

# THE MUSA DAGH RESISTANCE TO THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

VAHRAM L. SHEMMASSIAN  
Vahram.shemmassian@csun.edu

The use of force in settling political scores is common practice. When a dominant force has the intent of inflicting mortal punishment on a minority and this is, in fact, the outcome, the intent and outcome acquire paramount importance in determining the nature and scope of the resultant human tragedy. This premise applies *par excellence* to the Turkish-Armenian conflict in the Ottoman Empire during the years of World War I. What transpired then constituted genocide against the indigenous Armenian minority by the Turkish ruling establishment, having at its disposal the vast resources of an empire. But while the majority of Armenians was annihilated passively, some communities refused to accept death without a struggle. Musa Dagh was a case in point.

## CONSCRIPTION

The Ottoman Empire girded for World War I by announcing *seferberlik* (general mobilization). In Musa Dagh, village headmen received sealed envelopes with orders to open them when instructed. That notification came in the summer of 1914 as town-criers, having received the green light from visiting mounted officers, called upon reservists—and eventually all adult males within a broad age group—to enlist.<sup>1</sup> This momentous announcement of compulsory military service, coupled with the government's demand for circumspection regarding joint Ottoman-German military movements, caused great consternation and prompted Musa Dagh dignitaries to consult with their counterparts in Antioch. Despite the expressed concerns for the safety and fair treatment of the potential draftees in the Army, it was deemed prudent to comply with the order and thus pledge allegiance to the State. The Armenian villagers were so informed in no uncertain terms.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of men from Musa Dagh obeyed, enlisted at Antioch, and returned. But once at home, some went into hiding after hearing horror stories from compatriots who had fought in the Balkan Wars (1912-13) as soldiers in the Ottoman Army. Others falsified their age to evade military service.<sup>3</sup> German Consul Walter Rössler of Aleppo also knew “of cases, where Armenian soldiers deserted [the Army] and did not go to the mountains, but rather joined their families in order to be deported with them, although they knew what this deportation meant.”<sup>4</sup> Those fugitives who stayed in Musa Dagh roamed the wilderness, sometimes going hungry

for days and even being betrayed, kept armed vigilance over their villages, and became the embryo of resistance.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, most youths were inducted into the army, transferred to the Aleppo and Aintab districts, disarmed, grouped into labor battalions, and forced to work on the roads under adverse conditions. Catholicos (Pontiff) Sahak Khapayan II of Cilicia, who had personally witnessed their misery during his travels, feared that they would be sent to Deir al-Zor, the inhospitable Syrian desert that constituted the most notorious locus of the Armenian genocide. The Pontiff felt even greater pain in his powerlessness to plead with the Ottoman Government for the soldiers' wellbeing and in his inability to communicate with the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, for all cables from Aleppo province to the Ottoman capital required the provincial Governor's approval.<sup>6</sup> While Armenian soldiers remained in the Army until the end of war, some Musa Daghians, unable to withstand discrimination and neglect, escaped to their birthplace.<sup>7</sup> Not all reached their destination unharmed. For instance, seven deserters en route to Musa Dagh were caught and sent back to Aleppo. An imperial decree from Constantinople condemned them to death. The penalty was carried out publicly by a firing squad behind the Ramadaniye Hospital. Fr. Mkrtich Muratian, a local Armenian priest summoned to administer the last rites, buried the bodies in the Armenian national cemetery.<sup>8</sup>

With few exceptions, the Musa Dagh notables, who were essentially traditionalist, conservative and/or reactionary and who had business and patron-client relations with Turkish notables in the district, viewed the fugitives and AWOLs amongst them as a dangerous nuisance. But the Armenian notables, who were related to many of these youths through lineage, marriage and other ties, also felt ill-at-ease with the idea of surrendering them to the authorities. The deserters, for their part, regarded those notables as a threat to their very existence, warning them of grave consequences if betrayal occurred.<sup>9</sup> Although no major collisions took place between the two factions, periodic inspections by government representatives and troops to achieve a fuller implementation of the draft created tense moments for the entire population. On one occasion in the fall of 1914 a Corporal who was dispatched by the sub-district Governor of Svedia to the village of Kabusiye to apprehend any fugitives, especially one called Levon, ransacked homes and beat women and old men to extract confessions. Complaints lodged at the higher echelons of government forced the sub-district Governor out of office.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding, such incidents continued to take place. For example, special forces sent to Yoghunoluk in the spring of 1915 to search for firearms and deserters did not leave before they had severely beaten and arrested some villagers and killed a fugitive.<sup>11</sup> At about the same time, the district Governor of

Antioch, Zeki Maaruf Bey, visited Haji Habibli, summoned the *mukhtars* (village headmen) and councils of elders, and demanded their full cooperation in handing over the fugitives. Hoping to avoid a major headache, the Armenian conferees eventually relinquished some youths, who were immediately jailed and ultimately transferred to Aleppo.<sup>12</sup> In a similar event, a Major named Hasan surrounded Bitias and left no stone unturned in his search. Having found nothing incriminating or anyone to arrest, in frustration he took with him four notables and a teacher. Two of the notables were set free, the teacher escaped and returned to Musa Dagh, and the remaining two prisoners bought their freedom by paying a hefty ransom.<sup>13</sup>

Conscription proved ruinous to Musa Dagh's economy. The crunch began with the government's exaction of substantial *corvées* for the digging of trenches and construction of roads. This was followed by the imposition of a military exemption tax on men in the amount of 2 liras, and subsequently an additional 5 liras, per head. Notwithstanding these payments, the Army proceeded to enlist the Armenians by force.<sup>14</sup> In addition to these "excessive" demands, the government made "successive requisitions" of domestic animals.<sup>15</sup> In the village of Bitias, government agents gathered the horses, mules, donkeys, cows, and oxen into a central square called Kabirlik and divided them into four categories. In descending order, from the fat and beautiful to the least desirable, the animals were branded with the Arabic numerals "4" and "3," the crescent sign, and the letter "jeem." Number "4" and number "3" animals were considered outright government property, and the remainder was left in place to be requisitioned at will. Unbranded animals, if caught, would be confiscated and their owners punished. Despite the villagers' compliance, none were reimbursed for their losses.<sup>16</sup>

From early on Fr. Harutiun Tumayan, in his capacity as Locum Tenens of the Antioch Bishopric, kept Catholicos Sahak II abreast of the abject misery in Musa Dagh. "The economic crisis at this moment may exist everywhere perhaps—wrote Fr. Tumayan in January 1915—but theirs [Musa Daghians'] is more dreadful and without consoling hope," because while in other Armenian centers the needy could be taken care of by philanthropic associations, it was impossible to differentiate between the haves and have-nots in Musa Dagh. Accordingly, Fr. Tumayan implored his superior to extend a helping hand.<sup>17</sup> That plea fell on receptive ears as an emergency relief of 50 liras was sent via the Aleppo Prelacy and distributed among needy households in the six villages of Musa Dagh.<sup>18</sup> The amount received, however, was too meager to mitigate the pain, because there existed in each village an average of thirty families that lacked any means of livelihood and, therefore, subsisted on the verge of

starvation. Particularly hard hit were the widows, from whom the government now demanded six years of property tax arrears (not collected since the 1909 massacres). Thanks to Fr. Tumayan's appeals, the levies were deferred for a month, but the Antioch Government warned that unless an understanding were reached with the Ministry of Finance, a lien would be placed on the widows' houses.<sup>19</sup> Fr. Tumayan's supplication to the Governor of Aleppo province in this regard remained unanswered. Information is lacking about whether the matter was resolved either way. At any rate, Fr. Tumayan continued to urge Catholicos Sahak II to find "a miraculous way" to dispatch additional relief.<sup>20</sup>

Economic misery worsened due to the absence of much needed farmhands during the important sericulture season. As spring 1915 approached, Catholicos Sahak II petitioned the Governor of Aleppo province and Jemal Pasha, Minister of the Navy and Commander of the IV Army stationed in Greater Syria, to release at least some of the conscripts so that they could return to Musa Dagh and assist their families in the cultivation of cocoons and related activities. Denial of the request, the Catholicos warned, would cause wretchedness, in which case the government would be burdened with feeding a starving population. A just and favorable response was therefore in order.<sup>21</sup> Fr. Tumayan traveled to Aleppo to further press the case with the provincial Governor. The latter promised to cable the Ministry of the Interior (i.e., to Talaat Pasha) as well as the command of the IV Army (i.e., to Jemal Pasha), which promise gave hope for a "satisfactory result," whereby "at least the rest of the people [of military age] could stay home until the end of the Cocoon season."<sup>22</sup> The subject arose again during a meeting between Catholicos Sahak II and Fakhreddin/Fahri Pasha, Jemal's deputy, on April 10 in Adana. After making "bilious revelations" on the situation in Zeytun, Marash, Aintab, Aleppo and other localities where he had visited recently, Fakhreddin acknowledged the receipt of his interlocutor's earlier cable regarding Musa Dagh, but dismissed it as exaggerated.<sup>23</sup> Wrote Catholicos Sahak II subsequently: "The males taken [from Musa Dagh into the Army] are those who are of legal age, as they are taken everywhere. At any rate, wrong information leaves the supplicants in an awkward situation; this shortcoming is very common for us Armenians, unfortunately."<sup>24</sup> The Pontiff accordingly admonished Fr. Tumayan: "Your information given to us was such that it seemed as if there was no male left in Svedia [Musa Dagh]... Of course what [Fakhreddin] Pasha said is correct. Therefore, we recommend that in reporting there must be cautiousness and accuracy, so that the appeals do not encounter any legitimate argument."<sup>25</sup> In the final analysis, none of the Armenian appeals yielded any favorable results. In fact, the situation deteriorated in June 1915 with the invasion of locusts

that wrought havoc. Women, school children, and the elderly marched in formations sounding tin cans and pushed the insects into long ditches, where they buried them with earth. Success was limited, however, as successive swarms of locusts resembling “dark clouds in the sky” blanketed nature and denuded a good part of the vegetation, especially on the lower peripheries of Musa Dagh.<sup>26</sup> The Musa Daghians were still in shock when they received the deportation orders.

#### EXISTENTIAL DILEMMAS

When the Armenians of Kesab (Kessab/Kasab) and vicinity received deportation orders on July 26, 1915, the news sent shock waves through neighboring Musa Dagh. Without waiting for their anticipated notification, leading community members held an emergency meeting at the home of Fr. Abraham Ter Galustian in Yoghunoluk on July 29. Invited representatives from Kabusiye did not attend. The only item on the agenda was how to respond to the incipient banishment of the entire population to an unknown destination and fate. Two options existed: either to comply or to resist. Both choices loomed under the ominous prospect of near certain death, but the lesser of two evils had to be decided on. The meeting accordingly weighed the pros and cons of compliance and defiance.<sup>27</sup>

Most delegates initially opposed resistance, for two basic reasons. First, military hardware and training were utterly inadequate. According to an official ARF report, there were only 85 Gras rifles and 150-200 hunting guns available at the time.<sup>28</sup> Non-Armenian tallies show somewhat higher numbers. In all, estimated one such source, the Armenians possessed “about four hundred modern rifles, flint-locks, and horse-pistols.”<sup>29</sup> A French report indicated 140 Gras rifles, 8 Mausers, and “about 300 hunting guns, many of which in bad shape.”<sup>30</sup> But the French figures changed based on a more detailed inventory taken immediately after the eventual resistance. This count specified 502 guns and 110 revolvers, of which “70 guns (including 59 1874 model mousquetons) and 8 revolvers could be of military use.” However, 31 of those 70 guns required major repairs. The rest of the Armenians’ weapons consisted of “hunting rifles (350 with pistons) and small revolvers, nearly all in deplorable condition.”<sup>31</sup> By all tabulations, therefore, the Armenians owned no more than 612 weapons, the bulk of which was hunting guns, in bad shape and/or of no real military value. Similarly, ammunition was very low: a total of 6,000 cartridges and 106 kilograms of black gunpowder.<sup>32</sup> The Musa Daghians were also short on manpower, estimated at no more than 800 men capable of carrying a gun. Even then, not all would be able to fight because of the lack of enough weapons for everyone. Lastly, most men had no military training or discipline whatsoever.<sup>33</sup>

Second, the Musa Daghians lacked provisions. Because the mountainous terrain was ill suited for the cultivation of cereals, 90 percent of the population bought its staples from outside markets, mainly that of Antioch. An armed confrontation, therefore, especially if prolonged, would terminate the steady flow of supplies. Even the immediate or short-term prospects were not promising. It being off season, people had not yet secured their winter provisions. Moreover, there was an unwillingness to store large quantities in view of the uncertain future. The lack of money also prevented many from purchasing the necessary rations. Therefore, it would be a “ludicrous adventure” or a “masterpiece of foolishness” to defy the well-armed, formidable Ottoman Army.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, some favorable or hopeful conditions for a remotely feasible resistance existed. It is true that the Musa Daghians lacked adequate guns, ammunition, and formal training. Nevertheless, they were hardened peasants who could not only withstand all kinds of deprivation in their highly-defensible mountain, but were also excellent marksmen by virtue of being seasoned hunters. The problem of food could likewise be solved by acquiring small quantities from neighboring villages, with the anticipation of a speedy end to the World War. But more importantly, the occasional appearance of Allied battleships off the Musa Dagh coast inspired hope for a possible deliverance via the sea. What also reinforced the conviction of resistance proponents was the alternative—torturous death in the most humiliating manner along the deportation route.<sup>35</sup> The testimony of Army deserters, other natives returning from business trips, and Rev. Tigran Andreasian, who had independently witnessed the suffering of thousands of Armenians uprooted from their native soil, supported this position.<sup>36</sup> Such corroborative accounts were too powerful to be ignored.

