

# REPLY TO L'HISTOIRE

**Prof. Dr. Norman STONE**

Professor at Bilkent University  
norman@bilkent.edu.tr

**Maxime GAUIN**

Doctoral Student at the  
Panthéon Sorbonne University

**Abstract:** *François Georgeon's interview with Fuat Dündar, published in the April 2009 issue of L'Histoire, has been criticized with this article standing as a reply and being written by Prof. Dr. Norman Stone and Maxime Gauin. In the article, while the lies laid by omission and the inaccuracies of Dündar are being mentioned, it is also expressed that data lacking accuracy and being proven as erroneous a long time ago has been used to support his thesis. As a result of the evaluations made within this framework, it has been concluded that Dündar's method is rather polemical than scientific.*

**Key Words:** *Armenian Genocide, Fuat Dündar, Norman Stone, Maxime Gauin*

## Introduction

In France, among the publications not appealing to the scholarly circles, but to a large audience, L'Histoire<sup>1</sup> is the most known and appreciated magazine in the historical field. It cannot be expected that a "popular" Magazine will examine historical events in depth. However, since it is highly sold, it affects the public opinion. Therefore, it is important for this kind of Magazine to publish accurate or at least unbiased information.

In the 341st issue of L'Histoire published last April, "Armenian Genocide" was the main subject. As known, April is the month in which most of the anti-Turkish and anti-Turkey demonstrations take place relating to the Armenian genocide allegations and Armenian demands from Turkey. Since L'Histoire covered this topic in April, it inevitably served Armenian aspirations. However, in 1990's, this Magazine had not refrained from publishing French scholar Gilles Weinstein's views which rejected the Armenian genocide allegations. In summary, on the Armenian Genocide issue, the Magazine L'Histoire has changed its attitude from being neutral to being biased.

---

1 "L'Histoire" means history in French

In this issue of the Magazine, a long interview with Fuat Dündar and a somewhat short one with Ahmet İnsel took place. The fact that no Armenians being interviewed seems like an effort to be neutral; having in mind the case of Taner Akçam, it is obvious that in order to be more convincing, a policy to get Turks to state Armenian theses was adopted by the Magazine.

Many photographs claimed to be taken during the Armenian resettlement and showing some ghastly images were also published in the Magazine. To what extent the truth has been reflected with these photographs which have been used before, has been a matter of discussion for a long time. We can at least argue that looking at the photographs, at first sight it is difficult to distinguish whether the people in the photographs are Armenians or Muslims.

On the other hand, all the sources in the given bibliography support the Armenian genocide allegations. However, in order to show the opposing views, it would have been fairer to at least mention one Turkish source like Kamuran Gürün's book<sup>2</sup> which was also published in French.

Apart from the interview, concrete inaccuracies exist in the article. At the top comes the assertion that 2.7 million of the total 6.5 million Armenians in the world live within Diaspora. However, in the same article, numbers have been given relating to the Armenian population in other countries apart from Armenia. Including Turkey, the total of Diaspora population sums up to 5.960.000.

In conclusion, it seems that some Armenian circles have placed an order to L'Histoire to publish an article on the Armenian genocide allegations in April. For this purpose, French historian François Georgeon has been contacted who has then collaborated with Fuat Dündar and Ahmet İnsel. However, since none of them is an expert on the Armenian Question<sup>3</sup> and visibly are not concerned with being impartial, the published article is far from being satisfying.

Well known historian Norman Stone and French doctoral student Maxime Gauin has sent a detailed answer to L'Histoire concerning the inaccuracies of the interview made with Fuat Dündar. The Magazine L'Histoire did not publish this answer and not even mentioned it in its following issues.

Below, we are publishing the English translation of Professor Norman Stone and Maxime Gauin's answer originally written in French.

---

2 Le Dossier arménien, (Triangle, Paris 1983, ISBN 2.85809 1315)

3 François Georgeon and Fuat Dündar are historians. However they did not publish a book nor an article on the Armenian Question. Ahmet Insel is an economist.

To the Magazine L'Histoire

18 April 2009

Madam(s), Sir(s),

François Georgeon's interview with Fuat Dündar published in the April 2009 issue of L'Histoire, is an uncommon source of astonishment.

By growing level of seriousness, and without any pretensions:

1) We should shortly make mention of the lies that are laid by omission and the inaccuracies that have been carried out by Mr. Dündar, which make us doubt the author's general capacity to deal with such a controversial issue.

Mr. Dündar makes reference to the Balkan wars without mentioning once the ethnical purification encountered by the Muslims and Jews living in the regions conquered by Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. Studies have been widely carried out in this field and certain ones, such as Justin McCarthy's study, have been used as a reference. This study clearly shows that the Balkan wars<sup>4</sup> have caused the death of 1,450,000 Ottoman Muslims, mostly killed by the civilian victims of the armed Christian forces.

Mr. Dündar affirms that "the Young Turks had not developed any hostilities towards the Armenians" prior to World War I. It is the least he could say. In 1914, there prevailed 12 Armenian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament. In fact, the Ottoman Ambassador to London was an Armenian. The Young Turks had also placed an Armenian at the head of the town council of Van, Bedros Kapamaciyan. Kapamaciyan was assassinated with the order of the local Dashnak committee on December 1912.<sup>5</sup> On December 20, 1913, the Istanbul British Ambassador writes that the Armenians had faith in Talat Pasha, "but feared that the ministers of Interior whom would later be appointed would not be at their disposal as the current one was."<sup>6</sup> Many more examples exist in this context.

