



Boghos Nubar

Boghos Nubar's Papers  
and the  
Armenian Question  
1915–1918

**Documents**

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# Contents

GLOSSARY	xiii
PREFACE	xvii
DOCUMENTS	
1- The War and the Armenians of Cilicia [Memorandum]	3
2- Victor Bérard to Boghos Nubar	6
3- Boghos Nubar to Mikael Varandian	8
4- Boghos Nubar to Mikael Papadjanian	12
5- Boghos Nubar to Sahag Catholicos of Cilicia	14
6- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	17
7- Khounounts, President of Armenian National Bureau to the United Armenian Association of London	18
8- The Petrograd Plan	19
9- Arshag Tchobanian to Boghos Nubar	21
10- Lord Bryce to Boghos Nubar	23
11- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Victor Bérard	24
12- Aneurin Williams to Boghos Nubar Aneurin Williams to the State Department, Washington Guy Locock to Aneurin Williams	25 26 27
13- Meeting of Boghos Nubar With Mr. Izvolski	28
14- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jean Gout	29
15- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Philippe Berthelot	31
16- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Denys Cochin	34
17- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Clemenceau	37
18- The Armenian Committee of Manchester to Boghos Nubar Resolution	38 39
19- Aneurin Williams to Noel Buxton	41
20- Boghos Nubar to Aneurin Williams	42
21- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Robert de Caix	43
22- H. N. Mosditchian to Boghos Nubar	44
23- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Georges Leygues	45
24- Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. Gregory to Boghos Nubar	46
25- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. de Margerie	47
26- Boghos Nubar's Interview with Delcassé	50
27- Mr. Veselitsky to Boghos Nubar	53
28- Boghos Nubar to Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. Gregory	54
29- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	56
30- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Couyba	58
31- Boghos Nubar to Sir Francis Bertie	59
32- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Francis Bertie	60
33- Boghos Nubar to Mr. T. Delcassé	61
34- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Izvolski	62
35- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Georges Clemenceau	63
36- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Veselitsky	64
37- Levon Meguerditchian to Boghos Nubar	65

---

38- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Victor Bérard	67
39- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Chavinon	68
40- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Edgard Rohelse	69
41- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Celestin Jonnart	70
42- The Armenian Question [ABrief Memorandum]	71
43- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Albin Rozet	73
44- Mikael Varandian to Dr. Zavriev	74
45- Mikael Varandian to Boghos Nubar	75
46- Handwritten Note of Boghos Nubar	76
47- Banquet Given by Mr. Jonnart	77
48- Boghos Nubar to Archbishop Kevork Utugian	79
49- The Armenian Question [Memorandum presented to Mr. Delcassé]	80
50- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Celestin Jonnart	85
51- Dr. Zavriev to Mr. Asribekov	86
52- Archbishop Kevork Utugian to Boghos Nubar	87
53- H. N. Mosditchian to Boghos Nubar	89
54- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Stephen Pichon	90
55- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Caillaux	91
56- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jean Herbert	92
57- Rev. Father Vramshabouh Kibarian to Victor Emmanuel III	93
58- Bishop Ghevont Tourian to Boghos Nubar	95
59- Puzant Masraf to Boghos Nubar	98
60- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Robert de Caix	99
61- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Georges Leygues	100
62- Boghos Nubar to Yakoub Artin Pasha	102
63- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	103
64- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jonnart	105
65- Hampartsoum Arakelian to Boghos Nubar	106
66- Boghos Nubar to Mr. H. Mosditchian	107
67- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	108
68- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Frederic Maclair	111
69- Dr. Zavriev to Boghos Nubar	112
70- Frederic Maclair to Boghos Nubar	113
71- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Hampartsoum Arakelian	114
72- Yakoub Artin Pasha to Boghos Nubar	115
73- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	117
74- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Izvolski	118
The Baghdad Railway Terminal	119
75- Mr. Izvolski to Count Benckendorff	120
76- Sir Austin Lee to Sir Arthur Nicolson	121
77- Sir Austin Lee to Lord Bryce	122
78- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Hampartsoum Arakelian	123
79- From Boghos Nubar to Mr. Puzant Masraf	124
80- Mr. Hampartsoum Arakelian to Boghos Nubar	125
81- Messrs. Mutafoff and Armenag Gamsaragan to Boghos Nubar	128
82- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Lord Bryce	129
83- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Lord Cromer	133
84- From H. Mutafoff to Boghos Nubar	134
85- Arakel Bey Nubar to Boghos Nubar	136

86-	Yakoub Artin Pasha to Boghos Nubar	137
87-	Boghos Nubar to Mr. Jean Mutafoff	138
88-	Boghos Nubar to Messrs. Gamsaragan and Mutafoff	139
89-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace	141
90-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Sir Arthur Nicolson	142
91-	H. S. Ayvazian to Boghos Nubar	145
92-	Bishop Ghevont Tourian to Boghos Nubar	149
	A secret report from Patriarch Zaven to Bishop Tourian	149
93-	Boghos Nubar 's Meeting with Count Benckendorff	152
94-	Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	155
95-	Lord Bryce to Boghos Nubar	156
96-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Paul Cambon	157
97-	Jean Mutafoff to Boghos Nubar	161
98-	Miss Anna Zavriev to Boghos Nubar	163
99-	Puzant Masraf to Boghos Nubar	164
100-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Lord Bryce	166
101-	A Tea Party Given by Mr. Veselitsky	168
102-	Boghos Nubar to Sir Arthur Nicolson	169
103-	Memorandum Submitted to the Foreign Office	170
104-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Messrs. Steede and Max	178
105-	Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	180
106-	Mr. Veselitsky to Boghos Nubar	181
107-	Boghos Nubar to Count Benckendorff	182
108-	Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	183
109-	Very Rev. Vramshabouh Kibarian to Boghos Nubar	185
110-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Charles Woods	187
111-	Minutes of the Meeting of the British Armenia Committee in the British Parliament	189
112-	Boghos Nubar to Mr. Mutafoff	193
113-	Announcement by the Armenian National Defense Committee Regarding Military Action in Cilicia	194
114-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Count Benckendorff	196
115-	Boghos Nubar to Bishop Ghevont Tourian	197
116-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Count Benckendorff	199
117-	Sir Arthur Nicolson to Boghos Nubar	201
118-	Dr. Zavriev to Boghos Nubar	202
119-	Announcement by the Armenian National Defense Committee to the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Egypt, Sir J. Maxwell	203
120-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	205
121-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Ledoulx	207
122-	Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	209
123-	Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	215
124-	Rev. Thomas K. Megrdochian to Boghos Nubar	218
125-	Germany and the East—Lord Cromer's Warning	219
126-	Boghos Nubar to Mr. Sazonov	221
127-	Boghos Nubar to Lord Cromer	223
128-	Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	224
129-	Boghos Nubar to Mr. H. N. Mosditchian	225
130-	Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Dr. Zavriev	227

---

131- Boghos Nubar to Yakoub Artin Pasha	230
132- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Jean Mutafoff	232
133- Sir George Arthur to Boghos Nubar	234
134- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Puzant Masraf	235
135- Lord Cromer to Boghos Nubar	237
136- J. V. Macmillan to Boghos Nubar	238
137- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Aneurin Williams	239
138- Boghos Nubar to Dr. Zavriev	240
139- Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	241
140- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Karnig Fendeklian	242
141- Boghos Nubar to Mr. H. Mosditchian	243
142- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Miliukov	244
143- Boghos Nubar to Lord Kitchener	245
144- Dr. H. Zavriev to Boghos Nubar	246
145- Dr. Zavriev to Boghos Nubar	247
146- Boghos Nubar to Bishop Ghevont Tourian	255
147- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Hampartsoum Arakelian	257
148- Robert de Caix to Boghos Nubar	258
149- Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	259
150- Aneurin Williams to Boghos Nubar	261
151- H. N. Mosditchian to Boghos Nubar	262
152- Hampartsoum Arakelian to Boghos Nubar	264
153- Lord Bryce to Boghos Nubar	265
154- Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	266
155- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	267
156- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	268
157- Boghos Nubar to Mr. H. A. Aylvazian	272
158- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Dikranoff	273
159- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Mikael Papadjanoff	274
160- Boghos Nubar to Mr. Hampartsoum Arakelian	275
161- Boghos Nubar to Dr. Zavriev	276
162- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Victor Bérard	279
163- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Delcassé	281
164- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Etienne	285
165- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	286
166- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Ogagnord	289
167- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Clemenceau	291
168- Catholicos Kevork V To Boghos Nubar	292
Copy of Encyclical	294
169- Speech Given by Boghos Nubar at the Banquet of the American Club	296
170- Boghos Nubar to Lord Bryce	301
171- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	302
172- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	305
173- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kenork V	308
174- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	310
175- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Dr. Samné	313
176- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Steede	314
177- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. René Pinon	316
178- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Count d'Aunay	317