Those who advocated resistance prevailed by a two-thirds margin. The opposition included the Apostolic clergy and some of the traditional notables, but ultimately they too joined the majority, with some exceptions. Rev. Andreasian of Yoghunoluk, who initially vacillated, also tilted toward resistance.<sup>37</sup> Almost the entirety of Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, and most of Haji Habibli thus opted for death with “dignity and honor,” while a number in Bitias continued to waver. With very few exceptions, Kabusiye complied with the government’s orders without much debate. But whether they chose defiance or submission, the Musa Daghians adopted their positions begrudgingly as desperate humans aiming at survival.<sup>38</sup>

The representative assembly then debated the location for their self-defense. Some argued in favor of gathering in one of the more defensible villages. Rev. Andreasian vehemently opposed this idea, because the enemy could easily encircle and obliterate any one concentration. Besides,

the Armenians would be cut off from the sea, “which inspired the most rational hope for our salvation.” He proposed, instead, that the villagers gradually withdraw to the mountain crags, wherefrom they could engage the Ottoman forces with guerrilla tactics, preventing them from resting or camping at night. And although it would be impossible to defend the entire mountain with limited manpower, this strategy would allow the necessary mobility for the defenders to change location as needed. Movses Ter Galustian and others concurred.<sup>39</sup>

Before adjourning, the meeting contemplated a last-ditch effort to save the people by sending a deputation to Antioch to implore and/or bribe the Turkish notables in exchange for exemption from deportation. The Musa Dagh envoys embarked on their mission the following morning, July 30, with low expectations.<sup>40</sup> Unbeknownst to them, three days earlier a delegation from Kesab consisting of the Protestant Pastor Tigran Guntagjian, the notable Sargo Mahtesian, and John M. Herter, director of a German orphanage at Kesab, had traveled to Antioch on the way to Aleppo to solicit German Consul Rössler’s intercession to secure a cancellation or postponement of the Kesab exodus. While in Antioch, the Kesab delegation was joined by local Armenian dignitaries and a few influential Musa Daghians there on business for consultations regarding the adoption of a common strategy. After a thorough assessment of the situation, it was deemed more prudent for Herter to proceed to Aleppo alone. The other delegates would return to Kesab and look into the possibility of sending at least the able men to Musa Dagh for a joint defense. A letter addressed to Dr. Avetis Injejkian, the ARF leader in Kesab, requested his cooperation. Shortly after the delegates’ departure to their respective destinations, the government rounded up the remaining notables, including the Musa Dagh businessmen.<sup>41</sup> It was at this juncture that the Musa Dagh emissaries arrived in Antioch and, heeding the advice of Turkish acquaintances, returned to Musa Dagh empty-handed and recommended acquiescence.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, on July 30, Turkish gendarmes had visited Musa Dagh to serve the official deportation notice. The declaration, signed by district Governor of Antioch Zeki Maaruf Bey, stated:

1. Let it be noted that, seven days from the date of this announcement, all Armenians living in the Kaza of Antioch must leave Antioch and its surrounding villages. Everyone must, during this period, arrange for his or her personal affairs and means of transportation.

2. During the relocation of the Armenians to areas determined by the government and during the course of the journey, their comfort, peace, and protection against all kinds of extortion will be insured by the gendarmes.

3. Transportation and food for families whose poverty has been established will be provided by the government.

4. Possessions and items remaining behind will be registered, one by one, in a ledger and stored in secure places and protected by the government. Later, the monies acquired from the sale of these items will be deposited in government safes and sent to the owners.

5. The personal rights of the refugees will be protected after they comfortably inhabit their assigned locations.

6. Under my chairmanship, I have formed a committee to make certain that the relocation does take place, that it will be conducted properly, that personal rights will be protected, and that possessions and movable items are registered in ledgers.

7. Individuals subject to the relocation must support the government's operation with complete trust. Other Ottoman subjects must respect and observe this right, which is protected in every way, since the pending relocation is going to be an ordinary migration.

8. Warning—be it the people or the officials, both must behave in an orderly fashion. Whoever is found negligent in these matters will immediately be arrested and court martialed.<sup>43</sup>

An addendum, signed by the sub-district Governor of Svedia, Khaled, gave the *mukhtars* and their councils seven days to prepare for exile.<sup>44</sup> The inhabitants of Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, and Haji Habibli, and many from Bitias, shunned the order, although they initially feigned submission in order to prepare for resistance. And when it was time to move, they took the mountain trails instead of the road to exile. That ascent occurred between July 31 and August 2 before the very eyes of Ottoman soldiers guarding the village passes. The Armenians interpreted this puzzling inaction on the part of the troops as reflective of the Government's conviction that it could subjugate the resisters with little or no effort or persuade them with deceitful promises.<sup>45</sup> At this juncture Movses Ter Galustian communicated with the Armenians of Kesab in an effort to persuade them to defy the deportation order. Conflicting responses were given: Kesab was ready to resist alone, would join Musa Dagh, or would send some armed youths as a token of solidarity. None of these responses materialized.<sup>46</sup> The Armenians of Antioch, who had received a similar invitation, expressed readiness to join Musa Dagh if Kesab took the lead. Neither, therefore, was this call heeded.<sup>47</sup>

As the Armenians of Musa Dagh proceeded to settle in the uplands, Khaled sent three additional letters. The first mentioned the well-being of the deportees, at the same time reminding the resisters of the seriousness of their responsibility and asking them to come down. The second note was addressed to Fr. Ter Galustian and the notable Melkon Guyumjian. Both were chided for conduct inappropriate to their stature. However, the note

continued, their sagaciousness would make them realize the terrible end awaiting their followers. The right thing to do, therefore, would be to surrender immediately, otherwise they would be held accountable for the blood spilled and the tears shed. The third call to submission was conveyed through an Armenian delegation consisting of Fr. Vardan Varderesian and Haji Khichir Martirian from Haji Habibli and Pastor Harutiun Nokhutian and Gevorg Sherpetjian from Bitias. All three messages failed to persuade the resisters to surrender.<sup>48</sup>

The two Protestant ministers, Rev. Andreasian and Rev. Nokhutian, had an opportunity to confer alone. Rev. Nokhutian opposed resistance. Newly married, he had concerns for the well-being of his wife, disliked revolutions in general, and had no faith in the people's ability to defend themselves. Like others, he saw no logic in any form of opposition to the Government given the serious shortage of provisions, military and domestic. Despite his awareness of the tragic fate of Armenians elsewhere, he criticized those Army dodgers who had persuaded the Musa Daghians to take up arms.<sup>49</sup> He also "thought it would be wiser for his congregation to await the Turkish gendarmerie because the Turks were known to be lenient to Protestants in fear of the American and German missionaries in Turkey," although he had not received any such promise.<sup>50</sup> Rev. Nokhutian was not opportunistic or timid: he refused to renounce his Christian faith later in exile even if it meant further banishment or death.<sup>51</sup> He similarly managed to obtain permission to run an orphanage for deported Armenian children in Hama.<sup>52</sup> His critics have vilified him as the main catalyst for so many Protestant families from Bitias opting for deportation.<sup>53</sup> His only known apologist, his nephew, has hailed him as a clever, brave, and heroic person for making the right decision—compliance with the deportation order.<sup>54</sup> A hero Rev. Nokhutian certainly was not, but like all Armenians he was a victim of genocide with a natural human yearning for the prolongation of that most precious commodity—life.

At the end of his tête-à-tête with Rev. Andreasian, Rev. Nokhutian hinted that he might join the majority on the mountain if he perceived a lack of resolve on the part of the Army to attack the resisters.<sup>55</sup> His compliant attitude and behavior back in Bitias, however, did not manifest such a mood,<sup>56</sup> and his congregation, together with some Apostolic families, were further polarized in terms of which way to go. Offspring, siblings, engaged couples, in-laws, and other members of extended households were thus torn apart, without the faintest idea whether they would be reunited.<sup>57</sup> Because of the irresolution of the local priests and the anti-resistance attitude of some of the notables, a similar situation prevailed in Haji Habibli, albeit on a smaller scale.<sup>58</sup> And in Kabusiye, neither the two Apostolic clergymen nor, for that matter, anyone else, with the

exception of a handful of people, could muster any stomach to challenge or even debate the determination of the two local strongmen, Gevorg Paljian and Samson Payramian, to accede readily to the government's order.<sup>59</sup> For one-third of Musa Daghians the stage was thus set for deportation, while the two-third majority prepared to create a feasible resistance machine with all that was available to it.

The above situation clearly demonstrates that the Musa Dagh resistance was a spontaneous act against the Ottoman Government's deportation order and not a pre-planned insurgency, as subscribers to the official Turkish narrative argue. For example, ignoring the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, as well as relying on Franz Werfel's fictionalized historical novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and Ottoman military sources, Edward J. Erickson, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army, has elected to view the Musa Dagh resistance as part of a general, empire-wide "Armenian Rebellion" to which the Ottoman Army responded by applying "counterinsurgency" tactics.<sup>60</sup> While many of Erickson's assertions are challenged below, suffice it to quote here two statements by an official representative of Germany, the closest political-military ally of the Ottoman Empire during the war. German Consul Rössler on November 8, 1915 wrote to his Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg: "...There is no proof that the [Svedia] district had from the beginning been planning a revolt. On the contrary, it was driven to rebellion by the threatening deportation."<sup>61</sup> Also on November 8, Rössler reported to his Ambassador in Constantinople, Paul von Wolff-Metternich: "The uprising of the Armenians in the area of Suedije [Svedia]... was, even according to reports from the Turkish military side, not a pre-planned conspiracy, but rather an uprising born from the moment, which was mainly due to the bungling of the Kaimakam of Ladakije [must be Antioch – V.S.] when he announced the order for deportation." He then added: "Also the taking on board of the insurgents of Suedije by French warships was not a long-planned act. For this fact speak the circumstances and the opinions of well-informed Turks."<sup>62</sup>

#### THE RESISTANCE MACHINE

Although some incongruous accounts concerning the human, structural, and chronological components of the Musa Dagh resistance machine exist, broadly speaking it underwent three stages dictated by shifting exigencies: uncoordinated clustering, centralization, and planned decentralization. As people ascended the mountain from various directions, they camped at four different locations: Kizilja, Kuzjehaz, Damlajik, and Kaplan Duzaghi. During the first week of August, traditional notables led the concentrations at Kizilja and Damlajik, whereas that of Kaplan

Duzaghi lacked collective leadership. On the other hand, the male population of the Kuzjeghaz encampment elected a seven-member council which would be augmented by three persons representing the fighters.<sup>63</sup>

An uncoordinated, centrifugal mode of operation could not sustain a viable resistance. This fact necessitated the creation of a central governing body that would run both the civil and military affairs of the entire population. On August 7 the leaderships of Kizilja, Kuzjeghaz, and Damlajik met at a plateau called Tataralang to discuss the issue. Elected representatives from among the Bitias and Haji Habibli inhabitants were likewise invited but could not arrive on time, and Rev. Nokhutian and Movses Renjilian, who were still in Bitias and vacillating, did not show up. Hardly had the assembly elected its Chairman and Secretary when news of the first Turkish attack forced the meeting to adjourn.<sup>64</sup> Within the next few days the fighters were regimented into forty-three units, each comprising twelve men led by a corporal.<sup>65</sup> Soon after August 12, as the initial clashes subsided, representatives from the various camps met once again, this time at Damlajik, and formed a Central Administrative Council (CAC) consisting of a Chairman, a Secretary, and fourteen members.<sup>66</sup> Rev. Andreasian chaired the group. Several attributes must have propelled him to that position. According to people who knew him well, he was endowed with a daring spirit bordering on adventurousness, complemented by a logical mind, level-headedness, and clarity of vision. He was, moreover, one of the most learned men of the entire lot, having graduated from the Central Turkey College in Aintab (1911) and the Theological Seminary in Marash (1914) with a full resume as a teacher and preacher to his credit at the youthful age of twenty-seven. Despite his ministry to the minority Protestant community, he commanded respect among a broad spectrum of fellow villagers.<sup>67</sup>

The CAC's fundamental task was to create and oversee a feasible resistance machine that consisted of two parts, one civil and one military. Rev. Andreasian and his colleagues met twice daily and designed, implemented, and changed plans as necessary. They also managed virtually all aspects of daily life, assigned various tasks, prosecuted and punished delinquents, maintained general order, coordinated the construction of shelters and clearing of trails, and secured communication with the outside world.<sup>68</sup> Although food was not stored in a central depot and rationed, the CAC secured the provision of meat for the fighters. Wheat and other staples were scarce because on the eve of the resistance people had virtually no cash and lacked sufficient faith in the future to stockpile large quantities of cereals. What little was available was cooked with great difficulty because of the abnormal living conditions. As a small supplement to their diet, a number of peasants, crossing the enemy line

under cover of darkness, ventured out into their orchards and fields and those of Alawites to pick fruit and corn. But these “surgical” measures hardly sufficed to feed a large population.<sup>69</sup> In addition to the fear of imminent hunger, the CAC faced other difficulties. Displacement, unusual living conditions, and the mounting horror of inevitable extinction accentuated complaints, disagreements, and myriad social problems. As tensions mounted, so did the reluctance to take orders or advice from each other; there were many leaders but hardly any followers. Unable to impose its full authority at all times, the CAC acted judiciously to avoid worse scenarios.<sup>70</sup>

The CAC created its military wing by appointing Movses Ter Galustian as *Sevkiyet Reisi* (chief of dispatching). He was assisted by two lieutenants, Serob Sherpetjian and Tigran Garajian.<sup>71</sup> The son of the respected Apostolic priest Fr. Abraham of Yoghunoluk, Ter Galustian, then hardly twenty years of age, possessed undeniable, albeit yet unrefined, military prowess, a characteristic that later earned him high accolades as *officier très courageux* and *vaillant officier* while serving in the French Légion d'Orient in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Cilicia. A tall and imposing personality, in subsequent decades he would play a pivotal role in Armenian politics in the Middle East as a sub-district Governor of Musa Dagh, a deputy to the Syrian and Lebanese legislatures, and a member of the ARF Bureau, that party's highest executive body.<sup>72</sup>

Ter Galustian oversaw the building of barracks, changing of guards, sending of reinforcements, transmitting of communications between the headquarters and the posts, and providing of overall logistical support.<sup>73</sup> Although the number and composition of the fighting units were kept intact, as a matter of expediency three commando units, known as *chete* bands, were created for rapid deployment in hot spots. This augmentation was necessitated by the fact that, since the Musa Daghians had to defend a relatively wide area with limited numbers, they were spread too thin, thereby rendering at least some segments of the battlefield vulnerable. Headquartered at Tataralang, these special units included thirty-three of the best fighters, who took their immediate orders from three chiefs, namely, Yesayi Yagupian, Petros Tmlakian, and Petros Tutaglian. Together with two other comrades, Yagupian and Tmlakian were tasked with the added responsibility of policing the armed forces to maintain discipline and prevent desertions.<sup>74</sup> Yagupian's portfolio, in particular, reveals that he was an early, indefatigable proponent of self-defense and a seasoned arms smuggler who had joined the Reformed Hnchakian party as a young emigrant in the United States. A man with some influence among certain youths and families in his native Yoghunoluk, he was well received within the ARF circle, many of whose members were his relatives and/or close

friends.<sup>75</sup> During the battles, he distinguished himself as a fearless soldier and a charismatic leader, for which reasons his political camp later on hailed him as almost the only moving force behind the Musa Dagh resistance.<sup>76</sup>