"The Special Organization" was founded before Young Turks were in power –therefore not in 1914, but between 1903 and 1907. –The Organization was named as Teşkilat-i Mahsusa in 1913.<sup>7</sup>

4 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims*, Princeton, Darwin Press, 1995, pp. 135–164 and 339. See also: Université d'Athènes, *The Crimes of Bulgaria in Macedonia*, Washington, 1914; DACB, *Les Atrocités des coalisés balkaniques*, Istanbul, 1913, no. 1, 2 and 3; Commity of Ottoman National Defence, *Les Atrocités des Bulgares en Thrace*, Istanbul, 1913; and *Les Atrocités des Grecs en Macédoine*, Istanbul, 1914.

5 Hasan Oktay, « On the Assassination of Van Mayor Kapamaciyan by the Tashnak Committee », *Review of Armenian Studies*, I-1, 2002.

6 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2005, p. 65.

7 Philip H. Stoddard, *The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918: A Preliminary Study of the Teşkilat-i Mahsusa*, Princeton University, 1963, pp. 1–2, 52 and sqq.

2) The amazement continues to prevail with every assertion, as is the case with the statement that “Bulgarians who were in majority in Thrace were chased away”. In fact, Muslims were in majority in Thrace for a very long time, as well as in regions conquered by Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Muslims and Jews residing in these regions were soon sent away until the big powers asked for the massacres to end.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Dündar affirms that “The Young Turks admired Germany, its civilization and its military power”. The Young Turks, except Enver Pasha, hated Guillaume the 2nd’s Germany which was an ally of Abdülhamid’s regime. They preferred French republicanism or British liberalism. In 1913-1914, Cemal Pasha tried to reconcile with France and the United Kingdom, but was unsuccessful as these powers preferred the Russian alliance.<sup>9</sup>

Experts of Ottoman history do not agree with Dündar who defines the nationalism of the Young Turks as aggressive. In this context, Justin McCarthy observes that “Nationalists within the CUP were always constrained by the need not to alienate non-Turks.”<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Dündar adds that the Young Turks aspired to gain land through the war. In fact, they wanted above all, the survival of Empire, and a less strong pressure of great power on the Empire.<sup>11</sup> The Triple-Entente, under the leadership of Russia, had clearly stated its desire for the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire without mentioning the Turkish people.

Mr. Dündar refers to Bryce and Toynbee’s Blue Book, without making reference to the significant hesitations pertaining to this book. James Morgan Read, who has a favorable attitude towards the Armenian point of view, concludes that the general impression he attained after having seen the enormous allegations is that the book consists of “hearsay evidence.”<sup>12</sup>

In fact, one of the principle sources which are missionary reports, need to be handled with great care due to the propensity of their authors’ for tendentious interpretation and

---

8 Justin McCarthy, « The Population of Ottoman Europe, Before and After the Fall of the Ottoman Empire », in Heath Lowry and Ralph S. Hattox (dir.), *Proceedings of the Third Conference on the Social and Economic History of Turkey*, İstanbul, Isis, 1990, pp. 275-298 ; See also: *Mémoire sur la Thrace adressé à la Société des nations par le comité turc de Thrace*, İstanbul, Ahmed Ihsan & Cie Publishing, 1922 and note 1.

9 Stanford J. Shaw et Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York-London-Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, volume II, édition 2, 1978, p. 310; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turke. A Modern History*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 111.

10 Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, London – New York, Hodder Arnold/ Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 76. See also: Feroz Ahmad, « Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914 », in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, New York, Holmes and Meier, 1982, pp. 401-434.

11 David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, New York, Owl Books, 2001, pp. 45–50; Erik J. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 112.

12 James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda. 1914–1919*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press/Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 221. See also: Horace C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War. The Campaign Against American Neutrality (1914–1917)*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1939, pp. 53–59, on methods of disinformation employed by the team Bryce.

their dependence on Armenian dogmas to understand the Ottomans and to be understood by them.<sup>13</sup> After 1919, Toynbee himself qualified the book as a “work of war propaganda”,<sup>14</sup> and in other books of his, made many remarks in contradiction with assertions made in the Blue Book.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning Bryce, the British officer Cuthbert F. Dixon-Johnson observed that : “Lord Bryce and ‘friends of Armenia’ collected funds to dress and equip Armenian volunteers on April 2, 1915, which is almost a month before the ‘massacre’ allegations, whom were so-committed without any need for provocations.”<sup>16</sup>

The magnanimity of Mr. Dündar for the sociologist Taner Akçam is surprising, considering that he makes reference to Mr. Akçam without mentioning his rather frequent and serious violations of scientific ethic,<sup>17</sup> his past in the “Devrimci Sol” an extreme left wing terrorist organization responsible for thousands of assassinations,<sup>18</sup> and the funding of Mr. Akçam’s post by Armenian associations mostly known for their political activism rather than their interest for knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

3) Just so, Mr Dündar holds a high selection of proofs.

a) The trial at the martial court for crimes against Armenian deportees initiated by Talat and Cemal is not even mentioned once. Yet, during the year 1915, more than 20 Muslims were brought in front of a martial court under the orders of Talat, and were sentenced to death and hung for killing Armenians: Firstly in January and later in February of 1916, Cemal decided to hang other criminals.<sup>20</sup> From March 12 to May 22, 1916, 1,673 Muslims were judged by the martial court on the same grounds. After a poll carried out by the commissions established by Talat, 67 were sentenced to death and hung, 524 were condemned to prison for life, and 68 were condemned with other punishments such as bounden duties.<sup>21</sup> These figures only represent a certain part of the repression as the polls date to the end of the First World War, 1918.<sup>22</sup>

13 Edward Mead Earle, « American Missions in the Near East », *Foreign Affairs*, VII-1929, p. 417; Guenter Lewy, op. cit., p. 144.

