

ISSUES MISSED IN THE 1915 ARMENIAN DEBATE

(1915 ERMENİ TARTIŞMASINDA
GÖZDEN KAÇAN HUSUSLAR)

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Abstract: *This article evaluates some of the major critical issues that are disregarded in the 1915 Armenian debate. Therefore the article attempts to analyze the one-sided and unscientific historical discourse pioneered by the Armenian propaganda.*

Keywords: *1915, Armenian, relocation, propaganda, archives*

Öz: *Bu makale 1915 Ermeni tartışmalarında göz ardı edilen bazı kritik konulara değinmektedir. Çalışmada Ermeni propogandası tarafından yönlendirilen tek-taraflı ve bilimsel olmayan tarih söylemi incelenmektedir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *1915, Ermeni, tehcir, propaganda, arşivler*

CREATING PEACE OUT OF WAR

Kemal Atatürk, the founder and architect of modern Turkey, took his just and due place in history an experienced statesman and as a senior soldier who fought against the Italians in Tripoli, British, French, Australians and New Zealanders in the Çanakkale Strait, Russians in Eastern Anatolia, and against the Greek armies in Western Anatolia, and as an experienced statesman. Therefore, 69 years after his death, the Mausoleum, his eternal resting-place not far from Turkish General Staff, was visited by 4 million Turkish and foreign visitors in 2005 and 8 million in 2006.

The charismatic personality and philosophy of the Great Commander still remains alive in the minds of the Mausoleum visitors ranging from the ordinary citizens of his country to the distinguished representatives of the world nations.

It is well known how that particular soldier, the founder of a modern nation and a secular republic in the East-Mediterranean geography has defined the concept of “war”.

However, once again, I would like to quote this definition by which I am fascinated just like many of his admirers.

According to the eternal Commander-in-chief of the Armies of the Turkish Republic:

War is a murder unless it is unavoidable.

In other words, he asserts that “war” should be “unavoidable” in order not to be conceived as a murder.

I do not know if it is possible to make any other stronger and humane definition than this.

Besides, the person who made this definition was a military genius, and a hero who fought bravely in the battlefields.

He called on to his soldiers saying, “I am ordering you to die!” on Gelibolu, at the dawn of a very hot August night in 1915.

I have always wondered:

Why would a commander make such a definition of “war”?

What made him say, “War is a murder unless it is unavoidable”?

Kemal Atatürk was a soldier who conducted battles and wars against the armies of other nations.

He made this definition after having observed the world of other nations’ armies with whom his own sons fought in the Balkan War, the Great War, and in the Turkish War of Independence.

It is a definition based thoroughly on comparative and minute observations of battles.

I would like to point that:

The foundation of the Turkish Republic on the remaining soil of an empire

that expired its 600-year life in 1923 is the consequence of this particular definition.

This definition was made as a result of the unjust stipulations of the Mondros Armistice that brought the four-year bloody war to an end in 1918.

Thus, under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish nation founded a parliament and armed forces in Ankara, and fought the war because it was “unavoidable”.

The Commander, winning the military victory at a historical moment, pointed to a new and permanent aim for his army and nation.

Peace at home, peace in the world!

This aim is still pursued by the Turkish Republic as the fixed state policy...

I name this stage as the “creating peace out of war.”

At this new stage, the Commander Atatürk did not want to leave the Turkish nation alone with the unbearable tragedies of the Balkan wars, the World War I, and the Turkish War of Independence forever.

The Triumphant Commander defined it as an aim to be pursued by the every single individual of the nation, who survived through the period of disasters, in reaching and exceeding the contemporary level of civilization.

He wanted all the Turks, be it men or women, to contribute to the common heritage of the humanity, and serve to the peace in the region, and around the world.

This Brave Soldier and His Nation took the first concrete step in the realization of this aim at the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

He made peace with the people of a neighbor country against whom he had fought severely in Western Anatolia in the war of 1919-1922.

On March 18, 1934, he called on to the mournful mothers of the British, French, Australian, and New Zealander soldiers who lost their lives in their fight against the Turks in the Gelibolu Peninsula during the Great War.

This Great Man said the following for the soldiers of the Entente Powers who had disembarked on the Gelibolu Peninsula in order to seize Istanbul, the Turkish capital since 1453:

Heroes who shed their blood and lost their lives on this land!

You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace.

There is no difference between the Jonnies and the Mehmetts to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours.

You, the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, don't cry for them anymore.

Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.

After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

Still, I have been observing in deep grief that no nation, state, or a leader in our world had considered the post-Great War relations and peace, as Atatürk did.

The republican generations of the new Türkiye have never nourished themselves on the old controversies with their neighbors, world nations, and armies.

