

THE
TURCO-ARMENIAN
QUESTION
THE TURKISH POINT OF VIEW

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THE TURCO-ARMENIAN QUESTION

TREATMENT

Of the non Moslem in General in the Ottoman Empire

Though sorely embarrassed in her relations with her Christian subjects whose loyalty was never above doubt, Turkey sincerely strove for close upon a century to ensure to the non-Moslem elements under her sway equal treatment and rights with those of the Musulmans. This idea pervades the whole legislation enacted in the Empire since the "TANZIMAT" (era of reforms inaugurated by the proclamation of the Charter of Gulhane in 1839) and was in great part realized when Russia, herself more than ever attached to a system of Government by which her non-Orthodox subjects were condemned to a marked state of inferiority in regard to their compatriots professing the state-religion, declared war upon her neighbor in 1876 under the pretext of obtaining its application.

If this work had not been carried out entirely until then, the reason of it is to be found in the fact that the disappearance of Musulman supremacy would have given rise to perpetual conflicts between the different Christian sects whose hatred for one another knew no bounds.⁽¹⁾

This is how the French diplomatist and historian M. Engelhardt expresses himself on the subject in his book "Turkey and the Tanzimat" ". . . But in advocating the advantages of a common regime, the Divan was averse to complete assimilation which would have compromised Musulman supremacy, in its opinion the only barrier against anarchy. This precaution had its *raison d'être* in an undeniable fact of the period and one which could pass as axiomatic: . . . the government which divides the rayahs least is the Musulman".

And let it not be forgotten that one of the difficulties and not the least encountered by the Sublime Porte in the fulfillment of her task was to be found in the attitude of the Christians themselves who demanded the suppression of the inequalities from which they suffered in certain fields but strenuously opposed the annulment of the privileges they enjoyed in others.

This truth is equally confirmed by M. Engelhardt in his above mentioned work which refers to it in the following passage:

"This experiment (the assimilation of the non-Moslems as regards the blood-tax) carried with it an unexpected teaching: it demonstrated that the Reform, in the measure as it would pass from theory to fact,

⁽¹⁾ To give once instance out of a hundred of this mutual hostility: Orthodox and Catholics and non-Orthodox among themselves waged battle against one another within the very precincts of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Finally the Ottoman Government was obliged to post a detachment of troops in this, the most sacred of temple of Christianity, to prevent the recurrence of the scandalous scenes which desecrated it.

would be opposed by the very people who were destined to enjoy its first benefits, a difficulty which aggravated in a singular degree the particular problem in whose solution the Powers were more particularly interested.”

However, the author commits a grievous historical error in speaking of all the Powers as having at heart the appeasement or satisfaction of the Christian subjects of the Porte by the adoption of measures calculated to place them on a footing of equality with her Musulman subjects.

Russia, whose policy towards Turkey had notoriously aimed for several centuries at paving the way to her conquest of Constantinople by maintaining her neighbor in a state of chronic weakness rendering her incapable of an effective resistance – tactics which, as a matter of fact, had allowed her to make a considerable approach towards the object of her cupidity – set up for the zealous advocate of the Ottoman-orthodox but, in reality would have been considerably put out if they had been deprived of their grievances against the Porte. Consequently she encouraged them under hand to put forward exaggerated claims calculated to prevent an understanding being reached between the former and the latter.

From the beginning of the XVIIIth century up to the present war Turkey had been the victim of the determined and persistent hostility of Russia and the obstacles she deliberately put in the way of her progress account in a large measure for her backward condition of today.

In spite of all Turkey persevered in her task so well that for thirty years and more the distinction between Musulmans and non-Musulmans which the prejudices of former ages, common alike to West and East, had prompted her to maintain in her national economy have entirely disappeared from it. The assimilation of the “rayahs” to the Musulman subjects of the Empire became complete and they had no longer to complain even of that humiliating denomination which suppressed from the Ottoman Statute Book simultaneously with the discriminations attaching to it.

At the same time as she proceeded to transform her legislation so as to establish equality between all in the matter of general administration. Turkey permitted her non-Musulman subjects to retain their organization in separate communities enjoying complete autonomy from the religions, educational and juridical points of view – the latter in so much as questions of personal status were concerned.

Speaking of the privileges of this situation dating from the very morrow of the conquest of Constantinople so far as the Greeks and Armenians were concerned, this is what says M. Philip Marshall Brown, Professor of international law at the University of Princeton (U.S.A.) in his book bearing the title “Foreigners in Turkey – Their Juridical Status” and published in 1914:

“The principal concern of Mahomed the Conqueror after his capture of Constantinople was the establishment of an effective system of administration which should relieve the Government of needless embarrassments and prove suitable to the needs of his newly conquered Christian subjects.

“His idea was extremely simple. He aimed to leave the Greeks, to the fullest practical extent, in possession of their own laws and customs under the responsible control of their Patriarch who should serve as their intermediary or Ambassador before the Sublime Porte. . . . The Sultan assisted himself in state at the investiture of the new Patriarch on whom as the spiritual successor of the Greek Emperors, Mohamed

conferred the unusual title of “Millet bashi”. (Head of the Nation). He also granted to the Patriarch and his successors an almost unrestricted jurisdiction over the members of the Greek Nation.

“Unfortunately the original **BERAT** of Mohammed confirming these extraordinary privileges has disappeared. Successive Sultans have most explicitly reaffirmed them, however, and except for certain curtailments which were inevitable in the progress of four centuries and more, these exceptional powers are still asserted by the Greek Patriarch as well as by the heads of other religious communities which later received similar grants.

“Such an abnormal state of affair – the existence of veritable *imperia in imperio* – cannot be expected to exist indefinitely. But as concerns those immunities of jurisdiction in matters relating to the personal status of non-Moslem subjects which were granted spontaneously by Mohammed the Conqueror, as an act of constructive statesmanship it would seem likely that such privileges would continue to exist for a long time.

“Thus, while Mohammed may have been actuated by tolerant and statesmanlike motives in according such extensive privileges to his conquered subjects he was also trying to solve a peculiar problem having its origin in the Moslem conception of the identity of the State and religion. . . .

“The essential fact to be noted is simply that the Turks in the midst of a great triumph spontaneously and generously recognized the right of the conquered to be governed by their own laws and customs in matters held sacred by the Moslems as well as in matters not of vital interest to the State. . . .

“It was (this tolerant policy), in fact, in entire harmony with the Moslem spirit of Jurisprudence and eloquently refutes the universal reputation for intolerance so unjustly attributed to the Turks.”⁽¹⁾

Here is a proof of historical honesty which one is agreeably surprised to meet in a work of occidental origin regarding Turkey. It would be a source of considerable improvement in the relations between the Moslem and Christian worlds if the spirit of fairness and impartiality with which the American author has dealt with his subject was that of all Westerners discussing Turkish affairs.

Freed, on the other hand, from the discriminations which had operated against them in the juridical and administrative fields: maintained, on the other, in their ancient privileges favoring their development on national and cultural lines and safeguarding their religious liberty, the non-Musulman peoples under Turkish rule enjoyed a situation which furnishes *an unparalleled instance of liberalism in the treatment of conquered races.*

Too great stress cannot be laid on the point: a comparison between the history of Turkey and the countries of the West brings into striking evidence the fact that the peoples she annexed by the sword have enjoyed a political, national, religious and social situation incomparably more favorable than those subdued in the same fashion by Europe.

Another important remark to be made in this connection is that the non-Musulmans had as much or more to complain of their spiritual chiefs than of the Turkish authorities. The quote M. Engelhardt once more:

⁽¹⁾ Underlined by the Editor.

“Dating from this period (XVIIIth century) it is a fact that the provinces joined to the Patriarchate of Constantinople had no less to suffer from the oppression of their ecclesiastical Authorities than from the extortions of the Pashas and as they were more directly in contact with them it was the yoke of their own masters which weighed the most heavily on them.”

Such was the situation of the non-Moslems in general in the Ottoman Empire according to historical fact. We would like to believe that the spirit of fairness and the concern for accuracy with which we have dealt with this question will be recognized by the reader and that after having followed us to this point he will admit that Turkey has been shamefully slandered when she is represented as having treated her Christian subjects as pariahs.

Treatment of the Armenians.

We will now broach the subject of the relations between Turks and Armenians which forms the special object of this work.

The majority of the latter people live as agriculturists in the Eastern provinces of Anatolia where they are mixed with Kurds and Turks, and in Cilicia where their neighbors are Turks. A considerable minority of them are settled in the big towns of the Empire, principally Constantinople, where their avocations are those of bankers, merchants or artisans.

Up to the reign of Abdul-Hamid they had no special complaint to formulate. On the contrary. Enjoying the confidence and esteem of their rulers, who employed them as their agents and advisers in their private and official affairs, they had special opportunities for exercising their talents and attained in this fashion a degree of material prosperity and political influence which gave them a privileged situation in the Empire.

As regards to their relations with the Kurds, contrary to the general opinion on this subject, they had been living on very tolerable terms with them. This is how M. Zarzecki, former French Consul at Van, describes the situation:

“By reason of the isolation of the little Armenian people, which became Christian in the Vth century, in the midst of the Musulman peoples whose preponderance in Asia Minor became more marked from day to day, the Armenians were considered by the Musulman conquerors who succeeded one another as belonging to an inferior race. The Kurds, having embraced Islam, were favored by these conquerors and very naturally encouraged to have the upper hand.

“Nevertheless, the Kurdish beys and aghas who used them to till their fields or for other work, treated them with a certain kindness and protected them against the extortions of other Kurdish feudal lords who sought to take them away from their neighbors to place them under their own authority or to get a temporary profit out of them by plundering their villages. Thus, it would come to pass during this period, that one Kurdish tribe would fight another because the Armenians had been attacked, molested or plundered by certain Kurds. In short, the relations between Kurds and Armenians were those of lords and bondsmen. The Armenians worked, the Kurds protected them. Accustomed to this condition of affairs, the Armenians did not imagine it could be otherwise, and did not complain too much of their fate. Besides, materially they were not too unhappy.

“Toward the end of this first period the. . . demands of the Kurds on the Armenians became less hard. . . Under favor of this new state of things the conditions of the Armenians still further improved by the promulgation of the Tanzimat. Many Armenians became rich and acquired vast fields of which many were even cultivated by poor Armenian rayahs. *The relations between the Kurdish rayahs and the Armenian had always been good. . .*”⁽¹⁾

The reader will gather from the above how false is the opinion sedulously propagated abroad that the Armenians were from all time oppressed and maltreated by the Kurds.

⁽¹⁾ “La Question Kurdo-armenienne” in the *Revue de Paris* of 15th April 1914 – Underlined by the Editor.

Thus, on the one hand, provided with the same extensive autonomy as the Greeks, and other non-Muslims and allowed in this fashion to develop without restriction on national lines, free, on the other, from all persecution and enjoying the favor of the dominant race, the Armenians, so far from having the right to complain of their condition in the Ottoman Empire, were better situated than the other subject races and, absolutely speaking, enjoyed a very enviable fate for a conquered people.

ORIGIN

Of the Armenian Question

Attitude of the Armenians.

The Armenians proved worthy of this treatment up to the middle of the nineteenth century. By their correct attitude as subjects and their devotion to the interests of the Empire as officials they even gained the surname of “millet-i-sadika” (the loyal people). Unfortunately, from this date onward Russian propaganda, which so far had contented itself with acting on the Greeks and Slavs of the Empire, including them in its operations. It first began to make itself felt through the intermediary of the Catholicos of Etchmiadjin (supreme religious authority of the Armenians having its seat in Russia) the latter employing the Armenian men of letters and generally speaking the Armenian *intelligentsia* to create a movement against the Turks among their Ottoman and Russian congeners.

The seeds of disaffection sown in this manner from the outside found a favorable ground for development on the one hand in the minds of a few Armenian youths who had brought back from abroad the revolutionary ideal of 1848, without realizing its incompatibility with the geographical and demographic conditions of their race and, on the other, among the lower clergy whose professional idleness and indifference inclined them to dabble in politics. In this manner intriguing Russia set on foot a movement which little by little gained the whole Armenian community and transformed the “loyal people” into one of the most hostile elements of the State. But we hasten to add that the unbalanced or extremist politicians who had taken its destinies into its hands had to persevere for seventy years in their efforts to undermine the loyalty of this element and substitute terrorism for persuasion as a means of propaganda before this end was achieved.

Without the mischievous intervention of Russia, who fabricated the Armenian Question out of the false or superficial grievances and baseless claims of a handful of fanatics trained to further unconsciously her selfish ends, the world would have been spared a political tragedy for which there was no room in the natural course of history.

What was remarkable in this, the first phase of the Turco-Armenian Question is, on the one hand, that the Armenians yielded to the suggestions of Russia, whom they had every reason to mistrust and on the other, that the Porte refused to see in the demonstrations verging on rebellion in which they presently indulged at Van, Alachgerd, Moosh and Erzeroum anything but accidental and transient outbreaks of discontent having no connection with politics and continued to follow toward them an attitude of paternal goodwill. Thus, she refrained as in the past from exercising all control over the educational and religious administration of the Armenian Patriarchate, kept granting official subsidies to the national institutions of the Community and willingly made good the constantly recurring deficits in the patriarchal budget.

Such was the situation when, war having broken out between Turkey and Russia, the fortune of arms brought the army of the Grand-Duke Nicholas to San Stefano.

Forgetful of the very extensive and real franchises and immunities they enjoyed within the frame of their ecclesiastically autonomous organization and declining to make allowance for the difficulties which trammelled the Porte in her efforts to remedy the defects of her administration, the Armenian National Assembly took advantage of the presence of the arch-enemy of Turkey at the gates of her Capital to forward to the Russian Generalissimo an address asking his government to use its powers so that the provinces of Eastern Anatolia inhabited by Armenians be proclaimed independent or at least that they pass under the control of Russia. The Armenian Patriarch, Nerses Varzabedian, headed this movement officially.

The Russian Government, whose deceitful promises had led the Armenians to formulate these requests, was in no wise concerned to grant them. Setting them aside pretty cavalierly, it contented itself with inserting in the treaty of San Stefano a clause stipulating reforms in favor of the Armenian subjects of the Sultan. In so doing it was by no means actuated by the desire of improving their condition which would only have had the effect of bringing it into stronger contrast with that of the Armenians living in its own territory. Its object was simply to reserve to itself a new pretext for interfering in the domestic affairs of Turkey, which would take the place of that it had employed until then by playing the part of protector of the Ottoman Slavs, and to which the treaty of San Stefano, giving satisfaction to the aspirations of the Bulgarians, Servians and Montenegrins, would put a natural end.

The Convention of Cyprus concluded between Turkey and England and the Treaty of Berlin which supplanted that of San Stefano reproduced this stipulation, always at the instance of the Armenians, the former on account of England separately, the latter on account of *Europe* collectively.

The Armenian Question was born, assuming an international as well as a local form. Thus, it was already at this period that the Armenians appeared on the political stage in the part of disloyal subjects – a part which their conditions in the Empire, however imperfect it may have been, was far from justifying.

It is necessary to bring this point into relief.

Long before the principle of nationalities had been formulated in Europe, Turkey in an outburst of liberalism which was astonishing for the period (XVth century) applied it in a very extensive form to her dominions. No doubt the autonomy she conferred on the non-Moslem elements under her sway was based on their ecclesiastical organization and not, as took place since then in Austria-Hungary, on a territorial distribution. But this system, -- supposing it had suited Turkey to adopt it, who after all had her interests as a State to consider – was impracticable in the case of the Armenians by reason of the dispersion of this race throughout the Empire and the preponderance acquired by the Musulman element long before the Turkish conquest in what had once been the kingdom of Armenia. As a people deprived of its independence but whose racial and cultural individuality it was impossible to safeguard under other conditions of existence than those granted to it in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians could not legitimately or reasonably claim any other right than that to be decently administered. The natural path which was theirs to follow was to seek a remedy for their administrative grievances which were far from being unbearable in an alliance with their Musulman compatriots who were not less victims than they of the Imperial administration and amongst whom a movement had sprung up against the absolutism of the Throne, the only guilty party in the

matter. Instead of which, keeping apart as if they did not belong to the same country or could form one on their own account, and preferring to a joint action with the founders of the Empire, of whose benevolence they were assured, the help, first of Russia whose motives were more than doubtful, and then that of calculating and interested Europe, had they not committed an act of high treason mixed with ingratitude against the State and an unpardonable political mistake from the point of view of their own interests as a separate racial unit? Unfortunately, refusing to go back on their steps, they persevered in their mistaken course even after the revolution of 1908 had deprived them of their only excuse by overthrowing the hamidian regime.

Attitude of the Armenians After the Russo-Turkish War.

Disappointed in the Congress of Berlin which had only granted them an installment on their claims, and misled by the example of the Greeks and Bulgarians whose essentially different situation from that of the Armenians had rendered possible the creation of an independent Greece and an autonomous Bulgaria, the Armenian politicians engaged in a frankly revolutionary movement by means of which they were to wrest indirectly from Europe what they had not succeeded in obtaining from her directly. Organizing themselves into numerous Committees of which the most militant were the Dachnak (Dachnaksoutzioum) and the Hintchak⁽¹⁾ their activity assumed the form of a virulent campaign against Turkey abroad and an uninterrupted series of acts of violence in the country itself. England, France and the United States, chosen by them as the most favorable ground for attacks upon Turkey, became the scene of a daily outpouring of calumnies on her name and appeals to the anti-Musulman prejudices of the West such as the most perfidiously malignant mind could suggest. In the Empire, armed rebellion, on the slightest pretext against the Authorities; murder, rape, arson, pillage, systematically practiced at the expense of the Musulmans formed the substance of their local operations. In adopting this course, the Committees looked forward to reprisals which were to bring about the intervention of Europe by being represented as sudden and causeless outbreaks of Turkish fanaticism. This, in turn was to result in the realization of their political aspirations.

This calculation, which was also that of the Bulgarian, Servian and Greek revolutionary organizations, reappears in all the ulterior ventures of the Armenian Committees. It proved correct from the outset in so far as securing the sympathy of western public opinion was concerned. The version that in the tragedies forcibly brought about by the Committees themselves the Turkish side was responsible found quick and easy credence abroad.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The "Hintchak" began by calling itself "Drochak". Its press organ still appears under this name. Other organizations founded under cultural or charitable pretenses to the number of half a dozen worked secretly toward the same end. The first two began by rivals who fought one another savagely. The sordid question of money was at the bottom of this antagonism.