14 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, London-Bombay-Sydney, Constable & Co 1922, p. 50.

15 For example : Arnold J. Toynbee, op. cit., pp. VII-VIII; Robert F. Zeidner, *The Tricolor over the Taurus*, New York, Peter Lang, 1996, p.112; Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic. The Turkish War of National Liberation*, Ankara, TTK, 2000, Volume I, p. 62, no. 21.

16 Cuthbert F. Dixon-Johnson, *The Armenians*, London-Northgate, Toulmin and Sons, 1916, p. 47.

17 Erman Şahin, « A Scrutiny of Akçam’s version of History and the Armenian Genocide », *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, XXVIII-2, August 2008, pp. 303-319; See also: ATAA, « Review of ‘A Shameful Act’ », April 2007.

18 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror. Forty Years We Fought Alone*, London, Routledge, 2005.

19 Ergun Kirkhlovali, “It is Official: Taner Akçam is Paid by the Armenians”. Date obtained: 3 August 2009, <http://www.turk-la.com/index.php?c=1&mid=1284&yid=4>

20 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 111 and 113.

21 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915. What Happened to the Ottoman Armenians?*, Ankara , TTK, 2008, pp. 82-87.

22 Kâmurân Gürün, *Le Dossier arménien*, Geneva, Triangle, 1984, p. 258.

They do not include the forced changes, the downgrading carried out against the public officials who have exceeded the orders of deportation, nor those who oversaw their subordinates committing crimes.<sup>23</sup>

Some of these documents concerning the trials were published;<sup>24</sup> the rest can be accessed from the national Turkish archives in Ankara.<sup>25</sup>

- b) Mr. Dündar argues that Cemal Pasha “obtained the permission to relocate only 2 % [...] of the Armenian population in Aleppo”. Cemal’s policy in favor of the displaced Armenians, especially in the vilayet of Damas, is forgotten. Here’s a short insight:

*“In contrast, a survivor whose family was allowed to stay in Aleppo refers to Djemal Pasha as “a great man,” who was “responsible for the saving of half-a-million Armenians in the part of Turkey subject to his control.” [...]*

*Djemal Pasha's efforts to this effect and other improvements in the lot of the deported Armenians achieved by the viceroy are confirmed by the German ambassador, Paul von Wolff-Metternich, who calls Djemal one of those Turks ashamed at the way in which the deportations had been carried out. Djemal Pasha's interventions on behalf of the Armenians are said to have earned him the nickname “Pasha of Armenia”. [...]*

*Some five months later, Ranzi noted a change for the better in the situation of the exiles. While previously the deportees had been sent to the southern thinly populated areas east of Jordan, they now also were being sent to more populated parts of the province, and some had even been kept in Damascus [Damas]. Many exiles had found work in agriculture. The subsistence allowance paid to them had been raised. Credit for these improvements, the consul wrote, was generally given to Djemal Pasha. In a declaration publicized in all the newspapers, Djemal Pasha had recently stated that the removal of the Armenians was necessary for reasons of state but that the life, honor, and property of the relocated were under the protection of the government. The fulfillment of this obligation was a matter of moral integrity. [...]*

*In March 1916, Djemal Pasha organized an aid program for the Armenians that was headed by Hussein Kasim Bey, the former vali of Saloniki and Aleppo. Loytved Hardegg, the German consul in Damascus, reported on May 30 that Kasim Bey had provided bread, had established a delousing and bathing facility together with a hospital and had found work for many of the exiles.*

23 A few examples in Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 177, 181 and 186.

24 See: Hikmet Özdemir and Yusuf Sarıay, *Turkish Armenian Conflict Documents*, Ankara, TBMM, 2007, p. 261.

25 Complete examples of these files can be found in Stanford J. Shaw, op. cit., Volume I, p. 59, no:14.

*“It is estimated that 20,000 out of 132,000 Armenians relocated in southern Syria died, a sadly large number but a far better ratio than among the deportees to the eastern part of the province.”*<sup>26</sup>

Hilmar Kaiser, a pro-Armenian, verifies the evidence stating that, “Let me say something more radical: The one person who saved most Armenians in World War I was nobody other than Cemal Pasha.”<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, Mr. Dündar conceives that the deportations were not executed in the same manner everywhere, but he does not refer to necessary documents in this regard, such as the following:

*“The contingent assigned to protect Armenian convoys against attacks by Kurdish gangs was attacked by Kurdish gangs from all four directions on their way through the Kop mountains on 28.4.331 (11 July 1915). [...] After a two-hour armed clash, two of the gang was killed, the rest escaped. The contingent suffered no casualties and the Armenian convoy was saved, according to the information from Bayburt post.”*<sup>28</sup>

These kinds of protectorate acts, such as Cemal’s policies, were only a strict application of the decrees of forced relocation and complementary bills.<sup>29</sup>

c) Mr. Dündar’s remark concerning the Armenian revolts and massacres committed by Armenian guerillas is more or less elliptic.