---

179- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Mihran Eram	318
180- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Edgard Rohelse	320
181- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Messrs. Briand and Berthelot	321
182- The Parliamentary Committee for Operations Abroad to Boghos Nubar	323
183- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	324
184- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. René Pinon	328
185- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	329
186- Death Sentence Pronounced Against Boghos Nubar	332
187- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	333
188- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Miliukov	336
189- Meeting of Dr. Zavriev with Mr. Izvolski	339
190- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	340
191- Meeting of Boghos Nubar Mr. Clemenceau	342
192- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Colonel Engelhard	343
193- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar Pasha	346
194- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Robert de Caix	347
195- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jonnart	348
196- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Robert de Caix	350
197- Boghos Nubar Pasha to Catholicos Kevork V	351
198- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	352
199- “France-Armenia”—First Meeting of the Constituent Committee	353
200- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	356
201- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	357
202- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Eugene Semenov	359
203- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Denys Cochin	362
204- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jonnart	363
205- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Maurice Murais	365
206- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Maurice Murais	367
207- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Gout	368
208- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. René Pinon	371
209- Boghos Nubar to the Armenian National Union of Egypt	372
210- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	375
211- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Jonnart	376
212- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Flandin	377
213- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Izvolski	378
214- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Malcolm	380
215- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Sir Mark Sykes	382
216- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Picot, with Messrs. Sykes, Mosditchian, and Malcolm	384
217- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Lord Bryce	387
218- Meeting with Viscount Grey at the Foreign Office	389
219- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Sir Mark Sykes	391
220- Visit of Boghos Nubar to Mr. Picot	393
221- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Lord Cromer	398
222- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Count Benckendorff	400
223- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	401
224- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Fitzmaurice	402
225- Boghos Nubar’s Speech Delivered Before the Committee of France-Armenia	406

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226- The Conditions Set by the Foreign Ministry of France to Enlist the Volunteers	409
227- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Gout	411
228- Boghos Nubar's Meeting with Mr. Jean Gout	415
229- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Gout	419
230- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	420
231- Meeting of Boghos Nubar with Mr. Georges Picot	422
232- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	425
233- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	426
234- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	427
235- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar Copy of Dr. M[oise] Housepian's Letter	428 429
236- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	430
237- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	431
238- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	434
239- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	436
240- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	442
241- Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V	443
242- Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar	444
 <b>POST WAR CHRONOLOGY</b>	 446
<b>MAPS</b>	
Greater and Lesser Armenia in ancient and mediavel times	448
The six Armenian provinces (vilayets) of the Ottoman Empire	449
The partition of the Ottoman Empire as planned by the Allies	450
Republic of Armenia, Karabakh, Nakhitchevan, and President Wilson's boundaries	451
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	452
<b>INDEX</b>	455



# Glossary

Allies - See Triple Entente.

Armenia Major - A term synonymous with Greater Armenia, indicates all the territories inhabited by Armenians since the dawn of history, excluding Armenia Minor and Cilicia. At the beginning of the twentieth century Greater Armenia included the six Armenian provinces under Ottoman rule, and Armenia, Karabakh and Nakhitchevan under Russian rule.

Armenia Minor - The trans-Euphrates section of Armenia, west to Greater Armenia. The boundaries of Armenia Minor underwent many changes throughout history. In its largest form it lay between the southeastern shores of the Black Sea (including Trebizond) and the Taurus Mountains in Cilicia. At the turn of twentieth century, Armenia Minor was mainly included in the vilayet of Sivas, with parts of it in the vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Kharput (Mamuret el-Aziz), Aleppo, and Adana. Armenia Minor was also called Lesser Armenia.

Catholicos - The supreme religious leader of the Armenian people.

Duma - The Russian Parliament.

Greater Armenia - See Armenia Major.

Lesser Armenia - See Armenia Minor. In this book the term Lesser Armenia is given to Cilicia, most probably based on the fact that the boundaries of Lesser Armenia once reached the Cilician Taurus mountain ranges.

Quai d'Orsay - The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Six Provinces - See Vilayet.

Sublime Porte - The Ottoman/Turkish government.

Tetrad Entente - The Triple Entente was also called Tetrad Entente after Italy joined Great Britain, France, and Russia against the Triple Alliance in 1915.

Triple Alliance - A name originally given to a treaty signed in 1882 between Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy. However, when World War I broke up in 1914, Italy first remained neutral. Instead, Turkey joined Austria-Hungary and Germany. In this book Triple Alliance is the unity of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey.

Triple Entente - Great Britain, France, and Russia.

Upper Armenia - The first province of Greater Armenia, known also as Province of Karin after its main city's name. From this highland begins the Euphrates River and other rivers. It was composed of nine districts in the seventh century and corresponded to the vilayet of Erzerum at the turn of the twentieth century.

Vilayet - Administrative unit in Turkey established in 1866, based on the Constitution of 1864. In late nineteenth century, the Armenian territories under Ottoman rule were included in the vilayets of Van, Erzerum, Bitlis, Kharput, and Trebizond. Cilicia was included in the vilayet of Adana. During World War I, there were six Armenian vilayets (provinces) which are mentioned in this book—Van, Bitlis, Erzerum, Kharput (Mamuret el-Aziz), Diyarbakir, and Sivas.

# Preface

At the moment when the Great War began Armenia, divided between Russia and Turkey, repressed by force or actual massacre, had no defense ... A grim alternative was presented to the Armenian leaders ... They took the remarkable decision that if war should come, their people in Turkey and in Russia should do their duty to their respective Governments. They thought it better to face fratricidal strife in the quarrels of others than to stake their existence upon the victory of either side...

When Turkey attacked Russian Armenia, the Czar's Government, fearing that a successful defense of Caucasia by Armenians would dangerously inflame the Nationalist aspirations of the race, conveyed a hundred and fifty thousand Armenian conscripts to the Polish and Galician fronts and brought other Russian troops to defend Armenian hearths and homes in Caucasia. Few of these hundred and fifty thousand Armenian soldiers survived the European battles or were able to return to Caucasia before the end of the War. This was hard measure. But worse remained. The Turkish war plan failed. Their offensive against Caucasia in December, 1914 and January, 1915 was defeated. They recoiled in deep resentment. They accused the Armenians of the Turkish eastern districts of having acted as spies and agents on behalf of Russia, and of having assailed the Turkish lines of communication. These charges were probably true; but true or false, they provoked a vengeance which was also in accord with deliberate policy. In 1915 the Turkish Government began, and ruthlessly carried out, the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia Minor. Three or four hundred thousand men, women, and children escaped into Russian territory and others into Persia or Mesopotamia; but the clearance of the race from Asia Minor was about as complete as such an act, on a scale so great, could well be. It is supposed that about one and a quarter millions of Armenians were involved, of whom more than half perished. There is no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reasons. The opportunity presented itself for clearing Turkish soil of a Christian race opposed to all Turkish ambitions, cherishing National ambitions that could only be satisfied at the expense of Turkey and planted geographically between Turkish and Caucasian Moslems. It may well be that the British attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula stimulated the merciless fury of the Turkish Government. Even, thought the Pan-Turks, if Constantinople were to fall and Turkey lost the war, the clearance would have been effected and a permanent advantage for the future of the Turkish race would be gained...

The arrival of the Grand Duke Nicholas in the Caucasus at the beginning of 1916, his masterly capture of Erzeroum in February, 1916, and his conquests of Turkish territory in North-Eastern Asia Minor revived Armenian hopes. The entry of the United States raised them higher. But the Russian Revolution quenched this flicker.

Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis—1918–1928: The Aftermath*  
(New York, 1929) 428–433.

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## On This Book

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This book of correspondence, minutes, and memoranda is about the aspirations of a people for autonomy and a dignified life. It is about conflicting political interests and an unprecedented tragedy. It is about crumbling empires and emerging nations. It is about World War I.

The presented documents reflect the events of 1915 through 1918 from the perspective of the Armenian National Delegation, who sided with the Triple Entente (Russia, France, and Great Britain) in order to fight for Armenian rights, as well as the rights of all persecuted peoples against the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey).

These documents do not present the entirety of the negotiations entrusted to the Armenian National Delegation, even though they clearly outline the major developments during World War I.

The reason only a portion of the archives is translated here is a simple one. The originals of the documents presented in this book have vanished!

In 1923, Kapriel Noradounghian, Boghos Nubar's successor as the president of the Armenian National Delegation, asked Aram Andonian, the director of the Bibliothèque Nubar in Paris, France, to prepare "a concise translation of the most important documents" in the archive, paying special attention to the negotiations of the delegation.<sup>1</sup>

Andonian did what he was asked. He translated the French and English documents, and, fortunately, copied the Armenian language correspondence. Strangely enough, though, the source material Andonian used was never returned to the archives.

Therefore, at this stage, the aim of this work was to translate "Andonian's documents," and put them into circulation.

A comparison of a sampling of Andonian's translations with some original documents kept at the State Central Archives in Yerevan, Armenia, was done. The documents showed a similarity of content which supports the conclusion that Andonian did a thorough job and that "his documents" should be considered, in their essence, as authentic as the missing originals.

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## On Boghos Nubar

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*A pharos of hope...*

Yervant Odian, a famous Armenian satirist, in a biographical sketch on Boghos Nubar says: "When His Holiness the Catholicos formed the

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<sup>1</sup> Boghos Nubar dictated and wrote his minutes in French—his first language. His second language was English. *Nubar and Nubarashen*, a publication of the General Directorship of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (Paris, 1929), 21.

Armenian Delegation for Europe and appointed Boghos Pasha president, this name suddenly gained an unprecedented popularity ... It became a pharos of hope to which all eyes turned.”<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Odian recalls Poincaré, the French president, referring to Boghos Nubar as “one of those few people who combines a highest moral with a great intellect.”<sup>3</sup>

Charged to represent a nation with no independent country as the head of the Armenian National Delegation and the official representative of the Catholicos of All Armenians, Boghos Nubar was politically the most centripetal Armenian figure during the years 1913 through 1918.

Boghos Nubar (1851–1930) was born in Constantinople to a family known for its dedication to the well-being of the Armenian people.

His great-great-grandfather, Nubar, ruled the Chaventour district in Karabakh. It is told that Nubar was a great warrior who successfully protected his district against enemies until the assassination of Mekhitar Sparapet, the head of the Armenian army, in 1730. After Mekhitar’s death, Nubar was forced to abandon his homeland and settle in Smyrna, in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

Boghos Nubar’s father, Nubar Pasha (1825–1899), was an astute politician who was thrice appointed prime minister of Egypt and was instrumental in introducing judiciary reforms in Egypt. He was also credited for playing an important role in the opening of the Suez Canal.<sup>5</sup>

Boghos Nubar was a graduate of Ecole Centrale of Paris as a technician-geometrician. In 1900, he was awarded a French gold medal and honorary degree for the invention of an automated plough. In 1906, he was again awarded a gold medal and another French honorary degree at Milan’s agricultural exposition.

In 1905, as the delegate of the Egyptian government to the first general convention of Rome’s International Agricultural Institute, Boghos Nubar was instrumental in founding the International Institute of Agriculture which then helped improve agricultural techniques in many parts of the world.

Boghos Nubar also helped reorganize the railway system in Egypt, and founded the town of Heliopolis adjacent to Cairo.

Over the years, Boghos Nubar was awarded the Belgian Ordre de Léopold and the Egyptian “Mejidiéh,” “Osmanieh,” and “Nile” honorary degrees and medals for distinguished services.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yervant Odian, *Boghos Pasha Nubar* (Istanbul, 1913), 3–4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 92–93.

<sup>4</sup> V. and B. Zartarian Bros., *Hishadagaran* (Monument), vol. II (Istanbul, 1911), 277.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 284–287.

<sup>6</sup> *Nubar and Nubarashen*, a publication of the General Directorate of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (Paris, 1929), 5–7.

Boghos Nubar's services to the Armenian people began in the late nineteenth century after his election as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Diocese in Alexandria, Egypt. As chairman he provided shelter and jobs to Armenian refugees fleeing the Ottoman massacres of 1895–1896. These massacres, perpetrated by Sultan Abdul Hamid, took 300,000 lives and forced tens of thousands additional Armenians to flee the Ottoman Empire and find refuge in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

Boghos Nubar's most significant Armenian achievement is generally considered to be the founding of the Armenian General Benevolent Union in Cairo, Egypt, in 1906. This membership organization, which soon boasted chapters throughout the world, became the largest Armenian philanthropic association in history. Though presented as nonpolitical by the founders,<sup>7</sup> the union was political in nature.<sup>8</sup> It was formed to "help the Armenians of the East advance intellectually and morally; improve their financial conditions; and encourage any publication which serves the stated purpose."<sup>9</sup>

Boghos Nubar remained life-president of the union until his retirement in 1928. He donated his time and money to the strengthening of the union.

The union, in turn, brought widespread recognition for Boghos Nubar among Armenian communities throughout the world. He emerged as the kind of nonpartisan leader capable of channeling the unified participation of most Armenian political and nonpolitical organizations toward the realization of national goals. His personal wealth and his father's reputation as the brightest Armenian politician of modern times also were contributing factors in his emergence as a unique leader.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, his appointment, in December 1912, to head the Armenian National Delegation by the spiritual leader of the Armenian people, the Catholicos of All Armenians, Kevork V, was accepted by all parties with almost no objection.

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<sup>7</sup> *Vosgemadian Haygagan Parekordzagan Enthanour Mioutian* (Golden-Album of the Armenian General Benevolent Union), Silver Jubilee: 1906–1931, vol. I (Paris, 1935), 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 452–453. Vahan Malezian, the general director of the union, stated that precautionary measures were taken to not indicate that the purpose of the union was to assist all those who suffer for being Armenian, and to try to free Armenians everywhere.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>10</sup> During the negotiations at Berlin in 1878, Nubar Pasha Nubarian presented a plan for Armenian reforms, suggesting that Armenians ask for civil liberties under an Armenian general governor to be appointed for a term of six to seven years, with a structure similar to the one implemented in Lebanon. The Armenian representatives to Berlin rejected Nubar's plan as "very modest." Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrous Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 42–48.

## On the Armenian Question

*A lesson of iron spoon*

The origin of the Armenian Question dates back to the fourteenth century when the last Armenian kingdom in Cilicia (Southern Anatolia) collapsed in 1375. It was then that the aspiration of reestablishing Armenian sovereignty was planted. However, the question officially gained recognition in the nineteenth century as part of the Eastern Question.

The term Eastern Question was first used in 1822, during the congress of the Holy Alliance in Verona, where the powers discussed the tense situation in the Balkans, upon eruption of the Greek liberation movement. At this point, the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor became a major issue in world politics for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

The Armenian Question, as such, surfaced at the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1878, during negotiations which resulted in the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) and its Article XVI. The article stated: "Since the evacuation of Russian troops from the territories which they occupy in Armenia and which ought to be returned to Turkey could give rise to conflicts and complications prejudicial to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte, with no further delay, promises to bring about the improvements and reforms called for by local needs in provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their safety against the Kurds and the Circassians."<sup>12</sup>

Article XVI, however, was soon changed into Article LXI during the Congress of Berlin on July 8, 1878. This version bound the Porte to introduce "without further loss of time such ameliorations and reforms as are called for by the local conditions of the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to take measures to protect them against the Circassians and Kurds."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Eastern Question...means the problem or group of problems that result from the occupation of Constantinople and the Balkan Peninsula by the Turks ...The solution of the problem...depended upon the answer to two questions: Was Turkey to be executed entirely from Europe, and if so, how was her territory to be distributed? Was Russia, or Austria, or any other Power to win practical mastery of the Danube and Dardanelles by establishing a semi-protectorate over the Balkan nations or Turkey?" Charles Seymour, *The Diplomatic Background of the War 1870–1914* (New Haven, 1916), 195.