- (I) "The idea of fomenting disturbances at all cost in view, of attracting the attention of Europe never quits the mind of the Christians of Turkey. The case of the Greeks, Roumanians, Servians and Bulgarians is an instance of it.
"Those who took up this attitude experienced as much difficulty in proving that the Turks were the assassins of the Christians as they had to bring about the reprisals of the former. The silent Turks alone know what the Christian revolutionists did to exasperate the Musulmans.
"The blind perpetration of crimes which alone the most criminal imagination could conceive is due to a propaganda carried on not only by dailies but by pictures drawn up in thousands of different forms and distributed to the population. It is through these means that the legend of the barbarity of the Turks and of the Musulmans in general has been accredited. This is the idea which is inculcated in the gullible Christians: The Turks rest five, ten years. Then all of a sudden a fever takes possession of them and they all rise and wherever there are Christians they fall upon them and massacre them.
"This is the *etat d'ame* of all the Christians in Turkey. But if the Turks had the same ethics as the correspondents of Christian papers and if what is said of their instincts is true would any Christians still exist in Turkey?
"True many Armenians live in wretchedness but one does not meet any where with authentic Turkish barbarity. It does not exist, it is a deliberately invented political fable. . . ."

No doubt, occidental *prejudice* and ignorance were only too ready to accept on trust this flagrant introversion of truth. No doubt also, the Armenian question was to act sooner or later as an opportunity for the Governments which were hostile to Turkey, to fish in troubled waters. But it is none the less true that by not reacting for a long time against the slanderous propaganda of the Committees and only intervening later on spasmodically and most often clumsily, Turkey contributed not a little herself towards the perpetuation of a mischievous legend which was to stir up Europe and America against her. It is a fact: whether it be the result of apathy, inexperience or miscalculated parsimony the Turkish people has shown itself singularly helpless in obtaining justice from the tribunal of public opinion.

Such was the ferocious resolution of the committees, especially the Dachnak, that they did not scruple to murder such wealthy or influential members of their own race as would not contribute to the success of their subversive enterprise either because they were possessed of a saner judgment or because the gratitude they felt for their rulers would not permit them to do so.⁽¹⁾ This system of terrorism which was first practiced in the towns was soon to be extended to the villages.⁽¹⁾ This was not all, the “comitadjis”, exasperated by the unresponsiveness of the Musulmans, started killing here and there congeners of their selected in a haphazard fashion staging these crimes in such a manner as to cause them to be attributed to the over enduring objects of their provocations. This process was also those of their compatriots who had remained refractory to persuasion and intimidation.

“If the truth is to be admitted as it exists one must confess that in the East it is the Christians and not the Musulmans who are the barbarians. In the East it is the Christians who commit the misdeeds and then attribute them to the protectionless Musulmans. What is remarkable is the long periods of security in turkey and not its occasional absence. . .”(Quoting from a very clumsy French translation we have taken the liberty to touch it up but without in the least modifying the meaning which it is sought to convey). “General Maiewski.”

⁽¹⁾ It is in this fashion that the priest Hampre, the lawyers Hatchik and Sebouh, the merchant Apik Oundjian and a notable Dieran Karaguezian, were murdered in full day in Constantinople. Many other Armenians who had remained hostile or indifferent to the appeals of the Committees experienced the same fate in the provinces as well as in America where there are numerous and prosperous Armenian colonies. (see reports of the French Ambassador to the Porte, Mr. Cambon, dated March 27th and June 3rd, 1894 – Yellow Book 1894-1897).

⁽¹⁾ See annex Xo.3, Series I. See also extract from report of General Maiewski in “Aspirations et agissements revolutionnaires des Comites Armeniens” page 106-107, a book published in Constantinople in 1917 on the Turco-Armenian question.

Turkish Official Reaction to the Armenian Provocations.

And its influence on the Kurdish-Armenian relations.

In spite of all, the Musulman population would not stir. Deprived of all protection abroad, where the Christians alone of the Ottoman Empire were the object of public sympathy, the Hamidian regime had plunged them in a state of insensibility approaching brutishness. The answer came from another quarter. Exasperated by the audacity of the Committees which offended his *amour-propre* as a despot and wishing to have done once and for all with their revolutionary practices, Abdul Hamid, who saw clearly through their policy, decided to respond to their provocations tending to bring about an effusion of Armenian blood, feeling sure that, however far he might go in this direction, disunited Europe would only intervene platonically. Russia, who saw in the execution of this project which, in fact, she suggested herself to the Recluse of Yildiz, a complement of the policy of denationalization she was practicing against it at that time⁽¹⁾ in her own territory and a means of discrediting Turkey, urged him to strike as hard as he could while at the same time she encouraged the Armenians to indulge in redoubled violence. This is the explanation of the massacres of 1895-6⁽²⁾.

The responsibility for this tragedy is to be divided between Russia, who initiated the Armenian movement and was playing at the time the double game just alluded to, the Committees, and Abdul Hamid. So far as the latter is concerned, he was no doubt satisfying a personal feeling of resentment and revenge in ordering the massacres but at the same time, he was acting the part of an Agent of Russia and the Committees whose deliberate policy it had been from different motives to bring them about. No doubt this sanguinary tyrant and Russia are answerable for them to humanity but to the Armenian people it is the Committees and the Committees alone. We may say the same of all the other calamities that befell this unfortunate race. In giving vent to its grief its maledictions should fall where they are due. Passion should not make it unjust.

The Turkish people had nothing to do with the lamentable episodes we are discussing, either in deed or in thought. Its true sentiments were reflected in the attitude of hundreds of Musulmans who, in Constantinople and the provinces, saved at the peril of their lives, those of many of the peaceable Armenians hunted by the bravos of Yildiz or gave them asylum, defying thereby the vengeance of the

⁽¹⁾ The attitude of Russia towards the Armenian race was full of contradictions and duplicity. While persecuting the Armenians in her own territory she took up the role of ostensible protectress of those living in Turkey. The insincerity of this conduct appeared after the Turco-Russian war as explained above. This tortuous policy continued till 1907. From that date the Government of St. Petersburg granted a more liberal treatment to its Armenian subjects, its Armenian policy having crystallized in the sense of a real though interested support given to the claims of the Armenian section of the race.

⁽²⁾ The incidents which broke the patience of Abdul Hamid and were the immediate cause of the massacres were the rebellions in the Sassoun, at Van and Trebizonde and the bloody riots at Coum-Capou and in front of the Poste and the assault on the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople when half a dozen bandits armed with bombs broke into the building killing five individuals on their passage and refrained from blowing it up only on the reassurance received from the Russian Embassy that their desires would be taken into consideration. This is how General Maiewski expresses himself on the subject. . . "Whatever the accusations of barbarity directed against the Turks, it should be pointed out that the Armenians were everywhere the cause of the trouble. Thus, for instance, at Trebizonde the attempts on Bahri and Hamdi Pachas are the sole causes of the massacres which occurred in this locality. . . ." Major Williams, British Consul at Van is equally categorical as to the responsibility of the Armenian. (See Blue Book No. 8, 1896 page 207).

Tyrant. As a matter of fact, the West, fair to Turkey once in a way, exempted her from its reprobation in this connection. This fastened upon Abdul Hamid who became the “Gory Sultan” and to a certain extent upon the Committees but Russia escaped its anathemas.

In this dispensation of justice, incomplete as it was, we have the first and unfortunately last instance of discernment and impartiality on the part of the West in regard to the political tragedies of which Turkey has been the theater in modern times.

The embitterment of the relations between the Armenians and Kurds, which as we have seen had been quite tolerable from the outset and had been improving from year to year, dates from the same period. M. Zarzecki’s already quoted article is very edifying on this point also. This is what it says:

“The second period comprises the reign of Abdul Hamid. When the latter, pressed by the Powers to introduce in Armenia the reforms promised by the Treaty of Berlin, sought to burke the Armenian question “by suppressing the Armenians”. As a former Grand-Vizir put it, he found zealous auxiliaries in the Kurds. Displeased themselves with the slow but progressive development of the Armenians, annoyed by their revolutionary attempts, the Kurds seized with joy upon the “authorization” granted to them secretly by Yildiz to repress the nascent movement of the Armenians by terrorizing them. And when Abdul Hamid, at the time of the creation of the Hamidian regiments, gave a free hand to the “achirets” (tribes) to deal with the Armenians as they pleased, the pillaging instincts of the Kurds gave themselves a free reign. Then, isolated cases of murder and theft occurred. Then, as the Armenians who had become conscious of their nationality and dignity would not put up with this treatment, there were reprisals on their part; the isolated acts became general and spread to the regions where harmony still reigned. The religious fanaticism to which the Cheikhs and Mollahs acting for Abdul Hamid appealed, as well as the practices of the revolutionary Armenian Committees envenomed the relations between the Kurds and the Armenians: the murders and the thefts degenerated into general butcheries and organized plunderings in the course of which the Ottoman authorities lent their aid to the Kurds against the Armenians. . . . Thus, Abdul Hamid succeeded in creating a permanent current of mistrust, hatred and antagonism between the Armenian and Kurdish populations which had lived for centuries on fairly good terms, a current which was to grow and whose disastrous effects are one of the causes of the present disturbed state of the country.”

General Maiewski, whom we have already quoted on the subject of the general situation of the Armenians in the Empire is even more edifying regarding the relations between them and the Kurds. In his “Statistics of the vilayets of Van and Bitlis” which is written in a remarkable spirit of impartiality and truth except in so far as he omits to speak of the very compromising role played in the Armenian Question by his own country, this is what this soldier diplomat has to say of the relations between Kurds and Armenians:

“The allegations of publicists according to which the Kurds are busy exterminating the Armenians may be set aside as false without exception. If they were founded it would mean that not a single individual belonging to another race could exist among the Kurds, and that the different peoples living in their midst would be obliged to emigrate *en masse* because of the impossibility of obtaining a piece of bread or to become their slaves. Neither of these situations had occurred. On the contrary, all those who

know the eastern provinces (of Anatolia) will bear witness to the fact that the villages of the Christians are in any case more prosperous than those of the Kurds. If the Kurds were no more than brigands and thieves as the Europeans claim the prosperous condition of the Armenians which lasted until 1895 would never have been possible. Thus, until that date the distress of the Armenians is nothing but a legend. The condition of the Ottoman Armenian was not worse than that of the Armenians living in other countries.

“The incidents in connection with which the Armenian revolutionists would make such a terrible outcry, such as instances of murdering and pillaging, occurred just as often if not more so in the Caucasus. As to cattle lifting, this question has no other character than in different localities in Russia. Then, again, life and property were better guarded wherever the authority of the Government could make itself felt than in the district of Elisabetpol for instance.

“One could see certain Kurdish chieftains notoriously addicted to brigandage and pillaging, to take under their protection needy Armenians even in the most agitated times. There could be no better proof that the Armenians lived on perfectly friendly terms with the Kurds whom the Armenians denounced as highwaymen.

“During the years 1895-6 the Armenian Committees sowed the seeds of such an animosity between Kurds and Armenians that no sort of reforms could extinguish it.

“Here (at Sassoum) the Armenians and Kurds had lived very amicably together for centuries. In 1893 one Damadian makes his appearance. . . . A year later one Boyadjian takes his place. . . . As a result of the intrigues of these individuals several affrays took place in a short time between the two elements. . . .”

These statements are all the more valuable as they proceed from the representative of Turkey itself of a Power thoroughly hostile to that country and one which exploited more especially against it this very Armenian question.

They corroborate M. Zarzecki’s statement that Kurds and Armenians had lived on neighborly terms for centuries and that, if from a certain date the former conceived some animosity for the latter this was the product of the discord purposely sown between the two races by Abdul Hamid *aided* by the Committees and that it would not have taken the excessive form into which it degenerated if it had not been fanned into hatred by those same agencies. As a matter of fact Russia was behind both.

It should be added that on their side, the Armenians of the mountainous region of Zeitoun, where they had maintained themselves in a semi-independent state until 1895 and where they continued to form a hot-bed of disturbances and intrigue even after that date, had dealt from all time in the most violent spirit of hostility with the surrounding musulman population committing outrages at their expense which in violence and frequency did not fall short of those of which their kinsmen had to suffer at the hands of the Kurds.⁽¹⁾ Thus, the Armenian and musulman elements were at least quits so far as persecution was concerned.

If the Porte had not succeeded until Abdul Hamid in improving the administrative conditions in those regions which would have prevented much of the trouble that was to follow – her authority was very imperfectly established in that part of the Empire owing to its remoteness from the Capital and the absence

⁽¹⁾ See a book entitled “Zeitoun” by Minas Tcheraz.

of decent means of communication – if, generally speaking, she had remained so backward in carrying out the work of reformation undertaken with such good will and sincerity under Abdul Medjid and Abdul Aziz, it was in great part due to the obstacles thrown in her way by Russia and to the paralyzing effects of the Capitulations on her action. This is tantamount to saying that the Great Powers, the unbending selfishness of one of which showed in its opposition to Ottoman reform and of all in their refusal to renounce the benefits of the Capitulations of which that section at least which restricted Turkey's economic independence formed a crying abuse, were responsible in a considerable measure for the perpetuation of Turkish maladministration which favored the expansion of the Armenian Question beyond its natural limits by offering the West a pretext for intervention on the Armenian side.

The baleful result of the tactics of the Committees which had succeeded only too well in causing the Turkish soil to be soaked with Armenian blood without, however, as Abdul Hamid had foreseen, the action of Europe exceeding the limits of more or less indignant protestation, gave matter for reflection to the demoniacs composing these associations, all the more as they came under the maledictions of the Armenian people itself, and important section of which had been deliberately sacrificed by them to their political plans without any profit to the race. They pretty well renounced, for the moment, their system of isolated attempts upon the Musulmans and rebellion against the Imperial Authorities. Concentrating the greater part of their activity on the person of Abdul Hamid, they became doubly violent in their campaign against him abroad and even hatched several plots against his life one of which all but attained its object. This was the famous bomb conspiracy of Yildiz in which he escaped death as if by miracle.

The Young Turkish Committee, thinking they could perceive in this change of plans of the Armenian Committees a possible ground for an understanding with them, in view of a joint action against the Hamidian regime, made overtures to them in this sense. The exorbitant pretensions with which this initiative was met caused it to fail. Things dragged along in this manner until the unexpected revolution of 1908.

Sterility of the Official Efforts Made Under the New Regime To conciliate the Armenian Committees.

In the delirious joy which Turks and Armenians experienced in common at being at last delivered from the cruel omnipotence of Yildiz, they drew themselves into one another's arms. This fraternization offers the best proof that the former made a distinction between the Committees and the Armenian people which was still loyal in the mass and that, on its side, the latter would not impute, as it could not, to the ruling race the responsibility for the innocent Armenian blood spilt in the course of the blind repression of 1895-6.⁽¹⁾

The historical date of July 23, 1908, marks the end of the second and the beginning of the third phase of the Turco-Armenian Question.

It was only natural that power should have fallen to the lot of the party of Union and Progress in Constitutional Turkey which owed to it the acquisition of this character. There is no doubt that this group which was to cause finally such a disappointment to Turkey brought the office the high principles which had guided it in its revolutionary campaign and which abandoned it only after several years of the exercise of power. The task it set to itself at the outset of its official career was of a perfectly legitimate and high order.

It consisted in reestablishing the independence of the Empire in regard to Europe and uniting all the races living in its dominions in a group animated by the same national conception: the perpetuation of turkey in the form of a reformed and progressive State. It is evident that Union and Progress would succeed more easily in the arduous enterprise if it could obtain the support of one of the Christian elements of the Empire. It imagined it could find this in the Armenian people.

For several centuries Turks and Armenians had lived inextricably mixed with one another on excellent terms as citizens of the same Empire. No doubt foreign intrigue had greatly disturbed these relations by creating in the midst of the former a movement against the ruler of the latter – benevolent as this was. But as explained above, this movement, though very violent, was limited to a small minority composed of visionaries, wild enthusiasts and not a few adventurers. The majority of enlightened Armenians, conscious of the artificial and politically immoral character of the revolutionary action of the Committees, the commercial and industrial classes whose material interests it threatened, and the mass of the workers who enjoyed prosperity in spite of the lacunae of the Imperial Administration were opposed to it.

This minority itself, was it not possible to disarm it? This was indispensable because it encompassed all organized Armenianism and because the propaganda in which it indulged, though it had met until then with a very limited success represented, nonetheless, a serious danger. Beside many indifferent elements it comprised not a few disinterested and sincere individuals. The point was to cure

⁽¹⁾ As a matter of fact, all the ring-leaders in the events which were the immediate cause of this repression – political bandits whose hands were steeped in blood – escaped thanks to foreign protection. The innocent paid for them. The Belgian Joris who was the prime actor in the bomb tragedy of Yildiz, of which we have just spoken, when about 50 attendants upon Abdul Hamid fell victims to his infernal machine escaped in the same fashion.

these of their chimera and prove to them that the higher interests of their race, so well safeguarded until then within the compass of the Ottoman Empire, where the constitutional regime had provided them with new guarantees, could scarcely find a better ground for development in separation and that, for the rest, the only real grievance of the Armenians, that is the imperfect working of the Imperial Administration would disappear if the radical change which had taken place in the political situation of the country was allowed to produce its natural results by the observance of loyalty and order on the part of the non-Moslem elements.

Putting forward these considerations, Union and Progress made overtures to the Dachnak. This was the most soundly recruited among the Armenian Committees and that which at the same time possessed the most solid organization. Hence, its collaboration with Union and Progress would offer the best chances of success in an enterprise whose object was the internal consolidation of the Empire by the subordination of the particular interests of the different races living within its boundaries to those of the common fatherland. According to this program each retained its individual value. What would happen is that they would be all reduced to a common denominator: ottomanism. The Armenians could submit to this conception all the more easily as their higher interests fitted in with those of the Turks so that they would have no serious sacrifice to make in adopting it. There was in this appeal a very wide formula for an understanding.

The Dachnakists responded favorably. An alliance was concluded between Union and Progress and their group in which the former gave proofs of the most generous spirit of accommodation. Thus, it granted the Armenians a number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate considerably in excess of their numerical importance. At the same time it allowed their revolutionary Committees to survive the breakup of the Hamidian regime in the shape of political parties and, what was particularly worthy of notice, to maintain their affiliations abroad. Nay more. Giving a forced interpretation to the amnesty granted under "The political crimes and offenses act" it authorized the return into the country not only of the Ottoman Armenians who were most compromised under the former regime, including those who had the most heinous crimes under common law on their consciences, but of the Armenian revolutionaries of Russian nationality who had had the most nefarious influence on their local associates by driving them in the paths of violence.