Zeytun was not only “a gathering for young Armenians escaping their military services”, but was also a place where “some armed confrontations” occurred. First of all, it is a city where rebellions had become a tradition. Until 1852, Zeytun has seen, mainly for fiscal reasons, 57 Armenian insurrections in 1780, 1782, 1808, 1819, 1829, 1835 and 1852; ten years later, this city has witnessed the rebellion that has founded Armenian nationalism;<sup>30</sup> then two other rebellions in 1878 and 1896. Two other insurrections, in August and December 1914 occurred in Zeytun, which were put down by the Ottoman army.<sup>31</sup> In February 1915, just before the relocation, the Armenian revolutionaries of Zeytun sent a delegation to Moscow to demand arms and munitions from the Triple-Entente, which had 15,000 men under its disposal.<sup>32</sup>

26 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 196–198 and 218–220.

27 « Historian Challenges Politically Motivated 1915 Arguments », *Today's Zaman*, 22 March 2009.

28 *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Ankara, Volume II, 1983, p. 97.

29 *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, op. cit., pp. 91 and 103; Şinasi Orel and Sürreya Yuca, *Les «Télégrammes» de Talât Pacha. Fait historique ou fiction?*, Paris, Triangle, 1986, pp. 115 and sqq.

30 Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1967 (1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1963), pp. 67–68; Kâmurân Gürün, op. cit., pp. 189–190.

31 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Facts on the Relocation of Armenians*, Ankara, TTK, pp. 47–52.

32 Arthur Beylerian (ed.), *Les Grandes Puissances, l'Empire ottoman et les Arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918)*, Paris, 1983, p. 7.

Mr. Dündar presumes that “if a deportation had not been carried out in Zeytun in February 1915, there would not be any reactions from the Armenians in Van and Istanbul”. This argument is a very daring one. The Bitlis revolt started between March-April 1914,<sup>33</sup> almost one year before the forced relocation of Armenians in Zeytun.

The intention of the Armenian revolutionary parties was announced clearly, even before the Ottoman Empire had entered the war.

The Hinchak called for arms starting from the year of 1914,<sup>34</sup> realizing this way the point VI of its program, which posits that war conditions are the ideal occasions for insurrections.<sup>35</sup>

Hayasdan, the Bulgarian branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), writes in its edition dated August 19, 1914:

*“The Mongol race, disastrous and traitorous (the Turks) has attacked once again, but even more violently, one of the purest and best Aryan races (the Armenians) [...]. These struggles which have been continuing for centuries under different forms are no other than assaults on a nation that remained under the darkness of another nation that has already been through social progress, and is advancing toward the light.*

*Either us or them!... This struggle has not been continuing for a year or a century. The Armenian nation has always bravely resisted this race that has been following the line of treason and crimes.*

*The world should get rid of this curse, and for the peace and tranquility of the universe, the Turkish nation should be eliminated.*

*We are waiting our heads up high and armed with faith in victory.”*<sup>36</sup>

Hovhannes Katchaznouni, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and former leader of ARF states:

*“Even though Turkey had not entered the war [...], voluntary Armenian groups gathered with a lot of zeal. Despite the resolution adopted by the central committee in Erzurum, a few weeks before the Armenian Revolutionary*

33 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Facts on the Relocation*, op. cit., p. 46.

34 *Aspirations et agissements révolutionnaires des comités arméniens, avant et après la proclamation de la Constitution ottomane*, Istanbul, 1917, pp. 99-100.

35 Sarkis Atamian, *The Armenian Community: The Historical Development of a Social and Ideological Conflict*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1955, p. 96 ; Louise Nalbandian, op. cit., p. 111 ; Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, Ankara, Documentary Publications, 1988, p. 687.

36 Cited in: *Aspirations et Agissements Révolutionnaires des Comités Arméniens...*, op. cit., p. 155.



*Federation had actively contributed to the establishment of these groups, and in particularly their arming against Turkey.”<sup>37</sup>*

Kapriel S. Papazian, head of the Ramkavar Party, confirms that:

*“The fact remains, however, that the leaders of the Turkish-Armenian section of the Dashnagtzoutune did not carry out their promise of loyalty to the Turkish cause when the Turks entered the war. The Dashnagtzoutune in the Caucasus had the upper hand. They were swayed in their actions by the interests of the Russian government and disregarded, entirely, the political dangers that the war had created for the Armenians in Turkey. [...] Thousands of Armenians from all over the world flocked to the standards of such famous fighters as Antranik, Kery, Dro, etc. The Armenian volunteer regiments rendered valuable services to the Russian army during the years of 1914, 1915 and 1916.”<sup>38</sup>*

From autumn 1914, Armenian gangs attacked villages and military divisions of the isolated police force, especially in the province of Van. This document, translated and published in 1919 by an opponent of the Young Turks, may be cited among many others:

*“Son of Major Essad Efendi, Mehemd Toufan Efendi’s statement under oath, deputy judge at the court of Hakkari,*

*[...]*

*After the declaration of war, Armenian bandits which were put together long before, started their activities and became the scouts and couriers of the Russian troops in the Persian border.*

*They summoned the Russians and led them on November 9, 1330 (1914) to the village of Dir, administration of Chikefti, district of Hekguiari.*

*While the Russians occupied Dir, these bandits massacred thousands of children and all the male population of the Kurdish villages on their route.*

*More than 400 Kurdish women and young girls were raped. Older women were murdered.<sup>39</sup>*

Mr. Dündar states that “On April 20, Armenians of Van started building barriers”. The rebellions of Van were organized by the rural rebels mentioned above; an

37 Hovannes Katchaznouni, *The Armenian Revolutionary Federation has nothing to do anymore*, New York, Armenian Information Service, 1955, p. 5 (1st edition, 1923).

