we finished eating, they wrapped everything in bread and gave it to us. Another Kurd brought us cigarettes and matches and showed the way to the summer pastures. We took the road and reached Tersim and moved around there freely. We were free.

Poghos V. Vardanian

2 October, 1916
Karin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 427, pp. 1-24, original, handwritten.

No 112
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TOVMAS POGHOSIAN ON THE
MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF KARIN AND
ARMENIAN LABOUR COMPANIES**

1917
Karin

Recounted by Tovmas Poghosian from the town of Hayni of Tigranakert province

Hayni is a town with 4,000 households in the north-east of Tigranakert province. One thousand households are Armenian, the rest are all Turks.

The Armenians were divided into two denominations – Protestant and Apostolic. There were 900 households of Apostolic Armenians and 100 households of Protestant Armenians each with one church. The Apostolics [had] three mixed two-sex schools with 600 students. The Protestants had two schools – one for the boys, the other for the girls, with 120 students.

With a small exception, the crafts and trade were in the hands of the Armenians. I cannot give exact figures; I can only say that they lived quite a well-to-do life.

Hayni properly responded to the mobilisation: all the Armenian conscripts with a small exception went to the army to do their duty. Meanwhile the requisition committee was literally robbing the Armenian merchants and households. Besides that, the soldiers that invaded the town, and especially the

Armenian neighbourhoods, were taking away anything they liked without paying much attention to the complaints.

I was enlisted in the 21st Lebanon artillery company. Our company was transferred to the village of Hekipat near Kyoprikyoy. After staying there for 2 months, we moved on to Kyotak. During the Turkish offensive our company took part in the Soghanlu fightings. Our company consisted of 1,600 men but after the fightings only 200 were left. The remnants withdrew to the village of Azap and stayed there to rest until January. In that month the Armenian soldiers were disarmed. There were 60 Armenians soldiers left in our company. We were all disarmed and transferred to the transportation service. After serving in transportation for only 15 days, we were transferred to Erzurum and arrested there. After keeping us in prison for 8 days, they moved us to Ashkala.

There was an Armenian soldier from Derjan named Sedrak, who was kept in the company when the Armenians were dismissed. They had learned that he had a lot of money and demanded that he hand it over but he refused. Then we learned from a wounded Turkish soldier that he was murdered.

After keeping us in prison in Ashkala for a night, they transferred us to Mamakhatun to work on the roads.

Before dismissing us from the army, they suggested that we should convert to Islam. We wanted to know the reason for such a proposal. They said there was no special reason; they just suggested that we should convert to Islam. Of course, we refused and were disarmed.

We worked on the roads in the Derjan region until May. Then the persecutions against the Armenians started. First, they started arresting prominent Armenians and plundering them in broad daylight. In those days confiscating property and forcibly extorting money had become common.

The arrested people were tied to each other, taken out of the prison and brought to the place where we were working. Beforehand, they had made us dig the pits where their corpses were to be buried. They slaughtered everybody before our eyes and made us bury them with our hands under the threat of arms. The gendarmes and specially trained *chetés* were executing the murders. They ordered us under the threat of death to keep silent and if somebody asked, to tell them that the Kurds had attacked and murdered them.

We had stopped working on the roads. Our everyday work was digging pits and burying corpses.

One Sunday a group of prisoners was brought from Erzurum to the pits we had dug. They murdered all of them. When we were burying them, a man wounded in the chest and still alive asked for water. A German officer with a pistol in his hand said: "Do you want a bullet instead of water?" But he didn't shoot. He ordered to throw him alive into the pit and bury him with the corpses. So we did.

The next Thursday we were on the road together with the engineer. A wounded Armenian with his head bandaged approached us and asked for bread. We asked where he was coming from. He said: "They buried me alive. After suffering in the grave for three days, I came out." He was from the group we had buried. We gave him some bread. He went to the tents of working soldiers. We returned to our tents. The same wounded guy was sitting there. The soldiers were digging a grave. We asked who it was for. The wounded guy said: "It is for me. They are going to bury me." Indeed, they put him into the grave and buried him.

After these events the general deportation from the Karin region and Derjan started. At that moment, they suggested that those who had a house and family from those regions should join them and be exiled. But knowing that they would murder us, we didn't allow the soldiers from Derjan to go with their families though when they saw them being driven off, they gave in and wanted to join them. At that moment the Turk Hasan *chavush*, who was appointed a supervisor over the labourer soldiers, came and instructed them strictly not to go, saying that everybody had been killed a little far away. After hearing that, no one wanted to leave.

At that time we were between Mamakhatun and Kyoti ([meaning] "useless") Kyopri. Caravans of deportees were arriving every day. The caravans halted there. They would separate the men and after taking them a little distance away would slaughter them all. Then they would turn to the women searching them for money and after robbing them, raping would start like in cattle herds, and then the massacre. The remnants were driven off and we were forced to throw the corpses into the pits dug beforehand. Then the second caravan would come and the same atrocities would repeat. This continued for a month and a half.

We had witnessed many times how for their barbaric entertainment they would cut open the abdomens of pregnant women before murdering them, take out the babies and sticking them on their swords they would roar with laughter and show to the others how the baby was twitching in agony.

There were six companies of Armenian labourer soldiers all along the road. One night all of them were gathered and ordered to move towards Yerznka as high-ranking German officers were supposed to arrive in cars and the roads had to be fixed. But before reaching Kyoti Kyopri we were suddenly ordered to return to our former place and it was announced that we were supposed to be executed, but then an order came not to kill us.

One evening the aforementioned Hasan *chavush* told us: "You will be massacred one day. Those who can, they should flee." A group of us was preparing to flee but Sirakan *chavush* from Basen informed the commander about it and we were arrested, put in prison for three days. Then they released us and we started working again. We were dispersed around the villages to do the

reaping since after the deportation and massacre of the Armenians the fields were in a state of neglect.

One night Hasan *chavush* again came to us and said that after the reaping was over we would be slaughtered, so he advised us to flee wherever we could. With seven friends we thought of a plan to flee, gave wheat to the refugees and took bread from them and headed to Mount Chipiché. We met two Turkish deserters there. They joined us and led us to Yerznka. We took some bread from there and went on. In the morning we came across Turkish soldiers. We replied to their questions that we were labour-soldiers working on transportation. We lost our five friends in the gorge and only two of us remained. There were military tents around. At night we started shouting the names of our five friends in the darkness with the hope to locate them. We continued our search for three nights but in vain. The soldiers in the tents thought we were armed *Fedayeen*,¹⁸⁹ so they would come out of their tents armed to catch us but we would put them off our tracks. When we couldn't find our friends, my friend lost his hope and went to Yerznka to surrendered to the government. I went to Tersim.

On 1 March, 1916 the Kurds attacked the Turks at Khozat, Tersim, Metskert and all the neighbouring regions. I took part in those raids four times. I wasn't given any share of the trophies they brought from the raids. I was half-naked. Therefore, I fled to another Kurdish *agha* that had quite a lot of Armenians. We stayed there until Yerznka was occupied and then went to Yerznka.

Tovmas Poghosian from Hayni
[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 492, pp. 2-8, original, handwritten.

No 113

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ARSHAK TERTERIAN ON THE MASSACRE OF THE POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF ASHKALA OF KARIN PROVINCE

November 1916

Ojaghuli

Village of Ashkhala (Mamakhatun region of the Erzurum *vilayet*¹⁹⁰)

Arshak Terterian who took shelter in the village of Ojaghuli, recounts:

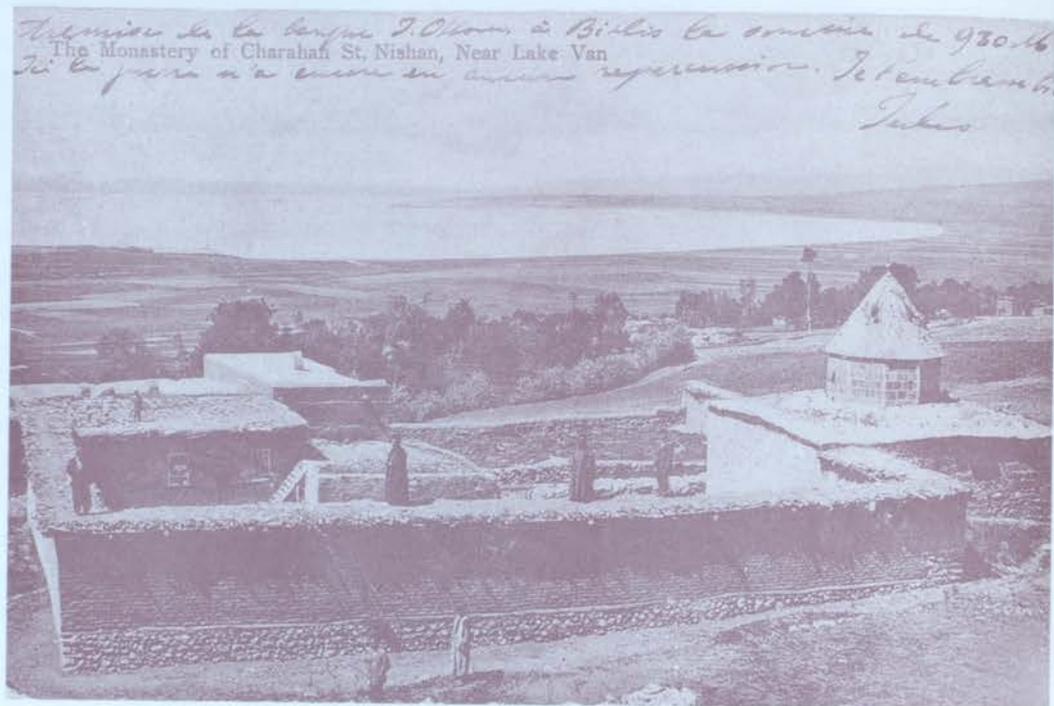
Ashkhala consisted of 350 households of which 50 were Armenian. The Armenians were the Turks' *mirabas*¹⁹¹, and I was an immigrant shoemaker there.



View of Van



View of Van



Saint Nshan monastery on the coast of Lake Van



Varagavank



Monastery of Ktuts hermitage



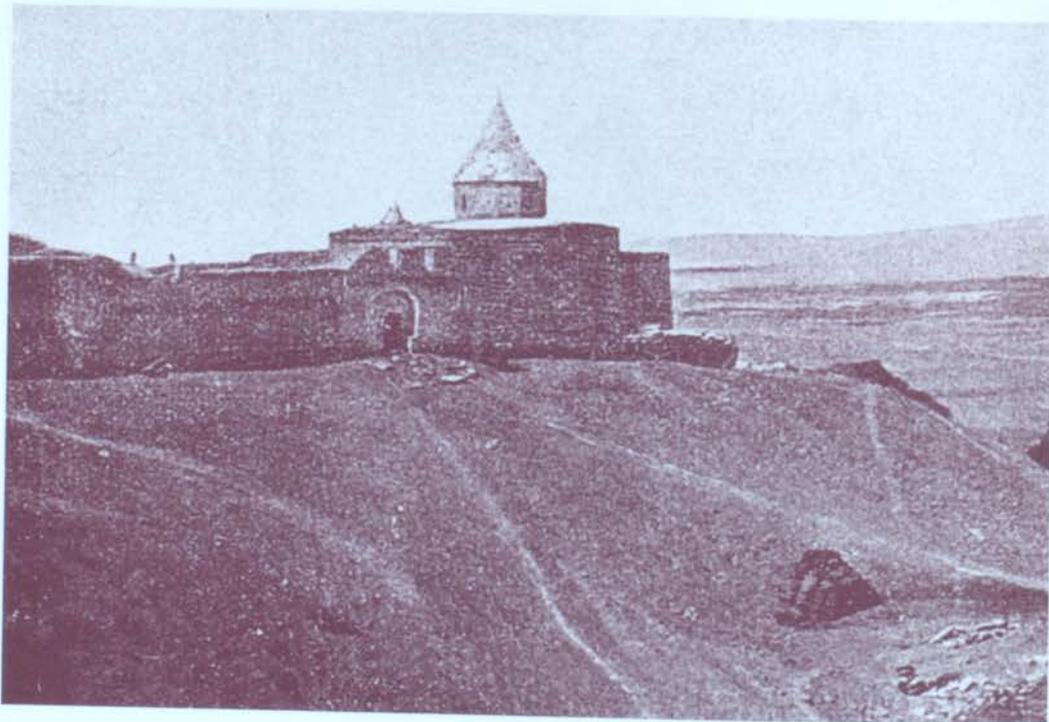
Pupils of the Varagavank religious school



View of Narekavank from the south-west (1900s)



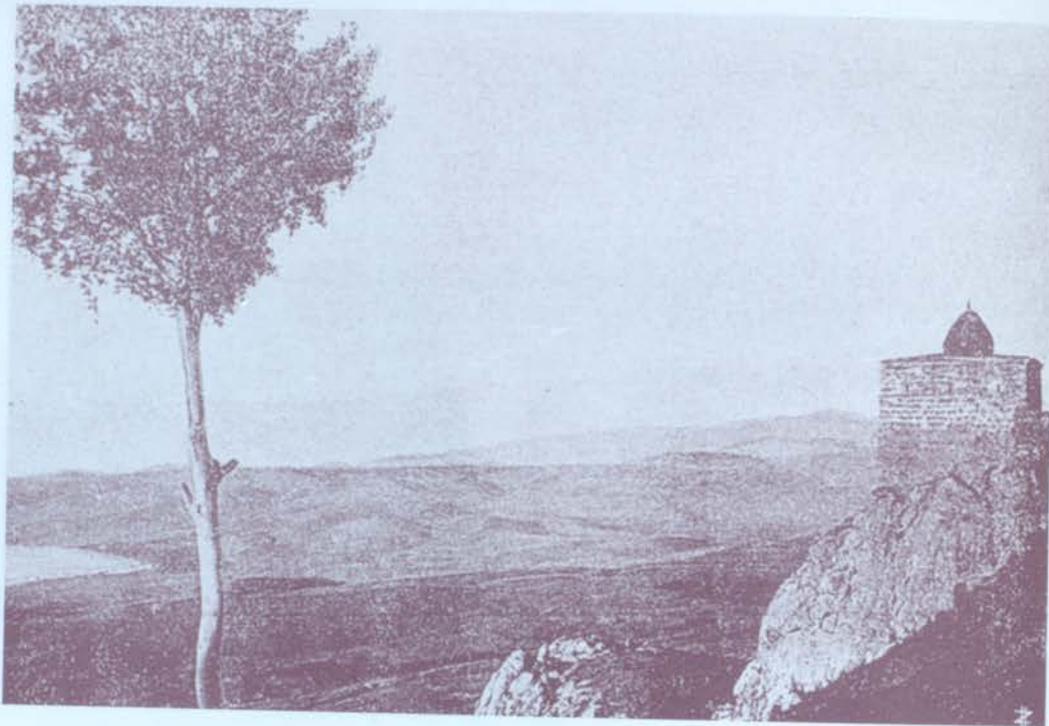
View of the Karmavor Holy Mother-of-God church in the village of Shushants from the south-east (1900s)



Holy Mother-of-God church in the village of Kurubash (1900s)



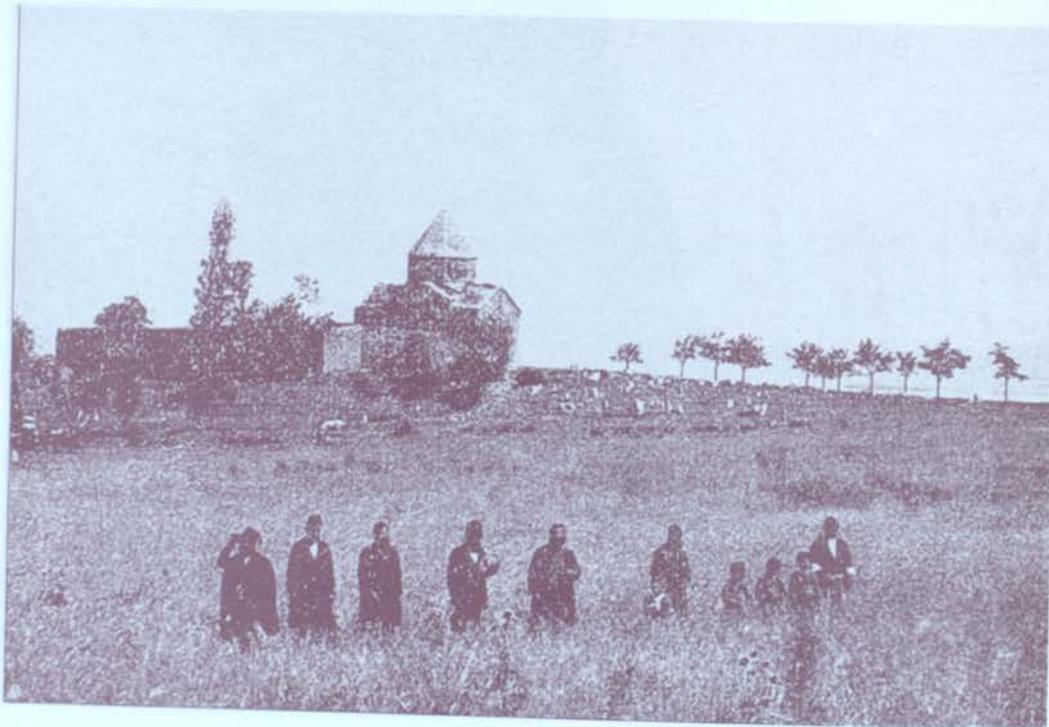
Lim island: general view of St George monastery from the north-east (1900s)



General view of the St Sahak monastery in the village of Ererin from the south (1900s)



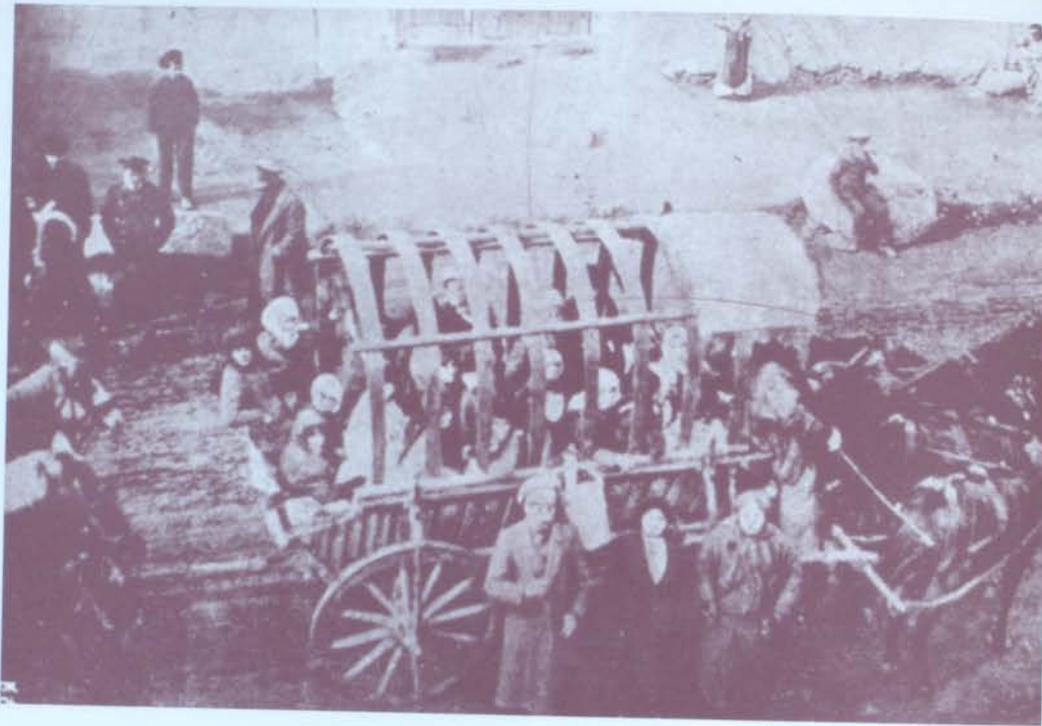
Tagh quarter in the district centre Shatakht



View of the Spitak Monastery in Gyavash from the south-east (1900s)



View of Tagh quarter in Shatakht from the north-west



Collecting orphans and children left on the roads during the Van retreat



Orphans at the Igdir food centre during the Van retreat



Food centre in the Igdir park during the July 1915 retreat with the victims of epidemy



Emigrants bake bread in the field near Igdir during the Van retreat



Emigrants have rest at the bottom of Ararat during the July 1915 retreat



Emigrants from Van in Etchmiadzin



Emigrants from Van in Etchmiadzin



Emigrants from Van in Etchmiadzin



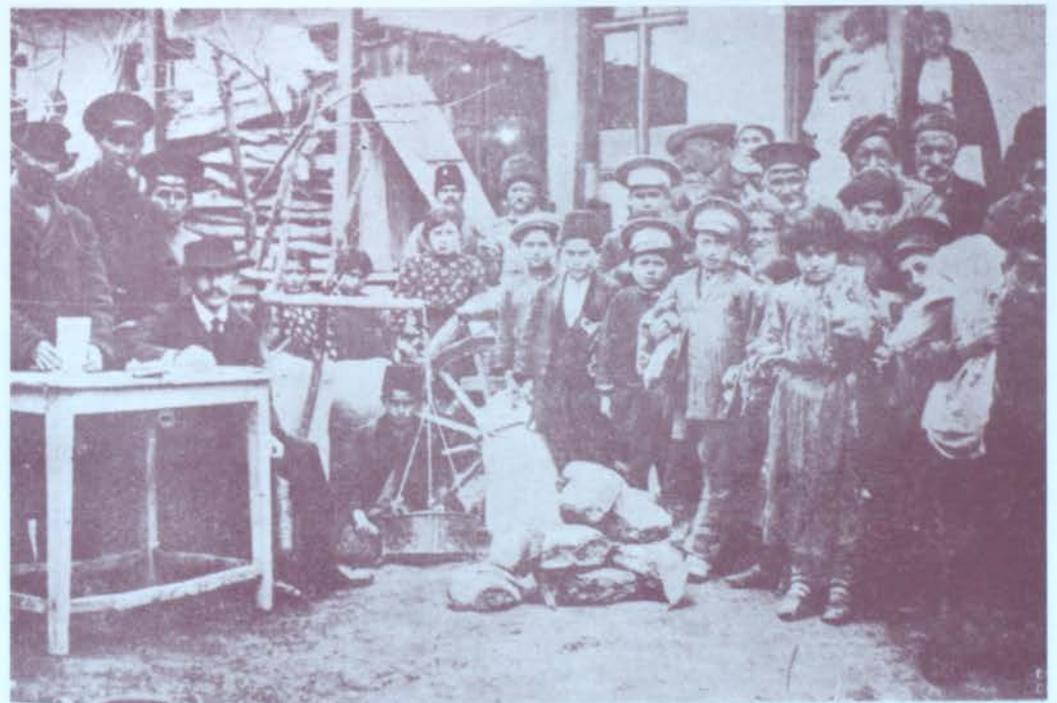
Armenian emigrants who died of epidemy and hunger in Etchmiadzin



Emigrants from Bashkala in the village of Kznut



Armenian emigrants who died of epidemy and hunger in Etchmiadzin



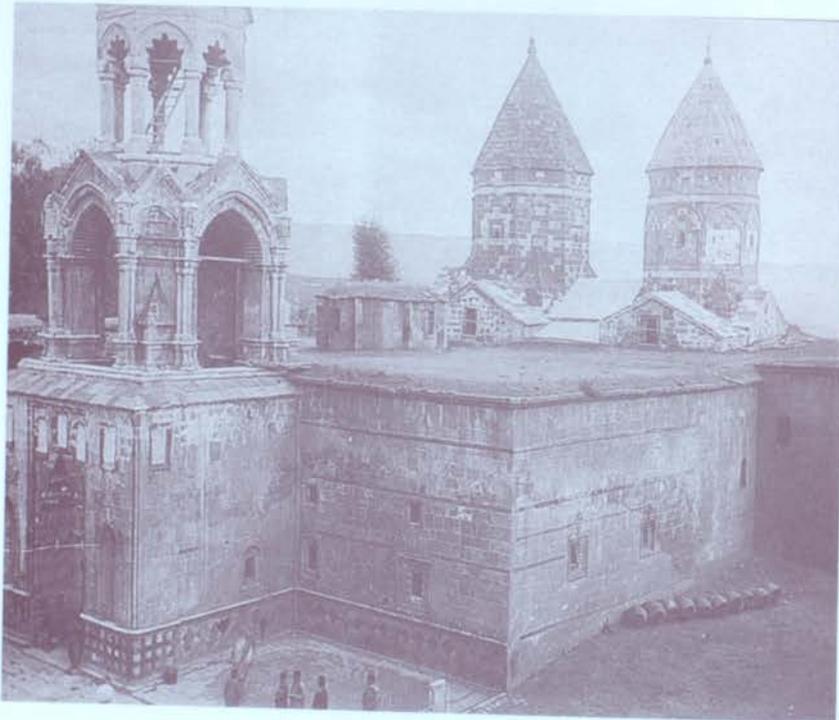
Emigrants are given bread in the village of Kznut



General view of Innakian Holy Precursor monastery (Glakavank)



Karmrak monastery in Bitlis



Innakian Holy Precursor monastery (Glakavank) (1905)



Apostles monastery in Mush (1910s)



Apostles monastery in Mush (1910s)



View from the town of Bitlis



Bones of the people burned in a cattle shed in the village of Ali-Zrnan of Mush



Skeletons of the martyrs of the Armenian populated village of Sheykhalan in the Plain of Mush



Skulls of the burned alive in Bitlis



Corpses of the murdered Armenians



Decapitated corpses of the Armenian labourers on the road to Bitlis



Orphans from Sasun at the Alexandrapol orphanage



View of Erzurum



Emigrant orphan girls



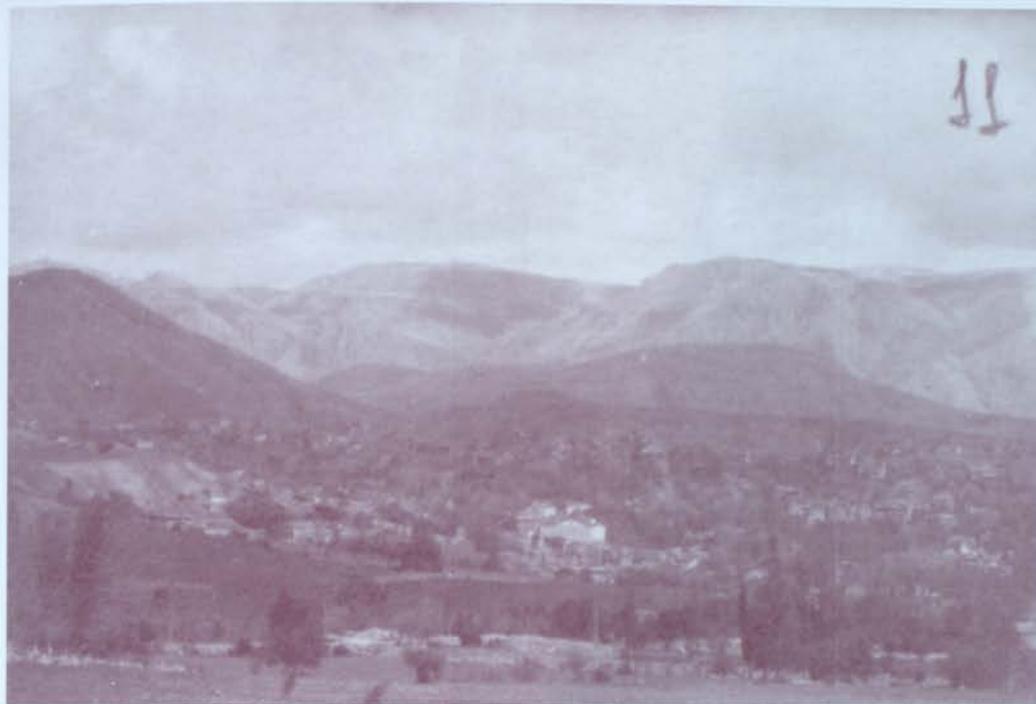
Armenian emigrants



View of Erzurum



View of Arabkir from the inner market



View of Arabkir (Church quarter)



Armenian church and school in Arabkir



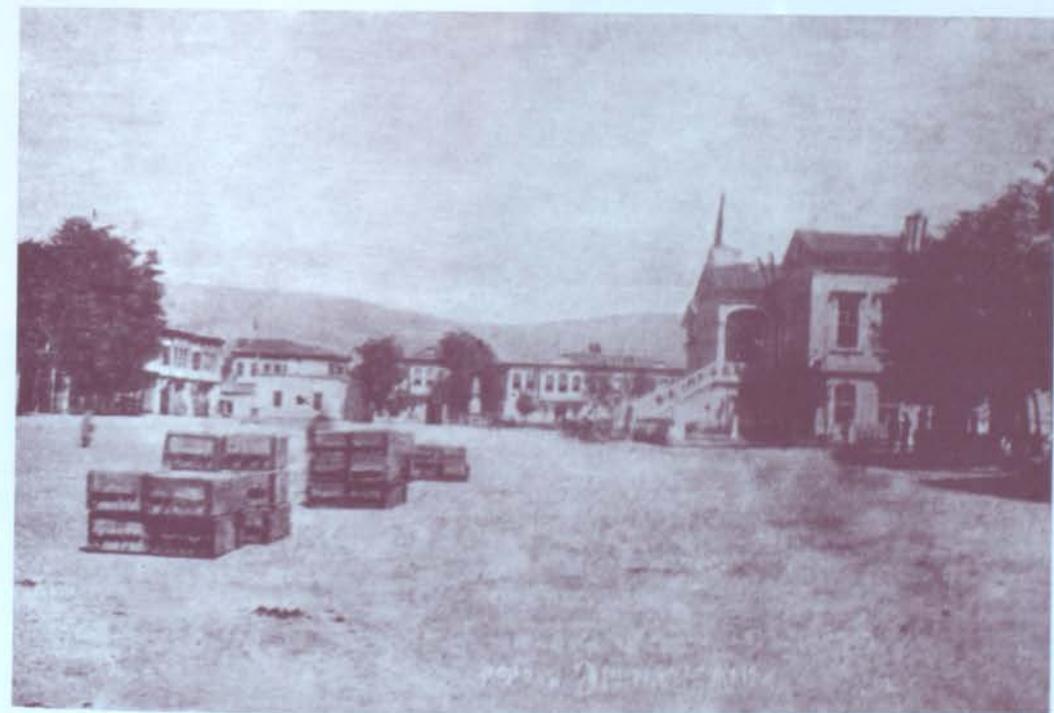
View of Arabkir



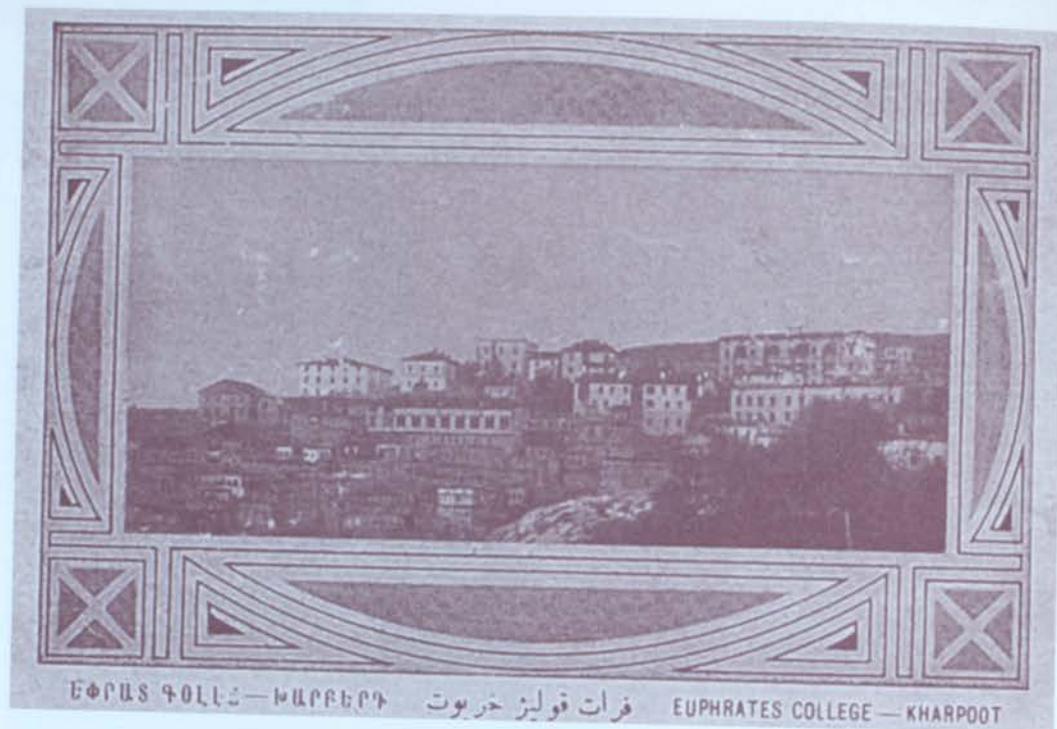
Interior of the Armenian church in Arabkir



Armenian church and the school building in Arabkir



Yerznka



Building of the Euphrates College in Kharberd



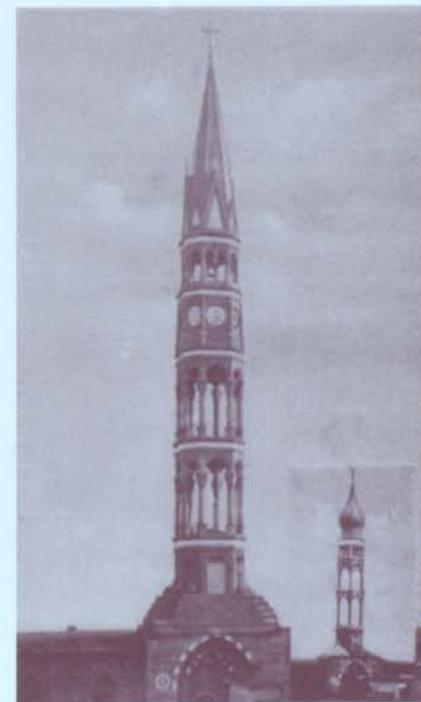
Building of the Euphrates College in Kharberd



The Euphrates River



Armenian church in Erzurum



Armenian church in Diarbekir



View of Trabzon



View of Trabzon



View of Trabzon



Armenian quarter in Samson



View of Baberd



View of Yedesia



View of Sebastia



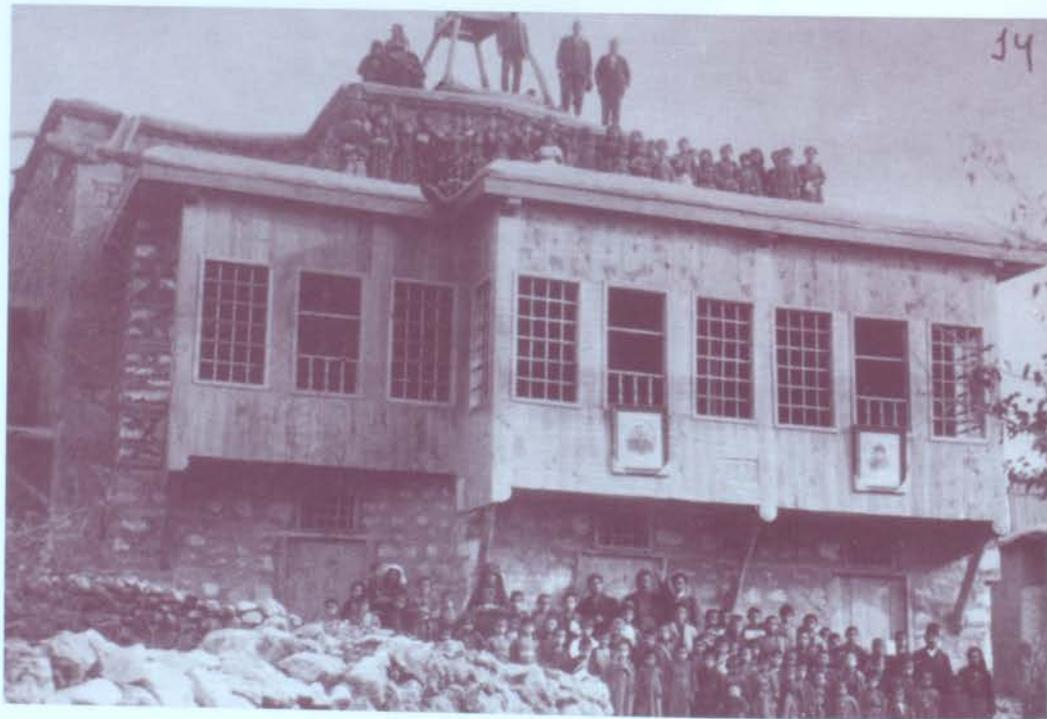
View of the village of Aghin



View of the village of Anjrđi (1909)



House of the Fabrikatorians in Kharberd



Girls school in Anjrđi



Armash monastery



Primate of Karin Smbat bishop Saattetian



Primate of Kesaria Khosrov bishop Pehrikian



The Fabrikatorian brothers



Mahtesi Karapet Saghatelian and his wife,
founders of the Arabkir Cathedral school



Ter Husik priest Kajuni from Arabkir (1854-1916)



Sargis Tevekelian, merchant from Arabkir



Armenak and Karapet Aichians from Arabkir



Sedrak Hovhannisian and Sedrak Yuzarchian
from Arabkir



Hovhannes Ekmekchian, Sargis Selverian (victim of the Armenian genocide) and Tadevos Yekavian (victim of the Armenian genocide)



The Arzumian family (1907, Anjrđi)



Family from Arabkir (1905)



Pupils, teachers and trustees of the Armenian school in Arabkir (1905)



Family from Arabkir



Members of the Arabkir Hnchak Party (1908)



Family from Arabkir



Pupils of the Arabkir St Nshan school (1914)



Հայ ցարազիտերու կարանու մը մը
 Ռաս-Այն-Սայի մը մը

Ras-Ul-Ayn camp of deported Armenians



Armenians hanged in Constantinople



Armenians brought to Marash from Zeytum.
 Half an hour after taking the picture they were all set alight



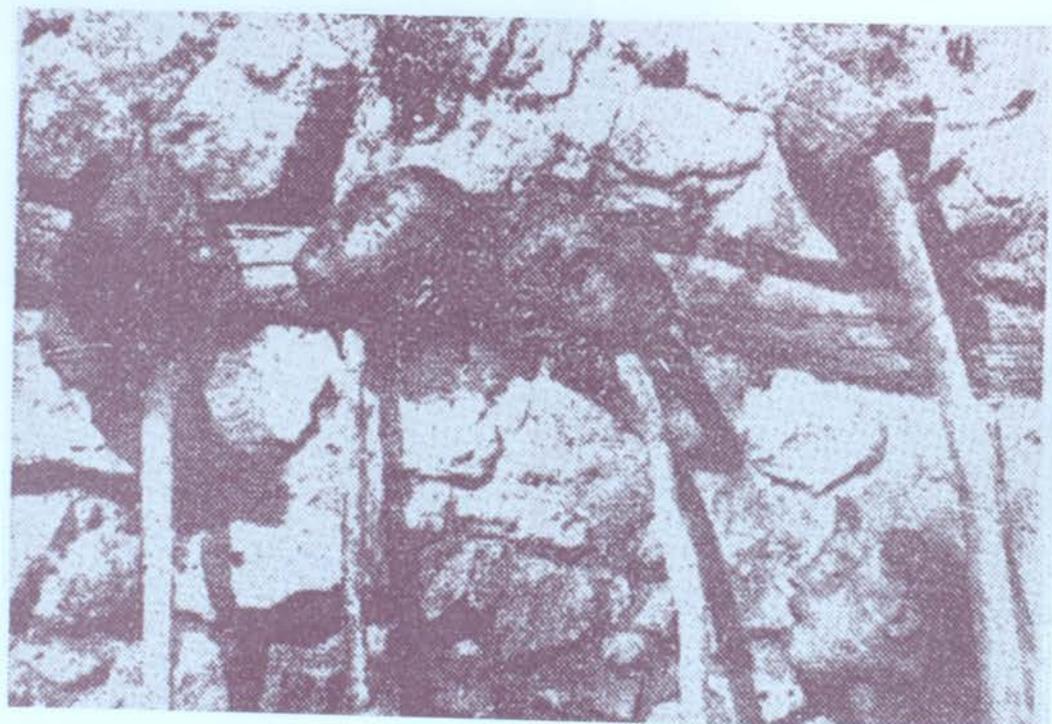
Armenians hanged in Constantinople



Armenians hanged in Constantinople



Remains of the skeletons of the murdered Trabzon Armenians



Heads of the Armenians impaled in Sebastia



Skeletons of the Armenians found at Der-Zor desert

II - 30 4

Հրույանքի

հարկու (հոկ) հարկու 18 9-տարե
պատանեկան, 10-տարե պատանեկան, 12-տարե պատանեկան
1914 թվականին Կիլիկիայի 9-տարե

(Քիչ հարկու ժամանակ անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
ուսմանը մեծ դեր ունեցավ հարկու ժամանակը և ժամանակ
հարկու հոկու հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի)

1917 թվականի 17-հունիս

From testimony of Nazaret Postoyan on the deportation and massacre of the Armenian population of Khgi province

II-15
Հարկու ժամանակը 18-տարե
հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի

1915 թվականի 30-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
1915 թվականի 30-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի

հարկու 15-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 12-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 10-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 8-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 6-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 4-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի
հարկու 2-ին էր սրտով կռուի ժամանակը
և հարկու անհրաժեշտ էր իր սրտով կռուի

From testimony of Mushegh Vorberian on the deportation and massacres of the Armenian population of the town of Kharberd

Handwritten text in Armenian script, likely a testimonial or official document. The text is dense and covers most of the page.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, continuing the narrative or providing additional details. The handwriting is consistent with the first page.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, possibly a separate testimonial or a continuation of the previous pages. It includes several paragraphs of text.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, providing further testimony or official information. The text is written in a clear, legible hand.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, located on the right side of the top row. It appears to be a testimonial or official document.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, located on the right side of the middle row. It continues the testimonial or official narrative.

Handwritten text in Armenian script, located on the right side of the bottom row. It provides further details of the events or testimonies.

Testimony of the Turks, Persians and Arabs on the deportation of the Armenian population of Karin

Testimony of the Assyrian F. Verten on the massacres of the Armenian population of Karin

having no trust in my new religion I fled to Saribaba to Ahmat *agha*. He sent people and seizing my family from their captors brought them to me. The Russians took Ashkhala and when they were 4 *versts* away from us they stopped. Another 15 Armenians gathered with us including Anna, the young wife of the Erzurum painter Papazian. The Turks had murdered her husband and child with rocks and had abducted Anna and taken her to the head of the sentry post as wife. Anna fled from his place naked and barefooted and came to us. With the help of a Turk, a boy named Khosrov and I passed over and surrendered to the Russians. We got a paper from their chief and freed my family and the other Islamised Armenians whom Ahmat *agha* had kept free. The Armenians from the villages of Topal-*Chavush*, Brnakapan and Ghara-Hasan of our region were massacred like in Ashkhala.

[Recorded by Varos Sargsian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 482, pp. 5 and rev., original, handwritten.

DERJAN DISTRICT

No 114

GAREGIN TURIKIAN'S RECORD ON THE CONDITION OF DERJAN DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE, DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF ITS ARMENIAN POPULATION

In old times Derjan district was named Heni. Now Derjan is an area of numerous pyramid-like hills and valleys following one another in high mountains named Paghr Papa, Khoshan, Heopek, Artuchli and Keshish Taghi. To the north-east it is bordered by Ashgalé, to the north by Baberd, to the west by Yerznka, to the south by Guzulchan and to the south-east by Kghi districts. The Euphrates flows in front of Mamakhatun leaving Ashgala on the right, through the Derjan valleys, sometimes winding and peaceful, sometimes tumultuous through a long gorge named Kalapan or Sansay Teresi scratching the northern foothills of the huge Paghr Papa mountain. The district was eighty-five *versts* from north to south and one hundred and ten *versts* from east to west.

Air and water in the villages on the mountain slopes are healthy and clean but they are unhealthy on the banks of the Euphrates especially in the summer. The main reason is that the district lacks trees.

There are oil fields and coal mines, cold mineral waters in the mountains. There are salt mines in the villages of Bagarich, Varduk and Gom-Dzor; three of them are in operation, three are closed. The Koter or Kutir Bridge, which is a

fine example of ancient architecture, is in front of the ruins of the ancient town of Kutir or Koter. There is a dilapidated village of the same name three *versts* to the left.

There is an ancient chapel in the village of Tsaghkari, which is standing to date. It is a fine work of ancient architecture but it is impossible to define its origin, Armenian, Greek or Roman, due to absence of inscriptions. The Armenian villagers always took care of it, recognised it as their shrine and lit countless candles there.

Derjan produces a large amount of wheat exporting it to the neighbouring provinces of Yerznka, Erzurum, Khuzulchan and Kghi. Derjan has vast meadows and pastures, the villagers had a lot of sheep and cattle, horses, oxen and buffaloes. Ox carts generally carried out the transportation in the district.

Bee farming was quite developed in a number of villages. There were farmers with a thousand beehives, of course, using old methods. If a new method of bee farming were used in the district, the result would have been four times more.

The district, surprisingly, didn't pay much attention to the cultivation of seedlings and generally fruit trees, despite its favourable, fertile and vast lands. In the autumn or in the winter the land would seem virgin to the eyes of the viewer being completely treeless and without adornment. The winding flow of the Euphrates was the only adornment.

Bagarich, Piriz, Koter, Hoghik and Sarghayia are the main villages of the district.

The town of Mamakhatun was at the bottom of pyramid-like mountains, on the other bank of the river. It consisted of 500 households. The not numerous Armenian population were engaged mainly in trade and crafts. The Mamakhatun Armenian diocesan prelacy was razed to the ground as well as the church and the school.

Though the Armenian population of the district was culturally backward, there were schools in the villages generally using old methods so barely 15 per cent of the Armenian population could be considered literate.

Visiting almost all the villages of Derjan district, I found most of them destroyed. Only the churches of Piriz, Tsaghkari, and Aprank¹⁹² were standing. All their movable property, the books and sacred vessels were plundered. Ghazar, an old villager from Khazakh, gave me a manuscript Gospel he had obtained from the Kurds with great difficulty.

The Armenian Church, like everywhere, had suffered a lot in this district too. Her lands remain without any official documents, merely attested by the statements of this or that individual from Derjan.

Monastery of St David: It is a monastery surrounded by a parapet within the confines of the village of Aparank, with a fine position on a height overlooking the southern plains, hills and mountains. It has a church – Holy Precursor – and a

chapel – St David - where the saint's grave is located. The monastery has 150 ploughed and sowed fields. The church and the chapel are standing together with the parapet but a dozen of their columns are destroyed. The monastery is plundered, all the books, about 150 sheep, about 100 head of cattle, oxen and buffaloes are plundered.

Information about the monastery's bookkeeping can be obtained from the last abbot – [Ter] Grigor Ghazarian from the village of Taru and Galust Voskanian from the village of Tsaghkari, who now live in the village of Chiftlik of the Plain of Karin and who can also give information about those who plundered the monastery.

The Armenian population of Derjan – some 10-11,000 before the war – lived in the central part of the dale of Derjan in about 30 villages some of which were exclusively Armenian, others mixed with Turks and surrounded by Kizilbash¹⁹³ Kurds. The Derjan villagers were generally farmers. Men and women were working equally. The Derjan woman is a productive hand equal to her husband but housekeeping is not for her, she is too shy.

Derjan had more than a thousand emigrants mostly settled in Rumania and Bulgaria, and a small number in Russia and America. The deportation and massacre started on 1 May, 1915 and finished on the 17-18 of the same month.

Most of the Derjan population was slaughtered and thrown into the water at the Kotyur Bridge, and the rest all along the Euphrates until the western border of Yerznka – the Kamakh Gorge. There is evidence from eye-witnesses that some of the deported population of Baberd, whom the government had provided with 40 carts, were massacred by a group of *chetés* who were waiting at the Kotyur Bridge. They spared no one. The survivors from Derjan say that most of the Armenians from Erzurum, the Plain⁵⁵ and Basen were with them from Mamakhatun to the Kamakh Gorge and were murdered before their eyes.

The main performers of the massacres were Memtuh *bek*, mayor of the town of Yeriza, Kyolo *agha*, chief of the Palapan *ashiret*, Khalet *bek* from Kamakh (member of the Ottoman parliament). It was they who developed the devilish plan of the massacres and terrible scenes that took place from Mamakhatun to the outskirts of Kamakh ordering this or that beast to double and quadruple their atrocities.

Khayri *bek*, head of Mamakhatun police, his friend policeman Mehmed *effendi*, Memish *agha* from the *ashiret* of Gurishan, Poy *bek*, son of Mustafa from Semik, Chatrchi Ali *bek* from Erzurum and the Erzurum mayor Tevfig *effendi* were very active too.

Ismayil *effendi*, the relative of Kyolo *agha* living in Keshtem, Mullah Veli, a 110-year-old beast from Chaprum, and his three sons, Hilmi *agha* from the

village of Bagarich, Haji, son of Emin *agha* from Piriz separately hired *chetés* and unseen atrocities were committed.

They made young Armenian men from Piriz destroy the local church. They put a rifle into the hands of an Armenian boy and threatened him and he involuntarily killed another Armenian.

Yusuf from Mrik Gomalso ordered massacres and led the mob as well as Ali, – son of Lavlav from Khumlar, his friend Hasan *chavush*, Kyamil, a café-owner from Erzurum, headman Mevlut from the village of Aprank, his friend Mahmut from Merven, Memet *agha* from the village of Taru and Hafif from the village of Kharkhin, Mustafa from Keoytsh, Fazli, Yeahuti and Hafzi *beks* from Ghughor and many others who did not shrink before any inhuman and brutal actions.

The provider of this information – Martiros Teroyan from the village of Aprank - was a baker in Mamakhatun before it fell and saw everything with his eyes. He fled 48 hours before the town fell and was away until the entry of the victorious Russian army. Mr. M. Teroyan recounts about a telegram that the bishop of Karin sent to the *locumtenens* Father Raphael Sahakian¹⁹⁴ (from Kotir) which read:

“Karin, 25 April, 1915,

Fifty households from Hertev of Basen took the road; provide them with shelter in your region.

Bishop Smbat Saatetian.”

Martiros Teroyan adds: “The deportees of Hertev hadn't reached the destination yet when on 1 May the deportees from the village of Topal *Chavush* from the Erzurum Plain arrived in Mamakhatun and were slaughtered there.”

Thus the people of Derjan witnessed and went through the pain, torture and massacre of the Armenians from Basen, Karin and Baberd and were massacred themselves in their thousands. Thousands of women and children threw themselves into the water not to fall into the hands of government soldiers, policemen and *chetés* made of hordes of enraged Turkish and Kurdish *bashibazouks*¹⁹⁵ who were patronised and instructed by shameless high-ranking officials.

Near the village of Hoghek, starting from the old bridge, the Euphrates washed away thousands of lifeless corpses of children and young women together with the blood of their beloved brothers, husbands and fathers. A small part of the deportees headed to Guruchay, Malatia, Arabkir, Kharberd and after the valley of Yerznka to the Kamakh Gorge. Compared with other provinces of Karin *vilayet*, Derjan can be considered the most fortunate since about 2,500 of its children, after suffering all kinds of torture, live in twenty-five ruined villages of their province today.

Together with the residents of Derjan who fight in the ranks of the volunteers and those returning from emigration, their number makes more than three

⁵⁵ Refers to the Plain of Karin.

thousand – persistent and sworn up holders of the traditions of their homeland. Enduring all kinds of difficulties, they have decided to little by little recover the villages and make the province prosper again. They will recover faster if seeds, oxen and 50 per cent of their current living necessities are provided.

Give them seeds and oxen! Next year they will provide wheat for two-to-three thousand people with their blessed plough and fertile fields.

NAA, f. 227, reg.1, rec.458, pp. 1-6, original, handwritten.

No 115

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR VARDAN AVETISIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF BAGARICH IN DERJAN DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE

Vardan Avetisian from the village of Bagarich of Derjan, aged 11

There were 10 people in our household. We had a good living in our village; we had no problems. My father was a farmer; we had sheep, cows, oxen, fields, a house – everything.

There were 300 households in our village; one hundred of them were Turkish. The Turks of our village didn't say anything to us in peacetime.

When the war started the government sent soldiers to exile us. They told us: "Go to Adana, stay there, we won't touch you." They deceived us and took us to the Kamakh Gorge. Eleven people fled from there (myself too). The rest were tied up back to back and then murdered one by one. They hit their arms and legs with swords, broke their heads with axes and threw them into the gorge. They took away beautiful women and girls, murdering the rest and throwing them into the water. The river was blocked with the corpses of the people near our town.

I was separated from the 11 people who fled and went to my mother. They captured the others, tied them to each other, melted lead and poured it into their mouths, put powder into their eyes and then slaughtered them like cattle and threw them into the water.

When I was with my mother, the Kurds came and captured all of us. They took off my mother's clothes and told her: "Give us 30 gold coins and we'll free you." My mother did and they freed us. We fled to the (Kurdish) village of Chali and were given shelter there. When the Turkish soldiers came, they would hide us, and when they left, the Kurds would let us out. We stayed there until the Russians came and the Turks fled. The village of Chali didn't flee. The Russians

came. There was an Armenian officer with them who took us with him to Mamakhatun – I, my mother and my 2 sisters. My mother couldn't take care of 5 people so she gave two of us to the orphanage.

[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 460, pp. 9-10, original, handwritten.

No 116

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HOVHANNES MARKOSIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF KHUMLAR IN DERJAN DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE

Narrative of Hovhannes Markosian from the village of Khumlar on the deportation and events.

During the 1914 mobilisation all the harsh measures imposed on other Armenian villages were imposed in our village with more strictness. The requisition committee announced that the villagers had to give one third of what they had for the army needs. We were ready to give what was legally required but within a few months they completely robbed us upon the pretext of government taxes; at the same time they were taxing the Turks for appearances alone, taking much less than legally required.

They took from the Armenians of the village in one go 300 *somars* (1 *somar* is 8 *poods*), gathered it in the school and instead of using for the army needs they distributed it among the Turks of the village as needy families, whereas they were as well-to-do as we were.

In December-January of 1914-1915, terrible persecutions started upon the pretext of searching for deserters. True, there were some deserters but compared to the Turks they were fewer and Armenian deserters were because of discriminatory attitude of Turkish officers. However, the Turks suffered no persecutions; only the deserters were persecuted whereas because of Armenian deserters not only their distant and near relatives were put to torture, but also fellow villagers, the priest, the headman etc.

Several cases of violence occurred in the village at that time. The gendarmes and *chetés* swarmed into our village upon the pretext of searching for deserters. The *chetés* were headed by Suleyman *bek* from Nariman and Tosun *bek* from Tortum. In December they came to the village to search for deserters and wanted

to abduct the beautiful daughter, aged 15, of Father Yeprem Norhatian. The priest rushed frantically to prevent it but was shot on the spot and the girl was taken away to the rocks opposite Mamakhatun. Her body was found after 5-6 days of severe rape; it was obvious she was a victim of terrible rape.

After that, they abducted Grigor Poghosian's daughter, aged 18. The Turks took her with them when retreating. Her father was carrying out his soldier's duty in the army.

Harutyun Sargsian's daughter who was married to a villager from Aprank was abducted at that time. The Turks raped her and took her with them when retreating.

In broad daylight, while searching for deserters the Turks publicly raped Khacho Siroyan's daughter-in-law, Hakob Ter-Nikoghosian's daughter-in-law, Nshan Karapetian's daughter-in-law, Tatos Msloyikian's daughter-in-law, Gabriel Sargisian's adolescent daughter, Ginos Galustian's daughter-in-law, Tatos Arakelian's adolescent daughter, Khacho Simonian's wife before the eyes of her husband, forcibly making him witness his wife's rape.

The following people were charged with being accomplices to deserters and after being tortured, were murdered within a few days: Ghukas Sargisian, Hovhannes Khachoyan, Kyuregh Hayrapetian, Sahak Hayrapetian, Tatos Arakelian, Grigor Paloyan, Poghik Piloyan, Karapet Simonian, Minas Poghosian, Poghos Khachoyan. From that time on such things were repeated regularly until the deportation, to say nothing of robbing and plundering by the *chetés* and gendarmes.

At that time, I was conscripted and joined my regiment, which was working on the roads: the Armenian soldiers were disarmed and were working on the roads. After my conscription, on 18 May the villagers were deported to the northern bank of the river and slaughtered there. We were working not far, next to the mountain and witnessed the massacre, unable to help and aware that our wives and children were put to the sword. All the men were murdered. The remnants of the women and children were driven to Yerznka. When they reached the Kyutur Bridge, they were blocked from both sides, slaughtered and thrown into the river. Many of them threw themselves into the river.

Two days before these events, the people from the plain of Erzurum arrived and passed by Mamakhatun. Hardly had they passed a *verst* towards Yerznka, when the terrible massacre started from the bridge to the water-mills. The caravan consisted of 1,500 households most of whom were massacred. The few survivors were driven towards Yerznka.

We were forced to dig graves for our brothers, put them, murdered or alive, into them and cover the graves. So we did. After the graves were covered, the earth was raising due to the movements of those who were buried alive.

Before slaughtering, they first robbed and raped them. They noticed a tall woman and trying to rape her tore her head cover; she turned out to be a priest. When they were murdering him, his daughter-in-law tried to protect him. They stripped her naked, and after gang raping her next to the priest cut both of them into pieces.

Such undisguised rapes were countless.

I couldn't stand those terrible scenes; I fled to the Kurds I knew and stayed there for 4 months. However, I couldn't stand hunger there, so I returned to my regiment until Erzurum was taken. After that, the remnants of the Armenian soldiers working on the roads were tied up (including me) and sent to the Kyutur Bridge. Knowing that we would be murdered we fled with 10 friends. Nine were killed; I was the only one to survive. I reached Trabzon and found shelter with the Greeks until the Russian army came.

Hovhannes Markosian from the village of Khumlar of Derjan
[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 460, pp. 19-22, original, handwritten.

No 117

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR FATHER HAMBARDZUM
HARUTYUNIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE
POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF VARDUK IN DERJAN DISTRICT
OF KARIN PROVINCE**

[1916]

Narrated by Father *Ter* Hambardzum Harutyunian from the village of Varduk of Derjan

Immediately after the beginning of the 1914 European war, a general mobilisation was declared in all Turkey including Derjan district.

The military commandant of the regional centre Mamakhatun distributed a circular signed by the supreme commander in chief of the Ottoman army with the following important part: men aged 20 to 45 have to be conscripted; those who did not report would be severely punished, their houses and homes would be burned, their property would be confiscated for the benefit of the state and their children would be thrown onto the street.

Another circular was distributed by the local branch of the supplies committee: we were required to give one-third of what we had for the army supplies.

The people - Armenians or Turks without distinction - responded to the mobilisation. Some, mostly among the Turks, didn't report.

As for the confiscation, the Armenians voluntarily, without any violence, provided the aid specified by the law. However, the Turks didn't want to comply and until the very end they gave only 20% of the required wheat. Despite that negligence, the authorities did not want to use violence against the Turks. However, if the Armenians were unable to pay the mandatory taxes because they didn't have that much, and the committee had unfairly fixed taxes beyond their means, they would enter their houses and take away anything they could find there, even the most necessary items.

After the defeat at the Caucasian front, the authorities started imposing harsher measures all over our region. Upon the pretext of searching for deserters and weapons, they would enter every Armenian house without exception and create unimaginable horrors. No violence was used against the Turks though there were more deserters among them. It was clear that they were instigating people to rebel to get a pretext for using more violence. That unbearable situation lasted until the deportation. The people always stayed patient and adapted, knowing that the authorities were looking for excuses.

The deportation of the Armenian population of the Plain of Erzurum and Basen occurred in May. They passed through Derjan without a massacre making us believe there would be no massacre. The deportation of our region started on 4 June. First, the male population was slaughtered on the spot by the local Turks and gendarmes. The women and children were deported to the village of Kyotur, which had a bridge of the same name over a branch of the Euphrates named Sev Jur. At the very moment when the deportees reached the bridge, soldiers heading towards the battlefield and the Turkish refugees fleeing from Basen and Alashkert entered the bridge from the other end. An inexplicable rape started. The Armenian women, protecting their dignity and unable to tolerate the dishonour, voluntarily threw themselves into the river. After a few hours everything was over and washed away by the waters of the Euphrates.

Tiruk Patasian, a young woman from the village of Varduk, didn't drown and came out of the water 200 yards down the river. The Turks noticed her and told a gendarme saying she might have money on her. The gendarme approached and caught her but the woman adroitly clung to him and pulled him down with her to the bottom of the river.

When the people were deported and the males were slaughtered, I managed to hide and then found shelter in a cave on the mountain opposite our village. I stayed there for two days hungry and thirsty. Unable to stand the hunger, I

went down to the village at night. Our family was not deported yet; they were taken to the house of a Turk to be robbed first I went to my family, put on a woman's clothes, took some bread and water and returned to the cave. I stayed in that small cave for 40 days. Sometimes at nights I came out of the cave. There was a shepherd who was always driving his flock to the cave at night. I bought bread and water from him. After 40 days, the Turks from our village learned that I was in the cave and wanted to kill me. The shepherd told me about it and at night I went to the village named Kilisé Gom, which was an hour's distance from our village, to a friendly Kurd called Hasan *chavush* son of Tamo. I stayed there for another 40 days. The Turks of our village again learned about my whereabouts. I fled to the mountains. After staying there for 20 days, I returned to my former place. After one or two days, our village crier Khallo and 4 gendarmes came and taking us by surprise caught us. At that time the 2 sons of the other priest of our village were with me. They took us to the *kaymakam* in Mamakhatun. After keeping us there for a night, they took us to the *kaymakam* for investigation. The *kaymakam* was a decent person and he ordered us to join the labour soldiers.

I couldn't stand the hard work and fell ill. They cut my scanty daily bread. I was miserable and hungry. At that time Ismayil of Serko from the village of Cher came to the *kaymakam* and asked for 10 labourers. The *kaymakam* separated 10 people who were like me unable to work and handed us over to him for work in the field. After working there for 10 days, all the others except me fled. The Kurd informed the authorities that everybody had fled. So the authorities thought that I had fled too.

After several months, the *kaymakam* was assigned to another position and was replaced by the local chief of *chetés* and head of police. Then the Turks from our village again learned that I was in the village. They told the aforementioned beast, the head of police, and he threatened the Kurd *agha* who gave me shelter that his house would be burnt if he didn't hand me over. The same day the Kurd hid me; they searched the house but couldn't find me. They searched for me several times but in vain. Several women and boys found shelter there along with me. They wrote again to that beast, the head of police, and this time he summoned the Kurd who gave us shelter and threatened that if he searched this time and found us he would put the whole house to the sword. The Kurd became desperate and asked us to leave but we refused knowing that leaving him would mean death for us. We asked him to let us open a hole from under the stable manger to the hayloft, which was completely full of straw. We stayed in that straw for eight days. He was

sending us food three times a day. Then the Russian army advanced and on 2 March, 1916, we were saved. The Turks retreated to Yerznka.

Father Hambardzum Harutyunian
from the village of Varduk of Derjan
[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 460, pp. 1-7, original, handwritten.

KHNUS DISTRICT

No 118

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR FATHER KARAPET TER-HOVHANNISIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE OF KARACHOBAN IN KHNUS DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE

August 20, 1916
Etchmiadzin

Information provided by Father Karapet Ter-Hovhannisian, diocesan vicar at the village of Karachoban of Khnus district about their village:-

The Karachoban cluster of villages (*nahia*) consisted of 7 Armenian, 7 Kurdish, 1 Circassian and 1 mixed Kurdish villages:

1. Karachoban	Armenian	350 households
2. Govnaduk	Armenian	150 households
3. Khrom-Khaya	Armenian	90 households
4. Khozlu	Armenian	200 households
5. Burnaz	Armenian	90 households
6. Kehrt	Armenian	100 households
7. Kara-Kyopru	Armenian	200 households
8. Sarvori	mixed 35 of which 10 Kurdish, the rest Armenian	
9. Ibo	Kurdish	5 households
10. Gontuz	Kurdish	8 households
11. Dataveran	Kurdish	30 households
12. Borhan	Kurdish	25 households
13. Hachukoshk	Kurdish	5 households

14. Labutagh (Circassians known as Ossetians)		60 households
15. Chapan	Kurdish	15 households
16. Alo	Kurdish	25 households

The current condition of the village: Before the war, the village of Karachoban had 350

exclusively Armenian households with a population of about 10,000. The village had about 3,000 sheep, 2,000 cows, 2,000 oxen, 1,000 female buffaloes and 2,000 buffaloes. Each household produced annually 50-100 *somar* of wheat (one *somar* is 32 *poods*⁵⁶). Each household had 3 to 4 carts, two iron ploughs, one thrasher (with wheels brought from Kharberd), 300-1000 poplars and willows. I myself (*Ter Karapet*) had about 15,000 trees¹⁹⁶.

Our village had a church named after St James, with 3 altars. The church had 2 Gospels in vellum ([called] Russet, Captive) and a manuscript *Narek* as well as 3 to 4 manuscript books of liturgical chants. We had a school with two classes and 3 teachers (6 sections).

The current condition of the village: Our village is now half-burnt and demolished. The church is razed to the ground. The school is changed into a Russian bakery. Twenty Armenian households currently live there; those who were rescued from captivity or who had left for the Caucasus in advance.

Mobilisation and war tax: During the July 1914 mobilisation our village gave its share of soldiers (he doesn't know the exact number) who were sent to Mush and Erzurum. For the first several months, our soldiers were treated properly but after the Russian-Turkish war started, the government changed its position especially when the news about the volunteer movement reached them. After that, our soldiers were murdered one by one. When the villagers of Karachoban learned that ominous news, they sent a telegram (through me) to Bishop Smbat the Primate of Karin but received no answer. After that about 2,000 Kurdish horsemen headed by a Turkish officer called Rufat *effendi* swarmed in and lived in our village for 2 months at the expense of the people before leaving for Sarighamish.

When the Armenian soldiers realised they would be murdered, they started fleeing one by one and returning to the village. However, they were often caught and sent in unknown directions...

In December, when winter came, the Kurds and the Turks retreated under the pressure of the Russian army and swarmed into our region. We kept them for the whole of three months – until the beginning of March – completely free of charge. In January the first retreat of the Russian army occurred. However, the Turks and the Kurds who found shelter with us did not leave. On the contrary,

⁵⁶ Most probably the unit of somar was different in different parts of Turkey.

Arab troops came to join them stationing at Mount Ghlch-Getik – 2 hours' distance from the village. We took care of that army for two months when they were leaving and returning (they retreated three times). At the beginning of March, the Russian army returned to the village of Esmerin Dutagh where they stayed for quite a while. At that time, the Hasnan *ashiret* swarmed into our region with their families and told us: "You are our Armenians, we protect you now but when the Russians come, you protect us then. We swear on our *nekrak* (crown)."

Self-defence, massacre and emigration: We protected those *muhachirs* for 3 to 4 days when suddenly the government sent the following telegram to the *mudur* of our village⁵⁷: "The government has issued an order that all the belongings, women and girls of the Armenians belong to Islam. Slaughter the Armenians and do not flee before the Russian army otherwise you will be slaughtered like the Armenians..."

After reading this telegram I immediately summoned all the villagers (by the way, there were quite a lot of people from other villages of our region gathered in our village) and after presenting the situation exhorted to resort to self-defence until we get a chance to flee to Manazkert. The people agreed but an Armenian named Israyel Melkonian who had been a *mudur* of the cluster of villages and at that time he was a barn supervisor, made his two policemen arrest me and my colleague, the other priest, in order not to do such a thing. Israyel himself wrote a letter on behalf of the people to the Kurdish commander Khalet *bek* from Hasnan asking him to come and protect, promising 300 Ottoman liras. Khalet accepted that invitation "with pleasure" and came to our village with 4,000 horsemen... At the daybreak of 3 May, they surrounded Karachoban and started shooting from all sides. The people panicked and only a small part of them was able to resort to self-defence.

Seeing that he was deceived, Israyel Melkonian immediately took his family to the *mudur*'s house as a safe place. However, that very house later became the slaughterhouse for him and his family... Realising the situation, I somehow got out of the prison (the guards were busy plundering) and leading 15 armed people, broke through the Kurdish line and reached the village called Ghara-Gyoz, which was the summer pasture of Karachoban. Only six people survived from the 15, the rest were killed in the fight. My family, except my son aged 12, as well as 4-5,000 villagers were massacred on that day in the village. The rest were taken captive to the village of Torkhan to the chief of tribe Baba (father) from Hasnan who kept them for 2 weeks and then sent them to the fortress of Khnus on

⁵⁷The telegraphist of Karachoban – Mushtag effendi, who was an Armenophile, immediately showed me the telegram and I read it with my own eyes. I remember its contents approximately. Unfortunately, I don't have a copy (note by the narrator).

government orders. Baba was plundered too as a punishment for favouring the Armenians. The Armenian captives were taken to different directions from Khnus and their fate is unknown to date. Only Mambre Harutyunian, aged 12, Aghek (aged 12) and 3 girls survived and told us about their misfortunes. These survivors were in the village of Uskuran of Vardo, when my brother, the sergeant of the 6th Volunteer Regiment, Simon Ter-Hovhannesian, found them there. The number of those who somehow fled and escaped from the massacre was 25 men and 3 women. Therefore, the total number of the survivors is 32 people. Besides, Karachoban had about 80 households of emigrants who had left in advance. Therefore, if all the villagers of Karachoban gather now, they will be about 100 households. The emigrants are mainly in the Kars and Basen villages.