Unfortunately, the sincerity of Union and Progress, which was undoubted, at that time, met with duplicity in the Dachnak, secretly clinging to its ideal of autonomy it was all the more resolved upon pursuing its realization as the new regime seemed to offer it greater chances of success.

Throwing off the mask almost on the morrow of its understanding with Union and Progress, it took the field forthwith. All the other Armenian organizations drunk with the wine of liberty followed suit. This was especially the case of the Hintchak, whose mortification at having been overlooked by Union and Progress led it to become as extremist as its preferred rival. Thus, it came to pass that, competing with one another, the Dachnakists and Hinchnakistes, the ecclesiastical and educational authorities of the Community and the numerous associations newly founded under the pretense of serving educational and

charitable purposes, engaged with cynical frankness in a campaign destined to generalize the revolutionary movement. This action took the form of a veritable political debauch constituting one of the most astonishing phenomena of the new regime.

Consider: abusing the liberties acquired by the country and which had added themselves to those enjoyed by the Armenians as an autonomous Community forming a State in the State and attributing to weakness the concessions of Union and Progress instead of seeing in the, what they were in reality, the effects of a misplaced confidence or perhaps a sentimental miscalculation, Dachnakists and Hintchakists, priests and school-masters, writers and artists, in a word all the Armenian *intelligentsia*, threw itself into an unbridled propaganda whose boldness was only equaled by the tolerance of the new authorities. Church, school, theater and press, all served them openly, boldly, as instruments for indoctrinating the masses. Not a newspaper article, not a sermon, not a dramatic performance, not a conference in ten whose subject was not an independent Armenia which it was the sacred duty of the race to restore by wresting the so-called Armenian provinces from the “sanguinary and barbarous Turk.”

The recklessness and cynicism of the Committees went so far as to make them throw off all restraint, even in the organization and employment of their revolutionary bands whose activity, subordinated so far to considerations of prudence and policy, displayed itself hence forward in broad daylight.⁽¹⁾

When recalling to mind this epoch of the Constitution, one imagines to be in dream. Absolute inaction characterized the attitude of the Government towards this overflow of the revolutionary spirit of the Armenians. When throwing off at last its strange unconcern – which happened only on the eve of the present war – it sought to stem the torrent it was too late. The Armenian people had been welded by its leaders into a compact mass, unanimously resolved upon profiting by the first favorable concourse of circumstances to establish for the benefit of their race an independent Armenia in the Eastern Anatolia which they stubbornly claimed as their patrimony, in spite of the flat contradictions of history and statistics.

⁽¹⁾ See doc annexed No.2, series A.

The Adana Trouble

The counter revolution of the 12th of April, 1908, although it occurred before the propaganda we have spoken of had produced all the effects it was intended to, appeared to the Committees a favorable opportunity for the materialization of their projects.

Taking advantage of the momentary absence of all government in the Empire and imagining that its last hour had struck in the terrible crisis it was going through, they decided to bring about a conflict between Musulmans and Armenians in the town of Adana and its neighborhood. Their principal Agent in this venture was the Armenian bishop of the town, Mgr. Mecheg.⁽¹⁾

The churches resounded with political addresses, those of the Bishop being among the most incendiary, the theaters with revolutionary songs; the walls of the town were plastered over with placards containing threats and gross insults addressed to the ruling element; the houses of the Musulmans were marked, with crosses as if to foretell the advent of a Christian triumph; outrages perpetrated on the person of Musulmans stained with blood the surrounding country; finally, arms were distributed to the Armenians with which they drilled publicly and in open daylight.

In the struggle the agitators well knew would arise from these maneuvers, the Committees hoped that the Armenians, who were fairly numerous in that neighborhood and provided with a formidable armament, would be able to resist until the arrival of the foreign troops the dispatching of which to the spot would be suggested to the Powers by the proximity of the port of Mersina joined by railway to Adana.⁽¹⁾ This practical manifestation of European sympathy was to act as a signal for the propagation of the movement in the direction of Eastern Anatolia, whence a subversion in the Asiatic part of Turkey added to that which was shaking it in her European part and, as a result, an autonomous, perhaps, an independent, Armenia springing up from the ruins of the seven century old Empire.

One more the Committees came out wrong in their calculations.

Whether the explosion occurred as a result of an Armenian or a Musulman outrage in the town of Adana itself does not matter. The essential point is that it had been willed and prepared by the Committees. As a proof of our affirmation we would only quote the report sent to his Government by Major Doughty-Wily, at the time British Consul General at Adana, in which he attributes the tragic events which unfolded themselves in Cilicia to the loudly provoking attitude of the Armenians and accuses the local authorities only to the extent that they did not intervene in time – *manu militari* -- it is his own expression – to oppose the stroke they were contemplating.

Here is assuredly a testimony which cannot be taxed as suspicious. It disposes of the opinion much too easily adopted in the West on the strength of depositions of Armenians, evidently interested in distorting the facts of the case, or of European residents whose impartiality was affected or understanding

⁽¹⁾ An eloquent detail of the activity of the Armenians in this connection is to be found in the cynically defiant and anything but evangelical attitude of a priest Danielian, who caused gunpowder to be burnt in the censers during the services he celebrated at this period.

⁽¹⁾ As a matter of fact, foreign warships did anchor at Mersina, but there was no disembarkation, the tragedy having ceased before their arrival.

obscured by a false spirit of Christian solidarity, that the Cilician tragedy was the result of a Musulman plot. Responsibility for it on the Turkish side is limited to Abdul Hamid's creatures who, with or without the knowledge of their master, took advantage of the Armenian preparations to stir up the Musulmans to counter action in the hope that the ensuing conflict would work to the destruction of the new regime.

This time it was the Musulman population which responded to the Armenian provocations, but only in the region directly affected, which is another proof that no premeditated or preconceived plan existed against the Armenians. If, in the exercise of its resentment, it indulged in extreme courses it is – and surely there is in this a very real excuse for its conduct – because the new road chosen by the Armenians to reach their goal, was to pass over their bodies and that of inanimate Turkey whose prematurely expected death they intended to hasten by striking her in the back. In other words, it is because, forming part of humanity, the Turks do not behave differently from other peoples when the sense of personal and national preservation is exasperated in them.

To mark out Turkey for special reprobation on account of these local excesses committed in a very natural overflow of passion and which, as a matter of fact, did not assume the character of a massacre, as has been asserted,⁽¹⁾ constitutes an act of great and unfortunately common injustice on the part of the West towards our country.

God forbid our defending Union and Progress in connection with its final Armenian policy. Nowhere has their action during the war in this regard caused greater execration and indignation than in our midst. But in fairness to the leaders of this group, as well as to Turkey on whom falls the material responsibility for their sanguinary action, the fact has to be recorded that up to the outbreak of European hostilities, the Armenians had no special cause for complaint against them. On the contrary. We have seen how, immediately after their accession to power, the Unionists cherished the hope of securing the Armenians as partners in their plan to weld the various populations of the Empire into a harmonious whole, actuated by a common political ideal and to what lengths they carried forbearance with them when the practical answer to their officially accepted advances in this direction were cynically frank nationalist demonstrations. This policy of propitiation showed in many other ways, as when they missed no opportunity to attend officially at their national celebrations, to humor their political whims and to contribute to the success of their charitable and educational enterprises. Consternation and despair: those were literally the effects produced on them by the unexpected affray at Adana between the two elements they were so strenuously seeking to bring into closer relationship. Deprived of all authority at the moment by the reactionary movement which had broken out in the Capital, they could not intervene efficaciously to put an end to the bloodshed. But no sooner were they restored to power than they gave proofs of their sense of official duty and the value they attached to Armenian friendship and goodwill by dispatching a joint Turco-Armenian Commission of inquiry to Adana, whose conclusions they adopted without hesitation

⁽¹⁾ There is an essential difference between what happened in 1895-6 and the Cilician tragedy. Abdul Hamid's reaction took place in cold blood at the expense of unarmed Armenians met at random; that of the Musulmans of Cilicia was a direct and immediate response to the provocations of Armenians as well armed as they. In the first case there was really

as a basis for the operation of justice. The Musulman ringleaders had to pay as much for their share in the outbreak as the Armenian. Indeed, it may even be said that the arm of the law dealt more severely with the Musulman than with the Christian side.

massacre. In the second there was struggle, conflict between the two elements. If three Armenians fell to one Turk it is because the latter were more numerous and had received a military training. The excesses committed were mutual.

Extension of the Revolutionary Organization of the Committees.

The system of isolated outrages and partial risings had proved less successful in moving Europe to practical intervention than the Committees expected. Without renouncing these minor operations which were to keep its agents in practice, the Dachnak assumed the task of converting the Armenian people to the idea of a general insurrection which was to allow it to carry with a high hand, Russia helping, the territorial autonomy which its former tactics had not succeeded in procuring it. From this moment onward it directed its efforts with its customary energy towards enlisting in its organization all the Armenians capable of bearing arms, creating militarily trained and disciplined cadres, and accumulating war material. Persuasion proving to be of as little use as before in gaining the masses, Dachnak had again recourse to pressure and terrorism to overcome their indifference or downright hostility.⁽¹⁾ It is a notable fact that even at this advanced phase of the Armenian Question the only concern of the working classes among the Armenian, saving perhaps a certain number of artisans in the towns, was to live in peace with the Authorities under whose perhaps imperfect and corrupt, but on the whole, benign administration they succeeded in gaining a very tolerable and, in many cases, comfortable livelihood.

To its former methods of propaganda, Dachnak added a series of new which will give an idea of their formidable determination to succeed. The leaders started overrunning the country themselves presenting the Armenian villages with a list of demands of which the first was to register as members of the Association which *ipso facto* entailed the obligation of acquitting numerous taxes: the “school” tax, the “arms” tax, the “Committee” tax, etc.; and the second, to buy there and then from them weapons, cash down. Opposition to these demands was punished by a series of graduated penalties, beginning with expulsion from the village, going on with forfeiture of the right to marry, to inherit and to take part in the elections and winding up with bastinado and death. It was especially in inflicting the penalties of forfeiture of civil and religious rights, which the committee was in a position to enforce owing to the abdication of the religious authorities in its hands, that it almost invariably succeeded in gaining its point. How was the unfortunate Armenian people to resist this tyrannical procedure? Complaint to the Authorities being one of the greatest crimes against the nation according to the code of the Committee and punishable by death, it was absolutely at its mercy. In this fashion even those most indifferent or hostile to its undertaking were obliged to submit. On the other hand, having once compromised themselves by enlisting in its organization and committing some criminal acts dictated to them sooner or later by the leaders, those recruited against their will would become after a time as fanatical enemies of the State as those who had joined by conviction.

If it be considered that Hintchak on its side was working with the greatest ardor to gain adherents, it will not astonish the reader to learn that on the eve of the war, nearly the whole Armenian people was

⁽¹⁾ See annex No. 3 (Dispatch of the Russian Consul at Bitlis).

aligned against the State. As a proof of this affirmation we will mention that in the Vilayet of Bitlis alone, Dachnak counted 170,000 members.⁽¹⁾

In regard to the second part of the extended program of the Dachnakists its realization was favored by the new law extending military service to the non-Moslems whence a yearly increasing number of Armenians in a position to teach drill and discipline to the others.

As to the third part, the distribution and storing up of war material, this was facilitated by the geographical and administrative conditions of the country and the Capitulations under which the foreign Consulates and post offices enjoyed customs franchise. Anatolia is a sparsely inhabited and mountainous country with a very developed sea board offering unusual opportunities to contraband and Turkish bureaucracy is unfortunately corrupt and inefficient. Thanks to this situation, thanks also to the help of the Russian Consulates which abused their privilege in favor of the Committees with which they had come to an understanding on this point, a vast quantity of rifles, repeating pistols, bombs, dynamite and other engines of war came into the possession of the revolutionaries.⁽¹⁾ The towns of Erzeroum, Cesarea, Van, Bitlis, Gueverek, Trebizonde, Samsoun in Eastern Anatolia; those of Adana, Marach, Aintab in Cilicia; finally those of Broussa, Ismidt, Ada-Pazari nearer Constantinople, and the Capital itself becomes centers of distribution.

Among the hiding places chosen by the Committees for the concealment of this murderous material it is interesting to mention the Armenian churches, monasteries and cemeteries where the Authorities could not make a search without the Patriarchate forthwith indignantly accusing them of profaning the sacred places of the Community and the West crying out in a chorus that here was another instance of Musulman fanaticism. One or the other of the great Powers intervening its turn to stop the operation of the law. From this it may be gathered how difficult it was for the Sublime Porte to stop the revolutionary movement. It is only after the explosion of the present war that, Turkey having recovered her political independence, the Ottoman Government was enabled to oppose in full liberty to the action of the Committees that of the police and other Authority. It is only then that it realized exactly how far the movement had gone. It was too late, ordinary measures of repression could not longer be of any avail.

This is an aspect of the question which should not be overlooked. Whether the Armenian or any other of the nationalist movements in Turkey be place under discussion, it will be found on a closer study of them that foreign intrigue brought them artificially into existence long before they would have broken out naturally and that the deliberately mischievous interference of Europe helped more than anything else to perpetuate and envenom them and eventually bring them to a tragic end. To lend their official patronage to the fabricated causes of the non-Moslem elements under the pretense that the latter were oppressed, when as a matter of fact their only real grievance was maladministration; to increase the difficulties of the Porte in dealing with this evil, in an indirect way by clinging to the economic section of the Capitulations the effect of whose merciless clauses was commercial and financial stagnation, and sometimes in a direct

⁽¹⁾ See annex No. 4 (Dispatch of the Russian Consul at Bitlis).

way, by openly opposing such measures of local interest as did not suit their political plans, as when Russia prevented Turkey from constructing railways in Eastern Anatolia; to encourage the politically disaffected populations in their hostility to the State and when the Authorities in the exercise of their legitimate rights had recourse to repressive action to stop it on the invented ground that fanaticism and intolerance were again at work; to indulge in all these unfair and shabby maneuvers and then denounce the Turkish people as wicked, oppressive, and incapable of governing others: here have we in a sentence the policy of Europe towards Turkey as it has been practiced for the last thirty or forty years. The Turkish people has been pitilessly dealt with in the public declarations of the Statesmen of Europe; it has been given every opprobrious epithet from tribune and pulpit; it has been systematically held up to contempt and execration. May it not say in self defense one or two blunt truths to its judges without incurring the additional accusation of insolence or arrogance?

⁽¹⁾ The mauser pistols discovered after the breaking out of the present war in the Armenian hiding places in the neighborhood of Constantinople alone proved sufficient to renew the armament of the police force of the Capital.

During the Balkan War.

The unfavorable course to Turkey taken by the Balkan war appeared to the Dachnak to offer an unexpected opportunity for the carrying out of its designs. Leading the Armenian peasantry to believe that Russia would occupy Eastern Anatolia and distribute among them the lands of the Musulmans⁽¹⁾ it succeeded at last in overcoming the mistrust and resentment which the political failures of this Association and its brutal proceedings towards them had caused them to entertain for it. The population of the villages which, unlike that of the towns, had continued to remain deaf to the appeals addressed to its national feelings, succumbed to the prospects opened up to its avidity. In the land hunger which is a characteristic of the tillers of the soil throughout the world, the Dachnak had at last found the means of interesting it in the success of its enterprise.

It is true that the collisions between Musulmans and Armenians it sought to bring about in the towns of Eastern Anatolia failed to occur thanks to the self-restraint of the Musulmans⁽¹⁾. At the same time Russia, caused a heavy disappointment to the Committees and their following, which from this time may be termed national in the most extensive meaning of the word. It is not that Dachnak had misused the name of this Power, who had been fully prepared to turn the Balkan war to account by invading the Ottoman provinces bordering on her Empire and, failing the pretext of disturbances, was ready to fasten upon any other in order to justify this course. But the victories of the Bulgarians which she was far from expecting having imperiled the Ottoman Capital where she wished to be the first to enter one day with the intention of sealing in it for good, it did not suit her to embarrass Turkey in the Asiatic part of her Empire. The Russian troops did not cross the frontier.

Once more the expectations of Dachnak had been dashed to the ground. But the mass of the Armenian peasantry hypnotized by visions of satisfied land, greed had been definitively won over to the political views of this Association, whose ranks had already been swelled by the greater part of the Armenian population of the towns. Nay more. The new crisis which the Empire was traversing and seemed to forebode its rapid end brought about a process of rapprochement between the Committees themselves with the result that on the eve of the present war all Armenianism was strongly united against Ottoman rule.

Disappointed in regard to Russia and intent upon making this loss good in another direction, the Dachnak urged the Armenians of Roumelia, where Turkey was struggling against invasion, to take advantage of the situation to fall upon their Musulman compatriots and combine with the enemy. It thus happened that at Adrianople, Rodostok Malgara, Kechan and elsewhere in Thrace, untold atrocities were committed by the Armenians who as a matter of fact were responsible for many of those attributed to the Bulgarians. It was the famous brigand patriot Antranik who led them in this sinister enterprise. The other forms their active hostility took was to act as spies and guides to the Bulgarian armies.

⁽¹⁾ See annex No.5.

⁽¹⁾ See annex No. 5.

It has been contended that the loyalty of the Armenians during this war was proved by the attitude of the officers and soldiers of this race enlisted in the Turkish army. Admitting that they remained true to their colors as generally as is claimed and that they even distinguished themselves by high feats of arms, this need not necessarily prove that they were acting from attachment to Turkey. Distributed among Turkish battalions of which they formed a small proportion, surrounded on all sides by Musulman comrades, they had no choice but to fulfill their duty. If they were at all born fighters, and many of them would be this being one of the characteristics of the Armenian of the mountainous regions, the ardor of battle would impel them to perform acts of valor. The Poles in the Russian and Prussian armies have always formed one of their most efficient elements in the field. Has this ever been advanced as a proof of their inward loyalty to the Governments they were serving? Passing over these explanations let us, for the sake of argument, put down the behavior of the Armenian troops to Ottoman patriotism. Would not this mean that they did not feel their race had sufficient reasons to rebel against Turkish rule and would it not be passing condemnation on the rest of their congeners who were steeped in high treason as we have seen and who, in any case, gave the true ring of Armenian feeling since they formed the vast majority of that people?

This is a sample of the puerile arguments put forward with a view to representing the Armenians as having behaved correctly towards the State.

Misrepresentation of the Policy of Ottomanization of Union and Progress And Opposition of the Committees to its Adoption.

In the meantime, the parliamentary group of Armenians joined hands with the Greeks in the common decision to paralyze the efforts of Union and Progress to reconstitute the Empire on a really Ottoman basis. Both organizations offered the utmost opposition to the very legitimate desire of the Unionists to create a national sentiment common to all the peoples living on Turkish soil without, however, impairing in the least their ethnical and cultural individuality.