38 Kapriel S. Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted*, Boston, Baikar Press, 1934, p. 38.

39 Kara Schemsi, *Turcs et Arméniens devant l’histoire*, Geneva, National Publishing, 1919, p. 40.

insurrection comparable to the one that had occurred in 1896, yet more effective was ended at the end of 1913 by way of an agreement between the local representatives and the Dashnak, Hinchak, and Ramkavar parties.<sup>40</sup> Mr. Dündar does not mention the crimes of the Armenian rebels in Van and its surroundings, proven by Ottoman and Russian documents, testimonies, and archeological diggings in Zeve of April 4, 1990.<sup>41</sup>

The Armenian guerillas were not constituted of a few numbers of soldiers, as Mr. Dündar claims. Ambassador Morgenthau — a source which a few pro-Armenian authors venturing themselves in “pro-Turkish” challenges — writes on May 25 that Armenian guerillas are “not less than 10,000, yet 25,000 is probably a number closer to reality.”<sup>42</sup> Garo Pasdermadjian, one of the chiefs of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and Deputy of Erzurum, leaves in 1914 to ally with the Russian side. He estimates that in Samsun only, 10,000 Ottoman Armenians fought in the Ottoman army, and in the summer of 1915 the Istanbul government in total had to send 5 regular divisions and tens of thousands of irregular Kurdish divisions to reduce the number of Armenian revolts.<sup>43</sup> According to German Consul Rössler, in October 1915, an Armenian revolutionary insurrection cost the Ottoman army 50 deaths and injured 125 in the city of Urfa.<sup>44</sup>

As for the Armenian voluntaries in the Russian army, they are estimated to be around 50,000. According to declarations of Armenian political chiefs who were responsible for their recruitments, 20,000 of these were subjects of the Tsar.<sup>45</sup>

Starting from 1916, thousands of other Ottoman Armenians committed themselves to the Légion d’Orient of the French army.<sup>46</sup> This process had actually started at the end of 1914 and was noticed by the Ottoman authorities. At the end, more than 400 Armenians joined the foreign Légion after calls for recruitment.<sup>47</sup>

In short, Mr. Dündar is unaware of the sources and historical studies carried out on

---

40 Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2006, pp. 180–201.

41 Kara Schemsi, op. cit., pp. 46–48; *Documents sur les atrocités arméno-russes*, Istanbul, Société anonyme de papeterie et d’imprimerie, 1917, pp. 10–13, 15 and sqq. ; Azmi Süslü, *Russian View on the Atrocities Committed by the Armenians against the Turks*, Ankara, Köksav-Kök, 1991, pp. 31–33; Association for the promotion of Van, *Zeve*, Istanbul, 1963; *Yakın Tarihimizde Van Uluslararası Sempozyumu*, Ankara, Yüzcüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayınları, 1990, pp. 76–77; Hüseyin Çelik, *Görenlerin Gözüyle Van’da Ermeni Mezalimi*, Ankara, Yüzcüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1993; Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, op. cit., pp. 213–257 and 279–281.

42 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., p. 92.

43 G. Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, Boston, Hairenik Publishing Company, 1918, pp. 26–28. See also: *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Ankara, 1983, Volume II, pp. 10 and sqq. and Volume III, pp. 53 and sqq.

44 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., p. 202.

45 Avetis Aharonian and Boghos Nubar, *La Question Arménienne devant la Conférence de la Paix*, Paris, Dupont Publishing, 1919 ; G. Pasdermadjian, op. cit., p. 19. See also « Armenians Join Russians and 20,000 Scatter Turks Near Feitun », *The Washington Post*, 13 November 1914.

46 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 104–108; Robert F. Zeidner, op. cit.

47 Aram Turabian, *Les Volontaires Arméniens sous les Drapeaux Français*, Marseille, Imprimerie nouvelle, 1917, pp. 6 and sqq.

Armenian revolts of 1914-1915, and of the scrupulous research of Edward J. Erickson who points at the real data on this issue.<sup>48</sup>

The massacres perpetrated by Armenian voluntaries of the Russian army during the army's advancement in 1915-1916, then its retreat between December 1917 and May 1918, should be well investigated.<sup>49</sup> For Mr. Dündar, these deaths seem not deserved to be mentioned.