The new generations have not been raised as individuals feeding on hatred, anger, revenge, or as individuals displaying an everlasting

aggressiveness.

Still, I have been observing in deep grief that no nation, state, or a leader in our world had considered the post-Great War relations and peace, as Atatürk did.

Today, the Turkish Nation is faced with the revengeful agitations and provocations of an unfortunate inhumane conception discriminating between the nationalities of military and civilian casualties of an incredible disaster, which destroyed humanity 90 years ago, the Great War.

This new type of aggression, which I define as the distortion of the realities by the *Inquisition* decisions in world history, has awakened the haunting mentality of the Dark Ages once again.

As an academician deeply convinced of the values of the civilized world, I feel deep humane reaction against the claims and of acceptance of the term "genocide" for the "events of by the parliaments of some ally states, just as all the individuals of my nation do.

However, as a Turkish citizen, I have to curb my rightful humane reaction against those decisions taken.

I am here to make an evaluation of an ever continuing non-historical, irrational, unscientific, illegitimate, and aggressive Inquisition directed against the Turkish Nation and its eternal reliable friends.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1915?

In order to enlighten the events known as the “1915 Crisis” between the Turks and the Armenians who lived together in an environment of peace and trust over the centuries in the Ottoman Empire, we first need to answer the question “what happened in 1915?” frankly.

Yes, what happened between the Ottoman Government and the Ottoman Armenian Committees while the war waged on in 1915?

Did you know that the Committee of Union and Progress in power, and the Armenian Dashnak Committee voted for the same single list in the Ottoman Parliamentary elections almost a year before 1915?

Only 7 years before 1915, during the 1908 Young Turk movement, the prominent members of the Committee of Union and Progress, and the leaders of the Dashnak Committee shouted “Long live freedom!” in the squares of Istanbul together.

Well, why did then the same Turkish and Armenian leaders fought against each other on “enemy” sides when mobilization for the Great War was declared?

The world history is full of examples where the “real” is always disguised and distorted.

Let us examine our own case:

In the spring of 1915, the assaults of the Entente Powers against the Çanakkale Strait, and the ground operations of the Russian Army in the Eastern Anatolia were continuing simultaneously.

In those days, the coastal areas of the Empire were under the unceasing bombardment of the Entente battleships.

On April 24, 1915 (in other words, the date declared by the Armenian

Diaspora and the Armenian Republic as a kind of “chosen trauma”), the Government in Istanbul arrested the leaders of the Ottoman Armenian Committees on the grounds of “having conducted military activities in favor of enemy forces.”

WHY ARCHIVES ARE IMPORTANT?

I would like to describe the picture in Istanbul and Anatolia on April 24, 1915.

At the time, the French Embassy in Istanbul was closed due to the World War. However, the intelligence reports, titled “daily events”, drawn by the French Embassy’s Chargé d’Affaires were being sent to France via the US Embassy in Istanbul.

The historical information documented in the intelligence reports prepared by the French Embassy in Istanbul between April 25 and May 1, 1915 is as follows:

(ONE) The Russian Navy is positioned at the Black Sea entrance of the Istanbul Strait.

(TWO) The British and French Navies have launched an attack on the entrance of the Çanakkale Strait.

(THREE) Armenians at the Caucasus Front are fighting against the Turkish Forces together with the Russian Army.

(FOUR) In Erzurum area, and especially in Van, the Armenian gangs are fighting against Turks.

(FIVE) The leaders of the Armenian Committees are arrested in the Ottoman capital.

(SIX) This pressure of the Ottoman Government is due to the outcome of the Armenian attitude displayed in Zeytun, and at the Caucasus Front. (The term “attitude” is not explained in the report.)

(SEVEN) According to the Chief of the Ottoman Court Martial, the Armenian Committees abroad are preparing a rebellion in the six provinces of Eastern Anatolia. (In fact, the Armenian Committees had already started the rebellion; the report claims they were at the stage of “preparation”).

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

The most vigorous discussion area of the Turkish-Armenian imbroglio has been darkened by the efficient propagandas made in and after 1915.

The Crises of 1915 does constitute a quite dramatic tragedy of war in various aspects.

Today this issue has been turned into an international conflict in relation to the recording of the history.

The positions of the parties involved in this acute controversy are as follows:

- (1) The Armenian Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia claim that the military activities undertaken by the Armenian Committees in favor of the enemy during the war were actions aiming at “rescuing themselves from the Ottoman sovereignty”.
- (2) Under the inevitable conditions of the First World War, making use of the Armenian Committees, and having them fight against the Turkish Forces in the rear echelons of the front was quite normal. Reminding of this particular fact by the Turkish historians is of course distressing. It is an obligation for the foreign parliaments and for the international organizations to pass pronouncements of “genocide” of political nature for they hold it as “wergeld” in debt to the Armenian committees. Thus, with the acceptance of such decisions taken, the “innocent lambs of would forget how they were exploited by the Entente Powers in the First World War.
- (3) Turkish people perceived the military activities and massacres committed by the Ottoman Armenian Committees as a threat to the existence of the Empire necessitating self-defense and government responsibility.