Details of massacre and self-defence: When I came out of the village with my group of 15 people, my other brother, Simon Ter-Hovhannesian, resisted the Kurds with 25 friends and after killing 25 Kurds and seizing 5 rifles in the village came out too. Eighteen people from that group separated and headed towards the village of Gezel-Bara where the Kurds surrounded them. They fought there for 3 days, killed two Kurds and fled to Manazkert without any casualties. Simon's group came and found me near the village of Derik. There was a fight between the Turks and the Russians there. We too participated in that fight on the side of the Russians. The Russians thought we were Kurds (we were in Kurdish costumes) and started firing at us. However, when we somehow made them understand that we were Armenians, they gave us bread and water and were cheered up seeing our courage. About 500 Kurds were killed near Derik, the rest retreated. We went to Manazkert with the Russian army (it was our first time with the Russians). The commander of the army, Major General Abatsev called us (there were already 35 of us together with the soldiers from Govantuk, Kopal and Khorom-Khayay) and said that didn't want to disarm courageous people. However, he wanted us to go to Van and join Andranik's group since it was impossible under those circumstances to fight alongside the Russian army. Van was taken on that very day. However, we didn't listen to the general's advice and stayed in Manazkert where some of us fell ill and died. We were forbidden to leave Manazkert until the July retreat. During the July retreat (1915), we emigrated together with the Russian army to the fortress of Kars where we lived until 18 February. Then we joined the villagers of Khnus, enlisted in the 6th Volunteer Regiment and headed towards Erzurum. We participated in the capture of Erzurum and had three casualties. After Khnus was retaken, the surviving villagers of Karachoban returned to their village to look for their families. Some established new households there (about 20 in number) marrying villagers who had emigrated from Khnus.

The written account is in accord with my narrative

Ter Karapet Ter-Hovhannesian
Priest of the village of Karachoban
[Recorded by A. Hatsagortsian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 425, p. 19-24 rev., original, handwritten.

KGHI DISTRICT

No 119

RECORDS OF NAZARET POSTOYAN ON THE MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN VILLAGES OF KGHI DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE

17 April 1917
Karin

Book of Grief

The historical, traditional description and the 1914 bloody events of 48 villages of Khordzian (Kghi) district

(Recorded by Nazaret Postoyan from the village of Khubs of Kghi, senior teacher in the refugee orphanage-school opened in the village of Umutum by the Armenian Committee of Moscow)

Preface

Hrakel mourned his son and sought no solace.

The years of 1895 and 1914–1917 seemed to be years of misfortunes and bloody events for the Armenians. Every Armenian seemed to have become a tragedian like the prophet Jeremiah or Armenian tragedians. Crossing seas, oceans, mountains and gorges and dispersing in different countries, they search for their lost fathers, mothers, sons and loved ones, they mourn their sons and do not want to be comforted. I too, suffering from the same pain, left the United States of America on 26 June, 1916 and crossing oceans, northern seas, crossing the town of Kristiania in Sweden, Norway, then Finland, I arrived in Tiflis and then from the town of Karin I left for Kghi longing for my ruined motherland: "Homeland is dear to the miserable Armenian." Was I going to see the once prosperous Khordzian province at the same high level? Oh, I am mistaken, it is ruined and desolate and has become a dwelling place for owls now bemoaning

over the ruins of every single Armenian village... The respected readers will certainly be indulgent towards my simple and plain language and rare use of dialect words. First, I have to confess that I have no university degrees; secondly, I always preferred the colloquial language that people use; thirdly, since my young years I have always liked to delve into the Armenian national traditions trying to find out where the names of villages and towns came from, etc. Therefore, I considered it appropriate to present separately and briefly all forty-eight (48) exclusively Armenian villages of Kghi to the readers and then dwell upon the bloody and heart-rending events of 1914 and the Armenian massacres and deportation in the framework of the anti-Armenian policy implemented by the criminal Turkish government. I have personally visited these villages and obtained the details of the massacres from the survivors whose names are given below.

After obtaining the details of the massacres from the survivors given below, I have first checked and then recorded everything.

1. Vahan Postoyan from the village of Khubs, aged 35;
2. Srapion Postoyan from the village of Khubs, aged 30;
3. Melkon Kochoyan from Khubs, aged 36;
4. Baghdasar Ter-Karapetian from Khubs, aged 37;
5. Karapet Ter-Karapetian from Khubs, aged 21;
6. Sargis Davdikian from Khubs, aged 35;
7. Khoren Chrkhoyan from Khubs, aged 35;
8. Hakob Chilinkirian from Khubs, aged 45;
9. Abgar Khuloyan from Khubs, aged 34;
10. Anna Mrchoyan, a woman from Khubs, aged 48.
11. Mariam Mrchoyan from Khubs, aged 40, and her son Vardges, aged 10;
12. Armenak Hekoyan from Khubs, aged 25;
13. Ghunkianos Soghoyan from the village of Sagadzor, aged 35;
14. Hambardzum Ohanian from Sagadzor, aged 25;
15. Sargis Ohanian from Sagadzor, aged 32;
16. Galust Paronian from Sagadzor, aged 38;
17. Gevorg Paronian from Sagadzor, aged 32;
18. Poghos Paronian from Sagadzor, aged 25;
19. Yeprem Sargisian from the village of Arindz, aged 22;
20. Sargis Sirakanian from the village of Arindz, aged 30;
21. Toros Reisian from the village of Tinekk, aged 35;
22. Khachatur Pzpzian from the village of Arek, aged 25;
23. Tigran Zarayan from the village of Arek, aged 28;
24. Mambre Srapian from the village of Osnak, aged 20;
25. Mesrop T[er]-Zakarian from the village of Apoghnak, aged 21;
26. Martiros Ter-Vardanian from the village of Arek, aged 35;

27. Martik Chuloyan from the village of Tsermak, aged 30;
28. Nshan Khachatrian from the village of Apevank, aged 28;
29. Misak Kantoyan from the village of Khubs, aged 27;
30. Hovhannes Abikian from the village of Agrak, aged 45;
31. Hovhannes Khzoyan from the village of Hagstun, aged 50;
32. Khachatur Chantimurian from the village of Hagstun, aged 50;
33. Poghos Karapetian from the village of Charek, aged 45.

Kghi-Gasapa (Khordzian)

1. Kghi-Gasapa is the residence of *kaymakam* in Karin district and is at a distance of 48 hours to the south-west of Karin. The local Armenian Primate sometimes under the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and sometimes administratively came under to the Prelacy of Karin. It was the headquarters of the reserve soldiers of the 4th Turkish army.

Kghi-Gasapa was built on the two banks of the Karakan Gorge. It is surrounded with small mountains to the east, west and north; the large River Kghi, which is a branch of the Euphrates, flows to the south. The water in the river is abundant, clear and limpid; flowing out from the Karakan Gorge called Kelek Teresi by the Turks. There are numerous caves above the gorge that are a result of iron mining; a great part of the Kghi mountains contain iron mines.

The Khordzian (Kghi) province was once the summer residence of the Armenian Arsacid kings⁵⁸. It was surrounded with dense forests and picturesque mountains most convenient for hunting: there were fallow deer, roedeer... all kinds of birds as well as wild animals – bears, wolves, foxes, beavers, etc.

At a distance of a quarter of an hour to the north-east from Kghi-Gasapa there is an old fortress on the very top of a hill. Gasapa can be defended from there on all four sides. Though the fortress was built by our Arsacid princes, it has no inscriptions on the fortress ramparts or ancient walls. We could obtain information and detailed data about it only if we had the big manuscript *Menologium*¹⁹⁷ which was kept in the Aparu monastery of Holy Precursor in the village of Hogstun and contained detailed information on the Kghi-Khordzian province villages and historical sites on vellum. Most probably, it was stolen during the latest events.

Kghi-Gasapa had (2,000) exclusively Armenian population in 500 households and another 250 households of mixed Turkish and Kurdish population. The Turkish part was separate to the south-east of Gasapa. Both the government buildings and the Agricultural Bank were built in between the Armenian quarter,

the lower part of the market and the Turkish quarter. All Armenian and Turkish buildings were built in the form of an amphitheatre. Water was abundant in all quarters. Almost all local Armenians were craftsmen and merchants: shoemakers, tanners, tailors, gunsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, smiths, distillers, tanners, silkworm breeders, millers, sculptors, masons, stonemasons, house-painters, photographers, watchmakers, etc. All kinds of crafts and trades were developed. Kghi produced almost all kinds of raw material for trade and local needs. Fruit production was very underdeveloped: mulberries, pastegh¹⁹⁸, raisins etc. were brought from Balu and Kharberd. However, recently the people had noticed their mistakes and started cultivating fruit trees and orchards. They were locally producing gum tragacanth, eremurus¹⁹⁹ [foxtail lilies] the stem of which, called *eghin* in the local dialect and fried with ghee and eggs is a very tasty dish; *mzhghun* (found on oak-trees) used in tanning; sumac²⁰⁰, hides of goats, sheep, foxes, martens and castors; they were also breeding sheep, goats, oxen, mules and horses depending on local conditions. Though the people of Kghi were quite isolated due to bad road communications, in the 1860s–1870s most of them emigrated to Constantinople and other places. However, when in the 1870s the United Armenian Association opened high school in Kghi-Gasapa and a preparatory college in the village of Khubs, the self-awareness of the local population was raised within a period of fifteen years and they started putting more effort in educational and cultural institutions, established associations and unions, the number of craftsmen and merchants grew up and hence the ruinous contagion of emigration was reduced among both town and village population. The educational, cultural and moral level was quite high.

Out of 500 Armenian households, nearly 100 were Armenian Protestants. The Apostolic Armenians had two famous churches in two quarters – Saint Sargis and Saint James, one high school and a high school for girls, a kindergarten for both sexes as well as three small chapels in two quarters. The Protestants had a high school and a meeting hall. The Apostolic and Protestant Armenians treated each other with great love in educational, church and community issues.

Out of 2,000 exclusively Armenian population of Kghi-Gasapa hardly 200 are in America and other colonies. Out of the remaining 1,800 people, only 20 have survived; the remaining 1,780 people were massacred. Upon the pretext of deportation, prominent and wealthy merchants were selected and ruthlessly massacred together with the local Primate Archimandrite Gegham Tevekelian²⁰¹ at the house of Zeynalzadé from Balu near the village of Tepé. You can see the details about these deeds in the list of massacres and deportations of this book of grief. All the shops of the merchants of the town, the houses and the estates of the town population were burnt and destroyed during the disastrous massacre of 1915²⁰². The once-prosperous and flourishing Kghi-Gasapa is now reduced to

⁵⁸ The mausoleum of the Arsacid princes was hidden in a place called Kghi-Gasapa Sarays. I have noted its location in my notebook and shall reveal it when the political situation allows. (N.P.)

ashes. It would seem to a traveller's eye that no population had lived here for hundreds of years...

This much about Kghi-Gasapa so far, leaving the continuation in the pages to come in their order.

The village of Cheper

2. The village of Cheper: It is at half an hour's distance south-west of Kghi-Gasapa. The village is located in a plain. It has 100 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,100. It has a church named after Holy Mother of God; almost every Sunday pilgrims from other villages come to the church. Adjacent to the church is the village school whose expenses are taken care of by the population of the village and their Society of Philomaths. About 200 people out of the population of 1,100 of Cheper have emigrated to America and other countries; nine hundred people were massacred and deported. Ninety per cent of the deportees were slaughtered on the road from Kghi to the town of Balu. The houses and buildings belonging to the people were burnt and destroyed by Zeynalzadé Mustafa from Kghi. There is no population there now. The church had about 500-600 gold coins and some estates, fields and small forests. The Armenian population of the village lived quite prosperously mostly on farming; some were engaged also in trade. The church and its school were destroyed and the buildings were completely burnt. So now what else can we call an uninhabited place, but an owls' shelter?

The village of Khazi or Gazi: -

3. A quarter of an hour's distance exactly south-west of Cheper with 40 households of Armenian population (400 people) and 20 households of Turks (150 people). The village is located on a small flat hill. They had a church and a small school. The church had no priest; the priests were visiting from Gasapa or Cheper when necessary. The educational level of the people was very low. The villagers were engaged in farming and almost all lived in poverty and misery. No one has survived the disastrous and bloody events of 1915. Many have witnessed and seen with their own eyes the massacre of all the Armenians of the village in the Kurdish village of Gulagan.

The village of Aghbzut

4. The village of Aghbzut: It is at a distance of one hour south of Gasapa. The village is located on a flat plain, with its eastern and southern edges washed by a tributary of the Euphrates. It has 60 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 600. There are 10 households of Turks. The village has a church and a small community school. Most people are farmers, some engaged in crafts – masons, stonemasons, joiners, carpenters, etc. Barely 50 people have emigrated

to America, Bulgaria and other countries. Of the remaining 600 people, 550 fell victim to massacres and deportations. There are no people in the village now and no buildings, only ashes and ruins...

The village of Chumakh

5. The village of Chumakh: It is at a distance of 1.5 hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa, at the foothills of a mountain called Seit Khasim. It is rich in water. The population is engaged in cattle-breeding and farming. There are 30 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 200 and 15 households of Kurds. They have a small Apostolic church and a small school. The intellectual level of the people is very low. There are no historical events to be mentioned. Only two families and one old man have survived; the remaining 198 people were massacred in 1915.

The village of Eolmej

6. The village of Eolmej: It is at a distance of 2 hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa. It had 20 households of exclusively Armenian population (about 250 people) and about 20 households of Kurds and Turks. They had a small church and a small school; the local prelacy took care of the school; the priest and spiritual solace were provided by Gasapa. Most of the people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. The educational level was very low. No one survived the 1915 massacre except for a crazy woman who died recently.

The village of Akipevank

7. The village of Akipevank: It is at a distance of 1.5 hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa, at the foothills of a mountain named Sivri. It had 40 households of exclusively Armenian Apostolic population (400 people) and 20 households of Turks and Kurds. The population was engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. They had a small church and a small school adjacent to it; the Armenian Patriarchate provided for the expenses of the latter. Only a woman and a young man survived the latest disastrous events of 1915. About 30 people live in America; so the casualties make 360 people. The houses are burnt and destroyed.

The village of Hoghas

8. The village of Hoghas: It is at a distance of two hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa, on the edge of a flat valley. It had 150 households of exclusively Armenian population (1,995 people) and 15 households of Turkish population (60-70 people) with a multitude of filthiest practices. The village is surrounded with small forests. The river of the village of Khubs flows at a distance of 20 minutes to the south and after half an hour merges with the large river of Kghi, a tributary of the Euphrates. The Armenians had an Apostolic church with a priest

and a school. They had a Society of Philomaths in America which took care of the annual expenses of the school. About 25 people from the village had emigrated to America. Only two women and a young man have miraculously survived the 1915 events and the massacre. The remaining 917 men, children, women and the priest were all slaughtered by both the Turks of their village and the *chetés* prepared by the government. The Armenians of Hoghas were all craftsmen, farmers and merchants at quite a high material, economic, moral and educational level. The houses and community institutions were destroyed.

The village of Sagadzor

9. The village of Sagadzor: It is at a distance of two and a half hours west of Kghi-Gasapa in a gorge. On the southern side it is bordering Mount Khoshkelt and on the northern side the Martikdagh mountain chain. It has eighty (80) exclusively Armenian households with a population of 640. A small number of them is in America and 120 people were saved from the massacre by the Kurds. The remaining 450 people were ruthlessly massacred and slaughtered. The houses were destroyed and possessions were plundered without leaving a trifle. They had a church and a small school adjacent to it. The school expenses were covered by the expatriate Society of Philomaths from America. The people lived on what they earned by farming, cattle-breeding and production of gum tragacanth and eremurus. They were quite prosperous, but after the 1915 disastrous massacres they lost everything and now their remnants live a miserable life. In Karin they live on the allowance received from the headquarters. There are rich coal mines near the village of Sagadzor. They also have one or two deep pits used as a public cemetery under which there are underground passages like labyrinths. According to the legend, the Arsacid princes kept geese here, that is why it is named Sagadzor (Goose Gorge). As for the underground passage built as a public cemetery, it was used as means of escape during war.

The village of Serkevil

10. The village of Serkevil: It is exactly at a distance of three hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa. The plan of the village resembles a quince⁵⁹. It is surrounded with apple trees, pear trees, quince trees, sour-cherry trees, sweet-cherry trees, walnut trees, Oriental hawthorn and hawthorn trees. The river of the Khubs village flows at a distance of twenty minutes to the south forming a delta near the Kurdish village of Enkuzek and merging with a small tributary of the Euphrates. The monastery of Holy Saviour is on top of a high hill five minutes away from the village. The construction was funded by Mrs. Odeta Muradian of Constantinople. The monastery

⁵⁹ "Serkevil" is the Armenian for quince.

is surrounded with a dense forest of Oriental hawthorn, hawthorn, pear trees and is also used as a cemetery. The monastery has no other estate except a water-mill. Previously the revenues of the water-mill were misappropriated by the village trustees. The expenses of the monastery were provided by the donations of the pilgrims. It had neither rooms nor a working monastic brotherhood, whereas Mrs. Odeta Muradian of Constantinople had given 6,000 gold coins to Khoshmaltian *Haji Asatur agha* to build 25-30 rooms for pilgrims and construct a new monastic building at Holy Saviour from the ground up. In the 1870s *Haji Asatur Khoshmaltian* constructed only a simple church for the monastery using the labour force of the local and neighbouring villages and embezzling the 6,000-7,000 gold coins. The monastery is now in ruins too.

The village of Serkevil [has] (170) exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,200 as well as 10 households of Turks. About 100 people from the village are in America; a further 12 people – children and women – survived during the 1915 events. The remaining 1,088 people were ruthlessly murdered by the Turks and Kurds. Their lands are now occupied by the Kurds from Plechan and the buildings are demolished. The 12 survivors are in Karin living on the allowance of the Armenian headquarters. It is needless to say or write anything about their despair to imagine their miserable life. The village of Serkevil had a church named after Saint Sargis and a stone-built, two-storied splendid school for pupils of both sexes. The village youth was going through a period of awakening, attaching great importance to education and upbringing. Many were ready to take upon themselves the role of revolutionary leaders with Andranik Chanoyan being the first. After his wife died he was recently consecrated a priest with the rank of an archimandrite and during the last 1915 massacres he took over the Derjan prelacy. He was murdered on the Koter Bridge by the Turkish authorities. We are going to write about his biography and activity later since we don't have complete information about his murder.

The village of Khubs

11. The village of Khubs and its history: Khubs is at a distance of three hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa. To the east it is bordered by a small mountain called Khachkonts Karish (*karish* in a local dialect means a small and sharp peak); to the north it is surrounded with Gabi Kar ('Rhubarb stone'), the high mountain of Sivr and Keneyner Karish; to the west with Bibiki (Beviken, Terement) and Kelekil karishes; to the south with a hill called Karbakoyt. The village was built on a plateau with natural strongholds for self-defence. Khubs had 300 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,700 as well as two households of Kurds. They had a church named after Holy Precursor, a chapel named after Saint Sargis, a very spacious high school, a school for girls and a kindergarten. These institutions were in a beautiful two-storied stone-made

building divided into classrooms. It was built with the material contribution and support of local people. The youth of Khubs had shown signs of awakening since the 1870s: they established the Aramian Society among the Khubs expatriates in Constantinople focusing on education and upbringing. It was followed by the Araratian Society which was later known as the "United Armenian Society". For fifteen years running the United Armenian Society was taking care of the educational needs of the village with the villagers making a small contribution to the Society. After 15 years the Association was obliged to close the schools due to unfavourable political conditions, but Khubs already had quite a number of young people with secondary education thanks to the schools opened by the United Society in the village. After the 1895 disastrous events⁶⁰ the residents of Khubs could no longer stay in the village. Since they were plundered, oppressed and living in poverty, they bribed their way and started moving to America looking for a better life there for themselves and their families. After a considerable number of Khubs villagers had gathered in America they again took the initiative and in 1900 established the "Society of Haykazian Philomaths of the Village of Khubs" drawing up a set of by-laws for it.

Since 1901, the Society of Haykazian Philomaths of the Village of Khubs had been taking care of the expenses of the Khubs village school with some support and education programmes provided by the United Society. The educational seeds of the United Society borne good and effective fruit among the Khubs youth. However, the bloody and disastrous massacre of 1915 put an end to all their ideals. The description of the region, the systemic extermination of the population during the massacre, the heroic fighting of the brave and courageous youth of Khubs will be presented in all details to the reading Armenian public²⁰³.

The heroic fight of the village of Khubs:

The periodic massacre and plundering of the Kghi villages started on 21 May 1915. It was carried out by the Kurdish and Turkish *chetés* and the mob in accordance with the instructions from the central Turkish government and secret exhortation, betrayal and support of the German military. Then upon the pretext of preventing these atrocities, Constantinople ordered the deportation of the Armenian population in order to take them out of their homes and dwellings, so that individual and organised *chetés* could put them to the sword and burn them. Each *cheté* consisted of 400 to 500 [people] besides the Turkish and Kurdish mobs numbering 30,000 to 40,000 people.

A. On 21 May 1915 the Armenian village of Agrak was plundered by the Kurds and the Turkish *chetés*; all the population was slaughtered; their sheep,

⁶⁰ Refers to the Armenian massacres carried out by Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1894-1896 when 300,000 Armenians were massacred.

cattle and household stuff were plundered. Agrak had 100 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 700-800. It had two community institutions – a church and a school. The village is completely burnt and demolished; there are hardly 3 or 4 survivors.

B. The village of Khupek with 25-30 mixed Armenian-Kurdish households, was plundered and the population was slaughtered by the Kurds. Exactly on 23 May Khasgyugh also with 8 to 10 Armenian households and 7 to 8 mixed Kurdish-Armenian households, was plundered, the people were murdered and their houses were burnt. The villages of Khupek and Khasgyugh had a church and a school each.

On the same day in Kholkhol with 12 Armenian households and 70 to 80 Kurdish households, the houses of the Armenians and their possessions were plundered, the houses were burnt and the Armenian population was slaughtered and exterminated; only one person has survived.

C. The Armenian village of Hertif: It had 150 households; most of the people were slaughtered. A very small number of Armenians were saved by the Kurdish Ismayil *agha* from Kemek; they are now in Karin and at the village of Arinj in Kghi. Their houses were burnt and their possessions were plundered on 23 May, 1915. It had a splendid church and a community school in the new style and with a splendid location.

D. The village of Serkevil was attacked by the Kurds on 24 May 1915; the village was plundered, the houses were burnt and the population was cruelly slaughtered. There were 180 to 200 Armenian and 8 Kurdish households. It had a monastery named after the Holy Saviour, a church named after Saint Sargis and a large community school for both sexes with separate classrooms and newly furnished. All this was burnt and demolished, reduced to ashes. The massacre and the history of the aforementioned villages will be presented in the lists of massacred people in the pages to come.

E. Khubs: On 24 May, 1915, news was spread like lightning that Khubs would be plundered.

The newly organised youth of the village decided to resort to self-defence without despairing. Self-defence groups were formed which had to take up positions around and inside the village to defend it.

The group occupying the first position – Suren Postoyan, Karapet Postoyan, Melkon Kochoyan, Manasé Manukian, Mesrop Postoyan and others – in Postoyan Tigran's two-storied house, to defend the south-east and west

The group occupying the second position – Srapion Postoyan, Vahan Postoyan, Mamikon Postoyan, Tages Khoshmaltian, Suren Khoshmaltian, Hovsep Paronian, Arshavir Paronian, Mihran Alagiants, Vahan Nalbandiants – in Arakel Postoyan's two-storied house which had a high position and it was possible to defend from its windows from the east, west, north and south.

The group occupying the third position – Mesrop Matosian, Khosrov Khoshmaltian, Sedrak Arvanikian, Abgar Matosian, Abgar Eroyan, Vahan Aboyan from Serkevil and others, nine people in all – in Khoshmaltian Gevorg *effendi*'s two-storied stone house, standing high. It was the centre of the upper part of the village convenient to defend from four sides.

The group occupying the fourth position – Hovhannes N. Khteyan, Hovhannes Mahtesi Hayrapetian and others, in all nine friends – in Mahtesi Hayrapetian Harutyun's two-storied house which was in the upper part of the village to defend from the north, south, east and west from the upper parts.

The group occupying the fifth position: this was a quickly formed group including the following young men: Manuk Elesikian, Baghdasar Ter-Karapetian, Baghdasar from Kholkhol (Matosian's son-in-law), Arakel Tolmachian, Kirakos Baghdikian and others, nine people. in all They were to defend the position from the right and the left from Tadevos Avagian's two-storied house against attacks from the upper part of the village.

After sunrise on 25 May, 1915, Khubs was surrounded from four sides by 8,000-9,000 Kurds. The fight started at noon according to the Turkish time. They started firing from all four sides of the village. Our courageous youth responded with non-stop fire from their positions. The non-stop fight against the unequal forces went on for a day and a half. The Kurds lost 35 to 40 people; we lost only Kirakos Baghdikian and that was due to his very aggressive and courageous behaviour. In the evening the Kurds and the mob collected the bodies of their dead and left the village in great despair. We immediately sent a man to Kghi to the Primate, Archimandrite Gegham Tevekelian and local executive authorities asking for help. Receiving a rejection from the Primate, we were left to carry on an unequal battle. We were obliged to leave the village and climb the mountains the next day. The Kurds and the Turks made use of the opportunity, attacked the village suddenly and started plundering, murdering and chasing those who fled to the mountains and ruthlessly murdered them. On that day the mob was more than 10,000 people. After plundering the village they started burning and razing to the ground the houses at the four corners of the village and those where the Armenians had taken positions. They demolished a whole Armenian village with 300 houses and community schools and a church. The village had a church named after Holy Precursor, a chapel named after Saint Sargis and two large two-storied schools, a kindergarten, buildings for a theatre and a library, schools for boys and girls. The damage only was more than 6,000 gold coins. The total population was 1,700 people. More than 1,250 of them were murdered; some 300-400 had emigrated to other places; their lists will be presented in the pages to come as well as the lists of the massacred and deported villagers. Only the following people have survived and are in Karin now: 1. Melkon Kochoyan; 2. Vahan Postoyan; 3. Srapion Postoyan; 4. Baghdasar Ter-Karapetian; 5. Karapet

Ter-Karapetian; 6. Hakob Chilinkirian; 7. Sargis Y. Davdikian; 8. Khoren (Vertek) Chrkhoyan; 9. Misak Kantoyan; 10. Annik Mrchoyan; 11. Mariam Mrchoyan; 12. Vardges Mrchoyan, aged 6; 13. Abgar Khuloyan. Only these 13 people survived from the entire village of Khubs passing through thousands of difficulties and deaths. They are now in Karin and live on allowances.

The names of the places where the deported Armenians were murdered:

First *frga*²⁰⁴ : – the total number of the murdered in the villages of Kghi – 1,500 people

Second *frga*: – deported and murdered in the village of Chan – 3,000 people

Third *frga*: – deported and murdered in the Kurdish village of Gulegan – 7,000 people

Fourth *frga*: – deported and murdered in the Kurdish village of Chelkheter – 3,500 people

Fifth *frga*: – deported and murdered in Tepe-Balu region (from Ari) – 2,000 people

Sixth *frga*: – deported and murdered at the town and bridge of Balu – 10,000 people

Seventh *frga*: – tied to each other, deported and murdered in Pakhr Maten – 13,000 people

Eighth *frga*: – children at the bridges of Mul, Shen, Arindz – 5,600 children

Ninth *frga*: – from different villages at the Kurdish village of Zrzanos – 8,000 people

The total number of the casualties is fifty three thousand and six hundred (53,600) people.

This figure is only for the people of Kghi and its villages that are known to have been murdered. We cannot give the number of the missing. The accuracy of these figures was again and again checked with the survivors. You can see from the list of nine *frgas* of the murdered deportees that this was a prepared and planned action: there was an order from Constantinople or some supreme preparatory body that the people of Kghi had to be murdered after they were taken out of their region, so that they could not flee to the people or places they knew. However, this had to be proved when 7,000 people were massacred in Gulgan, the *chetébashis* opposed to murdering them before they passed the border of the Balu region but the Kurds ignored the order to get the trophies. So 30 Kurds were captured, brought to the town of Kghi, hanged and shot for not obeying the government order and allowing many Armenian to flee and escape.

The village of Hertif

13. The village of Hertif: It is at a distance of four hours south-west of Kghi-Gasapa. In older times it used to be a town. It had 150 households with a

population of 1,500, a church and a community school in a new and fine building. The population was engaged in farming, linen production, cotton scutching and sheep breeding. There are ruins of an old town nearby as well as the Kurdish villages of Kemek and Kherat a distance of one hour to the east of Hertif. The houses of Mamut Tete are still in Kher remnants of an old Armenian monastery with cuneiform and other inscriptions and crosses on the building. The aforementioned Mamut Tete recounts that his great grandfathers had said that their ancestors were all Armenian archimandrites; their mode of life, behaviour and lifestyle shows that their ancestors were Armenians. The same thing is recounted about Ismayil *agha's* ancestors. During the disastrous events of 1915, they helped and saved many Armenians who are now in Karin and some of them are still in Kemek hiding in Ismayil *agha's* house²⁰⁵.

The village of Kholkhol

14. The village of Kholkhol (Khorkhor?)²⁰⁶ is exactly on the south-east part of Mount Surb Luys (Holy Light). It is half an hour away from the foothills of Surb Luys. According to the records and legends, Kholkhol was the property of Prince Peshar from the Khorkhoruni princes. There is an old Armenian cemetery in the eastern part of the village. On the road to the Kurdish village of Cheonek which is five minutes from Kholkhol, I read an epitaph of the year 657: "Here rests the son of Prince Peshar ... (obliterated) prematurely deceased at the youthful age of twenty." There are Peshar *oghli*s among the Kurds who used to be Armenians and now their descendants recount that their ancestors were Armenian. The village has no church. Peshar *oghli* Suleyman's field is in the place of a dilapidated church now; the stones and cross-stones of the church are still piled-up in the field. It is worth writing about the old crosses and properties of the church here. I personally was in *kirva* relationship with the chief Kurd of that village. There is a tradition among the Kurds that when you are a in a *kirva* relationship, all the villagers have to treat you with respect and keep no secrets from you. One day I asked why they were lighting candles in front of a small chest in the inner room of a Kurd called *Haji* Sleman every Saturday evening and Sunday. He said: "It is our saint but we don't know the contents of the chest". I asked permission to go there for pilgrimage one day. They agreed. Kurds respect those who are *mahtesi*²⁰⁷ and grow beards. Besides, I had studied for six years in the Jerusalem Armenian Seminary and after graduating (1880-1886) I was awarded the degree of sub-deacon. Having lived in a pious environment, I was close to the clergy. The Kurds respected me greatly. I was made to first wash my hands with soap, then I kneeled and advanced to the chest bareheaded. I prayed and started opening the chest. I took out of the chest a packet enveloped in white flowery shawls and wrapped in shawls meant to be put on the altar under the chalice. After unwrapping 12 shawls I found a book that contained music notes

in Greek and words below it were Armenian poems, parts of the Gospel, psalms, a *Narek* with an unknown year. I wrapped the book back with the shawls and took out another heavy packet from the bottom of the chest. I opened it: there were crosses – copper, iron, silver, wooden – 17 in number without any dates, only the words Jesus Christ in Armenian. I wrapped them into the shawls, put everything back into the chest, closed it and respectfully went out. The Kurd asked me what it was. I said: "Your saint is a very powerful saint. You have to always light candles in front of him." After a few weeks, I went to Kghi and told the Primate about it but Archimandrite Aristakes was a lazy man and did not pursue the matter. After two months, a Turkish captain passing through Kholkhol took everything and gave it to the *kaymakam*. Despite the Primate's demand, they did not give it back and sent it to Constantinople. There were 12 Armenian households in Kholkhol with a population of 70 to 80 as well as 50 Kurdish households. The lands of the Kurds all belong to the Armenians. After the massacre of 1915 all those 12 Armenian households were exterminated; only one Armenian survived who fled to the Kurdish village of Tersim. They wanted to bribe and have him killed in Tersim but he was vigilant and fled from Tersim to Yeriza, then to Kghi and from Kghi to Karin where he now lives on an allowance. This was the end of the Armenian population of Kholkhol.

The village of Khupek

15. The village of Khupek: It is at a distance of half an hour south of the village of Kholkhol. It had thirty (30) exclusively Armenian households with a population of 220 as well as six Kurdish households. They had a church and a school. The Armenians were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding; many villagers had emigrated. Only a man, his wife and daughter have survived after the 1914 massacre. About 20 people have emigrated to America. The remaining Armenians were massacred by the Kurds from neighbouring villages, their property was plundered and their houses were burnt.

The village of Agrak

16. The village of Agrak: It is at a distance of one hour south-east of the village of Khupek. It is built in a beautiful valley surrounded with an oak forest on four sides. It has 120 households with a population of 800 as well as seven households of Kurds. It has a church and a community school. The village is completely plundered and burnt. The lands are now cultivated by the Kurds as their property. There are 20 to 30 people in America but their whereabouts is unknown.

The village of Khas

17. The village of Khas: It is at a distance of half an hour south-east of Kholkhol in a valley. There are warm mineral waters below the village. It had

eight Armenian households with a population of 60. There was an old church in the village. The Tukhoyan family were the oldest inhabitants of these eight Armenian households. They were all courageous people and quite wealthy. Only one person survived from this family; further 4 to 5 people are in America. Their sheep, horses, cows, oxen and household stuff were plundered, all their family was put to the sword and their houses were set alight.

The village of Khachatur

18. The village of Khachatur : It is at a distance of two hours south-east of the village of Khubs. There were 20 Armenian households with a population of 80 as well as 20 Kurdish households. The aforementioned village used to belong to an Armenian nobleman named Khachatur. The Yazichi *oghli sipah*²⁰⁸ *amiras*²⁰⁹ took it away from him and gave it to the Kurds. Part of it still belongs to the villagers of Khubs. Though the village is located on a plain, the Khubs River passes from its northern side, and a tributary of the Euphrates flows from Kghi and passes the village from the southern side and because of that there are landslides. All the Armenian population was put to the sword; their houses and lands were occupied by the Kurds. Only a young man from the Chrkhoian family named Khoren survived and is now in Karin.

The village of Chan

19. The village of Chan: It is on the opposite bank of the Euphrates at a distance of four hours south of Kghi-Gasapa. It had 130 Armenian households with a population of 1,100 as well as 10 Kurdish households. The village is located on a plateau named Kaz. The people were mainly engaged in crafts, farming and trade. Their youth were quite advanced. Everybody was plundered and slaughtered during the last massacre of 1915; their houses and community institutions were set alight. They had a church and a school. About 100 people had emigrated to America.

Karboys (Kerpoz)

20. The village of Karboys: It is at a distance of one hour north-east of the village of Chan. There were 125 Armenian households with a population of 1,200 as well as 8 households of Kurds and Turks. They had a church and a community school. The entire population was prosperous; they were mostly craftsmen and merchants, also some farmers and cattle-breeders. Everyone without exception was slaughtered, their property plundered and their houses set alight and demolished. About 150 people are in America.

The village of Avrtnik

21. The village of Avrtnik: It is at a distance of one hour south-east of the village of Karboys. It had 15 Armenian households with a population of 90 and a

small church. The population was plundered and put to the sword. No one survived. There are 12 people in America.

The village of Lek

22. The village of Lek: Located at a distance of two hours south of the village of Chanakhchi. There were 10 Armenian households with a population of 80 as well as 12 Kurdish households. The people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding and were in very good financial position. They were slaughtered during the 1915 massacre. Only a man survived who is still among the Kurds. Their property was plundered and they were slaughtered by the Kurds from Kaz.

The village of Sanjak

23. The village of Sanjak: Near Lek. Eight Armenian households with a population of 60 as well as 20 Kurdish households. They were engaged in cattle breeding. Everyone was slaughtered during the massacre. Ten people are in America. Their houses were plundered and set alight by the Kurds.

The village of Chanakhchi

24. The village of Chanakhchi: It is at a distance of one hour east of the village of Karboys. It had 220 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,400. They were merchants, craftsmen, farmers and cattle-breeders. It was a very advanced and wealthy village. Their new youth were the big hope of the Armenians. They had a Society of Philomaths in America. They had an Apostolic church and a large school. All the people were plundered and slaughtered except for the 120 in America. All the buildings were set alight, demolished and razed to the ground.

The village of Khoshkar

25. The village of Khoshkar: It is south-east of the village of Chanakhchi. It had twenty Armenian households with a population of 90. They were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. Everybody except one were plundered and slaughtered. There are 12 people in America. They had a church and a small school opened by the community.

The village of Oror

26. The village of Oror: It is at a distance of 4 hours south-east of Kghi, on the bank of a Euphrates tributary. It had 35 Armenian households with a population of 240. All the population was massacred during these disastrous events of 1915. Oror always had landslides and crevices which explains the name of the village⁶¹

⁶¹ 'Oror' in Armenian means 'shake, rock, swing'.

The village of Darman

27. The village of Darman: It is at a distance of three hours south-east of Kghi-Gasapa, on the left bank of the Euphrates. It had 500 exclusively Armenian households (including Armenian Protestants) with a population of 2,100 as well as 10 Turkish households. They had two churches and two schools. The people were engaged in farming, trade and crafts. Everything belonging to the Armenians has been plundered and set alight in the village. About 75 people were saved thanks to a Kurdish *agha* from the village of Karer; a further 300 people are in America and other places. The remaining 1,725 people were massacred. The village was most populous and prominent for its merchants. It has no population now; it is burnt and demolished.

The village of Charipasht

28. The village of Charipasht: It is at a distance of half an hour east of the village of Oror. It had 35 Armenian households with a population of 350. They had a church and a school. The people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. The village was prosperous. The village was plundered and the people were massacred. No one survived.

The village of Seghank

29. The village of Seghank: It is at a distance of one hour east of the village of Darman. It had 120 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,100. They had a church²¹⁰ and a school. The people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. The people were prosperous thanks to their diligence and industriousness. They were plundered and massacred in 1915. Four people only survived and are now in Karin. A further 50 people are in America.

The village of Astghaber

30. The village of Astghaber: It is at a distance of half an hour north-east of the village of Seghank, located in a beautiful plain. It had 250 Armenian households with a population of 1,500 as well as 10 Kurdish households. The people were engaged in farming, trade and cattle-breeding. The village was economically strong and quite wealthy. They had a school for both sexes, two churches named after St Sargis and St George. The building used to be the pagan temple²¹¹ of false goddess Astghik and was converted into a church. Abundant water, enough for three water-mills, flows out from under the church. The building has the form of a pagan temple. The people were massacred and plundered; only 10 people survived.

The village of Khosnak

31. The village of Khosnak: It is at a distance of three hours east of Kghi-Gasapa located in a valley. It had 120 Armenian households with a population of 1,000 as well as 15 Turkish households. They have a church named St Cyriacus and a community school. Only 20 people survived from this village and are now in Karin. About 130 people have emigrated to America and other places. Some 850 people were massacred in 1915. The people were engaged in trade, farming and cattle-breeding. They were very prosperous. The houses are burnt and demolished.

The village of Apoznak

32. The village of Apoznak: It is at a distance of one hour north-east of the village of Darman. There were 120 Armenian households with a population of 1,000 as well as 7 Turkish households. The people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding; there were merchants and craftsmen. The village was plundered and the people were massacred. Only seven people escaped and are now in Karin. About 70 people are in America. The remaining 923 people were massacred in the course of 1915.

They had a church and a school which are now burnt.

The village of Chermak

33. The village of Chermak: It is at a distance of half an hour west of the village of Khosnak. It had 200 Armenian households with a population of 1,500 as well as 14 households of Turks. The people were engaged in crafts, trade and farming. They were all hard-working and prosperous. They had a church and a school. Their youth were very advanced and active in educational and community matters. In 1915, some of the population – about 70 people – were saved by the Kurds of the village of Karer and are now in Karin. A further 160 people have emigrated to America and other countries. About 1,270 people were massacred and exterminated, their property was plundered and their houses were set alight and reduced to ashes. Sheikh zadé Mustafa and his brother Nechip from the same village massacred the Armenians and did everything for the innocent Armenians to be murdered.

The village of Arek

34. The village of Arek: It is at a distance half an hour south-west of the village of Chermak. It had 300 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,680. They had a church, a school and the monastery of Holy Mother of God overlooking the River. The people were engaged in farming, trade, crafts and cattle-breeding. The economic state of the village was very prosperous. The people were polite, especially the youth who strived for

education. The village, the church, the monastery and the houses of the people were plundered and their property was robbed. The people were massacred and murdered with barely 25 survivors. Almost 1,200 people were massacred.

The village of Hagstun

35. The village of Hagstun: It is at a distance of four hours north of Kghi-Gasapa. It had 150 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,400. It had an Apostolic church and a school and a monastery called Holy Precursor of Apar. The people were engaged in farming, cattle-breeding and different crafts. They lived a prosperous and quiet life but the disastrous Armenian massacres of 1915 put an end to that quiet life: the village was plundered, the people were massacred with hardly 75 people saved by escaping; they are now in the village of Khoshan Mezré of the *nahiyé* of Andres living on the allowance from the Armenian headquarters of Karin. About 125 people have emigrated to America and other countries. About 1,200 people, children, etc. were massacred. Their detailed list is not available.

The village of Tinek

36. The village of Tinek: It is at a distance of three hours north-east of Kghi-Gasapa. There were 50 Armenian households with a population of 400 as well as 15 Kurdish households. They had two community institutions – a church and a school. Most people were farmers and cattle-breeders, there were also some craftsmen. Some emigrated and lived in quite civilised and prosperous conditions. However, the last massacres of 1915 put an end to everything: the village was plundered, all the property was robbed. Only four people survived with a further 20 people who are in America. The remaining 374 people were murdered.

The village of Amarich

37. The village of Amarich: It is at a distance of five hours north of Kghi-Gasapa in the *nahiyé* of Andres. It had 65 Armenian households with a population of 500 as well as 7 Kurdish households. They had a church and a school. The people were engaged in farming, cattle-breeding and crafts. The material condition of the people was very good. The village was plundered and destroyed. The people were massacred; only 7 people survived. There are further 50 people in America. In all 443 people were massacred and murdered.

The village of Arindz

38. The village of Arindz: It is at a distance of five hours north of Kghi-Gasapa. There were 70 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 600. They had two community institutions – a church and a school. The people

were engaged in farming, cattle-breeding and crafts. The village was plundered, all the property was robbed and the people were massacred and murdered. Only three people survived the 1915 massacre with a further 30 people expatriated to America. So 567 people were murdered and massacred. They were quite prosperous. Now most of the village is destroyed.

The village of Shen

39. The village of Shen: It is at a distance of one hour east of the village of Arindz. It had 35 Armenian households with a population of 360 as well as 10 Kurdish households. They had a church and a school. The people were engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. They were prosperous. The village was plundered and the people were massacred; there were only 8 survivors with further 12 people expatriated to America. So, 340 people were murdered.

The village of Jerman

40. The village of Jerman: It is at a distance of a quarter of an hour north of the village of Shen, on the opposite bank of the River Shen. There were 35 Armenian households with a population of 370 as well as 11 Kurdish households. The people were engaged in cattle-breeding, farming and crafts. They had a church and a school. Only 10 people survived; the remaining 360 were murdered and massacred.

The village of Melikan

41. The village of Melikan: It is at a distance of 20 minutes west of the village of Jerman. It had 67 Armenian households with a population of 600 as well as 3 Kurdish households. It had a church and a school. The people were plundered and massacred; the village was ruined. The people were economically quite well-off but the disastrous massacre of 1915 put an end to everything. About 50 people had emigrated to America and Russia and about 20 people survived, so 530 people were murdered and massacred.

The village of Lechik

42. The village of Lechik: It is at a distance of three hours north-east of the village of Melikan. It had 50 Armenian households with a population of 1,500 as well as 4 Kurdish households. They had a church and a school. The village was plundered and robbed; most of the population was massacred. Now the houses are destroyed. Thirty people have survived; twenty young people are in America. The people were engaged in trade and farming; they were prosperous with great chances of being successful in life.

The village of Kharapek

43. The village of Kharapek: It is at a distance of five hours north-east of the village of Melikan. It had 70 Armenian households with a population of 600. They had a church and a school. Only one priest survived from the village, who came to Karin and died there. The people were engaged in farming. The village is located on a flat plain. All the property of the village was plundered and the population was massacred by the *chetés*. The village is currently ruined with no population.

The village of Sharuk

44. The village of Sharuk: It is at a distance of 6 hours east of the village of Melikan. There is detailed information about the village later in the book with lists of survivors and the massacre.

The village of Chiftlik

45. The village of Chiftlik: It is at a distance of five hours north-east of the village of Melikan. It had 60 households and a population of 600. There is a church and a school in the village. The people are quite prosperous and economically very well-off. The village was plundered during the 1915 massacre: all the sheep, household goods and possessions were taken away. The people were massacred; only 15 survived. There are a further 35 people in America. So 550 people were massacred – adults, children and babies...

The village of Pash Chiftlik

45. The village of Pash Chiftlik: Not far from Chiftlik to the east. It had 50 households with a population of 480. There is a church named after Saint George and a school. The people were engaged in cattle-breeding and farming. The population was very prosperous and economically well-off. However, during the 1915 massacre all the village was plundered, the people were ruthlessly massacred by the *chetés*. Only 20 people survived, so 460 people were murdered.

The village of Inakh

46. The village of Inakh: It is at a distance of 3 hours north-east of Kghi-Gasapa. It had 12 Armenian households with a population of 120. There was no church and no school. They were completely plundered and massacred. Nothing is known about anyone.

The village of Hyolenk

47. The village of Hyolenk: It is at a distance of 12 hours north of Kghi-Gasapa. There were 5 Armenian households with a population of 62, 15 Greek households and 8 Kurdish households. Although some of them were saved, they

had 14 casualties. Some people were robbed and now live in Karin and neighbouring villages as well as in Umutum.

Khezel Chupukh

48. Khezel Chupukh: It is at a distance of 2 hours east of the village of Chiftlik. They have a church named Saint James. There were 15 Armenian households with a population of 120 as well as 15 Kurdish households. The people were living prosperously but were plundered and massacred by the *chetés*; hardly 10 people survived and now live in Karin on allowance.

I presented the aforementioned forty-eight Armenian villages in this order. There are about 20 to 30 villages in the *nahiyé* of Kochak that once belonged to the Armenians but now the Kurds live there, though their names are preserved: for example, Harkap (Haykap?), Hanzevik (Andzrevik?), Daru, Eresk, Horevank, Ter Ohan, Aghtat, Norberd (the Haykap Berd, etc. We shall write about them in detail later²¹².

Book of Grief

The village of Sharuk of Kghi had thirty-three (33) exclusively Armenian households. On 25 May, 1915 a terrible massacre and plunder started there recounted by the following inhabitants of the same village: Arakel Sargsian, aged 40; Mshur Israyelian, aged 25; Suren Vardanian, aged 27; Hovhannes Grigorian, aged 30; Smbat Petoyan, aged 29; Nerses Metsikian, aged 18; Suren Karoyan, aged 16; Suren Voskehanian, aged 10 and others. The following detailed information was recorded in the village of Umutum of Karin by Nazaret Postoyan – the first teacher of the Moscow Armenian Committee. Below we present first of all the misfortunes of Arakel Sargsian (recorded on 21 January, 1917, in the village).

Question: - My compatriot, where are you from?

Answer: - I am a native of the village of Sharuk of Kghi.

Q – What is your name and surname? How old are you? Do you have any relatives alive? Are you married? Do you have any children?

A – My name is Arakel, my surname is Sargsian, I am 40. I had 22 relatives. Now five of us have survived. I was married but during these events my wife was abducted by the Kurds. I had three daughters and a son who were deported. I don't know if they are dead or alive.

Q – How did they start plundering and massacring you? In what year did those events occur? Can you remember or recount in detail?

A – Oh, oh, dark-eyed one! Of course, I can tell. There was blood all over. What have we seen from the Ottomans? It was on 25 May, 1915, those black

days when four mounted gendarmes came to our village of Sharuk and hurried us, 23 households, to collect our belongings and go to the village of Lechik of Kghi. It was at a distance of one and a half hours from our Sharuk. We obeyed the government order and the same day we took everything we had – household goods, cattle, women's silver and golden head decorations, necklaces, bracelets, etc., many valuable things, silk dresses, antiques left from our ancestors, we took all this and left Sharuk for Lechik. When we reached the Kurdish village of Zrzanos we found there a huge crowd of Armenians from different villages – 350 to 400 people from Sharuk, 600 to 700 people from Lechik, 400 to 500 people from Kharapek, 550 to 600 people from Chiftlik, 300 to 400 people from Khezelpugh. All these people were gathered in the village of Zrzanos and surrounded by 2,500 to 3,000 Kurds headed by the following prominent people: Tervish *bek* from the village of Lechik, his brother Sleyman *bek* with their supporters – some 300 to 400 people; Aziz son of Memedin from Ghezelpugh with 250 people; Nivsret *bek* son of Ismayel *bek* from Shilgan with their 300 to 400 supporters; Memed *bek* son of Musa *bek* from Ghollan with 400 to 500 people; Aptil Selam from Sogl with his 200 to 300 people and the mob; Riza *bek* son of Zia *bek* from Pashgyugh with 400 to 500 people. Besides these important people, there was a mob of 3,000 to 4,000 people in the mountains and gorges. First Tervish *bek*'s brother Sleyman *bek* gathered all the money and valuables from the people and then ordered our slaughter. I wish my eyes hadn't seen that... Those were the black days of the great calamity: mothers forgot their babies, corpses started floating in torrents of blood... Seven to eight thousand innocent people were massacred there.

Q – How did you escape?

A – We obeyed the Kurdish law²¹³. Sayit *bek* from Temirtash persuaded us, took us with him and protected us. I lived under the Kurdish law for 4 months until the Russians took Karin. That night I fled to Karin and surrendered.

Q – Can you tell us about the households of your village and their members?

A – I can. I'm going to tell you and you write them down one by one...²¹⁴

Thus, the aforementioned Armenian village of Sharuk consisted of 35 households with a total population of 188 people. Three quarters of the population was cruelly slaughtered, even the minor children. Considering just the average of a quarter of their property, the damage would amount to fifty-three thousand Ottoman gold coins excluding the women's gold, silverware, head decorations, etc.

Note from the recorder: the total number is 188 people who were accurately listed as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Total number of survivors: | 25 people |
| 2. Emigrants to America: | 12 people |
| 3. Died of fear and horror: | 5 people |

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 4. Missing during deportation: | 9 people |
| 5. Number of abducted women and girls: | 4 people |
| 6. Total number of the murdered and put to the sword: | 133 people |
| Total: | 188 people |

The remnants of the survivors will probably not be able to live because of the scourge of suffering all kinds of torture on their skin and the sad and dark days of poverty of today's emigration...

N. Postoyan

Arakel Sargsian from the village of Sharuk – One of the survivors of the village of Sharuk who escaped from these horrible events and massacre recounts the following:

1. They murdered 400 people on the Zrzanos Bridge and threw them into the water; they were tying them up in fives and shooting them. In this way, they murdered 400 people and threw them into the water; the flow of the river was blocked due to the great number of corpses.

2. They murdered 200 to 250 people on the Lechik Bridge, too. They slaughtered people on the bridge like sheep. The two stone arches of the bridge are still painted in blood of the people as an eternal sign for revenge. After slaughtering the adults like sheep, they started selecting little children, took them by their legs and hit them against the stones of the bridge. The children were gathered from five villages; their number was about 1000. None survived: they were taking everyone by the legs and hitting them against the stones of the bridge. I saw it with my own eyes and after losing my last hope, I threw myself into the river. They fired a lot after me but I swam under the water, reached the shrubs and fled to Seyit *bek* from Temirtash hiding in his house.

Q – How many community institutions did you have?

A – We had a fine church named after Saint Sargis and a community school in a newly built stone building. No building is standing in the village; they are all set alight and razed to the ground. The damage of the community institutions and church vessels amounts to 1,000 gold coins.

Note from the recorder: All the people of the village were well-to-do, especially the youth of the new generation who were consciously strengthening the economic and educational organisation of the people. Unfortunately, the present terrible events put an end to everything.

N. Postoyan

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 140, pp. 1-60 rev., original, handwritten.

TESTIMONY OF A GROUP OF SURVIVORS ON THE MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGES IN KGHI DISTRICT OF KARIN PROVINCE

The brief story of the deportation and massacre in the Kghi district of Karin province is presented by the following people who are closely acquainted with the events:

1. Vahan Postoyan from the village of Khubs of Kghi who was deported to Balu and escaping death three times found shelter with the Kurds from 21 May, 1915 to May 1916.
2. Srapion Postoyan from the same village who shared his brother Vahan's fate in deportation, and hiding among the corpses fled at night and after long wanderings found shelter with the Kurds.
3. Baghdasar and Karapet Ter-Karapetians who escaped from the Balu massacre and found shelter with the Kurds.
4. Sargis Davdikian from the village of Khubs who reached Pakhr Maten of Kharberd with the deportees and fled from among the corpses at night.
5. Abgar Khuloyan from the village of Khubs who escaped from the Balu massacre and found, shelter with the Kurds.

The Armenian village of Agrak was plundered and massacred by the Kurds on 21 May. All the people – 100 households with a population of 700 – were massacred; household goods, draught animals, cattle and sheep were plundered. The village had a church and a school that were destroyed.

The massacre of the village of Agrak was committed mainly by Kehtë Ipish from Tersim and his people. They first massacred the entire population and then plundered all the possessions of the village.

The villages of Khupek and Khas were massacred on 23 May. The former had 30 and the latter 10 households. The population were mixed with the Kurds. The exact number of the population is unknown. The entire population were massacred, plundered and set alight. Khupek had a school and a church; Khas had an ancient church. The pupils of Khupek studied in their school; those of Khas studied partially in Khupek and partially in Agrak, though they had a Society of Philomaths in America.

The village of Kholkhol was massacred on the same day: the 10 exclusively Armenian households (out of total 80) were completely massacred and set alight. Only one person survived– Baghdasar Karkuts - who took shelter in the depths of Tersim.

The village of Hertev – 135 households with a population of 1,100 - was attacked on 25 May, 1915. Most of the people were massacred; a small number escaped thanks to the efforts and protection of Ismayil *agha* from Kemek. Some

were saved and came to Karin and some stayed with the same *agha*. The village is located at the foothills of Mount Surb Luys. There is a legend in the village that when the ark of Patriarch Noah was passing by, it shaved the top of the mountain exactly at morning sunrise; that is why it is called Mount Surb Luys⁶². Every year on the Feast of the Transfiguration the Armenians and the Kurds went there on pilgrimage and offered sacrifices.

The whole village was plundered and set alight. It had a beautifully built church and a more beautiful school, newly built through the efforts of fellow villagers from the Society of Philomaths in America.

The village of Serkevil with 200 households and a population of 1,400 was attacked on 24 May, 1915. There was a wonderful monastery named after the Holy Saviour with vast forests, orchards and estates, a church named after the Holy Sign and a newly built large school. The villagers were hard-working people. Three quarters of the villagers were massacred on the spot and a quarter after the deportation. The public institutions and the houses were set alight.

On 25 May, 1915 the village of Khubs was besieged by 7,000 to 8,000 Kurds.

Before the siege there was a rumour that Khubs would be plundered. The young active people of the village immediately gathered together and decided to resort to self-defence, since the previous attacks had taught them a lesson that without resistance they would be massacred. Self-defence groups were formed to take up positions around and in the village to resist the attacks.

The first group consisted of the following young men: Suren Postoyan, Karapet Postoyan, Melkon Kochoyan, Manasé Nalbandian and others.

The second group [consisted of]: Srapion Postoyan, Vahan Postoyan, Mamikon Postoyan, Tages Khoshmatlian, Suren Khoshmatlian, Hovsep Paronian, Arshavir Paronian, Mihran Avagian, Vahan Nalbandian.

The third group consisted of Mesrob Matosian, Khosrov Khoshmatlian, Sedrak Asvanikian, Abgar Matosian, Abgar Eroyan, Vahan Aboyan from Serkevil and others.

The fourth group consisted of Hovhannes Khteyan, Hovhannes M[ahtesi] Hairapetian and others.

The fifth group consisted of Manuk Elesikian, Baghdasar Ter-Karapetian, Paghtik from Kholkhol, Zakar Postoyan, Mambré Postoyan, Hovhannes Postoyan and others. This group was a special group consisting of well-known brave men which was to supervise all positions.

The first group took up a position in Tigran Postoyan's two-storied house in the southern part of the village.

⁶² "Surb Luys" in Armenian means "Holy Light".

The second group took up a position in Arakel Postoyan's two-storied house which had windows with iron bars, a very convenient position for self-defence and for supporting the first position. In this position one person could resist 100.

The third group took up position in the highest part of the village in Gevorg Khoshmatlian's house, located at the top of the amphitheatre-shaped village and dominating the whole village.

The fourth group took up position in Harutyun Hairapetian's house in the northern part of the village to resist the attacks from the north.

The fifth special group took up position in the houses of Tadevos Avagian and Hovhannes Khoshmatlian; they had to resist the attacks from the south and relieve all the positions.

The fight started at exactly 6 o'clock in the morning. The village was attacked from four sides. Bullets were fired like hail and our brave men replied from their positions without wasting a bullet and committing a massacre in the dense rows of the Kurds. The non-stop fight lasted one and a half days. The Kurds lost 35-40 people; we lost only Kirakos Baghdikian.

In the evening the Kurds gathered their bodies and in despair left the heroic Khubs. We took the chance and sent a messenger to the town through Mount Sivri to the diocesan *locum tenens* Archimandrite Gegham Tevekelian and local organisations asking to help us and send ammunition. Unfortunately, we received a negative answer from the Primate and an ignoble order to surrender. The same day the unequal fight resumed. The next day we had to withdraw from the village and climb the mountains because we were running out of ammunition. The Kurds and the Turks immediately attacked the village with redoubled forces. The defenceless village fell prey to the barbarity of the attackers. They massacred everybody ruthlessly; they even chased those who fled to the mountains massacring and setting them alight. The houses that served as positions were immediately set alight. After carrying away their loot for several days, they set the whole village alight.

The once prosperous and highly cultured village is now razed to the ground.

The village of Khubs had 300 exclusively Armenian households with a population of 1,700. There were 431 expatriates, mainly in America. The village had wonderful community cultural institutions, a 75-year-old fine church named after Holy Precursor, a two-storied school for both sexes with their classrooms and a ground floor theatre hall for performances and lectures as well as libraries. The schools were managed by the United Association. Part of the budget – 120 gold coins – was provided by the Khubs Society of Philomaths of America and the rest by the United Association of Constantinople. There was also a dilapidated chapel named after Saint Sargis in the upper part of the village.

The damage of the aforementioned cultural institutions amounted to 3,000 English Sovereigns. The material damage suffered by the people is impossible to calculate but supposedly it would reach the sum of 100,000 gold coins.

The casualties – 1,205 people murdered or missing; only 9 people miraculously survived – 2 women, 1 minor and 6 young people.

The residents of remaining villages and the town of Kghi were deported and their population were massacred in different places at Balu and Pakhr Maten (Kharberd). No one survived from Kghi to provide information about the deportation.

The total number of the deportees was 40,000.

First group – perished in villages – 1,500;

Second group – murdered in the village of Jan – 3,000;

Third group – murdered in the Kurdish village of Guligan – 7,000;

Fourth group – in the village of Zelkheter – 3,500;

Fifth group – murdered in the village of Tepé (Balu) – 2,000;

Sixth group – murdered at Balu and on the bridge and thrown into the gorge – 10,000;

Seventh group – murdered in Pakhr Maten (Kharberd) – 13,000;

Total: 40,000.

There are also lost and missing people among these, but it is impossible to check that.

Some of the progressive intellectuals of the town of Kghi along with the Primate – 19 people in all – were murdered in the house of the Muradians in the village of Tilimil of Balu.

Below we present a statistical table showing the former state of the villages and the number of the survivors for Kghi (along with the town of Kghi).

Number	Village name	Number of residents	Arm. households	Kurdsih, Turkish households	Churches	Schools	Survivors
1.	Hertif	1,200	150	7	1	1	193
2.	Serkevil	1,175	158	9	1, 1 monastery	1	-
3.	Agrak	800	120	7	1	1	1
4.	Khapek	215	35	6	1	1	3
5.	Kholkhol	70	10	50	0	0	1
6.	Khasgegh	50	7	9	1	0	
7.	Sagadzor	700	85	0	1	1	52
8.	Khubs	1,700	300	2	2	3	9
9.	Hoghas	994	150	15	1	1	
10.	Apevank	320	30	20	1	1	1

11.	Eolmezgegh	170	18	20	1	1	5
12.	Chumakh	90	25	20	1	1	6
13.	Chprgyugh	1,120	120	2	1	1	
14.	Khazi	320	45	20	1	1	
15.	Azbzat	380	45	10	1	1	
16.	Khachatur	80	12	20	0	1	
17.	Changyugh	1,200	120	15	1	1	
18.	Karboys	1,300	135	11	1	1	
19.	Avrtnik	100	15	13	1	1	
20.	Lek	52	10	10	0	1	
21.	Sanjak	80	7	20	0	0	
22.	Chanagchi	1,400	230	0	1	1	
23.	Khoshkar	100	25	10	1	1	
24.	Oror	400	35	10	1	1	
25.	Tarman	2,100	500	10	2	2	3
26.	Charipash	380	35	11	1	1	
27.	Seghank	1,112	120	0	1	1	
28.	Astghberd	1,600	260	12	3, 1 monastery	1	
29.	Khosnak	1,200	100	18	1	1	
30.	Apoznak	1,200	110	8	1	1	2
31.	Tsirmak	1,520	220	14	1	1	2
32.	Arek	1,580	300	0	2, 1 monastery	1	23
33.	Hogstan	1,200	140	0	2, 1 monastery	1	56
34.	Tinak	400	60	20	1	1	10
35.	Amarich	520	57	7	1	1	12
36.	Arinj	600	70	0	1	1	3
37.	Shen	300	30	12	1	1	14
38.	Jerman	340	30	10	1	1	3
39.	Melikan	550	70	4	1	1	26
40.	Lchig	500	60	7	1	1	28
41.	Chiftlik	595	67	10	1	1	
42.	Kharapek	518	62	5	1	1	
43.	Sharuk	490	40	7	1	1	
44.	Pash Chiftlik	475	40	3	1	1	
45.	Inakh	120	12	10	0	0	
46.	Heolenk	62	5	28 (Greek)	0	0	
47.	Moz	38	4	5	0	0	
48.	Horkap	20	2	35	0	0	
49.	Town of Kghi	2,000	500	200	4	4	8
		33,336	4,981	752	49	47	461

There were 107 survivors from the villages not included in the list.
The localities that were impossible to check, because they were under Turkish control, were not included in the list.

[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 474, pp. 1-9, original, handwritten.

YERZKA PROVINCE

No 121

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR YEGHIA TOROSIAN ABOUT THE DEPORTATION OF THE TOWN OF YERZKA

Narrated by Yeghia Torosian

Aged 60, freed as a craftsman and then found shelter among the Kurds

Mobilisation

The mobilisation in Turkey started on 21 June, 1914; men aged 20 to 45 were ordered to enlist

At that time I was in Mamakhatun with my family. I had a mother, a wife, two sons, aged 8 and 2, and a daughter aged 5. I had 25 sheep and 2 cows. I was a tailor. I was conscripted too and we had to leave for Yeriza after two days to work in a military workshop.

Departure

Two days before departure my mother and wife prepared supplies for me mixing their tears with the flour.

On 1 August, all households were in mourning: even before parting, before seeing the calamity they knew the result. Out of 400 households, only 15 were Armenian. Who will they leave their newly married wives to? Who will feed and take care of them?

One day they came with swords and took us out of our homes. We had white sacks with us – that was our supplies. The screams of our sons, the sorrow of our mothers and the weeping of our newly married wives completely demoralised us. We had to go – they were threatening. We made our last farewell and left.

We spent the first night at Mr Mambre's house. It was our first time out of our homes. After having a rest we continued our way the next day. The next day we stayed at a different village and were again made welcome. The next day we

were taken to an inn where we felt imprisoned and thought we would never be freed. We were supposed to reach Yerznka the next day.

Yerznka: the eclipse

At 9 o'clock on Friday, we – a group of 15 – entered Yerznka. We were in the market when the sun was eclipsed and we lost one another. The stars started shining instead of the sun. It lasted for 15 minutes and then it gradually became light again. We all went to our friends' houses and after having a rest, the next day we went to present ourselves. We were registered in the 35th Company. *Tapakhané*²¹⁵ was our workshop.

Tapakhané

The workshop called *Tapakhané* was at a distance of 20 minutes to the south of Yerznka.

There were 800 people there, 16 rooms, two directors and one captain; the rest were supervisors. We had to work 16 hours out of 24; the short days were to be made up at night.

Leaving the workshop was categorically forbidden. During working hours it was permitted to go out for several minutes only and if someone was late terrible punishment and beating were awaiting him. So knowing that, workers were trying to be back on time. Only natives of Yerznka were allowed to go home at night after work, on condition that in the morning they had to be on time for work otherwise they would be beaten. If someone fell ill and said "I am ill", he would be severely beaten and sent to hospital in a worse condition and after a few days we would get the mournful news of his death. So death was the only salvation from this hard labour and beating.

The great louse, the disease - *tifuz*²¹⁶

At the end of December 1914, the victorious Turkish armies in the Caucasus were defeated by the Russians at Sarighamish and retreated in disgrace with all the army wounded and ill.

This situation lasted for several months. All the government and large buildings were turned into hospitals in Yerznka as well as from Sarighamish to Karin, from Karin to Mamakhatun, from there to Yerznka, and from Yerznka to Sebastia. They founded hospitals along all that line – at a distance of every two hours from each other.

From December 1914 to March 1915, there were corpses all along the roads from Sarighamish to Sebastia. The corpses were too many to be buried so they were piled outside on each other for the scavengers to feed on. Every day 30 to 100 people died in the hospitals of Yerznka. The microbe [*sic*]of the disease was a louse – a big black insect that bred so fast that would kill the patient in three

days. The lice on different parts of the body would gather over the heart of the patient and from there move to the mouth and suffocate the patient. It was more widespread among the Turks: about 3,500 of them expired in Yerznka region, 7,000 in Karin and the number of those who fell dead on the roads in the snow was at least 50,000. For example, in September there were 800 people at *Tapakhana* [*sic*] and in March only 235.

The Turks were obliged to carry out a new mobilisation because the troops were depleted and the crier shouted that men aged 17 to 18 and 19 to 20 would be called up.

Chetés

For fifteen years the Turkish prisons were full of thieves, murderers and criminals of all kinds. During the deportation of the Armenians, they were released and given a free hand to commit crimes. The government armed and clothed them. The Armenians were wondering why those *chetés* were released, they were expecting some persecutions against the Armenians. All young Armenians were in the hands of Turkey, and the Turks got their programme from the German government.

When the Armenian volunteers started to join the Russian army in groups, the Turks understood that their end was close, that the Armenians would grow stronger after their death. They were unable to digest that and tried to exterminate the Armenians. They started their plan on 1 February, 1915: the intellectuals, the merchants and the high ranking officials were the first to suffer – they were fired and their property was confiscated. Then they started to secretly kill the revolutionaries.

One day the public officers didn't come home in the evening: "They were corrupt, so we deported them to some other place," was the answer. However, after two days their corpses were seen on the banks of the Euphrates. After some time all the villages were invaded by the *chetés*. Yerznka and its environs were swarmed by 30,000 troops and 10,000 *chetés*: they were plundering, beating, raping. The young men were captured and arrested and after two days were murdered. When [their relatives] brought food or clothes for them in the afternoon, they were told: "They have been sent to Sansar. You'll get a letter in a few days." That was the Sansar gorge that became a slaughterhouse for 15,000 young Armenian men.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 415, pp. 71-79, original, handwritten.

No 122
**GAREGIN TURIKIAN'S NOTES ABOUT THE MASSACRES OF THE
ARMENIAN VILLAGES IN YERZKA PROVINCE OF KARIN
VILAYET**

June 20, 1917.
Yeriza

The province with an old Armenian name Yekeghyats, now called Yeriza or Yerznka, is a vast valley surrounded with high mountains on four sides.

The River Euphrates flows through the Yeriza valley from east to west

The climate of Yeriza is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Despite hot summers in the valley, some mountain peaks surrounding it are covered with eternal snow.

The earth is soft and fertile. All kinds of cereals, legumes, vegetables and fruit are grown on it. Irrigation and drinking water are abundant, but not clear due to the carelessness of the former government and, certainly, the worn-out water supply system. The town is located in the centre of the valley surrounded with numerous villages adorned with gardens and orchards. The villages are located at the foothills of high mountains surrounding them and look like large fenced orchards to distant viewers.

The history of Yeriza had its peaks. When King Trdat⁶³ the Great from the Armenian dynasty of Arsacids received the crown from the Byzantine²¹⁷ [sic] emperor and returned to Armenia, he chose the Yekeghyats province for his residence. In the Middle Ages it was a battlefield between the invading Persian-Turkish and Tatar-Turkish tribes.