<sup>12</sup> Yves Ternon, *The Armenians—History of a Genocide* (New York, 1981), 51. This document is significant in many ways. Turkey accepted that the occupied territories called the Armenian provinces were Armenia; that there was a need for reforms; and that there was an issue of physical safety for the Armenians.

<sup>13</sup> Sir A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783–1919*, (New York, 1923) 141.

The Treaty of Berlin sparked a turn in Armenian political thought. Disappointed Armenians embraced the idea of armed struggle—a by-product necessitated by the oppressive Ottoman regime. In a February 20, 1894, telegram Paul Cambon, the French ambassador to Constantinople, attributed the birth of the Armenian revolutionary phenomenon to the intrigues of the Ottomans.<sup>14</sup> Many scholars adopted Cambon's theory,<sup>15</sup> while others, such as Roy Douglas, related the rise of Armenian revolutionary tendencies to the failure of the European powers to take effective actions.<sup>16</sup>

This approach, however, wrongly deprives Armenians of their role as active participants in determining their destiny. No doubt, the Armenians were subject to manipulations by the Ottoman authorities and the European powers. But also, no doubt, they were keenly aware of the logic of history in the nineteenth century—armed resistance is the means of realizing national aspirations, whether modest or ambitious, whether security of life or independence.

Liberation movements in Turkish Europe,<sup>17</sup> and the events in Zeitun,<sup>18</sup> all preceding the Treaty of Berlin or coinciding with it, taught Armenian leaders that none of their national aspirations could be realized without the use of power. This belief was well illustrated by Archbishop Khrimian in a sermon delivered at Constantinople in 1878. Khrimian compared the Treaty of Berlin to a dish of liberty from which the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Montenegrins took their shares thanks to their iron spoons, while the Armenians ate nothing because their spoon was made of paper.<sup>19</sup>

The organization of Armenian armed societies and revolutionary parties took place at a time when the major European powers and the Ottoman

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<sup>14</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (Providence, 1995) 34–36.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 34–36. See also Yves Ternon, *The Armenians—History of a Genocide* (New York, 1981), 73.

<sup>16</sup> Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (Providence, 1995), 36.

<sup>17</sup> Serbia gained autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1815, after a revolt in 1804; Greece gained independence after the eight years' war in 1829; Bulgaria's independence in 1878 was a result of a rebellion which began in 1876.

<sup>18</sup> Zeitun, known as the Armenian Montenegro, was granted semiautonomy in 1622. The Sublime Porte later made constant attempts to subjugate the town. In the nineteenth century, Zeitun revolted twice against Ottoman oppressive policies. The first was the revolt of 1862, which ended with a French intervention and the appointment of a Turkish governor, and the second began in 1877 and resulted in the reinstatement of the semiautonomous status of the town in 1879.

<sup>19</sup> Louisa Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement—The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), 28–29.

Empire were in constant conflict, and the European powers increased the intensity of their interventions on behalf of the Ottoman Empire's Christian population.

One such intervention was in May 1895, when the British, French, and Russians called for reforms in the Armenian provinces. The call was answered by widespread massacres organized by Abdul Hamid II. The sultan played on the conflicting interests of the powers to claim the lives of at least 300,000 Armenians.

This protogenocide offered the first evidence of a Turkish policy of ridding the empire of the Armenians and the Armenian Question.<sup>20</sup>

Did Armenian revolutionaries provoke these massacres, and, later, the genocide? Ronald Suny brilliantly presents the hierarchy of preceding developments: how the failure of reform in the Ottoman Empire on legal grounds precipitated the search for alternatives (organized resistance); how resistance provoked responses which, in turn, provoked more resistance and foreign interventions; how the Ottoman government planned to eliminate the Armenian threat.<sup>21</sup>

In 1908 the Young Turk movement and the declaration of a new constitution brought the Armenians some hope that they would finally enjoy the freedom, justice, and equality they sought as Ottoman subjects. But the Young Turks soon demonstrated their intentions to follow the policy of their predecessors, when in the spring of 1909 approximately 30,000 Armenians were massacred in the Cilician city of Adana and surrounding villages.<sup>22</sup>

The Balkan War of 1912–1913 ended with a partial dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey lost, almost entirely, its holdings in Europe. Thus, the Armenian Question was brought to a new juncture.

## On the War and its Aims in Asia Minor

*“Certain of the European states have desired that Ottoman power should be weakened if not destroyed, while others have desired that it should be reaffirmed. But to none of them has the fate of the Turkish Empire been a question of indifference.”*  
C. Seymour, *The Diplomatic Background of the War 1870–1914* (New Haven, 1916) 197.

World War I began on July 28, 1914, exactly a month after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, Serbia. Pan-Germanism clashed with Pan-Slavism. The culmination of all colonialist

<sup>20</sup> In the sixteenth century, Sultan Selim I intended to massacre the whole of the Christian population of his dominion. Selim's designs became possible in the twentieth century when German advisors began to counsel the Turkish government. J. Selden Willmore, *The Great Crime and its Moral* (New York, 1917), 213–214.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *Armenia in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 1983), 16–17.

<sup>22</sup> J. Selden Willmore, *The Great Crime and its Moral* (New York, 1917), 213–214.



plans divided Europe into two major groups—the Triple Entente, and the Triple Alliance.

On July 28, 1914, the Austro-Hungarians declared war on Serbia. Soon after, on August 1, Germany declared war on Russia; two days later France and Germany were caught in war; on August 4, Great Britain declared war on Germany; a day later Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia; a week later Britain and France jointly declared war on Austria-Hungary; and finally Turkey came to the picture, entering the war on November 1, 1914.

The stage was set. One of the most crucial dramas of the Armenian Question began to play.

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Turkey's ambition included restoration of the Ottoman Empire and its development into a Pan-Turkic state, or, at least, the maintenance of its territorial integrity in Asia Minor. To do so, Turkey aligned with Germany, wrongly believing that Germany had no territorial ambitions, except a desire to strengthen the Ottoman Empire. By this time Britain had already established itself in Egypt; Italy had seized Tripoli in Africa; France was known for its desire for Syria; and Russia had demonstrated determination to possess Armenia and the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It was not known, perhaps, to the Young Turks that the Germans "were striving for a gradual occupation of the entire territory in the form of a protectorate," as was concluded by the Austro-Hungarian military attaché at Constantinople.<sup>23</sup>

Djemal, the Turkish war minister, was convinced—a belief probably shared by other Young Turks—that the Entente powers had promised to deliver Constantinople to Russia.<sup>24</sup> This led to the secret Turko-German treaty of August 2, 1914, by which Turkey agreed to intervene in any struggle in which Germany and its Austro-Hungarian ally might be engaged.

In order to maintain its territorial integrity, Turkey also had to rid itself of any and all internal threats. "The war gave the Turks the opportunity they had so long desired...the opportunity namely of settling the racial problems in their empire. In 1915, they struck out on a policy of 'Turkification' or of destruction outright of the alien elements in their midst. The Armenian deportations represented an extreme case of their activities."<sup>25</sup>

The threat to hold Turkish leaders responsible for the Armenian massacres by the Allies, in 1915, apparently became an additional reason for the Turkish leaders to look upon Germany "as their only shelter from punishment by outraged Christianity."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bernadette E. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, vol. I (New York, 1930), 92.

<sup>24</sup> Djemal Pasha, *Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman* (London, 1922), 67.

<sup>25</sup> Frank P. Chambers, *The War Behind the War 1914–1918* (New York, 1939), 87

<sup>26</sup> Charles F. Horne (ed.), *Source Records of the Great War*, vol. III (National Alumni, 1923), xxxi.