In order to be able to solve the controversy, the following questions ought to be answered:

What are the military activities directed against the Ottoman army and Ottoman citizens by the Armenian Dashnak, Hntchaq and Ramgavar Committees at the beginning of the First World War?

Can those activities be considered as “indirect war” or defined as a “civil war”?

Or do they require different conceptual interpretation?

THE MEASURE FREQUENTLY TAKEN

What were the measures implemented for the 1915 Crisis that occurred in the Ottoman Empire with the beginning of the Great War?

These measures ought to be clarified prior to making of a legitimate historical evaluation of the issue.

I observe three major elements of deep controversy between the Ottoman Government and Armenian Committees in the creation of the 1915 Crisis:

- (1) Armenian Volunteer Units.
- (2) Organizations of Armenian Fedayees.
- (3) Naval Blockades and Bombardments.

The first two of these elements were thoroughly premeditated and put in to action on the battlefield by the Armenian Committees and their accomplice allies.

The third is due to the conditions of war; hence it is coincidental and indirect.

The two premeditated elements, jointly employed by the Armenian Committees and the Entente Powers, brought the only obligatory decision that could be taken to prevent the suddenly emerging crisis on the agenda of the Ottoman Government.

The coincidental third element was efficient in the widely acceptance of the relocation decision that was passed to prevent the crisis.

Now, I will try to explain my observations I made during my studies in the following order:

The two of the elements employed in creating the 1915 Crisis are: the armed “Armenian Volunteer Units (later Regiments)” at the Caucasus Front; and the “Armenian Fedayees” fulfilling the military duties assigned by the Dashnak and Hntchaq Committees in various provinces of Anatolia.

The Entente Powers were generally well informed of the military and semi-military activities conducted by these two elements. The activities were thoroughly intentional and premeditated.

Due to the conditions of war, the Russian, British and French naval

bombardments carried out along the shores of Black Sea, Marmara and the Mediterranean affected the Muslim and Christian communities living in these regions greatly.

The Ottoman Government had to take additional measures to prevent the clashes among civilian people and to neutralize the military activities initiated by the Armenians to help the Entente Powers.

In my studies, I came across documents proving the direct and indirect collaboration of the Armenian Committees and the Entente Powers.

I would like to keep my evaluations of those documents outside the scope of this work.

I believe an example will suffice:

90 days prior to the declaration of the Law of Relocations of May 27, 1915 by the Ottoman Government, Governor Varontsov-Dashkov of the Caucasus, in his telegram message – dated February 7, 1915 and numbered 1185 – wrote the following to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs:

The relocation of civilian communities by the governments on grounds of security is the most frequently used method in wartime, and in the face of rebellions.

The representative of Zeytun Armenians has just come to the Caucasus Army Headquarters. The representative says that some 15.000 Armenians are ready to strike the Turkish transportation lines but that they do not have weapons and bullets. Therefore, it is extremely vital to send sufficient amount of weapons and bullets to Iskenderun due to particular importance of Zeytun located on the transportation lines of the Turkish army in Erzurum. (...) Since it is impossible for us to give the weapons directly, I believe that a contact should be established with the French and British administration concerning the sending of French or British made weapons and bullets found on the French and British (war) ships to Iskenderun.

This message was appended to the telegraph dated February 9, 1915, numbered 708, and sent to Paris and London.

Here, I would like to clarify a point:

The relocation of civilian communities by the governments on grounds of security is the most frequently used method in wartime, and in the face of rebellions.

In the First World War, on grounds of security, the Russian Government relocated some civilian communities in West Russia, who were living near the operation area of German armies just at the commencement of the war.

A relocation measure similar to the measures taken by the Ottoman Government on grounds of security in the face of the bombardments along the Black Sea, Marmara, Mediterranean, and Syrian shores of Anatolia was implemented by the US President on the US citizens of Japanese origin during the Second World War.

Without doubt, the security measures the Ottoman Empire had implemented induced unbearable pains and disasters likewise.

Again in the Second World War, the USSR sent the communities of Turkish origin living in Crimea and Caucasus region to Central Asia through arduous voyages lasting for weeks.

And the Red Army in the Second World War took the Polish civilians away from their regions of settlement.

THE MODEL ATTITUDE

There are absolutely plausible reasons for the governments' resorting to the relocation of civilians on grounds of security at different periods, and geographical areas.

Yet, the modern and contemporary history is full of examples of agonies and unforgettable tragedies caused by such security measures.