- d) While Mr. Dündar makes reference to research carried out by Hilmar Kaiser and Ara Sarafian in 1995, he does not make reference to their controversial versions prevalent in the national Turkish archives which are accessible. He does not cite the archivists. Mr. Dündar does not mention either the researches of MM. Kaiser and Sarafian who a few years later stopped complaining about the bans regarding the archives. Mr. Kaiser declared:

*“Yes, there are still problems, but having said this; I should immediately add there are problems everywhere. The important thing is there is a process in place to overcome these problems. It's a huge administration, and encountering problems is part of the daily work. I can only say that, as far as I'm concerned, and I know the same for many, many researchers — both Turkish and foreigner — that they have had exactly the same experiences. If there is a problem, it's immediately addressed and resolved. That's all you can ask for. Turkey has gained a lot of credit with its new archive policy, and it will gain more credit if the present government would support the archives more strongly with additional funding.”<sup>50</sup>*

- 4) Mr. Dündar, to support his thesis, uses facts which are not true and have been proven wrong for a long time.
- a) The relocated Armenians were not taken to the “desert”. They were taken to a place where they could live and where people were already residing. The orders given by Istanbul were respected. Mr. Dündar contradicts himself by citing quotas for each “village”. By definition, a desert is a place without any human residents.

In his journal, Ambassador Morgenthau writes:

*“Zenop Bezjian, Vekil of Armenian Protestants, called. Schmavonian introduced him; he was his schoolmate. He told me a great deal about*

48 Edward J. Erickson, « The Armenians in Ottoman Military Policy », *War in History*, XV-2, April 2008, pp. 141–167.

49 Should be cited; Kara Schemsi, op. cit., pp. 52 eand sqq. ; National Turkish Congress, « Documents relatifs aux atrocités commises par les Arméniens contre la population musulmane », Istanbul, Société anonyme de papeterie et d'imprimerie, 1919; *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Ankara, volume I, 1982, pp. 125–295 and volume II, pp. 48, 51–52, and 116–128; *Ermeniler Tarafından Yapılan Katliam Belgeleri*, Ankara, 2001, volume I; — Raphael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, New York, Charles Scribner's, 1926, pp. 45 and 70; Morgan Philips Price, *War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia*, New York, Macmillan, 1918, p. 141; Justin McCarthy, « The Report of Niles and Sutherland », *XI. Turkish Congress of History*, Ankara, 1994, pp. 1828–1829 and 1850.

50 « Historian Challenges Politically Motivated 1915 Arguments », *Today's Zaman*, 22 March 2009.

*conditions [in the interior]. I was surprised to hear him report that Armenians at Zor were fairly well satisfied; that they have already settled down to business and are earning their livings.”*<sup>51</sup>

The Ottoman government had spent considerable amounts on food, and allowed American and Helvetian charity associations to complement these aids.<sup>52</sup> Even the American head of International Assistance for Armenian Effort in Istanbul indicates that Talat “has always promptly paid attention to our demands, and frequently has greeted me when we met in his office. He usually started the conversation with these words: “We are partners; what can I do for you today?”<sup>53</sup>

Assistance did not always arrive on time and some Armenians were re-deployed away from the Tigre base camp, although a significant part was strained less. It should not be forgotten that starvation, food shortage, and epidemics was common among the Ottomans — including the military — during the First World War and its aftermath. This was even more so in oriental Anatolia and in the Arab provinces.<sup>54</sup>

- b) Mr. Dündar puts forth that the Special Organization is responsible for Armenian massacres. The accusation, which was never mentioned during war times even in radical British propaganda, appeared in 1919 at a martial court established by the British occupiers. Finally it is abandoned,<sup>55</sup> even though these courts are restrictive when it comes to defense law, even more than the Bush government’s for prisoners of Guantanamo: the right of counter-interrogation of witnessed and counter-expertise of documents supporting the accusation, is not recognized to the accused.<sup>56</sup>

Since 1963, in his thesis on the Special Organization — which is still the unique academic study dedicated to this organization — Philip H. Stoddard concludes that when Ottoman archives are examined, it can be seen that Teşkilat-i Mahsusa had no role in Armenian relocation.<sup>57</sup> In March 2001, in an interview carried out with Guenter Lewy, M. Stoddard re-affirms his argument.

In 1973, as a response to the pro-Armenian writer Christopher J. Walker’s arguments, Gwynne Dyer, himself having a doctorate in Ottoman military history, with a thesis on the First World War, concludes that the Special Organization’s participation to Armenian massacres is “gossip”.<sup>58</sup>

---

51 Heath Lowry, *Les Dessous des Mémoires de l’Ambassadeur Morgenthau*, Istanbul, Isis, 1991.

52 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915*, op. cit., pp. 61-63 and 74-82 ; Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 194–198, 203, 215 and 218–220.

53 Louise Jenison Peet, *No Less Honor: The Biography of William Wheelock Peet*, Chattanooga, E.A. Andrews, 1939, p. 170.

54 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 53–62 et 190–191; Hikmet Özdemir, *The Ottoman Army, 1914–1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefield*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2008.

55 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

56 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 73-82.