Let us listen once more to Mr. Brown on this important subject: "The question of military service and others concerning the right of vote and the alleged right of *national* representation have all served to reveal the extraordinary pretensions of the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs, as well as the heads of the other communities, to represent their 'nations' in a political capacity before the Sublime Porte. One of the chief embarrassments of the new constitutional regime in Turkey was the unwillingness of the various communities, particularly that of the Greeks, to subordinate their national sentiment to the broader and superior claims of Ottoman nationality."

In a footnote, Mr. Brown, to whom Turkey is grateful for his very impartial and honest description of her relations with her non-Moslem subjects, adds the following remark: "The Young Turks perhaps committed an irretrievable blunder in treating with the respective religious Communities as with distinct nations and in determining representation in parliament on the basis of nationalities rather than on a strictly Ottoman basis. Correspondence and diplomatic negotiations with the Greek Patriarch on the subjects of recruitment, electoral rights, etc, were carried on with the Grand Vizier as if with the Ambassador of an independent Nation."

We beg the reader to listen now to Mr. Andre Mandelstamm, a Russian jurist and former first dragoman to the Russian Embassy at Constantinople, whose book "Le sort de l'Empire Ottoman" although written in a violent spirit of hostility to Turkey, contains the following passage on the subject under consideration:

"The historian of this period must not forget, however, that it was one of combat for the Young Turks, who were obliged to devote almost all their forces to the struggle with adversaries whose political ideal was fatally incompatible with theirs. It seems to suffer no doubt that the Young Turks dreamt during the first days of liberty of saving Turkey in making of her an Ottoman Empire where all the citizens would be equal before the law; but it was natural that this program should not seduce the Slavs, Armenians, Arabs and Greeks who had no intention of working toward the disappearance of their nationalities in an Ottoman State founded on equality, but on the contrary, to assert more strongly and to develop with greater intensity their national life. The non-Turkish elements aspired to decentralization in which the Young Turks thought they could see the beginning of their end. In this way the relations between the Turks and their alien subjects assumed presently and fatally a character of mistrust and hostility."⁽¹⁾

These are extremely valuable admissions coming as they do from a sworn enemy of Turkey.

The reader will gather from them, no doubt, very much to his surprise, that the ideal of the Young Turks was to found an Ottoman Empire based on the principle of equality applied impartially to all the races composing it and that it was not realized because the ideal of the alien elements was *fatally* incompatible with it. Why incompatible? Was it as Mr. Mandelstamm, agrees with the latter in saying because it would have meant the disappearance of their nationalities? This is absurd. Equality for all would naturally include in its scope the freedom for all to develop on national lines like the Turkish which certainly did not intend to abdicate in favor of some common nationality in which the individuality of each would be swamped – besides a materially impracticable conception. As a matter of fact, the Young Turkish program never included the idea of suppressing the autonomous organizations of the non-Moslem elements which had acted as the palladia of their national liberties. These stand intact to this day. No! The reason for the opposition encountered by the Young Turks on the part of the non-Turks is, as everybody will admit, who is at all acquainted with the workings of the internal politics of Turkey, that they were determined to recover their independence. In other words, compliance with their view on the part of the Young Turks would have meant adherence to a policy con_oting the disruption of the Empire. No doubt the non-Turks were within their rights in pursuing it. But surely the Turks were within theirs in reacting energetically against it at a time when the right of conquest formed one of the bases of the public law of the world.

This is how and why an understanding between the Young Turks and the non-Turkish elements was not achieved. This is how and why the relations between the two sides assumed “presently and fatally”, as Mr. Mandelstamm correctly puts it, a character of mistrust and hostility. It disposes of the dishonest version that oppression and persecution on the part of the Young Turks was what finally caused the reputedly well disposed non-Turkish elements to break away from them in sheer despair and set up as the enemies of the Empire.

Thus it was because Union and Progress sought to create an Ottoman Fatherland in which all the elements would feel united in a common sentiment of love for her without, on this account, being condemned to renounce the peculiarities of their separate origins that the Dashnakists broke their alliance with it. Here was at that time the great crime of Union and Progress against the Armenians!⁽¹⁾ Here is what three years later caused the Hinchakists to proclaim dramatically that they also, in face of the decision of Union and Progress to proceed, in spite of their pledged word to the suppression of the national privileges of the Armenians without which their race was destined to disappear, they resumed their liberty of action and reserved to themselves the right to defend its existence by such means as they thought fit!

⁽¹⁾ “Le sort de L’Empire Ottoman” d’Andre Mandelstamm, Librairie Payot, Paris, 1917.

⁽¹⁾ See annexes No. 6 and 7.

Elaboration by the Porte of a Program of Reforms For the Special Benefit of Eastern Anatolia.

Its Rejection by the Armenian Leaders.

In spite of the overt or dissembled hostility which Union and Progress encountered in each step of its relations with the Armenian Committees, the disasters of the Balkan war inspired it with the resolution to disarm them at any cost. This explains the concessions it made to the other Communities and which Mr. Brown calls right enough irretrievable blunders. This also explains the elaboration by the Porte of a project of reforms for the special benefit of Eastern Anatolia and its decision to entrust officials borrowed from England with its strict application.

Those impartial foreigners who were in contact with the official and private circles of Turkey at the time when the Sublime Porte had decided to liquidate definitively the Armenian Question by advancing in the path of concessions as far as was compatible with the integrity of the State, will bear witness to the sincerity and warmth of the feeling with which the enlightened part of the Turkish people adhered to this policy.

All this goodwill was to no purpose.

England, who had at first promised to comply with the very pressingly preferred request of the Sublime Porte to provide her with a certain number of officials taken from her colonial establishments who would dispose of sufficient powers to exercise an effective control over the working of the reorganized administrative machinery in the Anatolian provinces, backed out of her word. She officially excused herself on the ground that Russia to whom she had conceded the right to consider Eastern Anatolia as part of her sphere of influence in Turkey, was opposed to the employment of Englishmen in that part of the Empire.

On their side, the Armenian Committees proved all the more intractable as they saw in the carrying out of the project of the Ottoman Government the death of their political aspirations. Disdainfully rejecting the combination of the Sublime Porte which, as a matter of fact, was amply sufficient to ensure peace and prosperity to Eastern Anatolia under favor of a reformed administration, they made a rush for the Powers, especially Russia, to whom England had abandoned the management of the Armenian Question, with the request that for the Turkish project another be substituted, drawn up by Europe in accordance with their political claims, Europe, to superintend its application collectively. Boghos Nubar Pasha went the round of the western and central European Capitals at the head of a deputation charged with the mission of obtaining their adhesion to these views. The Catholicos undertook to advocate them in St. Petersburg. The Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, following in the footsteps of his predecessor Varzabedian, whom we have seen taking advantage of the presence of the victorious Russian troops at San Stefano in 1877, to enter into treasonable communication with the Grand Duke Nicolas, engaged in official *pourparlers* with the Ambassador of the Tzar in Constantinople.

Imagine the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ireland petitioning a foreign Ambassador in London for the modification of the political status of the Emerald Isle and deputations of Irish nationalists besieging

the European Capitals with the same request, would not these manifestations be considered criminal in England and be followed by severely repressive measures without any of the other countries finding a word of criticism to say in the matter? When occurring in Turkey, however, treason and revolution are considered natural and she may not react without being immediately accused of intolerance and brutality. Her acts in her relations with her conquered subjects are judged and treated according to a special code which has slowly developed out of her inability to free herself from the abnormal international situation into which she had dropped through sheer thoughtlessness and carelessness. Accustomed to deal with her on special terms established on an extra-legal basis, the other Powers gradually came to view her relationship to her alien subjects in the light of a combination in which the latter were more or less free from the duty of subjection and she more or less deprived of the rights of domination. One arbitrary conception led to the other. Foreign public opinion, predisposed to such a view by religious and racial prejudice found both natural.

The Armenian agitation was successful. The Powers called upon the Porte to collaborate with them in view of providing the six Vilayets inhabited by Armenians with a special organization.

Weakened and discredited by the Balkan war, Turkey was powerless to escape this new interference in her internal affairs. After seven months of negotiations, she was herself obliged to accept in its essentials the project of the Powers and the conditions they stipulated for its application. The hardest of these was that which forced her to choose the two foreign Inspectors General which it had been agreed to place at the head of the new administration of Eastern Anatolia from a list of Europeans drawn by the intervening parties.]

Thus, what was meant to be a voluntary action on the part of the Porte conceived in a spirit of deep sincerity was transformed into an international obligation still further restricting her independence.

For this humiliating treatment copied from the Hamidian epoch and for the creation in Eastern Anatolia of a situation which was no doubt calculated to remedy the administrative grievances of the Armenians but was not less intended to act as a transition for the definitive settlement of Russia in that region, constitutional Turkey was indebted to the Armenian Committees and generally speaking to the misguided Armenian people.

Was there not in this unreconcilable and blind hostility of the Committees, which was gradually spreading to the whole Armenian people, much to account for a growing feeling of exasperation not only on the part of the official circles of Turkey but of the Musulman population in general?

Baselessness of the Armenian Claims for Territorial Autonomy.

This is the moment to enter into a few explanations concerning the practical side of the Armenian Question.

According to a foreign census taken in Turkey in 1897, the number of Armenians exceeded that of the Musulmans only in 9 cazas (primary administrative division in the Empire) out of the 159 composing the nine Ottoman provinces comprised within the boundaries of what it is claimed formed the quondam Kingdom of Armenia. Out of a total population of 6,000,000, there were only 1,000,000 Armenians against 4,500,000 Musulmans, which means that the former were in the proportion of 1 to 4 1/2 as regards the latter and of 1 to 6 as regards the entire mass of the inhabitants.⁽¹⁾ It is to the point to remark that the Porte never followed a policy of colonization in "Armenia" to the profit of her domination. The numerical inferiority of the Armenians in this region claimed by them as theirs showed itself in a marked fashion at the time of the Turkish conquest (1514) and only increased since then. It was the result, on the one hand, of violent Persian and Arab pressure which determined an exodus of the indigenous population north and west and, on the other, of the slow infiltration of Persian, Arab, Seljuk and Byzantine elements. In more recent times the transplantation *en masse* into Persia of close upon 100,000 Armenians by Abbas Shah after his victorious campaign against Turkey in 1604, and the voluntary emigration of large numbers of them to Russia after the Treaty of Turkmen Tchai (1828) which gave the province of Erivan to that Power, largely contributed to give the Musulman element the overwhelming preponderance it enjoys today.⁽¹⁾

Such is the situation of the Armenians in Turkey from the demographic point of view.

From the historical, it is just as unfavorable to their Political claims. The historical title is only valid in the case of an existing domination and as a supplement to the ethnico geographical. Armenian rule in Eastern Anatolia has long been dead. To find it fully established we must go back to antiquity. The Armenian nationality took political consistency in the third century before Christ in the shape of two independent States, Armenia Major and Armenia Minor. The famous Tigrane – famous for having been the friend of Lucullus – reigned in the former when, having entered into conflict with Rome, he was vanquished by her and obliged to submit to her suzerainty. From this date onward these two States became the battlefield of East and West, represented respectively by Persia and the Roman Empire, which ended by dividing between themselves the overlordship of that part of Asia. No doubt there came into existence after that time several more or less independent Armenian States under more or less national dynasties. But as regards duration and extent they had no importance except perhaps that of Armenia Minor (Cilicia) resuscitated in the XIIth century and which resisted for two hundred years the onslaughts made upon it. At the time Selim I incorporated Eastern Anatolia in the Turkish dominations Armenian rule had ceased to exist in it for over two centuries to the profit of Persia, Egypt, the Seldjouk States and Byzance.

Thus, the pretension of the Armenians to govern in Eastern Anatolia is manifestly baseless from the double point of view of their demographic and historical situation in that region.

⁽¹⁾ See Encyclopedia Britannica, article Armenia.

⁽¹⁾ See Encyclopedia Britannica, article Armenia.

The French Government gave public and formal expression to this fact in 1901 when, Russia's near-eastern policy having assumed an anti-Armenian aspect and a rapprochement taken place between Turkey and the Republic as a result of the subterranean diplomacy of Abdul Hamid, M. Hanotaux, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared in a sitting at the Palais Bourbon that according to the reports of the French and English Consuls in Turkey, the Armenians were in a marked minority in all the regions contested by them and that this being the Government of which he was a member considered the Armenian Question shelved.

From this it may be gathered how little the Armenian claims really represent a national cause with the appearances of which they have been clothed to attract the sympathies of the world. It cannot be repeated too often: there are Armenians in Turkey, there is no Armenia and there cannot be except in flagrant violation of those very principles in the name of which its restoration is demanded.

If, in spite of all these objections, an autonomous Armenia had been constituted and if the great war had not broken out resulting in the establishment of a new basis for the constitution of political society, the creation of the new State would have only served as a transition for the occupation of its territory by Russia. The disturbances which were sure to occur in a commonwealth brought into existence for the benefit of a small Armenian minority and at the expense of an overwhelming Musulman majority would have served as a pretext, tolerated by the other Powers, for Russia to intervene and finally to settle in it definitively. Precedents were not wanting to justify Russia in this course and to dissuade the other Powers from protesting if indeed they felt at all inclined to do so.

It is significant in this connection that Russia was deputized by the Great Powers to carry on the negotiations concerning the new status to be given to the Eastern Vilayets and that the Convention embodying its conditions bears only two signatures: hers and Turkey's.

The degree of sincerity and disinterestedness of this Power in obtaining to deal separately with the Armenian Question at this juncture may be gathered from her attitude towards the efforts of Persia to operate her regeneration. Not only was she instrumental in causing the newly established liberal regime to remain a dead letter but she intervened directly to bring about the forcible departure from the country of Mr. Shuster, the American specialist, who was so conscientiously and ably assisting the Persian government.⁽¹⁾ The scandal caused by this incident is still fresh in everybody's mind.

Interpreted in the most favorable manner the special regime devised for the Eastern Vilayets was intended to repair the administrative grievances of the Armenians by causing a great political wrong to the Turks. Would there have been any justice in this?

The mechanism imagined by the Powers for the administration of Eastern Anatolia was on the point of being put into operation when the world war broke out. This naturally caused the plan to fall through.

⁽¹⁾ See: "The Strangulation of Persia" by F.G. Shuster.

Attitude of the Armenians after the Outbreak of the World War.

With the explosion of hostilities between the two groups into which Europe was divided, we enter the fourth and last phase of the Turco-Armenian Question.

This formidable event had the effect of electrifying the Committees which, as pointed out before, had buried their grievances and were presenting a united front to Turkey.

Before we proceed we would beg our Armenian compatriots not to take in bad part the frank exposure which is to follow of their conduct after the outbreak of the great war. We are not actuated by any feelings of revenge or hatred well knowing that theirs is the case of a people artificially, forcibly thrown into the paths of violence. Our intention is to lighten the burden of responsibility resting indirectly on the shoulders of the Turkish people, also a victim of its leaders, by proving that the tragedies in which the two elements figure were brought about by the Committees.

Anticipating the triumph of the Entente which had proclaimed the creation of an independent Armenia to be one of its objects in going to war, the Armenians came actively to her support by sending large contingents of volunteers to Russia and France. This action, which constituted in any case a violation of the laws of Ottoman citizenship, derived its full meaning from the language of the Armenian papers abroad. The Armenians must contribute to the success of the Entente because this would mean the confusion of Turkey to the benefit of their own race.

The attitude of the Armenians in answer to the decree of mobilization exceeded the worst suppositions of the Ottoman Government. Many of them disobeyed the summons and, crossing the frontier, joined the Russian forces. It was the case of those inhabiting the provinces bordering on the neighboring Empire. Of the remaining, the great number reached the recruiting offices reluctantly and under escort. Those who presented themselves voluntarily making a show of enthusiasm did so with the idea of deserting on the first opportunity provided with more or less useful information concerning the military plans of Turkey, and of turning against the State and their Musulman compatriots the perfected weapons which they had been provided to defend them.

Not a few of the latter swelled the ranks of the terrorist bands which had not ceased to infest the country since the opening of the Armenian campaign. The effects of this overflow of the revolutionary Armenian element were not long in showing themselves. Bold attacks against the isolated detachments of the Ottoman army, the inception of military convoys, the destruction of depots, constant acts of aggression against the Musulmans betaking themselves to the recruiting stations, in one word a systematic action against the military preparations of Turkey made itself felt precisely in that part of the Empire which was most liable to attack. At the same time there was a recrudescence in outrages against the Musulman population.

There was in this attitude of the misguided Armenians enough and more to render them amenable to law as traitors to the State and ordinary criminals. No doubt they had signalized themselves individually as such a long time before. But new crimes were added to the list of their former misdemeanors:

insubmission to military service, desertion *en masse* and by combination and enlistment as volunteers in the ranks of the Russian and French armies.

The Ministry of War retaliated, by ordering the Armenians remaining under the colors to be disarmed and transferred to the working battalions mostly composed of Christians and employed on the construction of roads and other works of military utility. Why mostly composed of Christians? Because Turkey, in the life and death struggle which was preparing her for could not trust the subject races – every impartial student of contemporary Turkish history will admit this – to act loyally as combatants. It is true that as a result of the decision concerning them, the Armenians had to endure more privations than if they had remained in the combatant by reason of the distinction which the military authorities were obliged to make in favor of the former, the feeding and equipping of the Army meeting with great difficulties. There was absolutely nothing intentional in this. And yet the Committees made no scruple of representing this natural measure of defense and its consequences as a new(?) proof of discrimination against their race which finally led them to rebel from sheer disgust and despair? ? ?

This is how they have travestied truth in every circumstance as regards the relations between the Sublime Porte and the Armenians. Their cleverness, their promptitude to turn in their favor even the most compromising facts for them – qualities in vivid contrast with the sluggishness and clumsiness of the Porte to defend Turkey against their calumnies – have been their most efficient weapons against Ottoman rule.

On the participation of Turkey in the war, the Armenians throwing off all restraint, set up as the open enemies of the State and applied themselves to put in full operation the plan they had conceived in view of the event. Here is a description of it: *By virtue of secret instructions communicated by the Committees to the smallest Armenian villages, their inhabitants, formed into bands stiffened with deserters from the Imperial Army and composed of all the able-bodied individuals of the race, were to sow destruction and death in the Turkish and Kurdish villages and in this fashion not only terrorize the Musulman population and incapacitate it, but to cause the Turkish soldiers to abandon their posts and rush to the help of their homes. To complete the disorganization of the military defense of the regions, they were to attack the military convoys, lay ambushes to the minor detachments of the Army and act as spies to the enemy ready to cross the frontier.* Having thus prepared the ground for the invasion of the Russian armies, they were to join them in their onward march, act as scouts, occupy positions in the rear and cut off the retreat of the Turkish troops.