Due to its fertile lands, flat and convenient position, the province had for a long time sheltered the Fourth Army of the ungrateful Ottoman Empire until Yeriza was captured by the brave soldiers of the Tsar.

The vegetation is abundant and in some places beekeeping and cattle-breeding are developed.

There is a coal mine in Yeriza 2-3 hours to the north of the town; however, no practical steps have been taken to exploit it to date. There is also a mineral water source an hour's distance to the east but it, too, flows away uselessly.

Yeriza is surrounded by mountains some of which are prominent: to the south it is Mirchan (historical Mndzur) which is part of the Tersim range and is known for the River Mndzuri originating from its slopes with cool and clear water as well as the Mirchan Gorge; to the north it is Spnkor, translated as Saint Gregory.

On this mountain St Gregory the Illuminator allegedly suffered torments. To the west it is Chartagli known for its military position.

Yeriza is bordered on the east by Derjan and Khuziljan, on the south by the Kghi, Bulurmur and Ovajig valleys separated by the Tersim range; on the west by Kemakh (the old Armenian name is Daranagh Kamaghk = Kamakh); on the north by Kelkut and Baberd. The territory of the province from east to west is almost 400 (four hundred) [square] *versts*.

The fortress built by King Artashes is worth noting among the ancient relics. It was destroyed by the Turks but some traces of it are preserved to date.

Thus, despite having a favourable position, after hundreds of years of rule by the Ottomans who clung to their profligate harem life and never thought of developing the town more with professional and commercial splendours, there are still unpaved streets in and out of Yeriza until today. On rainy days the people are forced to pass through the streets scratching the walls or carry each other on their backs in order to cross the flooded streets. The same can be said about the unclean drinking water. The experience shows that had the former government not spared some efforts and expenses, it could have provided its people with cool and high quality water helping them to bring up healthy and active children by bringing clean water into the town from its environs.

Besides, it was possible to boost the industry of the town and earn more revenues by making use of the waters flowing uselessly. For example, by turning the water from the gorge on the north-eastern part of the town to huge arid lands, it would be possible to provide the whole town with firewood. With no forests nearby, Yerznka was getting its firewood from places 7-8 hours away, on carts and draught animals, whereas irrigating those lands by that water and growing vegetables and especially sugar beet, it would be possible to cover all expenses within 4-5 years and then make a fortune.

Another source of wealth for the town could have been the exploitation of idle mines. After the Constitution⁶⁴ was adopted and individuals were given freedom of activity, the wealthy Armenian citizens of Yeriza obtained a licence from the government to start the exploitation of mines; they explored the mines and realising that their financial means were not enough they wanted to involve European companies to start the business. However, the mobilisation started and everything was over.

Monasteries

The following monasteries were in Yerznka:

1. The monastery of Sepuh or Saint Gregory the Illuminator, enclosed within walls. Its revenue came from fruit. It had property worth five thousand

⁶³ Refers to Trdat (Tiridates) III the Great who was recognized by Emperor Diocletian as king of Armenia in 287 AD.

⁶⁴ Refers to the Ottoman Constitution of 1908.

(5,000) Ottoman gold coins. The monastery is now plundered and reduced to ashes. It is in the western part of the province.

2. Avag Monastery, also walled, with numerous rooms and known for its architecture. Besides countless riches, the monastery had a round stone the size of a big horseshoe named Deghtap. They say Gregory the Illuminator had worn it around his neck²¹⁸ after sawing it into two parts. The other part was in Europe. When the Europeans learned that the second part of it was in the Sepuh monastery of the Holy Illuminator of Yeriza, they came in the first quarter of the last century and wanted to buy it for 15,000 Ottoman gold coins but returned empty-handed. It too is plundered and destroyed by the Turkish mob.

3. The grave of nine saints in the historical village of Tortan²¹⁹ with all its property – plundered and destroyed.

4. The monastery of Shokhay (Holy Shoghakat) with thirty *somars* of land and property – also plundered and destroyed.

5. The monastery of St James with all its revenues, also plundered and destroyed; only its parapet remained standing known for its structure.

6. The monastery of St Cyriacus, at a distance of an hour west of the town, also plundered and destroyed with all its property.

7. The monastery of Patriarch Nerses in the western part of the town with its countless

property and lands – plundered and destroyed of its property and assets; only the parapet surrounding it remained, also known for its structure and construction.

8. The monastery of the Passions of the Illuminator, about 50 (fifty) *somars* of land and countless properties – now plundered and destroyed.

The monastery of Paul and Peter, also wealthy and with much land, completely plundered and destroyed.

9. The monastery of St George, plundered and destroyed together with its assets and wealth.

10. The monastery of St Nicholas in the village of Btarich, plundered and destroyed with all its properties.

11. The monastery of the Holy Precursor, in the eastern part of the town, rich and beautifully built; plundered and destroyed with its wealth and buildings. Besides these there are many other small chapels and places of pilgrimage scattered all over the town that were also destroyed by the savage Turkish mob. All monasteries had old and precious books, goods, holy vessels that were priceless.

Buildings of Yeriza

Yeriza had 2,500 (two thousand five hundred) households in the town, ninety per cent of which is destroyed. There were also 2,500 shops, 1,500 of which

belonged to the Armenians and which are mostly in ruins now. It had four large schools for 250 pupils as well as several other middle and secondary schools for 50-100 pupils that are all destroyed now.

The building of the girls' school for 400 pupils is standing now and serves the refugees as shelter.

The Armenian population of Yeriza was to some extent educated and cultivated.

In trade and crafts they were the leaders. All the crafts were in the hands of the Armenians (see the statistical part). The copper industry and weaving (calico production) were developed and their products were widely exported to the neighbouring provinces. The properties worth 50,000 to 100,000 liras of many second category merchants were ruined.

Churches

Holy Saviour – in the southern part of the town, plundered and blown up with dynamite by the Turkish government. Holy Sign was similarly plundered and its inner structures were destroyed.

St Sargis is in a similar condition. Holy Trinity is also destroyed (inner structures) and its property is plundered. There are many other such chapels and places of pilgrimage destroyed and abandoned. It is worth mentioning the town's very large and walled cemetery, which today, however, is deprived of all its tombstones, trees and adornment. There is a dried spring in the cemetery as a memorial to a pious person, Yeghia Torosian, the only old man who survived the massacre and mourns the past glory of his town. All those who walk around the demolished Armenian houses and quarters or under the sorrowful and mouldy arches of thousands of deserted and abandoned shops and markets, envy the old man's bitter tears.

There were many calico producing workshops in Yeriza with about 1,500 labourers. Besides this, one of the reasons of prosperity of all Armenian villages and every inhabitant of Yeriza were numerous and large vineyards and orchards.

Some circumstances of the massacre

As in all other places in Yeriza also the same systematic and brutal methods were used to exterminate the Armenian people.

First, the prominent people and young men were imprisoned and upon the pretext of searching for arms were subjected to unheard-of tortures for several days and then murdered. Many other young men, healthy and strong – both those who had paid ransoms and those who hadn't – were sent out of the town supposedly to work on the roads to Mamakhatun and none of them returned.

The general deportation of Yeriza started on 28 May, 1915. Everyone – men and women, old and young – were ruthlessly massacred and put to the sword near the bridge of the Divrin Chay river – a distance of two hours away from the town.

Episodes of the Massacre

Lingering death of an infanticide Turk

It was told that an elderly Turk not yet sated with the blood of the Armenians, after raping women of all ages, got into the caravan of deportees on the road and started snatching 5-year-old children from the arms of their mothers. Then, amid their bitter crying and wailing, he was tearing them into two pieces by pulling away their legs and throwing them into the waters of the Euphrates.

Another Turk, definitely not so ruthless, approached him and said: “Brother, it’s really too much. It’s a sin, a sin!” “Leave me alone,” threatened the other Turk. “Didn’t you hear what Hochay *effendi* said in the mosque? That the Armenians have to be eradicated because they raped and massacred in this and that way our women and children in these and those places.” And he went on with his bloody business tearing the children into two and throwing them into the water.

After some time the infanticide Turk fell seriously ill. Learning about his illness, his neighbour Turk, the one who had spoken to him, came to visit him and saw that the infanticide was rolling in his bed from side to side and yelling: “Take these children away from my mouth! They are taking away my breath!” The visiting Turk interpreted the adage: “This world is not for the doers. You reap what you sow.” Indeed, after four-five days of suffering in agony the aforementioned infanticide died: this world was not for him.

The story of the Armenian who escaped from the grave

I was a native of Kharberd, but after being conscripted I was in Yerznka working in a tannery as a labourer. During the deportation we saw that terrible things were happening outside but we, the working Armenian soldiers, were not allowed to know the truth. One sad day we, the Armenian soldiers, were separated and taken out. Under strict guard we were taken to different places. Every day they were bringing new groups of refugees or other Armenians and soon there were about three hundred of us. Two days passed after we were taken away from our work. At one o'clock in the evening⁶⁵ they put us, about 300 people, into a spacious building. After giving us food, an officer said the following: “Our kind sultan decided to move his Armenian children to the

⁶⁵ One o'clock in the evening, according to Ottoman time keeping, is an hour after sunset and therefore might correspond to mid-evening according to the current universal time.

hinterland to save them from the enemies (because the Armenians had always been a useful element). So pray for the sultan and make your arrangements because you will start off today or tomorrow.” That night at about four o'clock we were taken out tied up and continued our way under guard in the darkness without knowing where we were going. While walking we noticed that the number of the people surrounding us was gradually growing. Some of them had wooden spades and picks. Out of the town, in the open space, they untied us and ordered us to undress. We all obeyed. They made us stand in line to continue our trip but suddenly, after an order, a volley was heard from the first rows. I fell down wounded in two places. Then they started stabbing us with daggers and I felt a sharp pain from a dagger on my nape. Nevertheless, I did not lose consciousness and felt how my body was getting soaked with warm blood when they started pulling the corpses into a deep and wide pit dug beforehand. They threw me also into the pit and others after me. My legs and chest felt their weight. Fortunately, the corpses thrown over me were the last ones and my head and mouth stayed uncovered. I started breathing with difficulty and frequently to save my dying life but that hope was lost too when they started throwing earth on us with wooden spades. Meanwhile I didn't stay idle and with my fingertips was moving aside the earth from my nose and mouth and making way for the air. If they had continued throwing earth on us, all the efforts to save my life would have definitely been useless. In order not to leave the robbing of our money and clothes to the others, the corpse-buriers decided to go and reassure those people before returning and carrying on with their task. When their voices died away, I started using my arms and legs to push myself out from under the corpses to sit and prepare to escape. At that moment I heard other voices coming from the pit asking for help or trying to come out from under the corpses. Finally, helping one another, five of us came out of the pit and started fleeing. Three of us ran in one direction, and I joined the other one and we two ran in a different direction. When it gradually grew dark, we reached a wheat field and tired, exhausted and all in blood lay down in numbness. I am not sure if we were sleeping or dreaming but we heard people's voices a little far from us. Listening carefully, we realised they were Turkish families who had come to reap hay and wheat. If they reached our field we would be lost since it would be impossible to flee, they were all around us. So we just kept silent leaving our destiny to the fate. Fortunately, hours passed, evening fell and they went to their homes without reaching our hideaway. Making use of the darkness and on my partner's advice, we headed to a nearby village but after walking a little, I felt that my strength was failing me. When my partner saw that my wound was serious, he tied it with pieces of his underclothes, he held me by my arms and advised me to walk until we reached a nearby village we knew. We stayed there in the house of reliable

friends and after recovering a little headed to Tersim until the Russians took Yeriza.

The Armenians die and the Germans have fun

A Greek native of Yeriza recounts that when the prisoners – tied up and in rows – were taken out of the prison to be deported, there were some elderly and young people among them, all of them noble and pampered, but after being severely beaten and tortured with red-hot crosses, iron and pincers, they were depressed, emaciated, their teeth and eye-sockets were full of mud, their clothes were torn and all bloody – they were completely unrecognisable. In this situation, when even the most hard-hearted felt some discomfort, there were some German officers who with great enthusiasm were using their cameras as if enjoying taking pictures of these suffering people.

A Turk's pride

Before the Russians captured Yeriza, Turks of different class and age were sitting in a café and each of them was recounting what ferocities they had committed towards the Armenians, how they had defiled and raped Armenian women and maids of all ages – mothers in the presence of their children and husbands, children in the presence of their mothers and fathers; how they had murdered parents in the presence of their children and children in the presence of their parents. One of the Turks recounted with the pride of someone who had committed some unexampled and unequalled deed: "I separated five children, aged 4 to 5, from their mothers, made them stand near a hill in a line and while they, unaware of what was going to befall them, were standing there with their arms open and looking for their wailing mothers and tears were flowing down their red cheeks like streams, after just one bullet from my rifle all five of them suddenly fluttered like birds and rolled down the hill under the heart-breaking and grievous shouts of their mothers."

Filicide mothers

After barely escaping from the massacres a young man from the province of Baberd, wandered from mountain to mountain for days without knowing where to go and how to save his life and finally found shelter at the Tersim mountains. There he met those youthful Armenian mothers reduced to skeletons sitting near a rock above a road on an unknown, desolate mountain covered with forests. He recounted:

"When I met those Armenian mothers they looked terrible. Their hair was tousled; their faces were pale, their eyes hollow and their clothes torn. They were sitting with folded arms, rocking and crying silently. I was exhausted and depressed when I joined them.

They were almost unable and in no mood to talk. Nevertheless, one of them made an effort and asked if I had come by that road. I said yes and she asked if I had seen anything on my way. I said: "Nothing. But there was a boy, aged 4 to 5, under a stone who was deep in agony and must have died by now." I had hardly finished my words when both youthful women started beating their breast, pulling out their hair and crying with heart-breaking words: "Let me go blind! Let me die! My dear Gurgen," said one of them. "How merciless I was to leave you and go away! Maybe my darling won't die. Why didn't I die instead of you? Yes, I was a pitiless mother!" "Oh, my little Zapel! Oh, my sweet baby! I wish I had thrown myself into water instead of you," said the other one. "What curses and what complaints you will have against us, dear children!" said the mothers beating their breast

I was astonished and regretted for what I did when I saw this grieving bitterness of the mothers. After a while, they seemed to grow weak and numb, their eyes started staring at the ground and they lapsed into silence under the stone.

From their reluctant answers to my questions I finally found out that when their caravan was passing by a Turkish village, a wealthy and influential Turkish *bek* selected several young beautiful mothers and kept them in the village where they had to satisfy the mean passions of the *bek* and his men. After some time the women were released.

Exhausted and tortured, unaware of their whereabouts and the roads, without leaders they started off expecting new and unheard-of sufferings. They were feeding on herbs, staying hungry for days. After some time two of them, one with her sick son Gurgen and the other with her daughter Zapel, aged 2, started to lag behind.

In such a situation, when Gurgen, who was sick, became too much of a burden for his despondent mother and starving little Zapel was tearing her mother's dried up breasts, one to rid herself of unbearable exhaustion and the other from unbearable grief and pain, especially because of exhortations of their friends and fearing to be left behind, they were obliged to part with their children. So little Zapel's mother put her sweet child into the waters of the river to spare her further torture from starvation and Gurgen's mother put her son under a stone hoping he would recover and survive by some chance. Thus, they left their children to the mercy of their fate and moved on to catch up with their friends.

"Oh, when I still could hear my Gurgen's voice, how many times I regretted and wanted to return and hug him, but I didn't until I could neither see nor hear him," Gurgen's mother said. The other mother said: "I wish I would dry to death, my little one. I had my eyes glued on the waters of the river. Oh, what a terrible moment that was! I didn't know how to live. My sweet Zapel! I wish I had

drowned in the water or we had died together! What a ruthless mother I was!” And the two unfortunate filicide mothers started grieving and crying bitterly again.

After parting with their children, the two unfortunate mothers were completely depressed with grief and could walk with their friends only for a day more. Then they said farewell to them and stayed at that black stone of grief.

Though I tried to encourage them to stand up and accompany me, it turned out to be impossible for them. I parted with them with tearful eyes, and their phantoms under that stone have not yet left my memory. It seems to me that those two unfortunate filicide mothers are still there.

What the duties of a Muslim are during the Armenian massacres

Mikael Ulian from the village of Agrak of Yerznka region who survived the massacre recounts that he was a soldier in the construction service staying with the sergeant as a servant when Saghroghli Haliat *bek* from Kamakh, the *mutassarif* of Yeriza, his friend Cheza Reizi, Kivlo *agha* the chief of Palapan *ashiret* and other officials, after having a meeting all night, sent a word in the morning to summon the group of *chetés* immediately and their order was executed in half a day.

The aforementioned officials and *beks* were sitting in the open air around a table together with the *chetés* when a clergyman (mullah) came out, ordered the *chetés* to calm down and climbing on a chair said the following:

“My dear children, the war that we are waging, is a war of the religion and every Muslim has a duty to perform. And that duty, my dear brave spirits, is in having no pity and mercy upon the Christians, especially the Armenians. It is the order of our dear king to completely exterminate the Armenians and he who performs his duty completely will be blessed both here and in heaven, and every Muslim killed while performing his duty is an immortal martyr. And those who do not perform their duty will be cursed here and forever and hell will be their destiny.

So go ahead, my sons! Let's kill any pity that could arise in us towards the Christians and especially the Armenians.” He said this and stepped down from the chair.

The *mutassarif* stood up after him and after confirming the *hoja's*²²⁰ words ordered not to forget his orders and perform the massacre of the Armenians ruthlessly, sparing neither young nor old. There was great enthusiasm among the crowd and after every one had made his oath and promise, they left for their places.

At that time, about 3,000 Armenian soldiers were working on the roads for free. Based on a secret order, every day 40 to 50 of them were murdered and their number was reduced to 125. As recounted by a local Greek, these 125

people were made to work near Shushar for some time and then they were all murdered. The massacre started on 8 May, 1915²²¹ and lasted until 17 July.

When the *mutassarif* and other high-ranking officials were invited by Kivlo *agha*, the chief of Palapan *ashiret*, to his house in the village of Kndzorik, the *mutassarif* suggested that Kivlo *agha* should massacre the Armenians from Derjan region in the Sansar Gorge.

To secure himself from future responsibility, Kivlo *agha* pledged to commit the massacre on condition he was given a signed paper. The *mutassarif* showed the Sultan's edict and read it out that the Turks and the Kurds were given a right to massacre the Armenians and take away their property. After that Kivlo *agha* sent messengers to the people and *mukhtars*²²² of his region and ordered them to start massacring and plundering the Armenians. A Kurd from Janpek that I knew, was kind enough to inform me to leave the Sansar Gorge since a massacre of Armenians was planned there and I fled to Tersim.

There were always German officials present at those massacres. Unfortunately, I don't know their names and ranks.

After hearing the story of Mikael Uliants from the village of Agrak, one night I was a guest in the exclusively Kurdish village of Kesstem. I was with Khalil, son of Zeynal who was a relative of Kivlo *agha*, chief of the Palapan *ashiret*. During our conversation he confessed about all the atrocities committed by Kivlo *agha*, confirmed the meeting that took place at the Sansar Gorge chaired by the *mutassarif* Memtuh *bek* and what the mullah had said to hundreds of *chetés*. They were ruthless in their attitude to the massacre of the Armenians. They confessed the participation of Khalet *bek* (member of the Ottoman parliament), son of Dahir *pasha* from Kamakh, *mutassarif* Memtuh *bek* who was treated as guest at Kivlo *agha's* house and his reading of the edict on massacres and *agha's* demand for security.

After that conversation, when we remained alone, my Kurdish host-Tavutoghli Mehmed Ali, started speaking: “I was going down to the field every day to cultivate the land. In May and June the Euphrates was all in blood and covered with corpses. There were people from our tribe (*ghzlpashs*²²³) who thought that a huge and incomprehensible crime was being committed. We managed to keep only twenty-six little ones until the Russians came and handed them over to the Armenian Committees²²⁴,” he said adding the following heartbreaking story:

“One day we were reaping on the bank of the river when I saw someone in a shirt and drawers on a small island dividing the river into two parts. I didn't approach him because of fear. The second day I saw him at the same place and couldn't do anything. On the third day I saw him again and realised that he had to be hungry with all his torments and terrible thoughts. I took some dry bread from my bag, went to the bank and called in a low voice for him to come and take the

bread. The man neither came nor answered. My entreaties were in vain, the man remained adamant. I thought he didn't approach because he was afraid I could kill him or the bread was poisoned. Those were awful days and every thought passed through my mind. I also thought he didn't want to eat the bread coloured with the blood of his dear people and wanted to voluntarily starve to death." Mehmet Ali went on: "I didn't know what to do. I put the bread on a stone and called for the last time that I was leaving, telling him not to be afraid, to come and take the bread. And I left. I came back the next morning. The bread was where I had left it. I saw a man lying on the sands of the island in his underwear. He did not move. The unfortunate man was dead, definitely preferring such a death to life with the help of a Muslim. I left that field and never returned there until the Russians came." I was told similar stories about the Turkish atrocities by a native of Yeriza Yegia *gha* Torosian, aged 65 (sixty-five), who was in Yerznka two months before it was taken. After telling about the murder of Bishop Smbat Saatetian²²⁵, Yegia *gha* showed me the pit that was dug in advance in the Armenian cemetery and became the bishop's grave. There were no tombstones; the Turks had taken away everything. "I have seen ill-fated days," the old man said. "I saw with my own eyes the massacres of people from Basen, Erzurum, Baberd, Derjan, of my dear ones from Yerznka. I have seen atrocities I cannot say anything about."

Yeghia *gha* was running the calico factory under the threats of the Turks and had been helpful to 50 to 60 Armenian women who were given jobs in the factory and then Yeghia *gha* helped them to flee to Tersim in small groups.

Only 402 (four hundred and two) people have survived from the 25,000 (twenty-five thousand) Armenian population of Yerznka and neighbouring villages (see the statistical table)²²⁶. The present number of the Armenians in Yerznka and the region is 1,450 (one thousand four hundred and fifty). They are from Yerznka, Chmshkatsag, Kamakh, Armtan and a small number from Kharberd and Kghi.

At present the Armenians again dominate the Turks in trade. What should our highest national bodies think and do to develop the trade, revive the crafts and not spoil the beautiful gardens and orchards in the villages? What should be the position of about 4,000 (four thousand) emigrants from Yerznka living in different countries in reviving one of the most beautiful and fertile valleys of Armenia that belonged to the Armenians on the evidence of numerous historical facts.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 488, pp. 1-20, original, handwritten.

KHARBERD PROVINCE

No 123

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MISAK PAPAJANIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF KHARBERD PROVINCE

Kharberd: Detailed information about the population of the Armenian villages is lacking...

Mobilisation: In August of 1914 the town criers announced: "Those who love the king should come to his wedding." In the beginning, the Armenians volunteered. There were also some who evaded but the authorities used the strictest methods against them. Some of them were caught and shot publicly in the town. In the villages the mobilisation was carried out by the police. After several months, due to unbearable conditions in the army – cold, hunger, poor clothing and other strict measures – the conscripts started deserting, often in groups and armed. If the authorities could not catch them, they would arrest their brothers, father, mother, wife and other close relatives and torture them. To spread fear in the villages they set some houses alight confiscating their property. Due to the applied measures, many [deserters] surrendered. Such people were chained, sent to Erzurum and murdered there. The policemen would go to the villages and bring the deserters' mother, wife, sister, father to the town to make them surrender...

Confiscations: The authorities took all kinds of goods from town merchants without any payment, only against promissory notes. From the villages they took cattle, sheep, wheat, ghee, draught animals etc.

In the beginning of the mobilisation, the authorities were taking 60 gold coins of *bedel* both from the Turks and the Armenians, but after February 1915, *bedel* from the Armenians was no longer accepted. At first *memurs*²²⁷ were not conscripted but later all men aged 20 to 50 were conscripted without distinction. They made most Armenian soldiers work on the roads. In villages the elderly and the women had to carry food for days on their cattle – if they had any – and on their backs if they didn't have.

The state of the Armenian soldiers in the army: There was a strict attitude towards the Armenians and discrimination as compared with other groups. Armenian soldiers suffered lack of food and clothes, privations, sleepless nights and hatred.

After February 1915, the attitude of the Turks towards the Armenians dramatically changed; they started looking at the Armenians in a different way. Relations with Armenian officials were broken up and the existing pressure grew stronger.

In the beginning of March the Turks who had money matters with the Armenians, started demanding their money persistently. "Are you sure you will be alive by that time?" – this was how the Turks reacted to the requests of the Armenians for postponement.

Soon we heard that in February the authorities collected the weapons of the Armenians of Diyarbakir. After some time, on 10 March, they demanded also our weapons. Ostensibly, they were also collecting weapons from the Turks but we knew that they were secretly returning them to their owners.

Collecting weapons was a kind of a sign for their intentions. The Kurds were warning us about the intentions of the government, but we didn't believe them. When they started collecting weapons in March, the Armenians of Arabkir put up a resistance killing 15 policemen. Six other Armenians were arrested for not handing in the weapons and were hanged.

However, those who had weapons and handed them in were not saved. They underwent the most terrible torture in prisons: water was poured on them and they were beaten, their bodies were hot-branded with skewers, their nails were torn out and they were put to death after terrible tortures.

Massacre and deportation: On the night of 20 March the authorities suddenly gathered 80 prominent men of the town and under different pretexts took them out of the town and sent to them Yedesia. Therefore, until the end of April and end of May all the men were gathered, chained and sent to Yedesia. On their way, in a gorge covered with oleaster trees and named Bughsharshez Teresi about 1,200 young men were shot. The conspiracy was prepared in advance: the Shefki Kurds had hidden in the gorge and when the Armenians sat down to rest and have a meal, they started firing hails of bullets at them.

A young man from the village of Khulageh named Gaspar recounted this massacre he had witnessed as follows:

"When I opened my eyes, I saw that blood was flowing like water. After the first volley the crier shouted: "Those who are alive, stand up, the government has forgiven you." The survivors stood up from under the corpses believing the promise but were shot down in an instant. The Shefki Kurds moved on with axes and finished off the wounded and the half-dead. Many bodies were hacked to pieces."

Note: On the night of 20 April the houses were suddenly besieged and the men were gathered and taken out of the town.

The remaining old people and the children were also taken out of the town to the mountain called Haroghli (eight hours distance from Kharberd) where they were surrounded and murdered with swords and rifles. About 120 people were beaten and tortured to death before reaching the destination. The massacres were headed by two sergeants and a man called Mustafa *Chavush*. Everything was done on the orders of the government and by the troops.

The women and children were taken in the direction of Tigranakert reaching the lake named Kyolchivk. They murdered a lot of people there and threw them into the lake. According to the narrator, their number was about 30,000. On their way they would murder children by hitting them against the ground; they would spit children on their bayonets for fun and kill them by such tortures and torments. The Europeans and the Greeks witnessing all this took a completely neutral position. The Turkish people took part in the government plan, only the Kurds of Tersim protected the Armenians.

Note: They were in friendly relations before with the Armenians. The German military as well as doctors were very strict with the Armenians. Their attitude did not differ from that of the Turks.

Self-defence: No villages in Kharberd put up a resistance except the three towns of Hyusenek (12,000 inhabitants), Khulnagegh (700 households) and Datem (400 households).

1. Resistance at Hyusenek: At the end of April quite a large number of policemen and soldiers entered the town wishing to deport the people. But the Armenians resisted and killed the policemen and the soldiers. The resistance lasted three days and nights. The Armenians had very few weapons, many were fighting with small pistols. There were about 60 fighters. The resistance was suppressed by the troops brought from Malatia. The fighters were arrested, the people were deported to the lake named Gyolchik⁶⁶ where everybody was murdered and thrown into the lake.

2. Resistance of Khulagegh: About 20-30 young men of the village resisted the soldiers who came to deport the people. The fighters were armed quite well. But the resistance lasted only one day: troops were brought from Mezira and the resistance was suppressed. The fighters were arrested; the people were deported towards Malatia. At a place called Khan Gyol the people were put into houses and kept there without food and water for 4 days. Many of them were tortured and murdered. The rest were taken to the Euphrates or Kara-Su rivers and thrown into the water.

3. Resistance of Datem: About 20 young men climbed the mountain. When the policemen came to deport the people, they took up positions, put up a resistance and did not allow the police enter the village. They resisted for six days. Regular troops from Mezira were brought and the resistance was suppressed. The people were deported and as in the previous case were taken to Khan Gyol and murdered there. The fighters killed several policemen, then fled and found shelter with the Kurds at Tersim.

Note: Since April 1915, all the Armenian population of Kharberd was deported in different ways. Some of the people managed to somehow escape to Tersim – 3,000 people from Kharberd only, about 2,000 people from Sabastia and Diarbekir.

⁶⁶ Also called Kyolchik.

According to the information about Sebastia, all the people were deported ostensibly to be sent to Cilicia but were all massacred by the Kurds at Aghja-Dagh.

Only 300 young men from Shapin-Garahisar climbed the mountains and resisted for about three months. Their further fate is unknown...

This is how the people were in general deported and massacred:

Town of Khozat with about 500 households. They were all deported at the beginning of March. However, the Armenians were allowed to sell their property. Upon the pretext of sending them to Yedesia, the people were taken out of the town and near the village of Berdak, on the bank of the Euphrates, they were all shot and thrown into the water. Several young men attacked the policemen and taking them in their arms pulled them into the water with them.

Chimishkatsag: About 500 households. In the beginning of April the authorities left the men in the town and took the women and children out and deported them to Syria. Not long after, they took out the men to murder them. Many of them managed to flee and find shelter in the villages of Itaran, Sghna, Amutkhan and Tezavut where they found protection and, it is thought, remain there to date...

Note: Some Kurds protected the Armenians. Thus, The Kurd named Mahmet *gha* from the Khatabash *ashiret* saved about 500 young Armenian men and 700 to 800 women and children. Haji *gha* from the Pilvank *ashiret* saved about 500 Armenians. The authorities several times demanded to hand over the Armenians but Haji *gha* fought against them for about 20 days and burnt about 15 Turkish villages. It is thought the Armenians saved by him remain there to date...

A Kurd named Matkhutsi *pasha* had about 6 to 7 hundred Armenians with him. The authorities demanded the Armenians but he resisted, set alight about 50 Turkish villages in the district of Charsanchag and did not hand over the Armenians. Those Armenians are still with him...

Zeynal and Sleyman *ghas* from Kozan sheltered about 400 Armenians. The authorities demanded the Armenians – they resisted. When the policemen wanted to forcibly deport the Armenians, there was a fight; Sleyman *gha* and his son were killed. A Kurd named Mzé *gha* sheltered about 50 Armenians.

About the Armenians of Berdak: About 70 households were deported in April. At an hour's distance from the village they were all put to the sword and thrown into the river.

About the Armenians of Pedrk: The Turkish *beks* were forcing about 250 households to convert to Islam. For about a week they were persuading the Armenians and would not allow the authorities to massacre them. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the Armenians applied to the Kurd named Ali *chavush* from Kurshan, who attacked the Turks and saving some of the Armenians took them to his village. The Turkish *beks* took the rest to the bank of the Euphrates, murdered them there and threw them into the water.

Mazkert: Three hundred households were deported and all gathered in a field, were tortured and put to death.

About the Armenians of Havaf: They were more than 500 households. They were prepared in advance and were able to put up a resistance. They resisted for 20 days until they ran out of ammunition. They were obliged to stop fighting and fled to the Kurds. The young managed to escape but the women and the weak remained and were massacred.

When a sergeant with 50 soldiers came to collect the weapons, [the villagers] put up a resistance and did not allow them to enter the village. The Turks were obliged to turn back. Not long after that they returned, this time with the intention to deport the people but again there was resistance put up by the local young men. Among them was the Dashnak Anton from Beréwith his well-armed group (armed with old model rifles and Turkish Mausers).

The narrator about himself: When the deportation started and after some time we heard about the massacre of the deportees, the authorities announced that Kurds did that on the road and the authorities would punish them. With the help of a Kurd, I escaped from the town with 15 other people and hid in a forest. The Armenians lived freely with the Kurds (Kurds of Tersim were different in their religion from other tribes). We were in their clothes in order not to be recognised. When the massacre of Kharberd finished and when Erzurum was taken, the Kurds started attacking the Turkish villages and plundering them. They sheltered the Armenians found there until Yerznka was taken, when they handed us over to the Russians together with some other Armenians.

Narrator – Misak Papajanian
Recorded by Suren Mirzoyan

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 478, pp. 31-35 rev., original, handwritten.

No 124

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ARSEN KHACHIKIAN ON THE
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN
POPULATION OF KHARBERD**

November 28, 1916
Karin

Systematic massacre in Kharberd

Planned: Yes, the policy of annihilating the Armenians planned years ago was implemented systematically in Kharberd as well as in all Armenian *vilayets*, with inconceivable barbarity, slaughters and carnages typical of the Mongols. Below are the methods used in Kharberd to exterminate innocent Armenians depriving them of their property and honour, life and happiness, religion and language...

The first step was the destruction of the educational institutions – closing all community schools as well as the American school, the Euphrates College, for boys and girls. The closing of colleges and schools was ordered by the government upon the vain and lame excuse of “epidemic diseases.” They dispersed the pupils and changed the schools into hospitals and barracks. The schools were closed on 28 March, 1915. The administrative bodies, the American missionary organisation applied twice but in vain, no one listened to them...

Several houses were searched in April allegedly looking for political party members. They were looking for writings and some prominent people were arrested but there was no beating or torturing, they were just arrested. On 1 May they started arresting the professors of the Euphrates College, employees of educational institutions, wealthy people, prominent writers, archimandrites and priests who were well-known. On 10 May they started beating and torturing: first they started beating the people, then they shod them, put their heads in machines and squashed them. The last method was used against the professors of the Euphrates College and other prominent intellectuals. They also pulled out the nails and fingers of some people with pincers, poured nitric acid on their hands, burnt them and thus redoubled their tortures.

At this period of sufferings when the people were becoming extremely desperate, the merciless government started a Machiavellian game: “We have a programme: we are going to release the non-affiliated people and slightly punish the party members; this is no time to excite the people.” The *vali*²²⁸ summoned the Armenian Primate Senior Archimandrite Psak, the chauvinist German missionary Mr Ehman, the pastor of the Armenian Evangelicals²²⁹ Rev[erend] Vardan Amirkhanian and informed them about the contents of the two telegrams he had received and instructed them in a peremptory and imperious tone: “If the people want to see non-affiliated people released soon, they have to hand over all weapons and ammunition. After it, we will probably release all of them.” The allusion to “all” intimated the probability that the party members could be released.

The religious leaders together with the German missionary, believing the typically Turkish coaxing and polite assurances and words, started advocating enthusiastically: “Hand the weapons over to the government or else our people will stay in prison.” The German missionary who earlier made a good impression on the people, the archimandrite with his sermons in churches managed to

convince the poor people that “the salvation of our imprisoned friends is in handing over the weapons.” Through separate meetings and their persuasive words, they created a belief in the people that “the wisdom is in handing the weapons over.” The Protestant priest too had the same conviction and following the others and trusting the government promises, started preaching...

At this moment the fraudulent government managed to sow enmity and dissatisfaction among the people – party members and non-members started denouncing and incriminating each other, following which a number of unpalatable events took place ...

The result of preaching was that our people were foolishly deceived and they handed over the weapons. The poor, naive Primate trusted the Turkish official's words so much that started sending people to the villages, writing letters convincing everyone to immediately and unreservedly hand over what they had. The naive people immediately complied. (I, the undersigned, was in the village of Karmir because of my position when Archimandrite Psak sent a similar letter. I objected to him in my reply and I nearly... From that day on, I was a fugitive; no one knew my whereabouts except the person who brought food for me.) All these actions or, better to say, games took place at the end of May until 10 June when everything changed.

The handover of weapons was immediately followed by the deportation of prisoners (they were about 1,500-1,600) and the siege of the town and the region. The movement of people within half or three quarters of an hour distance from Kharberd to Mezré stopped. Any male seen outdoors was ruthlessly arrested, beaten, their hair, moustache and beards of the priests were pulled out and...

The barbarity was unspeakable; it was impossible even to go from house to house. We heard that the prisoners were taken away at night... (How well the Turks kept their promise!). Archimandrite Psak filed a petition, but on his way back he was arrested. After spending fifteen days in prison – hungry and thirsty – nine hundred already exhausted intellectuals were deported. They started searching for people expressly by name based on government registers. How cunning they were!

While the arrests of the male population continued, the population of neighbouring villages were completely massacred. The women applied to the German missionary: “They intentionally bring and throw the blood-stained clothes of our husbands at our doors.” But their words did not stir Mr Ehman's pity: “I don't believe your words. The government has assured us there will be deportation but not a massacre...” A fool's logic. How many times can one lie?

The general deportation of the population started on 15 June. Several people were released from prison against big bribes to leave with their families. They started emptying people quarter by quarter leading them to the mountains through the two routes to Diarbekir and Malatia in order to devour them... Let

the American Consul, Mr Davis, the American missionaries, if they have any conscience, the German missionaries, men and women, give evidence of what they eye-witnessed. Let them tell the whole world what they saw with their own eyes, the true stories of how the innocent population was taken caravan after caravan, group after group to the coast of the Kyolchyuk lake one and half hours away, to the mountains and were massacred and plundered on the road to Malatia, at the place called Choli Jur; how their bodies were thrown into the River Euphrates, how the clean water had changed into blood in this period of sufferings, how the Kurds were robbing the property of the Armenians and in what ways the Armenian virgins were abducted. I stop here leaving more skilful writers to complete what is missing...

Witnesses of the deportation who survived thanks to Tersim⁶⁷ told me how the malicious gendarmes leading the deportees were every day cheating the people with new lies: "A telegram has come. The remaining people will be safely taken to Urfa." Assuring people with such phrases, they were taking them from place to place gradually reducing their number... How they were raping wives in front of their husbands, how they were abducting girls in front of their fathers... Listen, the mothers were cutting the hair of their beautiful daughters and rubbing dry dung on their faces to make them look ugly. Armenian women and girls voluntarily threw themselves into the water, others were forcibly married. About 5,000 to 6,000 beautiful Armenian girls were forcibly married to Turkish policemen *khojas*²³⁰ and gendarmes in Kharberd and Malatia. In the Diarbekir and Kharberd regions there are more than 3,000 boys, aged 8 to 10 to 12, in the houses of the Turks and Kurds who saw them on the roads, took them in out of pity, and now these boys have forgotten their mother tongue...

The deportation turned into a funeral. The missionaries and the smart ones realised that from the very first day but it was impossible to flee; there were guards all around... A few girls remained in the town by converting to Islam and marrying [Muslims], by conforming and partially suffering... In August they started demolishing the churches and cemeteries of neighbouring villages. Only the church of St George and – before the eye of the American mission – the Armenian Evangelical church remain standing in Kharberd today. Two churches are standing in Mezzé in honour of the German missionaries. They are turned into military hospitals. Why haven't they destroyed those? Because they need them, or to deceive the foreigners?

I was hiding in Kharberd and the neighbourhood for 18 months. I was a medical orderly in the American hospital for 7 months. On 18 November I had a conversation with First Lieutenant Mehmet Ali and Svazi Mehmet Rizai: "Poor Arsen, your nation should have been exterminated after the war

⁶⁷ The author means the Kurds of Tersim.

with Bulgaria but it didn't work. Then there was the Constitution and we were very close to it but we were afraid of England, France and Russia. Now when all three of them are our enemies and the powerful German state is our ally, it gave us freedom to deal with our inner matters independently. What can stop us from exterminating a bad, rebellious nation like yours? Nubar *pasha* wanted independence. Well, let him come and take it... Arsen, if you were a smart nation, you would have understood that after the capitulations were annulled, you would be annulled too..."

Look, how long ago this systematic massacre was planned!

Arsen Khachikian

Graduate of the Theological Seminary of Euphrates College in Kharberd

Karin

November 28, 1916

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 125, pp. 13-15 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 125

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MIHRAN KARIPCHANIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF THE TOWN OF KHARBERD

1916
Tiflis

Mihran Zakarian Karipchanian, aged 27, from Van, student of Euphrates College²³¹ and Theological Seminary in Kharberd. Now I live in Tiflis, at 37 Badanikian Street and teach in the schools for refugees.

I was a student in the Kharberd College when mobilisation was declared. In that connection the authorities posted red announcements on the walls of the town and the villages. But since the Kurds did not know the language of the state²³² and did not understand the meaning of the announcement, to gain their favour the state officials announced that they should come together to massacre and plunder the Armenians. So the Kurds swarmed into the town to sign up. This process lasted for about a month so the town ran out of food supplies; it was impossible to find bread. The barracks and streets were so overcrowded with the Kurds that there was an outbreak of diseases with fatal outcome.

But when the Kurds learned that they were gathered for a different reason they started to flee secretly.

The Armenian population obeyed the mobilisation and all men aged 20 to 40 were conscripted. I don't remember any case when a young Armenian man avoided the conscription, except of course through the legal methods (for example, paying the *bedel* (military duty)). As is known, Armenians and Turks were living in different quarters in Kharberd. After the mobilisation the authorities started taking a great amount of goods from the Armenian merchants with the promise of future payment. They gave a piece of paper and took countless goods. Many Armenian merchants were practically plundered and went bankrupt because of that.

This situation continued until the declaration of war when the Armenian soldiers were sent to Erzurum in groups together with the Turks. The number of Armenian soldiers conscripted from Kharberd region was supposedly over 15,000. Graduates and senior grade students of Euphrates College⁶⁸ were taken to the military school to become officers.

After the declaration of war, when the troops started retreating from Erzurum, a large number of Armenian and Turkish population fled to Kharberd region from the areas that suffered from war. There were also soldiers among the refugees. Twelve Armenian and Kurdish deserters from the villages of Korpi and Bazmashen of Kharberd region were hanged and their houses were set alight to strike fear into the others.

I can testify as an eyewitness that when I was preaching among the Protestants in the village of Bertak, Turkish gendarmes entered the village during the Christmas festivities of 1915, stayed in the village for several days behaving licentiously – eating, drinking, plundering and raping many women. They also set several houses alight. I eye-witnessed that.

After Christmas 1915, the large buildings belonging to the American missionaries and wealthy Armenians were filled with soldiers. They destroyed the dome and the cross of the French church, emptied it and turned it into a military hospital. Because of the large number of soldiers, epidemic diseases were spread in the town, especially the one called *tifus*⁶⁹.

The first case of persecution was against the Hnchakians²³³ in Constantinople which echoed in the provinces. In Kharberd they caught a man (I have forgotten his name) as a Hnchakian; they slandered him alleging that “important” documents were found in his place. He was simply exiled to Constantinople. Then they started searches upon the pretext of arresting Hnchakians.

Upon the pretext of the epidemic the authorities closed all the Armenian schools as well as the Turkish schools (except Sultaniyé) placing soldiers there. To disperse the young men and students gathered around Euphrates College, they closed the school and placed soldiers there. The teachers and students of the school who were of conscription age were included in labour groups and sent to the trenches.

It happened on 15 March, 1915. But I was saved from it because of my pass according to which I was 17. Since April 1915, they had started separating and disarming Armenian soldiers. Many of them were returned to Kharberd. Some 6 to 7 thousand people were taken to work behind the battle lines and formed the *amele taburu* (labour regiments). Searches started in the town. First, they were searching for papers and books without censorship stamps, catching and imprisoning the owners. Partial searches gradually grew into general and mass ones. They started imprisoning Armenian professors one by one. Both in the town and in villages, they started seizing the Armenian intellectuals: merchants, priests and teachers were indiscriminately imprisoned. This phenomenon became systematic and extreme in nature. Professor Nik[oghos] Tenekejian⁷⁰ who was the leader of the Protestants, Prof. Hovh[annes] Puchigianian⁷¹, Prof. Tonabed Loulejian⁷², Professors Nahikian⁷³, Vorberian⁷⁴, Samuelian, Khachaturian⁷⁵, Soghikian⁷⁶ and teachers from the preparatory department, 8 people in all, as well as the well-known Turkish-Armenian writer Tlkatintsi with all the staff of his school were thrown into prison. They caught Father Vardan Aslanian and many other preachers, public figures and teachers. The well-known Dashnak activist, pharmacist Karo was arrested together with his friends.

Prof. Loulejian (who is now released from prison) recounts that Armenian prisoners suffered awful tortures in prison: pulling out their nails, putting their hands and feet under a press, extracting blood from their backs by means of thick wooden sticks and putting them to terrible torture. After beating Prof. Puchigianian they shouted on his face: “Will the Armenians survive?” (The Professor had used that phrase publicly in his speech). Puchigianian answered that “The Armenians will survive and raise from their ashes and cinders.” The beatings, the violence and keeping the people hungry in the prison was so terrible that a famous Armenian merchant – Muradian – died there and was secretly taken to the cemetery and buried there.

⁷⁰ Professor of History and Turkish at Euphrates College

⁷¹ Professor of Mental and Moral Science at Euphrates College

⁷² A graduate of Yale University, he was the Professor of Biology at Euphrates College

⁷³ Professor of Mathematics at Euphrates College

⁷⁴ Mkrtich Vorberian, Principal of High School at Euphrates College

⁷⁵ Samuel Khachaturian, Professor of Music at Euphrates College

⁷⁶ Karapet Soghikian, Professor of Armenian

⁶⁸ Only Armenians studied at Euphrates College.

⁶⁹ Typhus.

The Primate of Kharberd, Senior Archimandrite Psak, after consulting with the German missionary Mr Ehmann⁷⁷, issued circulars for the Armenians of the town and neighbouring villages to hand over their weapons to the authorities. Many people followed the call and handed over their light weapons. Mr Ehmann went to the village of Khula which was close to the town and exhorted the Armenian peasants to hand their weapons over to the authorities to be safe, promising to take them under his patronage for that. Within two weeks after that, the Turks and the Kurds besieged and invaded the village and started to deport and massacre the Armenians.

Then the authorities started gathering in Meziré the labour regiments made of Armenian soldiers imposing terrible tortures on them. Gathering them in a place called Karmir Konakh (Red Inn), they took out the Armenian soldiers in groups by roundabout ways and massacred them. They took the imprisoned intellectuals on private carts from Kharberd to Meziré. Archimandrite Psak joined them there and they were taken in the direction of Diarbekir and massacred there. This happened on 4 June, 1915.

Salvation of Prof. Loulejian: Prof. Loulejian was ill and could not walk. They put him on a donkey and led him to the American hospital to be treated there. I was ill then and was in the ward they brought the professor to. He recovered after a long treatment and somehow hid in the hospital. He told me in all details in what hellish conditions they were kept in the prison. Eventually the professor paid a bribe of 45 gold coins to the Kurds of Dersim and fled with their help to Yerznka.

In the beginning of July the authorities announced in Meziré that the Armenians had to settle all their accounts with the Turks and get ready to start off. The deportation started after four days. The German missionary Ehmann (who was also the consul) took a very hostile stance towards the Armenians during the deportation. The Turks were consulting with him on what steps to take. He was openly rejecting and turning out the Armenians who applied to him. Only the American missionaries were trying to do something but unfortunately, their efforts were in vain because the authorities were not listening to them.

The day before the deportation the authorities started separating the craftsmen keeping two, maximum three of each craft speciality to meet the needs of the authorities. The craftsmen were forcibly converted to Islam. The deportation was done in parts, 40 to 50 households at a time, to facilitate their massacre and plunder.

It is worth mentioning that a week before the deportation of Kharberd, people – women only – deported from Erzurum and Yerznka were brought to Kharberd. They were placed under the walls and kept without food. They were chained and

⁷⁷ Johannes Ehmann (1870-1926), representative of the German Hilfsbund organisation

surrounded by soldiers, completely hungry and naked. It was strictly forbidden for the locals to approach and ask questions. They were later led towards Diarbekir.

[The authorities] started the deportation of Kharberd with the wealthy class greatly facilitating their journey, providing them with carts, horses, donkeys etc. They were forbidden to sell their estates and property. They took with them what they could, leaving the rest for the Turkish population to rob and plunder. I can mention the Fabrikatorians, the well-known silk merchants could not take their property with them and left everything behind and the town governor immediately moved into their beautiful house and expropriated it.

After reaching Malatia or some other places the deported people were immediately robbed and plundered. The men were separated leaving only women and children under the age of eight. Prof. Vorberian's daughter, who was very beautiful, was separated and abducted by Mehmed Ali *bek*, the well-known ringleader of *Ittihad* horsemen. This happened on the road. At first the Turk offered the professor to give his daughter to him but he refused. So he forcibly took the girl and married her. Later Mehmed Ali *bek* fell ill and was brought to the American hospital where I had already recovered and was working as a medical orderly.

The Turk told how, heading a group of eight mounted gendarmes, he was going from village to village plundering, disarming the Armenian peasants, taking a lot of bribes. The Turk was telling about his exploits with deported Armenian population. "Since there is a war, you Armenians will be always murdered and massacred."

Meziré was deported four times. By that they completely emptied Meziré. Kharberd was emptied with three deportations: old, sick, disabled – everyone was deported indiscriminately.

After finishing the deportation of Meziré and Kharberd, they started openly massacring the Armenian population of the province. Everything was extremely hard for the Armenians: they were massacred with swords, daggers, cold metal weapons and blunt weapons.

Makhsud Boyajian from the village of Hapusi told me that he was with the population deported from Hapusi when the Turkish policemen attacked them and started murdering them with cold weapons without sparing anyone and with ferocity of beasts. He had 35 wounds, his intestines were all out, his ears were cut, one of his eyes was gouged out, one of his arms was cut off. After the massacre the policemen started digging pits and throwing everyone – dead and half-dead – into those pits covering the corpses with earth.

Thinking that wounded Makhsud was also dead they covered him with earth. But after the policemen left, he got out, crawled to the corn field and hid there. At nights crawling like a frog he reached Kharberd and secretly got into the

American hospital. After recovering he started working there as a carpenter. Eventually he fled to Dersim and was saved. Now he lives in Yerznka.

The Armenians started to realise that deportation would be followed by a massacre. They started hiding. Many fled to the mountains. Some villages converted to Islam (partially). For example, some families from the village of Guylu converted to Islam to be saved from the massacre. The village of Huseinik, which was close to the town, suggested to the authorities that they should convert to Islam with all village but the latter rejected saying that in '96 too many Armenians converted to Islam but later they converted back. The village was deported like the others and was massacred.

During the deportation of Kharberd a 12-year-old boy named Hrant was subjected to massacre together with his parents. His parents were murdered but he survived wounded in the chest. The gendarmes left. At night the boy walked out to the big road and came across a compassionate Turk who saw that the boy was covered in blood and took him to the American hospital. He was treated there and now stays in the same hospital in Kharberd.

In August 1915, after the deportation, the authorities invaded the American hospital and despite the entreaties, complaints and wailing of Doctor Atkinson and his wife, took away all the Armenian male patients and murdered them on the road. However, they didn't touch the employees and the Armenian medical orderlies of the hospital saying they would eventually need them.

There was a case of self-defence only in the Armenian village of Morenik, which is half an hour away from Meziré. Twelve young men of the village hid in the church. The gendarmes learned about it and besieged the church. A fight started, two of the gendarmes were killed, one was wounded and was taken to the American hospital. Some of the young men were killed, the others were captured, taken to the prison and murdered there. The village and the church were set alight.

Three of the hospital employees, students of Euphrates College, fled during the deportation to get to Mush (I was still ill then). However, near the village of Hapusi they came across gendarmes. A fight started; they killed two gendarmes but eventually they too were killed. Those three young men were Sedrak Zulumian (one of the teachers of the preparatory department of the college), Poghos Ter-Poghosian, Haikazun Israyelian (from Yerznka).

On the second night after taking away the patients of the hospital, the authorities set alight the prison full of Armenian prisoners (the famous Dashnak Karo was among them). The gendarmes encircled and surrounded it shooting incessantly. Doctor Nshan (his surname is not mentioned)⁷⁸ fled from the prison by a bribe. He is now a doctor in Erzurum.

⁷⁸ Possibly Dr Nshan Nahikian.

When the deportation of the town and villages ended, the government issued an edict that (Armenian) Catholics and Protestants were free. That is why when Armenians deported from other towns were brought to Kharberd, the American missionaries and two Catholic priests were selecting the Catholics and Protestants. In this way a group of women (the men were already murdered) were saved and were given identity cards to have no problem with the Turkish gendarmes. In such a way several thousand Armenian women and children were saved and now live in Kharberd.

The government had authorised the German Mr Ehmann to keep and save Protestant Armenians at his discretion.

In October of 1915 we heard that (during *Bayram*²³⁴) the governors of six *vilayets* were summoned to Erzurum for consultation on how to amass property captured from the Armenians in the hands of the government and on other problems. When the governor of Meziré returned from Erzurum at the end of October another great deportation occurred: they gathered the remnants of the population from the towns and villages and drove them towards Diarbekir.

At that time I was hiding in a hideaway at the American hospital. They caught several young Armenians in the hospital but thanks to Doctor Atkinson they were freed as hospital employees.

The local Turks were saying that 2 per cent of the Armenians had survived, that was why the authorities had to take strict measures to exterminate the Armenians for good and all.

It was announced in November that the government was not deporting Armenians anymore and pardoned them, but we finally realised that it was just a game to reveal the hidden Armenians since they indeed were hiding in houses and wells. However, they did not come out of their hideaways.

A large number of Armenian labourer-soldiers were brought to Meziré during those months (I was there then, at the American hospital). The labourers were severely tortured on the road. They were brought from Erzurum region. They told how they were tortured on the road. They headed to Aleppo to work on road construction. Eventually we heard that they were murdered. Two of them – Mushegh and Yeghishé – who were students at the American school in Erzurum, fled to Mr Ehmann but he categorically refused to accept them. Then they came to Doctor Atkinson who accepted them as male nurses. Now they are saved and in Erzurum. In November (1915) Doctor Atkinson was working hard in Meziré keeping about 100 Armenians in the hospital – both sick and healthy. There were cases of typhus in the town; Doctor Atkinson was infected and after lying in bed ill for six days, he died. (Doctor Mikayel, an Armenian, was appointed instead of Doctor Atkinson). At nights the American consul of Meziré Davidson and Doctor Atkinson were going to the gorges and mountains where the Armenians

were massacred, secretly examining the corpses and taking photographs. We learned about it through private channels.

The winter of 1915-1916 was quiet. There were no Armenians in Meziré. Many of the Turks were conscripted. The life became extremely expensive; there was no trade at all.

In March 1916, the Kurds of Dersim (mostly those of Pilvank) rebelled against the Turkish government. It has to be said that they sheltered many Armenians and there were Armenians fighting in their ranks. The Kurds advanced from Dersim to Khozat and tried to capture it. The Turks brought cannons against them. Eventually the *ashiret* of Kharab-Ali headed by Mehmed *agha* came to Khozat and liberated it. The government saw that it would be difficult to defeat the rebels with weapons, so they made peace with them. The authorities heard that the Kurds of Dersim (*ghzlbashes*) were transporting Armenians on boats on the Euphrates to Dersim, so they captured the boats and chained them. After that the Kurds started transporting and saving the Armenians by rafts. Their attitude towards the Armenians was conditioned solely by their interest, to get bribes. In this way they made quite a fortune.

In April the government transported its troops from the Dardanelles to the eastern front. There were persistent rumours that the Russians had advanced a lot.

Again there were persistent rumours that the Armenians would be massacred. But the authorities deported the obedient Kurdish families from Chapaghjur and Diarbekir and brought them to Meziré in a very miserable condition. Many of them were murdered on their way. The Kurds of Dersim complained about it and again prepared for a rebellion. The authorities took the deported Kurds out of the town. We don't know where they were taken. People say many of them were thrown into the River Euphrates.

In May Enver *pasha* came to Meziré accompanied by two German commanders and German women. He visited some hospitals. He also visited the American hospital accompanied by Mr Henry Riggs. He left satisfied and gave a medal to the son of the late doctor.

Beginning from March the government started providing for the food and electricity expenses of the American hospital. For that reason Doctor Nejjip *bey* demanded the list of the hospital staff but we stayed free as medical orderlies.

At the end of May Ihsan *chavush* was appointed manager of the hospital. He was an immoral person and raped one of the medical assistants – Mrs Nvard. With the help of Dr Atkinson's wife Mrs Nvard managed to leave the hospital. To take his revenge Ihsan *chavush* told on the young Armenian employees of the hospital to the authorities. One day in June 1916, the hospital was surrounded by soldiers to prevent us, 12 young conscripts, from fleeing. Led by Mrs Atkinson, we, 12 young men, reported to the military tribunal and after registering there, returned to the hospital.

In the end, Mrs Atkinson had the Turkish *chavush*, Ihsan, fired. The latter again told on us to the authorities claiming that we were refugees. The authorities forcibly included us in a Kurdish labour regiment.

The efforts of Mrs Atkinson and the American Ambassador⁷⁹ to free us were in vain. There were 10 of us; the other two managed to hide in the hospital. In the evening 5 of our friends fled from the barracks and hid in the Armenian houses of the town. The most daring was the escape of Hmayak Garakhancherian from Bitlis, a student at Euphrates College. His escape astonished the German missionary and the Turkish authorities.

Because of the escape of these five people, the *amele taburu* foreman insulted us strongly, threatening to beat us, accusing us of being accomplices of their escape. He put us under strict guard, locked us in a small room and appointed two soldiers with bayonets to guard us. Thanks to the efforts of Mrs Atkinson and intervention of the Turkish chief doctor, three of us were transferred to the American hospital as irreplaceable medical assistants. Their names were Vahan Manukian, Yervand Mkrtichian and Nazaret. The last person saved himself by a bribe because I was supposed to go as a medical assistant. But since he managed to go instead of me, I and a 10-year-old boy from Maten named Harutyun stayed locked in that room. I have to mention that the missionaries put a lot of effort to save us but in vain. I was in a grave state of mind. I had poison ready in my pocket and there was a severe battle between life and death in me. I was especially suffering because of my friend's betrayal. I lived in that cell for 8 days together with my friend – hungry and miserable. A woman named Satenik from Archak was bringing me a piece of bread from the American hospital. The Turkish officials were very hostile and violent towards me. On the eighth day of our stay at the *amele* group I heard that Miss McLaren⁸⁰, the missionary from Van, was in Meziré. I managed to meet her and told her that I was going to flee. She convinced me not to flee, gave me an Ottoman gold coin and socks. I parted with her in a very desperate state of mind. One Monday in the beginning of July, our army was getting ready to leave for Malatia. Necessary arrangements were made, the required instruments were obtained.

One night about a hundred Kurds managed to flee from the *ameletaburu* (labour group) army. The *bash chavush*²³⁵ (brigadier) secretly proposed that I give him 10 liras to let me flee but I had only 5 liras which I offered to him but he refused. I asked him to allow me to go to the market for several minutes to buy some things. He gave me a foreman-soldier and we went out of the barracks together. Fortunately, the group sergeant was absent that day.

⁷⁹ The narrator probably means the 'American consul'.

⁸⁰ Miss Grisell M McLaren.

In the market I offered the foreman 2 *mejids* to let me go. At first he refused but then agreed and I quickly walked away by zigzag ways. An Armenian doctor from Meziré, Khoren Galanian, was at that time serving in the Turkish army at Svaz but his family was in Meziré. I went to his house and his wife gladly received me and sheltered me for five days. Mrs Verzhin (the doctor's wife) was very kind to me. The head of the surgical department of the American hospital Suren Abdalian heard about my escape and that I was staying in the doctor's house and came to visit me. Through his intervention, I left on 10 July for Kharberd where I found my three friends – Mushegh Khanamirian, Yeghishé and Hmayak Garakhancherian. They had decided to flee to Dersim and for that reason were working to put together funds. I joined them and for about 15 days we lived secretly in the house of a Protestant family from Trabzon. The family consisted of women only. They were ill and stayed free as Protestants. There was a teacher named Anna Tenkilian in Kharberd who knew some Kurds from Dersim. She did some bargaining with the Kurds to save us. There were four of us and the Kurds agreed to help us flee for four liras each.

The Kurd leading us, named Ismayil, made us put on Kurdish clothes. An American company taking care of the poor helped us with the clothes. On 15 July (1916), at night we secretly left the town. At daybreak after the first night we reached the Kurdish village of Shekhis located on the bank of the River Euphrates. We spent the day hiding in that village, in a house belonging to a friend of the Kurd. Another four Armenians who had fled from the village of Khozat at Kharberd joined us in this village. The next night, we crossed the River Euphrates which was relatively safe and at night very cautiously advanced by secret paths through mountains and gorges. In the morning, at sunrise, we reached Aghzunik, the birthplace of the Kurd who was leading us. Two young men met us there, Beneamin and Samuil from the village of Huseinik at Kharberd. They encouraged us and took us to the village. We hid in that village as Kurds until the end of August. There was a dilapidated church in that village where we stayed. There were about 250 Armenians in that village and the Kurds had named it Bariz. The Kurds were lying to the authorities that there were no Armenians left among them, and when policemen showed up, the Kurds would hide us in secret places and tell the policemen that they had massacred all the Armenians. Fifteen days after our arrival there, cannonade was heard but we did not know for sure where the fighting was. There were persistent rumours that Yerznka and Balu were occupied. The cannonade was heard for 15 days running. The Turks of Khozat started fleeing to different sides but the Kurds didn't flee. In August the occupation of Yerznka by the Russian army was confirmed. There were also rumours that the Armenians from Ovaju province bordering Yerznka had fled and saved themselves. The chief of our village, Mehmed *agha*, was

keeping us in order to hand us over to the Russians himself to receive appreciation but I couldn't stand it anymore.

I took with me a young man named Artashes, a student from Meziré Central School, who knew the roads well. We walked through forests and gorges reaching the Kurdish village of Mstushagh on the bank of the River Muzurchay. There were Armenian families there. We joined an Armenian family from Yerznka and walked for four days non-stop, secretly through the Kurds. The Kurds didn't do anything to us. We reached the village of Yerkan of Yerznka in a very bad condition and met Russian soldiers there who gave us food. The next day we went to the town of Yerznka and found Mr Tevoyants there who provided us with some financial help. We stayed in Yerznka for 8 days in miserable conditions. After 8 days, together with the orphans of Yerznka we came to Erzurum on 36 carts provided by the Union of Towns²³⁶.

We were almost naked and physically exhausted. The long journey had weakened our bodies. In Erzurum I met my friends from Van Mr Simeon Torgomian and Ruben Apaghtsian who helped me to move to Yerevan. I couldn't find my family here since they had moved to Tiflis. So I moved to Tiflis and found my mother, wife and two children. Now I am in Tiflis and will teach in one of the schools for the refugees.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 491, pp. 5-12, original, handwritten.

No 126

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR MUSHEGH VORBERIAN ON THE
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN
POPULATION OF THE TOWN OF KHARBERD**

May 15, 1916

Narrated by Mushegh Vorberian, aged 18, sophomore student of Euphrates College, son of Euphrates College professor Vorberian

On 30 April, 1915, the authorities took the first step in the extermination of the Armenian population of Kharberd. All the prominent people of the town were arrested on that day. The arrests went on until June; only several people were left out, among them my father. Maybe they were left out for something worse.

On 15 June, an official came to our house, politely greeted us and on behalf of the mayor asked my father to go to the government office for a meeting. My father returned at 12 o'clock, half-dead, fell into an armchair and said as if in delirium: "They severely beat Armenians in our presence. I can't stand this."

The next day my father was taken to the American hospital: he had had a cerebral haemorrhage. After 15 days his condition was considerably better. We were deported to Urfa, via the Malatia route. Our friends and we had 40 donkeys and 4 carts loaded with valuable property.

On 3 July, the Kharberd caravan of 3,000 people started off. The governor gave reference letters with his stamp to the Urfa authorities to welcome us. The Turkish deputies (of the Ottoman Parliament Chamber of Deputies) also gave reference letters to various influential Turks of Urfa with the same purpose.

The people were glad they were leaving and could for some time escape the Turkish oppression.

We were accompanied by 100 gendarmes and 3 gendarmerie officers allegedly for the security of the caravan. We were travelling only 4 hours a day. We were quite calm during the first two days, but on the third day we felt the horror of death.

The caravan stopped at the bank of the Euphrates... As a warning, the river which was a loyal friend to the Armenians started showing from time to time the corpses of those who shared our fate, taking their bodies on its waves to the far-away Indian Ocean...

But, alas, those beheaded corpses were not convincing enough to open our eyes and show our end...

Tired and exhausted we had hardly sat down to take breath, when my father, perplexed and with eyes filled with blood, approached my 14-year-old sister and said: "My daughter, your father prefers to be massacred and exterminated with his friends rather than hand you over to a dog. Let's go, the river is near, it can swallow us all and save us from the reproaches of the dogs. It's better to kill the physical to keep pure the moral." My father told us that one of the three officers saw my beautiful sister and wanted her for his wife promising to free our friends and us.

There was a general confusion in the caravan; everyone was expecting a similar proposal for their beloved wife, daughter and sister; everyone was thinking about an escape. The same officer, guessing the reason for the confusion called my father and said that what he did was just an offer.

That night 10 gendarmes entered the inn and demanded 500 gold coins which was immediately collected and given to them.

It took 4 days to cross over to the other bank by small river boats.

On the 7th day of our deportation, at midnight, the masks were discarded; the wailing and the shouting reached the sky. About 20 gendarmes entered the caravan and started searching for money beating and trampling down men, women and children. Upon the pretext of searching for money, they were undressing and raping the women and girls.

In despair, we ran to the river but the gendarmes intercepted us and forced us to go back assuring us that those were the Kurds. They started firing in the air and the Kurds allegedly ran away.

When the morning came, the people, forgetting the beating and the physical torture, were mourning their raped honour... Unbeknown to us, the officer who was soliciting the hand of my sister considering her his property, defended our tents from the attacks of the gendarmes.

Meanwhile, 8 prominent people were separated from the caravan supposedly because the governor wanted to meet them. My father was among them. But the officer thought that saving my father could be a way of possessing my sister, he took him out of their ranks. The remaining 7 people were taken away. The Euphrates took away the first victims of our caravan...

Escape attempts were useless because we were surrounded by numerous *chetés*: anyone lagging behind the caravan was slaughtered by them. In this way we had 25 victims before reaching Malatia.

Two days before executing our death sentence, to win our confidence and keep us unaware, the gendarmes were ordered to shoot the Kurds. The order was executed and several Kurds were shot as if to defend us from their plundering.

It was the last evening. The caravan was unaware of its tomorrow. Only my father was aware of the looming disaster from the words of the officer. In the evening after the supper, the officer's servant found our tent and threatening our life said that if we promised to give my sister to the officer, the carts were ready and we all could escape. "Tomorrow morning, when I am slaughtered, only after that can he take my daughter." The officer did not realise his threat, he came in and said: "That will be your sin." Then he disappeared not to be seen again.

In the morning the caravan walked towards their slaughterhouse – a place named Chiftlik - 3 hours away from Malatia. Before reaching the town, a little far from us, they started separating males over the age of 12. They separated all of them and put them into a nearby barracks. The separated ones did not even have the chance to say their last farewells. The gendarmes were forcibly taking them away. I was among the very first to be put into the prison and I was waiting for ours to come. My father and our friends entered. The officer had interceded for me before the governor and I was taken out without kissing my father and friends the last time. All the women and children were in hospitals and in the streets. The Muslims had a right to choose whoever they wanted. My sister was abducted by the aforementioned officer.

None of the prisoners survived to tell us about their tragic story...

Mushegh Vorberian
[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 57, reg. 1, rec. 489, pp. 1-6, original, handwritten.

No 127
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR P. FAPRIGATORIAN ON THE
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN
POPULATION OF KHARBERD**

Black memories about the Kharberd deportation

On Saturday 1 May, 1915,²³⁷ Kharberd and the neighbouring villages were suddenly besieged and many people, in particular the educated, patriots and party leaders were arrested and underwent severe beatings. The prison tortures were indescribable: they beat some, tortured them, pulled out the hair of their beard one by one; they pulled out the toe-nails of some people, then put their feet into hot water and then with wooden sticks previously soaked in water they started beating their nailless, swollen, blood-stained feet softened by hot water. I cannot enumerate the number of strokes. If one was tired, another one would start hitting. In this way, one person was ruthlessly beaten by several soldiers to make him tell the number and the place of weapons. But I have to speak about them with praise because none of them turned to be disloyal. Quite the contrary, all of them endured all the pain and terrors gladly for the sake of their nation.

When they couldn't get the secrets out of the men, they would turn to the women inflicting the same or even worse torture on them. They would put copper plates in the oven, make them red-hot and then put on the women's breasts; they would shave some women's heads, put the aforementioned plates on their heads and start scorching them until they said the place of their husbands' weapons. However, the women showed the same patience and loyalty and didn't give away any secrets.

But what was the use of patience and secrecy when they were after implementing their prepared programme as soon as possible? The Armenian clerics, in particular the primate, to get rid of the pricks of conscience, together with some advisors decided to hand over the weapons in order to be saved and persuaded those who didn't want to. When they started handing over the weapons, the beating stopped for a while, but then it resumed with more effort saying that you have more weapons because this small amount couldn't serve their purpose. When they couldn't get more weapons in this way, they added a large amount of their own weapons upon ours, then took photographs; also armed 2-3 Dashnaks from head to toe and took their pictures and sent them up to Germany claiming that the Armenians had rebelled, and those were the samples of their weapons and *fedayeen*. After that the Germans allegedly told them to deport those *fedayeen* to avoid inner revolt.

Even before this order many Armenians died in deep pits unable to endure the prison, hunger and persecutions. Many others lived being fooled or half-dead with hopes of freedom.