A relay team of ten- to twelve-year-old youngsters, known as the “telephone boys,” maintained communications between the military headquarters and the trenches. Positioned at ten-minute intervals, these runners carried written orders or messages back and forth, thereby performing a vital function in the absence of any sort of communications technology.<sup>77</sup> A town-crier and his assistant fulfilled a related task by conveying the CAC’s instructions to the civilian population and reminding them of their assigned duties.<sup>78</sup> A master gunsmith named Nerses Gazanjian led a team of three blacksmiths as superintendent of ammunitions. As such, he oversaw the repair of guns, the loading and reloading of empty shells, and the distribution of bullets, lead, and gunpowder.<sup>79</sup> Labor battalions composed of unarmed men and the elderly dug trenches, felled thick forests that hindered visibility in front of ramparts, erected barricades, and blocked trails with rocks. Although there were no doctors or other trained medical personnel, two men administered first aid.<sup>80</sup> Women provided food and water to the military posts; some even fought alongside their men.<sup>81</sup> A peasant was commissioned to kill barking dogs that could betray the Armenian positions.<sup>82</sup>

Toward the end of August, that is, after waging three major battles within two weeks, it was deemed expedient to decentralize the general command for greater efficacy. Accordingly, new administrative councils were formed in the three major concentrations of Kuzjegahaz, Damlajik, and Kaplan Duzaghi, each modeled after the original CAC, which continued to function under Rev. Andreasian’s chairmanship in a coordinating capacity. Each of the three councils consisted of four to five members and a military commander, with Movses Ter Galustian, Tigran Garajian, and Habet Iskenterian assuming the latter role in Kuzjegahaz, Damlajik, and Kaplan Duzaghi, respectively.<sup>83</sup> Ter Galustian earned that role with a proven record. Virtually nothing is known about Garajian’s background. Iskenterian, a scion of the most influential clan in Haji Habibli and the leader of the rejuvenated Hnchakian Party there, possessed a rare combination of literary talent and military valor.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the overwhelming evidence of Armenian self-reliance, Erickson injects a dose of criminality into their ranks, concomitantly invoking the participation of the elderly and children as evidence of comprehensive insurgency and demonstrating the correctness of the Ottoman troops vis-à-vis the Armenians. He writes:

The [Ottoman Army's 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry] division war diary for August 1915 noted that the Armenians had paid bandit gangs (of actual criminals) to fight against the army. Furthermore, the diary noted that many older Armenians were responsible for the coordination of joint guerrilla operations between the Armenian villages. In the minds of the Ottomans, when combined with the active participation of children as fighters, this appeared as evidence of insurgency that was widely supported by the Armenian population. In spite of these volatile issues, the Fourth Army continued to coordinate the evacuation [of] the surviving Armenians from the area of operations.<sup>85</sup>

Erickson and his source fail to mention the background of the alleged mercenary "bandit gangs (of actual criminals)." Were they Armenians, Greeks, Alawites, Turks, Kurds, Arabs, or other killers? Where were they recruited from? What was their number? How much were they paid? Were any identified as mercenaries if captured and/or killed? There is no indication whatsoever in the French archives and other sources about non-Armenians/mercenaries carried by French battleships to Port Said. If they truly existed, what was their fate? Did they vanish into thin air? Even if they so desired, the Armenians, who were generally poor and unable to buy enough foodstuffs for themselves let alone for others, could not afford the luxury of having hired murderers to fight on their side. On the contrary, with the Ottoman troops "came a horde of scallywags, including a well-known Pan-Islamic agitator, Sheikh Maaruf [from Antioch] (who had gathered the horde together and came with them to egg them on to attack" against Musa Dagh.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, within the larger context of the genocide, it was the Ottoman Government which unleashed criminals from prisons and, together with Muslim (mainly Turkish) refugees from the Caucasus and the Balkans and Kurds, utilized them in Special Organizations for the specific purpose of finishing off the Armenians in the empire.<sup>87</sup>

Second, when an entire group is threatened with extinction, it is only natural, and logical, that all of its components with some ability participate in their struggle for survival. It is true that the elderly played a role in the Musa Dagh fights; nevertheless, that role was mostly in an auxiliary rather than coordinating capacity. In fact, there was no need for "coordination of guerrilla operations between the Armenian villages," simply because the defense of Musa Dagh took place at various locations on the mountain elevations, not in the villages below, which had been vacated by the resistance proponents from the outset for strategic reasons. As for children, they acted as messengers and, in one instance, stone throwers, not as actual fighters. In the final analysis, whether or not old men and children saw some action appropriate to their age, "in the minds of the Ottomans" and

their apologists all this would still have “appeared as evidence of insurgency that was widely supported by the Armenian population” in order to justify the liquidation of that minority.

Third, what the Ottoman Fourth Army proceeded to do was not “coordinate the evacuation [of the] surviving Armenians from the area of operations.” Rather, it oversaw the dispatch of those Armenians who had decided to obey the government’s deportation order. Therefore, there was no case of Armenians surviving the fights in the “area of operations” as implied—with the exception of some thirty families from Bitias which had taken refuge in a mountain hideout at some distance from the actual Armenian concentrations, who were captured and carried away—nor a scenario of benign “evacuation.” What Erickson has endeavored to portray is a government keen on removing Armenians from harm’s way, thereby manifesting a sense of duty, if not benevolence. Other governmental action, as Erickson continues to weave his narrative, buttressed this concern and empathy, as mentioned below.

### THE BATTLES

Reality sank in when, after the dizzying swirl of events, the Armenians finally faced the enemy. There is disagreement on the dates of the major clashes throughout the resistance. Four sources indicate August 7 as the date of the first armed confrontation,<sup>88</sup> while five accounts mention August 8.<sup>89</sup> Whatever the exact date, an estimated 200 Ottoman troops,<sup>90</sup> charging from Lauchié (Levshiyé) on Svedia plain through the Turkish village of Kabakli in Musa Dag, attempted to force the Armenians into submission. After several hours of clashes, the troops retreated while the Armenians chased them back to Kabakli.<sup>91</sup> The moment’s significance for the Armenians rested in breaking their mental taboo of firing on forces representing authority.<sup>92</sup> According to Erickson, who has used Werfel’s fictionalized novel as his source in this instance, these clashes took place at Bitias village,<sup>93</sup> which does not correspond to reality, because, as stated earlier, the Armenian defenders had abandoned the villages from the outset.

A much larger Ottoman assault from Haji Habibli on the Armenian position at Bakajak took place on the morning of August 10.<sup>94</sup> The overwhelmed defenders retreated, relinquishing much ground to the assailants.<sup>95</sup> In their advance, the latter utilized two mounted cannons to relentlessly bombard any site from which gun smoke arose—a betraying signal that rendered the Armenians sitting ducks. Even so, the bombs did not cause much damage; on the contrary, Armenian gunsmiths removed pellets from unexploded shells for their own usage.<sup>96</sup> However, heavy rain and fog caused serious concern. The poorly sheltered mountaineers, food,

and ammunition were soaked through, and some of the guns were rendered useless, at least temporarily.<sup>97</sup> Also, the day did not bode well for some thirty families from Bitias (mentioned above) who were captured while hiding in an isolated spot and carried away to Aleppo, but not before three persons were hacked to death on the spot. An elderly couple from Haji Habibli met the same fate a short distance away, as did the matriarch of another household.<sup>98</sup> Despite the hardships and pitched battles, when the guns fell silent in the evening, the Armenians emerged largely unscathed.<sup>99</sup>

Thus describes Erickson this second major round of fighting relying exclusively on an Ottoman military source:

The Armenians were pushed southeast and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions, 131<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment (altogether about 870 trained infantrymen) began a large operation against insurgent Armenians in the village of Hacıbıblı Köyü [Haji Habibli] on 9 August. In the village were some 1,500-1,800 Armenians, heavily armed and determined to resist. This time, the two Ottoman battalions conducted better reconnaissance and carefully encircled the village. The regimental commander then brought up his artillery. After a brief bombardment, the Ottomans assaulted and carried the village with a bayonet attack. More than 1,000 weapons of various types were found in the village (while this number of weapons seems unusually large it conforms to Werfel's descriptions). The survivors and their families were rounded up and sent into temporary camps for movement out of the area. The regiment received congratulations from the corps commander for its victory.<sup>100</sup>

While it is difficult to ascertain the exact date of clashes given the various chronologies indicated, this fight could not have taken place in the village of Haji Habibli simply because the Armenians had from the beginning moved out to take up positions at higher elevations. Neither, therefore, there could have been a case of capturing the village “with a bayonet attack” and then sending “the survivors and their families... into temporary camps for movement out of the area.” Second, never did the population of Haji Habibli amount to “some 1,500-1,800 Armenians” before 1915.<sup>101</sup> Third, the Armenians were not “heavily armed” as explained above. In short, Erickson's account is fundamentally flawed.

Although holding the enemy at bay provided a temporary respite, the prospects for ultimate success in a protracted war remained nil. The sea constituted the only channel to salvation. Finding a means to establish contact with the Allied Navy, therefore, was imperative.<sup>102</sup> While still in Yoghunoluk, Rev. Andreasian had conceived the idea of preparing a large banner with the following message inscribed in English: “CHRISTIANS IN DISTRESS—RESCUE.” On the mountain, this idea was met with

skepticism, and some even criticized Rev. Andreasian for wasting valuable time for its realization. He consequently carried the embroidered cloth wrapped around his waist until his comrades, unable to come up with a better alternative, dropped their objection and even proposed making a second flag with a red cross sign. The two banners, watched by several guards, were hoisted on a hilltop where they could be seen from the sea.<sup>103</sup> Should the flags be noticed by a passing Allied battleship, assigned swimmers would deliver a written petition. Composed by Rev. Andreasian in English, revised several times as the fights progressed, and placed in a sealed can to keep dry, the supplication was addressed to British, French, Italian, Russian, and American naval authorities. The August 8 version of the petition, probably the original one, described the terrible suffering of Armenian deportees from various towns and villages in Cilicia, the violation and kidnapping of young women by “the barbaric Turks, Kurds and Arabs,” the massacre of untold others, and the death of survivors in the deserts as a result of “hunger, thirst under the burning sun and persecution.” Rev. Andreasian concluded his introduction by stating: “We know certainly now that the Turkish government has decided to annihilate the Armenian nation.”<sup>104</sup> As for Musa Dagh:

Now, Sir, we are the remnant of a long-persecuted people. We have fled here for life and honor with few arms[,] insufficient ammunition and little food. The Turkish government in the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July has informed us his decision to make our villages immigrate, but we know certainly that the word “immigrate” now means complete destruction, loss of property, of honor, of life, loss of all. Hence we have rebelled against the Turkish barbarism and withdrawn to the mountains. We have decided to starve here, or die in the battle all of us, die with honor rather than immigrate to deserts, and after the loss of property, honor and all, find our death ignominiously in the hands of barbaric Turks, Kurds and Arabs.

And now, Sir, we appeal you in the name of God, in the name of human brotherhood, in the name of honor, we appeal to your gentlemanship and beseech your help. We believe that you have true Christian sympathy with us. We beseech you to transport all of us to Cyprus or a [sic] any other free land; or, if so much cannot be granted, we beseech you to transport at least our women and children, and equip us with sufficient arms and ammunition, and send us military officers, and we will use all our efforts to do something for crushing Turkish forces—the center of barbarism and inhumanity, the enemy of civilization. We need in that case three thousand mausers [rifles] or other equivalent arms, and sufficient ammunition. For particulars and other negotiations, sir, I am ready to come to your warship or steamer.

We believe, Sir, that you will at all cases help us and will not leave us to starvation or absolute perdition. You have wives and children, you know what freedom costs, it is very easy for you to imagine our lot. Please Sir, do not leave us to our lot, do not leave us to perdition.<sup>105</sup>

These arrangements were not deemed sufficient enough to attract outside attention; extra pro-activity could increase the chances for success. Accordingly, a team of four runner-swimmers headed to Alexandretta hoping to encounter a friendly warship. Three of the envoys returned a few days later disillusioned, and the fourth one did not come back at all.<sup>106</sup>

The temporary lull on the battlefield was breached on Sunday morning, August 15,<sup>107</sup> when the enemy, led by Turkish officers as well as at least one German officer, launched a multipronged offensive encircling the Armenians.<sup>108</sup> The latter put up fierce resistance at Dzovap, Sheikh Yordu, and Kizilja, but lost the southern defenses at Kor Osman, Lurch Zhayr, and Yol Aghzi. From Yol Aghzi the enemy charged in two directions, one aiming at Tataralang and one moving westward to keep vigilance in the forests. The trail to Tataralang proved the weakest link in the Armenian defenses, and it was further exposed as such by the large number of regular and irregular Ottoman forces engaged in the operation.<sup>109</sup> Over the following two days, the clashes took place with hellish ferocity amidst religious and nationalistic songs and degrading insults on both sides. An enemy column advancing from Chanakli attempted to take the water spring at Soghukoluk, but failed. Armenian women, old men, and boys, gathering at Kerteshints Khupaur, just one-half kilometer from their headquarters, hurled rocks at climbing soldiers. Other resistance took place at the Sersem well situated on the eastern hill of the Maghoy valley. The assailants, however, inched closer to victory by gaining ground from the Mazar valley to the Sinjar plateau, a short distance from the defenders' fastness, causing great panic among the civilians. The Armenian fighters stopped those who attempted to flee, surrender, or commit mass suicide. Without much coordination but with unerring instinct, they also hit the enemy flanks in a desperate move, thereby saving the day.<sup>110</sup> Two Armenian brothers from Kabusiye, who had guided the Ottoman troops, were caught and summarily executed as traitors.<sup>111</sup>

Among the enemy casualties the Armenians identified two captains, one of whom carried a letter from and a response to the German officer. The letter read: "Youzbachi [Captain] Effendi – send me the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalions that you have under your command as reinforcement; spend the night at the height where you are. Tomorrow you will take the two forests which are found on the seaside (west), and as for food do not worry. I will send it to you before midnight." The written response, obviously not

delivered due to the Captain's death, stated: "Mister Commandant: I cannot send you the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalions, because the forests about which you speak to me in your letter, are very solidly defended. Although I am certain that we will lose everything in that attack we nevertheless will obey all your orders."<sup>112</sup>

"This is the most effective resistance so far offered by the Armenians for they had invariably given up their arms before the deportation was commenced," wrote U.S. Consul Jesse B. Jackson of Aleppo on August 19 to his Ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau.<sup>113</sup> Speaking of the cumulative Turkish casualties in the entire episode, he reported to the Secretary of State: "It was rumoured in Aleppo that about 500 of the Turkish troops were killed and many more wounded in the attacks on the Armenians [of Musa Dagh], which continued over a period of about five weeks. The writer saw personally many wagonloads of the wounded that were brought to Aleppo for treatment."<sup>114</sup> The Armenians, on their part, suffered eighteen deaths and eight seriously wounded among the fighters during the entire episode, in addition to a number of civilian casualties and prisoners as indicated above.<sup>115</sup>

Meanwhile, according to Erickson,

Reports reached the [41<sup>st</sup> Infantry] division on 13 August 1915 that severe unprovoked massacres of Armenians had occurred near Musa Dağ. The division also received a report on 15 August of a massacre of over 30 Armenians in Alaaddin Köyü. A detachment was sent there to investigate and confirmed that the village was burnt. Moreover, the detachment found seven burnt bodies as well and made a complete report to the XII Corps headquarters. These reports, as well as others from throughout Anatolia, resulted in a three-member commission being dispatched in the fall of 1915 to investigate reports of atrocities and abuses against the Armenians.<sup>116</sup>

This version of history clearly tries to absolve the Ottoman Army—and by extension the Government—of culpability in the Armenian massacres that had reportedly taken place in the neighborhood of Musa Dagh in mid-August, on the one hand, and draw a picture of an Army (and Government) determined to get to the bottom of things in order, by inference, to find and punish those who had committed such crimes, on the other. But the following questions beg answers. First, who exactly were those Armenians "near" Musa Dagh that had been butchered given the Armenians of Kesab, Antioch, and (partially) Musa Dagh had been and/or were on the verge of being deported under military escort while the majority at Musa Dagh was caught in a struggle for survival? Second, who exactly dared to perpetrate "severe unprovoked" atrocities against innocent Armenian civilians

without direct orders or tacit approval from the government in an area controlled by the Ottoman Army during time of war? Third, where was Alaaddin Köyü located, because to the best of our knowledge no Armenian-inhabited village by that name existed in the general vicinity of Musa Dagh? Fourth, why was the dispatch of the alluded three-member commission of inquiry delayed until fall given the severity of the situation? One would be at a loss in obtaining answers were it not for the maxim that fit the Ottoman government, namely that it was acting as judge, jury, and executioner all at once in the case of the Armenian genocide.