The Armenians acquitted themselves of this task with extraordinary vigor, nay fury. Numbers of Musulman villages with their inhabitants fell victims to their rage. The town of Bayazid was captured at the very beginning of Turco-Russian hostilities by a body of Armenian volunteers. At the battle of Sari-Kamish their banners mixed their colors with those of the Russians. The telegraphic wires joining the different military centers were cut by them and the outstanding posts destroyed. To complete the paralyzing effects of these operations on Turkey's defensive action against Russia, rebellions broke out on the flimsiest pretexts, first at Zeitoun, then at Guevach, Pounar, Tchatak and finally at Van, where it derived extraordinary importance from the vicinity of this strong strategic position to the frontier and where

it was accompanied by outrages and followed by massacres. All along the coast of the Black Sea and the oriental basin of the Mediterranean, the Armenians acted the part of diligent spies to the Entente, committing at the same time numerous outrages against the Musulman population.

It would be fastidious to continue this enumeration. The reader will form an idea of the extent of the support given by the Armenians to the Russian armies and of their savage enterprises against their Musulman compatriots in the documents annexed to this work. He will find in them irrefutable proof of the participation of the mass of the Armenian population, driven out of the path of loyalty and fanatized by its leaders, in the worst crimes that one section of subjects can perpetrate against the other and against the State to which they belong in common.

And yet one of the first acts of the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, after the outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and Russia was to solemnly warn the Armenian Patriarch that any attempt at insurrection or any act of aggression against the Musulmans on the part of his Community would expose it to the most terrible consequences. He explained to him clearly that, busy as it was defending the country against three powerful enemies, the Government, which no doubt would proceed most rigorously on its own account but making a distinction in the measure of the possible between the guilty and innocent, would be unable to protect it against the just but blind vengeance of the Musulman crowd four and one half times as numerous as the Armenians. He pointed out that even if he, Minister of War, had disposable troops to send to the spot, the absence of means of communication would prevent him from intervening in time and that, under such conditions, all provocation would be not only a crime but an act of folly.

The President of Chamber, Halil Bey, addressed the same warning in the same impressive language to the Armenian deputies.

Nothing would do. The Armenians engaged with enthusiasm in the campaign we have just described.

Repressive Measures of the Government.

The Great Crime.

It is a fact that the Sublime Porte refrained from counteraction for several months which was the limit of endurance as will be admitted. Finally seeing that the salvation of the country demanded of her prompt and decisive measures, she determined to act.

The Committees were dissolved and their leaders arrested. Searches were operated in the national establishments and private residences of the Armenians as a result of which many of them were convicted of high treason and transferred to the interior. The subjects were imprisoned as a matter of precaution and the Armenian population generally speaking subjected to severe police restrictions. This was in the natural and indispensable order of things. At the same time recourse was had to a heroic measure: the transportation into the interior of the Armenian population of the provinces abutting on Russian territory and those where a landing of the enemy was possible, that is the Black Sea coast and the oriental basin of the Mediterranean. Even this was rendered legitimate by the situation.

No doubt the forcible transplantation of an entire people at short notice is a cruel measure. But consider the circumstances. Involved in a war in which her very existence was at stake and in which she had to strain every nerve to avoid defeat, Turkey found herself confronted with an internal enemy acting in support of, and in collusion with, the external and employing the most desperate and ferocious means to bring about her fall. While the great majority of Armenians of both sexes and all ages were engaged in this task was she to sacrifice the supreme interest of the State, its preservation, to concern for their welfare, this at a time when by the operation of war the laws of humanity in their general acceptance were suspended? Is the killing of hundreds of thousands of soldiers by one another and the devastation of whole provinces by them less of a tragedy than the removal from their homes of a whole population? It is not much of a consolation to those who have suffered from such effects of war to explain to them that war is a legally established institution. As a matter of fact, was the transportation of the Armenians an iniquitous measure? The exigencies of war know no law. Or rather, *salus regni primalex esto*. Besides, have no other countries, civilized, had recourse to the same measure under a less imperious necessity?

So far, the measures adopted by the government, merciless as they were, had not exceeded the limits of what was indispensable in defense of this country's existence.

The guilt of the Unionist organization which conceived and deliberately carried out this infernal policy of extermination and robbery is patent. Its leaders rank among the greatest criminals of humanity. But it is fair to render the Turkish people morally responsible for a criminal aberration against which its conscience protested from the outset and which it could not prevent, the war having placed unlimited power in the hands of its unnatural government which it abused to exercise its savagery well as the Musulman as against Armenian population? All classes, all nationalities were the victims of its tyranny.

As soon as the country was released from its deadly grip, it set itself to the task of making reparation for the immense wrong done to the Armenian people. It had been accused of insincerity and lukewarmness in this connection because a considerable time elapsed before its action produced any

tangible results. Those who take this view forget that the new Government found the administration peopled with Unionists whom they could not run out at a moment's notice and that it would naturally meet with secret opposition or inertia on their part in carrying out its work of retribution. They also forgot that the Turkish administrative machinery, unwieldy and slow at its best, was in a worse condition than every owing to the disorganization caused by the war. For all that most of the officials who acted as agents of the Unionist organization in its campaign of extermination and spoliation against the Armenians have been arrested and are under judgment. If the principal culprits have escaped it is due to the collusion of the German authorities in Turkey whose political instruments they had been. Their extradition has been demanded. The deported population is being restored to its homes, the acts of spoliation and robbery to which it was subjected repaired or compensated for and considerable funds allocated to relieve its distress. In one word justice if in full operation. The representatives of the Entente Powers may have had to intervene in view of hastening the action of the authorities in this matter, but it is not true to say that they discovered any ill-will or negligence in them.

The question now is whether the Turkish people deserve the special reprobation to which it is held up on account of the misdeeds under consideration.

Other countries have been or are today the theater of even worse violations of the laws of humanity and civilization without the national conscience reproving them and whose authors could not invoke, as the Unionists might, the extenuating circumstances that their action was not inspired by a policy of oppression or aggression, or greed or ambition, but by their concern to defend the country against internal attacks coming from an unreconcilable enemy who had set at defiance every ordinary means of repression and coinciding with an external war in which its very existence was at stake.

What, for instance, of the martyrdom of the Poles in Russia where every form of violence – massacre, execution en masse, forced conversion to orthodoxy, deportation to the mines of Siberia – those hells on earth – floggings, spoliation, proscription was employed against them for over a century with a view to denationalize them? What of the pogroms, those sanguinary outbreaks of politico-religious fanaticism organized periodically by the tzarist government against a race whose sole crimes were to differ in creed from its rulers and to surpass them in economic ability? What of bolshevism, which is offering the spectacle of the subversion in an ocean of blood of every principle of law and reason and seeks to found its rule on a terrorism the likes of which even the dark ages seldom witnessed? What – to reenter the Near East – of the policy of extermination followed against one another by Greeks, Bulgars and Servians in Macedonia, while it was under Turkish rule with a view to obtaining a majority at one another's expense in the disputed districts, a frenzied competition in murder, directed from Athens, Sofia and Belgrade which resulted in the suppression by the most savage means of thousands of innocent lives?

With these manifestations of human wickedness surpassing in horror the worst that has been committed in Turkey still fresh in the minds of all, to overlook them and reserve its thunders and anathemas for the Turkish people is, on the part of the West, an attitude which – we must be allowed to say so since we are fighting for our reputation and future – constitutes a negation on the morrow of their proclamation

of those principles of fairness and impartiality which the world was asked to believe would serve as a basis for the judgment of the nations and the reconstruction of international society. Or all the guilty in the dock, or none.

True, it is contended that the Musulman population joined on its own account in the massacre of the Armenians collectively or individually and therefore that the Turkish people are responsible for the terrible tragedy conjointly with the Unionist organization and this not only indirectly and materially, but directly and morally.

This bare presentment of the situation does not give a correct view of it.

Yes! In several localities the Musulman population, exasperated by the innumerable crimes committed by the Armenians, retaliated. But it should be born in mind that this happened in those regions where the Armenians had rebelled or committed outrages on their Musulman neighbors. On almost all these occasions the Musulmans were acting as avengers of the State and Islam or of their personal wrongs. It was national defense in answer to attack, outrage answering outrage, cruelty answering cruelty. It was fighting, not massacre. Which is the Empire where the mob on the side of the dominant element would not have meet such assaults in the integrity of the State, especially at a time of overwhelming national peril and its personal peace with equal violence? The Armenians had conducted themselves like demons. Was it expected that the Musulmans would behave like angels?

As a matter of fact, the Turks are a people to whose forbearance, tolerance, charity, hospitality and general kindness those foreigners who have been in close contact with them willing testify.

The Turks are deeply attached to their religion and extremely sensitive to the attacks made upon it, but they are not fanatical. The French poet and statesman, de Lamartine, records the fact in his "*Voyage en Orient*" in the following words:

"The Turks are the guardians of the Holy Sepulchre. Possessors of this sacred monument of the Christians by the right of war, they do not destroy it, they do not throw its ashes to the wind, they preserve it, maintaining in it an order, a police, a reverential silence which the Christian denominations which dispute it to one another are far from observing themselves. . . Without the Turks, this tomb would have already a hundred times an object of struggle between these rival and spiteful denominations. There is no reason in this to accuse and abuse the Turks. That so-called brutal intolerance of which the ignorant accuse them only manifests itself in tolerance and respect for what others adore and venerate. Wherever the Musulman sees the idea of God in the thought of his brethren, he bows his head and respects. It is the only tolerant people. Let the Christians search their consciences and ask themselves in good faith what they would have done if the fortunes of war had given them Mecca and the Kaaba; would the Turks come from all parts of Europe and Asia to venerate in that region the surviving moments of Islam?"

We have already quoted M. Brown on the same subject.

Free from intolerance, the Turks are no less free from the savagery and barbarity which are so persistently imputed to them.

This is the picture M. de Lamartine draws of them in this connection:

“The Turks as a race of men, as a nation, are still the first and the worthiest among the peoples of the East, theirs in the noblest and highest character, their courage is intact. Their religious, civil and domestic virtues are of a nature to inspire esteem and admiration to all impartial minds. Their nobility is written on their foreheads and in their actions; if they had better laws and a more enlightened government they would be one of the first peoples of the world. All their feelings are generous; they are a people of patriarchs and mediators; of adorers and philosophers; when God has spoken to them, they are a people of heroes and martyrs. . . .such a race of men does credit to humanity, according to me.”

This was written seventy years.

General Maiewski’s testimony is recent. His already quoted “Statistique de vilayets de Bitlis et de Van” contains the following passage concerning the Turks:

“The Turks form the best element of Asia Minor, not only in relation to the Musulman population but to all the peoples that inhabit this part of the Empire. They are free in reality from most of the vices attributed to them by the Russian and European press. If the truth is to be stated as it exists, one must admit that in the East it is the Christians and not the Musulmans who are the barbarians.”

The Turks are richer in civilization and the amenities of the mind and heart than an ignorant or prejudiced world will allow. Their literature, which is unfortunately a sealed book to the West, only a very few orientalists, being initiated in its beauties, their achievements in the field of art and industry, their proverbs and witticisms which reflect the national mind, are of a high and original order. Their first administrative organization was a model of efficiency and regularity which most western countries could envy them. Unfortunately, they allowed it to deteriorate and failed to adapt it to modern conditions of like. *That and their neglect of the positive sciences as well as of trade and industry have been their greatest and perhaps their only faults.* But all this can be changed by giving a new turn to the helm of the State and calling foreign specialists to their help. For the rest they belong to humanity and as such must be afflicted with some of its infirmities.

The enemies whom interest or prejudice has aligned against them and who have ever had recourse to diffamation to blacken them have found allies in this campaign in Turkish inartfulness and indifference to misrepresentation. If, instead of remaining passive under abuse and calumny they had displayed the same energy and cleverness to defend their reputation against a malevolently disposed world as other nations, their rivals, to fraudulently increase theirs in the eyes of a partial one, the Turks would be thought and spoken of today with greater respect and appreciation.

We readily admit that the official class in Turkey is corrupt and generally speaking of inferior character and morality. But this does not exclude a great refinement of feeling and behavior in their private relations. As for the masses, they still retain most of the virtues which Lamartine discovered in them.

One of these, which the upper classes share with them, is great self-restraint. To lose their balance and become a prey to the primitive instincts which lie dormant in the heart of the most polished humanity, the Turkish people must have been subjected to great and prolonged provocation. True, when finally exasperated, their action will take the most violent forms, but this is generally the case with virile beings,

whose anger is slow to come. As a nation they are quick to forget and forgive. In fact, they are constitutionally incapable of harboring resentment or hatred against another people. Thus, it is only casually that they speak of the humiliations and losses suffered by them at the hands of the Balkan States and towards which no deep seated feeling of revenge survived the conclusion of peace with them. Indeed, even Russia, the secular enemy who has caused us greater damage than any other country, escapes our detestation. In a patriotic sense, this is a humiliating statement to make and one from which we would have refrained if it did not serve to show that we are not psychologically predisposed to adopt a hostile attitude towards other peoples.

This was also proved during this war by our treatment of the subject of the enemy Powers who remained in our midst. With the exception of a few hundred who were interned because they belonged to the floating foreign population concerning which we had no information or because they were known to be personally hostile to the country, they were left in possession of an almost unrestricted freedom within the boundaries of the towns they inhabited; they were allowed to conduct their business and follow their avocations just as before the war; their shops, which remained open and not one of which was pillaged, were largely frequented by the Turks who were perhaps their best customers; the pleasure resorts and even the social clubs remained open to them and – what is particularly noteworthy – Turks, some of them high officials, were to be frequently seen in friendly converse with them. Many of them were helped financially or otherwise by their Turkish friends. In one word, they were shown even greater consideration than before the war, precisely because they were at a disadvantage as subjects of the enemy Powers. It is a fact: the Turk is a gentleman and a sympathetic human being first, a citizen and member of a special race afterwards.

Is there any likelihood that a people thus attuned would rise in wrath, kill, burn and devastate unless exasperated by attacks on its innermost feelings, of these one being attachment to creed, another attachment to hearth?

Evidence Against the Armenian.

Unfairness of Westerners Toward Turkey in this Connection.

If, after having read this account of the Turco-Armenian Question, anybody still doubts that the Armenians themselves and their Western patrons have been the instruments of their misfortune, we refer them to the overwhelming mass of evidence that exists against them. This is to be found in the action of the Committees from 1880 up to the war – an action which constitutes a formidable *a priori* argument against them – and, after the outbreak of hostilities, in the columns of their foreign press, in the secret circulars and instructions of their central organizations; in the declarations of the statesmen of the Entente, in the admissions of many Armenians actuated either by the spirit of brag which is a characteristic of the race,⁽¹⁾ or by their desire to ingratiate themselves with the Entente Powers or again by honesty or simplicity, in the reports of the Turkish commanders and in the affidavits of a crowd of Musulmans who were either victims or witnesses of their ferocity. A selection of these documents or extracts from them are annexed to this paper.

And after having given credence, on the trust to the worst that the Armenians have said of Turkey, let it not be contended that the counter accusations of the Ottoman Authorities and the Musulman population are subject to caution. If there is an interest on the Turkish side to pervert the truth so is there on the Armenian. All the standard works on Turkey bear testimony to the truth fullness of the common Turk and deplore the absence of this virtue in his Christian compatriots. In any case, in their feud with Turkey, the Committees raised falsehood and fraud to the rank of a science and art.

Unfortunately, most westerners interested in the Armenian Question are only too ready to be duped by the Committees in whom European and American public opinion refuses to see anything else but the defenders of a peaceful Christian element against a ferocious and arbitrary Musulman government. Accepting on trust as a rule the statements of the latter it is very seldom that they take the pains to make a person inquiry into them. Even then they will check the information thus derived from an Armenian source by applying to another source of the same nationality, an operation the result of which would naturally be corroboration owing to the vast and clever organization of falsehood established in the Armenian Community. In any case, Turkish evidence is summarily and systematically set aside as untrustworthy.

On the other hand, the well informed on Turkish affairs among the westerners which would be especially the case of statesmen too frequently refrain from correcting the false information circulated abroad or if they take up a position in the matter they do so actuated by anti-Musulman or anti-Turkish prejudice, giving to their action such a form as will confirm the worst opinions of Turkey. In this connection we would mention in particular Lord Bryce, whose publication entitled “Treatment of the

⁽¹⁾ “For some time past, the Armenians of the towns have contracted certain special habits. Every Armenian who has gone through of school, if only a primary one, makes a show of deep thought on the politics followed by his nation. The thirst of glory and greatness, the pretension that they alone are right, the idea that if the Armenians do not occupy a considerable place in politics, it is because they are under Turkish rule, operate in each of them. . . .The principal concern of the present day Armenian is to be an effective orator. Many peaceful Armenians have suffered from the fault of the rodomonts, ignoring everything of the wants of the nation and it may be said that among the revolutionists to dead in Turkey one does not meet with a single true patriot. . . .

Armenians in the Ottoman Empire” produced such a sensation. He places before the eyes of the reader 149 documents giving details of the Armenian massacres and says in his preface that the latter is intended to deal with the credibility of the evidence presented so that he will refrain from comment on the facts. Yet, after paying a tribute to the qualities of the Turkish peasantry and the fair methods of fighting of the Turkish soldiers, he goes on to say that “the record of the rulers of Turkey for the last two or three centuries. . . is, taken as a whole, an almost unbroken record of injustice, oppression and corruption which often rises into hideous cruelty” and then passing condemnation on the Unionist regime winds up with the question “whether anyone can still hope that the evils of such a government are curable, or does the evidence contained in his publication furnish the most terrible and convincing proof that it can no longer be permitted to rule over subjects of a different faith?” What is that but influencing the reader against Turkey by having recourse to the ordinary method which consists in judging and condemning her without giving her the benefit of a comparison with other countries whose governments have behaved even worse and whose peoples have not the redeeming qualities of the Turkish and of an exposure of the foreign intrigues which rendered the task of the Porte in dealing with her conquered populations so difficult, the latter themselves complicating it by their intolerable provocations?

As a matter of fact, the accusation of oppression and cruelty against the Turkish government does not hold good as regards the period which has elapsed since the Tanzimat except in so much as it manifested itself in the accidental outbreaks of violence of Abdul Hamid and the Unionist organization against the Armenians which the latter did all in their power to bring about, as we have shown.