The deportation order came at the very end. The Turkish officials treated the Armenians with such shrewdness and perspicacity that one could not guess what was the secret behind deportations. Every evening at about 6 o'clock, about 1,500 people were chained and sent away without food and clothes. But nobody knew where, in what direction. If we believed them, the destination was Urfa. But who would believe them? It became clear later that there was no other way out for the Armenians but death. In the morning when the mothers were taking meals to the prison, the prison doors were open, the clothes and the beds were there but not the people. There were a few compassionate policemen who tried to send them back with a couple of comforting phrases. But there were also others who sent them home cursing, beating and pushing. Where could the Armenian mothers go? Who could they demand from? Where could they search? Where were their sons taken, in what direction? Under what stone, or in what gorge and in what way were they murdered? Were they murdered by swords, stones, water or bullets? Only 4 to 5 people managed to escape from these several thousand deportees. Mr Asatur Asaturian was one of them. He recounted what he had witnessed – how, with what torments were they murdered. He said that some bound young men were taken down to a gorge. They ordered the first person to dig a grave for himself and stand over it. The order was obeyed. Then they shot him in the chest in the pit dug by him and ordered the second man to cover him and dig a pit for himself. In this way everybody was waiting drawn up for his turn.

With another group, with everyone tied up, they made them sit down and axed them hacking off their heads. Others were murdered by hacking their arm or leg or neck. Some were stoned to death. This young man was from the stoned group. He lay down as dead: there was a lot of blood and everyone was so stained with blood that they couldn't tell if he was dead or alive. He said streams of Armenian blood were flowing down the gorges. Some young men were piled one on another like bricks and putting a saw on their necks, they cut their heads off like a log. Oh, what horrible deaths! After several hours, this young man, blood-stained, crawled out from under the corpses and fled to the mountains. The soldiers saw him and chased him on horseback to catch him but fortunately, he managed to find shelter in the bushes. After several hours, seeing that the troops had left, he stood up, walked to the town and was thus saved. A few others were saved by such miracles from the other groups. The rest died horrible deaths. Merely one to two hundred people were released from the prison, against bribes amounting to several thousand gold coins, to be deported with their families. My husband was one of them. We were deported to Urfa on Saturday 14 June. We

were joined by the wealthy, distinguished and educated class, the respected families. We were accompanied by a captain, two sergeants and five hundred policemen who surrounded us. It was impossible to walk out of the ranks. The road to the village of Izoli should have taken a day but we made it in five days. Then when we reached the village and sat down for a rest our defenders started plundering us. The River Euphrates was flowing by, and we could see corpses tied up in pairs floating on the water. Oh, what a terrible scene is the picture of death! People did not want to believe that those were people in the water; they always tried to deceive themselves. When night fell, the soldiers would come, tie up the men and take them to the bank. "Now either you give us several hundred gold coins, or we throw you into the water," they would say and by threatening the people they would plunder the wealthy, and instantly throw the poor into the water. After staying there for several days, we headed to Malatia. Despite losing my dear ones, I was partially comforted because my dearest husband was still with me, saved from so many horrible deaths. It took us five days full of dreadful hardships to reach Malatia from Izoli. One can stand any hardship but when a husband's wife is raped in front of him, or when a father's child is abused in front of him – it is an unbearable and inextinguishable fire! What terrible minutes were those! Everybody was crying for death, looking for the Izoli water to throw themselves into it, but alas, it was gone! By that time our carts and horses were still left to us but what was the use of it if they didn't allow boys over the age of 10-12, and men to sit on them to have some rest. They didn't allow them to sit on the carts with their family even for a minute. On the contrary, they would beat them and make them walk bareheaded, naked and over the thorns. I can't describe what terrible beating was waiting for the one who dared to bend down to remove a splinter from his foot. He could then make one or two steps only and fall down short of breath; then the policemen would hit his head with rocks a couple of times and finish him off. One could see nothing but corpses along those roads.

When we entered Malatia, everyone was told to stay with their family. They said every five families would be put into one inn. We did as we were ordered waiting for our end. A further 200 soldiers were brought to guard us better so that not a single person could escape. So they started taking away the deportees cart by cart, separating men and boys over the age of 10 and giving the remaining women to the soldiers to be taken to the inns. Oh, bitter fate! What unbearable moment that was! Everyone was calling for their loved ones, the wailing and the shouts reached the sky. Fathers were separated from their children, wives from husbands, mothers from sons. I can't describe the grief. They were not allowed even their last kisses.

I was married only for three years and had no children, only a beloved adorable husband for whom I was ready to give my life any moment. I don't

know how he was taken away, what his last word was. I only know that when I came to myself I was alone with my sister aged 14. I found her sitting above my head and crying after having lost all her beloved people – father, mother, sister's husband, brother and having by her only me – her half-dead sister.

My mother and relatives were taken to some other inn. They did the same to everybody. When I came to myself I couldn't realise anything, I was like crazy. I heard people saying that [our relatives'] names were written down so they would return the next day. But who believed it? Everybody was yelling, it was like the whole of the town was shaking. It went on until evening, then from night until the morning, non-stop, the wailing and the shouting reached the sky but regrettably, they stayed unanswered, dispersing in vain. I wonder how the heaven could tolerate the wailing and crying of so many young children.

In the morning, just after the day broke, the *mutassarif* with his entourage came and said: "Your husbands were sent to Urfa. You will be sent there too. You might not see them today but tomorrow you'll see them by all means. So quickly get ready and come one by one, we have to examine you, there is an order from the government." We were already like fools: we didn't realise what they said, what they wanted to say. The women started going to the *mutassarif* one by one and he would make them take off their clothes one by one and examine carefully; they even made the women take off their underwear to check if anything was sewn there. They even checked below the women's breasts to make sure nothing was hidden there. Finally, after all kinds of unseemly words and deeds the women were let out. They did that every evening and then the mothers started off for Urfa with their babies on their two shoulders, nearly naked, without carts, without donkeys and even without food. Every day they covered an hour's distance in five hours and then made a halt in a desolate gorge. The sufferings of the mothers were unbearable: the babies who could not understand the phrase "We don't have any", who were used to milk and sweets, and now were deprived even of stale bread and water – it was terrible. The first day, after driving people for several hours, they made a halt in a desolate gorge and started the second search – like the first and even worse; they undressed the women and even checked their body cavities looking for hidden money. It continued until the night. Then they started searching for virgin girls. They would take a girl for 15 soldiers and bring her back after 2-3 hours almost half-dead. Oh, the cries of those young virgins and their mothers seemed to make stones and mountains cry. This continued until there were no more virgin girls over the age of 8-10, so they started with women and it became a common thing. At daytime, during the trip they would take the babies away from their mothers and if the mothers could pay several gold coins they would get their babies back with some beating or insulting only. But if they couldn't pay, the Turks would put the babies back into their mothers' arms and then hack them. They would

also break the necks of many babies just like birds and throw their heads aside. They would gather pregnant women, make them lie on the ground and ride their horses over them. Many of the babies would immediately come into this world and then die; many others would breathe their last breath in a minute.

During the deportation when the women could not walk and lagged behind, they would shoot them and then immediately undress them and cut their abdomen open saying: "If you break *giaour's* bones, you will find gold."

In this way they drove us torturing, beat us and took down to a desolate gorge where they again started searching as if the more we were plundered the more money we had. In this way the day would pass on to the evening, and in the evening they would start looking for young and beautiful women and without any shame, in front of the children, they would satisfy their mean passion and then go away. It was very difficult to escape from the hands of those wild animals if God didn't show the way.

I was able to escape because of the luck of having no children. Like I said, my sister was with me and I saved her too with great difficulty. At nights I would pay some old lady to lie on my sister and sleep like that. Often I would put her into a sack, tie it up and put under my head instead of a pillow. If she suffocated, at least, I had saved her honour. As for me, I spent the nights disguised as a boy. In the morning I painted sores on my face so that it was disgusting even looking at me. Many nights the Turks had been looking for me with a candle but thanks to God's support and my friends' secrecy, I was saved from the beasts.

All this continued for a month and a half and then they made us walk almost completely naked. After some time sores appeared on bodies and festered. Even in that condition the women had not lost their feeling of shame; they were gathering leaves from trees and bushes and joining them were making small dresses for themselves to cover their private parts. The Turks didn't allow even that: "Your honour, shame – all that has passed away." This continued for 15 days. We were already close to the town. Then Arabs on horseback, called nomads, appeared. They were wearing women's dresses and were spending the nights with music, drums and naked women. In the mornings they would choose the youngest babies, the suckling ones, the girls, saddle their horses with a baby behind, a baby in front and two babies on each hand and drive away. Oh, I can't describe the mothers' grief, it was indescribable! Only fathers and mothers can feel how bitter it was parting with their suckling babies and giving them to such people. But what could we do? God had already left us.

Finally, after so many tortures and grief we reached Urfa. Only about 200 women out of 6,000 made it to Urfa and they were wounded and half-dead. We were put into an inn. "Have a rest here. After two days we'll go further, to Rakka," they said. Oh, when I heard that they would not leave us at Urfa I immediately took measures to flee from the inn. I sent word to the Germans

about our arrival. My voice was heard thanks to my studying German. A German woman came and talked to the doctor to take us, the sick, to the hospital. Eventually she managed to take me, my sister and one or two others to the hospital. We stayed there for several days and recovered a little. Then we were taken to a different building that also belonged to the Germans. We stayed there for about two weeks. All the young men and wealthy people of Urfa were already murdered. There had already been an order to deport the remaining families and a few craftsmen but they resisted saying: "Where are the first people that left, that you allegedly deported? Where are the young men you sent to labour groups?²³⁸ Where is the primate?²³⁹ You say you deported all of them. But where to? Where are they, in what mountains, under what stones?" Several times the Turks tried to surround the block and catch the rebels but couldn't. Moreover, they had to retreat leaving many soldiers and policemen dead.²⁴⁰ Finally, the Armenians saw that they could not resist for long with 25 to 30 people and decided at least to kill as many Turks as they could before dying. When the Turks one more time tried to catch them, the *fedayeen*, ready to take up their positions, rang the church bells and all the people gathered there. After praying to God and being blessed they went to their positions singing in unison the song "Fight, guys, fight bravely!" The building we stayed in was between the Turkish and Armenian streets. One of the doors opened to the Turkish street, the other to the Armenian street. Oh, what sweet moments we had seeing the Turks horrified and bitter! They all fled. There were not enough troops, they couldn't resist. And the Armenian quarter was like a paradise – joy, sounds of songs and laughter shook the air. There was no difference between men and women; everyone was ready to fight bravely. There were around 30 fighting men, in charge of positions²⁴¹, the girls were doing the policing to stop the enemy from stealing in. Taking care of the wounded and making meals was the responsibility of the women. Some women put on Turkish dresses and exploded bombs in the crowds of Turks. Everyone over the age of 8 had some responsibility and was doing it with great enthusiasm. They already knew they had no future; there was no aid coming from anywhere but they said: "At least, we'll die as people and not be slaughtered like cattle." They fought like that for several days. The Turks had considerable losses. They came with a German representative²⁴² and said: "Surrender, there is no more deportation for you and there is no death." But the fighters were not convinced at all. They replied: "We want our brothers, our primate, our wealthy people that you allegedly deported. If you bring them back, it is all right. If not, we shall fight until our last breath calling for revenge." When the Turks saw that the Armenians did not intend to surrender, they returned and resumed fighting. Since our building belonged to the Germans, the Turks were able to come and put up positions on the balconies on two-three sides. But they had a lot of casualties. When they saw they couldn't defeat the

Armenians without more troops and cannons, they brought troops from Aleppo as well as a German sergeant and 2 or 3 cannons and took up positions from all sides²⁴³. The Armenians had already taken into consideration everything; they had such a training that if it were not for the cannons it would have been impossible to defeat them with 2,000 soldiers. For a month the Armenians fought with weapons and the Turks with cannons. The Armenians would have still held up had their leader Mkrtich Yotneghbarian not been wounded by a cannon shell. The poor guy was wounded in the leg and he committed suicide out of despair. Several days after that the Turks managed to invade the Armenian quarters. The troops led by a German captain²⁴⁴ besieged the American institution where all the Armenians – men and women – had gathered and started swarming in. The German captain announced: “Those who surrender will not be punished.” A large crowd surrendered, only an Armenian girl – Khanum Ketenjian²⁴⁵ – a graduate of Euphrates College in Kharberd, who had been policing the quarters, with her weapon in her hand, took off her cap and said: “I am not surrendering. Do whatever you want.” When the German officer heard this, he ordered to shoot the poor girl. They shot her, with the same bullet killing also her sister. The German officer was very angry with the girl who in the police uniform resisted them so much. He ordered to search everyone. They gathered all the boys over the age of 8 to 10 as well as all the girls who were helping the fighters, tied them up and put them in prison. The rest were taken out of town and left in inns hungry and thirsty. Then they started searching the houses of the Turks, Assyrians, and Germans and if any Armenians were found, they would immediately arrest them. We, who were in the German building – me, my sister and several other Armenian girls, were also taken away. Even those who had been working there for 15 years were taken away without letting them prepare food for themselves. All the men were arrested. Every day several men were hanged as well as several girls who had participated in fighting. The women were deported to the deserts. They left only some of the medical orderlies from the German hospital to take care of their wounded. They were so furious about Urfa that they did not spare anyone. The Armenians had killed about 1,500 Turks.

After the Urfa resistance, the American vice-consul Mr Leslie⁸¹ could not stand the tortures of the Armenians and nearly went mad. When he saw the construction of the gallows, he didn't want to live anymore and poisoned himself. He barely managed to cross the street, came to the German hospital and died there.

I can't keep writing what an honest man he was. After he died, a note was found in his pocket which read: “Do not blame anyone for my death. I poisoned

⁸¹ Francis H. Leslie

myself since I couldn't stand all the bitterness and tortures suffered by the Armenians.”

I can't truly believe that any pen is able to describe all the different types of torture that I had when I again heard about deportation and drinking from that bitter glass again. Those who haven't seen it can't understand it. We had many invitations from the Turks but it was more terrible: it was better to go and die than to live under their roof. Surprisingly, after so much fighting they still craved for Armenian women. Those days several young women unbeknownst to the authorities went to the houses of the Turks but after 2 to 3 days strangled their husbands and fled to us saying: “At least we revenged ourselves for our husbands.” I was still in the inn pretending to be ill because there was an order to delay [the deportation] of the sick until they had recovered. The German orderlies often came to take care of women patients. I asked them to bring an orderly's uniform the next day. They promised and brought it the next day. I immediately put it on and started examining the wounds like them. They were so stupid that did not recognise me after seeing me for such a long time because I had changed my clothes. In that way I managed to go out. The next day I managed to take out my sister the same way. We started buying from the Arabs and Turks the supplies they plundered from the Armenians to make meals for the Armenian patients in the inns. When they could walk a little, they were formed into a group and were immediately deported. I saved several girls from that horrible prison in the same way but what was the use of it, if after a month there was a second search and all those who were hiding were deported to the regions populated by Arabs. Hardly had we walked for 1 to 2 hours when they made us sit down and the same tortures started again. Oh, my God! Can people be tortured in the hands of wild beasts for 5 to 6 months and endure it? When night fell, I decided to flee. I told another woman from Urfa about my idea and she, as well as several others, wished to join me. When night fell, we took each other by hand and started fleeing. We headed towards some light and after an hour came to a village and knocked at a door that was opened. We saw a widow and two young children. They didn't understand our language. We gave them 1-2 *mejids*. When they saw the money, they gladly accepted us. We made her understand that we would give them money if they took us to Urfa in Arab clothes. She promised but in the morning some villagers came saying: “There are fugitives here. We'll hand them over to the guards.” All our entreaties were useless; only after we gave money to them, did they lapse into silence and went away. Not long after others came. I had painted sores on my sister's face and was sitting by her like I was ill. One of the newcomers pulled me out of the house. There was a pit in front of us, I jumped into it. She tried hard to pull me out but in vain. She turned the gun on me to scare me but it didn't work either, so she left. Then other women came to persuade me to come out of the pit and I replied to them: “If you

bring my sister, I'll come out, if not I prefer to die than to come out of here." Then they said: "We have already taken her before you." When I heard those words, I immediately came out of the pit and followed them. They took me to an inner room and locked me there with a woman next to me. A wicked woman with beads in her hand started scaring me to make me convert to Islam. I told her: "It is impossible to scare me by death, so don't try in vain." Then they took me to a different house with an Armenian woman thinking that an Armenian could persuade me. When I saw that Armenian woman, it was like all the world was mine. I told her that I had not seen Armenians for quite a long time and felt like staying without food. I told her: "Oh, my sister, I had a sister whom I had brought with me with great difficulties but now they took her away from me. For God's sake, if there is a way, by money or some other way, bring her back to me as soon as possible." The woman tried hard, did her best but couldn't find her saying another Arab had taken her and her friends to Urfa to sell that very night. I was left alone there. Oh, it seemed impossible to wait. I couldn't think of any means to save her, I was like a lunatic: God took from my hands the only consolation I had and left me with these speechless pagans. The Armenian woman who had lived with the Arabs for 8 months, was quite fluent in their language. I told her to think of some way to send me to the town promising to give as much money as they wanted. The Arabs loved money so much that were ready to change their honour for money; they would forget anything for the sake of money. I managed to send word to the Germans with an Arab who was a relative of the household. I told them about my whereabouts and they immediately sent a man who took me away but unbeknownst to the authorities. When I went to the town, my sister was my only concern. When I saw my German lady, my first words were asking about my sister. She said: "She came two days ago and we took all the measures to save her because there were searches every day but, alas, we failed. They found her again and treated both her and us very severely. They again deported her." Oh, my God, how could you not spare such an innocent virgin and again put her into the hands of those predators? She stayed inconsolable and the tears in her eyes didn't stop even when she had her devoted sister by her taking care of her. What is she going to do now without a sister, a friend or even a compatriot in the hands of those savages? But when you are not allowed to think of some way out, you are unable to think or mourn about your beloved one because of other thoughts, other personal fears. When in the morning they again surrounded the house to search it, before they entered I put on my clothes, had my hat on and went out. When they saw me, they paid no attention to me thinking I was German and started carefully searching in wardrobes, beds and clothes. I passed by the guards standing at the doors and went to the house in the park where another German woman lived. I went there and after waiting for several hours, returned. The

Turks had already left, disappointed. They came like that 2 to 3 times until they lost hope. After that I tried different things to find my sister but all in vain since it was impossible to free those who were among the Arabs. If they weren't afraid or if there was no hope of making money, they would marry off every girl over the age of 10. Then after using her for several days, according to their traditions, they would sell her. The buyer would do the same. That was the destiny of innocent Armenians. They would often prick with needles the lips of the Armenian girls to make them blue, not to differ from them. For a whole year I lived with the hope to get some news from my sister but was always disappointed. I was taken unawares when instead of my sister I got news about my mother who had returned from Malatia with her 5 little children thanks to a Kurd. Oh, what happy tidings that my mother was still alive with her little children! When I learned the news, I didn't want to wait another minute. I immediately turned to my friends, found a cabman thanks to them and left the same night unbeknownst to the authorities. Those who had fled two days earlier were caught and imprisoned but fortunately, I with my four friends safely reached our loved ones.

In Mezré I made enquiries to find out where my husband was taken and how he was executed. The sergeant that took him away said: "When we took them away to execute them, he wanted me to search him since everyone was searched before execution." So the sergeant thought there should be a secret and sent two soldiers to undress him but he took out a small dagger he had hidden and killing both soldiers fled. Immediately other soldiers ran after him but couldn't catch him and started shooting at him. Unfortunately, one of the bullets hit my poor husband and knocked him down. The sergeant said they didn't go to see if he was dead or wounded. He said when they returned they found everyone waiting like lambs to be slaughtered and finished them all. That news wasn't very bitter for me because he had died after obtaining the price for his blood. After staying in Mezré for a few days, even before quenching my yearning, the authorities learned about my arrival and wanted to imprison me. For 2 to 3 days I hid in different places, then with some friends of mine I fled to Tersim taking with me my 12-year-old brother. My God! Wasn't one whole year of suffering in the hands of Arabs and Turks enough to put me into the hands of the Kurds? But I stayed with the Kurds for barely 6 days. Fortunately, Yeriza was occupied by the Russians and we had a chance to be saved from the pagans and go to the Russians where our Armenian brothers took care of us.

Out of about 50 people (my husband, his brothers, his nephews and nieces) only myself and two little boys survived. The loss of 45 to 48 people in just one year was unbearable. One couldn't endure it if God didn't give people with much terrible bitterness also immeasurable patience.

Pailatsu Faprigatorian

A widow wandering in a foreign town who had lost all her dear people

P.S. Damn the readers from generation to generation if they do not take vengeance! Some may consider us crazy or criminal. But what we saw, the life that we lived – there can't be a human or even a skeleton who would not cry for revenge! I repeat again – damn him from generation to generation!²⁴⁶

NAA, f. 221, reg.1, rec. 381, pp.14-22 rev., original, handwritten.

No 128

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR PETROS HAKOBIAN ON THE
NEGATIVE ROLE OF FOREIGN OFFICIALS DURING THE
DEPORTATION OF KHARBERD**

May 16, 1916

Narrated by Reverend Petros Hakobian who worked at the German mission in Kharberd

In 1896, I left my job at the American mission and moved to the newly opened German mission headed by Colonel Mr Ehmman with a primary goal of opening orphanages. Later other missionary works were carried out.

I have worked in that institution for the whole of 20 years, doing my best and always believing that it was a purely Christian and charitable organisation. Today I maintain the same opinion about the organisation.

You must have heard a lot about the deportation, they were almost the same everywhere. It is worth mentioning several typical events that can explain the negative attitude of foreigners during the deportation.

1. Before the deportation, when the arrests especially of the party leaders started in towns (Kharberd and Mezré) and then all over the region, we were assured by both the authorities and Mr Ehmman that those arrests and persecutions were directed particularly against political parties and nothing would happen to the people. Certainly, nobody would have trusted the announcements of the authorities if a person like Mr Ehmman had not assured us like that. Even Reverend Vardan Amirghanian was absolutely convinced about the announcement and on Sunday, during the sermon he told the people, as good news that, "all persecutions are directed against party members and nothing will happen to the people." The terrified people took it on trust

2. During the arrests the authorities demanded that arms be handed over; in prisons the

prisoners were subjected to unheard-of tortures to make confessions about weapons caches; on the other hand, the population of the whole region was forced to hand over their weapons to the authorities. A mediator was needed for it and who could be a better mediator between the authorities and the people than the German Mr Ehmman who enjoyed complete confidence of the people. So it happened: Mr Ehmman received the news from the local primate Archimandrite Psak and others and did his best to persuade the Armenian population. He visited many places, invited people to meetings and giving all kinds of guarantees persuaded the people to hand over their weapons to the authorities.

It seems to us that Mr Ehmman was not aware of the intentions of the Turks about the massacre and deportation, because if he knew he should be considered the main person responsible among the authors of all Kharberd crimes.

3. Deportation started after the prisoners were taken out group by group, tied up by long ropes and driven away at night towards directions unknown to us. Rumours reached us that they were all massacred. The last group did not want to get out of the prison and burning the room, they themselves burned in it. People close to the German mission went there seeking asylum but Mr Ehmman had the door closed on them and turned them out. Reverend Yeghoyan and I requested to give asylum to the applicants and intervene before the authorities. "I cannot," was the only answer we received. How many times have we applied to him asking to send a telegram to Constantinople, to the Ambassador, since he had guaranteed people's safety but we always received a negative answer, he would cling to his "I cannot."

4. Some people secretly slipped into German institutions and found shelter there. There

were no men among them, only women and children. When Mr Ehmman learned about it, he threw everyone out knowing they would be massacred outside.

5. At the very last moment he put out 15 pupils of the last grade of the seminary – including my son – upon the pretext that they were of conscription age. Only 3 of them have been somehow released by now.

6. A formal order came that Protestant Armenians were pardoned. They announced that

everyone should get out of their hideaways and get registered. There were no men left, only women and children. They were all registered paying 20 *kurush* per person. Apparently, it was another trick to reveal the hidden people. When the registration was over, they started gathering people for the third and last deportation. It was at the end of September 1915; the remnants of the population were to be deported. Those very days, when Bulgaria joined the war and Serbia

was defeated, the Berlin-Constantinople railroad²⁴⁷ was completed; there was a celebration in Kharberd on that occasion. On that very day when the last remnants were deported, Mr Ehmann, instead of intervening for those people who were brought out of their hideouts for being Protestants, went to the event held by the Turks and after making a speech there he declared Germany to be the defender of 300 million Muslims.

7. The American consul Leslie Davis, of Jewish origin, also displayed negative attitude. He told the citizens who applied to him the first time that he defended only those Americans who were citizens by birth. So many applications of citizens remained unanswered and many American citizens were massacred due to the carelessness of the consul²⁴⁸. When the caravan was passing by the doors of the American consul, Mr Simon Sarkavagian, who had lived in America for decades and had become a citizen many years ago, on seeing the consul ran to him, presented his citizenship certificate and asked for protection. The consul pushed away the certificate with contempt and refused protection. Mr Sarkavagian tore the certificate and threw it at his face.⁸²

8. The people of Kharberd gave a lot of money to the American consul, the head of the

American mission Mr Sicks and the head of the German mission Mr Ehmann. Those of their remnants that now go to get their money are given Ottoman banknotes²⁴⁹ instead of gold coins which is only one third of its value.

Reverend Petros Hakobian
From the village of Perjench of Kharberd
[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 489, pp. 6-12, original, handwritten.

⁸² Others testify that seeing the consul Mr Sarkavagian approached him and said in fluent English: "I have been an American citizen for many years, protect me." The consul said he had no right to protect him. After that Mr Sarkavagian tore the paper, threw it at his face and shouted: "Take it and s*** on it since that paper is worthless for you. It is better to die than apply to a villain like you."

No 129
TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GALUST GALUSTIAN ON
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE ARMENIAN
POPULATION OF THE TOWN OF ARABKIR

June 21, 1917
Baberd, School of Orphans

The events of 1915-1917 in Arabkir

1. The conditions in Arabkir and the position of the Armenians: Arabkir is in the *vilayet* of Kharberd, to the west of the Euphrates, at a distance of 8 hours. It is a mountainous town with many beautiful sights.

Arabkir has 25,000 inhabitants – 15,000 Armenians and only 10,000 Turks. The villages are mostly Kurdish. Arabkir has also Armenian villages which have their own school and church.

In every respect Armenians occupied foremost positions in terms of both schools and crafts. The crafts were quite advanced and were all in the hands of the Armenians.

Arabkir had 700 shops, 550 of which belonged to the Armenians. The Turks had no craftsmen, only a few merchants.

Local schools too were quite advanced. The Armenians had a community high school. There was a school also for the girls, as well as a secondary college with more than 300 pupils.

Besides, there were 10 neighbourhood schools. The total number of students was about 1,200.

Arabkir had a wonderful church known as the Cathedral of Katoghike. It was an old church with the date inscribed, showing that it was built 150 years ago. There was the magnificent residence of the primate and many other well-known buildings.

There were also 5 churches destroyed during the 1895 Armenian massacres (by the Turks). They were in ruins.

Armenian Catholics and Protestants had their schools and churches.

The Turks had a school, mosques and a *metresé*²⁵⁰ for girls with about 150-170 pupils.

The houses in Arabkir were made of stone with 3 to 4 stories.

Arabkir was exporting *manusa*²⁵¹, all the export was in the hands of the Armenians. None of the Turks had factories – only the Armenians were weaving. There were about 2,000 weaving looms operated only by the Armenians.

Arabkir has large expatriate communities in America, Egypt, Bulgaria and other countries numbering some 4,000 people.

World War: On 22 July, 1914, when the European states clashed and the World War started, Turkey too announced mobilisation and conscripted men 20 to 45. About 3,000 young Armenian men were conscripted from Arabkir and only 700 of them were released by paying *bedel* and stayed in the town.

The Turks treated the Armenian merchants with barbarity. The Turkish authorities forcibly confiscated from them all kinds of goods and property upon the pretext that they were needed for the troops. The gendarmes took away all their goods even if they were useless for the troops.

The Turks, on the contrary, were happy about that since they didn't have [many] merchants and didn't suffer. The Turkish authorities always closed their eyes on the few merchants they had, who made the wealthy class of the Turks and so the Turkish merchants, prominent and wealthy men were saved from big losses. And the Armenians always suffered. Many of them were obliged to close their shops to cut their losses. The Armenian element was day by day weakening economically, and the rich Turkish military were occupying public offices and becoming richer day by day.

Bribe was considered the most significant factor for the Turkish authorities at that time.

And the Turkish officials were getting richer on bribes day by day. In this way, the Turkish authorities continued their barbaric actions until the general Armenian massacre.

Every day the Turkish gendarmes and policemen as well as the mob attacked Armenian houses on the pretext that there were Armenian deserters in the houses. They would break into the houses of the Armenians, plunder and rob, taking away anything they liked.

The Turkish authorities were becoming more demanding towards the Armenians, showering new orders upon their heads while the Turks went on with their business safe and sound, without any losses inflicted by the authorities.

This disastrous and unbearable situation continued until Tuesday, 20 April, 1915. The Turkish authorities committed their barbarities towards the Armenians until that date – demanding food, clothes and many other things for the troops, more than they could give. Besides, they were taking away the leaders of the community, beating them severely and then sending back on the pretext “You keep deserters” etc.

In November, I don't remember the date; they started spreading leaflets in Turkish quarters, among Turkish officials and Kurdish villages. The contents of those leaflets or circulars that were circulated as if secretly from the Armenians, was unknown to the Armenians yet. It was only understood that there was a programme of total extermination of the Armenians that the government wanted to communicate to Turkish and Kurdish villages as soon as possible.

However, the Armenians did not pay much attention to those leaflets. But it could be felt that the attitude of the Turkish authorities towards the Armenians was gradually becoming more severe. But what could poor Armenians of Arabkir do? Their young men were already conscripted. Arabkir had already suffered serious losses before 20 April, 1915. Epidemic typhus had caused calamities in many regions including Arabkir – many young Armenian men fell victim to it.

It was Tuesday, 20 April, 1915, and we have superficially recounted until that date the way the Turkish authorities behaved towards the Armenians. Now I shall tell you about the extermination of the Armenians.

2. Extermination of the Armenians: On the 20th day they imprisoned about 200 merchants who were made exempt from conscription by paying *bedel*. We had no idea why the Turkish authorities imprisoned those Armenian merchants. Two-three weeks before that the authorities had announced that the Armenian *fedayeen* had appeared in Turkey and promised big rewards to those who would inform the authorities on their whereabouts.

On the 21st day the authorities ordered the Armenians to hand over their weapons within 5 days.

Now everything was clear. The Turkish government was perhaps concerned that the Armenians could start some kind of internal revolution or could be in damaging relations with this or that state, but the words uttered by high ranking officials betrayed that behind the collection of weapons lay the extermination of the Armenians.

The authorities did not feel they had adequate forces, so they formed groups of *chetés* from among local wealthy Turks who had to deal with Armenian matters (collect the weapons). These new groups of *chetés* moved from block to block, surrounded the houses of the Armenians and searched until the evening. Besides searching, they were beating the Armenian women, girls, youngsters and even children by the meanest methods, demanding that they bring and hand over the weapons. And if someone dared to say a word, they would immediately knock them down hitting them with their rifles or canes. In short, every Armenian shuddered from the mere word *cheté*.

Let me tell you a short episode about what the ruthless *chetés* did to an Armenian girl aged 14.

Like every day, the *chetés* were searching quarter after quarter on the pretext of finding weapons. They surrounded a quarter and knocked at a door. A girl aged 14 was living there alone: her father and mother had died two years previously and her relatives were taking care of her.

When the *chetés* entered and asked where her father's weapons were and things like that, [the girl] was confused and scared and couldn't say anything. The *chetés* made her show all the nooks and crannies of the house. The poor girl

was obliged to lead them all around the house. Three of the *chetés* accompanied her. The girl showed them all the rooms and floors of the house. When they went down to check the dark cellar with a candle, one of the *chetés* put out the candle in the girl's hand, and the other two fell upon her and closing her mouth so that she would not make a noise, satisfied their animal instincts and then went out to tell their friends about their exploits. The girl stayed in bed ill for 8 days unable to speak and died on the 8th day, definitely because of that brutal act.

Often, even if the *chetés* couldn't find any weapons, they ruined the houses of the Armenians with the mattocks and wooden spades they had with them.

When the *chetés* considered their forces insufficient, they were joined by gendarmes and policemen as well as groups of Turkish soldiers over the age of 50 and headmen. They were searching the houses already searched by other groups again and again prolonging the sufferings of the Armenians.

It was in May 1915 when the first caravan of deportees arrived: they were Armenians from Yerznka and its neighbourhood. They were coming 4 days and 4 nights and there was no end to them. They were not allowed into the town where some could hide. Many of them told us about their misfortunes and we were horrified by their stories.

Leaving aside for a while the barbarities committed, let's touch upon the life of the prisoners who were moaning under beatings and terrible torments.

Besides their daily searches, the *chetés* had their night job – beating the Armenian prisoners and subjecting them to unspeakable tortures. Many of the prisoners were made invalids through beatings and torture.

The *chetés* started their night work at 1 o'clock a.m. (Turkish time)²⁵² and continued until 8 a.m. Taking out the Armenian prisoners by turn, they put them into a wooden instrument (that was in advance constructed for the Armenians). They made at least 1,500 to 2,000 strokes at the back, feet, buttocks in a way that the poor Armenians fainted under the shower of strokes. Then they were taken out of the instrument and thrown into a dark corner of their cell. And they were successively, by turn, taken there and brought back until 8 o'clock.

They would beat the children on the knees of their fathers and when the father wept for the pain of his child, they would beat him with sticks as many times as the child. They would nail the feet of the Armenians, keep them in water for 5 days, keep them standing for 10 days with chains weighing 50 *okas*, hungry and thirsty... Everybody was subjected to these tortures and more...

They burned and picked out the beards of the priests, etc.

On 15 May, 1915, a line of 130 Armenian prisoners with long chains on their necks was taken to the Euphrates River to be murdered. But the Turkish authorities deceived the people saying they were taken to the *vilayet* on the order of the *vali*. In reality, they threw everyone into the Euphrates River and drowned them all.

How they were drowned is narrated by the Turks and the gendarmes who participated in it. Many of the corpses are still on an island of the Euphrates: water took them there.

They recounted that all 130 people were put on a decrepit boat, the captain with them, and they started rowing. When they reached the middle of the river, the captain opened the holes made in advance on the bottom of the boat, jumped into the water and swam to the other bank. The small boat that could take up to 30 people but was loaded with 130 squeezed to each other like a pyramid, started slowly sinking taking the people with it. After 10 minutes the boat was under the water with the Armenians who were deceived by the Turkish authorities that they were being taken to the Kharberd *vilayet* but were drowned in the Euphrates River.

Three days after murdering these 130 men, another group of 300 Armenians – again with strong iron chains on their necks – were deceived by the authorities that this time they were being taken to Malatia, but in reality, they too were taken to the Euphrates.

Two days after that another group of 250 Armenians, again in long iron chains was taken to the Euphrates to be murdered.

All these Armenian prisoners were taken to the Euphrates River, thrown into it and drowned while the people in Arabkir (women and children) were convinced that the Armenian men were still alive. Nevertheless, the officials, the *chetés*, the policemen later told the reality and everything that happened about murdering the prisoners.

Two weeks after that the Turkish authorities issued strict orders for the remaining Armenian families making them sell all their property since they had to move to Urfa, as they said. So the Armenian families, already without their men, started selling their property for very low prices. After 8 days the authorities issued another order for all Armenians to start off the next day under the supervision of soldiers (50 per group) and *chetés*.

It was in June, and the Armenian families of Arabkir were getting ready to go to Urfa (Mesopotamia). We started off in June and after walking for 12 days finally reached a village 3 hours to the east of Malatia. I shall tell now what happened during those days.

The 1st day we started off from Arabkir with a caravan of about 10,000 people – women, children, newlywed women, girls, old people and about 250 men. Before that, they had already converted us to Islam so that nothing would happen to us when we reached Urfa. We were accompanied by about 150 *chetés*, policemen, gendarmes and local Turks as our guards. The first day we reached a field 3 hours to the south where the caravan made a halt and we stayed there. Nothing happened there.

The 2nd day we again started off and after walking for 6 hours we again halted at a waterless field where a lot of people were suffering of thirst while the gendarmes were going to the villages, eating and drinking there and coming back.

On the 3rd day we walked for 4 hours and reached a (Kurdish) village where we managed to get some bread and other food.

On the 4th day we walked to a region most thickly populated with Kurds and halted there. The gendarmerie sergeant who was with us, ordered the Armenians to give him 8,000 gold coins to take us to Malatia; otherwise he said he would leave us on top of the mountain among the Kurdish brigands and they would go away with their troops so that the Kurds would plunder us.

He gathered the men and the boys (I was one of them and managed to escape in girl's dresses). He threatened us that if he didn't get the 8,000 gold coins by the evening, he would murder the men and leave the people on top of the mountain among the Kurds (as if they were defending us at all).

The Armenian women handed over their jewellery (earrings, rings, golden ornaments, watches, silver waist belts, heavy shawls, golden watches, etc.), all the jewellery they had with them as well as many gold coins which made not 8,000 but more than 10,000 gold coins. They took it to the gendarmerie sergeant by the evening and he released the men.

There were 2 sacks of only earrings and rings, 4 sacks full of silver waist belts, and also 4,000 gold coins – this is how they plundered us in a civilised manner.

On the next day, the 5th, we had a rest there and started off to Malatia a day later.

It was on the 6th day when the caravan moved forward and reached a desolate place on the bank of the Euphrates.

Everybody's heart was beating like mad. When we saw the Euphrates, there were blackened skeletons on its banks. They were of the recently murdered people with rags of clothes on them. They were definitely Armenians thrown into the river.

Before us Armenian families from many towns had passed by that road. There were only corpses on both sides of the road that were swollen and rotted under the sun. There were more Armenian women who were hacked by brutal Kurds and gendarmes, and the blood was still fresh on their bodies.

On the 7th day the Armenian caravan again started off to Malatia.

Oh, that was the saddest day for the caravan! We climbed up a hill. It took us 3 hours. On top of the hill they separated our men – 250 people – and took them to the Euphrates. I put on girl's clothes again and was saved. There were little children among them, aged 12, who hand-in-hand were taken to the Euphrates under the supervision of the gendarmes.

The wailing and shouts from the hill shook the nature. The wailing of the Armenian women together with the dust was rising to the heaven, to God. We walked until 5 o'clock on that day: there were no gendarmes and no *chetés* with the caravan; they all went with the Armenian men. We were advancing to the bridge called Grgkyoz together with the Kurds. Finally, hungry and thirsty, we reached Grgkyoz. The gendarmerie sentry post and a huge crowd were seen from a distance.

We halted there where countless Armenian families had halted before us, whose corpses were buried on the surface of the ground with their hands, faces and feet still visible.

In front of the sentry post there were thousands of people – women and children, also some men.

Seeing us, they approached us. Oh, they were Armenians! We asked what village they were from. They said: "From the town of Svaz. It's 30 days we are on the road." Can you imagine? They covered the 5 days' road in 30 days. And we from Arabkir, covered the 2 days' road in 11 days.

The caravan stopped by the river (Tohmah Chay). Everybody rushed to the river to slake their thirst. Many women in despair threw themselves into the river and after staying on the waves for a moment they went down the waves and the river took them away.

It was evening when the gendarmes surrounded us (like every evening) so that the Kurds would not attack us. Sometimes they would shoot at the Kurds as if they were protecting us.

We were sitting when a rumour spread that they were bringing our men. The crowd started shouting in joy, everybody stood up to see the coming men. The moon was out and illuminated the entire crowd. Footsteps were heard at a distance. Indeed, about 30 boys (Armenian) were approaching us led by gendarmes. They were our boys who were separated from the other 250 men and brought to us. They were aged 12 to 16. Now that they were back, everybody was shouting at the top of their voices looking for their loved ones. After 10 minutes they all were in their mothers' embraces, and the sounds of weeping and kisses shook the air.

We asked about our men. They said the men were taken to Kharberd on a boat. Yes, eternal Kharberd! But when we asked the gendarme who was friendly with us, he told us how everybody was shot and thrown into the Euphrates. It was clear now that they had murdered the men but deceived the boys saying they sent the men to Kharberd since they didn't take the boys to the Euphrates but left them with 3 gendarmes at half an hour's distance away. They took away all 220 men and murdered them. The boys said they had heard some shots but hadn't asked anything out of fear. And when the gendarmes returned to the boys they

threatened them saying that the men were sent to Kharberd in a boat if asked. That is why the boys said that to us.

They had told us: "We are taking you to Malatia." We were 4 hours to the north of Malatia but we waited there to be led to Malatia.

It was the 8th day. The caravan again started off. But instead of taking the road to Malatia, they drove us down the road to the river. Those from Svaz who were sitting there for 4 days stayed in their place. We walked on but were in despair since we had a last hope that they would take us to Malatia but they took us down to the river. But what was the use of that?

We walked on and finally reached a vast field surrounded with vegetation all round. One of the gendarmes showed me Malatia and said it was the dense vegetation seen far away. I looked where he showed. Malatia seemed an endless field to us and we were looking at that town in vegetation from far away.

We had moved 2 days away from Malatia. We realized they took us not to Malatia but to a different place. The caravan stopped near a village with a pure spring with cold water. The crowd that was on the road for 8 days had not drunk such cold water yet. Here we had a lot of it.

It turned out that evening that there were 2 men among us who had escaped massacre by putting on women's clothes. But the ruthless gendarmes immediately went for them and shot both Armenian men in front of their families. The whole crowd was horrified as if waiting for some decisive moment. Eventually that moment should come and everybody should be freed from that unbearable yoke.

We went to sleep. It was midnight when a hail of bullets hit us from four sides.

What was that? The crowd thought it was our last moment and started kissing each other – mother and son, sister and brother, the screaming and wailing shook the air in the middle of the night.

But what rifles were those? They were mountainous Kurds who had attacked to plunder us in the moonlit night.

Our gendarmes kind of replied to the firing of the Kurds and the Kurds fled. The gendarmerie sergeant fled too.

The situation was heart-breaking: about 100 people were killed and wounded during that 10 to 20 minute fight. The wounded were moaning. Many considered those who were killed happy since they were finally freed from that calamity.

We again collected money and gave to the gendarmes as a fee for protection.

It was morning again and we started off, this time to the south.

It was the 9th day. After walking for 2 hours, we reached a Kurdish village. There was a police sergeant there, a complete beast, who had slaughtered many Armenian families from the passing caravans taking away Armenian girls and slaughtering Armenian children. The same happened with our Arabkir caravan:

many Armenian virgins fell into the clutches of the sergeant being parted from their mothers.

We spent the night there and at midnight the gendarmes started shouting: "Quickly get up, we have to go!"

What they wanted was money again. A solid sum was collected and given to the sergeant who didn't say anything.

It was the morning of the 10th day. The caravan again started off, this time approaching the Euphrates. We couldn't understand what they wanted, what games they were playing with us – those *chetés*, gendarmes. We merely obeyed them.

The crowd was decreasing in number day after day. We were now only 8,000 with 2,000 lost on our way – those who died on the road and the men.

On that day we walked for 3 hours and reached the foothills of a desolate mountain. There was neither bread there, nor water. Actually, there was water but the gendarmes wouldn't give it to us – they drank it themselves and demanded money to let us drink.

We passed that terrible night too. It was the morning of the last –the 11th- day of the deportation. We started off walking up the road. We were again on the eastern side of Malatia but I don't know how far we were. We climbed a hill and then a huge mountain and a valley opened in front of us.

There were huge mountains covered with snow inspiring awe to the viewers. There were villages and green gardens at the bottom of the mountains. In the village and below it thousands of people swarmed small like ants.

We were taken to them. We passed villages and gorges. It was noon and after 11 days of unbearable life, the caravan for the last time stopped at the villages that we had seen from far away. It was terribly hot and our bodies were bathing in blood and sweat, our faces had lost their forms because of dust. We were like creatures out of graves.

Finally, we reached those villages where thousands of people were swarming.

Oh, they were Armenians who were deported like us and brought to that village named Firinchi that became a grave for the Armenians. We asked them when they had come. They said: "We came yesterday. We are from Togat. All the Armenian population of Togat is here." There were young people among them too who looked out of the tents at us in despair.

A little down, under the shade of the trees there were others, Armenians from Amasia. They too were looking at us in despair. A little higher, on the rocks were the Armenians of the Upper Quarter²⁵³ of Kharberd, then the caravan from Akn that had arrived before us. The Armenians of Samson and Trabzon were below them, on the verge of the gorge. There were countless people beyond them, on the other end of the field; those were the Armenians of Svaz and the neighbourhood.

There was no place for us to take. The Armenians of Arabkir came to join the crowd.

The world was in full swing and it seemed to thunder with heart-breaking voices of grief and weeping.

Finally, we too made a halt on a small area by the ploughed field.

For many months this village had embraced the Armenians from very many towns and today too it had Armenians from well-known towns on its bloody lands and it was going to eventually gobble them up.

There were human skulls all around and such decay that one would immediately feel sick. After so many hardships if I had also to stay in such a stinking place, I would probably be suffocated.

The air there smelled of blood and only blood. There were skeletons, beyond them horse carcasses, then human bodies recently murdered; then carcasses of oxen and cows that were swollen and terribly decaying after staying in the summer sun for months.

Rags, pieces of clothes on the ground showed that Armenians had passed by these roads months ago.

So the Turkish authorities had gathered the Armenian population of 7 to 8 towns there in the summer heat. I approached an old Turk, barely aged 60, who was standing there and watching us and asked him if he knew where we would go the next day. He answered that the next day too we would go by the death road. I asked him what the "death road" meant. He showed the high mountains covered with snow and said: "Can you see those mountains? Tomorrow you will climb them up by a narrow gorge. It will take you 3 hours. When you reach the top, you'll get to *Haji Petir agha*, the chief of the Kurdish tribe, who slaughters all the boys over the age of 10, plunders the women and separates good girls and young women and sends the rest, led by the Kurds, to the Euphrates – Samsat Kemisi²⁵⁴. There, those who have money to pay, will pass to the other bank; those who haven't, will be thrown into the river. Those who pass will enter the land of Urfa." The man finished his words that were so despairing for me.

I walked to my family in despair, weakened and almost bent down and told the news. Everyone wept and I slept until the evening in a kneeling position. My grandmother woke me up and told me to go and bring water. I got up but there was no force in me when I remembered the words of that bearded man. I went to bring water. I saw that the gendarmes, policemen and the *chetés* who had walked with us were returning to Arabkir. I asked them why they were going. They said: "We brought you here. Let others join you from here." I brought water and my grandmother cooked a meal for us since the shops in Firinchi were better than in the town but they were terribly expensive. They were selling everything. They were selling a tomato for 2 *kurush*, but there was everything. I have to say that the market of Arabkir had moved to the village of Firinchi.

Now we were 3 hours to the east of Malatia. The gendarmerie sentry post and the *mudur* were in that village. Every minute the *mudur* was getting orders on the telephone for the Armenians there.

Then a gendarme received an order from the *mudur* and started shouting that when the next day we climb the mountain, we will have to leave all our property there as *tekalif-i harbiye*, no one should take his property with him. The game that the Turkish authorities played on our head was a civilized plunder. But what could we say?

There were perhaps 8,000 to 10,000 Armenians who had to start off the next day going to the mountainous Kurds. Up the road was a town named Kyaghda with a *kaymakam* and soldiers who were all Kurds and were looking forward to plundering us. Many of the gendarmes were sometimes firing at the Kurds and even wounded one or two of them as if trying to show us that they were protecting us from Kurdish attacks.

It was the 11th day when Arabkir joined the Armenian population of other towns and had to go to the slaughterhouse.

All the people were asleep at night. The moon sadly rose in the east and cast a sad ray on those Armenian families. And just at that moment there was a hail of bullets from the north, from the heights of the huge mountain. The crowd screamed. All the villages and the expanses of land shuddered from the screams and wailing of the crowd. Those were the Kurds who attacked us taking advantage of the silent and quiet night hours.

The gendarme who was among us said: "They must be hungry; they want us to send the crowd up to them quickly. It has been a long while since people went up there; the Armenians have gathered here." The shooting lasted for half an hour then it stopped.

It was morning and people were all sleepy. The gendarmes got into the crowd and started shouting that those who had children – girls under 15 and boys over 10, would be taken to Malatia by the authorities to be placed in orphanages opened for them, that the carts had arrived and they would soon be taken away. All the people started wailing since they had to part with their darling children; however, many people voluntarily took their children to the carts hoping that if they had to die, at least their children could stay alive.

Finally, all the children were gathered in one place. They were about 3,000 to 5,000 (because some of them had already been transported). The caravan of orphans moved on. The children were weeping and their mothers were in tears too.

It was a heartbreaking scene (the sword was dividing even the two inseparable souls in the world – mother and child). The mother who in her home didn't put her child down from her knees, now was voluntarily giving it to the gendarmes

to be taken to the orphanage in a hope, as we said, that if we had to die, at least let them stay alive, as if they would be taken good care of in the orphanage.

It was noon. A sergeant of gendarmes came on horseback and rode around us, the Armenians of Arabkir. It seemed he knew Armenians from Arabkir. The first time he rode his horse to us and started riding around the people. When he approached us, everybody stood up. After greeting us, he asked if the gendarmes had caused much trouble to us on the road. We replied there had been no trouble and wished good health to him. After such brief conversation, he spoke about my sister: "Would you give her to me? I want to take her to Malatia." He was hardly 25 years old. "I shall keep her for me and marry her," he said. Still before that, young Turkish men came from Malatia only for girls and forcibly took away hundreds of them. What could we say? If we didn't give her voluntarily, that sergeant of gendarmes would certainly take her away from us forcibly. Besides, he promised to take my sister, my younger brother and me to Malatia; my grandmother too would come to Malatia by cart and serve in the orphanage.

The sergeant brought the carts. We parted with our compatriots and got on the carts to go to Malatia. My younger brother was already sent with the orphans. My sister and I got on the cart together and my grandmother too was supposed to come by a cart later.

We stared off to Malatia and after 3 hours finally reached Malatia – that slaughterhouse of the Armenians.

There we were converted to Islam so that we would no longer be hunted down by the authorities.

When we reached Malatia, the local Armenians were not deported yet; they were to be deported after 15 days.

The sergeant gave me to a sheikh; I stayed with him for 2 years.

I shall say nothing about my unbearable and disastrous life during those 2 years, only about my salvation.

It was on 13 January, 1917, when I started off to Kharberd fed up with the life with the sheikh. As a Muslim (identity card²⁵⁵) I had my privileges.

I started off and after 3 days reached Kharberd where I found many Armenians. I stayed there for 3 weeks, received some money from the American mission and after 3 weeks secretly started off with the Kurds from Tersim. There were 9 of us with 2 Armenians from the mountains. We were going to freedom having entrusted ourselves to fate.

We started off having chosen the motto "Death or freedom!" We walked until the morning and finally reached a branch of the Euphrates. We were free. We went to a village named Aghzunik with about 2,000 Armenians who had fled like me.

After staying there for 10 days, we started off to Yerznka with a group of 54 people. After 6 days we finally reached the Russian border of Yeriza where on 8

March I greeted the Morning of Freedom and have been, up till now, serving the education of the young to the best of my ability. And I have vowed to take holy revenge on those who destroyed the foundations of my nation.

This is what happened to me and Arabkir during the World War to which the whole Armenian population fell victim.

During the deportation I was 16, now I am 18.

Galust Galustian, native of Arabkir

21 June, 1917

Baberd

School of Orphans

P.S. When we were going to Malatia we met the caravan from Svaz that made a halt at Grgkyoz. There were about 10,000 people there. Not long after we came across Armenians from the town of Aghn (Arabkir and Akn), about 2,000 people, who were going to join the others. When we reached Malatia we heard there that the caravan started off the next day. They said that one end of the caravan was in Urfa and the other was still in the village of Firinchi.

[signed by the same person]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 487, pp. 1-28, original, handwritten.

No 130

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HOVHANNES KHANCHARLIAN ON THE HORRORS EXPERIENCED BY THE ARMENIAN POPULATION OF MALATIA, MASSACRE OF MEN AND DEPORTATION

[1917]
Karin

Days of Horror
Hovhannes Khancharlian

Brutality in Malatia

Malatia was one of the largest, most productive and most populous towns of the Kharberd governorate. It is 18 hours south-west of Kharberd. The Armenians lived there with their tidy life-style in permanent fear of the cruel Turks. Despite their small number, due to their courageous spirit, the Armenians endured all the hardships and resisted the violence with their desperate fight. There were about

15,000 Armenians and more than 40,000 Turks in Malatia. There were almost no Armenian villages; only two villages near Aghchatagh – Ansur and Mushovka, with mixed Turkish population and without a free way of life. They were slaves and prisoners of the *beys*.

It is worth touching upon the heyday of the town and introducing this forgotten corner to our brothers. In Malatia the Armenians were not able to accumulate big fortunes because they were under constant pressure; they mostly made a living with their own hands. Though there were some well-known merchants, most were craftsmen. All the crafts were in the hands of the Armenians and they were careful not to teach their craft to the Turks who made a living by cultivating the land. The Armenians also had some land but compared to that of the Turks, it was nothing. Though their land was little, they knew the best ways of cultivating it. They grew especially poppies to make opium²⁵⁶ which was a significant part of their revenue. Recently they have bought lands from the Turks and paid special attention to reaching land equilibrium. All the money received from America was invested in land.

There are some young men in America from Malatia most of whom have left their homeland for fear of conscription, threat of massacres and very few for economic hardships. They were sending enough money to their families. All these incentives afforded the Armenian population a tidy lifestyle. The Turks and the Kurds were looking at the Armenian lifestyle with envy.

There was considerable progress in term of intellectual culture. The number of schools for both sexes was growing in an unprecedented manner, they were developing and with every passing year their curricula became closer to the newest pedagogical methods. We had 6 schools for boys, 5 for girls, 2 kindergartens with about 1,800 to 2,000 young children and teenagers studying there. All the expenses of the schools were paid by the people without any difficulty. Along with Armenian and Turkish, the students were taught French and English to be ready to enter colleges. All the teachers had college education. We had two library reading-halls regularly attended by the young people. Besides books in Armenian and Turkish, there were also selected works from English and French literature. From year to year the number of books was growing by geometric progression.

The Turks were looking at our economic and educational advantages with hostile eyes. The topic of their conversations was the Armenian massacre – when they will again have a chance to plunder, destroy and thus satisfy their brutal passions. Several times every year there were rumours about the massacres coming from the official and non-official announcements of high ranking Turkish officials that shattered our peace and quiet. If any Armenian had a dispute with a Turk, everyone would attack the poor Armenian and besides reproaching him, threaten all the Armenians with unspeakable curses.

This much about the past life. Let's now pass on to the main point.

As has been mentioned, Armenians were under constant pressure which reached its peak after the declaration of the Pan-European War.

When martial law was declared for the first time and mobilisation was set in motion, from that day on war tax (*tekalif-i harbiye*) was imposed. A special committee started requisitions: they were taking away wheat, rice, ghee, kerosene, sugar and other food; they were also taking ready-made clothes from the shops upon the pretext of supplying the army. It was a disaster for the Armenians. They searched all the stalls, shops and houses taking away anything they liked. The diocesan *locum tenens* complained about such lawlessness but Sergeant Chavit turned him out saying: "Go complain to Nubar *pasha* to intervene with England and France to send investigators. You are traitors to the state, you will see!" An unprecedented plunder started in this way. On the other hand, the young were conscripted: it was a different horror. We knew that the conscripted young men could be harmed. How could one lie next to his centuries-old enemy without the fear of being strangled? How could one go the battlefield without thinking that the Turk next to you would first aim his rifle at you? The effect of thousands of such doubts was that the Armenians started applying to their purse: without losing any time, those who had money paid the legal compensation to be released; those who had no money sold what they had to be released from the hellish life; so the helpless were put under arms realising quite well that it was impossible to return to their homes alive.

The discrimination was obvious from the very first day. The registration of Armenian soldiers was delayed and they were lodged in basements. The food of the Armenian soldier belonged to the *chavush*. They were severely beaten for minor faults. After military training, Armenian soldiers were forced to work for hours, etc. We eye-witnessed all this but we couldn't complain. Who would listen to us?

The confiscations stopped by the order of the authorities but that was only for the Armenians. The Turks could easily make confiscations from the Armenians. The Turkish labourer ploughing the land of the Armenian would appropriate the whole harvest condemning the poor landlord to hunger. Remittances from America stopped too, causing a public economic crisis among the Armenian population. Life was insecure, his abdomen was empty, his household was poor – how could an Armenian soldier move forward? Naturally, he was always looking back. And so it was. Those who found a way out deserted and escaped home. Armenians were not the only deserters. Most deserters were Kurds who on the day following their arrival would look back towards home. Compared with Armenians, there were 10 times more Turkish deserters but ours struck everybody's eye. The authorities ordered to burn the houses of the deserters. First, they set alight the houses of two Armenian deserters, then they attacked

Aghchatagh because of some rebellion. There were no deserters left; they all surrendered and were subjected to terrible tortures and were prosecuted. News of their deaths started coming one after another; not one of them was killed in battle, all of them died of illnesses. The reason was clear. Some returned home dying and after a few days left forever because of walking for days being seriously ill. Those who came on leave were like skeletons with bodies covered with louse bites.

The postal service started pressure for the first time banning correspondence in Armenian. Censors found secret meaning behind the most simple sentences and threw many Armenians into prison with the shortest conviction being 5 years imprisonment. This was followed by disarming Armenian soldiers. It was already obvious that something was being prepared for the Armenians. But did it have to be a massacre? It was hardly imaginable.

In April 1915, there was an unprecedented mobilisation: all conscripts, with or without a military card, were to report in 3 days. There was no ethnic discrimination in the order. After some time it was clear that the order was for the Armenians. The gendarmes and policemen entered houses and tying up the men found there, took them to the barracks while many of them had paid a compensation or had just come out of the rotting dens and were still on the verge of death. There was no medical examination; they were all sent to construct roads from the day they were caught. There was no end to searches; instead of going down, their number was growing. Breaking into houses at night, they were searching for soldiers; searching for soldiers was a pretext since they were searching also in small boxes and liquids to find people. They took anything they liked. They pocketed the money they found. There occurred also some impertinent acts. Little by little, they reached the young men of Akn and Arabkir. Without making them wait for long they sent them to road construction. The construction site was a highway leading to Kharberd, 3 hours south-east of Malatia.

The horror started penetrating our bones, especially because those days the telegraphic news presented the Armenians in a suspicious light. For example, information that Armenian rebels had closed mountain passes and were blocking the advancement of troops. Two gold coins were promised to those who would point to such Armenians. The Turkish society started looking at Armenians with hostile eyes. Every day fabrications were spread about Armenian brutalities. All that originated from the *Ittihad* club. The society believed it and was filled with hatred.

In the beginning of May individual and thorough searches started. Everything written in Armenian was taken away and always considered dangerous, and their owners were imprisoned. Books published in the period of despotism⁸³ by the

⁸³ Refers to the period of the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid.

permission of the education agency were considered dangerous and punishment was administered. A lot of people were imprisoned for owning books on arithmetic and grammar. Fortunately, we managed to hide or get rid of dangerous things between dozens of searches. This was followed by collection of weapons.

On 7 May a town crier announced that Armenians and Turks had to hand over their weapons to the authorities, that the government needed them for self-defence. A few Turks handed over their weapons from the one side of an administrative office and got them back from the other side, while the Armenians were in confusion and didn't know what to do. They handed over a few broken hunting rifles and started waiting. Two days later, on 9 May, all the Armenian public officials were arrested as well as the prominent people of the town – the diocesan *locum tenens*, members of the District Assembly, heads of political parties and wealthy people. In prison, at first they were treated politely, they were told in a friendly manner that all the weapons had to be handed over for the defence of the motherland, swearing that there was no other reason for the collection of the weapons. The prisoners held a meeting and decided to ask for permission to go out to collect the weapons. These ideas were accepted quite favourably. Four of the prisoners were let out promising to release the others too when the weapons were handed over. Those who were released visited the houses one by one, collected the weapons and took them to the administrative office. It has to be said that the best weapons were kept hidden. Instead of releasing the rest of the prisoners, the authorities captured them too. The same day they started arresting ordinary people at the market; they went to residential quarters and arrested all the men – young men, teenagers, boys and the old. About 1,300 men were arrested. Beatings started: first the prominent men were severely beaten, then all the prisoners indiscriminately. They took them out to the prison yard, made them lie on the ground and started beating them until the victim couldn't utter a sound; they would throw him into the water, then take him out and resume beating. To be released, the victim had to promise either to hand over his weapon or give away someone else. It was impossible to endure the beating and since there was a hope that those who had handed the weapons over would be released, those who had weapons promised to hand them over after the first several strokes. They were sent home accompanied by a policeman. If the weapon was handed over, the policeman took it and went back. They were freed for two, maximum, three days. Then the authorities took them to the prison again and beat them demanding more weapons or information on places where dynamite, bombs, arms caches or cannons were kept. The poor people in despair allowed the beatings to continue until their last breath.

Ter Stepan Paghtasarian, a Catholic priest, was the first victim of the beatings. They took the ill-fated priest to his house and after severely beating him in front of his family, led him to prison. They beat him so much on the way that on

reaching the prison he breathed his last breath. They threw his body in front of his house. His body was a horrendous sight: he was completely blue from the top of his head to his toe-nails; his lips were cracked, many of the teeth were broken: in one night, a living priest had changed into an unrecognisable corpse.

Very rarely did they send home those who were on the verge of death. What brutality! My God! The whole body was swollen, wounded on every part, with countless bruises. The family barely took care of him for a few days and, here, the police had come to take him.

There was a time that the police were making arrests at night: they were breaking into the houses, taking out the men and after beating them severely in the house, were taking them to the nearest guard house. There they beat them again and only after that took them to prison. They had absolutely no mercy: the weeping and entreaties of the little children of the house made them more ferocious.

The beatings allowed the Turks to collect most of the weapons Armenians had. Many Armenians bought factory-made weapons from the Turks and handed them over to get some temporary respite. Many Turks would promise to sell weapons but would disappear after getting the money. Mihran Tivtelian's mother bargained with a Turk for a Mauser for 25 Ottoman gold coins to bring Mihran out of the prison. She saw the weapon and went home to bring the money. After an hour she paid the 25 gold coins, took the weapon wrapped in cloth and hurried to the administrative office. They opened the cloth there and saw a piece of wood in the form of a Mauser. The situation was clear: they called the owner of the wood, took the money from him and sent him away. After this incident, the authorities took strict measures against the Turks selling weapons as a result of which the price for a *kapaghi*²⁵⁷ rose to 100 gold coins. Those who couldn't find a weapon gave 50 gold coins to the police commissioner: it was considered that they had handed over the weapon and were released. Were it not for the traitor among us, they wouldn't have collected any weapons in this way. There were people, though very few, who dazzled with the hope of freedom pointed at those who had weapons giving away the type and number of the weapon. Stepan Ter-Paghtasarian's son (who was a Turkish *mudur*) was the worst among them, who showed one by one the party members, the place of library books and party correspondence, etc. The Turks put aside the ordinary weapons, collected 114 prohibited factory-made weapons and ten-shot revolvers from the Armenians, added some more from their arsenal, took pictures and sent them to Constantinople²⁵⁸. No bombs were found since they had been liquidated in advance.

Beatings stopped at the end of May. Sixty people had died under beating and terrible torture. Manuk Okhantsian's head was burned, his teeth were pulled out, his tongue was cut off, his feet were shod. Khosrov Keshishian couldn't endure

the torture and took poison to die, but the butchers gave him an antidote and murdered him under torture. Napoleon Bonapartian threw himself down from the upper floor to commit suicide but stayed alive and was condemned to more torture, etc. At the end of May it was rumoured that the cases of those imprisoned would be investigated and the innocent would be released. The women were, on the one hand, taking food to the prison twice a day, on the other hand, they were appealing to influential Turks. The same answer was given everywhere that in a few days the prisoners would be released.

Let's leave the prison and go to the Armenian soldiers working on the roads. Armenians gathered from Malatia, Akn and Arabkir were obediently working in the heat of the day and enduring the reproaches of the Turks. The assigned task was so much and so hard that they had to work also some part of the night. The whip was permanently in use and no food was given. They were about 1,200 young and vigorous men, aged 20-35. The stricter the prison conditions in the town, the more their torture. At the end of May everybody was searched upon the pretext of a theft: no weapons were found- only several letters, a Bible and a Gospel which were considered not dangerous and their owners were just beaten.

The government started conscripting into *cheté* groups and arming the Turks who had been imprisoned for committing crimes. They started conscripting also the citizens. The Turks who were terrified of going to the army, joined the *chetés* by groups. The group was headed by Muhammet *bey*, the son of Hashim *bey*, member of the Ottoman Parliament. The *chetés* did not recognise the law; they would freely break into Armenians houses snatching anything that was valuable. One day there was a rumour that the *chetés* were leaving. Indeed, they left one day in the afternoon with 75 Armenians following them. The next day it was rumoured that the Armenians working on the roads were murdered. Some confirmed it, others said that they were taken to some other place after they finished their work in that area. The cruel reality had become a reality. That day several mothers started off before dawn to go to the workplaces. When only several hundred paces were left [before they reached their destination], a young man ran to them and told them about the murder of the labourers by the *chetés*. Then he obtained a bed sheet from the women, wrapped himself in it and came to the town. At daybreak the town was surrounded from all sides. Any man or woman who tried to go out of the town was arrested. There were spies at every corner of the Armenian quarters. Soldiers were placed around the town within view of each other. I forgot to mention that Turks aged 45 to 50 were conscripted merely to commit atrocities. When the massacre and deportation decreased, these formations were dissolved.

Here is how the road labourers were murdered. Normally there were 10 guards supervising them but on those days their number grew to 40. If the *chetés* appeared and started approaching the Armenians, the policemen would take up

positions against the *chetés*, the commander of the labourers would approach the chief of *chetés*, Muhammet *bey*, Hashim *bey's* son, and they would have a short conversation. The *chetés* would continue their way, go the village of Chiftlik and hide behind trees. The commander would order the Armenians to get into their tents to stay away from the danger. One or two policemen were assigned to each tent to tie up the labourers. They took 214 bound Armenians to the village of Pari and in the afternoon murdered them with thousands of tortures. The 75 men who followed the *chetés* were put into the Chiftlik inn. They surrounded the inn and waited for the darkness to fall. When darkness fell, they started tying them up in one line to take them out of the village and murder them. When they took out the poor men, they realised what awaited them and sat on the road refusing to move. The villains stabbed dozens of the labourers to make them move but it didn't help. Then they murdered them all with pistols, swords, stones and pieces of glass. Only a man from Arabkir managed to escape and return to the town with the women. Most of the labourers were taken to Izoghlu to be thrown into the Euphrates. First, they were put into the mosque of the village of Birot. In the evening four people were taken to the *mudur*. The *mudur* told them that on the order of the authorities they would reap wheat, and so that the peasants would not rob their clothes and thus to avoid court action, it was decided to undress everyone, record everything and keep until they returned. So they undressed them by deception, tied them to each other and threw them into the Euphrates. In this way they drowned dozens of people. The rest guessed that something was wrong. When the policemen came to take more people, they resisted, demanding the return of their friends. Their demand couldn't be fulfilled. The policemen tried to take them out by force but couldn't. After that the Armenians started breaking the wooden parts of the mosque to set fire to it making a lot of noise. The 40 policemen gathered together and fired several times into the mosque. The noise stopped and deadly silence fell upon the place until morning. At daybreak the noise restarted and the prisoners took action to start a fire. The policemen were terrified of the unarmed Armenians and didn't dare to go in and slaughter everyone. They surrounded the mosque and started firing from the windows. It continued for half an hour and then... it was over; only death rattles broke the silence from time to time. Even that was enough to terrify the villains; they didn't dare to go in. Instead, standing at the door they invited those who had survived to convert to Islam. Those who were wounded or had hidden under the corpses hurried to take the opportunity. They were pulled aside and murdered. The rest of the labourers' group were taken to the winter-abode near Old Malatia (Eskisheher) called Karmir Kyol. I don't know the details.

Nobody in the town believed in that massacre. The Turks swore a thousand times calling the news a lie. The Armenians didn't want to believe the loss of their loved ones, tried to convince and be convinced that it was a lie. After several

days letters started coming: one wrote from a village; the other from Kharberd, etc. Probably they were forced to write letters before they were murdered.

All this lulled us. The beatings had stopped. The prisoners started to encourage those outside that investigations would start after a few days and they would be released. These hopes became stronger after the authorities released in one day 40 children and 20 young men considered innocent. On the same day the authorities announced that the investigation of the cases of the Armenians had started, that all the Armenians had to be examined in five days. If after those five days anyone was caught without a Certificate of Inculpability, he would be punished. The searches started again. Those who had Inculpability Certificates were not arrested. This plan worked: Armenians started surrendering voluntarily to be investigated and recognised inculpable. After five days they arrested also those who had been released.