Since the days of Peter the Great and Catherine II, Russia's aim had been to rule the northeastern Mediterranean, turning the Black Sea into a Russian lake, and securing the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus under its control.<sup>27</sup>

Upon Russia's defeat in Manchuria at the hands of Japan, winning control over the Straits became Russia's first concern. The rise of Germany had sealed off the Baltic Sea. Access to the Pacific Ocean was cut off by Japan, and reaching the Persian Gulf was sacrificed to Great Britain in 1907.<sup>28</sup>

On August 16, 1914, the British, French, and Russian governments, unaware of the Turko-German pact, offered a guarantee of independence and territorial integrity to Turkey on the condition that it continue its neutrality—a game Turkey played successfully until its army was fully mobilized. It was only after Turkey's entry into the war that Russia was freed to revert to its historical ambition.<sup>29</sup>

The Dardanelles was a pivotal area also desired by Austria-Hungary because of its importance to Austrian trade. Gaining control over the Danube River was meaningless without control of the Straits. Especially after Austria's defeat in Prussia in 1866, and its lost hopes for control over Central Europe, Austria's ambitions turned toward southeastern Europe where it confronted the Slavic resistance and Russia, the Slavic protector.

Germany was new to the game. It wasn't long ago that for Bismarck the whole Eastern Question was not worth the bones of a single "Pomeranian grenadier." But things changed. In its search for new markets, Germany turned its eyes to Mesopotamia, believing it could penetrate without much trouble.

The Turkish concession granted to Germany in 1899 to extend a railway from Konia to the Persian Gulf was the first step in the German plan. The emerging Baghdad railway project also meant emerging German domination in Mesopotamia, certainly seen as a threat by both Russia and Britain.

Rohrbach, the German ideologue—generally considered the mastermind behind the idea that led to the deportation of the Armenians to Mesopotamia as a reinforcement to the Baghdad railway project—had a theory that "England can be attacked and mortally wounded by land from Europe only in one place—Egypt."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "For Russia the whole Eastern Question is summed up in these words: Under whose authority are the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles? Who is their possessor?" S. Goriainow, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles* (Paris, 1910), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Seymour, *The Diplomatic Background of the War 1870–1914* (New Haven, 1916), 198–199.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. II (London, 1925), 173–174.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Seymour, *The Diplomatic Background of the War 1870–1914* (New Haven, 1916), 206.

After all, as described by Bismarck, Egypt was the “neck of the British Empire.” The loss of Egypt would mean cutting Britain from India, as well as from central and east Africa.

Rohrbach also suggested strengthening Turkey as a way to defeat the British and to gain control over the Moslems in Asia.

William II’s address to the sultan, asking him to tell the 300 million Moslems of the world that the kaiser is “their friend,”<sup>31</sup> clearly indicated the link between Rohrbach’s theories and German diplomacy.

In 1913, when the German government sent General Liman von Sanders to Constantinople to train the Ottoman troops, the friction between Russia and Germany escalated into a direct confrontation. In a communique sent by Paul Cambon, the French ambassador to Constantinople, to the French government, it was stated that with Liman von Sander’s contract *the key to the straits* was put into German hands.<sup>32</sup>

This was the state of affairs on the eve of World War I.

The Allies did not have a collectively formulated war aim. The war aims that developed sprang “from a tangle of contradictory motives. Each wanted to improve its position—almost as much against its present partners as against Germany.”<sup>33</sup>

The first mutual agreement was reached between Russia and Great Britain against Germany to counter the threat to Mesopotamia and the straits. The Russians made it clear that they wanted the Straits. King George V, on November 13, 1914, told the Russian ambassador that the Straits must be Russian. Five days later, the British announced their intent to annex Egypt.

This was the prelude of negotiations for partitions in war zones and beyond after the war was over.

The negotiations led, on January 3, 1916, to the Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and Great Britain. However, the agreement was modified on April 26, 1916, to gain Russia’s approval. Another modification happened later, in April 1917, to include Italy in the agreement by allotting certain Ottoman territories to Italy.

By April 1916, the Sykes-Picot Agreement allotted Syria, Cilicia, and three Armenian provinces to France; Mesopotamia and Palestine to Britain, with the exception of Jerusalem; and Russia received Constantinople with the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, the province of Trebizond, and the remaining three Armenian provinces in Eastern Anatolia.

The Russian Revolution upset this whole scheme.

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<sup>31</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith, *The Genesis of the War* (New York, 1923), 82.

<sup>32</sup> Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War* (New York, 1930), 515.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

## On the Armenian National Delegation

*A tool for Russia!*

The sociopolitical condition of the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan War alarmed Armenians living in the Caucasus. In October 1912, Russian Armenians convened and appealed to the czar for an intervention. Later, on November 25, 1912, the Armenians of the Caucasus created a National Bureau in Tiflis, the Georgian capital.

Meanwhile, on November 10, 1912, the Catholicos of All Armenians invited Boghos Nubar to head the Armenian National Delegation<sup>34</sup> to advocate the Armenian problem before European powers who were discussing the Balkan War in London.<sup>35</sup>

The Armenians worked on three levels: Boghos Nubar in Paris and London; Dr. Hagop Zavriev in Petrograd; and the Security Council of the Armenian Parliament in Constantinople.<sup>36</sup>

The Security Council, in a report dated December 4, 1913, stated that even though the National Delegation was appointed by the Catholicos in response to the appeal of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, and by the consent of the Russian government, the Security Council was the directing force, and Boghos Nubar closely collaborated with it.<sup>37</sup>

Despite this statement, the tone for the activities of the National Delegation, and of the concerned Armenian bodies in general, was set by the Russian government.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The National Delegation was comprised of Archbishop Kevork Utugian of Paris, primate of the Armenians in Europe; Yakoub Artin Pasha of Egypt, a founder of the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the president of the Egyptian Academy; Minas Cheraz of Paris, secretary of the Armenian Delegation to the Berlin Congress in 1878; and Haroutioun Mosditchian of London.

<sup>35</sup> Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade* (Armenia and the Armenian Case): documents (Cairo, 1946), 144–145.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 146–165.

<sup>38</sup> Evidence for Russia's predominant role is abundant. According to the above-mentioned report, the Armenian Patriarchate was supposed to formulate the final proposal "after obtaining the views of the Russian government about it." Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade* (Armenia and the Armenian Case): documents (Cairo, 1946), 151. After the proposal was ready, the Russian government told the Patriarchate that it preferred that the proposal be rephrased and submitted to the powers by Andre Mandelstam, the first dragoman of the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. *Ibid.*, 152. Boghos Nubar stayed in Paris instead of going to London because of the Russian government's opposition. Vorontsov-Dashkov, in his letter of December 22, 1912, immediately after Nubar's appointment, told the Catholicos that the imperial government "finds that it would be more beneficial for the Armenians to

The Armenian National Delegation's aim was to secure reforms in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, based on the Treaty of Berlin and the reforms project of 1895, under collective supervision of the powers.<sup>39</sup> Asking for autonomy or independence was not part of the proposals of the delegation.

After negotiations between the Armenians and major European powers on one hand, and between major European powers and Turkey on the other, Turkey agreed to the reforms project and signed the agreement on February 8, 1914.

Thus, the Armenian National Delegation's mission was successfully completed. Even though the outcome did not meet the expectations of most Armenians, it was considered a major success, and Boghos Nubar was credited accordingly.

The outbreak of the Great War necessitated the activation of the Armenian National Delegation with a chain of events identical to the initial phase—the National Bureau of Tiflis, disturbed by news reaching it from the Armenian provinces, appealed to the Catholicos to intervene; the Catholicos, in turn, appealed on August 4, 1914, to the czar through the viceroy of the Caucasus; Vorontsov-Dashkov replied on September 2, 1914, announcing that Russia would see that the reforms in the Armenian provinces be carried out, provided that all Armenians, whether in the Caucasus or across the borders, follow his instructions.<sup>40</sup>

According to the Catholicos' letter of August 4, the Armenians wanted: (1) to create an integral region from the Armenian provinces of Anatolia; (2) to appoint, in that region, a Christian governor suggested by Russia; (3) to apply self-governance in the region with equal representation of Christians and Moslems; (4) to trust the supervision of reforms exclusively to Russia.<sup>41</sup>

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refrain from presenting the Armenian problem to the consortium of the powers in London, because [the Russians] suspect that the powers would reach an unanimous decision in that respect." Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrou Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 156–157. In Paris, Boghos Nubar went to the Russian ambassador and asked him whether it was time to appeal to the powers or not. Jon Giragosian (ed.), *Hayasdane Mitchazkayin yev Sovedagan Ardakin Kaghakaganoutian Pasdatgheroum 1828–1923* (Armenia in the Documents of International and Soviet Foreign Policy 1828–1923) (Yerevan, 1972), 168–169.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrou Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 174.