Without doubt, the security measures the Ottoman Empire had implemented induced unbearable pains and disasters likewise.

It has never been denied by the Ottoman documents that the civilian Armenian convoys were sometimes exposed to "gang" attacks or to the misdeeds of the "officious" authorities.

However, the humane effort and sensitivity displayed by the Ottoman civil and military authorities during the implementation of the relocations should not be ignored.

The attempts of Cemal Pasha, Commander of the Fourth Ottoman Army at the Syria Front, in embracing the relocated Armenians, in displaying extraordinary humanitarian aid projects, in his mobilization of all the sources available under his command for the welfare of the relocated, who were

overwhelmed by the heavy conditions of the Great War, without showing any signs of hesitation should be recorded as a historical reality.

The aid projects the Fourth Ottoman Army provided for the relocated Armenians at the Syria in the beginning of the 20th century, under the war conditions is the first immolate example of the “humanitarian aid” activities conducted by NATO and UN peace keeping forces today.

I would like to state briefly that:

Neither the Turkish people nor the Ottoman leaders have ever lost their humanitarian characteristics or their capability of distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent even at a time when they were fighting for their existence, and before the irresponsible behaviors of the Armenian Committees. The officials who were found to be guilty of misconduct towards the relocated Armenians were tried and sentenced regardless of their positions or ranks.

The policy the Ottoman Government implemented at the outset of the 20th century, under the heavy conditions of war, is an interesting historical experience, as it paved the way to series of unprecedented trials and punishments at the time of war.

At this point, I would like to add an important detail in order to dispel any confusion:

Those trials exclude the political trials realized in Istanbul under occupation after the Mondros Armistice of 1918.

I am showing as definite evidence the Court Martial investigations and trials carried out against the Ottoman officials who were accused of misuse of authority and maltreatment of the relocated Armenians in the Crisis of 1915.

The trials of 1915 and 1916 at the Ottoman Court Martial should be taken as exemplary models in the field of war criminology.

These trials carried out at the Court Martial in the same year by the same authority that had implemented the Law of Relocations in 1915 are deliberately ignored.

Neither the Turkish people nor the Ottoman leaders have ever lost their humanitarian characteristics or their capability of distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent even at a time when they were fighting for their existence, and before the irresponsible behaviors of the Armenian Committees. The officials who were found to be guilty of misconduct towards the relocated Armenians were tried and sentenced regardless of their positions or ranks.

In 1940, Russian Major General Nikolai Georgiyeviç Korsun wrote in his book that during the implementation of the relocations, the Turkish military authorities and the Turkish people had treated the relocated Armenians kindly; however, he says there were few instances where the Armenians were attacked in some regions.

According to Russian Major General, half of the relocated Armenians died of hunger and wide spread epidemics.

By the way, I would like to share my opinions on another subject.

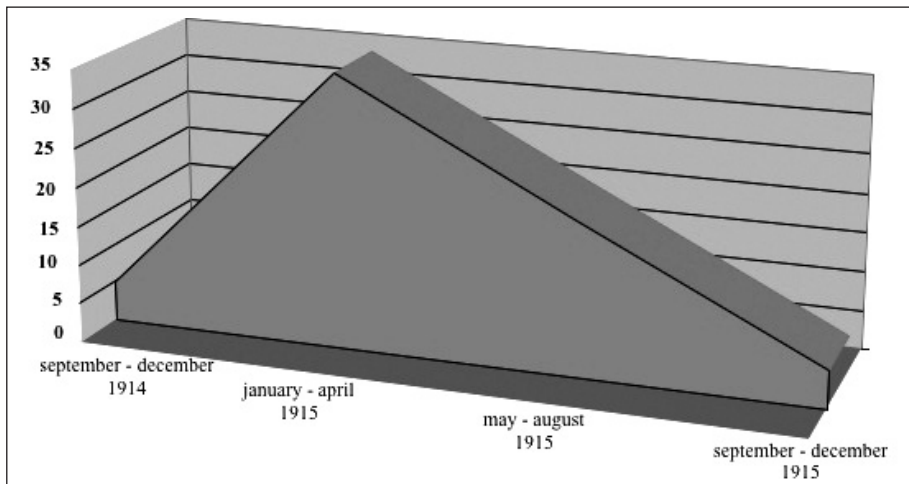
Due to the “power vacuum” created by the inevitable conditions of the First World War there was a civil unrest among the Turks (Muslims) and the Armenians (Christians) in some of the Anatolian provinces.

In some areas, the armed Armenian and Muslim inhabitants were trying to kill each other.

As a result of all these events, there were losses for the both sides.