A town crier announced that the town would hold illuminations and celebrations for three days. The Armenians were interested more than anyone else in those celebrations: some thought there would be a pardon; others were expecting a blow from the government and some others – a reconciliation. All the three guesses were supposed to bring about an improvement. The only event that rose concern was that the *chetés* came back. The cruel reality was soon revealed: it turned out to be a devilish celebration. There was a construction brigade composed of the Armenians who were working in the Interé gorge, an hour's distance from the town. They were bringing water for the barracks. On the second day of the celebration they were taken to work as usual. They noticed stains of blood on the road and suspected something. They reached the edge of the Interé gorge and saw that the water of the stream had changed into blood and there were armed *chetés* a little away. They had no more force to reach the tents and sat down where they were. The supervising *chavush* brought the brigade back. On the second day they were again taken to work. Hakob Syukkerian drove one of the draught animals towards Chil Hashim's house and upon the pretext of catching it ran after it behind the house. He saw 500 corpses there thrown in the winter-abode. He brought with him also numerous letters, stamps, prayer beads, etc. and told the reality to his friends who started wailing. After that the women were forbidden to take food to the prison: they were told that no one was left there, that everybody was taken away to reap wheat. We didn't want to believe that our fathers and brothers were butchered, but it was impossible not to believe: it had been seen. The rumour started to terrify everyone. In despair, people started making enquiries here and there. The women were doing that and the hidden men moved to more covert hideouts. The Turks were swearing that nothing had happened. To avoid telling lies some of them were saying that only a very small number of party members had been killed and the others had been taken to reap wheat and that the authorities would exile also the families of the

guilty. The rumours of deportation were like salt on our wounds. The women would bring different news every day: that some would be pardoned, that only the Armenians of Malatia would be released since they had no bombs, etc. The game with the labourers worked here too: some had written that they needed money, others were asking for clothes and because the signatures were true, we believed them.

We were lulled by these conflicting opinions only for a few days. One Monday in the beginning of June, several high ranking officials with a town crier in front of them announced the order on deportation. Here is the announcement: "Listen Armenians! The government ordered that after three days you should move towards Urfa and Ter Zor with your movable possessions without incurring any harm. You will find your men who have been sent there in advance. Those who wish can sell their property in order to buy animals," etc. We stopped worrying about the prisoners; now it was the turn of helpless women and delicate children to be deported. Those of us who were hiding had only three days to find a way to survive. Weeping, shouting, suicides had become ordinary things. The next day the town crier announced that the authorities had granted a privilege to those young Armenians who would volunteer for the construction brigade: their families would not be deported. That announcement gave rise to doubts, but as they say, a drowning man will catch at a straw; many men started joining the brigade voluntarily by paying bribes.

The construction brigade worked in three sites: 1. At the Interé gorge to bring water for the barracks; 2. At the construction of a meeting-hall for the Ittihad Party; 3. At Arep Osman's factory making clothes for the soldiers. It was considered that the hope for freedom was baseless, so we just hoped to last for a couple of months and, who knows, maybe there would be a pardon. From the very first step it turned out to be exploitation: they demanded a bribe of 10 gold coins from each applicant. But who would care for money when the life was endangered? We, 400 men who had been hidden, gave the bribe and were enlisted. I was included in the 1st group so I eye-witnessed many horrible scenes of deportation. We became prisoners: the work was more than required, and beyond our ability, and we were mentally destroyed, unable to move a branch.

Three days passed and there was no deportation, which arouse all manner of speculation, all of them about the reasons for pardoning. Every day there was new information that lasted only an hour. Women set to work: they visited all the Turks who were somehow prominent, fell down at their feet asking them to intervene and came home believing their promises. They had no rest – they were running from one to another thinking of new tricks to awaken their conscience. One day they would put their newborn babies to the feet of the chief of the *chetés* asking for mercy; the next day they would embrace the legs of some chief's horse. And if something didn't work, they would fall on the ground, put ashes on

their faces and pray – pray begging, pray complaining and even cursing. Nobody listened to them; the Turks didn't open their doors; God too went deaf. The most heart-breaking appeal was to the German mission. The most courageous women gathered and went to the German buildings. At first, the door was not opened. They knocked at the door for several hours and wept. Finally, the door opened, and Mr Christoffel's⁸⁴ sister⁸⁵ appeared. The Armenian women asked her to intervene with the Turkish authorities for the sake of Christ. The German woman furiously shouted: "You had to think about it earlier! You shouldn't have worshipped the Russians; you shouldn't have treated the Turks brutally. Now get out of here! You are damned! Go and die!" The Armenian women raised their heads: "We wish you to have the same as us," they shouted and went out. The women were almost always fasting: they didn't breastfeed their babies, they didn't even feed the animals that didn't work. Besides praying at daytime, they prayed another three times at night, read the Epistle of St Cyprian²⁵⁹ and especially wept for God to pity them.

One day when the wailing had just stopped, shouting started from the four sides of the town. They were calls for God. The shouting spread and all the Armenians instinctively started participating in it. We didn't know the reason; we just felt that those were critical moments. There had been an attack – that was all we knew. The amazing thing was that there was no sound of arms. After half an hour the shouting stopped. The Armenian quarters had been attacked from four points to check if Armenians would put up a resistance and shoot. The policeman managed to catch 15 young Armenians and stopped the shouting, driving off the attacking disguised policemen.

It was rumoured that the Kharberd and Sebastia deportees were coming. After several days of persistent rumours, it happened. In the morning all the *chetés*, the mayor of the town, the wealthy Turks and the officials went to meet them. After plundering them properly on the road, they brought them into the town, to the barracks square, separated men and women, left the boys below the age of 10 with their mothers, put the men into the barracks and the women and children into the Chiftlik state barns and the market inns. They sent us – the constructing brigade – home since they needed the barracks. The next morning when we came, the barracks were empty: they had murdered them at night. They had divided their victims into three parts taking the first group to Tash Depé, the second group to the winter-abode of Old Malatia and the third to the well of Kyuntipek. The authorities were trying to make criminals out of the Turks and

⁸⁴ Ernst Jakob Christoffel (1876-1955). He was the founder and longtime head of the German Christian Mission in the Orient. Based in Malatya, he ran the Bethesda Mission Station for the Blind.

⁸⁵ Hedwig Christoffel.

the Kurds, sweeten their mouths with trophy so that they had no mercy for the Armenians and were terrified of the Russians whom the Armenians supported. That's why they were sending the Armenians to all the villages inviting the villagers to plunder them.

Two hours after the Kharberd deportees, the deportees from Sebastia reached the town: they consisted of adult women, old people and very young children. They were placed at the market inns. The deportees were surrounded by soldiers who would allow no contact with local Armenians. They were deprived even of drinking water. The pregnant women were asking for nurses but the soldiers were cursing them. They stayed in the town for several days experiencing all kinds of torture: the beautiful women were immediately abducted and none of the rest could avoid rape. Raping was the easiest thing: any Turk could give 5 *kurush* to the guard, get in and... Oh, the barbarians! There was another search on the day of their departure. No place was left unsearched. I have witnessed how they made women take off their underwear to look for money, because it was done publicly.

After that deportees started arriving from all over – all naked, hungry and thirsty. The Turks' job was plundering and abducting. I know a Turk who had taken away 200 girls from among the deportees, kept them for a day and then turned them out. The deportees were sent to the village of Firinchi where they stayed for a few days and then were sent to Kekhté-Samsat or Atieaman-Samsat.

Of course, everyone has his own story. I shall just tell a few stories and pass on. It is worth listening to these stories that I witnessed to have an idea what tortures the deportees were subjected to. A group of deportees from Sebastia refused to pay money demanded by the policemen. The policemen threatened to take the children away from their mothers and burn them before their eyes. The women again resisted. At that time the policemen took two babies away from their mothers, pulled one by the legs and tore the baby into two, then put the other baby into the fire and burned it. Horrified by the scene, the women immediately paid the 200 gold coins. Burying the dead fell to my lot. Another case: ten paces from our workplace a woman had labour pains on the road, she immediately sat down and had a baby there. The baby languished because of the heat and started opening and closing its mouth without uttering a sound. The mother asked for a droplet of water to drop into the newborn's mouth. None of us moved, the policeman had forbidden us. The mother lost her hope and spat into the newborn's mouth to cool him. After some time she made a movement to stand up to continue her way but couldn't. The policemen started beating her with butts of their rifles to make her walk. In vain. They beat her to death next to the corpse of her baby.

One day a girl ran shouting from the village of Firinchi. All her body was in blood. Her breasts were in cuts, she had been stabbed twice on her shoulders.

She was completely naked, she was trying to cover her nudity with her hands. It made our blood creep, but what could we do? We gave her a cover and were about to talk to her, when a policeman took her away but not out of our view and murdered her.

I have witnessed thousands of such cases. Like dogs, without any moral regrets they openly implemented their will. The deportees were arriving from all directions on carriages, mules, donkeys and carts with some supplies. Upon approaching Malatia they were plundered and searched at thousands of places and left stripped naked, also deprived of their tender babies, beautiful girls and elderly mothers. Plundering, abduction and rape occurred everywhere. However, there were centres. Most people were plundered and murdered at a place near Malatia called Kirk Kyo. Men were strangled here or thrown into the Tokma River; the villains who wanted to abduct girls were gathering here; greedy Kurds were gathering here. The second centre was Old Malatia. The victims were taken to the local winter-abode; the babies were taken away from their mothers here. The third centre was the town itself. No boys over the age of 10 could leave the town. It was here that they selected those who were to be thrown into the Kyuntupek well and Pekler Teresi abyss. Here they were taking away the carriages, carts, mules, etc. putting their property into the state barns and sending the stripped deportees to Firinchi. Firinchi was the last destination and also the free market of all hardships. Here the policemen were selling girls, killing the women for minor offences like daring to approach the water. The whole plain of Firinchi is a cemetery. One can see skulls of unburied and unclaimed corpses all around. On the road to Kyakhta, on the left side of Nal Tyoken, human fat flowing from stacked corpses became proverbial... The women and girls to be thrown into the Euphrates were taken from here. The children and babies to be rolled down the slope on the road to Chanpek were taken from here. It is worth remembering also the village of Argha where they slaughtered the first caravan from Kharberd, the first and the second caravans from Sebastia as well as 120 young labourer soldiers. In the village of Sirkiv they massacred the second caravan from Malatia and those deported in October 1915 and on 16 February and 2 March, 1916.

Hunger day after day reaped those who reached the destination. Even water was sold for money. A woman from Tokat said she had changed her donkey for a bowl of water mixed with blood. An Assyrian woman brought from Ter Zor told about the hungry people from Kharan: on their way from Urfa to Kharan, in the desert, they didn't have even grass to eat so they ate the bodies of their dead children.

The authorities ordered to bring Armenian orphans and open orphanages and take care of them. For this project to succeed, thousands of babies, aged 1-8, were removed from their mothers' bosoms and put into 5 Armenian churches,

the conference hall, schools and big houses. The local Armenians, who were not deported yet, started kidnapping the children. There were about 4,000 babies in Armenian families. They were partially lucky, since they slept in beds and had something to eat, though the policemen were always hunting for them. The Turks and Kurds also took away the children – they were privileged. There are now about 15,000 children in the Turkish families in Malatia. New deportees soon took the place of those who were taken away. According to reliable sources, about 40,000 children were brought there.

It was terrible to see those children who were uncared for. Though they had brought also women, they could hardly take care of themselves and their children.

Many children couldn't even talk, walk or eat. They couldn't reach the spring to drink water or indicate that they were hungry. It was obvious that they would live not more than three days. All orphanages were turned into filth breeders: one had to close his nose at a distance of half an hour not to faint of stink. There wasn't a rag to lie on; it was a dump, a bedroom and a prison in one. In addition, they didn't give food. At first they were giving one *tayin* (50 grams of bread) to each child but after several days it was considered too much and the same amount was given to two children. The natural consequence of all this – an epidemic – started its ravage. Ten carriages of corpses of children were taken out and thrown in the pits near Poz Tepé without covering them with earth. They tried to stop the epidemic and took all the sick ones to where the corpses were. Every day they were throwing out corpses and sick people, but instead of diminishing, the disease was getting stronger threatening the population of the town. After some time the houses of the Turks and *muhachirs* became breeders of the epidemic. There even appeared a saying that those who plunder the Armenians would die.

At the end of July the authorities told the population to settle their accounts with the Armenians. First of all, the authorities started collecting taxes. A policeman and a gendarme were going from house to house, presenting the debt and demanding the money. If the family had no money, they would severely beat the woman and make her find the money from somewhere. They didn't take anything but money for the government, but they took other things for themselves. Simultaneously all the Turks who had some financial issues with Armenians started settling them. Many of them owed money to the Armenians, but never mind. They would say that some Armenian owed them something, they would take a policeman and go to the Armenian's house, demand the money and if there was no money, they would take some household things against debt. It was a legal and open plunder: merciless people did everything. Conscientious people would come too, demand their promissory note, tear the bookkeeping

records since they were concerned that the records would get into the hands of the government and they would come and demand their money from the Armenians. And the more conscientious, instead of taking by force, would come in and quietly explain that they would be deported and murdered, and the government would get everything. It would be better if they gave their house to their friends who would go to that house and protect it. They would persuade, even by digging out the buried things and taking them home. Very few would take care of those who lived in the house. It would be wrong to say that nobody took care of the Armenian children and women. In the first period, a lot of people were kept but when the deportation started they handed them over one by one to the government to get rid of them as soon as possible, to enjoy the plundering without pricks of conscience. Others didn't want to leave the job to the authorities, they murdered them themselves.

I think it was 1 August, when they searched the houses again and found a lot of Armenians, including my father. I barely managed to escape hiding in the water tank; the same day I went and joined my construction brigade I had fled from. The same night the town crier announced that the Armenians would be deported the next day. Also, there were rumours that the labourers' brigade was shot. In the grey dawn of the morning, my mother and other people came to visit and broke the grievous news. In the morning they had surrounded the Peyuk Mustafa *pasha*, Kyuchuk Mustafa *pasha* and Niazi neighbourhoods, in other words the quarters belonging to the parish of Holy Resurrection church parish and the deportation started. The authorities harnessed carts confiscated from other Armenians and loading them sent to Syurkiv. The cane, the whip and the sword were over the heads of the wretched Armenian children and women. The smart ones left their houses and fled to the central quarters hoping for something better. The deportation was going on. The houses of the deported were sealed and a guard was placed there; the same was done with the houses of those who had fled. Only houses belonging to members of the construction brigade as well as those who managed to bribe the deportation officials, were left free. The next day they besieged and took over the area between *Chavush* oghli and Kharaza quarters and on the third day occupied the area from Kharaza to Market quarters. Villains, greedy people and those who enjoyed watching brutal scenes occupied the streets on those days. They would abduct a girl here, rob the food supplies of some deportees there; they would beat a woman here and empty some house there, etc.

One of the biggest problems for the deportees was how to carry money with them. Searches took away everything, especially money but it was necessary to take money with them, to find some way out. Sewing up money in a corner of clothes was the most widespread but also the most dangerous method: the policemen knew quite well how to search bodies. It was equally dangerous to

hide the money in shoe soles. Some would keep money in envelopes in their hands and when halting somewhere they would bury it underground and sit on it and if the search was done on the road, they could throw it in the dust and later recover it. The policemen learned that trick too. Some would put money into unleavened dough and make bread, but bread was robbed too. No matter how smart the deportees were, it was impossible to save the money. And if they managed to save it by some miracle, it was impossible to live on it for long. Should they use it for water, to satisfy the demands of the policemen, to hire a place to sit on the mountain or to pay for the bread more expensive than diamonds? That was why the few people who escaped the sword perished one after the other. Hardly had the first deportees reached Sirkiv when news started to spread. They were surrounded in the Pekler Teresi gorge, two hours' distance from the town, and plundered and some of them were murdered. The survivors continued on their way. At Gyozené they met the Kurds from Aghchatagh. The policemen permitted the Kurds to do whatever they wished. The Kurds took away the girls and young women putting the rest to the sword. The policemen returned being relieved of the trouble of accompanying the deportees.

After 8 days the second deportation started which lasted for three days. The households of those from the construction brigade were again exempted. They gathered all those who escaped from previous deportations or whose deportation had somehow been postponed. There was not a single ox cart this time; everyone was on foot. Besides, instead of taking them towards Sirkiv, they took them to Firinchi and mixed them with other deportees and from there to Samsat through the Kyakhté route.

On 4 August we were as usual taken to the Interé gorge to work. In the evening when we came back and met our mothers at the pottery garden, we suddenly saw that we were surrounded by policemen. Everything was over, we were already in the convulsions of death; it was like having fire in our skulls. Several policemen drew us up in a line and took to the barracks and from there to the administrative office. Two other sections of the same brigade were already taken there before us. We waited in the yard for an hour then were taken to the prison. The guards at the first door of the prison searched us for knives but took away purses, beads, rings etc. At the second door we were searched again; this time they took away cigarette cases, handkerchiefs, etc. Fortunately, we were passing through very quickly if there was no money on us. We entered the outer garden, then passed through five doors and entered the inner yard. There were criminal Turks and Kurds who were watching us with exultation. We were led to the rooms called Coal-Room and Stable by the criminals. A guard was counting and letting us in. They put 150 Armenians into the first room, then opened the second room and put 130 there adding them to the 20 Armenians who had been there already for several days. Further 70 Armenians were put in the corridors

and the remaining 50 in a room called *Katil tam* (Criminal's House). In all, there were 400 of us. We were standing there confused, looking around. Some asked to sit, but how? There was hardly enough room to stand. Finally, somehow we managed to sit on each other. The door of the prison was closed; we had to take care of our natural needs right there. The air was so foul that one could faint; there was only one window to the yard and three quarters of it was closed with wooden and iron bars. We had no lamp. We became drowsy rather than slept. We would wake up when someone stretched his leg over our mouths. In the morning the guard opened the door of the prison, made us take out the rubbish and gave half an hour to take care of our natural needs. Hardly had 40 people washed themselves, when he drew those in the yard in and closed the door. Those with experience said it was done to get money. We raised money and collected barely 20 *kurush* which didn't satisfy the guard. We raised more money and collected 5 *kurush*. The guard was convinced money was scarce and opened the door. Now we were able to go up to the yard. For the first time I met my father who was imprisoned 12 days before me. None of us spoke; there was a tear drop in his eyes and a tear drop in mine. We stayed silent but understood each other. The time of the brigands had come. When the Turkish prisoners saw a more or less decent coat or jacket on someone, they would immediately make him take it off; the guards didn't say anything since they had their share. Several criminals would join up, one of them would stay by the door to the Armenians' room and the others would start plundering so that by the evening many were without their shoes, hats, belts etc. Most of all I was embarrassed seeing how those worthless and guilty Turks were walking freely and we, the innocent, were waiting for death. There was no food from home on the second day; that was a sign that there was a deportation. By noon some things were cleared out: the families of those from the construction brigade were deported but the authorities had separated the craftsmen and their families were exempted. On that day the families from the Market quarter up to the Ponchuklians' street were deported. The rest for reason unbeknownst to us were not. It was rumoured that there was a pardon. The same day teenagers from Sebastia were brought to the prison (they were coachmen) and put into a separate room; they were promised bread. In the evening I went to sleep a little early but I woke up at 3-5 o'clock from an unusual turmoil: I saw how all my friends were looking out of the only window with horrified eyes. In the yard the policemen were tying up the boys from Sebastia. Definitely, after a few minutes our turn would come. Many of them, when taken to be tied up, were crying "Mother!" They started murdering them. They would put a rope with a loop on their necks, tighten it and pull them up. The victim would kneel without uttering a sound. Another policeman would hit the head of the victim with the blunt side of an axe and it was over... There were only corpses lying on the ground... They untied the ropes and took them away,

then they started taking out the corpses and putting them into carts. We took breath; only in the morning did we feel pain for not having died and rid ourselves of everything.

Rumours of a pardon continued persistently but its limits had narrowed down— Catholics, Protestants, Syrians²⁶⁰ were pardoned, the names of the people belonging to those denominations were recorded. Fifty families of craftsmen of Armenian Apostolic church were going to be released. Bribe again became topical. Those who had 25 gold coins could be registered as craftsmen and get out of prison.

On 14 August no food came from home; the deportation had started. This time there were no craftsmen, Catholics or Protestants. Those who were captured and put into prison brought the news that not even a fly called Armenian was left in the town. All the Armenians were deported. Some predicted that it would be our last night. The newcomers had money – they gave us 3 gold coins and we bought grapes, bread and cheese. At noon we had a meal together, then we danced, at the end we wept; the old prayed and administered a sacrament with bread. We were ready for death. The evening fell. The smallest movements outside would make us shudder. We waited until dawn. They didn't come. No food was brought the next day either, and we had no money. We were really hungry. There was news in the evening that the police *mudur* from Kharberd had come as an investigator and had taken all the Armenians to the Almaluoghlu's field and separating Armenian and Latin Catholics, Protestants, Assyrians, had brought them back as well as 50 families of Apostolic Armenians. There were about 40 Protestants and Catholics in the prison. They started hoping.

In the evening of 15 August, the police *mudur* came to the prison, took everyone out into the yard and asked if anyone could make poppy oil. That was my father's job. My father came out. A few others and I followed his example. Then they asked for fullers who came out too. In all, we were 11 people. We were taken out of the prison and sent to the Kharazan barracks accompanied by a policeman to check who from our family was deported and if we really were in that craft. On 16 August we presented ourselves. Three of the families were still in town, the rest were deported. Each of us three was given a paper, the other 8 people were taken back to the prison. That night half of our friends were murdered. The other half were murdered the next night including the Catholics and Protestants.

The number of the Armenians exempted from deportation was more than a thousand. Then it reached 2,000 taking into account the hidden children, women and young men.

On 17 August it was announced that Muslim houses would be searched too and if Armenians were found there, they would be punished. The Muslims who had Armenians older than 10, hastily took them to the deportation places. Those

who had younger Armenians, officially registered them, and those who had taken grown-up girls, wedded them. There are now 8,500 Armenian girls wedded in town.

For about a month we lived without any terrible incident. After a month the authorities announced 15 days for conversion: those who wished to voluntarily convert were welcomed. The message of the order was clear. The policemen were going from house to house and demanding Armenians to convert immediately; otherwise they would be deported. The plan worked: the overwhelming majority converted to Islam though there were some families that stayed Christian.

At the end of December 1915, the authorities started conscription. They demanded 84 Armenians. Almost all of them reported and starting working. I, together with two other Armenians, was sent to Kharberd. Then they sent me back from Kharberd to recover. I returned to Malatia at the beginning of February 1916. I learned the news of the fall of Karin on 14 February. The same day they started arresting the Armenians. Thirty-four people were already put in prison. The next day their families were deported. On 2 March they again gathered the "*sapkals*", those who had past record, and deported them with their families. The men were murdered in Sirkiv. From 2 February, 1916, until 3 October only one Armenian was murdered – Nazaret Garakzian, Pello's son, at the water-mill. On 3 October I again came to Kharberd and continued to Tersim. The Armenian quarters were all in ruins then.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 471, pp. 1-27, original, handwritten.

DIARBEKIR, SEBASTIA AND TRABZON PROVINCES

No 131

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ZAKAR FNTKHIAN ON THE DEPORTATION AND MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGE OF NEKHRI IN BALU DISTRICT OF ARGHNI PROVINCE OF DIARBEKIR VILAYET

1917
Karin

Narrated by Zakar B. Fntkhian from the village of Nekhri of Balu, at a distance of half an hour east of the town:

Our village was an exclusively Armenian village; it had 60 households, about 2,000 inhabitants, one church²⁶¹ built of stone, with one priest, two schools – one

for the boys, the other for the girls, with 2 male and 2 female teachers and, in all, 215 pupils of both sexes.

The village had 250 pairs of oxen, 500 cows, more than 1,000 sheep. Sixty *chareks* (20 *poods*) of seeds were sown; about 75% of the land belonged to the peasants, the rest to Turkish landlords.

When the general mobilisation was announced I had just returned from staying in America for a year and wasn't registered in the military census; so I wasn't conscripted until the *mufti* (chief priest) from the neighbouring village gave up to the authorities all those who were not registered. For that reason I fled and my brother went to the army. I stayed a fugitive for three months.

On 8 May a government-appointed gendarmerie sergeant passed through villages looking for deserters. That night he besieged our village with 15 soldiers, gathered the priest and the prominent people of the village and beat them black and blue. Then he demanded drinks, got drunk and demanded a violin. He was given one but he didn't like it and demanded a better one. They asked me to give mine which I had brought over from America. When the sergeant saw the violin, he understood that it was American and asked for the owner of the violin. The man lied saying the owner was in America. The sergeant was furious; he went for the man threatening to shoot him if he didn't bring the owner. The man didn't give me up and the sergeant started beating him until the man was exhausted. Then he shod him. The next day he left for Khoshmat. There too he spoke about the violin and asked to buy that violin for him, also wanting to know who the owner of the violin was. The *mukhtar* of Khoshmat naively told him that it was Zakar Fntkhian from the village of Nekhri. After some time the *mukhtar* of Khoshmat came to me and asked me to sell the violin. I sold it for 5 gold coins. He left and with that bribe managed to give to the sergeant only half of the demanded conscripts. After returning to the town, the sergeant summoned the *mukhtar* of our village and said: "You lied to me. The owner of that violin is in the village and not in America. You have to hand him over to me." The *mukhtar* returned and asked me to surrender. I told him to tell the sergeant that I was at home, let him come and get me. After a few days, the sergeant came and surrounded my house with soldiers threatening to set it alight if I didn't surrender. At that moment I had taken up position on the rocks above the village and had decided that if they burned my house I would shoot at them, whatever happened. They severely beat my parents. Then the *mukhtar's* wife begged the sergeant to leave, promising to hand me over when I came home.

At the beginning of May the authorities started collecting the weapons. The aforementioned *mufti* from the neighbouring village said: "Leave that village to us." The *mufti* came to the village and persuaded the people to hand over the weapons and avoid problems with the authorities. The villagers handed over the

weapons which were unfit. The authorities were not satisfied: "They have good weapons at Nekhri. They have to hand them over," was the order. The *mufti* came to the village again and persuaded the villagers. Everybody handed over their weapons and went to *mufti's khonakh* (mansion). But I didn't hand over my weapon. My wife said: "Don't hand it over. They will kill you in any case so at least die fighting with your weapon in your hands." On that day I left the village with my wife and our child; we had prepared a cave in advance to stay there with 8 friends and fight. Unfortunately, none of them came. We were alone; the others with all their property found shelter at the *mufti's* house as if he would protect them.

At that time the authorities were gathering the young men from the villages to the town, demanding weapons and subjecting them to all kinds of torture. Many times I drew to their attention the example of previous massacres – in 1896 and in Cilicia, showing that they first disarmed the people and then massacred them. But the people didn't pay attention and surrendered.

The same night my brother came to me and begged at least to let my wife and child go to the *mufti's khonakh*. Finally, he convinced me. I hid my weapons in a hideout, took only my Colt revolver and went with them. The *mufti* met and welcomed us and promised to pay special attention to me. In the morning the *khonakh* was surrounded; the *mufti* suddenly turned into a beast, ordered to tie up everybody and hand over to the gendarmes. I found shelter in the hayloft. It was clear that we would be massacred. The *mufti* had suddenly changed. He was shouting: "One person from Nekhri had escaped and I skilfully brought him into my hands. All of you will be exterminated!"

After three hours the *mufti's* servant came and found me. He said if they knew where I was they would kill me and demanded 3 gold coins to save me. I asked him to call my mother and wife promising to pay him. My mother came and I sent my gold ring to the *mufti's* daughter to save me. So they knew where I was. The *sheikh*²⁶² came to me and hypocritically told me that since I had stayed there he would save me by sending me to a different village. The next day he called over some Kurds from a different village, handed me over to them and told them to "take good care" of me while he had secretly ordered them to murder me in a gorge. The *mufti* accompanied us to the gardens, saw us off and went back. When we went down the gorge, the Kurds demanded money saying: "We are not going to do anything to you but you have to give money to us." I knew what was going to happen and I already had my Colt revolver in my sleeve – just in case. I threw myself behind a rock. One of the Kurds wanted to shoot me but I was faster and shot him down. I fled, went to my hideout and took my weapons. In the afternoon I was staying in my hideout, at night I was going out.

One night I went out and went along the road to the town where I witnessed terrible scenes. On one side of the road there were women impaled by their

female genitals on specially prepared sharp pickets; their arms were tied crosswise on the sticks, their breasts were in cuts and cracks. On the other side of the road, the men were lying on the ground with their heads turned towards the women and with sticks driven into their anuses. At that moment, when the blood had already rushed to my head, there appeared a group of Kurds who called to me taking me for a Kurd. I started firing. After quite a long exchange of fire I withdrew in the darkness without knowing if any of them was killed. I stayed in that hideout for 17 days going out at nights and witnessing similar scenes on different roads.

The women and children of our family had stayed with the *mufiti*. He had sent them to do field work. I managed to meet them. They told me that there had been an order to kill all the men within the period of seven years. I saw that I couldn't do anything worthwhile alone and decided to go to a Kurdish friend of mine. I decided to go to a Kurdish village. I started off but lost my way, wandered in the mountains for two days, then made it to the village and went to the Kurd's house. He was a gendarme with Arifoghli who had a role in the deportation of the Armenians. He was not at home – only his wife, mother and daughter. His daughter knew Armenian. I asked for protection and waited. The man came home, welcomed me and promised to protect me, but demanded money. I promised to give. After several days, in the morning when as usual he went out to look for Armenians to murder them, he had told his mother to put me out in the evening. It was arranged that several Kurds would be waiting to murder me when I went out.

In the evening I was getting ready to go out but I had a foreboding there would be a trap. My revolver was ready in my pocket. I again talked to the Kurd's daughter: "I came to your house. Today, instead of saving me you put me out to be killed." The girl held my hand and said: "As long as I am alive, you will be alive in our house." The father came home but didn't oppose his daughter since she was his only child.

The Kurd was going out every morning and coming back in the evening. Who knows how many Armenians he had murdered and how much gold and silver he had plundered.

The day when the girl promised to save me, she asked me to make a door for her room. I made it the same day. In the evening her father came, saw it and asked who made it. The girl took his word that he would not be angry if she said. The father promised not to. The girl said I had made it. The Kurd said: "I'll keep you since you are a craftsman. Though I didn't want to kill you but I had to because the government issued a strict order to kill [Armenian men] whenever we met them in the period of seven years." But he promised to keep me. They named me Hyusein.

For some time I worked, did all the work. Then he again demanded that I should leave as if he was afraid of the authorities. The girl gave three gold coins to a Kurd and sent me to a place called Muziré Kalé, at the foothills of Tersim, to his uncle, chief of a Kurdish tribe Mllo Hyusein. He knew me. He welcomed me and armed me from head to toe. I asked him to go and get my wife and child. We mounted horses, armed and went there at night. I went to the part of the *khonakh* where the Armenian women were. I went in. My child had died. I took my wife and we went back to the Kurdish village.

They started bringing people from Kghi. My host insisted that we go plundering together. I opposed but he insisted saying: "You have to come in order not to attract the attention of the others." I agreed and we went together.

We went and saw that the terrible massacres had started. I saw a wounded woman. She was in agony. One of her breasts was cut and hanging, she was in death throes. Her baby, aged 1, was crying by her side: "Mommy, give me milk!" I took the baby and put it on the mother's breast. It started sucking the blooded milk. Tears were flowing down my eyes. My friend came, saw me and decided that I should not go with him anymore. Indeed, we never went plundering anymore. There too I saw women impaled with their arms tied crosswise, completely naked.

My Kurdish defender went to Balu and came back after several days. He said that on the order of the district governor Khalil *bey* a special slaughterhouse was opened on the bridge over the Euphrates. Hired people, in white coats, stayed in three places and brought the Armenians on to the bridge. First, the district governor personally cut off several heads and then passed it to the executioners saying: "The body – to the nation, the head – to the state." The head was thrown on one side of the bridge, the body on the other. Good-looking boys were sent to the house of the district governor to satisfy his animal desires.

At the same place a German official had set up a caravan of 40 to 50 mules with baskets which was going to different places, gathering the children, bringing and throwing them into the Euphrates.

Not long after, at the beginning of March, the Kurds mounted an attack against the Turks. The government organised a raid against Tersim. We armed ourselves, took up our positions and got ready for self-defence. The Turkish soldiers came and the fight started. We fought until the evening. Defender Mllo was killed. While in agony, he called my wife and said: "Almast, you take revenge for me, take my rifle!" My wife took the rifle and started fighting with us. On that day there were more than 250 corpses in front of our positions besides the wounded. The next day the attacks grew stronger and we couldn't resist. We withdrew to the mountains fighting. That day my wife was wounded and fell. We couldn't take her, she fell into the hands of Turkish soldiers. They

cut off the heads of Mllo, Seyit Pazhtash and my wife and took them to the district governor. They hanged them at the church door.

After my defender and my wife were killed, I hid my weapons and kept only my Colt revolver on me. I took a beggar's sack on my shoulder and mixed with the Tersim Kurds as a beggar. During the fights the Turkish army destroyed about 100 Kurdish villages. Many Kurds surrendered. They were all slaughtered.

I found a job with a Kurd from Tersim. I worked for a couple of days. Then Yerznka was taken and I passed on to Yerznka with some friends of mine.

Zakar B. Fntkhian

Balu-Nekhri

[Recorded by Amatuni]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 492, pp. 12-21, original, handwritten.

No 132

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR GOHAR SARIAN ON THE MASSACRES OF TRABZON

[1916]

Tiflis

Mrs Gohar A. Sarian, aged 35, native of Trabzon, Russian subject, literate, with three children – Nunufar, Shushanik and Farhat, with a maid, aged 16. They live in Tiflis, 8th quarter, Sviznoy Lane, No. 10. Her husband, Aram Sarian, and her brothers-in-law, Arshak and Armenak Sarians, were murdered in Trabzon.

During the Turkish mobilisation, Armenian soldiers were given no arms – they were used as labour. The wealthy ones paid *bedel*. The Armenians of Trabzon served with extreme devotion, made countless donations but nevertheless the authorities confiscated all the goods from the Armenian and Greek shops. Trabzon was peaceful until 1 June, 1915. Many of the citizens were in summer houses though more because of the fear of bombing.

In May, due to the events in Van, strict searches were carried out, especially among the Russian subjects and Dashnak party members finding only one pistol and a few hunting rifles.

On 11 June they gathered all the Russian subjects and 15 Dashank party members and told them that they would be deported to Svaz by the Samson route. They put them on board a big boat, tied up everybody's hands with ropes and stabbing them with daggers threw them into the sea. My husband and my

brother-in-law were among them. A Russian subject named Vardan, wounded in the head and arms, swam out of the sea and, stained with blood, applied to the Italian Consulate which was to defend the Russian subjects. But the Consul turned him out. Then Vardan naively applied to the governor to complain. He was taken to a Turkish hospital and was poisoned there. These and other details I learned from the governor's son, aged 15, who was boastfully telling about it.

I and a friend of mine, whose husband was in the same boat with my husband, went to the Italian Consul to obtain explanations. He received us very rudely and even turned us out of the consulate. He turned out to be very irresponsible and could not or did not want to protect Russian subjects and their families.

On Saturday, 13 June, the authorities posted an announcement giving us 5 days to get ready to leave for Mesopotamia. We could not take any belongings with us or sell them to the Greeks or Turks. Everybody had to hand over everything to the authorities with their hands. Old, sick, widowed and pregnant women could stay but they had to produce a certificate from the municipality doctor, a petition with a two-*kurush* stamp on it and then we would get a paper from the head of the police and could stay on that basis.

Government employees too were to be deported via Samson to Ankara and from there, allegedly, to Constantinople. Those who wished could hire horses or carriages. But it was nothing. Everybody considered walking on foot from Trabzon to Mesopotamia absolute annihilation and panicked.

No Greek or Turkish families could be seen on the streets. They all went to villages in order not to see this calamity. We, the women, gathered and with the children went to the governor. They rudely turned us out. We applied to the German consul in the summer house, one hour out of the town. He received us very badly and said: "You shouldn't have done it. You did it so you have to endure it."

"We did what?" we replied.

"How about Van?" he said.

"This is not Van. We are peaceful people, we don't know anything."

We begged him but he ruthlessly turned us out. We applied to the Austrian consul. He welcomed us, wept and said: "I wish I could be helpful but there is nothing I can do."

We returned to the town and went to the American consul. He gave us hope that he would try but eventually he couldn't do anything. He could only keep his employees with their families – 15 people.

We went to the Ittihad leader Nayil *bey* who assured us with a sly smile that on the road we would be provided with security and taken care of. But it was this Nayil *bey*, the governor, chief doctor of the municipality, head of police Mehmed Ali who were not from Trabzon and locals Mutay *effendi* and the villain Salih and several others who organised the massacre of Trabzon – in all, 12 people.

On the fourth day they started gathering people and took them to a monastery half an hour away from the town. On Thursday they started gathering families from quarters. Then they issued a new order that everyone could leave their sons with the Greeks, American missionaries or the Greek despot²⁶³. Many parents left their girls, under the age of 15, their boys under the age of 10 to American missionaries and the Greek Metropolitan²⁶⁴.

The first group from the town joined the group of men gathered at the monastery. They were given to a sergeant and 20-30 gendarmes. The Armenian groups were not yet formed, but the brigands were already there.

Some of the (local) Turks did not take part in this bloody business. The immediate murderers were the sergeants, gendarmes, the Turkish *chetés* and all the imprisoned criminals who were on those days released from the prison for that very purpose as well as refugee *Gyurjees*²⁶⁵ and sailors. The most ferocious among them were the "*kehya*"²⁶⁶ of the port, his young brother named Aslan and a prisoner named Nejat.

The first group, men and women, were taken up to Gyumushkhané, to a place named Baldaban. There the men were separated to be murdered and the women were driven to Yerznka. A woman came back from there and told about the troubles they had on the road and about that parting. The road was full of policemen and gendarmes and day after day more groups of people were deported.

I could hear their mourning and wailing at a distance of one hour from the town and closed my ears. Many women and girls took poison when the policemen came to their houses to deport them. Khachik *gha* Aslanian threw himself out of the window and died. Karapet Mnatsakanian killed himself with a knife. The wife of an Armenian man, a Bulgarian by origin, cut her neck with a razor. The father of Hnchakian Gurgen Sargsian set his house alight and burned it but died under the heels of the policemen. Gurgen himself was hiding in our house and after 15 days came out in a woman's dress but fell into the hands of the police. The *kavaz*²⁶⁷ of the American consul committed suicide from fear. Dashnaktsakan Sedrak from Sheyran hid in the ceiling of the house for a month but was then revealed and surrounded by the policemen. He fought for an hour but was killed wounding a policeman.

In the village of Zefanos three villagers hid near the church. When they were noticed, a fight started. The house they were in was set alight. One policeman was killed.

The Turks would return very wealthy women after a day or two of travelling, promising to release them if they told them where their money was hidden. The women would return tired, with their legs swollen and tell them everything. But they were again taken to the road but this time on the bank of the Degirmen Deré River which was half an hour from the town and were murdered and thrown into

the water. The deportees were plundered by both the gendarmes and the brigands who raped all the women over the age of 8, murdering on the spot those who resisted.

The men from the last groups were murdered near the town. The same was true with all the village men and women who didn't walk even a day's distance. On the bank of the river they murdered hundreds, thousands of people, all stripped naked, with bayonets, swords and then threw them into the water. All this was told by Greek soldiers, Armenian girls who married the Turks and the Turks themselves.

On 15 June I took my children and went to the governor's summer-house in Souksu and wept and begged a lot. The governor's wife pitied me and interceded for us allowing us to pretend that we were ill and stay in the hospital. After that I stayed in the hospital with my three children and the maid. After three days the Turkish patients were moved to a different place and the Armenian elderly and sick people, pregnant women, children as well as all the children kept by the Metropolitan and the Americans were brought in their place. Large houses, hotels and schools belonging to Armenians as well as the Armenian prelacy were opened, the children were put there, which they called schools. Boys over the age of 10 were selected and taken to Jevizlik. The Turks took some of them; all the rest were murdered with bayonets.

The chief doctor was every day examining everybody sending some to the sea and the others to the roads to be murdered. Every day they were bringing abandoned or parentless babies in baskets – dirty and covered with sores – to replace the deported ones. The Turks were coming and taking away whoever they liked. After five days they brought *sublima*²⁶⁸; at first they were persuading the patients, then forcing them to drink it. Many of them died immediately. After eight days the hospitals were cleansed, all the corpses were put into closed carriages and thrown into the sea. The hospital *mudur* Mehmed Ali *bey* seized all the property of the patients.

Meanwhile they put the families of Armenian officials on board the boats, took them to the open sea, murdered them and threw them into the water. Among them was my husband's brother, a post-office official, his daughter and wife.

They kept the Armenian soldiers for 15 days. Many of them were working on the roads. Then they made them dig big pits, murdered them with bayonets and buried in those pits. The men who were selected at Baldaban were all slaughtered by 40 *chetés*. As told by an Armenian soldier who survived, they were arranged in a line shooting 25 people with one bullet.

The deportees were taken as far as Kemakh. Several women and girls were left there with the Turks and the rest were taken towards Akn and most were thrown into the river in the deepest gorge of the Euphrates. If the group was with a kind gendarme, they managed to ford the river at a shallow place. This was narrated by a woman survivor who stayed in Akn, then moved on to Kirason and

from there very deftly reached us in Trabzon. She told us that there was a rock in front of the Euphrates with an inscription: "Lucky those who see this rock!" After Kemakh it seemed not to be very dangerous. After Kemakh people died only of hunger, exhaustion, illnesses, without clothes and money. The smart ones managed to find shelter in the houses of the Turks in the towns they passed; the rest continued their way to Mesopotamia. After five months I received a letter from my brother-in-law's wife and children who were in Akn. I received a letter also from my brother aged 15 who was writing that they had passed Kharberd.

I and my children as well as the Makhokhians (mother, sister and daughter) and six other girls stayed in the hospital under the protection of the governor's wife and could not go out because the committee (*Ittihad*) would catch and murder us. In the middle of July we were moved to the French chapel that had been turned into a mosque. The *imam*²⁶⁹ (the Turkish priest) came and administered the ritual of our conversion to Islam. There were 15 of us. Six girls were wed to young Muslim men. The *mudur* was proposing to me but I rejected him for four months saying that my husband was alive.

In the hospital the physician Avni *bey* who treated us well, told us about a peasant girl who had ferociously resisted and was brought to the hospital with 95 wounds. They brought her to the hospital to send to Constantinople but got rid of her at night.

An Armenian woman named Kalik who was converted to Islam was working as a cook for the chief doctor. After six months they threw her into the sea for not doing the laundry well.

The governor's wife came to the town from the summer house and took me to Sovuksu with her. There were five other Armenian girls – Armenuhi Kahrinian, Yughaber Chgnavorian, Arusiak Gazanchian, Siranush Etmekchian (who died of tuberculosis) and Arsen Minasian's daughter, aged 4.

The *mudur* Mehmed Ali demanded that I should be sent to Platana, to be really murdered, since I rejected his proposal. I explained everything to the governor's wife and she was kind enough to wed me with one of the public officials – Edhem *effendi*. He was a very kind person and took care of my children and me with decency. One day he told me how 6 women and girls and 2 men, all armed, couldn't stand the hunger and surrendered. At night the Turks took them to the sea and drowned them there. Those days also 4 men from a village surrendered and were even circumcised, but nevertheless, were murdered.

After keeping us for 4 months, Edhem *effendi* helped me find shelter in a Greek village with my children when the Islamised women and girls were being deported to Samsun fearing the Russians would approach. We stayed in that village of Kanlinka for two months. Several other Armenians who had escaped to the mountains gathered in that village. The Greek headman wanted to tell on us but Edhem *effendi* on my instigation threatened him and we stayed there until the Russians occupied Trabzon.

We stayed in Trabzon for 10 days and then passed via Batum to Tiflis where I stay due to my child's illness and make a living by sewing which I had learned when I was a schoolgirl, but had never practised in adulthood.

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 453, pp. 9-12 rev., original, handwritten.

KHOY, SALMAST AND URMIA PROVINCES

No 133

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR NERSES TER-TOVMASIANTS ON THE MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGE OF GYARDABAD OF URMIA PROVINCE

August 7, 1916
Old Nakhijevan
Yarmja

Narrated by Ter Nerses Tadevosian Ter-Tovmasiants from the village of Gyardabad of Urmia province now living in the village of Yarmja of Old Nakhijevan

On 21 December, 1914, we left our village because the Turks were going to swarm into our village the next day since the Russian troops had retreated. Our village had 130 exclusively Armenian households. We left all our belongings. I myself left property worth 5,000 roubles besides the household trifles. Only 10 households and a few people from separate families stayed in the village – 135 people in all. For the whole of five days, hungry, knee-deep in snow and mud, suffering, we barely made it to Julfa.

An English clergyman out of pity kept for 2 months in dugouts the only priest of our village – Ter Hovhannes Harutyunian who was in Urmia with his family. (The narrator does not know the name of the clergyman. I asked how come those English were not murdered. The priest said they escaped thanks to money.)

The Turks arrested T[er] Davit Margarian (a Catholic) from the village of Irhav²⁷⁰ (on 15 January, 1915, after he returned), put a chain on his neck, a donkey saddle on his back and made him walk on his knees an hour's distance until Urmia.

The Kurds raped Harutyun Stepanian's daughter Siranuysh, aged 8, in their house. The girl was unable to endure the long-lasting obscenities of the Kurds and breathed her last breath. Taron Manoyan's daughter was abducted from our

village and eventually fled when the Russian troops approached. The virgins were violated, the women were dishonoured.

All our villagers have returned; only 4 families still live in Yerevan province.

Signature of the narrator – Father Nerses Ter-Tovmasiants
[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f.227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 13, original, handwritten.

No 134

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SHUSHANIK BEYATIANTS ON THE
EMIGRATION OF THE VILLAGE OF TAGHER OF KHOY PROVINCE**

August 11, 1916

Village of Karakhan-Beglu

Narrated by Shushanik Beyatians from the village of Tagher of Khoy now living in the village of Karakhan-Beglu of Old Nakhijevan

During the retreat of December 1914, when the Russians withdrew from Bashkala (Aghbak) and Atrpatakan, they took the local Armenians with them to the Caucasus. Like Salmast and Urmi regions, Khoy emigrated too.

At the end of December, the Russians announced that they were withdrawing and that the Armenians had to go with them (others claim that the volunteers insisted on emigration so that the people were not massacred). The Armenian village of 200 households took the road of emigration. Several old people stayed in the village. Three of them were murdered, the rest are alive.

All our property was plundered by the neighbouring Turks. The houses are partially destroyed, the wooden parts are burned.

A lot of people died on the road because of cold, hunger and because of contagious diseases after reaching the Caucasus, but their exact number is unknown yet.

All our villagers have returned to our homeland. Only a few families have stayed and live mainly in different regions of Yerevan province.

Narrated by an illiterate woman, aged 22.
[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 21 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 135

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR HAKOB KHOROZIANTS ON THE
MASSACRES IN THE VILLAGE OF HAVTVAN AND OTHER
VILLAGES OF SALMAST PROVINCE**

August 10, 1916
Karakhan-Beglu

Village of Karakhan-Beglu of Old Nakhijevan

Narrated by Hakob Khoroziants from the village of Havtvan of Salmast now living in the village of Karakhan-Beglu of Old Nakhijevan

(The narrator was a teacher in Salmast and Urmi regions for 32 years; he is a native of Van)

At the beginning of December 1914, the Kurds of the Soma region headed by the chief of Amrkhans Jhangir *agha* [attacked] the exclusively Armenian villages of Mahlam and Sarna, set alight all the haystacks and advanced to the villages. However, meeting a strong resistance from the villagers and the Russians, they fled.

On 18 December, when the Russians retreated from the Turkish borders, they made the people emigrate with them to the Caucasus. The people left property worth 20 *million* roubles and perhaps more consisting of only movable property such as cows, oxen, buffaloes, horses, etc.

The houses are mostly burned or the wooden parts are taken out to burn. The Shey[tan]-Ava⁸⁶ school, the court hall and the church of Holy Mother-of-God (a place of pilgrimage) are burned. The local Turks did it. All the churches of the Salmast region have been plundered; the belfries have been destroyed or riddled with bullets.

Havtvan – 650 households; Khosrova inhabited by Assyrians with 20 Armenian households; Savra – 180 households of Armenian population; Old Town – 125 Armenian households; Sarna – 180 exclusively Armenian households; Mahlam – 270 exclusively Armenian households, Sheytanova – 15 Armenian households; Drishk – 35 Armenian households; Kochamish – 25 Armenian households; Kalashan – 20 households; Payajuk – 400 exclusively Armenian households; Ghalasar – 200 exclusively Armenian households; Akhtakhana – 80 Armenian households; Ghzljama – 60 households; Saramerik – 85 households; Vardan – 12 households; Ula – 6 households; Gyulizan – 4 households; Patavor – 3 households. All the aforementioned villages emigrated on 20-24 December. At that time the Armenian population of Aghbak also

⁸⁶ Refers to the village of Sheytanova.

retreated with the Russians and came to SalmaSt Some of them moved on to the Caucasus with the Salmast population, some stayed in the Salmast region with the locals. About 700 of them, mainly men, were slaughtered after severe torture: some men were put on the thresholds and their necks were hacked with a *najakh*²⁷¹; some were shot; some were dismembered and tortured to death; others were buried alive under the garden walls. The massacre was committed on the orders of the Turkish commander Khalil *bey*. Timur *agha*'s and Jhangir *agha*'s Kurds from Soma took part in the massacres and plundered all the property of the Armenians.

Local Turks had kept some women and children (the narrator doesn't remember the keepers' names), they had gathered them in a house, plundered them, subjected them to countless outrages. Then, after the Russians came back, they were again saved and moved on to the Caucasus.

Some of the people from that region have returned. Many have found their possessions and those who had taken them away managed to get back only a small part of it. Others live mainly in Yerevan, Tiflis, New Nakhijevan and the Russian hinterland.

The population didn't stay in some of the villages, like Saramerik, Vardan, Kochamish, Drishk and Sheytanova (only one person stayed in the village and was murdered), so they were not massacred. They had some losses only because of the difficulties, hardships on the road and diseases.

Signature of the narrator – Hakob Khoroziantz
[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 17 rev. and 18, original, handwritten.

No 136

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TAGUHI OHANESI VARDANIAN ON THE MASSACRES IN THE VILLAGE OF GHALASAR (KALASAR) OF SALMAST PROVINCE

August 5, 1916
Khalillu

Narrated by Taguhi Ohanesian from the village of Ghalasar of Salmast now living in the village of Khalillu of Old Nakhijevan, aged 38

On 5 January 1915, when the Russians were retreating from Bashkalé, they together with the volunteers made us emigrate with them in order not to be

massacred by the incoming Turks. We were not even able to take food for the road. Everything was left in the village which was plundered after we left. One, two or more people from each household stayed in the village; eighteen beautiful women and girls were abducted and dishonoured; more than 9 women, children and men are missing. In the spring of 1915, when our men went to Ghalasar, they saw a blood-stained saw near a well; they found 7 corpses in the well, 4 men, 3 women. Six heads severed with the saw were next to the corpses; only one head was missing.

The field along the road was covered with human corpses and bones; they belonged to the remnants of the population of our and neighbouring villages.

Hundreds of people died of cold and hunger during the emigration. I saw with my eyes dozens of women with their babies in their arms frozen to death on the roads.

On the other side of Araz, the whole area of the battlefield (in Atrpatakan) was emptied of the Armenians; those who stayed were ruthlessly slaughtered and taken prisoner. Last year a lot of people returned. Nothing is known about the figures – neither of the killed, nor of the survivors. Even now members of the families are dispersed, they don't know where their fellow villagers are, how many of them have survived. Even the relatives don't know if their family members are alive or murdered or dead; and even if they are alive, they don't know where they are now.

There are 7 people in our family now. We have one labourer; my brother has gone to Bashkala where my father was murdered. We emigrated from Bashkala to Salmast about 15 years ago because of the Kurdish horrors.

Signature of the narrator – Taguhi Vardanian

Note: According to the same narrator no one survived from the following villages: 1. Baz; 2. Arak; 3. Bashkala; 4. Heresan; 5. Haspstan; 6. Haratun; 7. Chukh; 8. Monastery of Bartholomew from where several people survived.

Taguhi Vardanian
[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 7 rev., original, handwritten.

No 137
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR KHACHATUR GRIGORIAN ON THE
MASSACRES IN THE VILLAGE OF MAHLAM OF SALMAST
PROVINCE**

August 7, 1916
Old Nakhijevan

Narrated by Khachatur Grigorian from the village of Mahlam of Salmast now living in the village of Kyarim-Bey-Diza

Twenty-five years ago the narrator fled from the Kurdish violence and settled in the village of Mahlam of SalmaSt At the end of December 1914, when the Russians retreated from Aghbak, we decided to leave everything we had, all our movable and immovable property and the village of 300 households, and emigrate in the severe frost of the winter in order not to fall victim to the Turkish-Kurdish atrocities. Only 44 households stayed in the village with about 250 people; some people from families that had emigrated stayed in the village too, so the total number of those who stayed in the village was around 288 to 300 people.

On 22 March 1915, after the Russians' retreat, the former governor of Van Jevtet *bey* swarmed into Salmast with regular troops. The Kurds started plundering the houses, slaughtering the population and setting houses alight. Jevtet's soldiers were gathering the men, tying them up in groups of 8 or 10 and shooting them. Then they were gathering the corpses under some wall and knocking it down on them. By the special order of Jevtet they tortured to death the priest of our village T[er] Vardan Matevosian: they drove a stick into his anus, flayed the skin of his face, suspended him by his beard, hung his ears on his arms which had been cut-off; they stabbed his body 12 times with daggers. Sharaf *bek*, one of the main Kurdish butchers of the battle of Khanasor²⁷², poured all his poison on the Armenian people. About 110 to 115 people were slaughtered. Many prominent people of our village were murdered: Daniel Nikoghosian, T[er] Vardan Matevosian, Gabriel Melik-Hovsepien, his son Mesrob Gabrielian, Hakob Altunian, Sayat Melik-Aloyan.

Ten days after the massacre, on 2 April, we went to the village. We opened the garden wall between Havtvan and Khosrova that had covered the corpses of the massacred people. I saw Father T[er] Vardan's tortured, mutilated body.

They had cut off the ears of the distinguished public figure Yenovk Israyelian while he was alive as well as his lips and nose, and had gouged out his eyes. Hovhannes Kishmishian, Safar Arakelian and others were tortured to death in a similar way.

On 2 April, 1915, when we returned to our homeland to see what condition it was in, we counted together with the villagers of Havtvan, Halasar, Payajuk and other villages of Salmast that 786 people from Salmast had been murdered by that time. At the beginning of May of the same year, 1915, during the Turkish attack another massacre occurred in the Salmast region. The exact figures of the massacre are not known but as far as we know, about 400 people were murdered in this second massacre. All the women from Salmast were gathered and raped; only 3 women were taken away from our village. Most of the rest were murdered. The survivors escaped from the clutches of the Turks and Kurds when Andranik repelled the Turkish attacks.

Most of the Salmast inhabitants have returned. Some of them still live in Yerevan, Tiflis, Baku and Rostov.

There are 5 people in our family now; we suffered three losses.

Narrator Khachatur Grigorian, aged 50, is illiterate. His fellow villager Khachatur Grigorov signs for him.

[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 12 and rev., original, handwritten.

No 138
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR ZARUHI MANUKIAN ON THE
MASSACRES IN THE VILLAGE OF MAHLAM OF SALMAST
PROVINCE**

August 5, 1916
Shkhmahmud

Narrated by Zaruhi Manukian from the village of Mahlam of Salmast now living in the village of Shkhmahmud

At the end of December 1914, after defeating the Turks near Khanasor, the Russians entered Aghbak but didn't stay there for long and soon withdrew. The Russians announced that they were going to retreat and the Armenians had to retreat with them in order not to fall victim to the rage of the Turks. We reached Julfa after 8 days of walking. Almost all the men stayed in the village (80 armed men) as well as 200 women and children. On 8-9 January 7,000 Turkish troops besieged the village. Our men put up a self-defence for 4 days. On the fifth day they ran out of ammunition and were obliged to surrender. The Turks took the

men and the 200 women and children with them to Dilman. On the third day they murdered the men with hellish torture: they cut off one's arm, another one's leg; they gouged out the third one's eye alive and then put him to the sword or shot him. The most horrible was the martyrdom of the priest T[er] Harutyun: the Turks flayed his skin alive, dismembered his limbs one by one until the priest breathed his last. His fate was shared by some prominent men of the village, namely Vardan and Yenovk⁸⁷.

Eighty people fell victim to the Turkish slaughterhouse. Only one person pretended to be dead and after staying among the corpses for 4 days fled and was saved. He was a tightrope-walker; he fled and told everything.

The Turks plundered the 200 women and children, stripped them naked and raped the women. They fell victim to the Turkish atrocities for the whole of 8 days until the Russians returned and the Turks fled. The women and children took the road of retreat. Eight women fell victim to the Turkish terror, one of them pregnant, as well as 3 children.

After emigration, they were dispersed in different villages and towns of the Caucasus. Many returned by the end of May 1915 but many fell victim to contagious diseases.

The rest live mainly in Tiflis and Baku.

The narrator is an illiterate woman, aged 30, from the village of Mahlam of SalmaSt

[Recorded by Hambarzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 5 rev-6, original, handwritten.

No 139

**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR FATHER MKRTICH TER-
PETROSIAN ON THE MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGES OF
MAHMADKYAR, NAGHADÉ AND GYARDABAD OF URMIA
PROVINCE**

August 8, 1916
Hajivar

Narrated by Father Ter Mkrtych Ter-Petrosians from the village of Gyardabad of the Urmi region now living in the village of Hajivar of Old Nakhijevan

⁸⁷It was they who had spurred the youth to resort to self-defence.

1. About the villages of Mahmadyar and Naghadé

On 7 December, 1914, the Sulduz province where I was serving, was attacked by Kurds from the *ashirets* from Dizé and the Turkish *bashibozuk* troops. The Russian troops stationed between Sulduz and Urmia in small groups advanced. As a result, the Russians retreated to Urmia and the Kurdish mob plundered the Armenian-Assyrian village of Mahmadyar (half of the 80 households were Armenians and half were Assyrians), rustling the cattle, sheep and robbing the household goods. The next day they attacked the village of Naghadé but didn't plunder it, only the horsemen settled in the houses of the wealthy Armenians. The latter were afraid that the attackers could commit murders, abductions and rape, and took shelter in the houses of their Kurdish neighbours. For five days the horsemen had feasts in the houses of wealthy Armenians, spoiled all household goods, took away all the copper-ware, *samovars*²⁷³, women's jewellery, etc. We complained about it to the Turkish commander stationed in Sough-Bulagh and he ordered Jemal *effendi* from Van to return the plundered property and live in peace with the Armenians. Upon receiving the order, Jemal *effendi* summoned me and the Armenian *aksakals* (elders) and turning to me said: "*Papaz*²⁷⁴ *effendi*, tell your people to keep to their work: let the farmer do his job, let the merchant do his trade, I'll put an end to the disturbances. Tell the local Armenians to be calm. If they have doubts about the massacre, are there no Christians in our lands for us to come here to massacre the Christians?" We were reassured with his words and went out.

After that the feverish haste among the Kurdish *ashirets* grew. On the orders of the same Jemal *effendi* the policemen were coming every day and demanding bread, ghee, lambs, sheep, rice, bedding, copper pressure cookers. Nothing taken was returned.

We applied to the same Jemal *effendi* but in vain. Then I returned to Urmi, my birthplace on 13 December.

2. About the village of Gyardabad of Urmi

On 13 December, 1914, I presented myself to the diocesan *locum tenens* of the Urmia diocese⁸⁸ Archimandrite Khoren Lazarian and told him about the developments. On 19 December I was in our village when I received the primate's letter which read: "Upon receiving my letter try to save yourself as soon as possible because the Russian troops are retreating." We left everything and started off. After 14 days we barely made it to Julfa via Dilman and Khoy because of terrible mud. Pregnant women had miscarriages. How many babies did I see abandoned on the snow!

⁸⁸In 1913 Archimandrite Khoren Lazarian was appointed the Atrpatakan Armenian Diocese *locum tense* in Urmia.

Our caravan of emigrants was 7 to 8,000 people. There were 150 households in our village. Everybody emigrated except 46 people who stayed in the village. Eleven of them were murdered – 4 men, 3 women, 2 boys and 2 girls.

A murder episode – A mother left her two daughters with their grandmother and fled. The grandmother took the two children and hid in the *tonir* of one of the wealthy villagers. The plunderers noticed that there were people in the *tonir* and started throwing stones into it. They stoned them until all three breathed their last

The Armenians and Assyrians from the southern part of Urmia could not manage to emigrate. They gathered under the protection of the American missionaries of Urmia. They all escaped the massacres. About 16,000 Armenians and Assyrians took refuge with the missionaries living mainly at their expense. The houses were so crowded with people that contagious diseases spread. Up to 10 to 16 people were dying daily. Mr Alan was distinguished for his care and honesty. During a private meeting, he said: "We, the Americans, had relatively more losses than those who we sheltered here. There were 18 of us; five of them died from contagious diseases. Three of them were sisters of charity, two were doctors."

Out of 150 households, hardly 15 have stayed away; all the rest have returned to our homeland. Most of those who didn't return are craftsmen, merchants and office workers who live dispersed in Nor Nakhijevan (on Don) and Yerevan. Those living in Nor Nakhijevan are merchants who had been living there for a long time. During the retreat they came after their families and took them away.

Our movable property was appropriated by the *ghzlbash* Turks of our region.

The plunderers have taken away the church vessels, railings, everything, even the doors and the windows.

The school is in the same state. The doors and the windows as well as the desks and the tables are shattered into pieces or taken away. The building is dilapidated. The school balcony as well as the ceiling are demolished.

Signature of the narrator – Father Mkrtych T[er]-Petrosian
[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 14 rev.-15 rev., original, handwritten.

No 140
**TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR TAMAM GHARIBIAN ON THE
MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGE OF SHUMBLABAD OF URMIA
PROVINCE**

August 11, 1916

Yemkhana

Narrated by Tamam Gharibian from the village of Shumblabat of Urmia now living in the village of Yemkhana of Old Nakhijevan

Because of the Russian retreat of 18 December, 1914, our village, like other villages of the neighbourhood, took the road of emigration. At night the volunteers told us that the Russians were going to withdraw and the Armenians, if they didn't want to fall victim to the Turks' rage, should leave everything and move on to the Caucasus. The village immediately prepared to start off though many villagers didn't want to leave and stayed in the village. The others left everything and started off. For example, we left 2 buffaloes, 2 oxen, 3 cows with their calves, 5 sets of bedding, 6 felt cloths, 6 hessian sacks, 3 pots and small copper containers; we left 8 cartloads of flour, wheat barns, etc.

We started off at daybreak. After three hours the Turkish troops and the Kurdish mob swarmed into the village. Among the Kurdish leaders was, by the way, the *agha* of our village and Ahmat *agha* from Khanag. There are barracks near our village which were empty at that time, and along the road from the barracks almond trees are planted. At daybreak those who stayed in the village learned that the Turkish troops and the Kurds were coming and wanted to escape by the aforementioned road. However, the troops and the Kurds intercepted them and a terrible massacre started. They slaughtered them with axes, swords and sawed many with saws. A man named Avag and three Assyrian boys survived. They had put up in the barracks 12 Armenians they had brought with them from *Igaghach* who took the chance to flee and save themselves.

Some prominent men from our village were among the victims: Melik-Hakob Azizian with his two sons, his brother Petros and the Assyrian priest (Kasha Israyel). Those who were murdered were from our village – 6 Armenians and 10 Assyrians. They were also from the villages of *Igaghach*, Nakhjevan-Tapé, Shirabad, Karajol, Karakz, Isalu and Batlbo. They had women and children with them who they kept for two weeks, tortured, dishonoured and then, when they learned that the Russians were again coming, left them and went away. They only took Shushanik Israyelian who hasn't come back yet. She was abducted by Kulam-Ali, son of Abbas *bey* from Khanag.

Our village consisted of 48 households (8 Assyrian and 40 Armenian). They plundered everything taking away even the house doors.

My brother-in-law's two sons, the two sons of my husband's uncle, my sister-in-law and her daughter, my daughter and Israyelian Sargis died on the road because of cold, hunger, fear etc. In all, 14 people from our village died on the road.

The rest reached the Caucasus.

Now most of the village people have returned back; the others are dispersed all over the Caucasus. My husband has gone to our homeland. Six people from our family have survived.

We have lost six people.

The narrator is an illiterate woman aged 50.

[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 22 rev. and 23, original, handwritten.

No 141

TESTIMONY OF SURVIVOR SALATIN TER-HOVHANNESIAN ON THE MASSACRES OF THE VILLAGE OF PAYAJUK OF SALMAST PROVINCE

August 10, 1916

Karakhan-Beglu

Narrated by Salatin Ter-Hovhannesian from the village of Payajuk of Salmast now living in the village of Karakhan-Beglu of Old Nakhijevan.

Because of the Russian retreat of 18 December, 1914, like other villages of Salmast, our exclusively Armenian village of Payajuk consisting of 600 households was made to flee.

The volunteers ordered us to retreat to the Caucasus together with the Russian troops and them. So we left everything we had and empty-handed, in the winter snow-storm took the road of flight. Only old people and women stayed in the village. Most of those who stayed, were murdered: 20 people (the narrator doesn't remember their names). Most of those who found shelter with their Turkish acquaintances survived. Our Turkish neighbours took away all our possessions—cattle, sheep, household goods, everything that could be taken away. The village church was also plundered: valuable church belongings were taken away, the rest was spoiled.

Most people from our village have returned to our homeland; some are dispersed in different towns and region of Russia and the Caucasus.

Narrated by an illiterate woman aged 30.

[Recorded by Hambardzum Galustian]

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 424, p. 19, original, handwritten.

ADDENDUM

No 1

TESTIMONY OF WITNESS OSMAN ALI OGHLI ABOUT THE DEMOLITION OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN KARIN

April 8, 1916

The story of the demolition of the Armenian church in Erzurum heard from a Turkish witness, Osman Ali oghli, aged 65.

When all the Armenian population of Karin was deported, the Governor Tahsinbey, the *eftertar*²⁷⁵ Seyfulla, the *muhurdar*²⁷⁶ Ahmet and Apilhinti Jefer, with special town criers invited all the Muslims to a meeting in the yard of the big church. More than 15,000 Turks gathered. The aforementioned people made long speeches with the message that we have cleansed the country from the *giaours*, now all the lands, houses and property of the Armenians are ours, we have lagged behind in crafts, we have to put maximum effort to learn everything not to make the absence of the Armenians felt in the town, etc. To perpetuate the occasion they ordered the demolition of the belfry immediately and turning the church into a mosque. They had brought experts who immediately started demolishing the belfry. When the holy cross fell on the ground, many Turks trampled and defiled it saying: "If you have any power, show it to us!" To demolish the church they summoned the well-known Armenian builder Mr Grigor Oznetsian and ordered him to turn it into a mosque immediately. Since it happened in November 1915, when winter was approaching, Grigor advised waiting until the spring to make the building more regular and solid. They liked the advice and so the building of the big church remained standing until the Russians occupied the town. Old Osman added weeping: "Thus the defiled cross showed its power and the criminal government fled defeated and Red Cross flags waved all over Karin."

I heard this story on 18 April, 1916.

Vahan Sitanian

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 134, p. 21, original, handwritten.

TESTIMONY OF TURKISH, PERSIAN AND ARAB WITNESSES
ABOUT THE REASONS OF DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE
ARMENIAN POPULATION OF KARIN

December 5, 1916

The reasons and the history of the deportation of the Armenian population of Karin in June 1915, heard from well-informed, reliable eyewitness: Turks, Persians and Arabs

The Persian *agha* Ehmet recounts: "At the beginning of the war, when Enver *pasha* came and organised the plan and armies for the campaign against Russia, there was a lot of enthusiasm among the Turks. Everybody was convinced that in a short time and easily they would take Ardvin, Ardahan, Batum, Akhaltskha, Kars and victoriously enter Tiflis. Deputy Seyfulla *effendi* was already appointed a viceroy in Tiflis. There were big celebrations and illuminations on the news of taking Olti, Ardvin, Artanuch, Ardahan. Every day Enver would send official telegrams: "My victorious armies besiege Sarikamish; my brave soldiers are heading towards Kars; the enemy retreats defeated and in disorder", etc. Suddenly rumours spread that there was a defeat, that the Russians had beaten the Turks at Sarikamish, there were countless wounded in Karin and they told us about the real defeat of the Turks. At night, Enver fled to Karin, had a short meeting with the *vali* and immediately left for Constantinople. The Turks started blaming the Armenians for their defeat, claiming that the Armenian volunteers blocked their progress, supported the Russians, and beat us. The Armenian deputy Pastrmajian²⁷⁷ was the general commander of the volunteers and betraying us brought our brave soldiers to defeat. They were openly insulting the Armenians saying: "You are traitors to our country; you are insidious; you are Russophiles, etc." They immediately killed Mr Sedrak Pastrmajian, deputy manager of the bank, in the street, as if to revenge on his brother. They arrested all well-known Armenian youth and Dashnak party members, put them in prison and tortured them. The aforementioned events became the beginning and the reason for the persecution of the Armenians and the devilish programme of exterminating Armenia."