Be that as it may, jolted by the intensity of the August 15-17 battles and weary of worse scenarios that might be in the offing, the Armenians now decided to communicate with the Allies and Musa Daghians abroad via Consul Jackson. Accordingly, three letters were written, one by Rev. Andreasian to Consul Jackson, one by Movses Ter Galustian to the Armenian Prelate of Aleppo, and one by Fr. Vardan Varderesian to Boghos Nubar Pasha, head of the Armenian National Delegation in Paris.<sup>117</sup> Because, as Consul Jackson maintained in reference to the villages of Musa Dagh, “communications by telegraph is [naturally] impossible with the above named places, and only meagre news leaks in from those localities,”<sup>118</sup> the letters had to be hand-delivered to Jackson. An army conscript by the name of Khacher Azapian, on official leave but compelled to stay behind due to the crisis, was deemed the most suitable person to carry the messages. But he returned shortly after his departure with unspecified excuses, so that some Greeks from Svedia were entrusted to accomplish the mission.<sup>119</sup> “We do not know if they [the letters] reached [their destination]—wrote Rev. Andreasian—but we do know that they did not produce any results.”<sup>120</sup> Despite Azapian’s aborted trip and the reported Greek connection, an Armenian messenger from Musa Dagh must have reached Aleppo to see Consul Jackson. The latter remembered the encounter three years later as follows:

Late in 1915, I think in December [must be August] of that year, an Armenian presented to me a written communication to the effect that there were about 5,000 of his race, men, women and children, on Jebel Moussa (Mount Moses), a few miles South of Antioch, and between that city and Latakia, Syria, where they were being besieged by something like 1,500 Turkish soldiers. The bearer of the letter represented that he had escaped through the Turkish lines and had made his way to Aleppo afoot, a distance of over 100 miles. A great many of the party had been killed previous to his departure, and the rest were rapidly being brought to a hopeless state because of the lack of provisions and ammunition [sic], and I was implored to take urgent steps to have them relieved.

Knowing that any appeal to the authorities would not only be useless, but would without doubt bring redoubled efforts to exterminate the entire party, I determined, if possible, to bring the matter to the attention of the French fleet that was constantly cruising in the Eastern Mediterranean. To do this it was decided to select a prominent business man of Aleppo, and who was of Armenian origin but living under a semi-Arabic name, to go to Beyrouth to attempt to communicate to the fleet the plight of the besieged.

This man was able to secure permission from the Turkish authorities to go to Beyrouth on business, and a couple of weeks later the French fleet arrived on the coast near Jebel Moussa, communicated with the Armenians, and took off about 4,000 of the unfortunates who were taken to Egypt, as I was later informed.<sup>121</sup>

As shall be seen below, the French did in fact come to the Armenians' rescue, but under different circumstances. The beleaguered resisters also thought of other ways to make their case known to the outside world. Early on, some families had negotiated with an Alawite skipper to take them to Cyprus, but to no avail. Stealing a boat from the Svedia harbor and sending word to Cyprus might be another possibility, but strict Ottoman vigilance of transports and rumors that all sailboats had been punctured and were, therefore, out of commission rendered the plan stillborn. Another plan involved hijacking a passing vessel, but reaching it posed a problem. Finally, an elderly man by the name of Movses Geregian proposed building a boat. Although no one believed that it could reach Cyprus, encountering a ship in the open seas was plausible. Described as "the second edition of Noah's Ark," the boat, in addition to its crew, would carry a duplicate of the red cross flag and petitions addressed to the captain of the first Allied battleship contacted, the High Commissioner and the military commander of Cyprus, the King and the Prime Minister of Britain, Professor Rendel Harris (an Armenophile), and Boghos Nubar Pasha.<sup>122</sup> The boat never set sail, one explanation citing the lack of volunteers to accompany Geregian (which does not seem plausible).<sup>123</sup>

On August 12/25 Rev. Andreasian also revised the August 8 appeal. This time it addressed all Allied and American "admirals, captains & authorities whom this petition may find..." It intimated that "the cry of hunger is already being heard, & the Turkish government is continually pursuing us. We have had five fierce battles against 1500 soldiers & a number of common people, & God has given us the victory." But, faced with imminent extermination, "transport us, please, to Cyprus or any other free land. Our people is not a lazy one, they will earn their own bread if they are employed." However, "if that is too much to grant, transport our

women, old people & children, equip us with sufficient arms, ammunition & food & we will work with you with all our might against the Turkish forces.” The appeal ended as follows: “Please, sir, do not leave us to starvation, do not leave us to extinction. Save our life, save our honor, before it is too late.”<sup>124</sup> This appeal was revised yet again, on August 20/September 2.<sup>125</sup> In late August a battleship cruised past Musa Dagh through the dense fog and proceeded north toward Alexandretta. The cries, the waving of banners, and the bonfires failed to attract its attention. While still in a state of despair and hope, the Armenians promptly sent a team of four runner-swimmers to communicate with the vessel.<sup>126</sup> Meantime, the Turkish strategy seemed to be to starve the besieged into submission. The resistance entered its final phase.

#### RESCUE

At the start of World War I the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron of the French Mediterranean Fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Dartige du Fournet, arrived in Port Said, Egypt. The visit surprised those who generally understood that the protection of Egypt was an exclusive British business. But the call at the port was neither incidental nor in any way connected with the security of the Suez Canal. The French presence portended the beginning of a blockade of the Syrian coast. While the military gains from such an undertaking seemed to be negligible, politically speaking the show of force may well have been intended as a poignant reminder of France’s traditional interests in Syria, ones that Paris wanted to protect by all means. The Squadron carried out its mission effectively through the end of summer 1915, when du Fournet left for the Dardanelles to replace an ailing colleague.<sup>127</sup> Before departing, however, one of his ships came into contact with the Armenians of Musa Dagh.

Around noon on Sunday, September 5, Armenian guards waved the red cross flag at a passing vessel amidst joyous cries “The ship has come! The ship has come!”<sup>128</sup> It was the French cruiser, *Guichen*, which, having caught sight of the signal, responded by dispatching a boat to investigate. Although the boat came under intense fire from the Ottoman side, it established contact with the Armenians, who described their saga and submitted a written supplication through the French-speaking Khacher Tumanian. Later in the afternoon, another Armenian representative, Petros Tmlakian (Pierre Dimlakian), boarded the ship, met with Captain Joseph Brisson, and transmitted further information on the menacing situation. Upon learning that the Turks had transformed the church at Kabusiye into an arms depot and that the village itself had become a campground for Turkish settlers relocated from elsewhere, the French bombarded those sites successfully. The *Guichen* similarly targeted the forested hills surrounding the enemy positions at Chanakli to cover some French marines

who landed at a beachhead and returned shortly thereafter. The *Guichen* briefed its flagship, *Jeanne d'Arc*, that same evening.<sup>129</sup>

On the following day, September 6, du Fournet proceeded to the troubled waters aboard the *Jeanne d'Arc*, escorted by the *Desaix*, and received Tmlakian to verify the story first hand. The latter, who left an “excellent impression,” requested that the women, children, and elderly be evacuated to safety and that the combatants be furnished 200 Gras rifles, 50,000 bullets, medicine, and 100 sacks of flour and 50 sacks of salt with which to fight another six months.<sup>130</sup> Being aware of at least one German officer fighting alongside the Ottoman forces, Tmlakian similarly asked for “a few French officers.”<sup>131</sup> In another affidavit Tmlakian detailed the composition of the general populace, the fate of Armenians, and the deployment of Ottoman troops to the south and north of the Orontes River, an area that covered Kesab, Svedia valley, Antioch, Kizil Dagh, Arsuz, Beylan, and Payas. As for Musa Dagh, he reported that there were 100 soldiers stationed at Kheder Beg, Yoghunoluk, and Haji Habibli each, fifty at Kabusiye and Magharajik each, thirty between Magharajik and Chevlik, and ten at Chevlik. In the nearby Turkish villages of Chanakli and Kara Kilise on adjoining Kizil Dagh to the north, the Army had a garrison of 120 soldiers which was responsible for firing on the *Guichen*.<sup>132</sup>

Du Fournet faced a dilemma, because “the acceptance of the Musa Dagh supplication [for evacuation] would be equivalent to suspension of the blockade [of the Syrian coast].”<sup>133</sup> However, given the gravity of the situation, whereby the beleaguered mountaineers were being more hard pressed each passing moment, the rescue of the entire group seemed to be the only feasible solution.<sup>134</sup> He promised the Armenians an answer within eight days,<sup>135</sup> and wired to his Minister of the Marine, Victor Augagneur, “warmly supporting” the Armenian requests and including that of French officers.<sup>136</sup> Should Augagneur concur, cavalry reserve Lieutenant Julien, formerly stationed at du Fournet’s Bizerte, Tunisia, headquarters and presently a Major in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Orient (Middle East) at the Dardanelles headquarters, “would be an excellent candidate” provided he agreed to assume such a role.<sup>137</sup> Because of an error by an officer on the *Amiral Charner*, the telegram (no. 1,000, key no. 1) did not reach Augagneur before September 15.<sup>138</sup>

Du Fournet left for Famagousta on the 6<sup>th</sup> to ask the British High Commissioner of Cyprus, Sir John Clausen, whether he could receive the refugees on the island, where Armenians in Nicosia could also assist their compatriots.<sup>139</sup> Clausen refused to grant asylum to the Musa Daghians, regretting that “very limited accomodation [sic] is already allotted for other refugees.” Besides, and perhaps more significantly, it was “politically inadvisable to introduce victims of insurrectionary fighting among mixed

Turk[ish] and Christian populations of Cyprus.”<sup>140</sup> Other British functionaries, however, were in favor of providing protection to the Armenians, for two main reasons. The first was humanitarian, as expressed by a certain official at the Foreign Office with the initials H.G.N.:

It is quite possible that to give hospitality to these Armenians in Cyprus would be inconvenient but I submit that not to do so would be singularly selfish and inhumane. However poor the accommodation at Cyprus may be, it is obviously better than leaving these people where they are, and it would be difficult to transport them to either Crete or Egypt even if the Greek and Egyptian Gots. [ie, governments] consented.

I submit therefore that we should urge the C[olonial] O[ffice] that the occasion seems to call for more generous treatment than the High Commissioner [of Cyprus] appears willing to afford.<sup>141</sup>

Similarly, Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell, Commander-in-Chief of British forces in Egypt, in a letter to Earl Kitchener, British Secretary of State for War, saw a window of military opportunity in relocating at least the non-combatant population to one of two Mediterranean islands. He wrote: “Everything should be done, I think, to help the movement, and, with either Cyprus or Rhodes taking their women and children, it will make an important diversion from the Dardanelles if we can promote the Armenian movement. I think it is advisable to exercise a little pressure in Cyprus.”<sup>142</sup> Such views notwithstanding, the British refrained from committing themselves to the Musa Daghians pending further clarifications. A bewildered official at the War Office asked: “What are Armenians, even Zeitunlis, doing fighting near Antioch? How is it possible to get 5000 old men, women and children to the coast? And how are we to send transports and take these people off from a hostile shore?” Therefore, “We must have more information, and not knowing that this te[legram] had reached us, I suggest that the D.W.O. should ask Sir J. Maxwell to get it from the French Admiral. To avoid confusion and overlapping we might leave it at that for the moment.”<sup>143</sup>

While the British sought answers, units of the French 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron had been in daily contact with the Armenians. On Wednesday, September 8, du Fournet, having by his side Charles-Diran Tekeian, an officer on the *Desaix* who also happened to be a relative of the Armenian poet, editor, and political activist Vahan Tekeian, met with three Musa Dagh representatives. The latter, ecstatic at the presence of a fellow Armenian, reiterated their request that the non-combatants be removed from the war zone and that the fighters be given ammunition and provisions to continue their struggle victoriously or die honorably. They also expressed their deep

love for France, under whose flag they wanted to serve. Although this last wish could not be granted for legal reasons, du Fournet, visibly moved by what he had heard, promised to let his government know about the encounter immediately. He spoke encouraging words, shook the representatives' hands, and sent them back on a special boat. While still awaiting directives from Paris, du Fournet instructed Captain Edouard-Alphonse Vergos of the *Desaix* to take charge of the rescue operations whenever necessary.<sup>144</sup>