The number of the Muslims massacred by the Armenian Fedayeens and the Armenian Volunteer Units between 1914 and 1918 was almost five times as much as the casualties that the Ottoman Army suffered during the four-year World War I.

The following diagram shows the clashes – according to periods - of the civilian Muslim people and the Ottoman Security Forces with the Armenian Fedayeens and the Armenian Volunteer Units affiliated to the Dashnak, Hntchaq and Ramgavar Committees in 1914–1915.



This diagram reached its peak when the committee leaders, posing threat to the security, in the capital of the Empire were arrested (April 24, 1915).

Different figures are mentioned in relation to the total losses of the Armenians during the same period.

As I have not completed my studies on the Armenian casualties yet, I am unable to give a definite number – for the time being.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE GUILTY AND THE INNOCENT

The people who were detained on April 24, 1915 were either the active members or the leaders of the Armenian Committees that were plotting against the Ottoman Empire.

It is interesting to observe the people who were banished from the capital, Istanbul, upon a security decision taken by the Government, and the former and new Armenian members of the Ottoman Parliament among the direct collaborators of the Russian forces at the Caucasus Front.

Some of these members of the Ottoman Parliament, along with the volunteers accompanying them, joined the Russian forces at the Caucasus Front just at the outset of the Great War.

As those people were in direct collaboration with the Russian forces they could not have been arrested.

If they had been in Istanbul on April 24, 1915, they would most probably have been charged with treason due to their activities against the Ottoman Empire and punished in the most severe way possible.

This procedure is quite legal, and usual.

In all the states, the perpetrators of such acts have always been punished in stipulations of law.

The values at the beginning of the 20th century and those at the threshold of the 21st century may differ in certain aspects. Nevertheless, “the high treason in the war”, especially “fighting in the enemy lines” is deemed as an act requiring the heaviest punishment in all the states even today.

Armenian members of Parliament, who did not engage in the military activities organized by the Armenian Committees, continued their duties in there during the Great War.

The minutes of the Ottoman Parliament are the most obvious proofs of this practice.

The same policy was applied without any reservation in the Ottoman civilian, judicial, financial, and military bureaucracy – with some exceptions of course.

The orders that the Ottoman government sent to the governors and the district officials prove the sensitivity in making distinction between the guilty and the innocent.

At this point, I would like to commemorate the brave Armenian and Christian medical staff, doctors and pharmacists who served in the Ottoman Army, and lost their lives in the battles at various fronts, or who died of typhus and other epidemics together with the Muslim doctors.

Of the 163 Ottoman medical staffs died at the Caucasus Front during the Great War, 124 were Muslim, 19 Greek, 17 Armenian, and 3 were of Jewish origin.

Today, the names of all those personnel are inscribed on the left marble wall of the Gülhane Military Medical Faculty in Ankara.

The loyal Ottoman Christian citizens in the Ottoman Army fulfilled their military service which was a kind of self-immolation.

The Ottoman War Ministry awarded those heroes with medals and decorations.

The list of the Armenian (and Christian) officers who were holding highly critical and secret positions in the Ottoman Army Headquarters and at the fronts in 1917 is an undeniable evidence of the distinction between the guilty and the innocent.

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Ottoman Army Headquarters

2nd Division

June 28, 1917

(Message)

To: Office of Personnel Affairs

I hereby request the list of the Ottoman-Armenian soldiers who are appointed as translators, for their language abilities, along with their positions.

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Ministry of War

Office of Personnel Affairs

Foreign Affairs Branch

1743

To: General Headquarters 2nd Division

In reply to the note dated July 2, 1917, numbered 43155

Attached is the list of the Ottoman-Armenian soldiers who are appointed as translators, for their language abilities, along with their positions.

July 24, 1917

The issues pertaining the Armenians

ought to be restricted through strict instructions

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IN THE ENEMY LINES

Now, I would like to bring some critical information on the military activities of some Ottoman citizens, with who were some of the members of parliament, in the Eastern Anatolian provinces against the Ottoman Empire, at the very beginning of the Great War, before the clashes between the Ottoman and Russian forces in the Caucasus, to your attention.

Their military activities against Türkiye along with the insurgences incited by the Fedayeens affiliated to the Armenian Committees in some Anatolian provinces are the only reasons for the relocations of the civilian Armenian people residing very close to the Russian front to a distant region (Syria and Mesopotamia).

As an honorable Turkish academician, I swear to God, and on the common holy values of the entire humanity that there is no other reason for the relocation of the Ottoman Armenians to other regions under the war conditions of 1915, despite all the impossibilities.

All the critical information I will present you is directly drawn from the Russian and Armenian sources.

Especially, the part concerning the military activities of the Armenian Committees at the Caucasus Front are taken directly from the Russian and Armenian sources.