On this last point Lord Bryce’s volume is particularly unfair. The historical summary it contains and which is due to the pen of M. Arnold J. Toynbee presents a truncated and distorted view of the relations between the Porte and the Turkish people and the Armenians. It minimizes and derides the autonomy granted to the latter which is very extensive and exaggerates their material grievances. Not a word in it of their revolutionary attitude beginning as far back as 1877, and lasting up to and through this war or of the savagery of their methods of action. Thanks to this incomplete staging of the Turco-Armenian tragedy, the impression is given that the Turks fell suddenly like a pack of infuriated wolves on a flock of innocent lambs. This would be pardonable in an ordinary publicist or politician. But not in Mr. Toynbee, whom Lord Bryce styles “a young historian of high academic distinction”, neither in the noble lord himself who steps out in the name of Justice and Truth.

As to the Consuls and other foreign officials residing in Turkey, they are as a rule ignorant of Turkish even when they claim to know it. They do not entertain regular intercourse with the Musulman element, among which, however French is very widespread, either because they disdain to frequent it or because the customs of the country stand somewhat in the way of a close relationship. Their opinions concerning local events are deeply colored by those of their dragomans when they are not an exact reproduction of them; now these dragomans are almost invariably Armenians, who specially court the functions of this character because they allow them to poison the minds of their chiefs against Turkey according to the general part followed by the Armenians which is to distort the most justifiable measures of

the Government and invent Turkish atrocities or else to attribute the crimes committed by themselves to the Turks and to represent the acts of repression of the Authorities and the reprisals of the Turkish population as sudden and causeless outbreaks of Musulman fanaticism.

Three points in the defense put forward by the Unionist Government in connection with the deportation of the Armenians require special demonstration. The first is that the Armenians took up arms and joined the Russians as soon as the latter crossed the Ottoman frontier. The second that there was a general conspiracy of the Armenians throughout the Empire to bring about an internal revolution when all the military forces were engaged on the frontier. The third that the Ottoman Armenians flocked to the Russian banners immediately after hostilities had broke out between Turkey and Russia.

As to the first point. Evidence of the armed revolts at Van and Zeitoun – the two principal ones – is to be found in documents No 15 and 122 of the Bryce collection to which the Editor refers the reader as establishing the contrary. True, by a strange aberration of mind the respective authors of these papers, a Miss Knapp (American) and the Rev. Andreassian (Armenian), declare there had not been a rebellion when, as a matter of fact, they describe it in detail, as application to the volume in question will show.

But what excuse has Mr. Toynbee for quoting this declaration as decisive when he must have realized in going through the two lucubrations under consideration that the fact related in them flatly contradicts it?

However, we will not labor the point. What is more interesting is that there exists an authentically Armenian pamphlet in French which leaves no doubt on the point at issue. It is entitled euphemistically “The Heroic Defense of Van” and was published by the Armenian paper “The Drochak” in Geneva in 1916. It contains amongst other documents a proclamation of the rebellion of which the following is the literal translation:

“Compatriots,

“In the heroic struggle which we have been carrying for 4 days against thousands of canon, hundreds and thousands of rifles (apparently the quantity of Turkish canon was greater than that of rifles) in the midst of the savage and desperate shouts of the enemy we remain prouder, and more resolved, to vanquish than ever.

“From Aidj-Oghli to Arark, from Arark to the Street of the Cross and to the despotic castle of Hamoud Agha (the barracks) our soldiers have remained victorious and proud.

“Our bullets, fired one by one, have caused great losses to the enemy. When our *soldiers* understood the sanguinary dream of Djevad who would turn our fatherland into a charnel house their rage knew no limits; they would vanquish at all cost.

“In this moment we are marching from triumph to triumph; all the minds are animated with the divine fire of defense of fatherland; we are all resolved to die.

“To die for thee, Armenian people! To die for they existence, they security, they lasting liberty!

“Neither the number of our enemies, nor the knowledge tat today or tomorrow we may die, cannot frighten us. No! We wish to contemplate death in its divine essence; we wish to show in the universal

struggle of the nations that in the depths of the East, the secular oak, the Armenian people know how to die, arms in hand, on the smoking ruins of the barracks and the innumerable bodies of the enemy!

“Armenian people!

“The struggle which we have begun we must continue it to the end, to the last drop of blood, but especially to the final crushing of our monstrous enemy!

“Be valiant, whatever happens, we will be victorious. Let your hearts be penetrated with the valiance of *our soldiers* like them be persevering, like them know how to resist! Do not leave the whole weight of the gigantic struggle on your heroes; everyone must take a share in it. Let the old folks and the children, the women and the young girls align themselves alongside the *soldiers*; let them share the work with them!

“Be brave! Together, in silence, let us embrace the creative work to prepare new victories! Look at these *barracks in ashes, the innumerable losses* of the enemy! Look at the heroic resistance of our *soldiers*! Full of courage and hope, prepare to celebrate the great holiday of national renaissance!

“Long live the Armenian soldiers! Long live the Armenian people!

“The Committee of National Defense
Van, 10th of April (1914).”

This bombastic proclamation which mentions the 4th of April as the date when the rebellion began, the order of deportation being dated the 15th – eleven days later – is followed by several communications of the so-called Committee of Defense enumerating the successes gained by the rebels and the losses caused to the Turks in men and positions.

The expression ‘Armenian soldiers’ constantly recurring in the proclamation incidentally brings into relief the fact mentioned by us that the Committees, principally the Dachnak, had organized a veritable army in view of a favorable opportunity for using it against the State.

That the revolt was not due to acts of oppression or administrative rigors in the town of Van, where on contrary, the Armenians were the object of a specially kindly treatment until the volunteer movement began, is admitted by an Armenian inhabitant, Mr. Rushdooni, in document No.17 of the Bryce collection in which he says: “The government treated the Armenians very liberally, exempting all the Gregorian and Protestant teachers of 25 years of age and allowing them to continue their schools on the condition that they would all go to the Government Building and register so that in case of necessity they might be called up as militia for the protection of the City.

“During the first two weeks this impartial treatment by the Turkish government filled the Armenians with gladness and trust and the Armenian soldiers who had deserted (so they had deserted!) returned and gave themselves up. . . .

“The Government sided with the Germans when they were still neutral, whereas the Armenians – unfortunately – sympathized with the allies. But even then no special injustice was done. The government showed kindness to the Armenians, at least on the surface. . . .

“After the entry of the Turks into the war, however, the situation assumed a different aspect. The Government began to adopt a cold and suspicious attitude towards the Armenians who had performed their duty towards the Government to the best of their ability (by deserting?). . . . In spite of all this coolness between them was very marked and this became especially apparent *after it was found that the Armenians had supplied volunteers to the Russians* and that they were the very troops who had occupied Bayazid (quite at the beginning of the Turco-Russian hostilities). . . . But the unfortunate part of it was that in the Government circles the dominant topic of conversation was the Armenian volunteers.

“It was before this that Tahsin Bey (the Governor) summoned the heads of the Dashnakists, the Hintchakists being already in prison, and pointed out to them that the Armenians had begun a volunteer movement and that this movement would be dangerous to them; and afterwards in a special letter he suggested to them and especially to Mr. Vremyan that they should write to the heads of the Dashnakists of Bayazid and stop this movement. . . .

“Because of the Turkish successes and volunteer movement the Government and Turkish public changed their attitude. . . .”

The reason, or rather the pretext for the rebellion at Van, was that the military Authorities were obliged to have recourse to armed action against the Armenians who refused to furnish more than 400 out of the 3,000 men due for military service, an extraordinary instance of bargaining as regards the fulfillment of a civic duty and a proof that they had not flocked to the colors as they contend in so many documents of the Bryce collection. Miss Knapp’s narrative fully explains this.

As to the second contention of the Ottoman Government, namely that a general conspiracy existed among the Armenians to bring about an internal revolution when all the military forces were engaged on the frontier.

Here is an extract from a letter dated September 1914, of the central office of the Dashnak to its branch at Damascus: “If the Russians advance this side of the frontier and if the Ottoman troops withdraw, a rising must take place on all sides at the same time and recourse had to all the means of which we dispose. The Turkish army will be taken between two fires. All the edifices of the State must be blown up, the forces of the government occupied in the interior and the revictualling convoys attacked. If, on the contrary, the Turkish army advances, the Armenian soldiers will leave their battalions with their arms, form bands and join the Russians.”

The Armenian newspaper “Hintchak” published the following proclamation of the morrow the Serajevo outrage which was followed by the war:

“. . . . The social democratic Committee “Hintchak” which *for more than a quarter of a century marches through blood soaked paths to ensure the deliverance of the Armenian element* which is subjected to every kind of extortion and deprived of all its rights (!) profits by the present circumstances to ring the signal of revolt and combat and *from the summits of the Taurus to the confines of the Armenian steps into the arena to draw in blood Ottoman tyranny.*

“The Hintchakist Committee, gathering all its moral and material forces, will participate in this gigantic struggle for the existence of nations *with the sabre of insurrection* in the capacity *of an ally of the Triple Entente and especially of the Russian armies* and with all its forces and political and revolutionary means will help the Ententistes to win victories in *Armenia, Cilicia,* the Caucasus, and Azerbeydjan and guided by patriotic necessities will fulfill its duty towards itself and civilization. . . .

“Forward then comrades, and to work. By our death let us stifle the death that threatens Armenia so that she may live eternally! ! !

“The Central Office of the Hintchakist Social
Democratic Committee.”

To quote one more Armenian document among the hundreds which exist to convince the most incredulous or prejudiced if only they would take the pains to make personal investigations before forming an opinion, that the Ottoman Armenians were steeped in treason and had been organizing for years before the war to deal a decisive blow to Turkish rule, we reproduce part of a memorandum addressed by the Dachnak to the Socialist Congress which met at Copenhagen in 1910:

“. . . . Our organization is the same in Turkish Armenia. At Van and Bitlis, in those great Armenian provinces, we had enlisted under our banner until 1908 (year of the establishment of the Constitution in Turkey) *the villagers and all the healthy and able-bodied population to form political bands.* . . .

“Until 1908, the activity of our Committee in Turkey was secret and manifested itself only at night. By daylight the members of the Committee dared not show in the open, the arming and drilling always took place at night. *Our activity had an entirely political and revolutionary character.* This same activity continues today *in all the centers of the Ottoman Empire* with this difference that it displays itself openly and in full daylight. In the other parts of Turkey inhabited by Armenians, our Committees dispose of large and well organized revolutionary bands. . . . “

We would call incidental attention to the statement contained in this paper of the Dachnak that its revolutionary activity not only survived the establishment of the Constitution in Turkey, but actually took the defiant form of operations in broad daylight throughout the Empire, which fully bears out or former description of the attitude of the Armenians after the introduction of the new regime showing that so far from causing them to suspend their hostilities, this event had only the effect of emboldening them beyond all credible limit.

As to the third and last contention of the Unionist Government to the effect that the civilian Armenian population of the Empire owes its misfortunes to the fact that it furnished great numbers of volunteers to the Russian armies:

Mr. Toynbee derides this contention, claiming that not a particle of evidence exists to substantiate it, except to the extent that three or four Armenian leaders crossed the frontier to take service with the Russians. For the rest, he seeks to prove that the Armenian volunteers in the Russian army were all Russian subjects whose loyalty to their government cast no imputation on the Ottoman Armenians.

And yet, Mr. Tonybee is the Editor of the Bryce volume in which Mr. Rushdooni has not a word of protest to say when the Authorities of Van reproach the Armenians with having initiated a volunteer movement and point out the danger of its continuation. Indeed, he implicitly bows his head to this reproach. Let us pass by.

In 1916, an all-Russian Congress was held at Moscow at the inauguration of which the Vice-Chairman, a full-blooded Armenian, M. Chalkushian, delivered a speech of which the following are extracts:

“A terrible calamity has overwhelmed us first owing to our sympathies with the Entente Powers and then thanks to the direct share of the Armenian people in the present war. . . . The war has involved the entire Armenian people. . . . But our sympathies were from the beginning of the war on the Entente side. . . . The war came and there began a movement of volunteers flocking everywhere from Armenia (Asia Minor), Egypt (technically a part of Turkey), Roumania and Bulgaria (where the Armenians were mostly Ottoman subjects) and volunteers who know Asia Minor so well that they have been of great service to the Russian government. An unexampled massacre began and it remained for us in the words of the Spaniards to cry with the mouths of our wounds. . . .

this speech, the text of which is to be found in the Russian supplement of the Times of July 29, 1916, is conclusive as regards the enlistment of Ottoman Armenians in the Russian armies and their collaboration with them against Turkey in Turkish territory and also as regards the fact that the official massacres followed their violently treasonable attitude.

When Mr. Toynbee, dealing with the fore going *apologia* of the Unionist Government, winds up his arguments against it with the conclusion that it falls to the ground, he stands convicted either of great neglect in the investigation of the subject or of downright bad faith.

We will repeat that we are far from concerned to defend the Unionist’s final Armenian policy, but in the interest of Turkey and Islam whose responsibility is indirectly involved we protest against the methods employed to deprive the authors of the massacres of the extenuating circumstances which exist in their favor. If a statesman with a big reputation for sincerity of purpose and honest of mind to preserve, like Lord Bryce and a “young historian of high academic distinction” with a reputation to make like Mr. Toynbee treat the Armenian Question in such a spirit of partiality, one can imagine the attitude on this matter of the ordinary western publicist who panders to public prejudice and has nothing to lose by coming out wrong in his statements.

The massacre of the Musulman population of Van after the capture of this town by the Russo-Armenians is recorded in dozen of affidavits of those who escaped and in the narrative of an American missionary published in the “Christian World” of November, 1915.

Our defense of Turkey in connection with the Armenian tragedies is at an end. We again express the hope that our intentions in exposing, as we have done, the different phases of the Turco-Armenian Question, will not be misunderstood. Neither hatred nor revenge has actuated us. Being the object of terrible accusations susceptible of having very serious political consequences for us as a nation, we had to

reveal in frank language the outrageous and atrocious conduct of the Armenian to lighten the responsibility that falls on our shoulders. The Armenians have had recourse to falsehood on almost every occasion if not always to charge us with imaginary misdeeds, at least very frequently to magnify our real misdemeanors. May we not defend ourselves remaining strictly within the limits of truth?

Conclusion.

Our expose of the Turco-Armenian case is at an end. To sum it up:

At the instigation of Russia, who was actuated by purely selfish motives, a revolutionary movement was initiated about 1850 by a small group of enthusiastic but unreasoning Armenian youths and a few priests, more interested in politics than religion, which gradually spread to the whole Armenian people, until then perfectly contented and loyal so much so that it was distinguished from the other elements by the surname of *millet-i-sadika* (the loyal people). The object of this movement was to restore Armenian rule in the provinces of the Empire inhabited by Armenians, but where, as a matter of fact, they were in a minority even at the time of the Turkish conquest and form today a very small proportion of the population: 1 to 4.5 as regards the Musulmans, 1 to 6 as regards the entire mass of inhabitants and where, on the other hand, an Armenian government had ceased to exist for over seven centuries⁽¹⁾. Realizing the weakness of their cause, which was further increased by the fact that the quondam kingdom of Armenia offered very few traces of Armenian civilization, represented by one or two monasteries and churches and was stamped throughout with the Turkish and Musulman mark, visible in numerous works of art and public utility, the Armenian Revolutionary Committees and other organizations appealed to the anti-Musulman and anti-Turkish prejudices of the West to enlist its sympathy in favor of their claims having recourse at the same time to falsifications of history and demography to deceive public opinion. Simultaneously with this they initiated after the Turco-Russian war a policy of rebellion on the flimsiest pretexts against the Ottoman authorities and of outrage of every descriptions: murder, rape, arson, etc., against their Musulman compatriots, their idea being to provoke reprisals which by represented by their press as causeless and sudden outbreaks of fanaticism, were to bring about an intervention of the Great Powers, destined to lead, step by step, to the creation of an independent Armenia. In material justification of their political claims they put forward complaints of Turkish oppression when, in reality, they enjoyed *pari passu* with other non-Musulmans a very extensive autonomy within the frame of their ecclesiastical organization which allowed them to develop freely on national lines and to retain in full their cultural, religious and racial individuality, their only legitimate grievance being the maladministration which reigned in the Empire, a condition from which all its populations, including the Turkish, suffered as much as they and which did not prevent them from living in peace and ease, more especially as they enjoyed the favor of their rulers, this permitting them to acquire a material situation and a political influence far above that of the other non-Musulman elements. On the whole, their fate was infinitely more satisfactory than that of most conquered peoples. In one word, their "ideal" was as immoral as the means they employed to attain it. Theirs was not even a case of which it could be said that the end justifies the means. An independent Armenia for the benefit of the Armenians cut out in the body of Turkey would be an artificial creation with no other foundation to rest upon than force and a violation at the expense of the Empire of which Eastern Anatolia forms ethnographically, linguistically, historically and sentimentally an organic part of the very principles

in whose name its creation is urged. Alsace-Lorraine is not more French if it is to be the same extent, as the six vilayets are Turkish. To establish Armenian rule in the latter would be a greater political crime than to restore German rule in the former.

Abdul Hamid answered violence by violence. But in ordering the massacres of 1895-6, he was simply responding to the desire of the Committees whose deliberate policy it was to bring about an effusion of Armenian blood – the greater the better from their point of view – in order to force Europe to take up the fraudulent Armenian cause.

Under the new regime during which the party of Union and Progress enjoyed a monopoly of power, the latter which was very anxious to secure the collaboration of the Armenian elements in the work of Ottoman regeneration, exhausted every means of conciliation and propitiation to no purpose. It was repaid by calumny and the Adana trouble which was fomented by the Committees, always with the idea of bringing about a European intervention. The same blind hostility showed itself on their part during the Balkan war when taking advantage of Turkey's distress, they rendered every service they could to the allies and perpetrated numberless atrocities on the Musulmans in Thrace, not to speak of the agitation they carried on in Eastern Anatolia with a view to providing Russia with a pretext for its occupation. In spite of all the Porte persisted in its policy of conciliation and making a supreme effort in this direction elaborated a project for the special benefit of the provinces inhabited by Armenians. But instead of accepting it, the Armenians obtained from Europe to substitute another one for it which deprived Turkey of her sovereign rights in that region.

The world war served as an opportunity for the Armenians to give full reign to their hostility. Carrying out a plan which they kept in reserve such a situation, they rose in arms, attacking the Imperial troops, flocking as volunteers to the Russian and French armies, spreading death and havoc among the Musulman population, committing every kind of atrocity at the expense of the latter and crowning their criminal activity with massacres. These manifestations finally determined the Porte to strike. This was all the more imperiously demanded of her as the country was engaged in a life and death struggle with the outside.