Unable to crush the resistance to date, the Ottomans issued an ultimatum sprinkled with deceitful softeners. Making their way through the morning lull on September 9, two Alawite lads delivered three letters to an Armenian military post. The first letter, signed by a certain Benjamin Hekim (Gayegjian), a doctor of Bitias origin then residing at Svedia who probably acted under pressure, was addressed to Fr. Abraham Ter Galustian and Fr. Vardan Varderesian. The Musa Dagh deportees were safe and sound, the priests were told, and the merciful Ottoman Government might grant them amnesty. But an insurgent conduct would certainly result in total annihilation by regular troops and unruly Arabs unless the Armenians surrendered at once. The choice was clear; it was left to the clergymen's "wisdom and conscience."<sup>145</sup> The second letter, signed by 131 Regiment Commander Refat, was addressed to the five village councils. It similarly was a call to submission, with the elderly and the children being asked to come out first holding white flags, while the combatants could give up without relinquishing their weapons immediately. None would be harmed once in custody, Refat promised, warning at the same time that the Armenians would be held materially and morally responsible for their terrible fate should the fighting continue. An addendum to the letter set a two-hour deadline to respond. The third letter, written by Commander Refat to Fr. Ter Galustian, basically reiterated previous threats of violence, adding that the besieged did not have any chance of outside help, even from the sea.<sup>146</sup>

The Armenian leadership discussed the letters at length during a meeting at Damlajik. Movses Ter Galustian proposed not to respond at all, whereas a fellow villager deemed it appropriate to explain to the government that the Musa Daghians, as always, were faithful subjects rather than rebels and that they had withdrawn to the mountain not to cause any harm but to live in peace and dignity. In Rev. Andreasian's opinion, such a timid reaction would only embolden the Turks to come up with more deceitful tactics to break the people's will at the weakest moment. He instead proposed to buy time to consult with the French, a view that prevailed. The emergency gathering requested from Commander Refat a

24-hour extension of the deadline to respond, arguing that such a crucial matter required more time to confer with the people.<sup>147</sup>

Hardly had the Armenians sent word than the enemy launched a major offensive with superior forces, ones that had not been fielded previously. Toward evening, as the battles raged, the *Desaix* spotted the Musa Dagh flag making distress signals. A French armed boat carrying Tekeian rushed to the rivulet near Svedia harbor. Two Armenian swimmers reached the marines and described the day's events in apocalyptic terms. Tekeian's report back to Vergos was transmitted to du Fournet via an extremely urgent telegram that stressed the imminent danger awaiting especially women and children. On the battlefield, meanwhile, the assailants had retreated in panic with many casualties.<sup>148</sup>

Du Fournet's earnest efforts to find a safe haven for the Armenians, on the one hand, and slow down the Ottoman advance to buy time, on the other, continued unabated throughout Friday, September 10. On du Fournet's instructions, *Contre-Amiral* Pierre Darrieus, Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division—and eventually *ad interim* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron—of the French Mediterranean Fleet, called upon Albert Defrance, the French Minister to Cairo, to make a strong representation with the British authorities in Egypt for the establishment of a haven for the Armenians. Defrance initially left the impression that a solution was in sight, but once the British were contacted, General Maxwell referred the matter to the High Commissioner of Egypt. The latter, in turn, arguing that giving quarters to such a large number of refugees was beyond his jurisdiction, asked London for instructions. Defrance, meanwhile, requested the French Government's intervention in the British capital.<sup>149</sup>

While this diplomatic flurry was underway, Tmlakian informed the *Desaix* that the defenders' provisions could last only another forty-eight hours and that a major Ottoman offensive could break the resistance leading to the extermination of women, children, and the elderly, who had sought shelter in the valleys. After consulting with du Fournet, Commander Vergos ordered the *Guichen* to stay put. The *Foudre*, *D'Estrées*, and *Amiral Charnet* soon arrived as reinforcements. Vergos similarly obtained authorization to destroy the barracks and telegraph office at Svedia, as well as the munitions depots at Kabusiye and Kabakli, in order to demoralize the enemy and halt its advance. Having first evacuated wounded Armenians from the shore, the French, relying on guidance by the Musa Dagh representatives on the *Desaix* and signals from the fighters on the mountain, hit their targets with precision. Elated by this success, the Armenians chased enemy soldiers, now in panic.<sup>150</sup> Reporting the incident to the Ottoman Office of the Acting Supreme Commander, Jemal Pasha sent the following coded message from Jerusalem:

It is possible that the cruisers “Victor Hugo” and “Henry Fastersine Louis” and three other unidentified warships took up positions [sic] in Suveydiye region upon these [Musa Dagh] Armenians’ calls. Two regiments from the 41<sup>st</sup> Division and a mountain artillery team were sent against the rebels. As a result of the bombardment by warships “Victor Hugo” and “Henry Fastersine Louis” of the units and headquarters in and near Kabakli, Kabakli Village was destroyed and casualties include eight dead from military and civilians, two wounded, and 20 dead animals.<sup>151</sup>

The diversion caused by the French shelling provided some respite for the preparation of an evacuation, which had become “very urgent” in the light of the arrival of Ottoman reinforcements. Under the circumstances, the outcome of talks between Paris and London had become irrelevant, and the French naval officers decided to go ahead with the rescue operations without delay. In addition to receiving the green light from du Fournet on Saturday, September 11, Vergos contacted Darrieus for the arrangement of transports to Port Said. Darrieus immediately worked French diplomatic channels in Egypt and personally negotiated with Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Pierse, Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies, and other local authorities to find out whether they could “place under our disposal the ships that the British admiralty and the Intelligence Office could dispose of without major inconvenience.”<sup>152</sup> Although Admiral Sir Cloudesley Vary Robinson, the Senior Naval Officer at Alexandria, informed DeFrance that there were four horse transports in the port that could carry a total of 2,000 persons and that the steamer *Suffolk* stationed at Port Said could accommodate another 1,000, Pierse did not divulge this information officially.<sup>153</sup> Instead, he confirmed the contents of the report in an internal memo to the Admiralty, adding: “I consider it preferable that refugees should be taken direct to Rhodes or Cyprus in which G.O.C. Egypt concurs. Request instructions early whether transports should be used.”<sup>154</sup>

Should the negotiated arrangements with the British fail, two cargo boats found by the French Consul General in Alexandria would stand by as a contingency alternative. In either case, the utilization of a few ships to carry a large population could be at best a temporary solution with “many inconveniences, the most important of which being the difficulty to ensure the execution of sanitary measures necessary for the health of such a large group.” Still, the scheme would enable the French to free up a certain number of their cruisers, now bogged down near the waters of Musa Dagh, to resume the blockade of the Syrian and Cilician coasts. Without waiting for the official British response, the French placed their 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron on

alert to initiate what promised to be a difficult and dangerous rescue operation.<sup>155</sup>

By 4 o'clock Sunday morning, September 12, the Armenians had descended a ravine called Injints Khandaye and gathered on a tiny beach together with their animals and belongings. The fighting men, forming a human corridor, remained in combat readiness to hold the Ottoman forces at bay. The *Foudre*, *D'Estrées*, *Guichen*, *Amiral Charner*, and *Desaix* were lined up at a distance with orders to fire on the enemy if needed. Lieutenant Sagon, Maneuver Officer of the *Desaix*, acted as shore officer in charge of the embarkations, while another officer oversaw the activities of the embarkation platoons from each cruiser. Moreover, a chief gunner commanded a platoon of fifteen marines to keep a close watch on the beach and the valley that the Armenians used as their conduit to freedom. A team of interpreters led by Tekeian prepared to give instructions to the Armenians.<sup>156</sup>

The unusually stormy weather and the rough seas prevented the steamboats and the rowboats commissioned to evacuate the refugees from approaching the shore for several hours, and the ropes pulling special rafts built for the occasion came undone several times. The scene became more dramatic as the motley Armenians watched the events impatiently from the other side. A new Ottoman offensive caused great panic and worsened the situation, but the attack was halted. The rising of the sun, the calming of the winds, and the weakening of the surf also bode well for the French-Armenian camp, which stood ready to accomplish its mission.<sup>157</sup>

Tekeian, assisted by marines and some native Armenians, organized the refugee population into groups according to their villages of origin. The fighters, remaining in their defensive positions, provided protective cover so that the women, children, and elderly could be removed first. Tekeian and his team also assured the restless crowd that all would be evacuated without exception. As some shouted "Vive la France!" others expressed their joy and gratitude by kissing Tekeian's hands and feet. Still others asked "a thousand infantine questions, [such as] 'Should I bring my butter?' [and] 'Do you have water on board?'" Cumbersome and unsanitary personal belongings including mattresses, bedspreads, foodstuffs, and house wares were piled up and set on fire. The animals were killed and/or burned to deprive the enemy of coveted booty.<sup>158</sup>

The *Foudre* was the first to set sail, at noon, for Port Said with 1,042 Musa Daghians on board. The *D'Estrées* followed suit two hours later carrying 459 passengers. By evening the *Guichen* had received 1,320 Armenians but was ordered, together with the *Desaix* and the *Amiral Charner*, to stay put and monitor the coast through the night for the safety of those who had stayed behind.<sup>159</sup> Upset by the humiliating Turkish

setbacks, Jemal Pasha reported: “I am sending General Fahri to the scene of the events to punish those who permitted the escape of Armenians and caused unnecessary casualties by not taking care in concealing the [Ottoman] headquarters.”<sup>160</sup>

As soon as the Armenians boarded the ships they kissed the cannons and embraced the marines. Some of the latter, consumed with emotion, lauded the refugees as “brave,” “lions,” and “heroes.”<sup>161</sup> The fighters’ guns and ammunitions were immediately collected, inventoried, and sorted out either to be cleaned and/or repaired or discarded.<sup>162</sup> The passengers received cooked and canned food, wine, and other treats.<sup>163</sup> A band of wind instruments entertained the guests on the *Guichen*. Curious and amused officers and crewmen took snapshots of their protégés.<sup>164</sup> The wounded and the sick received special treatment. One of the infirm, a lad by the name of Yenovk Keosheian, became an instant celebrity and was spoiled with a navy uniform and chocolate bars, things he had never seen before.<sup>165</sup> Habet Vanayan, one of the wounded fighters, was less fortunate; he succumbed to “gangrene gazeuse” and was buried at sea with full military honors involving the entire crew of the *Desaix*.<sup>166</sup> The young Haroutune Boyadjian described his trip as follows:

As the ships started moving, the sailors began to distribute food to the people. The children were given sweets, too! The deep affection and immense care of these men on the boat was amazing. We were poorly dressed, nothing very extraordinary about us, and perhaps in appearance just about average people! Yet these sailors gave us a heroes’ reception!

...

The youngsters, with their stomachs satisfied with good meals served to them, and their pockets filled with candies, were cheerfully playing and chasing each other on the deck, as conveniently as a really crowded boat allowed them...

Night fell, and many people had no idea where we were being taken. Gradually, people fell asleep, and the ship continued to move fast to reach her destination. How that night passed, I have no idea.<sup>167</sup>

In Egypt, meanwhile, Colonel Percival George Elgood, Supreme Commander of British forces at Port Said and Director of the Intelligence Office, had offered to set up a concentration camp at Lazaretta on the Asiatic side of the Suez Canal across from Port Said that could accommodate all of the Musa Daghians. In Darrieus’ opinion, “this proposition was too advantageous to be rejected. From the military point of view, it would enable the rapid evacuation of our cruisers (thus relieving the sanitation issue), which would immediately become available for the

[Syrian] blockade. This would also give undeniable facilities for the housing of the Armenian population, their alimentation, [and] the distribution of medical assistance to the many children, women and old men, who particularly suffered the hardships of their struggle.” Elgood had likewise been willing to place the seaplane carrier *Anne* at French disposal.<sup>168</sup> But it seems that the Foreign Office was unaware of Elgood’s proposed arrangements, and functionaries there were absolutely opposed to providing a permanent shelter to the incoming exiles. H.G.N. minuted:

I submit that there are 3 alternative courses:-

(1) Accommodate the refugees on steamers in Port Said harbour until the French can provide transport to take them to Algiers, or elsewhere.

(2) Ask the Italians to receive them at Rhodes.

(3) Insist on their being taken to Cyprus.

Of these three I submit that No. (1) is the most practicable, especially as the French are entirely responsible for the situation which has been created.<sup>169</sup>

Another officer concurred, at the same time manifesting a lingering confusion and expressing frustration towards the French: “The whole business is very sudden and distinctly mysterious... It seems to be entirely a French show and we literally have not room at a moment’s notice where refugees can be dumped down on us. I am still puzzled by Armenians at Antioch.”<sup>170</sup> Other Foreign Office internal memos demonstrated growing recalcitrance regarding the admission of Armenians into Egypt even on a temporary basis. Upon learning via the Transports Department and the Military Branch of the Admiralty that the *Suffolk* and the four horse ships were soon to be “required for important military movements,” H.G.N. suggested that “the idea of giving the refugees a temporary home in Port Said harbour must therefore be abandoned.”<sup>171</sup> Definitely, “these refugees cannot be landed either in Egypt or Cyprus.”<sup>172</sup>

Despite such opposition, the *Foudre* arrived in Port Said harbor on Monday, September 13, and transshipped its human cargo onto the *Suffolk*. Similarly, 300 of the 459 refugees aboard the *D’Estrées* were transferred to the *Tunisien* to avoid overcrowding. Off the coast of Musa Dagh, meanwhile, the *Guichen* picked up another 621 Armenians, for a total of 1,941, and headed to Port Said.<sup>173</sup> The fighters were the last to be evacuated, but not before requesting, one more time, provisions to continue their struggle. This being impossible, they left their twenty posts one by one, firing in the air to salute their leader.<sup>174</sup> While the *Amiral Charner* received 344 fighters, the *Desaix* temporarily cared for another 303, until they were taken aboard the *Anne* off the Svedia coast.<sup>175</sup>

At this juncture a German officer by the name of Eberhard Wolffskeel Von Reichenberg, who served as Chief-of-Staff of Fahri Pasha, Jemal Pasha's deputy, was dispatched to Musa Dagħ because "now we want to take a look at these matters ourselves."<sup>176</sup> Writing to his father from Damascus on September 15, Wolffskeel maintained that the Musa Dagħians "have shown a lack of comprehension for the government's kind offer to settle them elsewhere" by retreating to the mountain with their families and guns "with the expressed intention of not letting themselves be deported."<sup>177</sup> After using such contradictory terminology as "kind offer to settle" and "deported," he went on to assess the situation as follows:

You can have various opinions about the justification and the value of the original measure taken by the Turks against the Armenians. Where they are now, though, there's no way you can cope with them. For a heavily armed band, naturally with a hostile disposition, would threaten our defense of Alexandretta from the rear. The difficulty in catching them lies only in the fact that we have to attack them from the sea-side. For eight days, though, six French cruisers have been lying there, communicating with the rebels through signals, that put our troops under heavy grenade fire as soon as they appear on the cliffs facing the sea, against which our field artillery is no match, of course. The commander of the division there isn't the cleverest man, either, and has also deployed his worst regiment there—a troop put together only very recently. As a consequence, the whole group fell apart as soon as they came under grenade fire.<sup>178</sup>

Affirming that "the French have recently carried away two shipfulls [sic] of them [Musa Dagħians]," Wolffskeel made the following interesting remarks that betrayed his mindset:

If it were up to me, they [the French] could have the whole bunch. To me that would be a splendid solution, when as many Armenians as possible would leave the country on condition that they never come back. Turkey has no advantage from them, but only trouble. But it rubs the Turks the wrong way to let them be led away right under their nose, therefore it has to be prevented. Fine with me, we'll prevent it, assuming that the rest of them aren't already gone by the time we get there.