The most reliable narrator of the military activities of the Armenian Dashnak and Hntchaq Committees in the Eastern Anatolia against the Ottoman Army and the civilian Muslim people living in the region during the World War I is a Russian Commander.

In 1927, Russian General Gavril Korganoff of Armenian origin explains, in his book *La participation des Armeniens a la guerre Mondiale sur le front du Caucase, 1914-1918* [*Participation of the Armenians in the World War on the Caucasus Front 1914-1918* (Paris, 1927)], how the Armenian Committees and the Russian General Staff organized the Armenian Volunteer Units, and how these units fought against the Ottoman Forces, along with 30 hand-drawn front plans.

The report, numbered 13378, dated December 24, 1915, that was prepared by the Russian Caucasus Army includes statistical data about the Armenian Volunteer Units. According to these report, 6 volunteer units were formed. Each unit was composed of 1.000 or less members, and there were 5.000 Armenian volunteers in total. In addition, the 7th Reserve Volunteer Unit was

formed in Yerevan. (These are the first statistics. The number increased to 10.000 later).

Armenian Volunteers from Bulgaria, Romania, Egypt, and the USA (among them, the Ottoman Armenians were in majority) also joined these units.

As emphasized in the Andranik biography published in Beirut, in 1986; the majority of the people who took part in the formation of the Armenian Volunteer Units at the Caucasus Front consisted of the Ottoman Armenians who took refuge in the Caucasus front, and of those who settled in other countries.

I would like to present some brief information on these volunteer units:

THE FIRST ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER UNIT

The commander of this unit, Andranik, indicated in his interview with Russian General Nazarbekov that most of the combatant soldiers in his unit were from Turkiye, and from the province of Muş.

They were holding the Iran-Başkale-Van line.

THE SECOND ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER UNIT

The commander of this unit was Dro.

Setting off from Iğdır, the unit followed the Iğdır-Beyazıt-Berkri-Van line.

THE THIRD ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER UNIT

It was formed in Kağızman.

This unit, under the command of Amazaspom, held the Kağızman-Eleşkirt-Malazgirt-Bitlis line.

THE FOURTH ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER UNIT

They were positioned on Sarıkamış-Gare-Orzan-Köprüküy-Erzurum line.

Only one type of military uniform was prepared for the Armenian Volunteer Units.

There were green epaulets bearing the initials “A.D.I” (Pervaya Armyanskaya Drujina: The First Armenian Volunteer Unit) on these uniforms.

REBELLIONS

The centers of the most important rebellions carried out by the Armenian Committees in the Anatolian provinces were Zeytun, Bitlis, Van, Şebinkarahisar, and Urfa; Yozgat, Amasya, Tokat, Sivas, Kayseri, Elazığ, and Diyarbakır were of secondary importance.

Armenian Committees appointed inspectors, commanders, and gang leaders to those regions.

The places chosen for the inciting of rebellions and the military sabotages were the principal routes connecting the military posts and the military communication lines (in Turkish Menzil Stations).

During these rebellions, some troops were transferred to the regions in question from Ordu as it had been the case with Zeytun, Van, Şebinkarahisar, Mount Musa, and Urfa.

This fact weakened the battle capacity of army fighting at the fronts.

With the start of the war, the military maneuvers of the Armenian Committees spread from one region to another rapidly.

It has been ascertained that in 1915, almost 76.000 Armenians were in preparation of rebellion out of whom 30,000 were in Sivas, Erzurum, Van, Muş, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Bitlis.

The dates and the places of these military maneuvers that took place between 1914-1916 are shown in the map.

The Armenian Volunteer Units and the Armenian Fedayeens served as an important support elements providing the most crucial intelligence about the Ottoman Army.