Kyuchuk *bek*, son of Kodan *bek* from Artset, recounted: "In May 1915 our town crier invited all the Turks to a meeting out of town in a place named Pasha-Kyoshki. More than 10,000 Turks gathered there. No Armenians were allowed. The *vali*, Tahsin *pasha*, started speaking: "Unfortunately, I have to say that the Armenians took Van away from us and gave it to our enemy *Moscof*. The

Armenians are a great danger for our empire, so where there are Armenians, there is a danger of repeating the sad reality of Van. So I am asking you – what should be our attitude towards the Armenians?" All the people yelled: "Let's massacre, exterminate the insidious *giaours!*" Seyfulla was the next to speak: "We gave the Armenians high positions, even ministries; the Armenians are exploiting our country but it is not enough for them, they want to destroy us and establish their kingdom on our ruins. What are we going to do with these mutinous rebels?" All those gathered there yelled in unison: "Let's kill, destroy the insidious *giaours!*" Hefer spoke next calling for massacring all Armenians ruthlessly – old and young – and freeing the country from them. He said: "In 1895-1896 we spared the children but it was a big mistake. The children we spared have grown today and volunteer against us, fight and kill us, they take Van from our hands, and there is a danger that they will take also other towns from us." The meeting unanimously decided to massacre ruthlessly all the Armenians. However, doctor Hazim suggested that no blood should be shed in towns and villages because, he said, the corpses would decay and cause diseases; it would be better to drive them to far-away, desolate places and massacre them and throw them into the water. So that was the decision and it was sent by express-telegraph to Constantinople."

I asked: "Were you present at that meeting?"

Kyuchuk *bek* hung his head and said sadly: "Yes."

I said: "You implemented your monstrous plan, courageously massacred the helpless, unarmed old people, women and children and boasted that you had exterminated the Armenian people. But you will see now that you are very much mistaken. Know that over the centuries the Armenian people had experienced many such misfortunes but they were never exterminated and courageously defended their existence. The same will happen now. You are very wrong. There are many Armenians, they will come to their motherland, they will come and revive their ruined hearths and..."

The Persian *Meshedi*⁸⁹ *Haji* Ibrahim recounted the following:

At the end of May 1915, the *vali* Tahsin *bey* summoned the *chetebashi*²⁷⁸ Hamrvanli Eyupoghli Natir and showing the order from Constantinople said to him: "I am giving the local Armenians to you. You will safely take them to Kemakh where the Kurds and others will attack them. You will show that you want to protect them, take several shots at the attackers, then show that you can't resist; you will retreat and come back." Natir thought for a while and answered: "No, *pasha*, I can't accept you offer. You are ordering me to take the sheep and lambs with their hands and feet tied up to the slaughterhouse. It is merciless and

⁸⁹ Meshedi, mashadi – a Muslim who completed a pilgrimage.

does not become of me. I am a soldier; send me against an enemy who will shoot and kill me and I shall courageously fall, or I shall defeat him and free my country. But I shall never agree to stain my hands with the blood of the innocent." The *vali* persuaded him a lot to obey his order, but the noble Natir categorically refused. This time the *vali* summoned Mirza *bek* from Veransheher²⁷⁹ and made the same offer to him. Mirzabek too opposed saying: "Don't kill them for nothing. You are already putting the Armenians in such conditions that they will die on the roads; Mesopotamia is such a hot land that they will not endure it, they will all die." But the *vali* insisted on his offer and Mirza accepted it. Mirza fulfilled his commitment completely and after four months took 360,000 liras with him and went to Karin. He gave 90,000 liras to Tahsin, 90,000 to the local commandant Mahmut Kyamil, 90,000 to the *teftertar* and the rest to the *muhurtar* Seyfulla and their satellites. However, while dividing this plunder from the Armenians, a fight started between them, and the *vali* arrested Mirza. But Mirza threatened to make exposures that would surprise the whole world. Upon those threats, he was released.

Eyupoghli Natir and Kirza from Veransheher in person told this story to the Persian *Meshedi Haji Ibrahim*.

The Persian cameleer Kerpelayi Ali Memmet recounted the following: "I was transporting ammunition from Yerznka to Karin. Once in June 1915, when I came to the Khotur Bridge, a horrific scene opened to my eyes: countless human corpses had blocked the 12 arches of the big bridge and the water had changed its route flowing beyond the bridge. It was a terrible scene. I had to wait for a long time for the water to wash away the corpses so we could cross over the bridge. But the road from the bridge to Chenis was full of corpses – old people, women, children, already decaying and swollen. There was such a stench that it was impossible to pass by that road. Two of my cameleers fell ill because of that stink and died, so I had to change my way. Those were the victims and traces of an unheard-of and horrible crime. All the corpses were of Armenians, wretched Armenians."

Alamtar Ibrahim *effendi* recounted the following:

The order about the deportation of the Armenians that came from Constantinople was very strict and mandatory with the following message: ruthlessly kill all men from 14 to 65, do not touch children, old people and women but try to convert them to Islam. Mahmut Kyamil *pasha*, the Commander in Chief of the army, would always repeat: "Don't leave any Armenians anywhere. Cleanse the country from those *giaours* completely. If there is a cat with an Armenian name, even that should be driven away from this land!"

The governor of Karin Tahsin *bey* visited the local American consul Mr Stapleton⁹⁰ on 2 February and said: "We are obliged to leave Karin. The Russians and the Armenians will come after us. Please, tell them not to persecute the Turks since they are innocent in the Armenian question. And if they persecute and oppress them, we shall take revenge on the Armenians."

Vahan Sitanian

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 106, pp. 17-18 rev., original, handwritten.

No 3
**TESTIMONY OF THE ASSYRIAN F. A. VERTEN ON THE
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION
OF KARIN**

November 25, 1916
Karin

About the deportation of Karin

Narrated by the Assyrian (*kltani*) Farachallah Anton Verten from Aleppo

In April 1915, on the order of the *chetebashi* Jafar, *arapachi*²⁸⁰ Aghapek with some of his friends, upon the pretext of going to war, went to the Plain of Karin and started plundering, murdering, abducting and destroying almost all the village churches. Besides, it came out that those *chetés* had even tortured to death a priest by driving an iron stick into his anus. There were complaints to the governor of Karin against the vile acts of the *chetés*; the leader of the group Aghapek was imprisoned for 5 days only and then released.

After that some *cheté* mob, armed with spades and axes, swarmed into an Armenian cemetery to demolish the chapel constructed in memory of the previous Russian war. But they realised that it was quite a difficult and time-consuming job and started to forcibly bring every passing Armenian merchant or craftsmen or generally men to the cemetery and make them work on the demolition of the chapel. The *chetébash*i who was supervising the work, smashed the skull of an Armenian with a stone cursing that he was not working properly. The local primate applied to the governor about this barbaric act and even suggested that he should demolish the chapel himself but the governor reproached him saying he had no right to interfere in state affairs.

⁹⁰ The Reverend Robert S. Stapleton was a missionary in Erzurum, not the American consul.

After those events the deportation of 120 families was announced. The authorities gave only 15 days to prepare. The groups that followed this first group received a shorter time. On the order of the authorities they deposited their merchandise and valuable household goods in the Armenian church, sold the rest for a trifle and left the town. After the deportation of the second group, about 200 families converted to Islam to protect themselves against those calamities. However, upon the protests of the local Muslims claiming it was illegal, they were deported from the town.

Farachallah Anton Verten himself lived in Karin until its occupation by the Russian troops. Long after these events he made enquiries with the local Turkish population about the developments before the deportation and recounted as follows:

The telegram-order on the deportation and massacre signed by Sultan Mehmet Reshat and *Setrazam*²⁸¹ (*Grand vezier*²⁸²) Enver *pasha* arrived which read: "According to Sheykh-Yul-Islam's *fetva* (decision)²⁸³, all those who fight against our government and take a sword against Islam, they all deserve death as enemies of Islam; and since the Armenian people practically showed their disloyalty during this war, on the one hand, by giving away all our military secrets to the enemies and, on the other hand, all the Armenians arrived in groups to Russia from America, Bulgaria, Rumania to join local Armenians and fight against us which was clearly seen during the Persian war, therefore, all the Armenian nation without discrimination of sex and age, is condemned to death. So you (governor of Karin) are instructed, without any confusion and taking all safety precautions, to take the local Armenian population out of the town and massacre them all."

On the ground of this telegram, a meeting took place chaired by the Commander in Chief Kyamil *pasha* and with the participation of *hakim*²⁸⁴, Muslim clergymen and the chief Muslim leader. After that the Muslim clergymen made inciting speeches against the Armenians in *chamis*²⁸⁵. The main idea and the message of the government was presented to the Muslims and they all vowed to support the government plans with all their might. The mullahs instructed the Muslims to keep strict secrecy. They said that the Islamic law even allows, if required, to take false oaths in the name of God and the Prophet in order not to attract the attention of the Armenians and even make them feel secure. "And though a false oath is a sin in our religion, when it is done in the interests of Islam, it is on the contrary, pleasing to God and the Prophet," the Mullahs said.

Karin, 25 Nov. 1916

NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, rec. 106, pp. 19-20, original, handwritten.

No 4
**TESTIMONY OF WITNESS COSTANDIN TRIANTAFILTI ON THE
DEPORTATION AND MASSACRE OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION
OF KARIN**

Janury 16, 1917
Karin

Information presented by Mr Costandin Triantafilti on the deportation of Karin. He was a well-known Greek wholesale merchant and was aware of all the events:

On 20 July, 1914, a mobilisation was announced and immediately a requisition committee was formed. Persecutions started against deserters directed mainly against the Christians. The Turks who had more deserters were not persecuted; the requisition committee (*tekalif-i harbiye*) robbed the Christians giving them only promissory notes. They didn't take anything from the Turks or for show they took very little and sometimes gave it back. For the small amount of goods requisitioned from the Turks they immediately paid them.

On 19 October, 1914, war was declared. On 20 October, at 7:30-8:00 PM, all the *muftis* and clergymen surrounded the Russian consulate to drive out in two carriages the consul Mr Adamov and his staff. The English consul Mr Monahan learned about it at about 8:30 and went there. A police inspector and a military officer, after sitting in the consulate for a few hours, ordered to start off. The moment when the consul was going down, the head of the police went out and shouted to the cabmen: "Hurry up! Take this s*** out of here soon!" Then they came down. The carriages had just moved when the earth moved strongly three times. Upon that, I shouted that it showed that illegal things were going on. When I learned about the departure of the consul, who was a good friend of mine, I wanted to go and wish them a happy journey. A policeman was standing at my door and he told me not to go out otherwise threatening to shoot me.

Several days after that event, three Armenians were hanged charged with spying; they were servants at the home of the military attaché at the Russian consulate, Mr (then colonel, now general), His Excellency Eugene Vishinski²⁸⁶. The *kavaz* of the consulate slandered them at the trial.

The war had already started. Meanwhile news spread that Van had rebelled and because of that the persecutions that started earlier grew stronger, in particular, against the Armenians. During the Van fighting 800 Armenians were brought to our region. After an hour's walk, they started plundering them. Those who had money were beaten slightly but those who hadn't, were murdered. This story was told to us by the Kurds whose uprightness I don't doubt.

From what we heard, the actions of the government caused suspicions among the Armenians: one of their leaders was killed²⁸⁷, one was arrested²⁸⁸; the Armenians fired at and killed the soldiers who were sent to arrest another of their leaders²⁸⁹. A further 400 soldiers were sent who were also killed. The war started. The Russian army was approaching from the other side. When the Russians came closer, the Turks fled. Some of the refugees passed through our region and told legends about the atrocities committed by the Armenians in order to instigate the Turks. We, certainly, felt that it was slander. And when the army entered Van, they supposedly slaughtered 4,000 Turks without discrimination in sex or age.

Out of 800 Armenians who were brought from Van only 400 made it to Baberd. On the Baberd Bridge the Turks put them between two fires and slaughtered them or threw them into the gorge.

On 15-18 January, 1915, Mr Sedrak Pastrmajian, the chief controller of the Ottoman Bank, was murdered here: The Turks wanted to check if the Armenians would rebel or not. No sound was made. At the end of February 1,700 prominent Armenians and ordinary people were arrested. Bishop Smbat Saatetian applied to his alleged friend Governor Tahsin *pasha* begging him to release the prisoners. He released 160 people. Ten people – the editor of *Haraj*²⁹⁰ Atruni²⁹¹ and his friends, were taken away in carts and murdered.

On 10 April, 1915, the deportation of the Armenians all over Karin *vilayet* started. They started with 30 villages which were emptied in one day and one night; people left on carts or on foot. These villages were [deported] without resistance; even the weak and the sick were not spared. The sick didn't endure the deportation and fell down on the road; their corpses stayed lying on the roads.

This time the Russian consulate was turned into a hospital. I asked the chief doctor Fazli *bey*: “Why are you deporting the Armenians when no one puts up a resistance?” He answered: “Because the Armenians murdered 150,000 Turks in Van.”

The 15 to 20,000 people deported from the villages were all massacred before reaching Yerznka. When the town people learned the news, they refused to move. At that time Tahsin *pasha* – a hero who was massacring unarmed people – and the generous German consul mounted their horses and allegedly went where the villagers were massacred. They returned after 7 days, went to the prelacy, to Bishop Smbat, and said to him: “We went there and saw everything; only several people were killed by the Kurds. We punished the Kurds, executed many of them and established peace. There is no danger anymore.”

Bishop Smbat definitely did not trust the Turk but he trusted the German consul who confidently said: “I give you my word of honour: nothing will happen with any of the Armenians.” Bishop Smbat persuaded the people without

knowing that the German consul was the last villain and not a Christian consul. The people were reassured and the deportation started. A group left the town every five days. The first group on horseback towards Tigranakert; after them the other groups moved towards Yerznka. By the end of May the town was emptied. After the last group left the town, the massacres started on the roads. All the men from the group that headed to Tigranakert were slaughtered between Tigranakert and Kharberd; all the women were abducted by the Turks and Kurds. The lists of those who headed to Yerznka were sent in advance to the *chetés*. They came and after plundering them on the roads started slaughtering the people, raping the women and the girls. Many of them threw themselves into the water to save their honour. Each *cheté* abducted 2 to 3 girls. On the very last day, Bishop Smbat and the Protestant pastor²⁹² were deported and slaughtered in the Yerznka cemetery like sheep. After returning to Karin, the military officer who was present when Bishop Smbat was slaughtered, told the German consul in the presence of Soghikian's wife: “That damned black head had so much blood in him; he ran so much.”

Bishop Smbat offered a mass on the last Sunday. I was present too. It was so touching. Head of the Ottoman Bank Mr Palatur was present too. We parted weeping as if knowing that it was our last parting.

During the deportation the Armenians entrusted all their belongings in packages to the Ottoman Bank provided they would get them back when they returned. Since the bank had no place, they put everything into the Armenian church and put the name of the Ottoman Bank on it, for safety. When the last group left, which consisted of the Catholics who weren't supposed to be deported thanks to the intervention of the Austrian Emperor, and after Bishop Smbat and the pastor left, the authorities took off the name of Bank Ottoman from the church and announced: “It belongs to the Armenians so the court will take it.” We were not surprised that the Turks did such evil. We were surprised that the Germans who were considered Christians trusted the Turks and considered the Armenians traitors and ruthlessly murdered them. Even their representatives saw that there was no resistance. The Germans should have known that long ago: it was 500 years that the Turks were sucking the blood of the Christians. History should not forget this event when this time a Christian state became their accomplice in massacring the Christians.

The first *chetébash*i in this region was the agent of the German consulate Mr Scheubner²⁹³. This man was the biggest plunderer. He forcibly took three beautiful Armenian girls into his house and after doing all kinds of depravity and keeping them for some time, he gave each of them to a German officer²⁹⁴ to supplement the lechery he had missed.

The Hannesians had entrusted 3 bales of rugs and fabric to a German officer. When [the officer] was leaving, he took it with him. He, who had given a word

of honour to give it back to the survivors. If the German Christian officers are like this, you can imagine what would the Turks be like.

After the deportation of the Armenians, the new German consul, the villain Mr Vert, took the girls that the villain Mr Scheubner had given to the German officers (after the officers left), to his house and every time when he was taking a bath, he was making them massage him – his meanest act. When he was fleeing Karin, he added to the three girls also Martiros *effendi* Chilinkarian's respectable daughter, Miss Annik. Despite the girl's wailing, he dragged her with him. The German officers were as bloodthirsty and villainous as the Turks.

On 16 January, 1917, at 8:30 PM in his flat in Erzurum he gave me this information but didn't want to sign and took my word that his name would not be made public because one of his sons was in Constantinople then. Mr Mikayel Brutos, Mr Triantalfiliti's wife, son and daughter were present there.

I confirm that Mr Costi Triantalfiliti gave the aforementioned information – M. Brutos.

From the Moscow hostel Mr Amatuni together with Mr Brutos went to Mr Triantafilipi's place and brought this recorded information to the office of the Moscow Committee²⁹⁵.

Register of 16 January 1917
Karin

NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 479, pp. 1-9, original, handwritten.

NOTES

- ¹ Kyoprikyoy – a village in the Timar cluster of villages in Van district of Van province, 20 km to the north of the town of Van. In 1909 it had 22 Armenian and Muslim households.
- ² The number of the house is missing in the document.
- ³ Refers to the Kotur mountain range on the Turkish-Persian border.
- ⁴ See NAA, f. 227, reg. 1, rec. 469, pp. 13-15 rev.
- ⁵ Green Sunday – In the Armenian Church the Sunday following Easter Sunday is called the Sunday of the World Church of the "Green Sunday".
- ⁶ Names of 53 people are given in the document.
- ⁷ The church was named Bardzagnats Holy Mother-of-God; one of its priests, Father Abraham Ter Hovhannisian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸ Ishkhan, Ishkhan of Van (Nikol Poghosian-Mikayelian, 1883-1915) member of ARF, head of the freedom fighters.
- ⁹ Refers to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Party.
- ⁶⁴ Actually the *mudur* was not the head of the province, but the head of the cluster of villages. Janik was the centre of the Timar cluster of villages.
- ¹⁰ Dursi Tun (Outer House) was built on the lakeshore of the village of Khzhishk, to the south of Lim island, for the utility needs of the Lim Hermitage.
- ¹¹ The American Peabody-Martini single-shot rifle, modernised in Turkey in 1908, which used the 7.65 calibre cartridges of the Mauser rifle.
- ¹² There were two monasteries in the territory of the village of Alyur, on the hill, named after Holy Mother-of-God and St George.
- ¹³ Regular weapon – not old, modern weapon.
- ¹⁴ Refers to the American Smith & Wesson pistol.
- ¹⁵ Trekh – moccasin.
- ¹⁶ The priest Father Gevorg was murdered together with ten members of his family.
- ¹⁷ Refers to the Chief Executive Committee of Etchmiadzin Fraternity Aid. It was established on 28 December 1914 and dissolved in May 1919.
- ¹⁸ Refers to the United Armenian Organization established in Constantinople in 1881 with the unification of Araratian Armenian Association, Dprotsasirats Eastern Association and Cilician Association.
- ¹⁹ Dursi Tun (Outer House) was built on the lakeshore of the village of Khzhishk, to the south of Lim island, for the utility needs of the Lim Hermitage.
- ²⁰ Jihad – a holy war waged on behalf of Islam. See also Document 4.
- ²¹ Martini – the 1908 Turkish modernised rifle of the American Peabody-Martini single-shot rifle which used the 7.65 calibre cartridges of the Mauser rifle.
- ²² Village of Kalbasan.
- ²³ Refers to the regional committee of the ARF Party.
- ²⁴ The number of the house is not mentioned in the document.
- ²⁵ Refers to the village of Vostan in Gyavash district.
- ²⁶ Ter Mkrtich was the priest of the village of Mashtak.
- ²⁷ There are inconsistencies in the narrative.
- ²⁸ Refers to the coast of Lake Van.
- ²⁹ The narrator places the village in the wrong district.
- ³⁰ The period of the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid is meant.

- ³¹ Muavin (Turk.) – assistant.
- ³² Keri – Galfayan Arshak Grigor (1858-1916), national-liberation movement figure, member of ARF Party. During World War I he was appointed commander of the 4th Armenian Volunteer Detachment. He fell in May 1916.
- ³³ See NAA, f. 227, l.1, c.472, ss. 10-11.
- ³⁴ Mejid – 1. Turkish gold coin equal to 100 kurush. 2. Turkish silver coin equal 20 kurush.
- ³⁵ See Document No 19.
- ³⁶ Father Manuel, abbot of the Ter Huskan Vordi monastery and Diocesan Vicar of Van was killed during the massacres.
- ³⁷ ARF Party is meant.
- ³⁸ Probably near the village of Bzrkhana in the Alashkert region of Bayazet province.
- ³⁹ Yuva – village in the Ghamarlu region of Yerevan province.
- ⁴⁰ Kurdish chiefs of tribes are meant.
- ⁴¹ Refers to the Constitution of 1878 reinstated on 24 July 1908.
- ⁴² Tributaries of the Berkri River.
- ⁴³ The Diocesan Vicar of Archesh, Father Yeghishé, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁴⁴ Unit of measure for legumes.
- ⁴⁵ A special cylindrical clay stove dug in earth to bake bread.
- ⁴⁶ The number of the houses is missing in the document.
- ⁴⁷ Keri was the *nom de guerre* of Arshak Galfayan (1858-1916) who commanded the 4th Armenian Volunteer Detachment.
- ⁴⁸ The number of the house is missing in the document.
- ⁴⁹ Sukhari (Russ.) – dried crust.
- ⁵⁰ Probably near the village of Mahmedik of the Archak cluster of villages.
- ⁵¹ Refers to primate of Atrpatakan Bishop (later Archbishop) Nerses Melik-Tangian.
- ⁵² The villages of Ktsvak and Tsghak were not in Datvan but in Khlat district.
- ⁵³ Refers to the village of Surb Tatos in Berkri district.
- ⁵⁴ Location at mount Varag.
- ⁵⁵ Archimandrite Aristakes Katekchian, born in 1858, consecrated in 1888. He was the deputy abbot of the monastery of Varag.
- ⁵⁶ Archimandrite Petros Grigorian, born in 1865, consecrated in 1888. He was Diocesan Vicar of Khizan and the abbot of the monastery of Holy Cross.
- ⁵⁷ Refers to Archimandrite Aristakes Katekchian and Archimandrite Petros Grigorian. The third could have been Archimandrite Vrtanes Tevkants, the deputy abbot of the monastery of Varag (it is known that he too was killed during the massacres).
- ⁵⁸ Amended (the original has 1913).
- ⁵⁹ Before the first decades of the 20th century Armenian patronymics and surnames were both written with the “ian” ending often creating some confusion in differentiation of patronymics and surnames.
- ⁶⁰ Mar Shimun – literally “Saint Simon”, the religious and political leader of the Assyrians. Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin was the Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East from 1903 to 1918.
- ⁶¹ Artosh – a Kurdish *ashiret* in Aghbak (Bashkalé) province.
- ⁶² Fla – a Kurdish term denoting an Armenian.
- ⁶³ Blessing of Water – symbolizes Christ’s baptizing and is performed in the morning of the Holy Christmas, after the mass.
- ⁶⁴ Archimandrite Vardan Hakobian was born in 1846 and was consecrated a priest in 1880. He was the abbot of the monastery of the Holy Precursor in Mush for many years. After the death

- of Bishop Nerses Kharakhanian he accepted the post of the primate of Mush. He was killed during the massacres.
- ⁶⁵ The preposition “Ter” before the name means the person was a clergyman.
- ⁶⁶ Father Smbat Pahlavuni was consecrated by Bishop Mambré Mamikonian. He was killed at the age of 65.
- ⁶⁷ Father Hamazasp Mardoyan.
- ⁶⁸ The village priest, Father Mambré Yeranorian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁶⁹ One of the village priests, Father Tsaghik, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁰ Father Karapet and Father Hakop Ter-Serobian of the village church St James were killed during the massacres.
- ⁷¹ One of the village priests, Father Karapet, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷² The village priest, Father Khachatur Harutyunian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷³ The village priest, Father Barsegh Ter-Barseghian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁴ One of the village priests, Father Zaven, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁵ Father Daniel and Father Sargis of the village church of Holy Forty Children were killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁶ The village priest, Father Khachatur, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁷ The village priest, Father Vaghinak, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁸ The village priest, Father Movses Ghazarian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁷⁹ The village priest, Father Hrair Sukiasian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁰ Father Nerses Astvatsatrian and Father Hovhannes Ter-Hovhannesian of the village church of Holy MotherofGod were killed during the massacres.
- ⁸¹ The village priest, Father Khachatur Ter-Margarian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸² The village priest, Father Sargis Aivazian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸³ The village priests Father Daniel and Father Mikayel were killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁴ The village priest, Father Mesrop, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁵ The village priests Father Khachatur, aged 65, and Father Kristapor, aged 50, were killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁶ One of the monks of the monastery, archimandrite Khachatur, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁷ The village priest, Father Nerses, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁸⁸ Saleané – the annual tax replaced by amlak in 1872.
- ⁸⁹ Amlak, emlak (Arab.) – tax on real estate.
- ⁹⁰ Begyar – 1. Free work done by peasants on the lands of the landlords. 2. Free work the peasants were doing on the order of the administration, e.g. construction of roads, transportation of loads etc.
- ⁹¹ One of the priests of Tsronk, Father Mushegh Mikayelian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁹² The village priest, Father Serovbé, aged 65, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁹³ The village priest, Father Avetis Ter-Mikayelian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁹⁴ The village priests, Father Koryun Margarian and Father Husik were killed during the massacres.
- ⁹⁵ The village priest, Father Margar Danielian, was killed during the massacres.
- ⁹⁶ Refers to the chief of the ashiret.
- ⁹⁷ Hamal-boluki – group of load-carriers, labourers.
- ⁹⁸ An animal ritually sacrificed as an offering to God. It is cooked and distributed free among the poor and close acquaintances.
- ⁹⁹ Refers to Ruben Ter-Minasian.
- ¹⁰⁰ Preserved meat.

- ¹⁰¹The village priest, Father Poghos, was killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁰²The village pastors, Father Baghdasar and Father Hovhannes Soniyan, were killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁰³Gevorg Chavush – (1870, village of Mktenk – 1907, village of Sulukh) national-liberation movement figure, fedayee. Member of the ARF Party, one of the well-known Armenian national heroes.
- ¹⁰⁴The village priest, Father Tonapet, aged 65, was killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁰⁵The priest of the monastery, Father Harutyun Ter-Petrosian, was killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁰⁶This is the total number of Kurdish households given in the original text. The actual total is 70.
- ¹⁰⁷Archimandrite Vardan Hakobian was born in 1846. In 1880 he was consecrated bishop. He was the abbot of the Holy Precursor monastery of Mush for many years. After the death of Archbishop Nerses Kharakhanian he became the primate of Mush. He was killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁰⁸Amended; in the original it was August.
- ¹⁰⁹Amended; in the original it was August.
- ¹¹⁰Arshin – Russian measure of length equal to 70.11 cm.
- ¹¹¹Aghbalian Nikoghayos (Nikol) Poghos, (1873-1947), literary critic, Minister of public education and arts of the RA from August 1919 until May 1920.
- ¹¹²The primate of the Bitlis diocese Archimandrite Suren Galemian was born in 1884 in Kushna (Arabkir). In 1909 he was consecrated a monk. He was killed during the massacres.
- ¹¹³The church was named after St Stephen.
- ¹¹⁴During the World War I Turkey joined the Central Powers on 29 October 1914.
- ¹¹⁵Amended; the original was 1915.
- ¹¹⁶Artishen was a large Armenian village in Sassoun, in the Khulp district.
- ¹¹⁷Mukhsi, mahtesi, mghdsi, mghdesi, haji – someone who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is used before names.
- ¹¹⁸The village school was funded by the Yeghbairaser [Philanthropic] Association in Constantinople.
- ¹¹⁹Because of the tracks left on the grass.
- ¹²⁰This is how it is in the original. The actual name of the church was Holy Zion.
- ¹²¹Cordon – small groups of guards lined up in rows.
- ¹²²Amended; the original has Sevanchukh (the compilers are not aware of a locality bearing this name).
- ¹²³Yeraskh – another name for the river Araks.
- ¹²⁴Ushr – a harvest tax.
- ¹²⁵The original reads 1904 which is a mistake since the Armenians were not conscripted until 1908.
- ¹²⁶Ter Hovsep and Ter Hovhannes were the two priests from Kharkhots.
- ¹²⁷The church was called St Mesrop (St Cyriacus, according to other sources).
- ¹²⁸The American Peabody-Martini single-shot rifle, modernised in Turkey in 1908, which used the 7.65 calibre cartridges of the Mauser rifle.
- ¹²⁹Since the districts of Eruni and Barvar were next to each other, the location of some place names was often confused.
- ¹³⁰The priest of the church of St John the Precursor Father Karapet Atomian and Father Petros Ter-Stepanian were killed during the massacre.
- ¹³¹The priest of the church of Holy Mother-of-God, Father Hmayak Yeretsian was killed during he massacre.

- ¹³²The document reads 'province' but Erun was a district in the Sgherd province.
- ¹³³Since the districts of Eruni and Shirvan were next to each other, the location of some place names was often confused.
- ¹³⁴Fortified citadel of Berd in Manazkert.
- ¹³⁵Pool – the undisturbed part of the collapsed land (on the bank of a river, ravine, seacoast etc.).
- ¹³⁶Fakhi (faqih) – an expert in Islamic law.
- ¹³⁷The priest of Gyumgyum Father Nerses Ter-Hakobian was also killed during the massacre.
- ¹³⁸The *kot* accepted in Mush was equal to 8 kg.
- ¹³⁹Bahra – tax with harvest that the peasant cultivating the land paid as land fee. It was from half to one tenth of the harvest.
- ¹⁴⁰The church was dedicated to Holy Mother-of-God. It was an old, stone-built church with three altars.
- ¹⁴¹The church was called Tuxh Manuk (Dark-Skinned Child).
- ¹⁴²Merker – the name of a former owner of the Gospel.
- ¹⁴³Refers to the book of prayers compiled by Grigor Narekatsi.
- ¹⁴⁴The village school was opened in 1870 thanks to the efforts of Bishop Garegin Srvandzants.
- ¹⁴⁵Hamidiye – Kurdish cavalry organised by Sultan Abdul Hamid II.
- ¹⁴⁶Retif – Turkish reservists who were liable for military service in case of war during 15 years.
- ¹⁴⁷This refers to the members of the political party Union and Progress.
- ¹⁴⁸Mustahaviz (Arab.) – army of civilians in Turkey, the second mobilisation.
- ¹⁴⁹Olam – labour conscription, mainly carrying loads.
- ¹⁵⁰Murat River – Turkish name for the river Aratsani (Eastern Euphrates).
- ¹⁵¹Kirva – Kurdish or Turkish godfather, relation, close acquaintance.
- ¹⁵²Agha – Rich peasant, landlord; generally a wealthy person, employer who had employees.
- ¹⁵³Bek – a honorific title for high ranking officials, noblemen among the Turks; a hereditary landlord, chief of ashiret among the Kurds.
- ¹⁵⁴Bey – same as "bek".
- ¹⁵⁵Poghos pasha – Poghos Nubar pasha (Poghos pasha Nubarian, 1851, Constantinople – 1930, Paris). He had headed the Armenian communities in Cairo and Alexandria for many years. He founded the Armenian General Benevolent Union. In 1912 he was appointed the head of the national delegation by the catholicos George V.
- ¹⁵⁶George V Sureniants, Catholicos of All Armenians.
- ¹⁵⁷Refers to Alexander Khatisian, mayor of Tiflis.
- ¹⁵⁸Andranik – Refers to the national hero, general Andranik Ozanian.
- ¹⁵⁹Bostankend was located close to the border between districts of Mush and Bualnekh and was often ascribed to the district of Bulanekh.
- ¹⁶⁰The village had also a school opened in 1870.
- ¹⁶¹Zurna – a type of Oriental flute.
- ¹⁶²This refers to the members of mejlis idara – the administrative body of the vilayet, province or district. Christians too had their representatives in those bodies.
- ¹⁶³One of the priests of the village, Father Arakel Ter-Kajian, aged 50, was killed during the massacres.
- ¹⁶⁴Haji – a honorific title given to a Muslim person who has successfully completed the Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca.
- ¹⁶⁵The village church was built in 1268. One of the priests of the village, Father Hamazasp Ter-Hamazaspian, was murdered during the massacres.
- ¹⁶⁶The village school was founded in 1885 by the United Society of Constantinople.
- ¹⁶⁷The priests of Ziaret Father Tadevos, aged 60, Father Bardughimeos, aged 68 and Father

Hamazasp Ter-Hamazaspian, aged 55, were also murdered.

- ¹⁶⁸The priests of the village, Father Hovhannes, aged 80, and Father Avetis Vardanian, aged 50, were murdered during the massacres.
- ¹⁶⁹Kulab – a felt cloth coat worn by shepherds.
- ¹⁷⁰As is in text. It has to be Genj-Kharberd.
- ¹⁷¹Zozan – a mountainous cool place where cattle is kept in summer; a summer pasture.
- ¹⁷²Refers to the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God celebrated in the middle of August.
- ¹⁷³Giaour – infidel.
- ¹⁷⁴Refers to the aid received from the Armenian organisations.
- ¹⁷⁵Alayi (Turk.) – troops, army, crowd.
- ¹⁷⁶Zulim – calamity.
- ¹⁷⁷Besides the Monastery of Holy Apostles, the Holy Mother-of-God place of pilgrimage was also near the village.
- ¹⁷⁸The primate of Karin or Erzurum, Bishop Smbat Saatetian (born in 1871 in Atabazar) was ordained a celibate priest in 1895 by Archbishop Malachia. He taught at the Seminary of Armash and was Primate of Shapin-Garahisar. In 1908 archimandrite Smbat was elected primate of Karin. In 1910 in Etchmiadzin he was consecrated bishop by the Catholicos Matthew II. He was murdered during the 1915 massacres.
- ¹⁷⁹Barkhana – household stuff. Mostly used in phrases barg-barkhana, koch and barkhana.
- ¹⁸⁰Bashchavush (Turk.) – sergeant.
- ¹⁸¹Yapnji – a sleeveless coat made of goat hair, long mantle.
- ¹⁸²Mejitiyé – Turkish coin equal to 100 kurush.
- ¹⁸³Kahve (Arabic) – cafe.
- ¹⁸⁴Literal translation: By God, I hit him with all the strength of my arm after which he died.
- ¹⁸⁵The last part of the translation is wrong. The right translation is: “I don’t know, they want freedom.”
- ¹⁸⁶Kambakh – unfortunate.
- ¹⁸⁷Ramadan – the fasting month for the Muslims which is followed by the fitri feast.
- ¹⁸⁸Saj – a long thin round iron sheet on which bread is baked.
- ¹⁸⁹Fedayee – Haiduk [no English-speaker will understand the meaning of this word; perhaps “freedom fighter” or “guerrilla”].
- ¹⁹⁰The village of Ashkala was near the border of Derjan (Mamakhatun) district that is why the district is mentioned wrongly.
- ¹⁹¹Miriba, maraba – Land relationship in Turkey when a landless villager takes some land from a landlord and gives some part of his harvest to him according to the preliminary arrangement. Both the peasant cultivating the land and the lender are called miriba.
- ¹⁹²The church was named Holy Saviour and in the 1870s there was a school adjacent to it.
- ¹⁹³Kizilbash, ghzlbash (Turk.) – redhead – name given by the Sunni Turks to Zazas and alawis as well as Shia Persians.
- ¹⁹⁴Father Sahakian Raphael. He was born in 1864 and was consecrated in 1904. He was one of the pastors of the church of St George in the village of Koter. He was martyred during the massacres.
- ¹⁹⁵Bashibozuk – brigand.
- ¹⁹⁶The author exaggerated the number of the villagers, the trees he owned and the people murdered in one day.
- ¹⁹⁷Haysmavurk – the book where the behaviour and the martyrology of the saints and the witnesses are presented in the order of the church calendar.

- ¹⁹⁸Pastegh – sweetmeat made of juice of grapes, mulberries, plums, cornelian cherry and flour.
- ¹⁹⁹Eremurus – edible greens with long narrow leaves.
- ²⁰⁰Sumac – a plant with red sour fruits the ground seeds of which are used as spice.
- ²⁰¹The Primate of Kghi Archimandrite Gegham Tevekelian (born in 1886 in Enteres) was consecrated an archimandrite in 1909 by Archbishop Stepanos Hovakimian. He was elected Primate of Kghi on 1 December, 1912. He was martyred in 1915.
- ²⁰²The author has used 1914 instead of 1915, which was corrected by us.
- ²⁰³The description of the social-economical state of the village of Khubs and its daily routine was omitted.
- ²⁰⁴Frka (Arabic) – a group of people.
- ²⁰⁵The legends about the village were omitted.
- ²⁰⁶This is how it is in the original.
- ²⁰⁷Mahtesi – A Christian who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- ²⁰⁸Sipahi (Persian) – a feudal soldier on horseback.
- ²⁰⁹Amira – knight, chief.
- ²¹⁰The church was named after St Minas, built in 1201.
- ²¹¹Kratun – a pagan temple.
- ²¹²The lists of 1,200 people from the village of Khubs of Kghi who were massacred and deported and of 414 people who were in emigration were omitted.
- ²¹³He means converting to Islam.
- ²¹⁴The list of 188 people is omitted.
- ²¹⁵Tapakhané – tannery.
- ²¹⁶Tifuz (Turkish) – epidemic typhus.
- ²¹⁷The East Roman Empire also known as Byzantium didn't exist in the 3rd century.
- ²¹⁸According to legend, the Roman Emperor and the Empress were carved on the Deghtap stone. The Armenian king Trdat received that precious stone as a gift from the Emperor after adopting Christianity.
- ²¹⁹The village of Tortan is called historical because it is known from ancient times. The Armenian king Tigran the Great (95-55 BC) brought the monument of the pagan god Barsham and built a special pagan temple for it. The monument was made of ivory, rock crystal, silver and was a wonderful piece of art. In the beginning of the 4th century Gregory the Illuminator demolished the Barsham temple and built the Holy Sign monastery in its place.
- ²²⁰Hoja – Title given to a respected Muslim.
- ²²¹Amended. In the original it was 1916.
- ²²²Mukhtar – headman.
- ²²³Ghzbash (Turk.) – redhead. The name given by Sunni Turks to Zazas and Alawis as well as Shia Persians.
- ²²⁴Refers to different Armenian committees established during the war to support the Armenian refugees.
- ²²⁵Primate of Karin (Erzurum) bishop Smbat Saatetian (born in 1871 in Atabazar) was consecrated monk in 1895 by bishop Malakia. He was a teacher in Armash Dprevank, primate of Shapin-Garahisar. In 1908 Archimandrite Smbat was elected primate of Karin. In 1910 he was consecrated bishop by catholicos Mathew II in Etchmiadzin. He was murdered during the 1915 massacres.
- ²²⁶The statistical table was not found.
- ²²⁷Memur (Arab.) – a distorted version of the word employee, official.
- ²²⁸Vali – head of a province.

- ²²⁹Evangelical denomination – a denomination of Lutheran and Reformed Churches which is based only on the Gospel and does not accept the church tradition.
- ²³⁰Khoja – Old, elderly; rich merchant; Turkish teacher.
- ²³¹Euphrates College – Founded in 1878 in Kharberd by Dr Crosby Howard Wheeler (1823-1896), a missionary of the American Board of Foreign Missions. It was named Armenia College until 1888. Closed in 1915.
- ²³²Ottoman Turkish.
- ²³³Refers to 20 members of Hnchakian Party who were arrested on 14 July 1914 by the Turkish authorities on charges of attempted murder of the leadership of Young Turks and hanged on 15 June, 1915, on Sultan Bayezid Square in Constantinople. The Social-Democratic Hnchakian Party was founded in 1887 in Geneva.
- ²³⁴Bayram – a movable Muslim religious holiday celebrated twice a year.
- ²³⁵Pash chavush – sergeant.
- ²³⁶The All-Russian of Union of Town was founded in August 1914 to support the Russian government during the war.
- ²³⁷Amended. In the original it was 1914.
- ²³⁸Refers to 1,500 young conscripts from Urfa who were murdered in Gutemé and Karakyopru on 4 August.
- ²³⁹Archimandrite Artavazd Galenterian (1876-1915), primate of the Urfa diocese, arrested and murdered on 15 July.
- ²⁴⁰On 29-30 September 1915 the Turkish mob and policemen attacked the Armenian quarters but meeting with mighty resistance and losing about 400 killed, retreated.
- ²⁴¹Actually the Armenians had about 800 fighters. Thirty is the number of their positions.
- ²⁴²Refers to the owner of a carpet-weaving factory in Urfa, German M. Ekard, who promised life to the leader of the Armenians Mkrtich Yotneghbairian and demanded to stop fighting and surrender.
- ²⁴³Seeing the stubborn resistance of the Armenians, the Turkish authorities sent regular troops to Urfa headed by Fakhrpasha. The German colonel Volhshkahn was his deputy.
- ²⁴⁴Refers to the Chief of Staff of the Turkish army, colonel von Eksfeil.
- ²⁴⁵Corrected. In the original it was Katanchian.
- ²⁴⁶The post-scriptum is written in a different handwriting.
- ²⁴⁷In September 1915 Bulgaria joined the Alliance of Four. On 7 October the German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces started a general assault against Serbia and occupied Belgrade on 9 October. On 10 November they occupied Nišand; the Austrian troops joined with the Bulgarian troops thus opening the Berlin-Constantinople overland route.
- ²⁴⁸Actually, the American consul, despite warnings by the Turkish authorities, gave shelter to many Armenians in the consulate, presented the facts of extermination of the Armenian population in diplomatic reports and later wrote a book on it: Davis L. A., *The Slaughterhouse Province. An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, ed. by Susan X. Bleair, N.Y., 1989
- ²⁴⁹Banknote – non-interest bearing securities issued by a bank the value of which the bank pledges to compensate by gold.
- ²⁵⁰Metresé – a Muslim secondary school.
- ²⁵¹Manusa – striped cotton cloth.
- ²⁵²Turkish time – According to the time calculation system accepted in the Ottoman Empire.
- ²⁵³At the beginning of the 20th century Kharberd had the following quarters: Sinamut between two gorges in the south-west; the Assyrian, St Steven and Holy Precursor quarters up the hill one after another; the Upper Quarters were on the western heights; it was also named St

- James's or Missionaries' Quarter because the St James church and Euphrates College were there.
- ²⁵⁴The pontoon to Samsat.
- ²⁵⁵Nifiuz tezkeresi – an ID card. The author means that he had a document confirming he was a Muslim.
- ²⁵⁶Opium – juice of a poppy, made dense and solid, with poisonous smell and bitter taste used in medicine as a soporific and painkiller.
- ²⁵⁷The 9.5 mm Mauser rifle of the 1887 model adopted in the Turkish army. The 5.9 mm in the document is a mistake.
- ²⁵⁸These documents and the photographs of these weapons were used by the Turkish authorities in the book "Revolutionary Strivings and Actions of the Armenian Committees before and after the Adoption of the Ottoman Constitution" published in Constantinople in 1916.
- ²⁵⁹Refers to the "Book of Prayers Named Cyprianos: On All Kinds of Incidents that Fall upon People".
- ²⁶⁰Syrian – Assyrian religious-denominational direction.
- ²⁶¹The church was built in 1171.
- ²⁶²Sheikh – Muslim priest. Refers to the same mufti.
- ²⁶³Despot – title of a Greek bishop.
- ²⁶⁴Metropolitan – primate archbishop of Orthodox (Greek) Churches.
- ²⁶⁵Gyurji (Turk.) – Georgian.
- ²⁶⁶Kahya (Turk.) – manager, director.
- ²⁶⁷Kavaz, ghavaz (Turk.) – courier of an embassy or consulate; it also meant a bodyguard.
- ²⁶⁸Sublima – mercuric chloride.
- ²⁶⁹Imam – Muslim clergyman, priest.
- ²⁷⁰Refers to the village of Havtvan.
- ²⁷¹Najakh – axe-like cold weapon, pole axe.
- ²⁷²To take revenge on the Kurdish tribe of Mazrik for the treacherously murdered Armenian fedayeen, on 25 July 1887 an armed group of Armenian avengers attacked the tribe of Mazrik on the Khanasor plain, at the foothills of Mount Araul near the Turkish-Persian border. The chief of the tribe Sharaf bek fled and was saved.
- ²⁷³Samovar (Rus.) – a Russian urn to make tea.
- ²⁷⁴Papaz (Turk.) - priest.
- ²⁷⁵Teftertar (Arab.-Pers.) – head of the financial department of the vilayet.
- ²⁷⁶Muhurdar (Arab.-Pers.) – seal keeper.
- ²⁷⁷Armen Garo (Pastrmajian Garegin) (1872-1923), a public figure and politician. Member of the ARF Party. In 1908 he was elected member of the Turkish Parliament.
- ²⁷⁸Chetébashî – commander of chetés.
- ²⁷⁹Veranshehir – town in the Diarbekir vilayet, in Mesopotamia on the road to Yedesia. At the beginning of the 20th century it had 4,000 Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian and Assyrian inhabitants.
- ²⁸⁰Arabachi (Turk.) cart driver, carter, cabman.
- ²⁸¹Sadrazam – Grand vezier, prime minister, head of ministers.
- ²⁸²Grand vezier – In 1913-1917 Said Halim pasha was the Grand Vezier of the Ottoman Empire.
- ²⁸³Refers to the edict of November 1914 of the superior religious authority of the Ottoman Empire Sheikh-ul-Islam on calling all the Muslims of the world to a sacred war. See NAA, f. 57, l.1, c.630, ss.9-10. Between 1914 and 1916 the Sheikh-ul-Islam of the Ottoman Empire was Ürgüplü Mustafa Hayri Effendi.
- ²⁸⁴Hakim – judge.

GLOSSARY OF DIALECT AND FOREIGN WORDS

- ²⁸⁵Chami – a mosque, a rich and well-known Muslim prayer-hall.
- ²⁸⁶Thus in the original. Refers to Major General Evgeni Vishinski (1873-1918); in 1908-1914 he was the secretary at the Russian consulate in Erzurum; in 1915 he was the commander of the Yerevan Grenadier Regiment; in 1916 he was the assistant of the General-Quartermaster of the Staff of the Caucasian Army; in 1917 he was chief of staff of the Armenian separate corp.
- ²⁸⁷Ishkhan of Van – Nikol Poghosian-Mikayelian.
- ²⁸⁸Arshak Vramian.
- ²⁸⁹Aram Manukian.
- ²⁹⁰Haraj – newspaper of the Armenian Youth Union of Karin, published in 1909-1914.
- ²⁹¹Atruni Aram (1881, Kyumi – 1915), member of ARF. He was a teacher in Akn for several years. In 1902 he settled in Karin. In 1909 he started publishing the newspaper “Haraj”.
- ²⁹²Refers to Reverend Grigor Kirk Yasharian.
- ²⁹³Refers to the German Vice-Consul Count Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter who became Adolf Hitler’s chief political advisor in the 1920s.
- ²⁹⁴The names of those officers are as following: Karl Vert, colonel Schtanger, major Staschewski.
- ²⁹⁵The Armenian Committee of Moscow was established in the autumn of 1914 to support the wounded, Armenian volunteers and refugees of the World War I. The Committee organised and sent medical groups and medicine to the Caucasian front, showed financial assistance to the refugees and opened orphanages. In 1916 it founded a Russian weekly Armyanski Vestnik which was published until 1918.

- Amele taburu (Arab., Turk.)** – conscripts who were used in the rear in construction or for carrying goods.
- Arshin** - Russian measure of length equal to 70.11 cm.
- Ashiret** – Kurdish tribe ruled by one tribe chief.
- Askyar (Arab., Turk.)** – soldier.
- Bahra** – tax in harvest that the peasant who sows the land pays as land tax; it makes from one tenth to half of the harvest.
- Bard** – stack of dry hay consisting of 30-40 wisps (or up to 100 if small) and making one cartload.
- Bashibozuk** – irregular Turkish troops.
- Berdan rifle** – single shot rifle with lead bullets created by the American inventor Berdan.
- Bulgur** – boiled, dried and cracked wheat.
- Chaus** – see **chavush**.
- Chavush** – 1. Sergeant: 2. Messenger. 3. Observer, spy: 4. Policeman.
- Cheté** – militia, volunteers, gang of brigands.
- Cossack** – A category of population living in several regions of Russia, mainly South and East, which has its own administrative structures, differing from the others by their rights and responsibilities; Cossacks have extra land for which they are obliged to provide troops to the state at their expense.
- Effendi** – Honorific title for officials and learned men in Turkey.
- Ferman** – edict.
- Giaour** – infidel, the name given by the Muslims to all non-Muslims.
- Halvar** – see **Khalvar**.
- Hamal-boluki** – group of carriers, labourers.
- Hamidiye** – Kurdish cavalry created by Sultan Abdul Hamid II.
- Havar** – a signal for help.
- Ittihat** – “Ittihat ve Terakki” (“Union and Progress”) political party, Young Turks.
- Iyané (Arab., Turk.)** – donation, aid.
- Kaymakam (Arab., Turk.)** – head of the district.
- Khalvar** – wheat weight measure equal to 30 poods or 490 kilograms.
- Khan** – an inn, a shelter for passengers.
- Khana** – see **inyané**.
- Kholam** – servant.
- Kile** - Turkish measure of weight equal to about 25 kg.
- Kirva** – Kurdish or Turkish godfather, friend, close acquaintance.

Kot – cylindrical wooden bowl on a flat foot which is used as measure for grain; it is of different sizes in different areas.

Kurush – Ottoman unit of money; 100 kurush is one lira.

Lira – Ottoman lira equal to 22,70 Francs in gold.

Litre – unit of weight equal to twelve pounds or five and a half kilograms.

Mauser rifle – Carbine, a short muzzle rifle. This refers to the model 1898 Mauser carbine with the muzzle diameter of 7.65 mm adopted in the Turkish army.

Mejid – 1. Turkish gold coin equal to 100 kurush. 2. Turkish silver coin equal to 20 kurush.

Mejlis – Parliament in Turkey and Persia. Assembly.

Milli – Turkish or Kurdish volunteer.

Mosin – five bullet charging rifle of S. Mosin of the diameter 7.62 mm adopted in the Russian army.

Mudur – head of nahiye, cluster of villages in Turkey; inspector, head of an administrative unit.

Muhachir – refugee, Muslim emigrant.

Mukhtar – headman in Turkey; head of town district.

Mullah – Muslim priest with a white turban. Judge, lawyer.

Mustafis, mustahaviz – the army of the civilians in Turkey, second mobilisation.

Mutasarrif – Turkish official governing a province, head of province.

Nahiye – administrative unit in Turkey, cluster of villages.

Oka – Turkish measure of weight equal to 1,282 grams.

Okha – see **oka**.

Olam – labour service, mainly carrying loads.

Onbashi – sergeant.

Ottoman gold coin – see **lira**.

Ottoman lira – see **lira**.

Police mudur – head of police.

Pood – Russian measure of weight equal to 16,3 kg.

Redif, retif – Turkish reserve troops which in case of war had to report for conscription for 15 years.

Sandal – 1. Simple slipper-like shoes with a wooden plank instead of clay sole.
2. Light summer shoes without heels tied to the feet with thin straps.

Sheikh – chief of nomadic Arab tribes; the highest representative of Kurdish tribes; head priest.

Somar – measure for legumen, about three centners.

Tekalif-i harbiye – war tax.

Ushur – tax of one tenth of the harvest. Ushur is from the Arabic word “ashr” meaning “ten”.

Vali – head of the province.

Verst – Russian measure of length – 500 sazhen or 1,500 arshines or 1066,5 metres.

Vilayet – state.

Yataghan – curved sword.

Zulum – disaster, great calamity.

LIST OF NAMES

- Abatsev, Abatsiev Dmitri Konstantin** (1857–1936), lieutenant general, commander of the Yerevan detachment of the 6th Caucasian corps – 271
- Achemian Haik Arshavir** (1898, Van – 1965, Nor Jugha), philologist, pedagogue – 7, 73, 78, 110, 149, 151, 174, 203, 211
- Aghbalians Nikoghayos (Nikol) Poghos**, (1873–1947), literary critic, the Republic of Armenia (RA) minister of public education and art from August 1919 to May 1920 – 146
- Amirkhanian Vardan, Reverend** (1865–1915), priest of the Armenian Evangelical Church – 320
- Aristakes archimandrite**, primate of Kghi – 285
- Atruni Aram** (1881, Kyurni – 1915), member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), had been teaching in Akn for several years, in 1902 he settled in Karin, in 1908 he initiated publishing of the newspaper “Haraj” – 408
- Chanikants Tigran Baghdasar, Baghdasarian Tigran** (1890–1955), colonel, organizer of the Shatakh self-defence in 1915. In 1918–1920 he was the commander of a detachment in the Armenian army – 108
- Chanoyan Andranik** (locum tenens in Derjan) – 279
- Chatoyan Mihran** – 97, 176
- Davis Leslie A.** – (1876–1960) was US consul to Kharberd, Ottoman Empire from 1914 to 1917 – 322, 342, 348
- Dro (Kanayan Drastamat)** – (1883, Igdirdir – 1956, Boston), a military and political figure. Member of ARF party. In 1908 he moved on to the Western Armenia and controlled the transportation of weapons for haiduk groups. During the World War I he was the commander of the Second Armenian Volunteer Regiment, at the end of 1917 he was the military commissioner in Sarighamish. He headed the Armenian troops fighting against the Turks at Bash Aparan in 1918. In November 1920 he was appointed the RA military minister. He was the supreme commander in chief of the Armenian troops until 4 January 1921. Later he expatriated – 65, 108, 110, 176, 180, 183
- Ehman Johan**, colonel, consul, head of the missionaries – 320, 321, 326, 329, 346, 347, 348
- Enver pasha** (1881–1922), Turkish statesman and military figure, one of the main organizers of the Armenian Genocide – 37, 159, 330, 402, 406
- Gevorg Chavush** – (1870, village of Mktenk – 1907, Sulukh), activist of national-liberation movement, fedayee. Member of ARF party, one of renowned Armenian national heroes – 137

- Hamazasp, chieftain (Srvandztian Hamazasp Khachatur)** (1873, Van – 1921, Yerevan) – national-liberation movement figure. He participated in the volunteer movement in the Caucasus and was appointed the commander of the 3rd regiment. He took part in many battles. In 1918 he fought for the Baku Commune. He was axed at the Yerevan prison – 100
- Ishkhan, Ishkhanof Van (Nikol Poghosian–Mikayelian, 1883–1915)** – ARF activist, head of freedom fighters – 36, 49, 53, 97
- Jevtet bey**, Governor of Van – 32, 33, 35, 45, 49, 51, 56, 58, 115, 119, 120, 159, 182, 394
- Keri** – (**Galfayan Arshak Grigor**, 1858–1916), national-liberation movement figure. Member of the ARF party. In 1890 he participated in S. Kukumian's raid. He participated in the 1904 Sassoun rebellion. During the World War I he was appointed the commander of the 4th Armenian Volunteer Regiment. In 1915 he participated in the battle of Sarighamish. He perished in May 1916 near Revanduz – 60, 80, 92, 94, 110
- Khalil pasha Kut** (1882–1957) – general, commander of the 6th Turkish army – 25, 92, 126, 383, 392
- Koryun, Goms Iso (Iso)** (1880–1915) – participant of national liberation movement and battles in Sassoun, one of the leaders of the 1915 Sassoun self-defence. He perished at the battle of Mount Amprni – 215
- Lato (Mihran Rashoyan or Chatoyan)**, born in the village of Vosm in 1882. In 1904 he entered the liberation movement and participated in many fights. He fell on 6 July 1915 in the fight at the village of Betar – 176, 179–182
- Lazarian Khoren archimandrite** (locum tenens at Urmia) – 397
- Levon**, chieftain, from the village of Kharakants – see **Shaghoyan Levon**.
- Loulejian K. Donabed** (1876–1917), professor of biology, botany and zoology at the Euphrates college in Kharberd. Due to illness he was moved from the prison to the American hospital from where he managed to flee to Dersim and from there to the Caucasus. He died in Karin because of hardships of refugee life – 325, 326
- Mkrtich** (from Mush, dashnak) – **Mcho, Mkrtich Boleyan** (1868–1915) – member of ARF, chieftain, active participant of the Sassoun self-defence fights. He perished on Mount Krushik – 136, 141
- Murtula bek** – born in 1860, he was the son of Abdal bey from the family of El bek. He was the *mudur* of Moks and was known for his Armenophile position – 106
- Nahikian Khachatur** (1860–1915), professor of astronomy at the Euphrates college in Kharberd – 325
- Nazarbekov Tovmas**, (1855–1931), the Russian army major general (1915). During the World War I he was the commander of the 2nd Caucasian infantry division (Caucasian front). In 1917 he was appointed the commander of the

Armenian separate army corps. In 1918 under his general command the Armenian troops and volunteers stopped the advance of the Turkish troops at the battles of Gharakilisa, Bash Aparan and Sardarapat – 122, 211

Okhikian Armenak (1873–1915), lawyer, member of ARF, he worked in Persia and Russia. He lived in his birthplace since 1908 – 159

Paghtasarian Ter Stepan, Armenian Catholic priest in Malatia – 365, 366

Papazian Vahan (Koms) –1876, Tabriz – 1973, Beirut, national-liberation movement figure. Member of the ARF party. In 1908 he was elected member of the Ottoman Parliament from Van. In 1913–1914 he was in Mush. In 1915 he was one of the leaders of the Sassoun self-defence. In 1919 he was a member of the National Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference – 136

Petros archimandrite Grigorian –175

Psak Archimandrite (Ter Khorenian Psak Archimandrite) – 320, 321, 326, 347

Puchigianian Hovhannes (1873–1915), professor of philosophy and pedagogy at the Euphrates college in Kharberd. In 1909 he was the college inspector – 325

Saatetian Smbat, bishop – primate of Karin – 239, 261, 269, 314, 408, 409

Sargsian Varos Khurshud (1884–1970), pedagogue – 258

Sassountsi Manuk (Petara Manuk, Manuk Sharoyan, 1887–1920) – fedayee, participant of all Sassoun fights, Sassoun heroic battle of 1915, Sardarapat battle. In the period of the Republic he participated in the suppression of the Turk-Tartar rebellions. He perished during the capture of Koghb – 141–143

Smbat bishop – see **Saatetian Smbat, bishop**.

Shaghoian Levon, born in 1887 in the village of Kharakants of Hayots Dzor. He studied at the Aghtamar school. Starting a revolutionary life he stood out for his audacity. At the same time he was an intellectual with a sense of responsibility. In 1914 he was appointed the commander of the Gyavash self-defence forces, then the military leader of Pesandasht. About 6,000 Armenians of the area were saved thanks to him. In 1918 he moved to Mesopotamia together with the Armenians of Van. He lived in Mosul for many years and died in Baghdad in 1974 – 92, 94, 97, 98, 110

Shirin Yeghiazar Hakobian, chieftain from Archak, was born in Kharakonis in 1876. In 1915 he was the head of the Archak district. After the retreat he was the leader of the Yezidis in Alagyaz. He died in Alexandrapol in October 1920 – 7, 24, 29, 31, 84, 107, 111, 113, 152, 183

Shopner, Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter (1884, Riga – 1923, the real name is Ludwig Maximilian Erwin Richter), German diplomat, German vice-consul in Erzrum in 1915, a Baltic German by origin, one of the founders of the German National Socialist Labour Party, a friend of Hitler's, one of the organizers of the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich where he died from a policeman's bullet – 409, 410

Soghikian Karapet (1874–1915), professor of chemistry and languages at the Euphrates college in Kharberd. He contributed in Turkish–Armenian and American–Armenian newspapers; in 1910 he published the “Euphrates” newspaper. He was moved from the prison to the American hospital where he died – 325

Soghikian Sargis, professor, translator at the German consulate in Karin – 409

Tenekejian Nikoghos (1863–1915), professor of history and Turkish at the Euphrates college in Kharberd, head of the Armenian Protestants in the Kharberd region – 325

Ter Astvatsatur priest Ter Hovhannisian, from Soskun – 78, 80

Ter Barsegh (priest of Tapavank monastery) – 149

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Ter Gaspar priest Simonian (priest of Mjgyugh) – 232

Ter Gevorg priest, from Derots – 66

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Ter Davit priest Margarian(priest of Havtvan) – 389

Ter Hamazasp priest Mardoyan(priest of Ziaret) – 128, 129

Ter Hambardzum priest Harutians(priest of Varduk) – 265, 268

Ter Hmayak priest, from Berkri – 60

Ter Ghevond priest Sarukhanian, from Atnakan – 41

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Ter Karapet priest Ter Hovhannisian, priest of Kara–Chopan – 269, 272

Ter Kerob (priest of the village of Khas) – 130

Ter Khachatur priest, from Goms – 99

Ter Khoren priest, from Archran – 83

Ter Manvel – locum tenens of Yuskanordi monastery – 63

Ter Martiros priest (priest of Tapavank)– 149

Ter Martiros priest, from Khops – 49

Ter Melik priest (priest of Drmerd) – 133

Ter Mesrovb priest,from Khachan – 67

Ter Hakob priest, from Marmet – 47

Ter Harutyun priest (priest of Bostankend)– 212

Ter Harutyun priest, from Deru – 66

Ter Harutyun priest(priest of Mahlam) – 396

Ter Harutyun priest, from Norshen – 88

Ter Hovhannes priest (priest of Hamzashekh)– 201

Ter Hovhannes priest, from Marmet – 47

Ter Hovhannes priest Ghukasian(priest of Prkhus) – 157

Ter Hovhannes priest Harutyunian(priest of Gyardabad) – 389

Ter Hovhannes priest Ter Nersesian (priest of Khorkhots) – 175
Ter Hovsep(priest of Kharkhots) – 175
Ter Mkrtych priest, from Mashtak – 54
Ter Mikayel priest,from Tshogh – 97
Ter Mkrtych priest Ter Petrosiants,priest of Gyardabad – 396
Ter Mikayel priest Ter Samuelian(priest of Shervanshekh) – 203
Ter Minasian Ruben (1881, Akhalkalak – 1951, France), national–liberation movement figure. Member of the ARF party. In 1906–1908 he was in Gevorg *Chavush's* group in Taron and participated in the Sulukh fight. In 1915 he was one of the leaders of the Sassoun self–defence. In 1917–1918 he was a member of the Armenian National Counsel, then the RA military minister. After the establishment of the Soviet power, he moved to Zangezur and then expatriated – 136, 142
Ter Movses priest (priest of Top) – 166
Ter Nerses (priest of the village of Apri) – 191
Ter Nerses priest Ter Tovmasiants Tadevos,priest of Gyardabad – 389
Ter Petros (priest of the village of Avin) – 184
Ter Poghos priest , from Kuzel – 85
Ter Sahak priest, from Goms – 99
Ter Sahak priest (priest of Vozm) – 182
Ter Sargis priest (priest of Kashakh) – 172
Ter Shmavon (priest of Tapavnk) – 149, 151
Ter Simon priest, from Soskun – 78
Ter Smbat priest Pahlavuni (priest of Sordar) – 128
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Ter Yeghishé priest, from Archesh – 70, 72
Tevekelian Gegham archimandrite,locum tenens at Kghi – 275, 282, 298
Tlkatintsi (Hovhannes Harutyunian, 1860–1915), founder of a college at Kharberd, head of the St Jacob college. He was the author of stories, a novel, plays – 325
Trchun (chieftain)– 106, 181
Vahan – see **Papazian Vahan**.
Vardan archimandrite(Hakobian Vardan archimandrite) – 128, 140
Vishinsky Ozhen (Vishinsky Yevgeny), major general – 407
Vorberian Mkrtych S. –professor. He was born on 24 August 1868 in Malatia where he finished his primary education and entered the Euphrates college. Taking into account his qualities and knowledge, C. Hoyler invited him to teach in the college. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Euphrates

college he was awarded the title of the professor. The college sent him to America where he studied for one year at the Briston University. After the onset of the World War I he returned to Kharberd – 325, 327, 333
Yotyeghbrants, Yotneghbairian Mkrtych (1885–1915), organizer of the Urfa heroic battle – 342

LIST OF TOPONYMS

- Abagha** – cluster of villages in the eastern part of Berkri district of Van province. It was a separate district until the end of the 19th century. In 1912 it had 11 villages most of which were Armenian populated – 47, 48, 65, 66, 67, 74, 78
- Ablbuhar** – village in Mush district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian households – 131, 189
- Abulbuhar** – see **Ablbuhar**.
- Adana** – town in the Cilicia Plain, centre of Adana vilayet. At the beginning of the 20th century it had 45,000 residents of which 13,000 were Armenians – 234, 262, 312
- Adeyaman** – town in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet. At the end of the 19th century it had 15,000 residents of which 6,000 were Armenians, the rest – Turks, Greeks and Assyrians – 17, 372
- Aghasav** – village in Archesh district of Van vilayet – 73.
- Aghbak** – province in Vaspurakan region of Mets Haik. In ancient times it was considered the patrimonial province of the Artsruni princes. In the second half of the 19th century there were 81 villages in the district, 24 of which were Armenian. It was populated by Armenians (10,000 people), Kurds (8,000) as well as Assyrians and Jews (about 2,000) – 16, 116, 117, 118, 120, 187, 390, 391, 394, 395, 412
- Aghberkavank** – monastery in Khut province of Turuberan region. It was built in the beginning of the 4th century – 130, 132, 137.
- Aghbik, Aghbi** – village in Sassoun district of Mush province, 8–10 km from Tsovasar – 137, 138, 139, 224
- Aghbzut** – village in Khgi district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet, about 5 km south of the town of Khgi – 276
- Aghchatagh** – see **Aghjadagh**:
- Aghjadagh, Aghja-Dagh** – district in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet – 17, 318, 362, 364, 376
- Aghlat** – see **Khlat**.
- Aghni** – see **Vaghaver**.
- Aghsin** – village in Norduz district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 12 Armenian and 20 Kurdish households – 57, 58
- Aghsrav** – village in Archesh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century the village had 30 Armenian households – 83
- Aghtat** – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293
- Aghtat** – village in Mush province of Bitlis vilayet. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 65 households – 152

- Aghzunik** – village in Charsanjak province. It had a church named after St Sargis built in the 13th–14th centuries – 332, 360
- Agrak** – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 18 km east of the village of Charbuhar – 206
- Agrak** – village in Mush province, 57 km north–east of the town of Mush, on the right side of the Aratsani river – 170
- Agrak** – village in the Kghi district of Erzurum province – 274, 280, 281, 285, 296, 299,
- Agrak** – village in the Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet – 312, 313
- Aigestan** – the eastern part of the town of Van composed of 6 quarters – 24
- Ailants** – village in Sassoun region. At the end of the 19th century it had about 300 Armenian residents – 139
- Ailantsik** – see **Ailants**.
- Antap or Dutagh** – district in Bayazet province of Erzurum vilayet. At the end of the 19th century it had 80 settlements – 17, 123, 188, 189, 270
- Akants, Archesh** – town in Archesh district, 5–6 km away from Lake Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of about 1,000 households, 250 of which were Armenian – 49, 51, 60, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 211
- Akhavank, Akhavants** – village on the southern coast of Lake Van, in front of Aghtamar island, 33–34 km south–west of Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 200–250 Armenian residents – 97
- Akhdakhana** – see **Akhtakhana**.
- Akhlat** – see **Khlat**.
- Akhlat district** – see **Khlat district**.
- Akhorik** – village in Mahmudi district of Van province – 111
- Akhsraf** – see **Aghsrav**.
- Akhtakhana** – village in Persian Armenia, in Salmast region, north–west of Lake Urmia – 118, 391
- Akipevank** – see **Akipivan**.
- Akipivan** – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 274, 277, 299
- Akn** – district in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet. In 1896 the Armenian population of the district was massacred – 17
- Akn** – town in Kharberd district of Kharberd vilayet. In 1880, 5,442 Armenians and 4,286 residents of other nationalities (mainly Turks and some Greeks) lived in Akn – 244, 357, 361, 364, 367, 387, 388
- Akner** – village in Manazkert district of Mush province of Bitlis vilayet – 187
- Akrak** – see **Agrak**.
- Akrak** – village in Hakyari province, in Khoshab district. At the end of the 19th century it had 16 Armenian and 5 Kurdish households – 112, 113

Alagyaz – village in Lower Bulanekh cluster of villages of Bulanekh district of Mush province – 222

Alakan – mountain range in the Armenian Highland, north of the Kotur Mountains – 68

Alashkert – town at the upstream flow of the river Aratsani. It was founded by the Armenian king *Vagharshak* at the end of the 2nd century – 17, 128, 150, 152, 155, 158, 161, 166, 187, 190, 196, 205, 212, 266

Alberd – small village south-west of Lake Van – 166

Alchavaz – see **Artské**.

Aleppo (Halep) – province, district in Aleppo (Halep) vilayet – 18, 234, 329, 342, 405

Aliantsik – village in Upper Gavar cluster of villages in Mush district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 539 Armenian residents – 137

Alichan – see **Alijan**.

Aligbon – village in Mush district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 120 Armenian households.

Aliglbun – see **Aligbon**.

Alijan – village in Mush district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 80 Armenian households – 128, 131, 136, 168

Alizrna – village in Mush district, 6–7 km east of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 30 Armenian households – 131, 133, 225

Aljavaz – see **Artské**.