<sup>41</sup> Nersesian and Sahagian (eds.), *Hayeri Tseghasbanoutiounne Osmanian Gays - routiounoum* (The Genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire) (Yerevan, 1991), 331–332.

Immediately after Turkey's entering the war, the Catholicos reformulated the Armenian demands in a letter dated November 8, 1914, in which he requested that an autonomous Armenia be formed comprised of the six Armenian vilayets and Cilicia.<sup>42</sup>

An ambiguous response was delivered this time by the czar himself to the Catholicos in Tiflis: "A bright future awaits the Armenians," and "The Armenian Question will be solved according to the expectations of the Armenians."<sup>43</sup>

Discussions followed between Armenian representatives and the Russian foreign ministry in Petrograd. The result was a document prepared by the Armenians which outlined their demands and was considered as a plan of action, with no Russian commitment with regard to its realization (see document 8). Consequently, the revival of the Armenian National Delegation was decided.

On April 28, 1915, a telegram by the Catholicos to Boghos Nubar signaled the beginning of the second phase of the mission of the Armenian National Delegation.

During phase two, the delegation went through four stages:

(1) A period of active negotiations during a time when the Allies were optimistic about the outcome of the war<sup>44</sup> and were preoccupied with their military operations;

(2) A period of stalemate, when it was clear that the war would last longer than anticipated, and during which discussions of the minor problems of minor nations were placed on the back burner. This period ended with the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which included the Armenians;

(3) A period of heavy involvement in organizational matters related to Armenian volunteers and refugees. During this period, the Allies were in dire need of the manpower of minor nations, such as the Armenians. Characteristic of this period was sporadic negotiations and the reformulation of the Armenian demands in accordance with international developments, especially once the United States entered the war (April 6, 1917), and again when the Russian Revolution led to the final break-up of the delegation from Russia;

(4) A final period of extensive negotiations, together with the Delegation

<sup>42</sup> Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade* (Armenia and the Armenian Case): documents (Cairo, 1946), 196–197.

<sup>43</sup> Jon Giragosian, *Aratchin Hamashkharhayin Baderazme yev Arevmdahayoutioun* (The First World War and the Western Armenians) (Yerevan, 1967), 229. Gilbert comments: "With these words, the fate of hundreds and thousands of Armenians was endangered, as Turkey saw in its own large Armenian minority a source of fifth column activity, treachery and disloyalty." Martin Gilbert, *The First World War—a Complete History* (New York, 1994), 108.

<sup>44</sup> Carlton J. H. Hayes, *A Brief History of the Great War* (New York, 1920), 80

of the Republic of Armenia, to ensure that Armenian aspirations would be satisfied by the Paris Peace Conference and subsequent treaties. This period was embarked upon in 1918, and continued until 1924, when the delegation was dissolved.

This book brings to life the first two periods and the sporadic negotiations which took place during the third period.

## On Conflicting Interests

A matter of numbers...

What were the real intentions of the Allies vis-à-vis Western or Turkish Armenia and its population, and was it possible to match Armenian interests and demands with those of the Allies collectively or any one of them separately?

Great Britain had no interest in controlling the Armenian provinces. British foreign policy and aspiration focused on northern Africa and Mesopotamia. Britain's concern in the Armenian territories extended only in relation to its interests in Mesopotamia. The Armenian territories were primarily French and Russian concerns.

Given the British focus, its reluctance to give a positive answer to the Armenian appeals for an expedition in Cilicia is understandable,<sup>45</sup> and its hesitation to sign the collective warning issued on May 25, 1915, against the Sublime Porte, which held Turkish officials personally responsible for the Armenian massacres becomes clearer.<sup>46</sup>

The massacres, however, were exploited by Britain in order to influence American public opinion especially and to bring the United States into the war.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Seemingly a French opposition put an end to Kitchener's initial plan of sending an expedition to Cilicia. An agreement dated January 27, 1915, between Churchill and Ogagnord clearly indicated French interests' supremacy in Cilicia.

<sup>46</sup> Benckendorff wrote to Sazonov about Grey's hesitation about signing a joint declaration. Jon Giragosian (ed.), *Hayasdane Mitchazkayin yev Sovedagan Ardakin Kaghakaganoutian Pasdatgheroum 1828–1923* (Armenia in the Documents of International and Soviet Foreign Policy 1828–1923) (Yerevan, 1972), 376–377. The British government had to be concerned not to provoke anti-British sentiments among its Moslem subjects. It was with similar concerns that the British government demanded that French authorities remove the Armenian survivors of Musa Dagh from Port Said, Egypt, which was a British protectorate. Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question 1915–1923* (London, 1984), 91.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 74–75, 80. Also see Arthur Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances l'Empire Ottoman et les Arméniens dans les archives Françaises 1914–1918* (Publication de la Sorbonne, Paris, 1983), 67.

The tactic of engaging the United States in war by way of the Armenian issue was considered equally by Russia. Russian encouragement of the Catholicos of All Armenians to appeal to the president of the United States is evidence of its desire to involve both countries in the war.

Russia's interest in the Armenian provinces dated back to the days of Peter the Great. By 1912, during the Balkan War, Vorontsov-Dashkov initiated a new policy designed to agitate pro-Russian sentiments among the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the territories of Eastern Anatolia that might easily become a battleground for Russia.<sup>48</sup>

This change, though, was not accompanied by a change in policy vis-à-vis Turkish territorial integrity. Russia's primary concern was to maintain the territorial integrity of its neighbor in Asia for two reasons: (1) to prevent any European presence in the region as a result of an Ottoman disintegration; (2) to prevent an autonomous Armenia on its borders which might ignite disturbances among the Armenians of the Caucasus who were not happy Russian subjects.<sup>49</sup>

This policy was perpetuated in Russia even after the Sykes-Picot Agreement of April 1916. Russia's preference, as stated by the foreign minister on December 21, 1916, was an independent Turkish state, as large as possible, inclined politically and economically toward Russia.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrou Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in the Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 150–153.

<sup>49</sup> Sazonov, in a letter dated November 30, 1912, addressed to the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, stated that he advised the Turkish ambassador in Petrograd that Turkey should initiate reforms in Western Armenia in order to prevent any European intervention or any unpleasant development such as the “misfortunate war in the Balkans.” Sazonov asked his ambassador to convey a similar message to the Turkish Foreign Minister—who was Kapriel Noradougian at the time—that Russia was friendly towards Turkey, and that Russia would like to avoid disturbances on its border. Jon Giragosian (ed.), *Hayasdan Mitchazkayin yev Sovedagan Ardakin Kaghakaganoutian Pasdatgheroun 1828–1923* (Armenia in the Documents of International and Soviet Foreign Policy 1828–1923) (Yerevan, 1972), 154–155. It is interesting to know that, in 1911, Sazonov was convinced that a fast collapse of Turkey was not desirable, and that Russia should do everything possible within the sphere of diplomacy to postpone such an event. This was a reflection of the overall Russian diplomacy vis-à-vis Turkey. A Russian diplomat in the same period stated that it was better for the Turkey of the Young Turks to ignite in flames rather than collapse and become a share for all kinds of ambitions. Jon Giragosian, *Yeridturkere Badmoutian Tadasdani Arach* (The Young Turks Before the Judgement of History), vol. I (Yerevan, 1982), 191.

<sup>50</sup> Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrou Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 193.



It might be safe to conclude that the Russian policy was: (1) to maintain as a priority, if possible, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; (2) otherwise, to annex and russify as much territory as possible, in case the dismemberment of the empire became inevitable in Asia Minor.