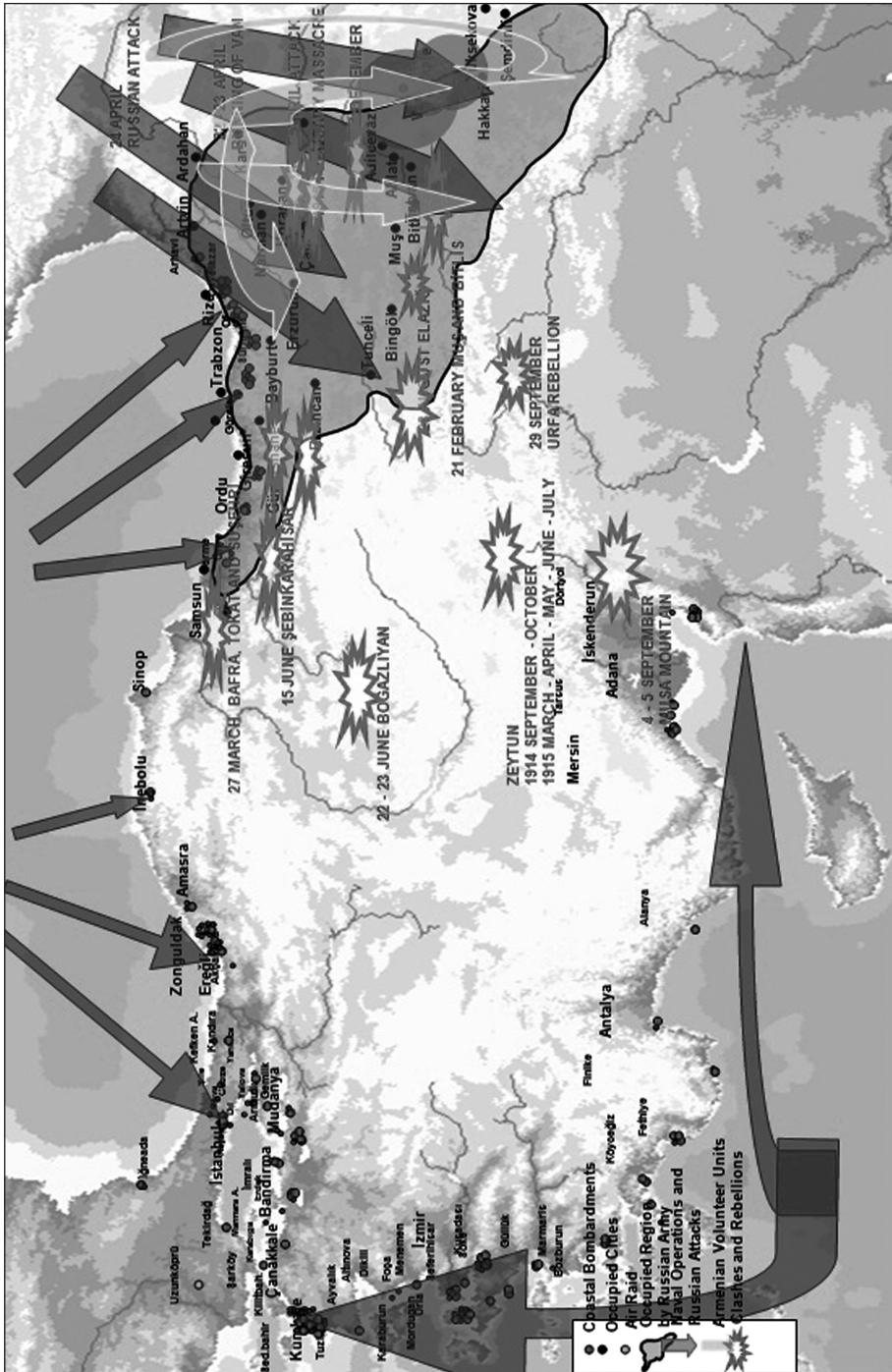
Russian Duma Deputy Papacanov expressed that the Russian military officials informed him about the contributions of the Armenian Volunteer Units to the Russian Army and told him that these units equipped with full intelligence about the region were irreplaceable.

After the occupation of Erzurum by the Russians in 1916, the following sentences were written in an article published in Echo de Paris, in France:

In the violent clashes that took place in Erzurum, the strong fortress of Turks, the Armenian Volunteer Units also fought along with the brave Russian Kazakh Units. The Armenian Volunteer Units that knew the region very well, provided an invaluable service for the Russian army.

Russian General Çernozubov wrote the following words for the First Armenian Volunteer Unit of Andranik:

... Our successes in Ashnak, Vrush Horan, Hanik, Kotur, Saray, Molla Hasan, Belicik and Garateli are mostly the results of the activities of the First Armenian Volunteer Unit. They were of great help in the fights that took place in Kotur Strait, near Hoy and in Dilman on April 28–31, 1915.



THE ROLE OF NAVAL BOMBARDMENTS

In the end, I managed to come to the third point.

The naval blockades and bombardments of the Anatolian coasts.

As I have underlined at the beginning of my speech, the issue of naval bombardments was influential in the spreading of the relocation decision taken by the government with security concerns.

In addition to the naval bombardments there were two other developments affecting the status of the Christian people (Greeks and Armenians) in the Marmara and Black Sea regions in the time of the relocation.

One of them was France's landing troops in Salonika on September 18, 1915, and the other was declaration of mobilization by Greece just a few days later, on September 24, 1915.

As a battlefield, only the city of Istanbul was an exception in the Marmara region, because Istanbul was the capital and security could be established there although with difficulty.

The relocation decision was not applied to the 120.000 Armenians residing in the city of Istanbul, except for the ones associated with the Armenian Committees.

Therefore, the relocation decision was not applied to the 120.000 Armenians residing in the city of Istanbul, except for the ones associated with the Armenian Committees.