All of these never-ending internal political concerns are repulsive to me in themselves, as you can imagine, and God knows the entire Armenian question does not form a glorious chapter in Turkish history. The people, though, are at least 300 years behind in their entire conception of domestic politics.<sup>179</sup>

Ten days later, on September 25, Wolffskeel wrote to his sister, this time from Svedia (Souediye) near Musa Dagh: “The matter itself is resolved” thanks to “a lack of cleverness on the part of one of our regimental commanders, who allowed the Armenians to escape onto ships...” He then added with some sense of relief: “This solution [by escape] to the question [of Armenian resistance] is quite welcome to me. Those characters are gone and won’t disturb us anymore, and we won’t have to deal with the unpleasant matters of deportation and courts-martial.”<sup>180</sup> The Musa Dagh headache now behind him, Wolffskeel proceeded to Urfa, where he would personally lead the obliteration of the town’s Armenian sector with heavy artillery bombardment.<sup>181</sup>

The last batch of Armenian fighters arrived in Port Said on September 16 aboard the *Anne*.<sup>182</sup> The refugees’ disposal posed a problem from the outset: the ships had to be freed up so that they could resume their mission or be deployed for new duties. Accordingly, the crews of the *Guichen* and the *Jaureguiberry*, also of the French 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, set up tents in the quarantine station of Lazaretta on September 14. The Armenians disembarked by late afternoon.<sup>183</sup> The British, “badly rushed,”<sup>184</sup> considered the newcomers as “a severe strain on our already highly tried staff, and resources.”<sup>185</sup> Political concerns also figured prominently: “The Muslims of Egypt, stirred by the Senoussis, are very excited and the asylum given to Armenians, considered as rebels to the Sultan, will be a cause for agitation.”<sup>186</sup> It therefore became expedient to relocate the refugees to a territory outside British control. The island of Rhodes, then under Italian rule, might serve as a possible site, but was eliminated as overburdened with other refugees.<sup>187</sup> The French contacted their colonies of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, raising two questions: first, if they had employment opportunities, and second, whether the reception of Christian Armenians, citizens of the Ottoman Empire, would cause any political problems.<sup>188</sup> In the opinion of the Tunisian Government, “the animosity between the Muslims and Armenians could be checked only by guarding the latter militarily. It will also be a dangerous complication in the light of the recent events in the south of the country.” Therefore, “it appears that it will be in Corsica or Central France that these people can be given employment appropriate to their feeble physical state.”<sup>189</sup> Morocco expressed similar fears. The indigenous populations, already agitated by outside propaganda, besides being further agitated by the mere presence of Armenians, “would not fail to see the certain evidence of our failure in the Orient and of the victory of the Turks over the Allied armies.”<sup>190</sup> The Algerians, in turn, while regretting the unavailability of labor on their soil, suggested that the Armenians be employed as stevedores at Mudros or as factory workers in urban industrial establishments manufacturing

munitions.<sup>191</sup> Yagup Artin Pasha, a high-ranking Egyptian functionary of Armenian origin, later dismissed rumors of an impending Armenian resettlement in French colonies in Africa as unfounded.<sup>192</sup>

At the same time that a search was being conducted in North Africa, French Foreign Minister Theophile Delcassé inquired whether the Russian Government could assume the repatriation of the Musa Daghians to the Caucasus, “where they will find assistance and support among their coreligionists.”<sup>193</sup> If this plan proved acceptable, the surest route to the Caucasus ran through Serbia and Romania, which could not be traversed at the time.<sup>194</sup> As a result, this alternative, like all the other possibilities, had to be abandoned altogether. The British were thus stuck with the Armenian exiles at Port Said, where they would stay for four years, until their repatriation to Musa Dagh in 1919.<sup>195</sup>

According to Darrieus, the Musa Dagh incident did not constitute a unique phenomenon but rather exemplified the prevalent unrest in Greater Syria. Oppressed by the Turks and unable to see an end to the war, all Muslim and Christian denominations unanimously desired to overthrow the Ottoman yoke. In this sense, “the example of the Armenians of Musa Dagh is contagious.” But the French Navy could not possibly rescue every presumed pocket of resistance along the coast. On the other hand, not only had France universally recognized rights and interests in the region, but also the indigenous populations looked up to her as their liberator. Two alternatives could break the impasse. The first solution, “the most complete and most satisfactory from a military point of view,” sought to occupy the region by sending a French expeditionary force to Cilicia and north Syria. Supported by the Navy, this operation could also relieve pressure from the Dardanelles front. The second solution would be to arm the natives. The 700-800 able men from Musa Dagh ideally could start that process. If the “current passivity” were not eliminated through either one of the proposed solutions, “the credit of France would certainly lose each day.”<sup>196</sup> The Armenians of Musa Dagh ultimately constituted the backbone of what became known as the *Légion d’Orient*.<sup>197</sup>

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Zora Iskenterian, “Brnagaght Yev Teghahanutian” (Forced deportation and uprooting), in Martiros Gushagjian and Poghos Maturian, eds., *Hushamatean Musa Leran* (Memorial book of Musa Dagh), Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970, p. 305; idem, “Joghovurde Inchu Zenkin Paretsav” (Why the people resorted to arms), in Gushagjian and Maturian, *Hushamatean*, pp. 312-14; *Pahak* (Sentry) (Boston), November 4, 1915; *Azduk* (Factor) (Beirut), November 1, 1934; *Zartok* (Awakening) (Beirut), March 20, 1938. According to Nvard (“Vahite”) Ikarian, “1915 Svedia Muharebesi” (The 1915 Svedia war), eyewitness account handwritten in Ottoman Turkish with Armenian characters (original with me), p.

- 1, the mobilization announcement was made on July 11, 1915. In the Armenian version published in *Asparez* (Arena) (Fresno), October 27, 1916, however, Ikarian indicates July 17 as the announcement date. This must be a printing error by *Asparez*. Ikarian, pp. 1-2, also maintains that the draftees' age range grew wider in time. The government first enrolled youths between the ages of 23 and 33, then between 33 and 45, then, in April and May 1915, between 21 and 45, and later between 18 and 50. According to Sargis Gapaghian, a participant in the resistance, the Ottoman Army recruited men between the ages of 16 and 60. See Hakob Cholakian, *Tsamkadz Aghbiure Noren Ke Bkhi* (The Dried fountain springs again), Aleppo: Al-Shark Press, 1981, p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Fr. Harutian Tumayan, as cited in Lerntsi (Hakob Poyajian), *Ejer Keankis Girken (Inknakensagrutium)* (Pages from the book of my life [autobiography]), Beirut: Altapress, 1986, p. 65; Iskenterian, "Joghovurde," p. 313.
- <sup>3</sup> Fr. Tumayan, as cited in Lerntsi, *Ejer*, p. 66; Iskenterian, "Joghovurde," pp. 314-14; *Husaber* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), October 2, 1915, September 5, 1916; *Pahak*, November 4, 1915; *Azduk*, November 1, 1934; *Yeprat* (Euphrates) (Aleppo), June 21, 1936; *Zartonk*, March 20, 1938.
- <sup>4</sup> Wolfgang Gust, ed., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des Deutschen Auswärtigen Amts*, Springe, Germany: Zu Klampen, 2005, p. 406.
- <sup>5</sup> Fr. Tumayan, as cited in Lerntsi, *Ejer*, p. 66; Iskenterian, "Joghovurde," pp. 314-14; *Husaber*, October 2, 1915, September 5, 1916; *Pahak*, November 4, 1915; *Azduk*, November 1, 1934; *Yeprat*, June 21, 1936; *Zartonk*, March 20, 1938.
- <sup>6</sup> Zakaria Pztikian, comp., *Kilikean Kskitdzner. Vaveragrer Kilikio Katoghikosakan Divanen, 1903-1915* (Cilician sorrows: Documents from the Catholicosate of Cilicia archives, 1903-1915), Beirut: Hrazdan Press, 1927, pp. 154-55.
- <sup>7</sup> Fr. Movses Shrigian, "Hushagrutium Movses A. Khn. Shrigiani (avazani anun Yesayi)" (Memoirs of Archpriest Movses Shrigian [baptismal name Yesayi], unpublished manuscript, Montebello, California, pp. 28-29; *Yeprat*, June 21, 1936.
- <sup>8</sup> *Taragir* (Deportee) (Aleppo), February 6, 1919. According to Sedrak Yesayi Haykazyan, "Husher U Pusher Musa Leran 1915 T. Inknashtpanutyuan Orerits" (Memoirs and thorns from the days of the 1915 Musa Dagh self-defense), unpublished manuscript, Musa Dagh Monument-Museum, Musa Ler Town, Armenia, notebook 6, n. p., the seven executed Musa Daghians were Petros Yaralian, Petros Korian (Jelilian), Arakel Iskejian, Yesayi Atajian, Sargis Zeytlian, Poghos Aleksanian, and Hovhannes Kerteshian ("Keose"). Only Grigor Pursalian had managed to escape and join the resistance. Another group of deserters had been completely wiped out earlier.
- <sup>9</sup> *Pahak*, November 4, 1915.
- <sup>10</sup> Hakob Davitian, "Musa Leran Hayere Mer Joghovurdi Azatagrakan Paykarin Mej" (The Armenians of Musa Dagh in the liberation struggle of our people), in Gersam Aharonian, ed., *Hushamatean Medz Yegherni, 1915-1916* (Memorial book of the Great Calamity, 1915-1916), Beirut: Zartonk, 1965, p. 786; Fr. Tumayan, as cited in Lerntsi, *Ejer*, pp. 65-66.
- <sup>11</sup> Lerntsi, *Ejer*, pp. 58-59, 67; *Husaber*, September 5, 1916; Alexander A. Antraskan, "The Eyewitness Story of 'The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,'" *AMAA News*, XIX: 2 (April, 1985): 4; Fr. Shrigian, "Hushagrutium," p. 29. The Yoghunoluk man killed was Tateos Gazanjan, nicknamed Mekhelints Kheiv. According to Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 2-11, 14-17, on May 1, 1915, the (new) sub-district Governor of Svedia, accompanied by gendarmes, went to Musa Dagh and caused hardship to the peoples of Haji Habibli and Yoghunoluk. When the government commissioned Locum Tenens Fr. Tumayan of

- 
- Antioch, Fr. Abraham Ter Galustian of Yoghunoluk, and a Major to investigate the sub-district Governor's excesses, he turned more violent (*Asparez*, November 3, 1916).
- <sup>12</sup> Iskenterian, "Joghovurde," p. 314.
- <sup>13</sup> Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 6-8; *Asparez*, October 27, 1916.
- <sup>14</sup> France, Archives Centrales de la Marine (hereafter ACM), Service Historique, Vincennes, France, Série SS, Section Historiques: Guerre 1914-1918, Ed: Etat-Major Général--4ème Section, vol. 125, *Syrie, Correspondence reçus, 1914-1916*, Darriesto Victor Augagneur, September 22, 1915. See also *Arev* (Sun) (Alexandria), September 17, 1915.
- <sup>15</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrius to Augagneur, September 22, 1915.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 11-13; *Asparez*, November 3, 1916. For the requisition of animals in other villages, see Habet M. Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune* (The Uprising of Svedia), Cairo: Zareh N. Perperian Printing, 1915, p. 10; Davitian, "Musa Leran Hayere," p. 786; Haykazyan, "Husher U Pusher," notebook 1, n. p.
- <sup>17</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia Archives (hereafter ACGC), Antelias, Lebanon, File 23/1, *Antiok, 1914-1940* (Antioch, 1914-1940), Fr. Harutiun Tumayan to Catholicos Sahak II Khapayan, January 22/4, 1915.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, File 22/1, *Jepel Musa-Svetia, 1920-1940* (Musa Dagh-Svedia, 1920-1940), Distribution of Aid to the Needy of Kabusiye, Kheder Beg, Vakef, Yoghunoluk, Haji Habibli, and Bitias, March 13-15, 1915.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, File 23/1, Fr. Tumayan to Catholicos Sahak II, March 4/17, 1915.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, File 22/1, March 19/April 1, 1915; *idem*, File 23/1, May 2/15, 1915.
- <sup>21</sup> Pztikian, *Kilikean Kskidzner*, pp. 139-41.
- <sup>22</sup> ACGC, File 2/1, *Halep 1914-1923* (Aleppo 1914-1923), Fr. Tumayan to Catholicos Sahak II, April 12/25, 1915.
- <sup>23</sup> Pztikian, *Kilikean Kskidzner*, p. 165.
- <sup>24</sup> ACGC, File 100/1, notebook containing copies of letters written by Catholicos Sahak II, p. 266, Catholicos Sahak II to Aleppo Prelacy locum tenens Fr. Harutiun Yesayan, April 22, 1915.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Catholicos Sahak II to Fr. Tumayan, April 22, 1915.
- <sup>26</sup> Grigor Geghuni (Gyozalyan), "Im Kyanki Husherits" (From the memoirs of my life), unpublished manuscript, Panorama City, California, book 1, pp. 76-77; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 13-14; *Asparez*, November 3, 1916.
- <sup>27</sup> Rev. T.[igran] Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune Yev Svetio Apstambutiune* (The Deportation of Zeytun and the uprising of Svedia), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Aleppo: College Press, 1935), pp. 38-40. According to Serob Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru* (History of Svedia Armenians), Yesayi Havatian, ed., Beirut: Hamazgayin Wahe Sethian Press, 2010, p. 59, Fr. Ter Galustian called for the meeting at his home upon ARF's instructions without mentioning the latter's name in order for "bad intentioned persons not to create excuses and cause divisions." There is no other evidence to corroborate Sherpetjian's claim.
- <sup>28</sup> Armenian Revolutionary Federation Archives (hereafter ARF), Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, File 1047/28, *H.H.D. Yegiptosi K. Komite, 1915 t.* (ARF Central Committee of Egypt, 1915), ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians, November 18, 1915.
- <sup>29</sup> Nimrod, "An Incident In The Greatest Massacre of Modern Times," *Chambers's Journal* VI: 282 (April 22, 1916): 332.
- <sup>30</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrius to Augagneur, September 22, 1915.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, SS S: EscadreSyrie (3ème Escadre), vol. 6, *Correspondence exceptionnelle*, Chateaminois to Darrius, September 23, 1915.