Almalu oghlun – plain in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 378

Alo – village in the Khnus district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 269

Alvarinj – village in Mush district. In 1909 it had 160 Armenian and 7 Kurdish households – 128, 131

Alyur – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. Alyur was the biggest and the richest settlement of the district. In 1909, 335 households of Armenian population lived in the village – 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41

Amarich – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 500 households of Armenian and 7 households of Kurdish population – 290, 300

Amasia – province in Sebastia vilayet with the province centre Amasia. Before 1915 it had 1,200 settlements and a population of 61,580 of which 28,500 were Armenians – 18, 357

Amutkhan – village in Dersim, in Chmshkatsag region. Formerly it was inhabited by the Armenians, but in the beginning of the 20th century it had 35–40 households of Kurdish population – 318

Andi Tagh – village in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 166, 167, 168, 170

Andok or **Andoq** – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Armenian Taurus mountain system – 136, 137, 214, 233, 235, 238

Andres – cluster of villages in Kghi district of Erzurum province, in the upper basin of the river Beri – 290

Andzav – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 8 Armenian households – 64

Angeg – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 105 Armenian households – 51

Anggh monastery – see **Holy Mother-of-God of Anggh**.

Annavank, Ananavank – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district, north-west of the town of Van. In the beginning of the 20th century there were 56 households of Armenians in the village – 40

Ansur – village in Pokr Haik (Small Armenia) in the Malatia region, to the right of the river Euphrates. In 1909 it had about 600 Armenian residents – 362

Antovk Mount – see **Andok**.

Apagha – see **Abagha**.

Aparank – see **Aprank**.

Aparu Holy Precursor – the monastery is located not far from the town of Kghi, on the height of Mount Aryuts. In the Middle Ages it was a centre of Armenian manuscript art – 274

Apevank – see **Akipivan**.

Apilhinti – see **Epilhinti**.

Apoghnak – village in Kghi district of Erzurum vilayet. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 1,000 residents – 273, 289, 300

Apoznak – see **Apoghnak**.

Aprank – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province, about 13 km south-west from the town of Mamakhatun. In 1912 it had about 100 households of Armenian population – 259, 261, 264

Apré – see **Apri**.

Apri – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 14 km north of Lake Nazik – 189, 191, 192, 206

Arabkir – district in Pokr Hayk; the town of Arabkir was its centre. The number of the Armenians in the district before 1915 was 35,000 – 17

Arabkir – the town was founded by Senikerim Artsruni in 1021. It is located on the north-eastern part of mount Yaghmur. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of more than 20,000 people more than half of which were Armenians – 159, 261, 316, 349, 350, 351, 353, 355, 356, 358, 359, 360, 361, 364, 367, 368

Aragh – village in Mush district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 37 Armenian households. The village had an old church (built in 831) – 131

Arak – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province – 118

Arak – village in Bashkala province of Van vilayet, about 10–12 km south-east of Bashkala – 393

Araks – river in the Armenian Highland; it heads from the slopes of mount Srmants of Byurakn plateau – 172, 393

Ararats or Arark – one of the quarters of the Aigestan region of the town of Van – 100

Araz – see **Araks**.

Yeraskh – see **Araks**.

Arberd – see **Harberd**.

Archak – cluster of villages in Van district, north-east of the town of Van – 16, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32

Archak – lake on the eastern side of Lake Van – 29

Archak or Archag – village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district, about 25 km north-east of the town of Van – 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 42, 101, 331

Archesh – district in the north side of Van vilayet – 16, 58, 68, 70, 73, 74, 76, 78

Archesh – see **Akants**.

Archra – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 74 Armenian households (477 residents). The village was divided into two parts – Upper and Lower, which were often considered separate villages – 81, 82, 83

Areg – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, in the valley of the river of the same name. Before 1915 it had 300 households with a population of 1,680 people – 273, 289, 300

Aregh – village in Shatakh district of Van province. In 1913 the village had 102 Armenian households – 109, 110

Aregin – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Arek – see **Areg**.

Aren – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. In 1909 there were 102 Armenian households (626 people) in the village – 45, 84, 85, 86

Argha – settlement in Aghjadagh district of Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 373

Argik – village in Gavar cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137

Arindz – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 273, 281, 283, 290, 291, 300

Arinj – see **Arindz**.

Arinj – village in Mush district, north of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 2,400–2,600 residents – 128

Arinjvank – village in Mush district, north of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 60 Armenian and 6 Kurdish households – 128

Arit – village in Shirvan district of Sgherd province – 186

Arkavank – village in Mush district, about 24 km south-east of the town of Mush, on the fertile lands of Meghraget – 132

Arkik – see **Argik**.

Armizon – village in Archesh district of Van province, on the northern side of Lake Van – 83

Arnis – village in Berkri district of Van province, in the north-eastern part of Lake Van – 73

Arnist – village in Mush district. In 1909 it had 70 Armenian and 15 Kurdish households – 131, 210

Arnjik – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 20 Armenian households – 178, 180

Aroh – village in Eruni district of Sgherd province – 181, 182

Aros – village in Erzurum vilayet, in Khnus region, 6–7 km south-east of the town of Khnus – 171

Artamet – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages of Van province. In 1909 the village had 150 Armenian households – 51, 53, 54

Artert – village in Mush district, north of the town of Mush. In 1880 it had 80 households with about 800 residents – 128

Artghu – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 137

Artghonk – see **Artkhonk**.

Artkhonk – village in Mush district of Mush province, 13–14 km north-west of the town of Mush – 128, 217

Artkunk – village in Khiank cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province. In 1909 it had 30 Armenian households – 237, 238

Artonk – village in Mush district, south-east of the town of Mush. It was a populous Armenian-populated village – 128, 131, 209, 210, 211

Artos – mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, near the southern coast of Lake Van – 97

Artsap – at the end of the 19th century the fortress was part of Bayazet province of Erzurum vilayet – 107

Artskéor Aljavaz – district in Van province, the historical Khorkhorunik. It stretches out to north-west of Lake Van. In the second half of the 19th century Artskéhad 140 villages with a population of 30,000, of which 25,000 were Armenians – 16, 36, 45, 68, 81–89

Artskéor Aljavaz – town on the northern coast of Lake Van, opposite the island of the same name – 69, 70, 85, 88, 89

Artuchli – mountain in the Armenian Highland – 258

Aruidots – see **Arvtots**.

Aruq, Aruk – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Arvtots – village in Upper Khizan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 232

Ashgala – see **Ashkala**.

Ashkala – town in Erzurum province, 40 km west of Erzurum. In 1909 it had about 800 Armenian and Turkish residents – 256 – 258

Ashkhala – see **Ashkala**.

Asparatsin of Astvatsatsin – village in Van province, on the east coast of Lake Van – 34, 35, 36

Astghaberd – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of 1,500 Armenians and 10 households of Kurds – 288

Astvatsatsin – village in Tinar cluster of villages in Van district, about 27 km south-west of the town of Berkri – 42, 176

Atanants – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of village of Van district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 308 Armenian residents – 53, 56, 89, 90

Ater – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1915 the village had 98 Armenian residents – 36

Atieaman – see **Adyaman**.

Atkon – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 130 households of which 100 were Armenian – 193, 195, 206

Atnakants – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 40 Armenian households – 36, 41

Atnjogh – Turkish village in Erzurum province – 257

Atrpatakan (Atropatene) – ancient country in Persia. In the beginning of the 20th century there were 6,123 households of Armenian population on the territory of Atrpatakan – 101, 390, 393, 397

Avag monastery – the monastery is on Mount Sepuh and was standing until the 1915 genocide. It had vast estates and 10 villages. According to the legend, the village was founded by apostle Thaddeus and Gregory the Illuminator – 306

Avants – village in Van province, in Van-Tosp. In 1909 the village had 300 Armenian households – 47, 48

Avarash (Sevjur) River – see **Garasu, Marmet River**.

Averak or Averaki – village in Van province, in Van-Tosp, 7 km north of the town of Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 60 Armenian and 31 Kurdish households – 21, 22

Avin – village in Shirvan district of Sgherd province – 183, 184

Avran – village in Mush district, north of the town of Mush. In 1913 it had 200 Armenian households – 128

Avrdi – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. The church was named after St Jacob, built in 1249 – 286, 300

Avrtnik – see **Avrdi**.

Avzaghbyur – see **Avzaghbyur Lower**.

Avzaghbyur Lower – village in Mush province, about 22 km east of the town of Mush – 128, 133, 171

Avzaghbyur Upper – village in Mush district, 12–15 km north-west of the town of Mush – 128

Avzut – village in Mush district, about 30 km south-east of the town of Mush, on the road to Bitlis – 128, 131, 134, 151, 152, 210, 219, 230

Ayants – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district of Van province. In 1901 the village had 52 households – 37

Azap, Azap Kyoy – village in the district of Lower Basen, on the road from Hasankala to Kars – 254

Azar – see **Hazara**.

Baberd – district in the north-western part of Erzurum province. The total number of the Armenians on the eve of 1915 was 17,000–19,000 – 17, 242, 238, 239, 242, 258, 260, 261, 305, 310, 314, 349, 361, 408

Badrants, Badranants – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. It was populated with Armenians. In 1909 it had 14 Armenian households – 178

Badrmut – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 231

Bagarich – settlement, village in Derjan district of Erzurum province. In older times, before 1915 it was part of Yernzka province – 258, 259, 261, 262

Baghcha – village in Khnus district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it was already populated with the Kurds – 152

Bagheshvilayet, province, district – 8, 16, 17, 42, 46, 47, 58, 99, 102, 127, 142, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160, 162–166, 169, 170, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 183, 184, 185, 188, 193, 196, 198, 214, 215, 218, 230,

Baghlo – see **Baghlu**.

Baghlu – village in Mush district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 40 Armenian households – 128

Baghnik – village in Erzurum province, 13 km north of the town of Erzurum. In 1880 it had a population of 804 of which 644 were Armenians – 272, 293

Bagran – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 Armenian and 30 Kurdish households – 187, 214

Bahri – village in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 368

Bakhezik – see **Pakhezik**.

Balazhu Mount – mountain in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 176

Baldaban – location in the Gyumushkhané province of Trabzon vilayet – 386, 387
Balkan or **Balqan** – village in Gyzaldara cluster of villages in Bitlis district – 216
Baloyink – see **Beloyenk**.
Balu – fortress town in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet. In 1914 it had a population of about 10,000 – Armenians, Turks, Kurds, Assyrians and Greeks – 275, 276, 283, 296, 299, 332, 379, 383, 384
Banon – village in Archesh district, north-east of Lake Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian households – 74
Banoti Gorge – gorge in the vicinity of Bitlis – 175
Baradotik – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Shatakh province of Van vilayet – 92, 109
Barvar – district in Sgherd province, in its eastern part, in the area of the downstream flow of the Eastern Tigris – 181, 182
Basen – district in Erzurum province. In 1909 it had 169 villages of which 57 were Armenian-populated – 17, 132, 168, 211, 238, 255, 260, 261, 266, 271, 314
Bashgala – see **Bashkala**.
Bashkala – town in Aghbak district of Hakyari province. It was the centre of the district. In the 1910s it had 50 households of Armenian, Jewish, Assyrian and Kurdish residents – 112, 114 – 123, 125, 126, 390, 392, 393
Bashkalé – see **Bashkala**.
Bast – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province, south-west of Lake Van – 178, 180
Batnos – district in Artské province of Van vilayet, on the north-western part of Lake Van – 81
Batsi – village in Khiank cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 137, 233
Bayazet – town in Bayazet district of Bayazet province of Erzurum vilayet – 17, 60, 69, 76, 128, 175
Bayburd – see **Baberd**.
Bayrak – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 38 Armenian households – 36, 41
Bayraq – see **Bayrak**.
Baz – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province. In 1915 the village had 20 Armenian and 12 Kurdish households – 118, 393
Bazenits monastery, Holy Mother-of-God, Baghenits Holy Etchmiadzin – monastery in Sparkert district. It was one of the centres of medieval Armenian manuscript art – 178
Bazents – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. It was a purely Armenian village – 178, 179
Bazidagh – village in Berkri district of Van province – 67

Bazmashen – village in Kharberd vilayet, 10–12 km south-west of the town of Kharberd. On the eve of genocide it had 460–500 households of purely Armenian population – 324
Bazu – village in Mush district, south of the Holy Precursor monastery. It was a centre of manuscript art – 128, 217
Beloyenk – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 233
Belu – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 110 households – 91
Bendi-Mahu, Bendimahu – see **Berkri River**.
Benkants – see **Pikants**.
Bentimahu – see **Berkri**.
Berd – see **Manazkert Berd**.
Berdak – village in Charsanchak district of Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet – 318
Berdak – village in Mush district, about 8 km south-east of the town of Mush. It had a church built in 921 and a school – 131, 178
Berkri – district in Van province, stretches out from the north-eastern bay of Lake Van to Maku Khanate and Tandurek mountain range – 16, 42, 43, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66
Berkri – river in the Armenian Highland. Originates in the north-eastern slopes of the Tsaghkants Mountains and flows into Lake Van 10 km south of the town of Berkri – 48, 107, 176
Berkri – town, fortress, fortress-town north-east of Lake Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 3,100 residents, of which 2,100 were Armenians, the rest – Turks, Jews and Kurds – 23, 43, 44, 49, 52, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 78, 81, 85, 98, 101, 107, 112, 176, 180, 183, 211
Berkri Canyon, Gorge, Pass – located in the north-eastern side of Lake Van, in the valley of the river Berkri – 21, 45, 48, 50, 59, 180
Berkri Kalé – see **Berkri** (town).
Berm – village in Khiank cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province. In 1890s it had 200 households – 137
Beshnagomir – see **Peshnagomer**.
Bglits – village in Mush province, near the village of Arinj. In 1914 it had 130 households with about 1,000 Armenian residents – 128, 131
Bhants – see **Pahants**.
Birkarip, Bir-Karip – see **Pirkarib**.
Biroi Kalin – location on mount Varaga – 112
Birot – village in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet – 368
Bitlis or **Baghesh** – town on the south-western side of Lake Van. In the beginning of the 20th century the town had a population of 30,000 people, of

which 10,000 were Armenians – 70, 92, 105, 143, 150, 151, 158, 159, 161, 165, 166, 169, 173, 174, 214, 219, 227, 331,

Bklits – see **Bglits**.

Blel – village in Mush province, about 8–9 km west of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 20 Armenian households – 128, 226

Blokank – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Bltents – see **Pltents**.

Blur – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 18 km south–west of the town of Manazkert – 205

Boghanis – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 18 Armenian households – 91, 121

Boglan – village in Genj district of Genj province. In 1909 it had about 68 Armenian and Kurdish residents – 128

Bohtani River – river in the Armenian Highland, the Eastern Tigris – 185

Bostankand, Bostakand – village in Mush district, about 36 km north–east of the town of Mush – 211

Brgashen – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 24 km south–west of the town of Kop – 206

Brnakapan – village in Erzurum district, at the southern foot of mount Kob – 241, 258

Brnashen – district in Bitlis vilayet. This is how Khut–Brnashen district of Sassoun is often named – 146, 166, 170

Btarich – village in Yerznka district, about 20 km south–east of the town of Yerznka – 306

Bughsharsz Deresi – gorge near Yedesia – 316

Bulanekh – district in Mush province of Bitlis vilayet – 16, 42, 132, 167, 189, 190, 191, 193, 195, 196, 198, 199, 201, 203, 205, 208, 222

Bulanekh Lower – cluster of villages in Mush province, the south–western part of Bulanekh district. In 1914 there were 13 purely Armenian villages here – 189, 191, 205, 206, 211, 212

Bulanekh Settlement – see **Kop Settlement**.

Bulanekh Upper – cluster of villages in Mush province, the north–eastern part of Bulanekh district. At the end of the 19th century it had 15 Armenian populated villages – 157, 192, 205, 206

Burnaz – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, about 23 km east of the town of Khnus – 268

Burni–Bulagh – see **Burnu Bulagh**.

Burnu Bulagh, Burnubulagh – village in Bayazet province, about 40 km south of the town of Gharakilisa – 208

Bzhnkert – village in Aghbak district of Hakyri province. At the end of the 19th century it had 55–60 Armenian and 10 Kurdish households – 49, 51

Bzrkhan – plain in Berkri district of Van province – 66

Chaghrbek – village in Archesh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 households – 73

Chakhr–Beg, Chakhrbek – see **Chaghrbek**.

Chali – village in Kamakh district of Yerznka province – 262

Chan, Changyugh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, on the bank of a tributary of the river Peri. – 283, 286, 299, 300

Chanagchi – see **Chanakhchi**.

Chanakhchi – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 287, 300

Chanchaghbyur – village in Archesh district of Van province – 74

Chanik – see **Janik**.

Chanpek – village in Charsanchak district of Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet – 373

Chapaghjur – district in Genj province of Bitlis vilayet, in the valley of the river Chapaghjur – 16, 330

Chapan – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 269

Charbuhor – village in Vardo district of Mush province, 45 km north of the town of Mush – 168

Chardakh, Chardak – village in Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet – 305

Charek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 274

Charibash – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 14 km south–east of the town of Kghi – 288, 300

Charipash – see **Charibash**.

Charphor – see **Charbuhor**.

Charsanchag – district in Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet, on its southern, plain part – 318

Chartagli – see **Chardakh**.

Chaurma, Chaurmeh, Chevirmeh – village in Khnis district of Erzurum province – 168

Chazhvan – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 50 Armenian households – 178

Chbkhlulu – village in Berkri district of Van province, 35 km south–east of Berkri – 65

Chenis – see **Jinis**.

Cher or Chir – village in Erzurum, 33 km south–west of the town of Khorasan – 267

Chermak (Tsirmak) – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 289

Chiftlik – village in Erzurum province, 17 km north–east of the town of Erzurum – 260, 292, 293, 294, 300

Chiftlik – village in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet, 12–13 km east of the town of Malatia – 335, 368, 371

Chil Khoroz – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 244

Chim – village in Psank district of Sassoun – 233

Chimishkatsak – see **Chmshkatsag**.

ChipichéMount – see **Sanasar gorge**.

Chlkani – village in Archesh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 20 households – 87

Chil–Kayni – see **Chlkani**.

Chmshkatsag – centre of the Chmshkatsag district of Dersim province. According to J. Lepsius, on the eve of 1915 it had 9,000 Armenian residents – 17, 314, 318

Chnok – see **Jnuk**.

Chprgegh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, on the left side of the midstream flow of the river Kghi 300

Chrtnik – see **Jrtnik**.

Chubukhlu – see **Chbkhlu**.

Chukh – village in Aghbak (Bashkala) district of Hakyari province of Van vilayet – 393

Chumakh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 7–8 km north–west of the town of Kghi – 277, 300

Cheonek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 284

Dadaveran – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, about 21 km north–east of the fortress–town of Khnus – 268

Daghveran – village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district. In 1914 it had 40 Armenian households with a population of 320 – 27, 29

Dahalaysé – village in Sassoun – 138

Daladzor – village in Upper Kharzan (Khabljoz) cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 232

Dalars or **Dalas** – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Dalhor – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province 137, 233

Dalicha – stream in the basin of Lake Van – 77

Dapik – see **Tapk**.

Darabek – village in Timar cluster of villages in Van district of Van province, north of the town of Van – 34–35

Daranaghi Kamaghk – see **Kamakh**.

Darents – village in Shatakh district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 7 Armenian households – 110

Darman – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In 1915 it had 2,650 Armenian residents. There were two churches there one of which – St Sargis, was built in 1181 – 288, 289, 300

Daru – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293

Dashbatrik – see **Tajbadrik**.

Dashli Chay – see **Dashlja**.

Dashlja – village in Karakilisa district of Bayazet province of Erzurum vilayet – 189

Dasht – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. It was a centre of manuscript art – 178

Dashtadem – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Dataveran – see **Dadaveran**.

Datem – village in Kharberd province, not far from the town of Kharberd – 317

Datvan – cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province – 16, 102, 168, 173

Dava–Boyn, Davaboyn – mountain range in the Armenian Highland, at the eastern part of Erzurum plateau – 257

Deghdz – see **Deghdzmer**.

Deghdzmer – village in Mush province, about 22 km south–east of the town of Mush – 218, 219, 220

Degirmen Dere – river and river–plain in the basin of the Mediterranean Sea – 386

Deh – village in Erun district of Sgherd province – 181, 182

Deir Ez–Zor (Deir El–Zor, Der–Zor, Ter–Zor) – town in Syria, on the right bank of the river Euphrates – 18, 370, 373

Derik – village in Manazkert district of Mush province, about 12 km south–west of the town of Manazkert – 128, 186, 187, 190, 192, 198, 218, 271

Derishk – village in Salmast province, south–east of the town of Dilman, on the right bank of the river Salmast 391, 392

Derjan or **Mamakhatun** – district in Erzurum province, stretching out along the upper flow of the Western Euphrates – 17, 254, 255, 258, 259, 260–263, 265, 266, 268, 279, 305, 313, 314

Derk – see **Derik**.

Derken – village in Shirvan district of Sgherd province – 186

Derkevank – village in Mush district of Mush province. In 1890 it had 89 and in 1909 – 60 Armenian households – 128

Deron – village in Berkri district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century the village had 30 Armenian and 25 Turkish households – 65, 66

Dersim – province, vilayet, region in Kharberd vilayet. On the eve of 1915 the population of Dersim was about 200,000 people with 45% being Armenians and the rest – Kurds – 16, 250–253, 256, 285, 296, 304, 305, 310, 313, 314, 317, 319, 322, 326, 328, 330, 332, 345, 360, 379, 383, 384

Deru – see **Deron**.

Diadin – village, settlement, town in Diadin district of Bayazet province. In 1915 it had 400 Armenian households – 17, 89, 209

Diarbekir – vilayet, province in Western Armenia. According to the 1882 data, the Armenian population of the vilayet was 150,000. At the end of 1914 the total population of the vilayet was 296,000 of which 105,000 were Armenians (thousands of Armenians were murdered and many had emigrated during the 1895 massacres) – 8, 16, 17, 138, 142, 253, 317, 321, 322, 326, 327, 329, 330, 379, 409

Dilman – town, village in Persia, the centre of Salmast province – 118, 396, 397

Divrin Chay – bridge near the town of Yernzka – 308

Diza – village in Gyavar district of Hakyari province inhabited by Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds and Jews – 124

Dolabash – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 40 Armenian and 10 Kurdish households – 187

Drishk – see **Derishk**.

Drmerd, Drmet – village in Mush district, east of the town of Mush 128, 132–135, 171

Dukhanashen or Dukhan – village in Bitlis vilayet, about 20 km south of the town of Bitlis – 159, 215

Duknuk – see **Tuknuk**.

Dusu – see **Tosu**.

Dutagh – see **Aintap**.

Dvalenk – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, 2–3 km east of Talvorik – 138

Dvnik – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province, 15–16 km west of the town of Erzurum – 128

Dzitahogh – village in Erzurum province. In 1909 it had 216 households. Most of the population were Armenians – 242, 250

Dzitavogh – see **Dzitahogh**.

Dzitogh – see **Dzitahogh**.

Dzoraghbi – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 231

Dzorer – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, populated with the Armenians – 140

Egadzor – see **Egedzor**.

Egedzor – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 18 Armenian households – 83, 84

Egnakhoja – see **Iknakhoja**.

Ekepat – village in Basen district of Erzurum province. At the end of the 19th century it had 70 households of Armenian population – 254

Ekin – see **Akn**.

Enkuzek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 278

Enkuznak, Enkuzek, Enkuzik – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Epilhinti – village in Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 22 households of Armenian population – 401

Ererin – see **Ererna**.

Ererna or Yererin – village in Timar cluster of villages in Van district, 23–24 km north–west of the town of Van – 34, 44, 45

Eresk – village in the Kochak cluster of villages of Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293

Ershter, Erishter – see **Yerishter**.

Erun – district in Sgherd province, in the area of the source of the river Tigris. Settlement Deh was its centre – 131, 181, 183–185

Rzaghghamsi or Khasmik, Erzi Khasmi – 187

Erzurum – province in Erzurum vilayet. In the beginning of the 20th century there were about 90,000 Armenians in the province – 7, 8, 16, 17, 123, 238, 255, 256, 258, 261–263, 265, 268, 272, 274, 296, 304

Erzurum or Karin – town in Karin province of Bardzr Haik of Mets Haik – 17, 42, 46, 52, 71, 86, 142, 149, 150, 157, 159, 173, 178, 188, 191, 193, 196, 201, 204, 206, 207, 211, 212, 218, 238–242, 249, 250, 253, 254, 257–261–266, 268, 269, 271, 272, 274, 278, 279, 284–286, 288–290, 292–294, 296, 297, 302, 303, 304, 314, 315, 319, 323, 324, 326, 328, 329, 333, 361, 379, 401, 402, 404–410

Eskisheher – village in Kharberd province – 368, 391

Esmar – village in Karakilisa district of Bayazet province, 35 km south–west of the town of Karakilisa. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 45 households of Armenian population – 270

Esmer – see **Esmar**.

Euphrates River – river in the basin of Persian Gulf – 129, 209, 214, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250–252, 258–261, 266, 274, 276–278, 286–288, 303, 304, 308, 313, 317, 318, 322, 330, 332, 334, 335, 338, 349, 352–355, 357, 358, 360, 368, 373, 383, 387, 388

Evrenli – village in Erzurum province, 29–30 km west of the town of Erzurum – 240

Farashin – village in Julamerk district of Hakyari province, populated by the Assyrians – 121

Frang Nor Shen – see **Norshen**.

Firinchi – see **Frnchiler**.

Frnchiler – road station in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet, near the town of Malatia – 257, 358, 361, 372, 373, 376

Gabi Kar or **Khavarakhili Kar** – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn–Mndzurian mountain system – 279

Gail, Gailget – province in the historical Pokr Haik, north–west of the town of Yerznka, in the valley of the river Gail – 305

Gaili – village in Kharberd province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 households with 188 Armenian residents – 328

Gyulu– see **Gaili**.

Gangachi – plain in Soma province of Persian Armenia – 125

Garasu, Karasu, Marmet – river in the basin of Lake Van, flows through Timar district – 67, 123

Garnen – village in Mush district of Mush province – 227

Gavash– see **Gyavash**.

Gavrishami – village in Berkri district of Van province – 60, 107

Gazi – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 41 km north–east of Kghi – 276

Gebin or **Kepin** – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Armenian Taurus mountain system, in Mush region – 142

Geghashen – village in Shatakh cluster of villages in Mush district, in its north–western part – 137–139, 141, 146, 223, 225

Geliegenman – village in Upper Gavar cluster of villages in Mush district of Mush province – 137, 138

Gelieguzan or **Galieguzan** – village in Upper Gavar cluster of villages in Mush district. In 1890s it had more than 1,000 Armenian residents – 137–139, 141, 143–145, 213, 214, 226, 227

Gelignman – see **Geliegenman**.

Gelimsur – see **Gyaliemsur**.

Germav – village in Mush district, about 10 km south–east of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 395 Armenian residents – 135–139, 141, 224, 225

Ghabljoz – see **Upper Kharzan**.

Ghalasar – see **Kalasar**.

Gharabudagh – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 Armenian households – 168

Gharaghaya, Ghara–Ghaya – see **Karakaya**.

Gharaghl – 205

Ghara–Gyoz – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 270

Ghara–Hasan – see **Karahasan**.

Karahasan – village in Erzurum province, about 60 km north–west of the town of Erzurum. In 1880 it had 574 residents of which 407 were Armenians – 258

Gharakilisa – see **Karakilisa**.

Ghasmik – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian and 30 Kurdish households – 187

Ghaymaz – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1909 it had 33 Armenian and 20 Muslim households – 66, 67, 68

Ghlich Ketuk – see **Ghlich Gyaduk**.

Ghlich GetikMount – see **Ghlich Gyaduk**.

Ghlich Gyaduk – mountain pass in the Armenian Highland, in the Sharian–Tsaghkants mountain range – 270

Ghlich Gyaduk, Ghlich – village in Alashkert district on Bayazet province, about 16 km south of the town of Alashkert – 47, 67, 69, 156, 157, 187, 208

Ghlich–Kyatuk – see **Ghlich Gyaduk**.

Ghlichlu – village in Mush province – 187

Ghotanlu – see **Khotanlu**.

Ghughor– see **Ghurghul**.

Ghurghul – village in Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet, in Derjan district – 261

Ghzhaghaj, Ghzl–Aghaj or **Kzlaghaj** – 128

Ghzlja – see **Kzlja**.

Ghzhjama – village in Salmast province. In 1890s it had 90 households of which 40 were Armenian – 391

Gighr – see **Kerkh**.

Gilonk – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 13 households of which 8 were Armenian and 5 – Kurdish – 170

Gndzik – village in Shirvani district of Sgherd province – 184, 185

Gndzu – village in Motkan cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 173

Gochanis – see **Kochanis**.

Goly Gom – gorge in the vicinity of the village of Gozé of Archesh district – 76

Gomats Holy Mother–of–God – monastery on the eastern part of village Goms, west of the town of Bitlis. In the 13th century the province diocese was here – 137

Gomats Mountain – mountain in the vicinity of the village of Goms of Gyavash district of Van province – 99, 100

Gom–Dzor – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province – 258

Gomer – village in Moks cluster of villages of Van district. In 1910s the village had 40 Armenian households – 105

Gomer, Sivtkna Gomer – village in Shatakh district, about 17 km north of the town of Shatakh – 110, 128, 131

Gomk – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, about 12 km north–east of the village of Dalhor. In the Middle Ages it was a centre of Armenian manuscript art – 128, 214, 232, 233

Gomots monastery – see **Gomats Holy Mother–of–God**.

Goms– see **Gomk**.

Goms – village in Karchkan cluster of villages of Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 it had 50 Armenian households – 98 – 101

Goms – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 40 Armenian households – 36

Gontuz – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 268

Gopal – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 65 households of Armenian and 25 households of Kurdish residents – 271

Gornges – see **Kornkez**.

Gornkes – see **Kornkez**.

Kortsot – village in Berkri district of Van province, on the eastern side of Lake Van. On the eve of 1915 Kortsot had more than 150 households – 43, 62

Gost – see **Kost**.

Govanutuk – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, on the bank of the river Khnus. In 1915 the village had 158 Armenian households with a population of about 1,000 – 271

Gozé – see **Gyoz**.

Gre-Gyol – mountain near the village of Soskun of Archesh district – 80

Grgkyoz – bridge over the river Euphrates – 355, 361

Gtsank – see **Ktsank**.

Gulé – village in Charsanchag district of Kharberd vilayet, in Khughova plain. At the end of the 19th century it had more than 1,200 Armenian population – 316, 317, 326

Guligan – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 299

Guru-Chay, Gururchay – see **Kuruchay**.

Guzel – see **Kuzel**.

Guzulchan – 258

Gyabolan – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 195, 206

Gyalhuk (Glhuk, Kalhok etc.) – village in Kharazan district of Sgherd province – 161

Gyaliemsur – village in Upper Gavar cluster of villages in Mush district of Mush province – 137, 138

Gyangyachin – see **Gangachi**.

Gyardabad – village in Urmia province, in Nazluchay region – 389, 396, 397

Gyavar – district in Hakyai province, in the valley of the river Gavar-Su, the tributary of the river Mets Zab – 16, 124

Gyavash – district in Van province, stretches out on the southern side of Lake Van – 16, 53, 89, 90–93, 95, 96, 98, 100–102, 104, 105, 106, 110, 183

Gyolchik – see **Kyolchik**.

Gyoli Glukh, Saregolé, Gyolbashi, Erun – village in Mush district of Mush provinc – 230

Gyollu, Kyolu – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. At the end of the 19th century the village had 40 Armenian households – 34

Gyolu – see **Gyollu**.

Gyoz, Koz Upper and Lower – villages in Archesh district of Van province – 76, 80

Gyozaldara – village in Gyozaldara district of Bitlis province of Bitlis vilayet – 209

Gyozené – location in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 376

Gyulizan – village in Persian Armenia, in Salmast region, north-west of Lake Urmia – 391

Gyumgyum – village in Vardo district of Mush province, on the southern foot of the Byurakn Mountains – 195

Gyumushkhané – town in Trabzon vilayet. On the eve of 1915 it had a population of 8,000 people, of which 2,500 were Armenians – 18, 242, 386

Gyuzak – village in Berkri district of Van province, on the north-eastern coast of Lake Van – 61, 64

Gyozaldara – cluster of villages in Bitlis province, in the basin of the river Gyozaldara. In 1909 it had 18 Armenian-populated villages – 16, 164, 165

Ghezelchpugh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 294

Gezel-Bara – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 271

Hablasat – mountain in Khoshab district of Hakyari province – 112

Hachukoshk – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 268

Haftvan – see **Havtvvan**.

Haghen – see **Haghi**.

Haghi, Aghi – village in Archesh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 households – 106

Haghin, Aghin – village in Moks cluster of villages of Gyavash district of Van province – 75

Hagmank – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 140

Hagstun – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, north of the town of Kghi – 274, 290

Hamzashekh, Hamzasheikh – village in Upper Bulanekh cluster of villages in Bulanekh district of Mush province. At the end of the 19th century it had 150 Armenian households – 201, 202, 204, 205

Hand – village in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 180

Hantikdzor – see **Hndkdzor**.

Hanzevik (Andzrevik?) – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, in Kochak cluster of villages – 293

Hapusi – village in Kharberd Province, about 21 km east fo the town of Kharberd. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 190 households of Armenian population – 327, 328

Haratun – see **Kharatun**.

Harberd – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 40 Armenian households – 93, 98

Hardert or **Artert** – village in Mush district of Mush province, in the Plain of Mush – 195

Harkap (Haykap?) – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, in Kochak cluster of villages – 293

Harkork – village in Gavar cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, on the slopes of Tsovasar – 137, 138

Haroghli – mountain in the vicinity of Kharberd – 316

Hartk – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province. It was a purely Armenian village – 137, 138

Hasan Galé, Hasangalé – see **Hasankala**.

Hasan Tamran – village in Mahmudi district of Van province, in the Plain of Abagha – 111

Hasan-Ghala – see **Hasankala**.

Hasnakala – village, town, fortress-town in Hasankala district of Erzurum province – 157, 159, 191, 193, 201, 204, 218, 223, 257

Hasnakala or **Basen Upper** – part of Basen district of Erzurum province – 43

Haspstan – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province of Van vilayet – 117, 121

Haspstan – village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 35 households – 393

Hatanants – see **Atanants**.

Hatkon – see **Atkon**.

Hatni – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 231

Hatsik – village in Mush province, north-east of the town of Mush – 128, 131

Havaf – see **Havav**.

Havatarik – see **Havatorik**.

Havatorik – village in Mush province, 4–5 km south-east of the town of Mush – 131, 136, 138, 144

Havav – village in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet. It was a big Armenian populated village, sometimes considered a town – 319

Havents – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 95 Armenian households – 37, 40

Havgonk – see **Havkunk**.

Havkunk – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, on the slopes of Tsovasar – 137, 233

Havtvan – village in Salmast province, 3–4 km south of the town of Dilman. Populated only with Armenians. In 1914 it had 400 households with a population of 2,200 – 118, 120, 121, 124, 391, 394, 395

Hay Ushtam – see **Ushtam**.

Hayné, Hayni – village, settlement, fortress-town in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet – 253, 256

Hayots Dzor (Khavardzor, Khavudzor, Haikadzor) – In new times it is mentioned as one of the districts and clusters of villages of Van province – 16, 48, 50, 52, 57, 59, 90, 110, 115

Hazara, Azaré – village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district. In 1915 it had about 40 Armenian households – 29, 30

Hazo – see **Hazzo**.

Hazzo – town in Hazazo cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province. In 1914 it had 4,500 residents (3,000 Armenians and 1,500 Kurds) – 235

Hekipat – see **Ekepat**.

Heni – see **Derjan**.

Herdif – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, on the north-western slope of mount Surbluys – 281, 283, 284, 299

Heresan – village in Bashkala district of Hakyari province. In 1915 it had 49 households of Armenian population – 393

Herkert – village in Mush province, north-west of the town of Mush. It was also called Pandik, Padik – 131, 189, 217

Hertev – village in Hasankala (Baberd) district of Erzurum province, 10–15 km south of the town of Hasankala. In 1909 it had 132–150 households of Armenian population – 261, 296

Hertif – see **Herdif**.

Hetink, Hetin – village in Gavar cluster of villages in Sassoun doistrict of Mush province. It was a purely Armenian village – 144

Hili, Ili – village in Gyavash district. In 1909 the village had 24 Armenian households with a population of 143 – 92

Hirch – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 30 Armenian and 60 Muslim households – 49, 97, 98

Hiritcha – see **Hirch**.

Hloghenk – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, on its north-western side – 140

Hndkdzor – village in Khut-Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan disrrict of Bitlis province – 170

Hndstan – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 it had 41 Armenian households – 112, 115, 116

Hoghas – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 10 km south-west of the town of Kghi – 277, 278, 299

Hoghek – see **Hoghik**.
Hoghik – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province. In 1915 it had 220 households of which 115 were Armenian – 261
Hogstun – see **Hagstun**.
Holy Cross monastery of Khizan– see **Seghavank**.
Holy Golden Small Finger of Apostle Peter monastery, Gomats monastery, Saint Peter Small Finger – the monastery is in the village of Gomk in Mush province, north of the town of Mush. It existed before the 14th century – 235
Holy Mother-of-God monastery – see **Holy Mother-of-God of Anggh**.
Holy Mother-of-God of Anggh – monastery in Hayots Dzor, south-east of the town of Artamet. According to legend, the monastery was founded by Apostle Thaddeus–34, 42, 51
Holy Precursor – monastery in the Yalznbagh village of Yerznka province, 10 km away from the town of Yerznka – 306
Holy Precursor monastery of Mush – monastery in Taron province of Turuberan region of Mets Haik, in new times – Mush province of Bitlis vilayet. The monastery was founded by Gregory the Illuminator in 303. Since the 6th century the monastery has been one of the well-known religious and cultural centres of Armenia – 127–130, 132, 137, 217, 219
Horevank – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In the past it was populated with Armenians, nowadays – with Kurds – 293
Horkap – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 300
Hoshut – see **Oshut**.
Hosner – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137
Hosnut – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, about 7 km east of the village of Talvorik. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 Armeian households – 137, 138
Hovgegh – village in Hazzo cluster of villages in Sasub district of Mush province – 232
Hrekonk – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 231
Hrut – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, in its northern part – 231
Hunan – village in Mush province. In 1880 it had 150 households with 1,200 Armenian residents – 128, 131
Hurtuk – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In 1909 it had 40 Armenian households – 112, 115
Hushtam, Ushtam – village in Mush district, in the Plain of Mush. In 1914 it had 50 households with 400 Armenian residents – 132, 135

Huskan Vordi – monastery in Berkri district of Van province, in the Plain of Abagha, in the valley of the river Berkri – 60, 63
Husp Upper – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178
Hyolenk – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 292
Heopek– mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Derjan – 258
Hivruk Lower – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 19 Armenian households – 174, 178, 180
Hivruk Upper – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis – 178, 179
Hyusnek – see **Hyusnik**.
Hyusenek – village and road station in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet – 317
Kem (Kim) or Gem (Gim) – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages in Van province. In 1909 the village had 98 Armenian households with 467 residents – 50–53, 56
Khachkonts Karish – mountain in the Byurakn–Mndzuriian mountain system, east of the village of Khubs in Kghi district – 279
Ibo – village In Khnus district of Erzurum province – 268
Igaghach – see **Ikaghaj**.
Ikaghaj – village in Urmia province. Before 1914 it was populated by 44 households of Armenians – 399
Iknakhoja – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 25 Armenian households – 187
Ilicha – see **Ilija**.
Ilija – village in Erzurum province, 10–12 km north-west of the town of Erzurum. In 1909 it had 220 households of which more than 80 were Armenian – 239, 240, 257
Illi – see **Hili**.
Inakh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 10–12 km north-east of the town of Kghi – 292, 300
Interé – mountain in the Anti-Taurus mountain system, near the town of Malatia – 369, 370, 376
Irishat, Ilishad or Yerishad – village in Archesh district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 66 Kurdish and 25 Armenian households – 35, 42
Iritsank – village in Mush district, 8 km south of the town of Mush, on south-western foot of Mount Sevsar – 137–139, 224, 225
Irtsan – see **Iritsank**.
Iritsank – see **Iritsank**.
Irzak – se **Yerizak**.

Ishkhanadzor – village in Khiank cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 137, 140

Ishkhanigom – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages in Van district. In 1909 it had 52 Armenian households (319 residents) – 56, 54, 56

Ishkhu – village in Basen district of Erzurum province – 250

Ishkhndzor – see **Ishkhanadzor**.

Itaran – village in Chmshkatsag district of Dersim province – 318

Izoghlu, Izoghli – village in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet – 368

Jan – see **Chan**.

Janik – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 160 households – 18, 29, 34, 36, 42, 43, 47

Jerman – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 50 km north-east of the town of Kghi – 291, 300

Jevizlik – settlement, village in Trabzon province of Trabzon vilayet, in Machka district – 387

Jigrashen, Chirashen, Chikrashen, Kirashen – village in Timar cluster of villages, of Van district, on the lake coast. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 126 Armenian residents – 40

Jinis – village in Erzurum province, 14 km south-east of the town of Erzurum. In 1909 it had 65 Armenian and 140 Turkish households – 404

Jirashen – see **Jigrashen**.

Jnuk – village in Shatakh district of Van province of Van vilayet – 182

Joj – gorge in Gyoaldara cluster of villages in Bitlis district – 165

Jortnik – see **Jrtnik**.

Jrik – village in Mush district. In 1909 it had 120 Armenian and 30 Kurdish households – 128, 131, 195

Jrtnik – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137, 233

Judgyakh or **Jugda** – village in Archesh district of Van province. In 1896 the village had 60 Armenian households – 83

Julamerk – district in Hakyari province – 16, 120–124

Julamerk – town in Hakyari province, in Julamerk district. At the end of the 19th century it had 500 households of Assyrian, Turkish, Armenian and Kurdish residents – 122, 124

Julfa – town in Persia, on the right bank of the river Araks – 389, 395, 397

Jutgyakh – see **Judgyakh**.

Cheziré – see **Jzirok**.

Jzirok – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province – 154, 158

Kababik – see **Kyababik**.

Kaghazis – village in Shatakh district of Van province. The village was populated only with Armenians. In 1909 it had 214 residents – 109, 110

Kajarenk – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 223

Kalapan – gorge in Derjan district of Erzurum province – 258

Kalasar – village in Salmast province, about 4 km east of the town of Dilman. In the beginning of the 20th century it had over 500 Armenian residents – 391–393

Kalashan – village in Salmast province, about 6 km south of the town of Dilman – 391

Kalbalsan – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district of Van province – 49

Kamakh – province, district in Erzurum vilayet. In the first quarter of the 19th century it had 360 villages with a population of 168–210 thousand; most of them were Armenians and forcibly Islamised Armenians. On the eve of 1915 there were only 21 Armenian villages in Kamakh with 7,000 residents – 305

Kamakh – settlement, fortress, village, town in Kamakh district of Yeznka province. Kamakh is known as one of the fortresses of Artaxiad and Arsacid dynasties. In the beginning of the 20th century Kamakh had a population of about 15,000 half of which were Armenians

Kamakh Canyon – see **Kamakh Gorge**.

Kamakh Gorge – gorge in the Armenian Highland, 50 km south-west of the town of Yeznka.

Kambakh – see **Kamakh**.

Kambakh Poghaz – see **Kamakh Gorge**.

Kamravor Holy Mother-of-God – monastery 8–10 km east of the town of Van, near the villages of Kamravor and Shushants. It was a centre of manuscript art – 116

Kan – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Sassoun, in the Sim (Kurtik) Mountains – 136, 142

Kan – village in Erzurum province, 3 km north of the town of Erzurum. The residents came there from the capital Ani in the 11th century. In 1914 the village had 350 Armenian and 70 Turkish households – 250

Kankvar, Kangavar, Kangevan, Kangever – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian households – 113

Kapuyt Mountains – mountains in the Armenian Highland. It is a watershed between the Western Euphrates and the Chorokh rivers, on the road Erzurum–Baberd – 241, 242

Karachoban – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province. In 1914 it had 400 Armenian households – 268–172

Karakan Gorge – gorge in the Armenian Highland, in the Kghi district of Erzurum province – 274

Karakaya – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1914 it had 114 Armenian households – 187

Karakilisa – town in Karakilisa district of Bayazet province. It was in the Alashkert plain, on the right bank of the Aratsani river – 17, 89, 138, 155, 168, 187, 192, 209

Karakyopri – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, 22 km south-east of the town of Khnus. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 200 households of Armenian population – 268

Kara-Kyopru – see **Karakyopri**.

Karashekh, Karasheikh – village in Artské-Aljavaz district of Van province, on the eastern slope of mount Sipan – 83

Kara-Su – see **Sev Jur** (Black Water).

Karasu or Karasu Upper – village in Khizan district of Bitlis province, about 30 km south of the town of Bitlis – 174

Karb – village in Gyoaldara cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province – 164, 165

Karbakoyt, Karbakuyt – hill in Kghi district, 11–12 km south-west of the town of Kghi – 279

Karboys (Kerpoz) Karabuys – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 286, 287, 300

Karchkan – cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province – 16, 98, 101, 102, 104

Kardzor, Kar-Dzor – village in Mush district. In 1909 it had 40 Armenian and 9 Kurdish households – 128, 131

Karer – village in Erzurum province, about 48 km south-west of the town of Erzurum – 288, 289

Karin – see **Erzurum**.

Karkar – fortress (fortress, village, town) in Kharberd province, south-east of the town of Malatia – 359, 372, 373, 376

Karkar – region in the south-western part of Lake Van. It was divided into two parts – Upper Karkar – a cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province, and Lower Karkar – a cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province of Bitlis vilayet – 16, 92, 101, 176, 183, 207

Karmav – see **Germav**.

Karmir Konakh – location in the vicinity of the town of Mezré in Kharberd province – 326

Karmir Kyol – winter shelter of Eskishehir (Old Malatia) – 368

Karmir, Karmim, Karmin –village in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet, 17–18 km south-east of the town of Kharberd. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of 20 households – 321

Karmravor Monastery– see **Kamravor Holy Mother-of-God**.

Kamurj– see **Karmunj**.

Karmunj – village in Klat district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 700 Armenian residents– 229

Karnen – village in Mush district, in the vicinity of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 130 households with 1,000 Armenian residents and 30 Kurdish households – 131

Karnets – see **Garnen**.

Kartafin Mount – see **Kartevan**.

Kartevan, Kartevin– mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, north of the town of Manazkert – 188

Kartser – small village–block in the Kusget cluster of villages on the south-east foot of Mount Maruta – 232

Kashakh – village in Motkan cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province, on the left bank of the river Arpi – 172, 173

Kasr – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In 1411 scribe Hovhannes made a copy of Gospel here – 113

Kasrik – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 12–15 households – 113

Katnaghbyur – spring on the eastern coast of Lake Van, near the Mother-of-God monastery – 60

Katnuk Aghbyur – see **Katnaghbyur**.

Kavré-Shamé – see **Gavrishami**.

Kaymaz – see **Ghaymaz**.

Kaynemeran – village in Shatakh district of Van province. In 1909 it had 20 Armenian households – 109, 110

Kaz – plateau in the Armenian Highland, in Kghi – 286

Kchanits– gorge in Van province – 47

Kekarlu, Kakarlu – mountain in Bulanekh district of Mush province, some 24 km south-west of the town of Manazkert – 205, 206, 208, 209

Kekhté – see **Karkar**.

Kelek Teresi – see **Karakan Gorge**.

Kelekili Karish, Kelekeli – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Byurakn-Mndzuriian mountain range – 279

Kelkut – see **Gail**.

Kemakh – see **Kamakh**.

Keneyney Karish – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn-Mndzurian mountain range – 279

Kerkh or Kerkhr – village in Tatik cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province, near the town of Bitlis – 161

Kermav – see **Germav**.

Keshish Tagh – mountain in Derjan district – 258

Kez – village in Erzurum province, 6–7 km north–west of the town of Erzurum. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of 160 households, of which 130 were Armenian – 239

Kghi– province, district in Erzurum vilayet. Kghi district stretched out in the south–western outlying districts of Erzurum province. In 1909 there were 16,255 Armenian residents in 50 Armenian–populated villages of Kghi – 7, 258, 259, 272–283, 285–290, 292–294, 296, 299, 305, 314, 383

Kghi – river in the basin of the Aratsani, the middle flow of its right–side tributary Peri – 274, 277

Kghi – town, village in Erzurum province in Kghi district; its administrative centre. On the eve of 1915 Kghi had a population of 15,000 of which 10,000 were Armenian – 276, 285, 286, 299, 300

Kghi–Gasapa – see **Kghi**.

Kghzi – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 32 Armenian and 11 Kurdish households – 49

Khabian – see **Kheibian**.

Khachan – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1909 it had 70 Armenian households – 66, 67, 112

Khachatur – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 286, 300

Khachlu – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, 22 km south–west of Manazkert – 205

Khamur – village in Karakilisa district of Bayazet province of Erzurum vilayet – 200, 209

Khan Gyol – location on the road to Malatia – 317

Khanas – see **Khanants**.

Khanants – village in Julamerk district of Hakyari province – 120, 121

Khanasor – plain in the Armenian Highland, at the north–eastern part of Bashkala (Aghbak) plain – 394, 395

Khanik – village in Salmast province, about 24 km south of the town of Dilman, at the upstream flow of the river Nazluchay – 114

Khan–Oghli, Khanoghli – village in Manazkert district of Mush province – 187

Kharabashehir – village in Upper Bulanekh cluster of villages in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 205

Kharakonis – village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 200 Armenian households – 24, 26, 28, 29

Kharan – town in Northern Mesopotamia in Urfa (Yedesia) province, south–east of Yedesia – 373

Kharapek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 45 km north–east of the town of Kghi – 292, 294, 300

Kharapshaher – see **Kharabashehir**.

Kharatun – village in Aghbak (Bashkala) district of Hakyari province of Van vilayet – 116, 393

Kharaza Tagh – one of the quarters of the town of Malatia – 375, 378

Kharberd – province in Kharberd vilayet, in its central part, in the valley of the downstream flow of the river Aratsani. According to Turkish sources, 50,024 Armenians were deported from this area – 8, 16, 17, 22, 261, 296, 299, 308, 314–317, 319, 320–329, 332–334, 348, 349, 353, 369

Kharberd – town in Kharberd vilayet, on the left side of the downstream flow of the river Aratsani, in Kharberd plain – 17, 143, 145, 220, 269, 275, 315, 317, 319, 323, 324, 327, 328, 332, 333, 336, 342, 346–348, 355–357, 360, 361, 371–373, 378, 379, 388, 409

Khardos – see **Khartos**.

Kharit – village in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 10 Armenian households – 160, 161

Kharken or **Khargin** – village in Archesh district of Van province, 2–3 km south–east of the town of Archesh. In 1909 the village had 23 Armenian and Turkish households – 72

Kharkhin – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province, about 18 km south–west of Mamakhatun – 261

Kharkhots – village in Shenadzor cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 174–177

Khars – village in Mush district, about 30 km east of the town of Mush, north of the river Meghaget – 128, 131, 133

Khart or **Khard** – village in Aznavdзор or Gyoaldara cluster of villages in Bitlis district – 166

Khartos– village in Mush province. In 1909 it had 30 Armenian households and a church built in 1151 – 128

Khas – see **Khasgyugh**.

Khasgegh – see **Khasgyugh**.

Khasgyugh – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, west of the town of Kghi – 281, 285, 296, 299

Khasgyugh, Khas–Gyugh – village in Mush district of Mush province, about 16 km south–east of the town of Mush. 128, 130, 132, 133, 218, 220, 221, 222, 231

Khashghaldgh – see **Khashkhaldagh**.

Khash–Ghaltgh – see **Khashkhaldagh**.

Khashkhaldagh – village in Mush province of Bitlis vilayet, in the Plain of Mush, north of the town of Mush – 128, 131, 189, 190, 195

Khavents – see **Havents**.

Khazagh – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 259

Khazakh – see **Khazagh**.

Khazi Gyugh, Khazigyugh, Khazi – village in Kghi distict of Erzurum province – 276, 300

Khdir – village in Karakilisa district of Bayazet province, about 5 km east of the town of Karakilisa – 117

Kheibian – village in Mush province, about 22 km north-west of the town of Mush – 127, 128, 217, 131

Kheypian – see **Kheibian**.

Khiartang, Khiartank – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province, north-east of Lake Nazik – 154, 157, 158

Kikian – see **Kheibian**.

Khizan – district in Bitlis province, south of Lake Van. In 1909 it had 168 villages of which 68 were Armenian-populated – 16, 160, 174, 176–178

Khizan – town in Khizan district of Bitlis province, about 35 km south-east of the town of Bitlis – 97, 159, 176, 177, 182

Khlat – district in Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 9 Kurdish populated and 24 Armenian populated villages – 16, 102, 229, 132, 147–149, 151, 152, 155, 156, 208, 229

Khlat – town in Khlat district of Bitlis province, centre of Khlat district – 58, 103, 104, 148, 155, 156, 157, 208

Khlich–Ketik – see **Ghlich Gyaduk**.

Khndzorgin – village in Karchkan cluster of villages in Gyavash district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 40 Armenian households – 102,

Kndzorik – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 313

Kndzorik– village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137, 233

Khnus district – located in Erzurum province. The town of Khnus is the administrative centre of the district – 17, 142, 146, 268, 271

Khnus River – river in the basin of the Euphrates, right tributary of the river Aratsani – 203

Khnus, Khniskala, Khnusberd – town in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 132, 138, 143, 151, 155, 168, 171, 172, 187, 188, 221, 226, 227, 228, 270, 271

Khober –see **Khoper**.

Khodtsovank – see **Khotsots monastery**.

Khodtsovank – see **Khotsotsvank**.

Kholkhol – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 2–3 km from the south-eastern slopes of mount Surb – 281, 282, 284, 285, 296, 297, 299

Khoper – village in Mush province, about 7 km north of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 30 Armenian households – 128

Khvner, Khevner – village in Mush district, 29–31 km east of the town of Mush – 219

Khor – village in Shatakh district of Van province – 146

Khorank – see **Khoronk**.

Khorants or Horants – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 40 Armenian households (334 residents) – 89

Khordzian – province in the Fourth Haik region of Mets Hayk, in the valley of the river Gail (now Kghi) which is a tributary of the river Aratsani. In the 14th century it was the centre of Armenian manuscript art. Later the province was divided into two parts – Lower Kghi and Upper Kghi – 272, 274

Khorom–Khaya – see **Khrmkhaya**.

Khoronk – village in Mush district. In 1909 it had 50 Armenian and 6 Kurdish households – 128

Khoronk or Khorni – village in Mush district, about 8 km north-west of the town of Mush – 217

Khorors – village in Khizan cluster of villages in Bitlis province – 174

Khoshab – district in Hakyari province, in its north-western part – 16, 51, 112–115, 125

Khoshab – river in the basin of Lake Van. Its length is 113 km. One of the largest rivers flowing into Lake Van – 125

Khoshan – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Dersim, Chmshkatsag region – 258

Khoshan Mezré– village in Andres cluster of villages of Kghi district of Erzurum province – 290

Khoshap– see **Khoshab**.

Khoshgeldi – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Kghi region, near the village of Sagadzor – 278

Khoshgyaldi – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 206

Khoshkar – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 287, 300

Khoshkeldi – see **Khoshgeldi**.

Khoshmat – village in Mazrvat cluster of villages of Balu district of Arghanamaden province. In 1915 it had 105 households of Armenian population and the Holy Mother-of-God church built in 1116 – 380

Khosnak – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 20 km south-east from the town of Kghi – 289, 300

Khosp – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 43 Armenian households (223 residents) – 48, 50

Khosrova – village in Salmast province – 391, 394

Khotanlu – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 65 Armenian and 10 Kurdish households – 187

Khotsetsvank – see **Khotsotsvank**.

Khotsots monastery – monastery in Mush province, in the village of Khots in Sassoun, on the slope of Mount Tsovasar – 137

Khotsotsvank – village in Gavar cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, on the slopes of Mount Tsovasar – 137, 138, 139

Khotur Bridge – see **Kotur Bridge**.

Khoy – province in Persia, north-west of Lake Urmia, in the valley of the river Kotur – 101, 389, 390

Khoy – town in Persia, north of Lake Urmia, on the left side of midstream flow of the river Kotur – 101, 123, 397

Khoyt – see **Khut**.

Khozat – town, settlement, village in Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet, in Khozat district – 17, 256, 318, 330, 332

Khozerut – forest in Khizan district of Bitlis province, near the village of Kharit – 161

Khozlu – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, about 20 km north-east of Khnus – 268

Kher – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 26 km west of the town of Kghi – 284

Khrmkhaya – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, on the bank of the river Aratsani – 268, 271

Khrom-Khaya – see **Khrmkhaya**.

Kehrt – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province, about 22 km north-east of the town of Khnus – 268

Khtan – village in Gavar cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 139

Khubs – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 12 km west of the town of Kghi. In 1915 it was a small town; it had 317 households with a population of 2,400 – 272–275, 277–283, 286, 296–299

Khula – see **Gulé**.

Khulagyugh – see **Gulé**.

Khulik – village in Khlata district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 20 households with 183 Armenian residents – 154, 155, 208, 229

Khulnagegh – see **Gulé**.

Khulp – district in Genj province of Bitlis vilayet – 16, 145, 237

Khultik – village in Bayirki cluster of villages in Bitlis district, about 16 km south-east of the town of Bitlis – 162, 164

Khumlar – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province. At the end of the 19th century it had 50 Armenian households, in 1909 – 35 Armenian and 30 Turkish households – 261, 263, 265

Khupek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 281, 285, 296

Khut – since the beginning of the Ottoman rule it has been part of Bitlis vilayet, composing the Khut–Brnashen district. In 1915 it had 21 Armenian-populated villages – 166, 167, 170, 214,

Khut – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 132, 134, 227, 228

Khut – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Khuzichan – region in Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet, in its northern part, in the valley of the river Khuzichan – 259, 305

Khuziljan – see **Khuzichan**.

Khuzulchan – see **Khuzichan**.

Khzhishk – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 110 Armenian households – 36, 37

Khezal Chupukh, Gzl Chipukh – see **Kzichubukh**.

Khzlaghach or Kzl-Aghach – village in Mush province, between the Holy Precursor and Saint John monasteries – 217

Kilisa – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province, about 21 km north-west of Bashkala – 113

Kilisé Gom – settlement near Varduk – 267

Kimishkhana – see **Gyumushkhané**.

Kirk Kyozy – location near Malatia – 373

Kistagh – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, about 35 km south-west of the town of Mush – 137

Klakhulé – see **Kyalakholi**.

Klisé – see **Kilisa**.

Klok – see **Gyalhuk**.

Kemek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, near the village of Hertif – 281, 284, 296

Kndzu – see **Gndzu**.

Kob – see **Kop**.

Kochak – cluster of villages in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293

Kochamish – village in Salmast province – 391, 392

Kochanis – village in Julamerk district of Hakyari province, the residence of the spiritual leader of Assyrians of Aghbak and Julamerk – 122, 123

Kocherer or Kochren – village and port in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 35 households with 311 residents – 84, 85

Koghak – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 198, 199, 206

Koghpants – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 it had 27 Armenian households – 112

Kolosik – village in Mush district, 17 km south-east of the town of Mush – 131

Koltan – village in Mush province. It had Armenian and Kurdish population – 229

Kop – settlement in Bulanekh district of Mush province. In 1914 it had 600 Armenian and 150 Kurdish households – 171, 212

Kop Mount – see **Kapuyt Mountains**.

Kop, Qop – village in Sharakh cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, on the slope of Mount Sevasar – 127, 137–139, 141, 197–199, 205–207, 212, 224, 225, 241

Kopal – see **Gopal**.

Kor Musun – see **Mosun**.

Korakhu – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 137

Korder – village in Upper Kharzan (Khabljöz) cluster of villages of Sassoun district of Mush province – 232

Kornkez – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137, 233

Korpi – see **Kyorbé**.

Gortsot – see **Kortsot**.

Koshak – village in Hazzo cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 231

Kosor – cluster of villages in Mush district, on the eastern part of the Plain of Mush – 131, 146, 228

Kost – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Mitkan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 35 Armenian residents – 170

Kosur – see **Kosor**.

Kotak – village in Basen district of Erzurum province – 254

Kotents Lower – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Kotents Upper – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Koter – settlement in Derjan district of Erzurum province, near the town of Derjan. In 1914 it had 160 households (of which 150 were Armenian) with a population of 1,500 – 259

Koter Bridge – bridge over the Western Euphrates, between the villages of Koter and Vachan of Derjan district. It has seven arches and was built in the 13th century – 404 – 258, 260, 264, 265, 279

Kotol Gyal – see **Kotur**.

Kotrfer – see **Korder**.

Kotur – mountain range in the Armenian Highland, in Kotur–Zagros mountain system – 25

Kotyur, Kotyur Bridge – see **Koter Bridge**.

Kran – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 220

Kravu – village in Aghjan cluster of villages in Khandrez district of Mush province, 16 km north of the town of Mush – 128, 146

Krdagom – village in Mush district, about 15 km east of the town of Mush – 128, 131, 230

Krdamank – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, on the slopes of Mount Tsovasar – 137

Krel – village in Khosha district of Hakyari province. In 1909 the village had 60 Armenian households – 112, 113

Krtagom – see **Krdagom**.

Krtikan – village in Hakyari province – 113

Keshtem – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province – 260, 313

Kshtonik – village in Tatik district of Bitlis province, on the left side of Tatik Gorge – 161

Ktrats Kar – village in Archesh district of Van province. In 1909 it had 30 Kurdish and 28 Armenian households – 76–78

Ktsank – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Ktsu – village in Genj district of Genj province. In 1909 it had 10 Armenian and 4 Kurdish households – 128

Ktsvak – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province. In 1909 the village had 60 Armenian households – 102, 103

Krayu – see **Kravu**.

Kurd Meydan, Kurdmeydan – village in Mush district, about 20 km north–east of the town of Mush – 217, 128

Kurkura Bridge – bridge in the vicinity of the village of Ziart in Mush district – 217

Kurubash – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages of Van district. On the eve of 1915 the village had 120 Armenian households with 880 residents – 22, 23, 54, 56

Kuruchay – district in Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet, in the valley of the same name river – 17

Kuruchay – town in Yerznka district of Erzurum province, the centre of the same name district – 261

Kuzel – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. It had 20 Armenian households with a population of 120 – 79, 84, 85, 86

Kyababik – village in Berki district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 35 Armenian households – 64

Kyaghda – see **Karkar**.

Kyakhta – see **Karkar**.

Kyakhté – see **Karkar**.

Kyalakholi – village in Mush province, in the Palin of Mush. In 1909 it had 10 Armenian and 20 Kurdish households – 128

Kyochani –village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 110 Armenian households – 34, 36

Kyolchik – lake in the Armenian Highland, in the western part of the Armenian Taurus, south-east of the town of Kharberd – 317

Kyol-Pasan– see **Kalbalsan**.

Kyoprikyoy – village, town in Upper Basen district of Erzurum province, in the Plain of Basen Å 21, 201, 207, 254

Kyorbé – village in Kharberd province of Kharberd vilayet, not far from the town of Kharberd – 324

Kyoshk – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van province. In 1909 the village had 35 Armenian households with 182 residents – 57, 64

Kyotak – see **Kotak**.

Kyuchuk Mustafa pasha – one of the quarters of the town of Malatia – 375

Kyuntipek Well – location in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 371

Kyusnents, Gosnents – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 110 Armenian households – 34, 49

Kyusn – see **Kyusnents**.

Kutir – see **Koter**.

Kyutur Bridge – see **Koter Bridge**.

Kzhdonik – see **Kshtonik**.

Kzlchubukh, Kzlchubuk – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293, 294

Kzldizé, Ghzl Dizé – village in Van district– 68

Kzlja, Kozlich, Ghzlja –village in Archak cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 it had 55 Armenian households – 24, 29

Kzljé, Kzlju – see **Kzlja**.

Labutagh – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province of Erzurum vilayet – 269

Lachkan – the settlement was located between Mush and Sassoun – 220

Lake Nazik– lake in the Armenian Highland, west of Lake Van; its length is about 11 km – 154, 157, 158

Lake Nazuk – see **Lake Nazik**.

Lake Van – lake in the Armenian Highland, in its southern part. Its basin is about 6,000 square kilometers – 81, 86, 147

Latar – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, on the slope of Mount Blejan – 187, 205

Lchik – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 50 km north-east of the town of Kghi. In 1909 it had a population of 280 Armenian and 70 Kurdish households – 291, 294, 295

Lechik – see **Lchik**.

Lek – villiage in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 287, 300

Lesk – village in Van-Tosp cluster of villages in Van province. In 1909 it had 130 Armenian households – 36, 37

Lim – island in Lake Van, on its eastern side, 1 km from the coast – 35, 36, 41, 43, 45, 85, 89

Lim Hermitage –located on Lim island of Lake Van – 69

Liz – village in Lower Bulanekh cluster of villages in Bulanekh district of Mush province. It was the centre of the cluster of villages. In 1914 the village had 300 households – 190, 193, 194, 196, 204, 206

Lontrdzor – see **Lortndzor**.

Lortndzor – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Lvar – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Lvaver – mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, in the Armenian Taurus mountain range – 49

Maghalesor – village in Khnus district of Erzurum province – 168

Mahlam – village in Salmast province, about 7 km south of the town of Salmast, on the right bank of the river Zoluchay – 111, 118, 391, 394–396

Mahmadkyar – village in Persia, in Sulduz province – 396, 397

Mahmatik – gorge near the village of Mahmedik of Archak cluster of villages – 101

Malabat – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1901 it had 30 households – 60

Malakasm– see **Molla Gasim**.

Malatia – town in Malatia district of Malatia province, south-west of Kharberd. In 1915 the town had 40,000 residents, of which 20,000 were Armenian – 17, 261, 317, 321, 322, 327, 331, 334, 335, 338, 345, 353, 354, 356, 357, 359–362, 364, 367, 368, 370, 371, 373, 374, 379

Mamakhatun – town in Erzurum province, on the right bank of the river Derjan, left-side tributary of the Western Euphrates. It was the centre of Mamakhatun (Derjan) province – 254–256, 258–261, 263–265, 267, 301, 302, 307

Mamrtank – cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province, on the south-western side of Lake Van – 174, 182, 183

Manazkert – district in Mush province of Bitlis vilayet, on its north-eastern edge – 16, 42, 186, 187, 188, 190, 208

Manazkert – town, fortress-town in Mush province, in the district of the same name. According to legend, the town was founded by Manavaz, the son of Haik Patriarch. In 1909 it had 280 households, of which 80 were Armenian – 127, 128, 130, 136, 150–152, 154, 157, 186–188, 190, 192, 197, 198, 200, 203, 204, 208, 209, 212, 231, 270, 271

Manazkert Fortress – fortress, fortress-town in Rshtunik province of Vaspurakan region of Mets Haik, on the coast of Lake Van, in front of island Aghtamar, on top a high hill – 152, 158, 187, 192

Mandan – village in Archak cluster of villags of Van district. In 1909 the village had 35 Armenian and 33 Kurdish households – 25, 26, 29

Maratuk – see **Mount Maruta**.

Market Quarter – a quarter in the town of Malatia – 375, 377

Marmet – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district, 3–4 km from the coast of Lake Van – 34, 40, 41, 46

Marmus – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 25 Armenian and 50 Kurdish households – 187–189

Marnik – village in Mush district of Mush province – 138

Marsto – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, in its south-western part – 233

Martikdagh, Martik – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Gailakhazut Mountains of Byurakn mountain system – 278

Mashtak – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 61 Armenian households with a population of 319 – 52, 56, 90

Mat – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 20 Armenian households – 178

Matadzman, Matadzmen – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Matatsmen – see **Matadzman**.

Matnavank – village in Khlat distiricit of Bitlis province, 5–6 km south-west of the town of Khlat – 130, 132

Matne Vank – see **Matnavank**.

Mazkert – see **Metskert**.

Mdzi – see **Mtsu**.

Meghraget – river in the Armenan Highland, in the basin of Aratsani, the left tributary of the river Aratsani – 136

Meghti, Meghdi – village in Mush district, in the north-western edge of the Plain of Mush – 128, 217

Meghri Get – see **Meghraget**.

Mejetlu – see **Mejitlu**.

Mejgyugh – see **Mjgegh**.

Mejitlu – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 21 km south-west of the town of Manazkert – 205

Melikan – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 30 km north-east of the town of Kghi – 291, 292, 300

Merbar, Mirbar – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 19 km south-west of the town of Manazkert – 205

Merjan, Merjan Dagh – mountan range in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn-Mndzuriian mountain system – 304

Metsk, Metsik – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province – 17, 229, 256, 319

Metskert – town in Dersim district of Kharberd vilayet, 60 km north-east of the town of Kharberd – 17, 319

Mezré, Meziré – town 5 km south-west of the town of Kharberd. In 1914 it had 14 thousand residents half of which were Armenians – 17, 290, 317, 321, 322, 326–333, 345, 346

Mragom – see **Mkragom**.

Michelni – location in Mush district of Mush province – 146

Mirchan – see **Merjan**.

Mirchan Poghaz – canyon in Merjan mountain range – 304

Misak Agha Gyugh – village in Mush district of Mush province – 217

Mjgegh, Mijgyugh – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 232, 233

Mkragom – village in Mush province, about 16 km east of the town of Mush – 130, 131, 218

Mktenk, Mktink – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, near the border between the clusters of villages of Khoiank and Psank – 137, 138, 140, 233

Mkting – see **Mktenk**.

Mlhamlu – see **Mahlam, Maylam**.

Mndzuri River – river in the Armenian Highland, in the basin of the Aratsani – 304, 333

Mochkonk – village in Tatik cliuster of villages in Bitlis district. In 1909 it had 43 households with 291 Armenian residents – 161

Mogonk – see **Mokunk**.