Unfortunately, exasperation and the insufficiency of ordinary measures of repression caused the Unionist organization which dominated in the Cabinet to include the massacre of the Armenians in its defensive action. At one blow it lost the moral benefit of seven years of forbearance and patience. Today it stands committed before the world with the perpetration of one of its most sinister tragedies.

We are not concerned to defend the Unionist organization which, as a matter of fact, is responsible for many other crimes, these committed at the expense of the entire Ottoman nation. But in the name of the Turkish race and Islam, so terribly compromised by this political group sprung from their midst, we claim that other countries have been the theater and other religions the environment of equal misdeeds, for which they cannot invoke extenuating circumstances as Turkey and Islam can do, and that therefore, it is

⁽¹⁾ It is not by inducing Armenians who never had a territorial connection with certain regions of Asia Minor like Adana, for instance, to settle in them, as the Armenian organizations are doing with feverish energy and considerable success that they can establish a legitimate claim to them for their race.

supremely unfair to hold them up to special reprobation in connection with a criminal aberration for which they are only accidentally responsible.

To this last extent, the Turkish people bow its head. It does so in grief for the Armenian people and shame for itself. It has recognized and is fulfilling the obligations under which this situation places it. But repudiates all moral responsibility in connection with the action of its unworthy leaders whom it has disowned.

So far as the latter are concerned, their responsibility, which in truth is overwhelming absolutely speaking, is to God, humanity and the Turkish people, not to the Armenian. Those who are responsible for the latter are the Committees who did all in their power to bring its misfortunes on its head by engaging it in a fraudulent suit against Turkey and employing the most violent, the most savage means to win it. In more than one country their action would have had similar consequence. In all they would have been terrible, whatever their form. The maledictions of the Armenian people with whom the mass of the Turkish sympathizes, realizing that it was turned off the paths of loyalty by cunning and violence after resisting for seventy years, and with whom it is one of its dearest wishes is that their attitude should make it possible to resume its former fraternal relations, should fall on those whose sacrilegious hands, switching history off her course, artificially separated from one another two races naturally destined to continue in mutual friendship and goodwill their secular association.

This is a condensed account of the genesis of the Turco-Armenian feud, its local and international aspects and the responsibilities attaching to it.

We have now a few words to say in connection with its relationship to the war and the triumph of the Entente.

In this supreme moment, when the destiny of so many nations is being settled by the world-controlling powers of the Entente, which have solemnly proclaimed their intention to use their overwhelming victory to secure to humanity an enduring peace based on the natural right and justice, we have this to say respectfully to them: they would be betraying the exalted, transcendently responsible mission they have undertaken if, in judging Turkey in connection with the Armenian question, they rendered their verdict in the name of abstract justice when everything is contingent in this world – *summum jus summa injuria* -- and if, in fixing her territorial future, a problem exclusively amenable to historical, ethnographic and demographic principles, they allowed themselves to be influenced by sentimental considerations.

Is not the Turkish misfortune which exists alongside of the Armenian just as poignant, just as widespread? The Turks massacred and murdered Armenians, plundered and devastated their homes. Yes. But did not the Armenians massacre and murder Turks, plunder and devastate their homes and were they not the first to start the sinister game?

Today there are as many Turkish widows and orphans thrown helpless and starving on the world as Armenian; as many grief-stricken hearths; as many victims of outrage and cruelty – mostly the result of Armenian savagery!

Nations cannot be suppressed nor can they be deprived of their natural properties and rights beyond a limited period. It is a law of nature that they should endure and a law of politics that they should come back to their own.

In the name of the generations to come of our race, we protest beforehand against any decision concerning us that will not be adopted conformably with the Wilsonian principles which are being applied to the other nations. We claim integrally all our natural and conventional rights.

This is the cry of a nation, maltreated, abused, but which has not lost its self-respect and is determined that justice shall be done to it. It may not succeed in the present, it will in the future.

ANNEXES.

No. 1

EXTRACT FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS

Issued by the Committees in 1910, and circulated broadcast among Armenians, in tens of thousands of copies.

These instructions were issued under the heading of "Instructions for personal defense". These words, "Personal defense"⁽¹⁾ became almost a password.

THE CHOICE OF ARMS.

Those who need weapons should first of all ask some trustworthy person for advice. Naturally, those manufactured in Europe are the best, but the Armenians cannot procure them because we cannot go to Europe, and European arms cannot reach Armenia.⁽¹⁾ Even if some could be obtained, it would not be possible to manufacture bullets. Therefore, we must look for weapons around us. We border on three countries, where there are at present two sort of arms. In Russia, there is nowadays the "Moussine"; formerly, there was the "Berdan". "Martinis" were formally used in Turkey; nowadays, they have the "Mauser". The best of these, the new ones, are in the hands of the Governments. It would be easy to procure at a good price the cartridges for those arms, but no Governments allow them to be used by the population, and to buy or sell them would be compromising. We must, therefore, prefer the older weapons that are easier to procure.

A question may arise in this case, as follows: how can one, armed with an old pattern rifle, resist one possessing a new and good weapon? This observation is out of place 1) because it is impossible that our enemies use their weapons as well as we can our own, and 2) because everybody knows that a good quality weapon is not always of great use in the hands of the commonest people.

THE VILLAGES.

We have three kinds of villages:

- 1) Those situated between other Armenian villages and exclusively inhabited by Armenians;
- 2) Those situated in non-Armenian zones, but nevertheless exclusively inhabited by Armenians;
- 3) Those inhabited at the same time by Armenians and non-Armenians.

From the organization point of view, there is no difference between these three kinds of villages. Each of them will organize a special detachment, and all existing forces will join it with their weapons.

Each detachment will be divided into two sections: "the stationary force", and the "active force". Each section shall have a chief and an assistant chief. In each village, the stationary force and the active

⁽¹⁾ By using this denomination, the Committees played a comedy before their own countrymen. It will be gathered from the said instructions that the object of personal defense was to attack Moslem villages.

force⁽¹⁾ will jointly select their leader among the most experienced. This leader shall hold the highest authority in the village and all the forces in the place will be under his orders. He will be at the same time the representative of the zone command and of the general staff.

The chiefs of villages situated in the same zone shall assemble and elect among them a provisional staff composed of three members. On days of battle, the staff, or the commander of the zone, may, under their own responsibility, take their weapons from those who would not be able to use them and give them to more experienced men. Villages attacked by surprise shall immediately send messengers to neighboring localities asking for assistance. Armenians inhabiting mixed villages and who, being a minority, cannot expect assistance from neighboring villages, must at once join the Armenian zones, taking with them their lightest chattels.

In mixed villages, where the enemies would be in minority in relation to Armenians, the enemies must be kept as hostages if they have previously fled, or requested to leave the village, according to the attitude adopted by them or by their Government.

During battle, the doors of houses must be left open to assist combatants fleeing before regular troops or policemen. In those circumstances, unarmed people must absolutely remain indoors. All the village must pay the price of any weapons that might fall into the hands of the enemy. Arms taken from the enemy belong to those who have captured them.

TO ATTACK VILLAGES.⁽ⁱ⁾

In order to attack villages, it is necessary:

- 1) To know the fortified sections of enemy villages;
- 2) To select beforehand the line of retreat and have it guarded by sentries;
- 3) To ascertain from where the enemy may receive reinforcements and prevent their arrival.
- 4) To attack the village only on three sides, leaving a side free for the besieged to make good their escape. (If the village is attacked on all sides, the enemy may fight with desperation and compromise victory) However, on the side left free, a section of attackers must conceal themselves in order to pursue the enemy and cause him as much damage as possible. Furthermore, the object of leaving a side free is, rather than favor the retreat of the enemy, to break up his force of resistance and thus hasten victory;
- 5) In order to disturb the enemy, the time of attack should be fixed at the early dawn. If began sooner, it might stop fighting owing to darkness, which would uselessly cause victims;
- 6) In order to provoke a panic in the adversary's camp, fire should be set and kindled in several places at the same time. All that is necessary for this should be provided before beginning the attack;

(1) This is inaccurate. Tens of thousands of rifles, not to speak of repeating pistols, were imported between 1910 and 1914 by the revolutionary committees.

⁽¹⁾ The existence of the active force next to the stationary detachment obviously proves that the Committees' plans consisted not only in resistance to repressive operations by imperial troops, but also in attacks on Moslem villages. In fact, the attacks by these active forces caused the punishing expeditions undertaken by State troops, which stationary forces were to repel. (Note by the Author).

⁽ⁱ⁾ We draw notice to this heading. It proves that the Armenians had a regular war plan.

- 7) If the detachment delivering the attack is not mounted, several horses will have to be held in reserve to transport the dead and wounded to Armenian villages, and thus *prevent their being recognized.*⁽¹⁾
- A few days before the attack, several capable and trustworthy men, chosen and appointed by the staff, must be sent to the village without disclosing their identity; each one of them will remain in the assigned zone as long as necessary, and after having completed his investigation, will send his report upon the basis of which the attack will be prepared.

⁽¹⁾ This precaution is significant. It shows plainly that the offensive was on the Armenian side.

No. 2.

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT

**Handed by the Dachnak Committee to the Socialist
Congress in Copenhagen, in 1910.**

(As an auxiliary weapon, the Dachnak often used socialism, posing as a partisan of this system; it could thereby more easily attract the sympathies of the Armenian mass as well as those of the European proletariats).

“ . . . Our organization is the same in Turkish Armenia. At Van and Bitlis, in both those large Armenian provinces, we had, until 1908, enlisted under the banner of our Committee, the village folk and the sane and sound population to form political bands. The latter still exists, but their number is naturally more restricted.

Until 1908, the activity of our Committee in Turkey was clandestine and operated only by night. In the daytime, the members of the Committee were not to be seen abroad: armament, exercises, everything was done at night. Our activity had quite a political and revolutionary character. This same activity continues nowadays in all the centers of the Ottoman Empire, with this difference – that it is now openly displayed in broad daylight. In other parts of Turkey inhabited by Armenians, our Committees have large detachments of well-organized revolutionaries. . . .⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ We have underlined these sentences.

No. 3.

REPORT BY THE RUSSIAN CONSUL IN BITLIS.

Dated 3rd December, 1910.

No. 602

A fact worthy of attention in the vilayet of Bitlis is the activity constantly displayed in the interior of this province by the Armenian revolutionary committee. Tachnaktzoutioun (Dachnak) regarding which I have the honor to send Your Excellency the following information:

The Armenian population, hardworking, although ignorant, had latterly shown open and real antipathy towards this committee, the members of which, *who assumed the title of "saviors of the nation"* had brought down on it for the past few years untold sufferings. In spite of this, the Tachnaktzoutioun still exists in the Bitlis vilayet. *And without renouncing its former aims*, is striving to educate the masses, leaving the matter of arms aside, and quietly waiting events. *By an inscrutable transformation, the former men hunters of the Mouche valley have become teachers in the Armenian schools of the provinces.*⁽¹⁾ *The revolutionary chiefs who had fought in 1909 and 1910 at Sassoun against imperial troops* have assumed in Bitlis the position of judges, and without any authority, have opened negotiations "in the name of the nation", to settle all disputes between Armenians. . . .

The activity of revolutionists has somewhat decreased since the proclamation of the Constitution, and they are now very quiet. But it would be difficult to say how long will this change last, and to what extent it will be necessary. *The Armenian committees have up to the present very cleverly availed themselves of the nation's ignorance. Nowadays, the membership of the Tachnaktzoutioun in Sassoun, in the Sandjak, the Valley of Mouche, the Cazas of Boulanik, Ahlat and Malazguerd an in the city of Bitlis, reaches about 100,000.* The principal chief of this organization in the interior of the vilayet is Carmen, otherwise called Karnik.

The central seat of this committee with 100,000 members is at Mouche. This organization is divided into 20 committees, 100 subcommittees and 8,000 groups. Consequently, each group numbers about 10 to 12 members. One hundred to a thousand Armenians form a subcommittee, and from 1 to 5,000 form a committee. The central seat is at Mouche, and the Tachnaktzoutioun section in the city and the valley of Mouche, Boulanik and Malazguerd, and the city and neighborhood of Bitlis are attached to this center. All the members of the Tachnaktzoutioun have to pay a monthly subscription ranging between 10 paras and one piastre. It is believed that, in this respect, merely in the vilayet of Bitlis, this organization has an annual income of 1 to 1,500 pounds Turkish.⁽¹⁾

The money thus collected by each group or committee is sent to *Western Office of the Tachnaktzoutioun*, in Geneva, the latter spending it according to the directions issued by the *High Tachnakist Committee of Switzerland*.

⁽¹⁾ The Italics are our own.

⁽¹⁾ This would mean at one piastre per head, a membership of 150,000 in one province only of the Empire. (Author's note)

Armenian revolutionists – that is to say the members of the Tachnaktzoutioun – in the vilayet of Bitlis do not receive any official pay or remuneration from the Committees or the Office. Of course, those people can compel the population to pay more money than is needed and keep the surplus. The maintenance of revolutionists who are not natives of Bitlis, such as Karnik, is at the charge of the committees.

The chiefs of committees and subcommittees, and former revolutionists who have fought against Ottoman troops, possess revolvers, Moussine or Berdan rifles, and a sufficient number of cartridges. The other members of the Tachnaktzoutioun possess about 7 to 800 rifles of different types (Gras, Berdan, Martini, Kramnowka, etc.) Under the former reign, those weapons were hidden underground in the villages. Nowadays they are openly carried.

Since the proclamation of the Constitution and especially this year (1910), the Tachnakists appear to have renounced armed activity in the interior of the vilayet. They *apparently* are merely concerned with national affairs, endeavoring, according to what I have heard, to apply the decentralization system in the provinces and to develop public instruction among Armenians. . . .

The Tachnaktzoutioun's power is felt in all Armenian communal affairs in localities where, as at Mouche, the Tachnakists have succeeded in monopolizing the spiritual administration. The Armenian Member of the Ottoman Parliament for Mouche obeys the order of the Tachnakists. In the Mouche law courts, Armenian judges carry out the advice given by the Tachnaktzoutioun; finally, in the valley of Mouche, the teachers and Elder councils execute *voleus noleus*, the orders of the Mouche committee.

With regards to Armenian village folk, although they complain now and again to the Ottoman authorities of the Vilayet, they cannot get rid of the Tachnakists, and all the others, with more or less hesitation, enlist in the Tachnakzoutioun's membership; *and under the influence of blows and threats give a part of their earnings for objects which they are not even able to understand*. Admitting that the village folk were formerly partial towards the Committee, they are far from being that at present.

Regarding the relations between Tachnakists and foreign countries, they have considerably developed after the proclamation of the Constitution, owing to the abolition of former polic prescriptions and to an entire freedom to travel.

No. 4

FURTHER REPORT FROM THE RUSSIAN CONSUL IN BITLIS.

Dated 19th November, 1912.

No. 630.

The Tachnakist Committee has just decided to act against the Ottoman Government, although it has concluded an agreement with the Union and Progress party in view of concerted action, undertaking to mutually assist each other in Persia and Caucasus. This decision is no doubt due to the fall of the latter party, and the conviction arising there from that no result would accrue from supporting Turkish interests. The Tachnakist Committee has 38 members in Bitlis, 190 in Mouche, 5 in Guendj and 2 in Saard.

The committee's decision was also dictated by the numerous crimes and robberies that constantly are occurring throughout the vilayet, and more recently, by the murder of an Armenian priest and the school inspector, Raphail, both killed at "Karkar", on the limit of the Van and Bitlis provinces.⁽¹⁾

The news having reached here of the demonstration organized in this respect by the Tachnaktzoutioun Committees against the Van authorities, the Bitlis Tachnakists decided also to show themselves and availed themselves for this purpose of a most favorable opportunity: the Ottoman defeats in the Balkan war. Those defeats, the animosity of the Moslem population towards the Christians, the general situation of Armenians who imagined that in such circumstances Turkey could not live without massacres, were as many provocations for the Tachnakists, who therefore began to agitate, but without success. On Friday, 9th October, several Armenian shoemakers closed their shops, circulating the news Moslems would massacre the Armenians. However, nobody initiated them, and thanks to the measures taken by the police, nothing serious happened. The ringleaders were arrested.

Although this movement fostered by the Tachnaktzoutioun led to nothing, it deserves the attention of the local authorities as being the prelude of the committee's activity, the latter awaiting an opportunity to avenge on Turks the murder of two Armenians in Karkar, and bring about the disorders in the country.

The murder of those Armenians⁽¹⁾ has caused the appearance in Karkar and Hizan of two armed bands, each twenty men strong. The latter have concealed themselves after killing a Kurd in order to enrage the Moslems, and are roving about the mountains. It is believed that a part of those bands has passed into the Van vilayet, and that another is hiding in the Armenian villages of the Mouche valley. Last autumn, many arms were transported to the latter valley.

⁽¹⁾ We have already referred to General Maiewski's report in which it is stated that the Committees did all they could to induce the Kurds to commit assaults against Armenians, which they used as a grievance against the authorities and the Moslem population.

⁽¹⁾ One of those Armenians was a teacher by the name of Raphail, a member of the Dachnak; but he having opposed the latter, he was murdered in retaliation. Of course, the Dachnak endeavored to accuse the Kurds of this outrage, which had been committed by their orders. (Note of the author)

No. 5

**REPORT FROM THE RUSSIAN CONSUL IN BITLIS TO THE
RUSSIAN EMBASSY AT CONSTANTINOPLE**

Dated 24th December, 1912

No. 63

Having reported the effects of the Balkan War on Turco-Armenian relations in Eastern Anatolia, the consul states what follows:

“I have seen and heard myself Armenians and their religious chiefs complain to the Vali that they could not live any longer with the Turks and the latter stating they could not bear Armenians furthermore. There is therefore at present, in the provinces of Bitlis, a violent animosity which increases or decreases according to developments in the Balkan War and its expected consequences. Should this state of things continue, as I have already stated, it is to be expected that the slightest pretext will cause an outburst of Moslem fanaticism.⁽¹⁾”

“The activity of the Tachnaktzoutioun Committee has a great deal to do with the excitement of Armenian public opinion. This committee is unrelentingly working to bring about collisions between Armenians and Moslems in order to avail itself of the misfortune that may arise therefrom, and cause a Russian intervention, and the occupation of the country by our army.

“The members of this committee have recently met at the monastery of Sourp Cabaret, near Mouche, and after passing a resolution to the effect above mentioned, they have appointed a delegate to the general Congress to be held in Geneva or Constantinople.