57 Philip H. Stoddard, op. cit., pp. 52–58.

58 Gwynne Dyer, « Letter to the Editor », *Middle Eastern Studies*, IX–1973, p. 379.

The sociologist Vahakn Dadrian delves further into these accusations in his writings dated 1989 and 1993.<sup>59</sup> But Guenter Lewy proves in 2005 that all of the arguments presented on this issue by Mr. Dadrian relies on the forgery of the sources he has used.<sup>60</sup>

Finally in 2006, J. Erickson who also has a doctorate in Ottoman history, with a thesis (presenting a rather un-encountered point of view) on the First World War, falsifies the arguments regarding Teşkilat-i Mahsusa's participation in Armenian massacres by analyzing systematically its orders of mission and reports sent to the command during the dates of 1915-1916.<sup>61</sup>

Contrary to Mr. Dündar's arguments, the Special Organization's archives are not closed. Some of the organization's documents were available for public use for almost half a century; whereby the rest were progressively classed and brought to public use, finally in 2005.<sup>62</sup>

We should note here that the Special Organization was not "a paramilitary organization", and did not aim to "to spread terror in the Russian territories". It was a special force, as was the case with all other strong armies around the world at the time.<sup>63</sup> It is true that the Ottoman Empire in 1914 freed the prisoners of common law to grow the army. It is not absurd to think that some were assigned to the Special Organization; but it should be mentioned that firstly nothing proves that this structure was more concerned with the sending of ex-convicts, and secondly this practice was a trend in most armies and democratic regimes during the First World War. In fact, in 1917, courts of the United States of America freed 7,900 prisoners, including assassins and rapists in exchange for their commitment to the American troops.<sup>64</sup>

5) Mr. Dündar's method is rather polemical than scientific.

a) He argues that the Young Turks maintained the objective of Turkifying Anatolia. Yet, he does not provide proof for this thesis of his, nor presents opposing views to such claims.

59 « The Role of the Special Organization in the Armenian Genocide during the First World War » in Panikos Panayi (dir.), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America, and Australia during the Two World Wars*, Oxford, Berg, 1993, pp. 50-82.

60 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 83-87.

61 Edward J. Erickson, « Armenian Massacres: New Records Undercut Old Blame », *The Middle East Quarterly*, XIII-3, spring 2006, pp. 67- 75.

62 Philip Stoddard, op. cit. ; Yücel Güçlü, « Will Untapped Ottoman Archives Reshape the Armenian Debate? », *The Middle East Quarterly*, XVI-2, spring 2009, pp. 35-42.

63 Philip Stoddard, op. cit. ; see also: Doğu Ergil, « A Reassessment: The Young Turks, Their Politics and Anti-Colonial Struggle », *Balkan Studies*, XVI-2, 1975, pp. 70-71.

64 *Second Report of the Provost Marshal to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919, p. 149.

He affirms that Young Turks admired social Darwinism — or, according to his barbarism, “the social Darwinism” — a term that doesn’t exist in the *Petit Larousse* or the *Grand Robert*. He does not provide any text or source to support such a serious accusation. He could be referring to ideas of Ziya Gökalp, one of the main intellectuals of the CUP and the pioneer of Turanism and “Turkism”, while making such arguments. Yet, it should be clarified as explained by Taha Parla that Gökalp’s nationalism, “relies, without any ambiguity, on language and culture”. Gökalp was a man “preoccupied by humanism”. For him, Turkish nationalism was “a cultural ideal”, “the base of solidarity” and he conceived nationalism just like Émile Durkheim did. His nationalism was “non-racist, non-expansionist and pluralist” Gökalp, goes in the footsteps of Gotthard Jöscke, who interprets Turanism as a non-political notion.<sup>65</sup> The most extreme “Turkists” and “nationalists” between the years of 1908-1914 are mainly represented by Ahmet Rıza and Ahmed Emin Yalman.<sup>66</sup> The first criticizes the relocation of 1915-1916; the second denounces it with viciousness.<sup>67</sup>

The Armenians of Zeyton, the first ones to be relocated, were led towards Konya, right in the centre of Anatolia not towards Arab provinces — as Mr. Dündar also recognizes — others were relocated inside Anatolia: Armenians of Mersin settled in Adana, and Armenians of some villages settled in other Anatolian villages. Armenians living in Istanbul, Edirne, Izmir, Aydın, Kastamonu, Antalya and Maraş were not relocated. Adana was an exception as it was a particular case. Fanatics took control of the local CUP in Adana and almost half of the Armenians living there were expelled as well as the extremists under the orders of Talat.<sup>68</sup>

More significantly, the Ottoman government authorized the construction of Armenian churches in Anatolia during the first months of the war: On November 22, 1914 in Bergama, December 14, 1914 in Adana and April 5, 1915 in Sivas.<sup>69</sup> It can also be seen from this practice that the argument of “Turkifying Anatolia” is a paradox.

- b) Mr. Dündar argues that Talat had the intention of eliminating all Armenian presence in the North-East of Anatolia, by disregarding the fact that all measures taken at the time were presented as temporary measures in Ottoman decrees.<sup>70</sup> If we consider that the Ottoman defeat made it difficult for the Ottoman government to show its goodwill, we should take note of the fact that Cemal Pasha gave permission for the return of relocated Armenians on the basis of legal grounds.<sup>71</sup> It is unimaginable that Talat was not informed, or did not approve such measures.

65 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., p. 45. See also: Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, op. cit., pp. 300–304.

66 Erik J. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 89 ; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, op. cit., p. 301 ; Odile Rudelle, *L'Empire ottoman à l'âge des réformes*, Paris-Istanbul, IFEA/Maisonneuve & Larose, 2007, pp. 208 and 299.

67 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2003, p. 222; Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1930, p. 221 and passim.

68 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915*, op. cit., pp. 52 and 91; Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 186–187, 191, 203–205.

69 Şinasi Orel and Sürreya Yuca, op. cit., p. 103.