Mogunk – see **Mokunk**.

Mokhraberd – village in Gyavash district of Van province, on the south-eastern coast of Lake Van – 95

Moks or Mokq – cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province, on the southern side of Lake Van – 105–107, 176, 180–183

Mokunk – village in Mush province, on the eastern side of the town of Mush. In 1914 it had more than 600 Armenian residents – 128, 131

Molla Gasim – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district of Van province – 37, 38, 45

Molla Mustafa, Molla-Mstafa – village in Manazkert ditrict of Mush province, about 21 km west of the town of Manazkert – 187, 204

Molla-Bad – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 75 households – 187

Molla Hasan Lower and Molla Hasan Upper – villages in Timar district of Van province – 42

Mollakyand, Mollakend – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 11 km north-west of Lake Nazik – 206

Monastery of St Bartholomew Apostle – monastery in Vaspurakan region of Mets Haik. According to legend, it was built in the times of Gregory the Illuminator, and Apostle Bartholomew was buried there – 393

Vank, Skavarakavank, Shirints St George – the monastery is located in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district – 178

Mosul – town in Upper (Armenian) Mesopotamia, near the town of Old Mtsbin, the centre of the province of the same name – 238

Mosun – village in Diadin district of Bauazet province, 20 km north-east of the town of Diadin – 189, 209

Motkan – district in Bitlis province, in the most mountaineous part of Sassoun. At the end of the 19th century it had 69 villages with a population of 22,612 of which about 8,000 were Armenians – 16, 166, 169, 170, 172, 228

Mount Bibk, Mount Bevkn, Termenti – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in Byurakn–Mndzuriian mountain system, about 15 km west of Kghi – 279

Mount Maruta – mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, in the Sassoun Mountains – 231, 236

Mount Sim (Mount Kosura) – mountain in Mush district, in the vicinity of the village of Tsronk – 131

Mount Sivr – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn–Mndzuriian mountain range – 277, 279, 298

Moz – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 300

Mozikor Mozak – village in Chukhur cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitis province – 131, 210

Mshgegh – see **Mjgegh**.

Mshkatar – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 232

Mstushaghi – Kurdish populated village on the bank of the river Mndzuri – 333

Mtsu – village in Motkan cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province, on the bank of the river Mtsu – 169

Mukhur – village in Maku region of Persia, 40 km south-east of the town of Maku – 111

Mulk – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 40 households of Armenian and Turkish residents – 53, 54

Murat – see **Murad**.

Murat River, Muradsu – river in the Armenian Highland, in the basin of the Euphrates – 136, 146, 187, 200, 202, 204, 212

Mush province and Mush – town in Mush province Centre of Mush province and district. The Armenian primate's residence was here. Archeological materials preserved in Mush and its environs confirm that it is one of the oldest settlements in the Armenian Highland. Before 1915 Mush had 12 quarters – 16, 20, 83, 102, 127–146, 151, 152, 156, 167, 168, 171, 172, 175, 185, 186, 188–191, 193, 195–199, 201, 203, 205–207, 209, 210–214, 216, 218–232, 234–237, 269, 328

Musheghshen – village in Chukhur cluster of villages in Bitlis district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 60 Armenian households – 131, 210, 230

Mushovka – village in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet. The village was located in a deep gorge – 362

Musul – see **Mosul**.

Muzurchay – see **Mndzuri**.

Myulk – see **Mulk**.

Mzr, Mzra – see **Mzran**.

Mzra – see **Mzré**.

Mzran – village in Moks custer of villages of Gyavash district of Van province – 102

Mzré – Kurdish populated village in manazkert district of Mush province – 155, 233

Mzré – village in Khiank cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province – 165

Nabat – village in Archak cluster of villages in Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 40 Armenian households – 24

Nabayin – village in Shirvan district of Sgherd province, 28 km north-east of the town of Sgherd – 185, 186

Nadopa, Nadopan – village in Hazzo cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 232

Naghadé – village in Persia, in Sulduz province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a mixed population with 85 households of Armenians – 396, 397

Nal Tyoken – village in Kyakhta district of Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 373

Nar Lower and Upper – villages in Shatakh district of Van province – 110

Narek – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 120 Armenian households – 97

Narek monastery – monastery in Gyavash district of Van province, in the village of Narek. It was built in the 10th century – 39

Nazarava – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1909 it had 50 Armenian households – 67

Nekhri – village in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet – 379–381, 384

Nemrut – mountain in the Armenian Highland, on the south-western coast of Lake Van – 102, 150

Nerban, Nerpan – village in Shirvan district of Bitlis province – 178

Nerkin Kelin – village in Sassoun district of Mush province – 139

Nerkin Tagh – village in Kusget cluster of villages on the south-eastern foot of Mount Maruta – 232

Niazi – one of the quarters of the town of Malatia – 375

Nine Saints' Grave – see **St Nshan**.

Nist – village in Bitlis province, 10–11 km north of the town of Bitlis, to the left of the road to Mush – 150

Norak – see **Norshen**.

Noratun – see **Norati**.

Norati, Noratin, Noradin – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 145 households of which 115 were Armenian – 187

Norberd (Haykap Fortress) – fortress and village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In the past it was inhabited only by Armenians; since middle of the 19th century it has been populated by the Kurds – 293

Norduz – district in Van province, south-east of Shatakh – 16, 49, 122

Norgyugh – village in Gyavash district of Van province, south of Lake Van. In 1909 it had 85 Armenian households – 97

Nors – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Butlis province – 169, 180

Norshen – village in Artské-Aljavaz district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 35 Armenian households – 68, 84, 87

Norshen – village in Mush province, 22 km north-west of the town of Mush – 128, 235

Norshen, Frangu Norsahen, Frank Norshen – village in Mush province, 11 km east of the town of Mush – 128

Nazarové – see **Nazarava**.

Oghand, Hoghand – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. It was Armenian-populated – 178

Oghjin, Hoghjin – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 55 Armenian and Kurdish households – 187

Oghngej – small village-block in Kusget cluster of villages on the south-eastern foot of Mount Maruta – 232

Oghunk, Hoghunk – village in Mush district, 6 km north-east of the town of Mush – 131

Oghvants – village in Karchkan cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province – 100

Old Malatia – see **Eskishehir**.

Old Town – see **Eskishehir**.

Orknots, Horknots – village in Mush district, 12 km east of the town of Mush. In 1901 it had 40 Armenian households – 131

Ormzu Gorge – gorge in Motkan district, in the vicinity of the village of Kashakh – 173

Oror – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In 1909 it had 90 households (630 Armenians and 140 other nationalities), a church named after St George or Holy Mother-of-God (built in 1131) – 287, 300

Ororan – village in Archesh district of Van province. In 1907 the village had 17 households – 71, 72, 75

Oshut – village in Khut-Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province. It was Armenian-populated – 170

Osnak – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. It had churches built in 1161 and 1276 – 273

Ovachg Valley – see **Plain of Ovajik**.

Ovajik district – it was located in Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet – 17, 332

Ovaju province – see **Ovajik district**.

Paghché – see **Baghcha**.

Paghr Papa – see **Pakhr**.

Pakhvanis, Pakhvants, Bakhvants – village in Gyavash district of Van province – 94, 97

Pari – see **Bahri**.

Paka-Gaduk – see **Pakagyaduk**.

Pakagyaduk – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province, 36–37 km south-east of the town of Van – 113

Pakan – village in Julamerk district of Hakyari province. At the end of the 19th century it had 80 Armenian households – 121

Pakhezik – village in Van-Tosp cluster of villages in Van district, on the road from Van to Archak – 23

Pakhor or Pakhur Lower – village in Shenadzor cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 17 Armenian households – 176

Pakhr – mountain in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn-Mndzuriian mountain range – 258

Pakhr Maten, Pakhrmaten – see **Arghanamaden**.

Arghanamaden – province of Diarbekir vilayet – 283, 296, 299

Pantimah – see **Berkri River**.

Parkhand – village in Datvan cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province – 162

Parva – see **Barvar**.

Pas –village in Tatik cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 58 households with 441 Armenian residents – 160, 161

Pash Chiftlik, Pashchivtlik – village in Erzurum province, south-west of the town of Erzurum – 292

Pashakyoshk – summer residence in Erzurum vilayet, 2–3 km away from the town of Erzurum – 402

Pasha-Kyoshki – see **Pashakyoshk**.

Pashkalé– see **Bashkala**.

Passion Illuminating monastery – see **Passion monastery**.

Passion monastery, St Gregory the Illuminator – monastery in Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet, in its south-eastern part, 20–22 km away from the town of Yerznka. It was built at the times of Trdat and Gregory the Illuminator, on the place of a pagan temple to God Vormizd – 306

Past – see **Bast**.

Pasur – village in Khulp district of Genj province, 23–24 km south-west of the village of Khulp – 146

Patavor – village in Salmast province, 7 km south-west of the town of Dilman – 391

Patranants, Patrants – see **Badrants**.

Patrmut – see **Badrmut**.

Paul and Peter monastery – monastery in Yerznka province, north-east of the town of Yerznka on a huge rock – 306

Payajuk – village in Salmast province. In 1915 it had 330 households of Armenian population – 391, 395, 400

Pazatagh – see **Bazidagh**.

Pazenits Holy Mother-of-God monastery – see **Bazenits monastery**.

Pazents – see **Bazents**.

Pazu – village in Mush district of Mush province of Bitlis vilayet – 128

Pekler Teresi – location, abyss in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 373, 376

Pesandasht – plain in the Armenian Highland, in the valley of the Eastern Tigris, in Shatakh district of Van province – 92, 95, 109, 110

Petar – village in Mush district, 7–8 km south of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 30 Armenian households – 128, 131, 140, 181

Peyuk Mustafa pasha – one of the quarters of the town of Malatia – 375

Phans, Pahants – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. It was inhabited by Armenians and Kurds – 113

Phorakhané– tributary of the Berkri river – 67

Pichonk – see **Pijonk**.

Pijonk – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province. In 1901 it had 21 Armenian households – 170

Pikants – village in Karchkan cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province – 100

Pionk or Piong – village in Lower Bulanekh cluster of villages in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 158, 194, 198, 206

Piran – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, about 30 km south-west of the town of Manazkert – 205

Piriz – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province. On the eve of 1915 it had 187 Armenian households with a population of 1,484 – 259, 261

Pirkarib – village in Timar district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 35 Armenian households – 36

Pirshenk – village in Upper Kharzan (Khabljjoz) cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 households with 155 Armenian residents – 231, 234–237

Pitar – see **Petar**.

Plain of Abagha – it is located in the north-western part of Berkri district and borders Maku Khanate – 183

Plain of Erzurum – plain in the Armenian Highland, at the upstream flow area of the river Euphrates – 238, 260, 261, 266

Plain of Karin – see **Plain of Erzurum**.

Plain of Ovajik – plain in the Armenian Highland, in Dersim, 45–46 km south-east of the town of Kamakh – 305

Platana – town and port in Trabzon province, in Aghchapat district – 388

Plokan – see **Blokank**.

Pltents – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 65 households, 7 of them were Kurdish, the rest – Armenian – 53

Poghorgov – see **Poghrkov**.

Poghrkov – village in Mush province, 12 km north-west of the town of Mush – 128

Poz Tepé – location near Malatia– 374

Prkashen, Prqashen – see **Brgashen**.

Prkhus – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province. In 1914 it had 140 Armenian households – 151, 152, 154–157, 229

Prnakapan – see **Brnakapan**.

Proshents – village in Shenadzor cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 174

Psank – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district, on the western side of Mount Maratuk – 137, 233

Pshavants or **Pshavank** – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 50 Armenian households – 97

Pshnagomer – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province. On the eve of 1915 it had 40 Armenian households – 83

Pshut – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province, about 40 km south–west of the town of Mush – 233

Psti Gyugh – see **Pstikgegh**.

Pstikgegh – village in Berkri district of Van province. In 1909 it had 70 Armenian households – 62, 64, 65

Put, Bot – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province – 113

Putkii monastery – see **Putku St George**.

Putku St George – monastery in Moks cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province. It was a centre of manuscript art – 106

Pzhnkert – see **Bzhnkert**.

Pztik–Gyugh – see **Pstikgegh**.

Rahli – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 households – 27

Rahmen – see **Rahli**.

Rikonk – see **Hrekonk**.

Rstam–Gyaduk – see **Rstamgyaduk**.

Rstamgyaduk – village in Manazkert district of Mush province – 187

Sagadzor – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, on the left bank of the upstream flow of the river Kghi – 273, 278, 299

Sahak – village in Mush district, about 30 km north–west of the town of Mush, on the northern slope of Mount Karké – 128, 217

Saint Gregory – mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, about 22 km north–east of the town of Yerznka – 242, 304

Salakhana – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In the middle of the 19th century 35–40 Armenian families were settled her by efforts of Khrimian Hairik – 113

Salmast – province in Persia, on the north–western side of Lake Urmia – 101, 120, 389–395, 400

Salmast – town in Salmast province, on the north–western side of Lake Urmia – 120, 123, 127, 177, 393, 394

Samsat, Samat – village in Malatia province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 150 Armenian residents – 358, 372, 376

Samson – province in Trabzon vilayet, in its western coastal part – 357, 384, 355

Sanasar Canyon – gorge, mountain pass, canyon in the Armenian Highland, about 42 km south–east of the town of Yerznka – 303, 313

Sanjak – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 28 households of Armenian and Kurdish residents – 287, 300

Sansa – see **Sanasar Canyon**.

Sansar Gorge – see **Sanasar Canyon**.

Saramerik – village in Salmast province, 6–7 km north of the town of Dilman – 391, 392

Saray – village in Mahmudi district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had more than 100 households of Armenian, Assyrian, Kurdish and Turkish residents – 24–27, 29, 42, 47, 49, 53, 55, 57, 79, 86, 91, 101, 111, 114

Sarghayian – see **Sarighaya**.

Sarighaya – village in Derjan province, 8–9 km south–west of the town of Mamakhaturun. In 1909 it had 100 Armenian households – 259

Sarisu – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province of Van vilayet – 69

Sarna – village in Salmast province, 5 km south of the town of Dilman – 391

Sasik – village in Tatik cluster of villages in Bitlis district – 161

Sassoun – district in Mush province. The sources do not specify its area. As of 1914–1915 there were around 118–243 settlements with a population of about 10,000 – 16, 19, 20, 127, 135, 136, 138–140, 142–146, 211, 213, 214, 220, 222–225, 227, 228, 231–235, 237, 238

Savra – village in Salmast province, 4 km south–west of the town of Dilman – 391

Sebastia – town in historical Pokr Haik. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, according to different sources, the town had a population of 60,000–90,000 people; about half of them were Armenians, the rest – Turks and some Greeks – 302, 318, 355–357, 361, 377

Sebastia – vilayet in historical Pokr Haik, in its north–eastern part – 16–18, 243, 322, 371–373, 384

Seghank – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. It was located in the north–eastern part of the town of Metskert – 288, 300

Seghavank – monastery near the village of Segh in the Mamrtank cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 175

Sel – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province – 113

Semal – village in Verin Gavar cluster of villages in Mush province, on the northern side of Mount Andok – 136–139, 141, 144, 223, 225

Sepuh or **Saint Gregory the Illuminator Monastery** – see **St Gregory the Illuminator**.

Serkevil – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, about 12 km south–west of the town of Kghi – 278, 279, 281, 282, 297, 299

Sesar – village in Motkan district – 173

Sev Get – see **Marmet**.

Sev Kar – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 Armenian households – 178

Sev Sar, Sev Ler – mountains and mountain peak in the Armenian Taurus mountain system – 133, 134

Sevagrak – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages in Van district, about 10 km south of the town of Van – 52

Sevan – village in Archak cluster of villages in Van district. In 1909 the village had 65 Armenian and Kurdish households – 32, 33, 34

Sevjur, Sev Jur – stream in the basin of the Euphrates, its right–side tributary – 266, 317

Seydavar – village in Khoy province. At the end of the 19th century it had about 100 Armenian households – 123

Seit Khasim, Seyid Kasim – mountains in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn–Mndzuriian mountain range – 277

Sgherd – town in Sgherd province, 50–52 km south–west of the town of Bitlis – 16, 137, 159, 161, 166, 174, 181–185, 215, 216

Sghga – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 it had 135 households – 90

Shagalty, Shahgyalti – see **Shahgyaldi**.

Shahgyaldi – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 20 Armenian households – 36

Shahverdi, Shahvert – village in Motkan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 19 households with 192 Armenian residents – 170

Sharuk – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 192–195, 300

Shatak – district in Van province, around the area of the source of the Eastern Tigris – 16, 107, 109, 146, 222

Shatak – town in Shatak district, about 30 km south–east of the town of Moks – 53, 107–110, 182

Shatak–Tagh – see **Shatak**.

Sheikh Yaghub – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province, on the bank of the River Kop – 205

Sheikhlian – 128

Sheikh–Zelan – village in Aintap district, 4 km south of the settlement of Aintap – 209

Shekhan – village in Mush province, 16–17 km north–west of the town of Mush, on the Mush–Ziaret road – 217

Shekhis – Kurdish populated village near the town of Kharberd, on the bank of the Euphrates – 332

Shekh–Nok, Shekhnok – village in Bitlis district of Bitlis province – 216

Shekh–Usuf – see **Shekh–Yusuf**.

Shekh–Yusuf or **Sheikhyusuf** – village in Mush district, 16 km north of the town of Mush – 128, 131

Shen – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 27 km north–east of the town of Kghi – 283, 291, 300

Shen – village in Khizan–Khorors cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 177

Shen – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 145, 146, 170

Shenik, Sheniq – village in Mush province, about 24 km south–east of the town of Mush – 136–139, 141, 144

Shervanshekh or **Shirvanshekh** – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 200 Armenian households – 205

Sheikh–Brem – see **Sheykhbrim**.

Sheykhbrim – village in Mush province, in the Plain of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 Armenian and 9 Kurdsih households – 128, 189

Sheikhyaghub – see **Sheikh Yaghub**.

Sheytan–Ave – see **Sheytanova**.

Sheytanova – village in Salmast province, about 4 km south–east of the town of Dilman – 391, 392

Sheytanova, Sheytanova – village in Manazkert district of Mush province – 187

Shitan – village in Shatak district of Van province – 94, 97, 98, 110

Shmlak – see **Shmluk**.

Shmluk – village in Mush district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 60 households with 500 Armenian residents – 128, 131

Shnidzor or **Shenidzor** – cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 174

Shnist – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 45 Armenian households – 170

Shnist Lower – village in Khut–Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Shokha monastery (St Shoghakat) – see **Shokha St Shoghakat**.

Shokha St Shoghakat – monastery in Yerznka province, 13 km west of the town of Yerznka. According to legend, the monastery was founded by Apostle Thaddeus – 306

Shumblabat, Shumblabad – village in Urmia province, 28 km north of the town of Urmia – 399

Shushants – mountain in the Armenian Highland, east of the town of Van – 24

Shushants – village in Van–Tosp cluster of villages of Van district. In the 14th–17th centuries it was a centre of Armenian manuscript art – 24, 90, 112, 116

Shushar – region (province, district) in the Armenian Highland, in Byurakn Plateau – 313

Shushnamerk – village in Shatakh cluster of villages in Mush district, on the bank of the River Shushnamerk – 137–139, 222–226, 228, 233

Simon – village in Bulanekh district populated with Circassians – 202, 204

Sinamirg – see **Shushnamerk**.

Siok – village in Mush district of Mush province – 145

Sipan – mountain peak in the Armenian Highland, north of Lake Van – 89

Sipan Lower – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province, 8–9 km north–east of the town of Artské – 88

Sipan Upper – village in Artské–Aljavaz district of Van province, 8–9 km north–east of the town of Artské – 69

Sipkants Gyugh – see **Spkants–Gyugh**.

Sndznut – village in Mush province, west of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 120 Armenian households – 128

Sokhgom – village in Mush district, 4–5 km east of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 120 Armenian and 10 Kurdish households – 128, 131

Sokran – village in Gyavar district of Hakyari province – 126

Soma Region – district in Urmia province, in its northern part – 391, 392

Soran – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 Armenian and 7 Kurdish households – 118

Sorb or **Sorp** – village in Karchkan cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 63 Armenian households – 100

Sordar – village in Mush district, about 30 km north–west of the town of Mush – 128, 129, 217

Sori – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Sorkhach – village in Aghbak district of Hakyari province – 123

Soskun – village in Archesh district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 69 Armenian households with a population of 440 – 78–81

Sosrat – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district, 20–22 km north of the town of Van. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 30 Armenian households and 12 households of Turks and Kurds – 34, 36, 40, 41

Souksu, Sougsu – village in Trabzon province, south–west of the town of Trabzon – 387

Soghants – see **Sozvants**.

Sozvants – village in Shatakh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 43 Armenian residents – 108

Sparkert – cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province. At the end of the 19th century it had 29–30 villages with a population of about 4,000 – 174, 176, 178, 180, 181, 183

Spghank – village in Bun Sassoun district of Sassoun in Mush province, about 33 km south–west of the town of Mush – 137, 140

Spitakvank – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 297 Armenian residents – 53, 56

Spkants–Gyugh – village in Moks cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 18 households – 106, 107

Spnkor – see **Saint Gregory**.

Spnkor Mount – see **Saint Gregory**.

Srgolen – see **Erun**.

Sruch – town, fortress in Upper Mesopotamia, fortress in Upper Mesopotamia, in Berejik province of Aleppo (by other division Urfa) vilayet, south–west of the town of Yedesia – 238

St Aghberik – see **Aghberkavank**.

St All Saviour – monastery in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 15–20 km of the town of Kghi – 278, 279, 281, 297, 307

St Apostles monastery – several kilometers south–east of the town of Mush. It has existed since the 5th century – 130, 132, 232

St David monastery, Tsakkar monastery, Aparanits St Gregory monastery – monastery in Erzurum province. It was 18 km south–west of the town of Mamakhatun. It was founded probably in the 13th century – 259, 260

St George monastery – see **St George monastery of Yerkan**.

St Gregory the Illuminator – monastery in Yerznka region of Erzurum vilayet. According to legend, it was built by Gregory the Illuminator who was there together with Trdat III. It was a centre of Armenian manuscript art in the Middle Ages – 305, 306

St James – monastery in Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet, 39–40 km west of the town of Yerznka – 306

St Nicholas – monastery in Yerznka province, south–east of the town of Yerznka, on the slope of mount Keshishdagh – 306

St Nshan monastery – monastery in the village of Tordan in Yerznka province. According to legend, it was built in the 4th century by Gregory the Illuminator. Armenian King Trdat III, Queen Ashkhen, princes, Gregory the Illuminator (his grave was bigger and more beautiful) and other saints were buried here. That is why the monastery was also named Nine Saints' Graves – 306

St Saviour – see **St All Saviour**.

St Vardan – gorge near the village of Saint Vardan in Van district – 54

Stukuran – village in Vardo district of Mush province of Bitlis vilayet – 271

Suchkhan – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province – 154

Sultaniyé – town in Gonia province – 325

Sulduz – province in Atrpatakan, southern part of Lake Urmia – 397

Sultanlu – village in Manazkert district. In 1909 it had 150 households of Armenian and Kurdish residents – 187

Sultanmud – village in Manazkert district of Mush province, 20 km north-east of the town of Manazkert – 147, 148

Sulukh – village in Mush province, about 12 km north-east of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 160 households with more than 1,000 residents – 128, 131, 146, 189, 190

Surb Luys – mountain, mountains in the Armenian Highland, in the Byurakn-Mndzuriian mountain system – 284, 297

Surb Tadeosor Surb Tatos – village in Berkri district. In 1909 the village had 30 Armenian households – 64, 111

Surb Vardan – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages of Van district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 305 Armenian residents – 55

Suruj – see **Sruch**.

Suzants – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Svaz – see **Sebastia**.

Syurgyu – village in Malatia province, 48 km south-west of the town of Malatia – 373, 376, 379

Sirkiv – see **Syurgyu**.

Tabk – see **Tapk**.

Tagh – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district, 22–25 km south-east of the town of Bitlis – 178

Taghavank, Taghvank – village in Khut-Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 269 residents – 170

Tagher – Armenian populated suburb of the town of Khoy – 390

Taghudzor – see **Taghvdzor**.

Taghvdzor – village in Khut-Brnashen cluster of villages in Motkan district of Bitlis province – 170

Taghveran – see **Daghveran**.

Tajbadrik – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province 233

Talhur – see **Dalhor**.

Talidzor – see **Daladzor**.

Talvorik – village in Khulp district of Genj province, centre of Talvorik cluster of villages – 137, 138, 140, 141, 144

Tandzis – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178

Tapavank – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province, 20 km west of the town of Khlat, south of Lake Nazik – 149–152, 229

Tapk, Tapq – village in Shatakh cluster of villages in Mush district. In 1909 it had 244 Armenian residents and a church – 141, 143, 145, 214, 222–227

Tarman – see **Darman**.

Taru – village in Yerznka province of Erzurum vilayet. In 1915 it had 102 Armenian households with 456 residents – 260, 261

Taruk – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137

Tash Depe – village in Malatia province of Kharberd vilayet – 371

Tashtadem – see **Dashtadem**.

Tatank – village in Psank cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 137, 138

Tatik – cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province stretching over the valley of the river Tatik. Before the genocide of 1915 80% of the population was Armenian – 16, 160, 161

Tatos Arakel – see **Surb Tatevos**.

Tatragom – village in Mush district, 14 km south-west of the town of Mush. In 1914 it had 165 Armenian residents – 128

Tatuk – village in Sassoun – 233

Teghut – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province on the road Kop-Khnus – 147, 202, 205

Tepe – village in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet – 283

Ter Gevank – see **Derkevank**.

Ter Ohan – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 293

Ter Zor – see **Deir Ez-Zor**.

Tersim province – see **Dersim province**.

Tezavut – village in Dersim in Chmshkatsag region – 318

Tiar – region in Hakyari province. At the end of the 19th century it had 75 Assyrian populated and 6 Kurdish populated villages – 121, 122

Tigranakert – see **Diarbekir**.

Tigris – river in the basin of Persian Gulf – 185

Til – village in Mush district of Mush province, about 10–12 km north of Lake Nazik – 128, 132

Tilimli – village in Balu district of Arghanamaden province of Diarbekir vilayet – 299

Timar – cluster of villages that stretched out over the peninsula in the eastern part of Lake Van – 16, 21, 34, 36, 42, 44, 46, 69, 110

Tinek – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 16 km north-east of the town of Kghi – 273, 290

Tiramer – see **Astvatsatsin (Mother-of-God)**.

Tiramer – see **Mother-of-God**.

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Togat – see **Tokat**.

Tohmah Chay, Tokhmachay, Tokhmasu – left-side tributary of the river Euphrates – 355

Tokat – province in the north of Sebastia vilayet – 357, 373

Tokma – river in Pokr Haik, a right-side tributary of the Euphrates, known under the name of Melas – 373

Tolaghash – see **Dolabash**.

Tom – village in Mush district, about 14 km north-west of the town of Mush. In 1909 it had 40 Armenian households – 128

Tondrak – village in Manazkert district of Mush province, in the vicinity of the town of Manazkert – 187

Tondras – see **Tondrak**.

Toni – village in Hayots Dzor cluster of villages in Van district of Van province, 15–16 km south-east of the town of Van – 116

Top – village in Gyoaldara cluster of villages of Bitlis district, 16 km east of the town of Bitlis – 165, 166

Topal Chaush – village in Erzurum province, about 25 km north-east of the town of Mamakhatun. In 1909 it had a population of 35 Armenian and 150 Turkish households – 258, 261

Tordan – village in Kamakh district of Yeznka province. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries it had an Armenian population of about 450 (1.500 according to some sources) – 306

Torkhani – village in Bayazet province, in its far south-west. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 38 households of Kurdish population – 270

Tortan – see **Tordan**.

Tosu – village in Sparkert cluster of villages in Khizan district of Bitlis province – 178, 263

Trabzon – province in Trabzon vilayet, in its northern part. On the eve of 1915 the province had 60.000 Armenian residents – 16, 18, 242

Trabzon – town and port in Asia Minor, on the southern coast of the Black Sea. On the eve of 1915 some 14–15 thousand Armenians lived there – 265, 332, 357, 384, 385, 388, 389

Trlashen – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district. In 1909 the village had 95 Armenian households – 34, 36, 40, 41

Trtop – village in Lower Bulanekh cluster of villages in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 157

Tsabna – see **Tsapna**.

Tsaktar – village in Timar cluster of villages in Van district of Van province. In 1909 the village had 40 Armenian households – 40

Tsaktsak – village in Archesh district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 42 Armenian households with 375 residents – 83

Tsapna – village in Mush district, about 4 km north-east of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 32 households – 128

Tsermak – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province. In 1914 it had 165 Armenian households – 274

Tsghak – village in Khlat district of Bitlis province, north-west of Lake Van – 102, 103

Tsghak – village in Mush province, about 24 km south-east of the town of Mush, on the right side of the road Mush–Bitlis – 131, 135

Tsghkam – village in Tatik cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province – 161

Tshokh, Tshogh – village in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian households – 96

Tsitsants – village in Shatakh district of Van province. In 1909 it had 22 households with 165 Armenian residents – 182

Tskhau – see **Tskhavu**.

Tskhavu – village in Mush district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had more than 300 residents – 128, 218

Tsntenu, Sndzut – village in Mush district of Mush province – 217

Tsovasar – mountain, mountain range in the Armenian Highland, in the Armenian Taurus mountain system – 224

Tsronk – village in Mush province, 15 km north-east of the town of Mush, in the Plain of Mush, in the valley of the river Meghraget – 128, 131, 136, 189

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Tuknuk, Dyugnuk – village in Manazkert district of Mush province. In 1909 it had 340 Armenian and Kurdish households – 187

Tzi – village in Upper Kharzan cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mus province – 231

Ula – village in Salmast province, 6 km south-west of the town of Dilman – 391

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Upper Kharzan (Khabljoz) – cluster of villages in Sassoun district of Mush province – 139, 231, 234, 236

Urfa – see **Yedesia**.

Urtap – village in Datvan cluster of villages of Bitlis district. In 1909 the village had 58 households – 103, 159

Urugh – village in Mush district, on the bank of the river Aratsani. In 1914 it had 100 Armenian households – 128

Ushtam – village in Mush province, in the Plain of Mush, 28 km south-east of the town of Mush, on the right bank of the river Meghraget – 128

Uskuran – see **Stukuran**.

Vaghaver – village in Dersim province of Kharberd vilayet, in Arabkir region – 361

Van – town in Tosp province of Vaspurakan region of Mets Haik, east of Lake Van – 9, 20, 21–33, 35–37, 42, 43, 45–51, 53–59, 68–72, 76, 78, 81, 85, 86, 88, 90–92, 94, 96–102, 105–108, 110–116, 122, 124–126, 142, 150, 151, 156, 159, 162, 165, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 187, 196, 203, 215, 230, 271, 323, 331, 333, 384, 385, 391, 394, 397, 402, 403, 407, 408

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Vanik – village in Karchkan cluster of village of Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 it had 37 Armenian households – 104, 105, 180

Vanik – village in Tatik cluster of villages in Bitlis district of Bitlis province. In 1909 it had 60 households with 362 Armenian residents – 161

Varag or **Varak** – mountain range in the Armenian Highland, in the eastern side of Lake Van – 23, 55, 56, 90, 112, 116

Varaga monastery – the monastery was located east of the town of Van, on the western slope of mount Varag – 24

Vardenis – village in Mush district, about 35 km south–east of the town of Mush, on the right bank of the river Meghraget – 128, 131, 133, 210, 211, 228–230

Vardkhagh – village in Mush district, about 26 km south–ast of the town of Mush. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 168 Armenian and as many Kurdish residents – 131, 132

Vardo district – district in Mush province of Bitlis vilayet. The Armenian populated village of Gyumgyum was its centre – 16, 195, 271

Varduk – village in Derjan district of Erzurum province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 households of Armenian and the same number of Turkish population – 258, 265, 266, 268

Voghjin– see **Oghjin**.

Vostan – town in Rshtunik province of vaspurakan region of Mets Haik, about 1 km south of the southern coast of Lake Van, opposite Aghtamar island – 47, 50, 53, 56, 57, 94, 96–98, 106, 109, 110, 176, 180, 181, 183

Vostin – village in Tatik cluster o villages in Bitlis province – 161

Votnchur – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province – 205

Vozm or **Vozim** – village in Barvar district of Sgherd province. In the beginning of the 20th century the village had 200–300 Armenian households – 23, 25, 176, 179, 180, 182, 183

Yaghbi – see **Aghbik**.

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Halvarinj– see **Alvarinj**.

Harakh – see **Aragh**.

Hardonk – see **Artonk**.

Hargavank – see **Arkavank**.

Harinj– see **Arinj**.

Harj-Vank– see **Arinjvank**.

Harkin –see **Aregin**.

Harnjik – see **Arnjik**.

Havran – see **Avran**.

Yedesia (Urha, Urfa) – village in Upper Mesopotamia. It is an ancient town that as joined to the Armenian state during the time of Tigran II (95–56 BC). Yedesia was a well-known centre of Armenian culture – 316, 318, 322, 334, 337, 339–344, 353, 358, 361, 370, 373

Yeghegis, Gyollu – village in Karchkan cluster of villages of Gyavash district of Van province. In 1909 it had about 90 Armenian households – 100, 101

Yeghgard – village in Talvorik cluster of villages in Khulp district of Genj province, on its north–eastern side – 137, 140

Yeghonaka Mount – mountain in Khlat district of Bitlis province – 157

Yeghvan Gorge– gorge in Berkri district of Van province – 63 .

Yekeghyats province – see **Yerznka**.

Yekmal – village in Manazkert district. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15–17 Armenian households with a population of 160 people – 187

Yekmal – village in Timar cluster of villages of Van district of Van province, populated only by the Armenians – 41

Yenikyoy – Turkish village in Erzurum province – 257

Yerishter – village in Mush district, 20–22 km south–east of the town of Mush – 130, 131, 133, 218, 219, 222

Yeriza – see **Yerznka**.

Yerizak – village in Mush district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 50 Armenian and 12 Kurdish households – 131, 195

Yerkan St George monastery – monastery in Yerznka province, 10–12 km south–east of the town of Yerznka – 306

Yerkan, Erkan – village in Yerznka province, south of the town of Yerznka. In 1915 it had 150 Armenian households – 333

Yershter – see **Yerishter**.

Yerun– see **Erun**.

Yerznka – town in Erzurum vilayet, centre of Yerznka province – 164, 239–240, 242–244, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 264, 268, 301–303, 305, 308, 314, 319, 326, 328, 332, 333, 352, 360, 384, 386, 404, 408, 409

Yerznka – province in Erzurum vilayet. In 1877–78 it had a population of 180,374 people, of which 76,220 were Armenians – 17, 259, 304, 312304

Yezdikhané – cluster of villages in Norduz district of Van province populated by the Yezidis – 111

Hoghant– see **Oghand**.

Yolmej – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province, 6 km north–west of the town of Kghi – 277, 300

Eolmezgegh– see **Yolmej**.

Yonjalu – see **Yonjalu**. **Yonjalu** – village in Bulanekh district of Mush province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 300 households of which 263 were Armenian – 205

Hordank– see **Artonk**.

Hushtum – see **Hushtam**.

Zefanoz – village in Trabzon province, about 9.5 km south–east of the town of Trabzon. In the beginning of the 20th century it had about 60 households of Armenian population – 386

Zelkheter – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 299

Zernak – village in Khoshab district of Hakyari province. In 1913 it had 80 households – 112

Zeven – village in Karchkan cluster of villages in Gyavash district of Van province. In the beginning of the 20th century it had 15 Kurdish households – 47

Zghran –bridge over the river Euphrates – 212

Ziaret – village in Mush district, about 25 km north–west of the town of Mush – 127–130, 216, 217

Zilan Gorge –see **Zilanderé**.

Zilanderé –canyon (gorge valley) in the basin of Lake Van – 48, 59, 68, 73, 75, 211

Zrzanos – village in Kghi district of Erzurum province – 283, 294, 295

Zughr – bridge over the river Euphrates – 202, 204

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Address: 49/2 Komitas Ave, Yerevan, 0051, Republic of Armenia

Tel.: (+37410) 23-25-28, Fax: (+37410) 23-25-95, E-mail: info@zangak.am, URL: www.zangak.am

BULANUKH, KHLAT (BITLIS VILAYET) AND ALJAVAZ (VAN VILAYET) IN 1914

Scale 1:400 000

Author: Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer: Martin Martirosyan



LEGEND

- Vilayet boundaries
- Province (sanjak) boundaries
- District (kaza) boundaries
- Boundaries and territory (approximate) of Armenian princedoms
- Artaks
- Castles, fortresses
- Alaments Khan
- Inns
- BITLIS** Centre of vilayet
- Kop** Centre of district (kaza)
- Metsk** Centre of the rural community (nahiye)
- Latar** Settlements
- Ingelir** Centre of Armenian princedom
- Villages
- Farms ("meze", "cattle shed")
- HAYKASHEN** Town locations
- Manzaker** Village locations
- BULANUKH** District (kaza)
- TARKHANTSI** Armenian princedoms
- GAVAR** Rural community (nahiye)

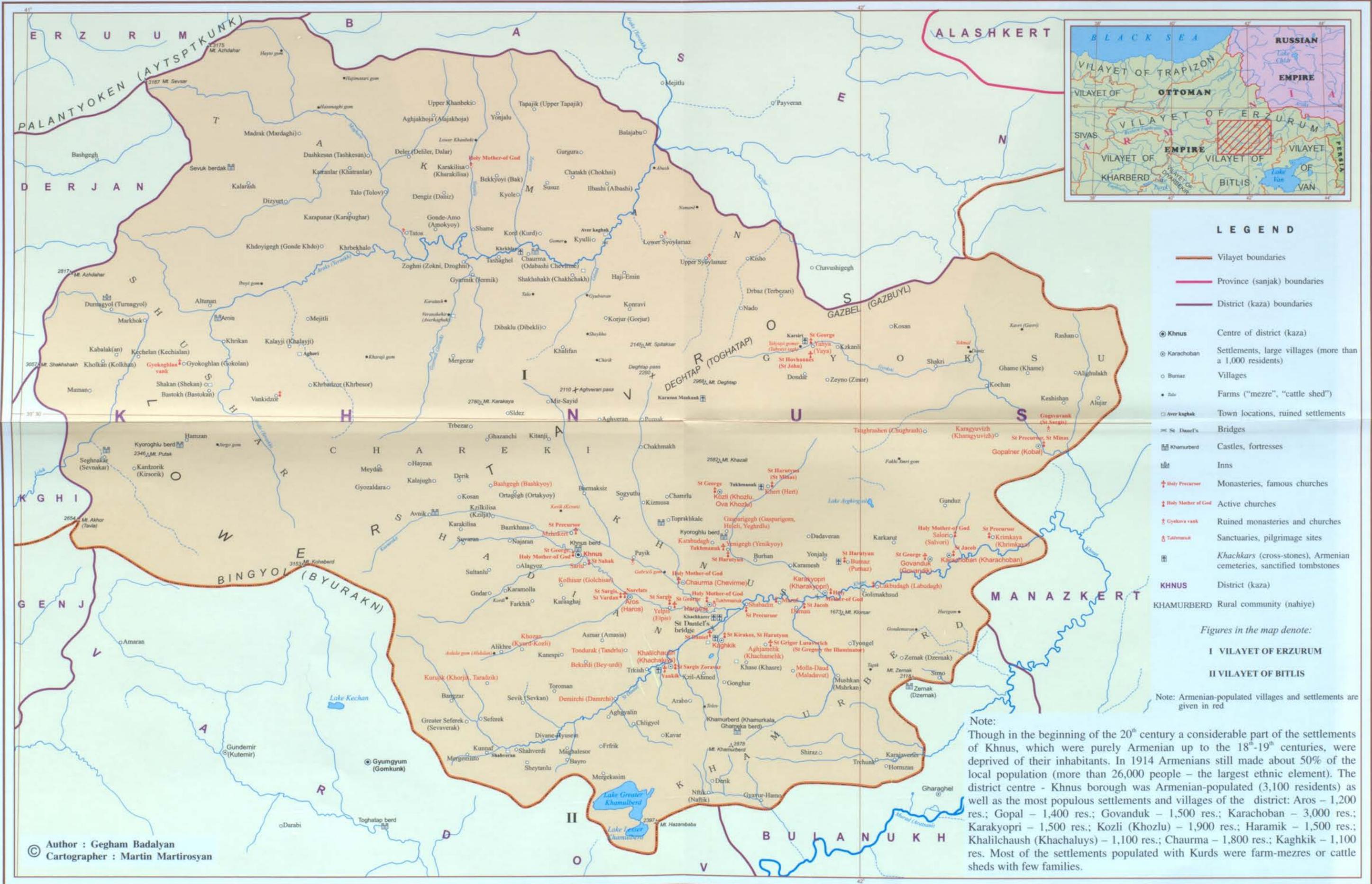
Figures in the map denote:
I SANJAK OF MUSH II SANJAK OF BITLIS

The Settlements of Bulanukh, Khlata, Aljavaz and the southern part of Manzaker with the highest ratio of Armenian population in 1914

- 1. Bulanukh**
Atkon - 880 residents; Brgashen - 590 res.; Teghut - 1,180 res.; Latar - 700 res.; Liz (Lits) - 1,800 res.; Kharabashehir (Haykashen) - 610 res.; Khoshgyaldi - 1,510 res.; Kop town - 5,100 res.; Hamzasheykh - 1,300 res.; Gharaghel (Berdak) - 1,600 res.; Mechitlu (Mashtlu, Lich) - 950 res.; Yonjalu (Arvtnots) - 1,650 res.; Shekhaghub (Shushanavank) - 1,200 res.; Shirvansheykh - 1,300 res.; Votnchor (Yotnjur) - 1,300 res.; Pionk - 570 res.; Kakarlu - 1,510 res.
- 2. Manzaker (southern section)**
Derik - 920 res.; Khotanlu - 500 res.; Ghasimi (Irzi Khasmik) - 670 res.; Gharaghaya (Kharakhaya) - 725 res.; Manzaker borough - 945 res.; Noratin (Otsin) - 1,740; Rustamyaduk - 1,800 res.
- 3. Artske-Aljavaz**
Aren - 1,300 res.; Arinjkus - 610 res.; Artske town - 1,200 res.; Archra (Lower Ardza) - 800 res.; Gazokh (Gandzak) - 800 res.; Ziraktsi - 800 res.; Khorants - 820 res.; Kocheren - 550 res.; Gharakeshish (Kharakeshish) - 720 res.; Norshenjugh - 500 res.; Sipan (Upper and Lower) - 1,040 res.; Pshnagomer (Peshgenagomer) - 530 res.
- 4. Khlata (Akhlata)**
Teghut - 1,300 res.; Khulik - 670 res.; Tsghak - 1,300 res.; Kamurj (Karmunj) - 725 res.; Kushtian - 640 res.; Metsk - 580 res.; Tapavank - 1,170 res.; Prkhus - 2,100 res.
- 5. Datvan-Rahva (before the beginning of 20th century it was part of Khlata)**
Datvan - 1,300 res.; Ketsvak - 940 res.; Dzorkonk - 625 res.; Jirhor - 785 res.; Urtap (Ortap) - 585 res.

DISTRICT OF KHNUM IN 1914

Scale 1:350 000



LEGEND

- Vilayet boundaries
- Province (sanjak) boundaries
- District (kaza) boundaries
- Khnum Centre of district (kaza)
- Karachoban Settlements, large villages (more than a 1,000 residents)
- Burnaz Villages
- Talo Farms ("mezre", "cattle shed")
- Aver kaghak Town locations, ruined settlements
- St. Daniel's Bridges
- Khamurberd Castles, fortresses
- Inns
- Holy Precursor Monasteries, famous churches
- Holy Mother of God Active churches
- Gyekava vank Ruined monasteries and churches
- Tahmasak Sanctuaries, pilgrimage sites
- Khachkars (cross-stones), Armenian cemeteries, sanctified tombstones
- KHNUM** District (kaza)
- KHAMURBERD** Rural community (nahiye)

Figures in the map denote:
I VILAYET OF ERZURUM
II VILAYET OF BITLIS

Note: Armenian-populated villages and settlements are given in red

Note:
 Though in the beginning of the 20th century a considerable part of the settlements of Khnum, which were purely Armenian up to the 18th-19th centuries, were deprived of their inhabitants. In 1914 Armenians still made about 50% of the local population (more than 26,000 people – the largest ethnic element). The district centre - Khnum borough was Armenian-populated (3,100 residents) as well as the most populous settlements and villages of the district: Aros – 1,200 res.; Gopal – 1,400 res.; Govanduk – 1,500 res.; Karachoban – 3,000 res.; Karakyopri – 1,500 res.; Kozli (Khozlu) – 1,900 res.; Haramik – 1,500 res.; Khalilchaush (Khachaluy) – 1,100 res.; Chaurma – 1,800 res.; Kaghkik – 1,100 res. Most of the settlements populated with Kurds were farm-mezres or cattle sheds with few families.

SANJAK OF VAN IN 1914

Scale 1:750 000

© Author : Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer : Martin Martirosyan



LEGEND

- - - State boundaries
- Vilayet boundaries
- Province (sanjak) boundaries
- District (kaza) boundaries
- - - Rural communities (nahiye) boundaries
- - - «Independent Assyrian Province» boundaries

- ⊙ VAN Centre of vilayet
- ⊙ BASHKALE Centre of province (sanjak)
- ⊙ VOSTAN Centre of district (kaza)
- Kighzi Centre of rural community (nahiye)
- Khachik Villages
- ⚡ Varagavank Armenian active monasteries
- ⚡ KOCHANES The sight of catholicos (marshimoon) of the Nestorians (Assyrians)
- Shatakhs Castles, fortresses
- SHATAKH District (kaza)
- HAYOTS DZOR Rural community (nahiye)
- 4058 A. Mt. Sipan Picks and heights in metres
- X Main passes

SANJAK OF HAKKARI IN 1914

Scale 1:700 000



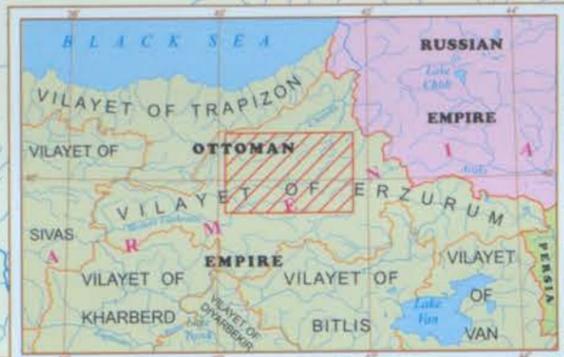
LEGEND

- State boundaries
- Vilayet boundaries
- Province (sanjak) boundaries
- District (kaza) boundaries
- Rural communities (nahiye) boundaries
- «Independent Assyrian Province» boundaries
- Regions of «Independent Assyrian Province» (meliks)
- VAN Centre of vilayet
- BASHKALE Centre of province (sanjak)
- Vostan Centre of district (kaza)
- Hariki Centre of rural community (nahiye)
- Avdar Villages
- Varaga vank Armenian active monasteries
- KOCHANES The sight of catholicos (marshmoon) of the Nestorians (Assyrians)
- Marbishu Assyrian active monasteries
- Shatakh Castles, fortresses
- Ashita Centre of the independent Assyrian regions (meliks)
- SHATAKH District (kaza)
- HAYOTS DZOR Rural community (nahiye)
- TIYARI Assyrian regions
- 4058 A. Mt. Sipan Picks and heights in metres
- Main passes

Author : Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer : Martin Martirosyan

DISTRICT OF ERZURUM IN 1914

Scale 1:350 000



Author : Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer : Martin Martirosyan

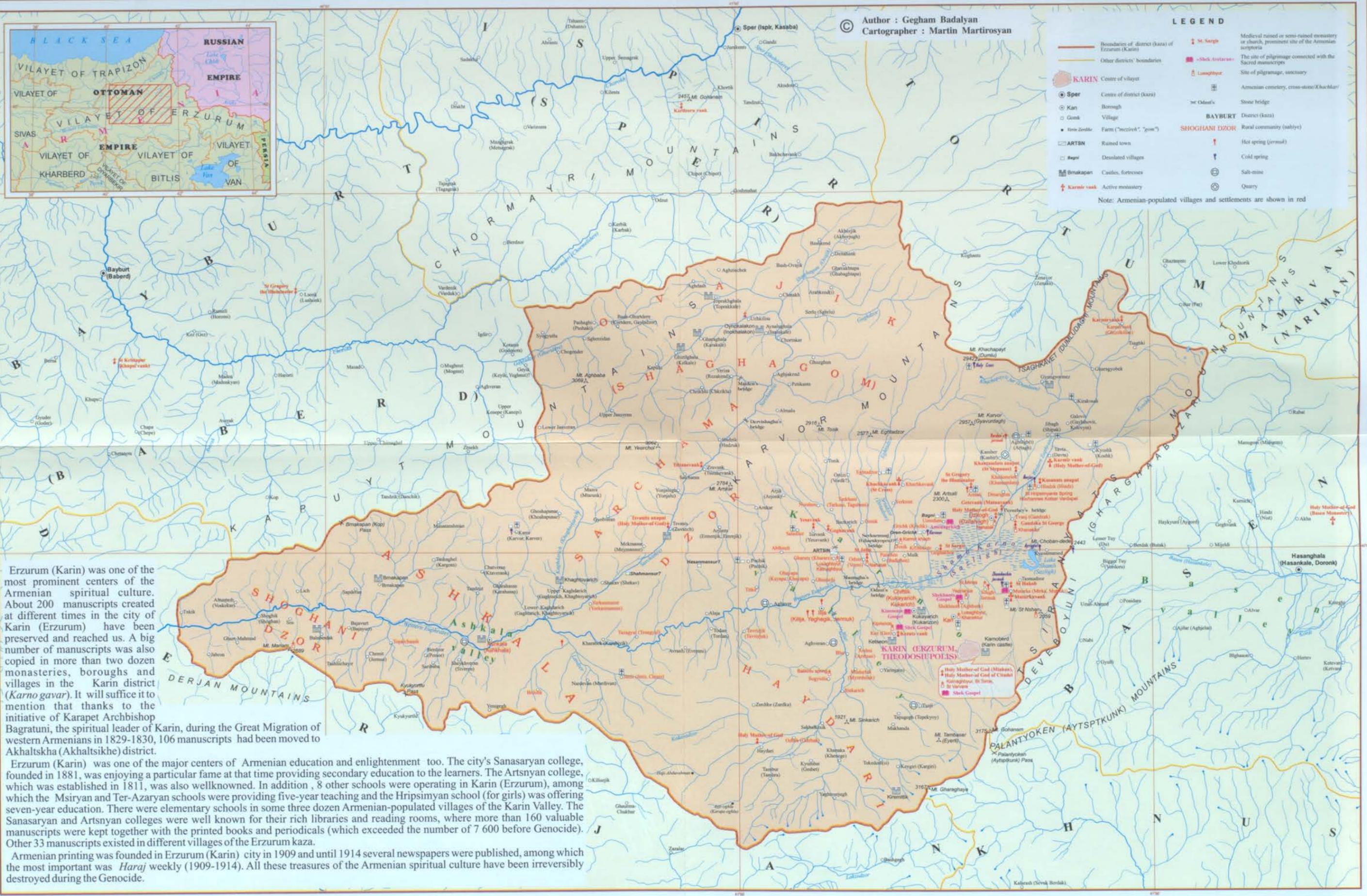
LEGEND	
	Boundaries of district (kaza) of Erzurum (Karin)
	Other districts' boundaries
	KARIN Centre of vilayet
	Sper Centre of district (kaza)
	Kan Borough
	Gomb Village
	Free Zentle Farm ("mezirak", "zom")
	ARTSN Ruined town
	Beyli Desolated villages
	Brakapan Castles, fortresses
	Karnir vank Active monastery
	St. Sargis Medieval ruined or semi-ruined monastery or church, prominent site of the Armenian scriptoria
	Shk. Avtaras The site of pilgrimage connected with the Sacred manuscripts
	Lashghar Site of pilgrimage, sanctuary
	Armenian cemetery, cross-stone/Khachkar
	St. Omani's Stone bridge
	BAYBURT District (kaza)
	SHOGHANI DZOR Rural community (nahiyeh)
	H Hot spring (jermak)
	C Cold spring
	S Salt-mine
	Q Quarry

Note: Armenian-populated villages and settlements are shown in red

Erzurum (Karin) was one of the most prominent centers of the Armenian spiritual culture. About 200 manuscripts created at different times in the city of Karin (Erzurum) have been preserved and reached us. A big number of manuscripts was also copied in more than two dozen monasteries, boroughs and villages in the Karin district (*Karno gavar*). It will suffice to mention that thanks to the initiative of Karapet Archbishop Bagratuni, the spiritual leader of Karin, during the Great Migration of western Armenians in 1829-1830, 106 manuscripts had been moved to Akhaltskha (Akhaltzikhe) district.

Erzurum (Karin) was one of the major centers of Armenian education and enlightenment too. The city's Sanasaryan college, founded in 1881, was enjoying a particular fame at that time providing secondary education to the learners. The Artsnyan college, which was established in 1811, was also wellknown. In addition, 8 other schools were operating in Karin (Erzurum), among which the Msiryan and Ter-Azaryan schools were providing five-year teaching and the Hripsimyan school (for girls) was offering seven-year education. There were elementary schools in some three dozen Armenian-populated villages of the Karin Valley. The Sanasaryan and Artsnyan colleges were well known for their rich libraries and reading rooms, where more than 160 valuable manuscripts were kept together with the printed books and periodicals (which exceeded the number of 7 600 before Genocide). Other 33 manuscripts existed in different villages of the Erzurum kaza.

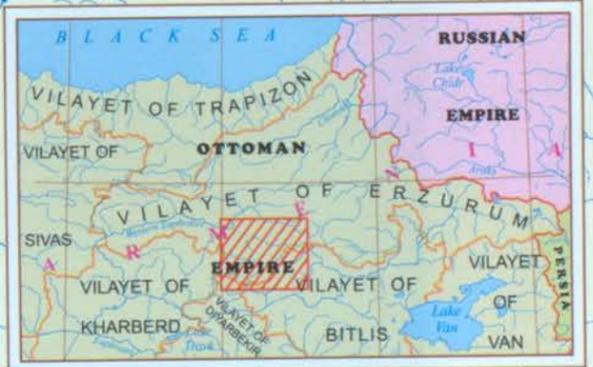
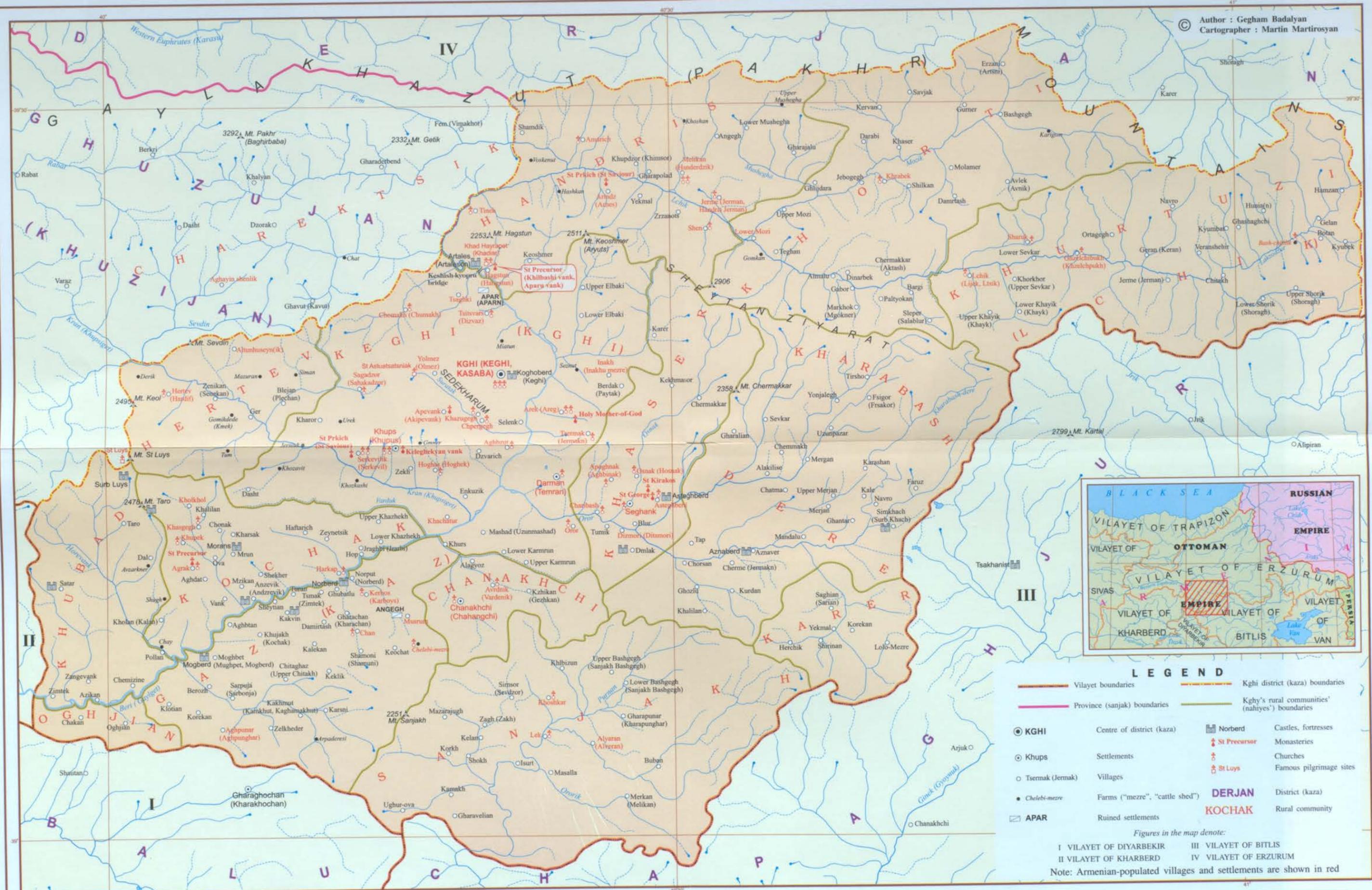
Armenian printing was founded in Erzurum (Karin) city in 1909 and until 1914 several newspapers were published, among which the most important was *Haraj* weekly (1909-1914). All these treasures of the Armenian spiritual culture have been irreversibly destroyed during the Genocide.



DISTRICT OF KGHI IN 1914

Scale 1:250 000

Author : Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer : Martin Martirosyan

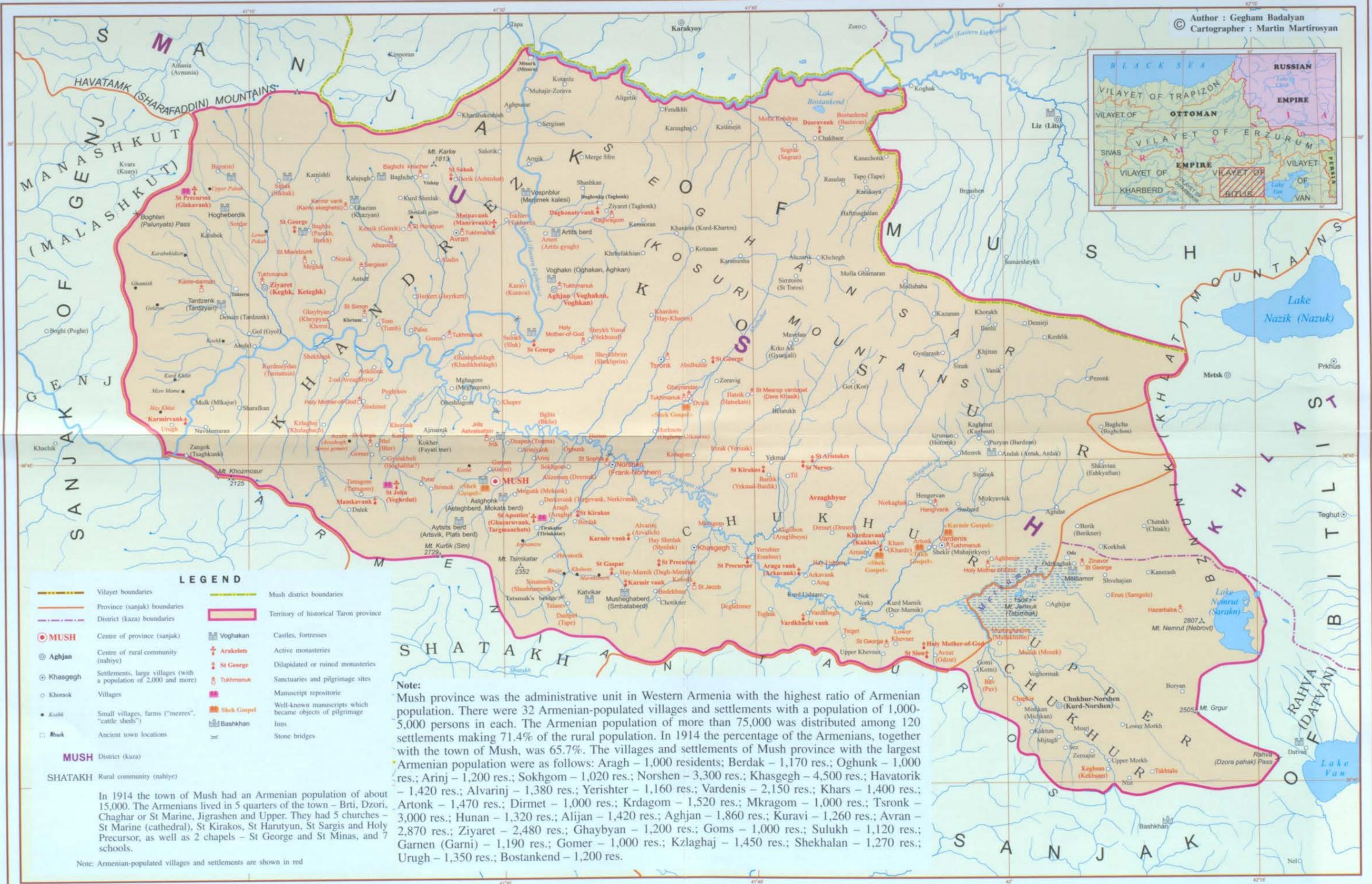


- ### LEGEND
- Vilayet boundaries
 - Province (sanjak) boundaries
 - Kghi district (kaza) boundaries
 - Kghi's rural communities' (nahiyeh) boundaries
 - KGHI Centre of district (kaza)
 - Khups Settlements
 - Tsermak (Jermak) Villages
 - Chelebi-meze Farms ("mezre", "cattle shed")
 - APAR Ruined settlements
 - Norberd Castles, fortresses
 - ✙ St Precursor Monasteries
 - ✙ Churches
 - ✙ St Luys Famous pilgrimage sites
 - DERJAN District (kaza)
 - KOCHAK Rural community

Figures in the map denote:
 I VILAYET OF DIYARBEKIR III VILAYET OF BITLIS
 II VILAYET OF KHARBERD IV VILAYET OF ERZURUM
 Note: Armenian-populated villages and settlements are shown in red

DISTRICT OF MUSH (TARON) IN 1914

Scale 1:300 000



Author : Gegham Badalyan
Cartographer : Martin Martirosyan



LEGEND

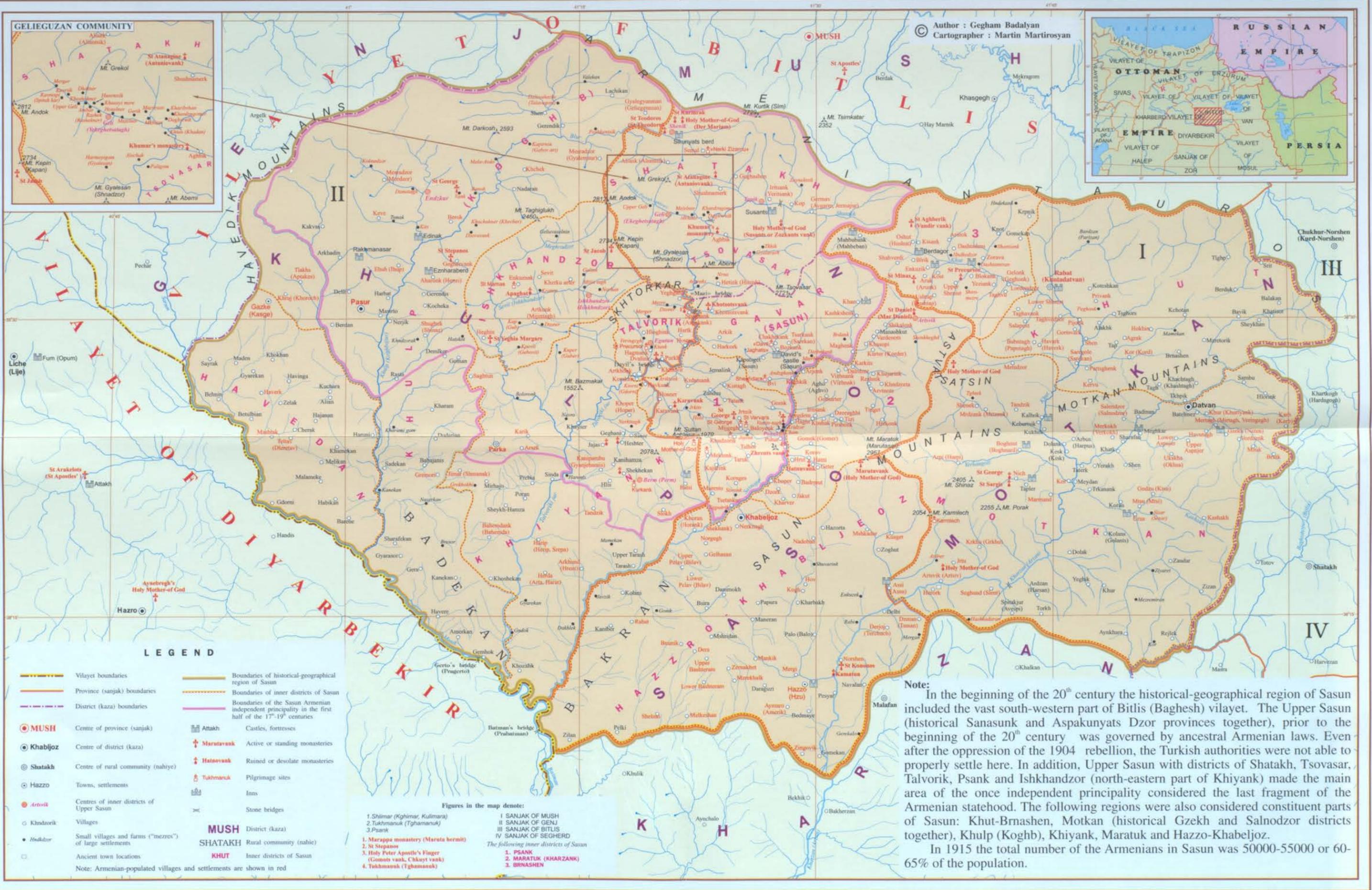
Vilayet boundaries	Mush district boundaries
Province (sanjak) boundaries	Territory of historical Taron province
District (kaza) boundaries	Castles, fortresses
MUSH Centre of province (sanjak)	Active monasteries
Aghjan Centre of rural community (nahiye)	Dilapidated or ruined monasteries
Khasgegh Settlements, large villages (with a population of 2,000 and more)	Sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites
Khorok Villages	Manuscript repository
Kaski Small villages, farms ("mezres", "cattle sheds")	Well-known manuscripts which became objects of pilgrimage
Mshk Ancient town locations	Inns
MUSH District (kaza)	Stone bridges
SHATAKH Rural community (nahiye)	

Note: Mush province was the administrative unit in Western Armenia with the highest ratio of Armenian population. There were 32 Armenian-populated villages and settlements with a population of 1,000-5,000 persons in each. The Armenian population of more than 75,000 was distributed among 120 settlements making 71.4% of the rural population. In 1914 the percentage of the Armenians, together with the town of Mush, was 65.7%. The villages and settlements of Mush province with the largest Armenian population were as follows: Aragh – 1,000 residents; Berdak – 1,170 res.; Oghunk – 1,000 res.; Arinj – 1,200 res.; Sokhgom – 1,020 res.; Norshen – 3,300 res.; Khasgegh – 4,500 res.; Havatorik – 1,420 res.; Alvarinj – 1,380 res.; Yerishter – 1,160 res.; Vardenis – 2,150 res.; Khars – 1,400 res.; Artonk – 1,470 res.; Dirmet – 1,000 res.; Krdagom – 1,520 res.; Mkragom – 1,000 res.; Tsonk – 3,000 res.; Hunan – 1,320 res.; Alijan – 1,420 res.; Aghjan – 1,860 res.; Kuravi – 1,260 res.; Avran – 2,870 res.; Ziyaret – 2,480 res.; Ghaybyan – 1,200 res.; Goms – 1,000 res.; Sulukh – 1,120 res.; Garnen (Garni) – 1,190 res.; Gomer – 1,000 res.; Kzlaghaj – 1,450 res.; Shekhalan – 1,270 res.; Urugh – 1,350 res.; Bostankend – 1,200 res.

Note: Armenian-populated villages and settlements are shown in red

SASUN IN 1914

Scale 1:300 000



MASSACRES OF ARMENIANS AND OTHER CHRISTIANS IN WESTERN ARMENIA IN 1914-1915