The relocation of only the Armenians and Greeks who were affiliated with the organizations collaborating with the enemy, as an exception, cannot be justified with any other reason than the extraordinary war conditions experienced in Istanbul and in the settlement areas in Thrace, even only this exception is sufficient for justifying It was an obligation of war.

Once on the summer of 1915 the battles were going on all the fronts and the situation was so critical that the Government thought to move the capital from Istanbul to Central Anatolia.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

As you all know closely, in recent years the parliaments of some allies of Türkiye have been calling the 1915 events as “genocide”.

Today, the individuals or the institutions (like assemblies or parliaments) lacking any information on the course of dramatic events that broke out during the disintegration period of the Ottoman Empire and the Great War are being forced to believe in a dogma based on an imaginary memory.

This is my definite opinion as an academician devoted to the freedom of scientific research.

Those who do not believe in this intangible system of belief, which has been promulgated by the Armenian Diaspora, the Republic of Armenia, and their supporters, are under the threat of detention, or are even sentenced in some countries.

This point of view is a new form of “clash of civilizations” today.

This is a dirty war where literature, history, music, cinema, and finally Internet are used instead of tanks, aircrafts and submarines...

In this dirty war, Turkish Nation shall never tolerate any injustice against her ancestors.

Moreover, it is a very natural and basic human right to demand the revelation of the historical details that were concealed purposefully by unjust war propaganda prevailed during the years of the Great War.

As I have mentioned at the very beginning of my speech, the prohibition of this human right in some countries with laws points to the haunting of the Dark Age mentality.

They want to forbid the use of this right forever by the Turkish people with the Inquisition resolutions.

In Europe of the 18th century, when the book of Rousseau was burned in Switzerland, the famous intellectual Voltaire said to his colleague whom he had called as “the furious dog of Diogenes”: “Je ne suis pas d’accord avec ce que vous dites; mais je défendrai jusqu’à la mort votre droit à le dire!” [I don’t agree with you in any of your opinions, but I will defend your freedom of expression till the end of my life!]

Voltaire presented a unique model for the freedom of expression with his approach to different points of view.

We, the Turkish people, shall never accept the model imposed for the solution of this chronic historical dissension that has been put before our generation today.

It should be borne in mind that although all the parliaments in the world take decisions against us, we shall continue our way for thousands of years with an unwavering self-confidence.

The events of 1915 did not occur as narrated by the Armenian Diaspora, the Republic of Armenia, and individuals or institutions believing in them.

We unyieldingly shall address to those decision-makers:

“You can continue to trust in this intangible system of belief; for understanding, narrating and writing history we have your documents and we shall use them”.

In such a case, you can ask:

“How and when will it be possible to eliminate this chronic conflict between Turks and Armenians?”

No unilateral step will be of use for the solution of this 90-year chronic conflict.

The best way for both parties is to take mutual steps for a solution.

As emphasized earlier, “the historians (...) are in pursuit of revealing not only the facts but also how and why these facts occurred, and what their meanings are; this is what the historians undertake as their duty”.

Therefore, while fulfilling this highly respected duty and in enjoying this international ethical right, the Turkish historians should not be restricted – as well as their colleagues from different countries.

In conclusion, I would like to indicate that the Prime Minister of Türkiye sent a letter to the officials of the Republic of Armenia for the settlement of the Turkish-Armenian conflict.

In this letter, Turkish Prime Minister offered forming of a joint commission consisting of the historians from two sides in order to investigate the events of 1915 and that the result to be reached is recognized by all parts of the conflict.

This is a very important step.

But unfortunately, Armenian part has not given any “positive” reply so far.

The parties should open all their archives pertaining to the years of war for each other's use.

The Armenian Dashnak Committee Archives are in the USA and is closed to the Turkish academicians.

The Armenian Patriarchate Archives are in Israel, and they are also closed for the Turkish academicians.

The archive records are of great importance and indispensable elements in the solution of such conflicts.

Türkiye keeps her resolute stance in the issue by publishing the facsimiles of the documents in her archives.

The State Archives have about 1 million documents on Armenian question.

The facsimiles of the original documents in the State Archives concerning the issue are being published continuously.

With the order of the Turkish General Staff, 1047 documents found in the archives of the Authority of Military History and Strategic Studies are prepared for publication in 8 volumes; already published.

In these volumes, the facsimiles and English translations of all the records on the secret correspondence of the Ottoman Armies, and the military activities of the Armenian Committees during World War I are presented to the use of the international public opinion, and to all Turkish and foreign readers.

Undoubtedly, this is not sufficient for solving the 1915 Turkish-Armenian conflict. However, it can be a first modest step for the troublesome process towards peace.

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