An Armenian autonomy was never welcomed by czarist Russia, and the Russian government's real intentions were clearly demonstrated by its colonization of Armenian provinces in Turkey.<sup>51</sup>

After Russia consented to allot Syria and Cilicia to France, the Armenian Question became dependent mainly on Russian and French policies, though the British were still involved and partners in deciding conditions of peace, as seen in the London pact of September 5, 1914.<sup>52</sup>

The fact that Boghos Nubar was asked to revive the National Delegation in late April 1915, after Russia had secured both British and French agreement to annex Armenia and the Straits, indicates a possibility that the revival of the delegation was initiated by Russia to “renege from its commitment”—a conclusion rightfully reached by Boghos Nubar after his meeting with Izvolski on May 26, 1915.<sup>53</sup>

The plan which guided Boghos Nubar's negotiations,<sup>54</sup> called for an autonomous Armenia—the six Armenian vilayets and Cilicia—within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire and under Allied protection.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Many military or civilian administrators of the Caucasian front suggested populating the occupied Armenian territories with Russian refugees. Kapriel Lazian, *Hayasdan yev Hay Tade Hayevrouv Haraperoutiounnerou Louysin Dag* (Armenia and the Armenian Case in Light of Armeno-Russian Relations) (Cairo, 1957), 185–186. Accordingly, Catholicos Kevork V and the National Bureau of Tiflis raised their concerns to the Russian government in June and July, 1915, only to receive Machiavellian answers. *Ibid.*, 186–189. When Sazonov suggested on June 27, 1915, a moderate policy vis-à-vis occupied Armenian territories, as opposed to two extreme tendencies—autonomous Armenia under Russian protection, or the replacement of Armenians with Moslems—Vorontsov-Dashkov agreed immediately. Furthermore, he stated: “There is no Armenian problem within the current borders of the Russian Empire;” meaning the borders prior to the occupation of the Armenian provinces. Jon Giragosian (ed.), *Hayasdane Mitchazkayin yev Sovedagan Ardakin Kaghakaganoutian Pasdatgheroum 1828\_1923* (Armenia in the Documents of International and Soviet Foreign Policy 1828\_1923) (Yerevan, 1972), 396\_399. The Russian colonization of Western Armenia was a theme constantly discussed in the Duma, the Russian media, and in the policies of General Yudenich, the commander of the Caucasian army, in the occupied Armenian territories. A. N. Mnatzaganian, *Hay Zhoghoverti Voghperkoutiounne* (The Tragedy of the Armenian People) (Yerevan, 1965), 68–69.

<sup>52</sup> R. B. Mowat, *A History of European Diplomacy 1914–1925* (London, 1928), 7.

<sup>53</sup> See document 29.

<sup>54</sup> See document 67.

<sup>55</sup> See document 8.

Since the Russian government had agreed to allot Cilicia to France, it made no open commitment to the Armenian plan. Russia placed the burden of the plan's realization upon the Armenians themselves.

Furthermore, Russia declared to France that it would grant autonomy to Armenia rather than annex it.<sup>56</sup>

The importance of this message lay in the possibilities it offered to the Armenians in shaping the theory of annexation of Cilicia to an autonomous Armenia in order to turn Armenia into a vibrant and self-sufficient state. Boghos Nubar developed the idea brilliantly in his memoranda and during his negotiations.

Thus, from the very beginning, Armenian aspirations were caught in the middle of conflicting Russian and French interests, both of which were based on the theory of annexation rather than autonomy.

After the failure of the Allies in the Dardanelles, Boghos Nubar—who was a pacifist and a conservative, and who categorically opposed the idea of armed struggle—came, in July 1915, to the conclusion that the Armenians should rely on themselves and on their volunteers.<sup>57</sup> It was too late though, for two reasons: (1) by mid-1915, close to 800,000 Armenians had already been massacred, depriving the Armenian provinces of the manpower to fight; (2) the Allies suffered from a severe shortage in ammunition, therefore, practically, they were unable to give any to the Armenians. In addition, by this time Russia was limiting the number of Armenian volunteers, fearing that they may bring about a movement of national liberation against it.<sup>58</sup>

In August 1915, the Russian intentions were expressed through the first interpreter of the Russian Embassy in London. Sablin stated that Russia must annex Armenia for the good of the Armenians; otherwise, a new problem will be added to Russia's already existing problems with Poland and Bulgaria—Armenia irredanta.<sup>59</sup>

By the end of 1915, Boghos Nubar arrived at three main conclusions: (1) because of the extermination of at least 800,000 Armenians, the Armenian Question was transformed into a new issue; (2) the volunteer movement was a source of trouble, being used by the Young Turks as justification for their Armenocidal plans; and (3) there was no sense in continuing negotiations with the Allies when all efforts would be fruitless.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See document 16.

<sup>57</sup> See document 122.

<sup>58</sup> Dzadour Aghayan, *Hay Zhoghoverti Azadakragan Baykari Badmoutiounits* (From the History of the Struggle for Liberation of the Armenian People) (Yerevan, 1976), 373. Besides the 5,000 volunteers, there were 200,000 Armenians serving in the Russian army during World War I. *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>59</sup> See document 145.

<sup>60</sup> See document 171.

The hopes for Armenian autonomy, according to the initial plan of the Armenian National Delegation, suffered further by August 1916. France made it clear in March 1916 that it would not oppose any Russian policy in Armenia;<sup>61</sup> England stated that it was giving Russia a free hand in settling the Armenian case despite its dissatisfaction with the Russian desire to annex Armenia;<sup>62</sup> and Russia exposed its real agenda against Armenian autonomy under its new foreign minister Stürmer.<sup>63</sup>

By mid-1916 it was time for Boghos Nubar to reformulate Armenian interests and to identify and acknowledge France as the state with which Armenian interests best coincided. According to the reformulated Armenian desires, France was to be allotted as vast a territory as possible in Asiatic Turkey, provided that France granted autonomy to the Armenians.<sup>64</sup>

The French government insinuated that the Armenians could count on its total goodwill.<sup>65</sup> By the end of 1916, this evolved into a commitment by France to grant autonomy to the Armenians, especially after Boghos Nubar was included in the Sykes-Picot Agreement negotiations, and France received Boghos Nubar's agreement for Armenian legions to fight alongside France in Asiatic Turkey, and particularly in Cilicia.<sup>66</sup>

This success was put at stake after the United States entered the war in April 1917, and after the Russian Provisional Government revised the foreign policy of Russia. It was time for the Armenian National Delegation to once again reformulate the Armenian desires. This time, the delegation reverted back to its initial plan with some modifications—the creation of a neutralized autonomous Armenia (the six vilayets and Cilicia, together with Mersin, and Alexandretta) under Allied protection, with a mandate to one power, preferably the United States.

The documents in this book do not cover the developments that followed and led to the Treaty of Sévres (August 10, 1920), which treated Armenia favorably, or later, to the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923), which reduced the Armenian Question to a matter of minority rights.

Despite Boghos Nubar's talent, and despite the commitment and courage of the many Armenian volunteers, the Armenian Question, in the sense of establishing Armenian autonomy, and, eventually, sovereignty in Western Armenia and Cilicia, was doomed to failure for a very simple yet significant reason—by 1918 the six Armenian provinces and Cilicia were almost entirely depopulated of Armenians due to deportation and genocide.

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<sup>61</sup> See document 181.

<sup>62</sup> See document 188.

<sup>63</sup> See documents 202 and 204.

<sup>64</sup> See documents 204 and 225.

<sup>65</sup> See document 227.

<sup>66</sup> See documents 215 through 220, and 229.

# Documents

“The maintenance of the Turkish Empire was, during many generations, regarded by statesmen of worldwide authority as essential to the maintenance of European peace. Why, it is asked, should the cause of peace be now associated with a complete reversal of this traditional policy?”

The answer is that circumstances have completely changed. It is unnecessary to consider now whether the creation of a reformed Turkey, mediating between hostile races in the Near East, was a scheme which, had the Sultan been sincere and the Powers united, could ever have been realized. It certainly can not be realized now. The Turkey of ‘Union and Progress’ is at least as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In the hands of Germany it has ceased even in appearance to be a bulwark of peace and is openly used as an instrument of conquest. Under German officers Turkish soldiers are now fighting in lands from which they had long been expelled, and a Turkish Government, controlled, subsidized and supported by Germany, has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall if possible be brought to an end...”