- 
- <sup>32</sup> ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians, November 18, 1915.
- <sup>33</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 42; Nimrod, "An Incident," p. 332.
- <sup>34</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 41-42.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-39; *Husaber*, October 2, 1915.
- <sup>37</sup> Yeznik Poyajian, *Patkerner Musa Taghi Diutsaznergutunen* (Scenes from the heroic epic of Musa Dagh), Beirut and Toronto: Atlas Press, 1973, pp. 41-44; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 43-44; *Husaber*, September 21, 1915; *Arev*, September 24, 1915. Once on the mountain, the priests encouraged and consoled their flocks, and celebrated Mass at a makeshift altar at Damlajik (Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 74-75).
- <sup>38</sup> For an understanding of the disposition of those who chose deportation, consult Sargis M. Renjilian, "Süveydiye Vakıası" (The Svedia incident), *Kilikia* (Cilicia) 3: 6 (February 9, 1918): 8-11. Renjilian, then an emigrant in the United States, possessed letters sent to him by his father, Movses Renjilian of Bitias, from exile in Hama, Syria. For the specific figures of those who joined the resistance or complied with the deportation order from each village, consult American University of Beirut Archives, Beirut, Lebanon, (hereafter AUB), Howard Bliss Collection, 1860-1920, Box 17, File 5, *Papers Regarding the Armenians of Sweydiyeh and the Revolt on Musa Dagh, 30 July-12 September 1915*, Rev. Dikran Andreasian, "A General Survey: The Armenians of Sweydiyeh." See also Viscount Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16*, London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons, Limited, 1916, p. 521.
- <sup>39</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
- <sup>41</sup> Iskenterian, "Joghovurde," p. 317.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318. According to political activist Mihran Tamatian, the Government sent some sixty leading Turks from Antioch into exile for their opposition to the deportation of their long-time Armenian neighbors (*Arev*, September 24, 1915). Given the strong anti-Armenian sentiments manifested especially by Turkish notables of Antioch in previous years and during the 1909 massacre of Armenians in that city, Tamatian's statement, without corroborative evidence, must be treated with caution.
- <sup>43</sup> Rev. D. Antreasian, *The Banishment of Zeitun and Suedia's Revolt*, Knarik O. Meneshian, trans., Paramus, New Jersey: Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1993, p. 31. For the notification in Ottoman Turkish with Armenian characters and its Armenian translation, see Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 46-49.
- <sup>44</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53. Actually, the Bitias people (and probably those of Haji Habibli) ascended the mountain from August 1-10 by crossing the following points: Yel Deliyi, Chat, Makhulints Tamire, Köklü Göl, Tosakhak, Enkuzik, Mermineot Chukuroye, and Umman, to arrive at Kaplan Duzaghi (Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 23-28; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916). The Yoghunoluk people (and probably those of Kheder Beg and Vakef) moved to the uplands by stopping at Hamcheltigh (resting place) or Sargahints Khupornen and Gayegjints Tayre at Tataralang, to arrive at Kuzjeghaz (Haykazyan, "Husher U Pusher," notebook 1, n. p).
- <sup>46</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 51; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 13; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 56; *Arev*, September 24, 1915. For the Musa Dagh-Kesab negotiations and the deportation from Kesab, see Hakob Cholakian, *Kesap*,

- 
- vol. I, Aleppo: Arevk Prsss, 1995, pp. 99-107; Bryce, *The Treatment of the Armenians*, p. 522.
- <sup>47</sup> *Arev*, September 24, 1915.
- <sup>48</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 52-56.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57; A. Theodore Baghdikian, Jr., "Reflections of Musa Dagħ and the Deportations," *AMAA News* XVIII: 4, August, 1984, pp. 5-6; Poyajian, *Patkerner*, pp. 48-53; *Azđak*, January 4, 1936. For Nokhutian's personal views and activities, see Harry H. Serian, *The Life and Experiences of Rev. Harry H. Serian (Haroutune Nokhoudian): An Autobiography*, Beirut: N. p., 1968, pp. 25-31.
- <sup>50</sup> Serian, *Life and Experiences*, p. 29. At no time in his memoirs does Rev. Nokhutian mention a promise on the part of the government that his Protestant congregation would be spared deportation. The only mention of exceptions was made regarding the families of enlisted soldiers, which was a deception on the part of the government.
- <sup>51</sup> Serian, *Life and Experiences*, pp. 46-48; *idem*, "Kristoneakan Havatkis Tjknajame" (The Ordeal of my Christian faith), *Janaser* (Endeavor Love), no. 4, February 15, 1961, pp. 56-57.
- <sup>52</sup> Serian, *Life and Experiences*, pp. 39-40.
- <sup>53</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 43, holds Rev. Nokhutian and the prominent Protestant community leader, Movses Renjilian, responsible for the deportation of sixty-four families from Bitias. See also *Azđak*, January 4, 1936.
- <sup>54</sup> Baghdikian, "Reflections of Musa Dagħ," p. 6.
- <sup>55</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 57.
- <sup>56</sup> Serian, *Life and Experiences*, pp. 27-31.
- <sup>57</sup> [Rose Ikarian Fiscus], "Rose's Story (as Recorded in 1953)," unpublished typewritten memoirs (a copy with me), pp. 3-11; Elisa Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode de Djébel Moussa," in Archag Tchobanian, ed. *La Femme Arménienne*, Paris: Librairie Bernard Grasset, 1918, p. 79; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 20-22; *Asparez*, November 4, 1916, November 17, 1916. According to Ikarian, the sub-district Governor of Svedia promised to give 6 *meteliks* (60 *paras*, an insignificant amount) to each adult and 4 *meteliks* (40 *paras*) to each child per diem if they obeyed the deportation orders. The notables still in Bitias were ordered to convey the message to their fellow villagers who had joined the resistance. As a result, many families and individuals who had already participated in the first two battles, were deceived and surrendered in August 12-14.
- <sup>58</sup> Poyajian, *Patkerner*, pp. 38-53 *passim*; Haroutune P. Boyadjian, *Musa Dagħ and My Personal Memoirs*, Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Rosekeer Press, 1981, p. 12.
- <sup>59</sup> *Husaber*, September 23, 1915, indicates that only 6 families from Kabusiye joined the resistance. In a report dated September 28, 1915, Prelate Thorgom (Torgom Gushakian) of Egypt put the number at ten families out of a total of 250 families (Bryce, *Treatment of Armenians*, p. 521). Haykazyan, "Husher U Pusher," notebook 4, n. p., mentions nine families plus three persons. The families were those of Harutiun Gasamian, Movses Gasamian, Asatur Gasamian, Asatur Davitian, Hovhannes Nersesian, Abraham Nersesian, Serob Kiuzelian, Simon Simonian, and Kirakos Kesablian. The names of the three individuals are not mentioned. Shepetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 65, indicates sixteen families. For the confusion in Kabusiye at the time, see also Davitian, "Musa Leran Hayere," pp. 788-89; Geghuni, "Im Kyanki Husheits," notebook 1, pp. 73-86. AUB, Bliss Collection, Box 17, File 5, Rev. Andreasian, "A General Survey: The Armenians of Sweydiyeh."
- <sup>60</sup> Edward J. Erickson, "Bayonets on Musa Dagħ: Ottoman Counterinsurgency Operations – 1915," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28: 3 (June, 2005): 529-48.

---

<sup>61</sup> Gust, *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, p. 351.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>63</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>65</sup> M. Ter-Galstian (Movses Ter Galustian), “Musa Leran Diutsaznergutiune. Verhishumner Svetio Inknashtpanutenen” (The Heroic epic of Musa Dagh: Reminiscences about the self-defense of Svedia), in M. Salbi (Dr. Aram Sahakian), ed., *Aleakner Yev Khleakner. Hay Vranakaghakin Taregirke* (Little waves and wrecks: The Yearbook of the Armenian tent city), Alexandria, Egypt: A. Gasparian Press, 1920, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 68-69, mentions the following members: Tigran Andreasian, Chairman, Mikael Kekejian, Secretary, Hetum Filian, Sahak Antekian, Khacher Martirian, Hovnan Iskenterian, Iskenter Kelemian, Japra Gazanjian, Poghos Gaparian, Hovhannes Gopurian, Movses Ter Galustian, Melkon Guyumjian, Grigor Tovmasian, Yesayi Iprahimian, Simon Shemmasian, and Tovmas Aghayan. Mihran Tamatian maintains in an article in *Arev*, October 13, 1915, that the representatives elected two councils, one civil and one military. He lists the following eight civil councilmen: Japra Gazanjian, Vanis Gpurian, Mikael Petrosian, Grigor Tovmasian, Tovmas Aghayan, Hetum Filian, Hovnan Iskenterian, and Sahak Antakian. Tamatian thus excludes Chairman Rev. Andreasian, Secretary Mikael Kekejian, and seven other members. Instead, he includes a certain Mikael Petrosian. Tamatian also names the following four military councilmen: Yesayi Yagupian, Petros Tmlakian, Petros Galustian, and Martiros Jansezian. Movses Ter Galustian is excluded. Tamatian’s information is incorrect on both counts, as the discussion in the text and the pertinent notes reveal.

On the other hand, ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians, refers to a civil council or cabinet (*mejlis*) consisting of thirteen members chosen from the “aghas [notables] entirely incapable of fighting.” The report also highlights Ter Galustian’s key role in the military command, which he led with the assistance of ARF member Serob Sherpetjian and Tigran Iprajian. While closer to reality in numerical terms, this report clearly underscores the ARF’s prominence in the resistance leadership.

<sup>67</sup> For Rev. Andreasian’s leadership qualities, consult *Nor Avetaber* (New Herald), no. 26, November 24, 1928, p. 205; *Janaser* no. 4, February 15, 1966, the entire issue. According to Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 74-75, the CAC chairmanship was first proposed to Fr. Abraham Ter Galustian, who preferred to be with his flock and instead supported Rev. Andreasian’s candidacy.

<sup>68</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 69-74; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 27; *Arev*, October 13, 1915.

<sup>69</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 75-76; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 31; Sherpetjian, *Parmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 79-80; Cholakian, *Tsamkadz Aghbiure*, pp. 33-36; Haykazyan, “Husher U Pusher,” notebook 2, n. p., notebook 3, n. p.; idem, “Sedrak Haykazyan Husherirs,” unpublished memoirs, notebook 4, n. p., notebook 5, n. p.; Richard J. Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian, 25 April 1900-21 October 1993,” unpublished memorial biography (a copy with me), p. 1. During some of the expeditions for food and other operations conducted in broad daylight, Armenian fighters attacked and punished Muslim looters roaming abandoned Musa Dagh villages (Ter-Galstian, *supra*; Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” pp. 53-56; *Asperez*, November 24, 1916).

<sup>70</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 94. Sherpetjian, *Parmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 88-92, disputes Rev. Andreasian’s account about discipline and other social problems.

- <sup>71</sup> ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians.
- <sup>72</sup> For the biography of Movses Ter Galustian, consult Ashot Nersisian, *Movses Ter Galustian*, “Living Heroes” series, no. 5, Yerevan: Edit Print, 2011; Poghos Snapiian, ed., *Movses Ter Galustian (A. Leylani)*, Beirut: Hamazgayin Wahe Sethian Press, 2004.
- <sup>73</sup> Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 28; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 69.
- <sup>74</sup> Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 28; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 69-72, 92; ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 46-47; Sherpetjian, *Patmutium Svetahayeru*, pp. 73-74; Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de tourisme*, vol. III, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1931, p. 503.
- <sup>75</sup> Sherpetjian, *Patmutium Svetahayeru*, p. 53; M. Lerntsi, *Ejer*, p. 40; *Pahak*, November 11, 1915, November 25, 1915; *Zartonk*, March 12, 1938, March 20, 1938.
- <sup>76</sup> *Pahak*, November 11, 1915, November 25, 1915; *Yeprat*, June 11-28, 1936; *Zartonk*, March 12, 1938, March 20, 1938; Ara Aharonian, *Heroic Figures of A.D.L.*, Aris G. Sevag, trans., Los Angeles, California: “Nor-Or” Publications, 2006, pp. 65-71.
- <sup>77</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 72; Sherpetjian, *Patmutium Svetahayeru*, p. 74; Jaquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 502.
- <sup>78</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 74. Arakel Kepeshian, assisted by Ohan Penenian, acted as town crier.
- <sup>79</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 74.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 73, 88. The male nurses were Hovhannes Gopurian and Levon Gazanjian.
- <sup>81</sup> Sona Zeytlian, *Hay Knoj Dere Hay Heghapokhokan Sharjman Medj* (The Role of the Armenian woman in the Armenian revolutionary movement), Antlias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia Publication, 1968, pp. 119-22; H.[ovhannes] G.[rigor] Pursalian, *Musa-Leran Herosamarte* (The Heroic battle of Musa Dagh), Aleppo: Arevelk Press, 1954, pp. 34, 51, 58; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 72-73; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 15; Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” pp. 33-34; Haykazyan, “Husher U Pusher,” notebook 3, n. p.; Cholakian, *Tsmakadz Aghbiure*, p. 27; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 502; *Arev*, October 29, 1915; *Husaber*, November 3, 1916; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916.
- <sup>82</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 89. Ohan Penenian was entrusted with this task.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee, Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” pp. 31-32; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 28-29.
- <sup>84</sup> M. Peylerian, “Habet M. Iskenteriani Kiankn U Gordze (Hamarot Aknark)” (The Life and work of Habet M. Iskenterian [brief survey]), *Hnchak* (Bell), no. 3, March, 1935, n. p.; Habet M. Iskenterian, *Kervadzner Yev Artzak Edjer* (Poems and prose pages), Beirut: K. Tonikian Press, 1959, pp. 5-30.
- <sup>85</sup> Erickson, “Bayonets on Musa Dagh,” p. 542.
- <sup>86</sup> “The Armenian Massacres,” *Olive Trees* xxx: 1, January, 1916, p. 37.
- <sup>87</sup> For criminal gangs and/or the Special Organizations involved in the Armenian genocide, see Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, Paul Bessemer, trans., New York, New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Co., 2006, pp. 133-41; Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011, pp. 217-23.
- <sup>88</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 57-58; Sherpetjian, *Patmutium Svetahayeru*, p. 67; Margarian, “Svetio Joghovurde,” n. p., (July 25/August 7); Erickson, “Bayonets on Musa Dagh,” p. 541.