“At present, Tachnakists are striving to rehabilitate themselves before peaceful Armenians who had turned away from them, accusing them of having caused this misfortune and misery of the Armenian nation. They act according to their new motto, which in their own terms is “to bring the Russians round here.”

“To this end, Tachnakists resort to different means and try to bring about collisions between Armenians and Moslems, and especially Ottoman troops. For instance, the Tachnakist Committees of Bitlis and Mouche, with a view to spread a panic, have induced the bazar Armenians to close their shops. They have further armed a band of revolutionists which overran, in October and November, the casa of Hizane, and murdered several Kurds in order to avenge the death of Raphail, an inspector of Armenian schools and a member of the Tachnaktzoutioun. Should they reach their purpose, the Moslems would naturally attack Armenian villages, and this would cause an intervention of Russia. Noted Tachnakists of Bitlis state that they would make a great mistake if they did not avail themselves of the present situation to bring the Russians here. . . .

“Armenians, in the cities, as well of those in the countryside, and their religious chiefs, have always shown inclination and affection for Russia, and stated several times that the Turkish

⁽¹⁾ Always this same old story: Moslem fanaticism, regarding acts of defense and reprisals by Turks and Kurds. (Author's note)

Government is incapable of establishing order, law and prosperity. Many Armenians have already promised to give up their churches to Russian soldiers, to be used as orthodox temples.

The present situation in the Balkans, the victory of Slavonic and Greek Governments have excited Armenians to the highest pitch and filled their hearts with the hope and joy of being delivered from the Turks. Armenians are boiling over with the desire of revenge, and consider Turkish defeats as a Godsend, and atonement for the misery and humiliation of their race. Comparison between the cities and provinces of Bitlis, Erzeroum and Van with those of Caucasus; between the condition of population of commerce and means of communication in Caucasus with those of the vilayets inhabited by Armenians, proves to them in eloquent terms that they have no happiness or freedom to expect from Turkish domination⁽¹⁾ All the hopes of the Armenians, and I believe of Christians generally, in Bitlis and the neighborhood are centered in Russia.

The Tachnaktzoutioun Committee, morally discredited in the eyes of the calm and peaceful population, hopes to regain their confidence, and as already stated hereabove, is trying to bring about collisions between Armenians and Kurds, and in general, between Armenians and Moslems in order to cause disturbances and create a pretext for Russian intervention.

⁽¹⁾ Compare this description to that given by General Maiewsky in his report, extracts of which have been inserted herein. Who to believe of the two consuls? Evidently, the one who favors Turkey because the representative of a Power essentially hostile to the latter had no interest in taking her part, whereas there was some advantage in flattering the unfavorable opinions of the Government regarding the Turks. We do not know whether the report of the Russian Consul in Bitlis inserted under No. 3 herein is by the same official as the one who wrote the above. At any rate, it is couched in a different spirit than the former. (Author's note)

No. 6

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS AT THE HINTCHAKIST CONGRESS

Held in Constantinople, in 1913.

(The same includes an explanation by Armenians regarding the Union and Progress plan of Empire organization).

Constanza, 17th September, 1913

Situation in Turkey of the Hintchakist Committee S.D. As a consequence of the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution, on 10th July, 1908, following upon a military revolution, it was necessary for the different elements existing in Turkey to preserve their national existence, and among the, that the Armenians should have the means to develop in conformity with their rational principles, outside of any administrative pressure.

After sixty-two years of rebellion and strife, and almost doomed to disappear, the Armenian nation needed some rest, if only temporary, in order to recover its strength and reappear on the political scene.

The promises vouchsafed by the Constitution appearing limited, our committee endeavored to bring to maturity the ideas it spread abroad, hoping thereby, as much as possible, to benefit by existing circumstances. For that reason, at the sixth council of Hintchak delegates, there was no question of secession from the Ottoman constitutional Government, and it was resolved to adopt legal form towards it in order to better pursue our activity.

During the ensuing period of four to five years, it was discovered that the Ottoman Constitution merely contained words and was devoid of real promises; that governmental laws tended to oppress all political parties, especially the left and extreme left, and that the administrative ideal, and the new organizations, had no other object than to absorb and crush the different elements. And proof was given that the dominant nation was incapable of giving being to any new Government. It is known that an oligarchy rules the Union and Progress Committee, which holds at present the reigns of administration. This party's program is to preserve Turkish bureaucracy and not to allow the creation of a progressive Government. Its apparent object is to unify the different elements, but its policy is to hold these under constant pressure, in order to annihilate them in case of need. With respect to the Government, it encourages and upholds unrelentingly a policy of Armenian destruction which was inaugurated by the dominating classes. The Armenian nation is on the point of vanishing under the effects of this policy and of the forces that have always been used against it, and in these circumstances it is natural that it cannot pursue the realization of its principles. Armenians are convinced that they should hereafter adopt a firm and courageous attitude in order to free themselves from the dominating class and elude the murderous sword suspended over their heads.⁽¹⁾

The seventh general council of delegates from the Hintchakist S.D. party has resolved, unanimously less one vote, that in order to obtain the national and individual rights that can no longer

⁽¹⁾ The committees indulged in socialism to attract the masses.

be assured by legal means, it would be more opportune, hereafter, to adopt an illegal position, and to give a greater impulse to party strife, until new political and economic conditions have arisen.

Passing for legality to lawlessness – prior to the meeting of the seventh general council of delegates, it had been agreed to reorganize and centralize all the sections of Turkey and of foreign countries under legal form. But owing to that present situation, the seventh council of delegates from the Hintchakist S.D. party resolves:

- 1) To dissolve the administrative board of the Turkey Committee – which has not been able to gain the confidence of other sections in the Ottoman empire, nor to meet the present requirements of the party, and to appoint in its stead a new council;
- 2) To give hereafter the name of “Turkey Administrative Board” to the central administrative council which is the supreme center of executive power for the committee branches in Turkey;
- 3) The members of the Turkey administrative board, being elected by the branches of the committee in the Ottoman Empire, to give this council a certain authority over the administrative board of the Central Office, whilst subordinating its decisions to the latter’s ratification;
- 4) Whilst apparently maintaining the existing branches and organizations of their present form, to try and create new secret branches, and to work underhand to maintain unlawful activity, in agreement with the active members and delegates of our committee, and in conformity with the instructions of the Central Administrative Board and information given by the Turkey Administrative Board;
- 5) To alter the former interior regulations, and adapt them to present circumstances, and to abolish the economic and political principles followed up to the present in order to replace them by those recently adopted by our committee, whilst appointing the active members who will have to apply them.

GENERAL AND SPECIAL MODIFICATIONS.

Independent Armenian – Although it will not interfere in the question of general and special reforms to be introduced in Armenia by the Ottoman Government, and will not oppose them, the Hintchakist S.D. Committee *is convinced that the population of Armenia, in any element to which it belongs, can no longer live in peace and prosper, and that the Armenian nation will only be able to preserve its national existence against the attacks from the interior and the exterior by the formation of an independent Armenia* has resolved to uphold this idea.

The unworthiness, incapacity, the ignorance, external relations and political tenets of the Turkish dominating element, and of the statesmen who are at the head of affairs, being well known, it is necessary to uphold the idea of Armenian independence under the control of Europe.

No. 7

NOTE HANDED BY THE ARMEIAN PATRIARCH

**To the Russian Embassy, through the first drogman of the latter,
Regarding the plan of reforms in Eastern Anatolia.**

Dear Friend,

Our National Council requests me to express its deep gratitude to H.E. the Ambassador with regard to the formula he considers as the only one that could safeguard or rights in the appointment of a General Inspector.

The Council awaits with a most comprehensible anxiety the draft of the Note to be handed today by the Porte to the Imperial Embassy, before its official communication of the Powers.

Considering the habits of the Porte, it is to be expected that either in the powers of the Inspector General, or in the participation of non-Moslems in Assemblies, Councils and public offices, or finally in the other dispositions, it will try to bungle the formulas suggested by the Imperial Embassy. The Council hopes it will be able in time to express its views on the matter. Considering the concession made in the formula of appointment, it becomes indispensable to compensate this by maintaining absolutely all of the other dispositions.

19/1st January, 1914.

No. 8.

To our beloved comrades of the Constantinople section:

The Hintchak Committee.

Kighi, 31st January, 1913.

. . . .We will not try issues with such frivolous people. We have an extreme need of arms. The money is ready. The important point is to get the arms down here. We call your attention to this.

For the Committee:

The President, L. MARDIROSSIAN.

No. 9

To Morate the Hero.

City of Kighi, 23rd January, 1914.

The question of arms is of the utmost concern to us. Very few of the members of the Hintchakist band under our administration are armed. In my point of view, affiliation to the Committees is useless if only platonic and without activity.

For the S. Lays Regiment

The Chief Secretary

K. POSTADJIAN

The President

VAHAN ZEITOUNLIAN

NO. 10.

To the Alexandria Section of the Ramgavar Party.

20th Feb/5th March, 1914.

Comrades,

We have received your letter of 24th January and thank you for the affectionate sentiments you express regarding the Central Section of Constantinople.

- 1) The question of arms is fundamental. Nobody can of course deny its necessity;
- 2) Our Central Section, in conformity with the decision of the delegate's council declare that its rights have been protected according to the dispositions of the special chapter of Internal regulations.

"Our most ardent wish is to act in conformity of views with the Hintchak Committee. Our section has worked to this end and will continue to do so in the future. Furthermore, it is not difficult to agree on this matter with the Ragazmiak-Hintchak, because there are no differences of principle between us on any matter,

At present, it is just as necessary for us to unite as soon as possible as to act in concert. For this purpose the competent groups of the Ramgavar and the Hintchak should enter in agreement with the Tachnaktzoutioun and the Veragzmial-Hintchak.

For the Central Section of Constantinople

Of the Ramgavar Committee:

The Secretary, *the President,*

HATCHIK INGLISIAN DIRAN KELEKIAN

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM THE DACHNAK TO THE DAMAS BRANCH.

Constantinople, 1914.

“Should the Russians advance beyond the border and Ottoman troops withdraw before the, all will have to rise at the same time everywhere and use all the means at disposal. The Ottoman army will be caught between two fires. All State buildings will have to be destroyed. The Government forces will be busy in the interior, and supply convoys will be attacked. On the other hand, should the Ottoman army advance, Armenians soldiers will desert their battalions, form into bands and join the Russians.”

No. 14.

Prior to the war, the newspaper “Areve” published in Bakou, had inserted the following article in its number dated 11 September, 1914:

“DECISIVE MOMENTS.”

“Events now occurring on our frontier, and all that is happening around us, are worthy of our attention. Present times are important not only in Russian history, but also for us, Armenians. A people bowed down for centuries in the bonds of slavery, the supreme ideal of which it has been sought to destroy, is now rising before us, and demands the solution of the Armenian question. Armenians have accomplished great deed to this end, and more particularly during the past quarter of century: they have produced heroes and devoted men who have fought their enemies with courage and firmness.

“There must be an end to the question of Ottoman Armenians, in order to close the tragedy in which, for centuries, has been plunged an honest, active, hard-working and virtuous population.

“Since the Berlin Congress right until the present times, the European Powers have done nothing for us. In periods of peace, we resorted to a weak and ineffective policy towards the Ottoman Government; but today, a cyclone is sweeping the world and each people is seeking means to ensure its existence and to have a place in the sun. the question of nationalities has now emerged in a new form with a vigor unprecedented in history. Should we sleep when the destinies of all the nations, large and small, are in the balance? Armenians have never faced a moment of greater import during their secular existence. Our forefathers were able to save a nation from destruction and to preserve it until nowadays. They defended

Armenian virtues and qualities against the assaults and attacks from Asia, and thanks to this, although politically weak and small, we are counted among the number of nations. Should we now abandon our position and retire in shame, or work towards a suitable future? That is the question in this important moment for our generation to decide.

“The nations are in strife; borders are being altered, each one wished to be master of its history. In such serious times, Armenian Youth and Armenians must think of the inheritance they have received from past generations and to what we expect from the future. *Conquering all the difficulties that history had accumulated around them, from Van to Constantinople, from Zeitun to Sassoun, from Erivan to Chiraz, at Lor and at Karabagh, the Armenians during the course of the XIXth century had attempted to create a new Armenia.* It is this new creation which has now to face such important events. It may disappear, or, on the other hand, develop and grow as other small nations in the XIXth century. Tomorrow or the next historical events may occur on the frontier, and the sounds from the general war find a repercussion on Armenia’s horizon. Armenians should be prepared for that day and welcome it by action, and not by mere appeals to union and concord. Up to the present, a part only of the Armenian people has sacrificed itself, and suffered all the risks and torments. Is it not time for those who have criticized the Committees right and left to show themselves and fulfill their national duties?

“Armenians, the heroic souls of our glorious ancestors are looking down upon us. Are we able to understand them, and in such serious days, can we expect to realize the new life for which they had started to fight in a time of great peril and under the worst conditions? . . .”

No. 15.

PROCLAMATION BY THE HINTCHAK In the paper of the same name, immediately After the Serajevo outrage.

“ . . .The Social-Democratic Hintchak Party which has, for the past quarter of a century, stepped through blood-stained paths in order to deliver the Armenian element from all exactions, and reinstate it in its rights, avails itself of the present political conditions to give the signal of rebellion and strife, and from the summit of the Taurus and the confines of Armenia, to come down in the arena with a view to drown Ottoman tyranny in blood.

“The Hintchakist Committee, assembling all its material and moral forces, will participate with the sword of insurrection in this gigantic fight for the existence of nations, and as an ally of the Triple Entente, and more especially of the Russian armies, with all the revolutionary forces and means at its disposal, will help the Ententistes to win the victory in Armenia, in Cilicia, Caucasus and Azerbedjian; and guided by patriotic necessities, will do its duty towards itself and civilization.

“Let the heroes willing to sacrifice their lives for the deliverance of Armenian throw themselves in the arena with their material and moral forces so that, in tomorrow’s Congress, Armenians also may take

their place, after having shed their blood in their own cause and that of civilization, and obtain their independence, under the aegis of their country and of the Entente, by proving their right to live and to political freedom. Let the dawn of war arise and cast its light on right, justice, freedom and fraternity.

“Forward, comrades, and to work! By our death, let us stifle the death threatening Armenia so that she may live forever! ! !

The Central Office of the Social-Democratic Hintchak Committee.

No. 16.

REPORTS

By the Armenian Military Committee in Van.

13th April, morning.

- 1) On Sunday, we killed a Turkish soldier before the Hadji-Bekir barracks.
- 2) We killed yesterday two Turkish soldiers in front of Arak.
- 3) We killed a Turk in our position of Vezonz.
- 4) Yesterday, we killed a Turk and Saturday a volunteer Turkish muleteer in front of our post of Chehbender.
- 5) We killed a Turk at Itch-Aghlou in front of the barracks of Hadji-Bekir.
- 6) The Kurds carried away the cattle of the Germans at Engke Bagh.
- 7) A violent musketry fire was heard this morning in the direction of Couronyache. It is probable that an encounter took place between Armenians and Turkish detachments. We saw the enemy flee.

The Military Committee.

13th April, noon.

- 1) We burnt the house of Hamza, situated opposite the position of Chah Baghi. A Turkish detachment was in it. The enemy fled leaving a few dead.
- 2) A Turk was killed yesterday in our position of Tutundjian.
- 3) We took yesterday three new positions in the center of Arateveze and killed several Turks. In the night we set fire to several of their advanced positions.
- 4) After a small fight on the bridge of Atna Kanz, we captured eight boxes of munitions.
- 5) We killed today a Turk at Cahn Dagh.

The Military Committee.

No. 17.

REPORT BY THE MILITARY COMMITTEE AT VAN.

For the period 6th April to 16th April.

The struggle we have been waging for the past ten days in order to deliver our nation is developing every moment, and becoming increasingly heroic and sacred. Our hereditary enemy, this time, wants to annihilate us and to wipe out the Armenian name from the list of nations, we are firmly determined to defend our lives, our dignity, our religion, to avenge our dishonored mothers and sisters and to obtain guarantees for our existence.

We have been fighting during six centuries against this savage and cruel Government, and will always struggle against those murderers who trample on right and civilization, and quench their thirst in the tears and blood of Armenians. At the same time as they proclaim Holy War, they are murdering women and children, old and young, ailing and impotent.

Armenians of Vassporagan (Van)! *For ten days we have fought with all our forces and all our means.* This struggle, unparalleled in history, will raise the admiration of all civilized people in this general war. All the world will know that a handful of heroes are fighting for Right and Justice. The avenging God is with us, and the glory of our heroes will be our reward. These ten days of struggle are on the point of ending. Let us prepare for new fights, for new victories!

The fires. The activity of our soldiers continues at night. Last night we burnt at Chah Dagh the house of Botchke Ahmed, which served as a relay for Turkish soldiers. According to information from the Office at Arak, the Armenians burnt last night one of the most important positions of the enemy, that of Arerotexe. The hero of this deed, one of our soldiers, quietly returned to our lines with his arms. Our night detachment set fire yesterday to the house of Holi in the street of the Cross. The fire could only be put out in a café of the neighborhood.

The same evening our detachment recaptured the position of Saradjian, which the enemy held until then.

This morning our auxiliary troops killed a Turk at Chirvian. We killed another from our position of Izro.

Towards three o'clock, after a violent cannonade and musketry fire, the Turks of Chah Dagh attacked our positions in the streets of Chag Bey, but were compelled to withdraw. Gun fire still continues. We noticed yesterday boats on the lake; three were going to Devan, and another coming to Van.

No. 18.

STATISTICS OF THE MOSLEM POPULATION

**Of the provinces which have been occupied by the Russians and the
Approximate figures of the refugees, and the inhabitants whose fate is unknown.**

Name of the Provinces	Moslem Population before the War	Moslem Population Today	Moslem Refugees	Moslem Inhabitants whose fate is unknown	Population
Erzroom	704,573	215,266	282,202	207,105	29%
Bitlis	361,615	108,484	144,647	108,484	30%
Trebizond	1,100,624	746,482	130,999	223,143	22.5%
Van	308,000	100,000	100,000	108,000	35%
Erzindjan	148,672	79,238	15,000	54,434	37%
TOTAL	2,295,669	1,249,470	499,034	579,824	28%

N.B. -- The figures here above show how many innocent and peaceful creatures have been the victims of the Armenian Bands whose cruel activity began after the first defeat of the Ottoman Army at the Caucasus and continued until the Ottomans occupied there provinces after the Brest-Litovst Treaty (See the Russian official documents concerning the attitude of the Armenians published by the National Congress under No. 2, Serie B).