From the British supplement to Entente reply to  
President Wilson, January 13, 1917.  
James Brown Scott, *Official Statements of War Aims  
and Peace Proposals* (Washington, 1921) 46–47.

## Note

- a. The numbers that follow the document titles indicate the numbers on the source documents, *Bibliothèque Nubar*, Paris.
- b. The following abbreviations, used next to the numbers of the source documents, indicate the original language of the document and the source from which it was translated into English:
  - AA= Original is in Armenian, translated from Armenian;
  - EA= Original is in English, translated from Armenian;
  - FA= Original is in French, translated from Armenian;
  - FF= Original is in French, translated from French.
- c. All numeric annotations belong to the editor of this book, except document 103. All other annotations or footnotes belong to Aram Andonian, and are part of the source documents.
- d. All explanations in parentheses belong to Aram Andonian. The bracketed explanations are those of the editor of this book.

**1****The War and the Armenians of Cilicia [Memorandum]  
918–923 EA**

Cairo, February 3, 1915

There is no need to write about the massacre and persecution of Armenians in Turkey in this concise memorandum. However, it would be helpful to mention that last year, after deliberate negotiations, we secured from the Sublime Porte a commitment to implement modest reforms in Armenia.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey did not respect its commitment and even before entering the war tore up the agreement with the inspectors general who were assigned by the Sublime Porte upon the suggestion of the powers. Therefore, the Allies are the Armenians' only hope.

It is possible that Russia annex the provinces of Greater Armenia adjacent to the Caucasus. The Armenians have reason to believe that His Majesty the Czar would grant a kind of autonomy to them, under Russian rule, as it did to Poland.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, I will not discuss these matters in this memorandum.

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<sup>1</sup> The Balkan War, 1912–1913, created a favorable atmosphere for the revival of the Armenian Question in order to improve the conditions of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Since the Triple Entente was anxious to limit the German increasing influence in the Ottoman Empire, the Russian government encouraged the Catholicos of All Armenians to appeal through the viceroy of the Caucasus to the imperial government for an intervention in favor of reforms in the Armenian provinces. The reforms project, prepared by the Russian First Dragoman A. Mandelstam and Armenian representatives, was introduced and discussed in Constantinople in the meeting of the ambassadors of the Triple Entente and Triple Alliance. The project suggested the formation of one province from the six Armenian vilayets (Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Kharput, and Sivas) under either an Ottoman Christian, or a European governor general to be appointed by the powers for five years. Germany opposed the project and succeeded in pressuring Russia to remodel it. In the final reforms agreement signed between Russia (on behalf of the powers) and Turkey on February 8, 1914, there was no mention of Armenia and Armenians. The agreement was reduced to reforms in the six vilayets of Eastern Anatolia by grouping these six vilayets into two provinces under two European inspectors general to be nominated by the powers and appointed by the sultan. Jon Giragosian (ed.), *Hayasdane Mitchazkayin yev Sovedagan Ardakin Kaghakaganoutian Pasdatghteroum 1828–1923* (Armenia in the Documents of International and Soviet Foreign Policy 1828–1923) (Yerevan, 1972), 149–358.

<sup>2</sup> After Napoleon's final defeat in 1815, Poland was repartitioned by the Vienna Congress, and a small self-governing Kingdom of Poland was established under Russian control. However, after the second revolt of the Polish in 1863, Russia implemented a policy of russification in the kingdom. The memorandum speaks only of the self-governance for obvious reasons.

The situation is more complex in Cilicia, or Lesser Armenia,<sup>3</sup> which includes the regions of Zeitun, Marash, Aintab, etc., as well as the port of Alexandretta on the Mediterranean. Cilicia's status is dependent on the future course of the war. If the Russians, due to their victories, reach the sea before a peace accord, then it may be safe to predict an accord between the Allies for Lesser and Greater Armenia to be united under one regime. But what happens if a peace accord is signed before the Russians conquer Cilicia? We have to consider this option, too. Will it be left again under Turkish administration? Armenians are most afraid of this possibility, and they will not accept it, especially considering the most recent experience regarding the reforms and the Sublime Porte's unwillingness to abide with its commitment.

In fact, last year, when I was negotiating for reforms on behalf of all Armenians as the delegate of His Holiness the Catholicos to the powers, the populations of Cilicia, unable to wait anymore, were ready to revolt. A great deal of effort was required, together with the support of religious authorities, to prevent it, since a rebellion would have endangered European peace. Contrary to that, we will not be able to prevent a desperate act if our compatriots do not receive assurances that they will be free of the malicious past rule once the Turkish problem is settled. Minimally, they want annexation to an Allied power, or an Allied guarantee of autonomy. The latter solution would be a relief for the population of Lesser Armenia, and is of great importance, because the solution would neutralize the whole region where the Baghdad railway starts and ends in the port of Alexandretta. The international economic and political advantages gained by such an arrangement should not need to be underlined.

After His Majesty's British government decided to send an expedition to the shores of Alexandretta, General Sir John Maxwell honored me with a discussion asking for details on the kinds of support the Armenian population of Cilicia might offer to the expedition. In answer to his question, I hereby do not hesitate to announce that my compatriots will greet the British soldiers as liberators, and they will support them by all means, assuming that their local national authorities will not oppose such a move. Today, when no danger threatens European peace, because the war is a fact, I would be one of the first to advise my compatriots to join the British soldiers if I could be assured that they will not be subjected to revenge, as happened in the vilayets of Erzerum and Van. There, the Turks, after the Russian retreat to the Caucasus and upon the battles of Ardahan and Sarikamish, massacred the Armenians who joined the advancing Russian soldiers in Armenia at the beginning of the war and offered them support, in hopes that the Russian occupation was final.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In Boghos Nubar's papers Lesser Armenia is synonymous for Cilicia.

<sup>4</sup> One of the objectives of the Turks was to capture the Baku oil fields and penetrate

If England plans to seize the Cilician shore only temporarily and plans to retreat after the peace accord, the Armenians will not accept the possibility of Turkish revenge. In such a case, it is understood that we would not be able to encourage them to participate in hostile actions. Therefore, their participation can be secured only by a commitment from His Majesty's British government that they will not be abandoned after the war, that Cilicia will be annexed to an Allied power, or that the region will be granted a special autonomy and neutrality guaranteed by the powers.

In such conditions, we would be able to offer the expedition Cilician compatriots who would be invaluable support, knowing the land and the people [of Cilicia]. Thus, the British soldiers would be assured perfect and total support by the Armenians who need only guns, since the Turkish authorities have constantly disarmed them in order to prevent them from resisting the atrocities. I would like to mention that the Armenians of Cilicia, and especially those living in the mountainous region of Zeitun, demonstrated a military talent during the 1895 revolt, having resisted, for months and months, a Turkish army of 30,000.<sup>5</sup>

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to Central Asia. To do so, they had to capture Kars first which, together with Ardahan, was under Russia since 1878. Predicting the Turkish plan, Russia advanced first to Erzerum and occupied Koprikeui on November 20, 1914. A Turkish offensive followed about the middle of December. Russian troops were forced back for a short while. The battle of Sarikamish (close to Kars) and Ardahan, which ended on January 17, 1915, prevented the advance of the Turkish army toward the Caucasus, but it had grievous consequences on the Armenian population of the battlefield. "In only three days, the Turks massacred more than 10,000 Armenians north of Lake Van." M. V. Arzoumanian, *Taravor Koyamard* (Centuries-old Struggle) (Yerevan, 1989), 339.

<sup>5</sup> The resistance began in mid-October as a result of the oppressive measures of Turkish officials. The Turkish army, first under the command of Ali Bey, then Ramzi Pasha, and finally Edhem Pasha, suffered considerable casualties (around 20,000 according to the *Yellow Book*), even though it had over 50,000 troops on the battlefield. The confrontation ended on February 9, 1896, after two-week-long negotiations between the Turks, the Armenians, and the consuls of Russia, France, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany. Zeitun was granted a semiautonomous status under a Christian governor. Kr. H. Kalousdian, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heros Zeitun* (Marash or Kermanig, and Hero Zeitun) (New York, 1934), 155–169.