70 Kâmuran Gürün, op. cit., pp. 247–253.

71 Guenter Lewy, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

Mr. Dündar affirms that the coded telegrams of the Ministry of Interior weren't consulted by the researchers before 1995, even before 2001, and that "for the first time, in these telegrams according to my researches, Talat establishes the grounds which the Armenian population shouldn't surpass (like July 12, 1915, August 5, 27 October etc.) [...]." These coded telegrams were examined long before Mr. Dündar had done so, e.g. by Kâmuran Gürün, Şinasi Orel and Sürreya Yuca. One of the first cases – maybe the first - thresholds of population can be found in the note sent by the general commandant on May 26, 1915.

Mr. Dündar's claims that Talat Pasha had ideological motivations are without any proof.

The text indicates that:

"To avoid the creation of new foyers of rebellion, these principles should be applied during the transfer of Armenians:

- a) The Armenian population should not exceed 1/10th of the population of Muslim tribes in the places where they are sent.
- b) No village shall be constructed solely by immigrated Armenians, and their homes shall not exceed 50.
- c) The immigrant Armenian families are not allowed to change homes, unless they are moving, under the pretext of travelling."<sup>72</sup>

Mr. Dündar makes reference to "Talat Pasha's notebook", published by Murat Bardakci, who carried out a simple transliteration — not a translation — into modern Turkish.<sup>73</sup> This so-called "notebook" is a series of anonymous documents, compiled by Talat, and then later by his widow. The documents are not in his handwriting. The majority of these documents published by Mr. Bardakci do not even concern the Armenians. But two of these documents brought about significant debate.

The first is a statistical table which presents the number of relocated Armenians. This document contains many errors. For example, it indicates (p.77 of the work published by Mr. Bardakci) that 109,521 Armenians were relocated from Bitlis, and 128,657 from Erzurum. It should be noted that a significant portion of the Armenians living in these provinces were taken to the Russian Caucasus by the troops of the Tsar.

72 Kâmuran Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

73 Murat Bardakci, *Talat Paşa'nın Evrak-ı Metrukesi*, İstanbul, Everest Yayınları, 2008.

The second (p. 109) document ignites even more doubt. It provides a list of the number of Armenians residing within the Ottoman Empire in the year of 1917. It indicates that 284,000 Armenians were present in Anatolia, which is credible, but the estimated number of Armenians living in the Arab provinces is absurd. The table mentions that 6,778 Armenians were living in Der-el-Zor, 7,033 in Mosul and 1,849 in Beirut. These numbers are far from reality.<sup>74</sup>

Is it with this material that Mr. DüNDAR intends to radically change our knowledge on the events that took place in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War? Ottoman documents which are not supposed to be published, found in Ottoman archives since 1982, are completely neglected by Mr. DüNDAR.<sup>75</sup>

The publication of this interview would not have such serious consequences if L'Histoire had afterwards published Edward J. Erickson, Guenter Lewy or Justin McCarthy's articles. Instead, L'Histoire published selected small studies where it is not possible to encounter Russia's instrumental use of Armenian nationalism,<sup>76</sup> nor signs of Armenian terror which took place between 1973-1997. This can largely be explained by the influence of the intrigue of Russian services.<sup>77</sup>

L'Histoire also added a photography taken by Armin Wegner. Through this photography, the readers who have been misinformed will be strongly touched, and therefore their sense of analytic criticism will be reduced. The intellectual dishonesty of Wegner was carefully removed by Martin Tamcke with a journal kept during the First World War, by this curious witness. Mr. Tamcke concluded that Wegner's book covers the "domain of legends" rather than history.<sup>78</sup> Starvation was effective in the Arab provinces of oriental Anatolia, and effected Christians, Muslims and Jews; demonstrating photographs of Armenian children who died of starvation does not prove the Ottoman authorities' intention with regard to Armenians.

"Very few people are wise enough to prefer the blame which is useful to them rather than the praise that betray them",<sup>79</sup> observed La Rochefoucauld. Madams and Sirs, readers of L'Histoire, will you be a part of these little numbers of people?

74 Erman Şahin should be thanked for his analysis of Mr. Barbakci's book. See also: Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, op. cit., pp. 273–276.

75 Other than the documents already cited in footnotes no. 21, 24 and 45, should be mentioned: « Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents », Ankara, ATASE, seven volumes, 2005–2007.

76 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, op. cit., pp. 13–19, 29–40 and passim; William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, pp. 150–157 and 204–210; Türkaya Ataöv, « Procurement of Arms for Armenian Terrorism: Realities Based on Ottoman Documents », in *International Terrorism and the Drug Connection*, Ankara University Press, 1984, pp. 169–177; Garo Pasdermajian, op. cit., pp. 28 and sqq.

77 Metin Tamkoç, « International Terrorism: The Russian Connection », in *International Terrorism and the Drug Connection*, op. cit., pp. 49–59; Michael M. Gunter, « Pursuing the Just Cause of their People ». *A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*, Westport-New York London, Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 94–97; Gaïdz Minassian, *Guerre et terrorisme arméniens*, Paris, PUF, 2002, pp. 18–23, 27–29, 74 and passim.

78 Martin Tamcke, *Armin Wegner und die Armenier: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit eines Augenzeugen*, Göttingen, Cuvillier, 1993, p. 220.

79 *Maximes*, 147; in complete studies, Paris, Gallimard, « Pléiade library », 1964, p. 422.