---

<sup>89</sup> Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," p. 26; ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 14; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, p. 33; *Arev*, October 15, 1915. On the other hand, Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode," p. 79, indicates July 27/(August 9). Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 26, does not mention a date.

<sup>90</sup> Most of the Armenian sources in the above two footnotes agree on the 200 figure, whereas Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode," p. 79, mentions 100 soldiers, and Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 26, refers to "a few hundred souls." Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, and Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde," do not provide any numbers.

<sup>91</sup> The first clash, which took place at the juncture of Hurden Chekrek and Magharen Khantkaye on the trail connecting Yol Aghzi with Damlajik, lasted four to six hours (ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 14-15; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 26; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 67; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 26-27; Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode," p. 79; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 58; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, pp. 33-35; *Arev*, October 15, 1915).

<sup>92</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 58; Cholakian, *Tsmakadz Aghbiure*, pp. 14-15. Sargis Gapaghian of Kheder Beg fired the first shot, killing a mounted officer.

<sup>93</sup> Erickson, "Bayonets on Musa Dagh," p. 541.

<sup>94</sup> Estimates of Ottoman troops and irregular Muslim mobs fighting the Armenians of Musa Dagh vary. After the clash of August 8, the number of Ottoman forces increased considerably. Armenian sources almost unanimously put the assailants at 1,500-1,600 regulars when referring to the second battle that took place on August 10 (ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," p. 29; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 16; *Arev*, October 15, 1915; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916). The numbers increased further during the third and most critical battle of August 15-17. This time, however, Armenian sources are not unanimous in their assessment of the number of enemy fighters, as the following list indicates: *Arev*, September 17, 1915, 3,500 regulars and irregulars; idem, September 24, 1915, two battalions plus 3,000 "wild Arabs"; idem, October 18, 1915, provides two separate counts, 1) two battalions plus 2,000 Arabs, 2) 2,000 regulars commanded by 131 *Alay* (regiment) Major Rifaat plus 2,000-3,000 irregulars including Turks, Turkmens, Fellahs, and Arabs; *Husaber*, September 18, 1915, 1,500 regulars plus 2,000 irregulars; idem, September 21, 1915, 2,000 regulars commanded by 3<sup>rd</sup> *Kol* Commandant Rifaat Bey plus 4,000 Turkish and Arab irregulars; *Asparez*, November 4, 1915, 3,500 regulars; idem, November 17, 1916, more than 3,000 regulars; ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians, 4,000-5,000 regulars and irregulars; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 62, about 5,000 regular troops plus ruffians; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," p. 43, more than 3,000 regulars; Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode," p. 80, 3,500 regulars; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, p. 51, 5,000 regulars commanded by Fakhri (Fakhreddin/Fahri?).

An official French source, based on information obtained from Armenians, maintains that the ottomans started their assaults with 1,000-1,500 regulars, which numbers increased substantially in the face of stiff Armenian resistance. Moreover, German officers led the Ottoman Army campaign (France, ACM, SS S 5, Chamonardto Elgood, September 12, 1915). Christof Dinkel, "German Officers and the Armenian Genocide," *The Armenian Review* 44: 1/173, Spring, 1991, p. 86, refers to a certain "Bavarian officer, Eberhard Graf Wolffskeel von Reichenberg, who participated in the military expedition against the Armenians in Zeitun, Musa Ler (Musa Dagh), and Urfa." This German officer arrived

---

near Musa Dagh after the fights were over. The French similarly make reference to “numerous Muslim fanatics, recruited in the regions of Aleppo and Beilan,” who marched on Musa Dagh armed with clubs (France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrius to Augangneur, September 22, 1915). In the end, however, the French offered the following explanation: “The depositions gathered by [French] interpreting officers on the subject of the force of the regular Turkish troops, sent against the Armenians, are very contradictory. Putting aside the exaggerations, it must be admitted that the number of regular Turkish soldiers has never exceeded five or six hundred. These soldiers were armed, in the main, with mauser rifles, some had gras rifles.” (France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrius to Augangneur, September 22, 1915). The London *Times*, October 8, 1915, on the other hand, relying on information provided by refugees from Syria, put the number of Ottoman troops at 4,000, who were “of inferior quality.”

Turkish sources provide the following official Ottoman accounts regarding the composition of government forces engaged in the Musa Dagh campaign. According to Jemal Pasha, “two regiments from the 41<sup>st</sup> Division and a mountain artillery team were sent against the rebels.” Toward the end of the conflict, Jemal Pasha dispatched “General Fahri to the scene of the events...” (Turkey, Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press and Information, *Documents*, Ankara: Başarı Matbaacılık Sanayi, 1982, p. 101). A German consular report corroborates the figure of two battalions, adding that they were not well trained (Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, Turkei, 183, vol. 38, A 28019, Rössler to Bethmann Hollweg, September 3, 1915). Erickson, in turn, maintains that “On 7 August 1915, the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division began its counter-insurgency operations...” He further states that “The Armenians were pushed southeast and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions, 131<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment (altogether about 870 trained infantrymen) began a large operation...on 9 August.” Similarly, “On 13 August 1915, the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division received orders to take several villages...” “In these operations—Erickson writes—the 131<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment lost six men killed, 26 men wounded and had 25 men missing in action. The regiment reported the expenditure of 20,353 rifle bullets, 30 shrapnel shells, 47 high explosive shells, and also reported the loss of eight rifles and three pistols.” (Erickson, “Bayonets on Musa Dagh,” pp. 541-42). None of these sources pertaining to the composition of Ottoman troops mentions irregular Muslim mobs joining them in the Musa Dagh campaign.

<sup>95</sup> The battles, lasting 12-13 hours, threatened the Armenian camp and military post at Kizilja and Omaren Gitayn, respectively, forcing the populace and the defenders to move to Tataralang, Kuzjeghaz, and Enkuzak (ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiuine*, pp. 15-16; Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” pp. 29-35; Margarian, “Svetio Joghovurde,” n. p.; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” pp. 26-27; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 83-86; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 59-61; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, pp. 35-40; *Arev*, October 15, 1915; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916).

<sup>96</sup> The Ottoman Army targeted the Armenian positions at Bakajak and Evrenje Hill (Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 63-64; Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” p. 30; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 83-86; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 26; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503; *Arev*, October 15, 1915; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916).

<sup>97</sup> Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” p. 32; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 26; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 64-66; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, p. 36; *Arev*, October 15, 1915; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916.

<sup>98</sup> Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” pp. 35-36; Fiscus, “Rose’s Story,” p. 11; *Asparez*, November 10, 1916. According to news received in Washington, D.C., thirty captive families from

- Musa Dagh reached Aleppo in miserable conditions and were somehow rescued by Consul Jackson (*Hayrenik*, February 10, 1916). Other sources provide various other figures. Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 61-63, for instance, mentions eight families consisting of fifty-two persons. Seklémian, “Récit de l’épisode,” p. 80, on the other hand, speaks of twelve captured youths from Yoghunoluk and two youths from Bitias, in addition to thirty women and girls (from Bitias?). According to the *London Times*, October 8, 1915, “the Turks carried off some 20 Armenian women and children, and executed two prisoners before the Armenian position. The Armenians retaliated by executing a Turkish major, a notable who had plundered one of their villages, and other prisoners whom they took.”
- <sup>99</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 63-65.
- <sup>100</sup> Erickson, “Bayonets on Musa Dagh,” p. 541.
- <sup>101</sup> The population of Haji Habibli on the eve of the resistance in 1915 consisted of 1,284 persons (AUB, Bliss Collection, Box 17, File 5, Rev. Andreasian, “A General Survey.”).
- <sup>102</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 75-76.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77. For the skepticism and criticism regarding the banner with an inscription, see *Husaber*, September 11, 1918. Sherbetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 57-58, actually mentions several red cross flags, which was not the case.
- <sup>104</sup> France, ACM, SS Q 85, Dikran Antreasian (Tigran Andreasian), “For all the Christian people here” on Musa Dagh “To all the captains, admirals and authorities of English, French, Italian, and American nations who happen to pass by our shore...,” August 8, 1915.
- <sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>106</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 83; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 19-20; Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” pp. 41-42; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 78-79; *Husaber*, September 21, 1915. Both Iskenterian and Ikarian indicate August 12 as the date of the team’s departure to Alexandretta, whereas Rev. Andreasian places it after August 20, that is, after the third major battle of August 15-17. The leader of the team was Movses Geregian of Haji Habibli, accompanied by Abraham Gojayan and Karapet Khaghtsinian of Bitias, and Tigran Mavlikian. The latter, a native of Vakef but a resident of Beylan in later years, did not return to Musa Dagh.
- <sup>107</sup> Several, but not all, sources agree on August 15. Those in agreement are Ikarian, “1915 Svedia,” p. 43; ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; *Arev*, October 18, 1915. Margarian, “Svetio Joghovurde,” n. p., uses August 3 of the old calendar (August 16 of the new calendar). Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 84, and Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503, indicate August 19. Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 80, and Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, p. 50, specify August 22. Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 28, while not providing a particular date, refers to a Sunday two weeks after the second battle (August 10). Seklémian, “Récit de l’épisode,” p. 80, speaks of a Sunday, which could have been either August 15 or 22.
- <sup>108</sup> There is not a consensus regarding the number of prongs of the Ottoman offensive. Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 82, and Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, p. 51, speak of seven directions. Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” p. 28, and Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503, six directions. ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians, and *Arev*, October 18, 1915, five directions. Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 84, and Margarian, “Svetio Joghovurde,” n. p., four directions.
- <sup>109</sup> ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Ter-Galstian, “Musa Leran,” pp. 28-29; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*,

- p. 83; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 43-53; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 84-89; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, pp. 50-54; *Arev*, October 18, 1915.
- <sup>110</sup> ARF, File 1047/28, ARF Egypt Committee Report on the Uprising of Svedia Armenians; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 30; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 83-87; Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 43-53; Seklémian, "Récit de l'épisode," pp. 80-81; Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde," n. p.; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 89-90; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, pp. 56-61; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503; *Arev*, October 18, 1915.
- <sup>111</sup> Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 24-25; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 29; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 85; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, p. 85; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, pp. 61-62; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 503.
- <sup>112</sup> France, SS Q 85, Renseignements donnés par le Chef arménien Pierre Dimlakian sur la situation des arméniens de la région voisine du mont Moussa.
- <sup>113</sup> United States National Archives, Washington, D.C. (now in College Park, MD), Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, File 867.4016/148, Jesse B. Jackson to Henry Morgenthau, August 19, 1915.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, File 867.4016/386, Jackson to Secretary of State, May 27, 1918. The *London Times*, October 8, 1915, basing its information on accounts by refugees from Syria, put the number of Turkish losses at 300-400. German Consul of Aleppo Rössler, however, cited only thirty wounded soldiers in early September, ascribing eight of the cases to friendly fire resulting from confusion and, indirectly, from poor preparation or training. Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, Türkei, 183, vol. 38, A 28019, Rössler to Bethmann Hollweg, September 3, 1915. In addition to Aleppo, the wounded Ottoman troops were treated at a hospital in Aintab (Ikarian, "1915 Svedia," pp. 52-53; *Asparez*, November 24, 1916).
- <sup>115</sup> The overwhelming majority of Armenian sources put the number of the slain Armenian fighters at eighteen. However, their names are not unanimously agreed upon, and in some cases more than one name is ascribed to the same victim. Moreover, in the glorification of those killed, the sources tend to disregard several other victims from the civilian population, not to mention the fact that hundreds of deported Musa Daghians who perished in exile in Hama and environs have been totally ignored or forgotten. Lastly, the number of the wounded in the battles has been estimated at about a dozen. For the various tallies of the dead and wounded during the resistance, consult Educational Society of Musa Dagh, *Musa-Leran 18 Nahatakneré*, Beirut: N. p., n. d.; ARF, File 1055/36, Roster of the Families of Heroes Sacrificed during the Musa Dagh Battles; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 99-100; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," pp. 34-35; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 47; Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde," n. p.; Pursalian, *Musa-Leran*, n. p. and pp. 40, 64; *Husaber*, September 21, 1915, November 23, 1915; *Arev*, September 17, 1915, October 15, 1915, October 20, 1915, October 25, 1915. On the other hand, according to "The Armenian Massacres," *Olive Trees*, p. 37, "During the whole of the fighting the Armenians lost 21 killed and 16 wounded—the latter are now [late 1915-early 1916] in hospital at Port Said—and they estimate the losses of the Turks at over 800 killed and wounded."
- <sup>116</sup> Erickson, "Bayonets on Musa Dagh," p. 542.
- <sup>117</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 92-93.
- <sup>118</sup> USNA, RG 59, File 867.4016/148, Jackson to Morgenthau, August 19, 1915.
- <sup>119</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 93. Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru* p.78, provides a different version, maintaining that Azapian, a "stupid man," was caught in Antioch and the letter was confiscated and destroyed. He was then deployed in Palestine, taken prisoner (by the British), and sent to the Port Said refugee camp.

- <sup>120</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 93.
- <sup>121</sup> USNA, RG 59, File 867.4016/386, Jackson to Secretary of State, May 27, 1918.
- <sup>122</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 96-98.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98. Rev. Andreasian's claim about the lack of volunteers seems unconvincing given the Armenians' desperate situation and the fact that volunteers had in fact accompanied Geregian in earlier expeditions to Alexandretta, albeit on land, not the sea. A more reasonable explanation as to why the boat did not take off may be that the chance contact with a French cruiser, the *Guichen*, on September 5 rendered such a trip unnecessary.
- <sup>124</sup> France, ACM, SS Q 85, Dikran Antreassian, "For all the Christians here [in Musa Dagh], "To all the English, French, Italian, Russian & American admirals, captains & authorities whom this petition may find..." August 12/25, 1915.
- <sup>125</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 77-82.
- <sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
- <sup>127</sup> P.[ercival] G.[eorge] Elgood, *Egypt and the Army*, London: Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 178-79; Dartige du Fournet, *Souvenirs de Guerre d'un Amiral, 1914-1916*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1920, pp. 43-44; Benoist d'Azy, *L'Origine de la Légion d'Orient*, Paris: N. p., 1939, p. 5.
- <sup>128</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 99.
- <sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 101-02; France, ACM, SS S 5, Chamonard to Elgood, September 12, 1915; idem, SS Ed 125, Darrius to Augagneur, September 22, 1915; du Fournet, *Souvenirs*, p. 43; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 32; *Arev*, October 25, 1915.
- <sup>130</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 122, 1169 – Marine Paris September 15, 1915 (Amiral Jeanne d'Arc à Marine Paris, September 6, 1915).
- <sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, SS Q 25, Renseignements donnés par le chef arménien Pierre Dimlakian sur les côtes sud et nord de l'embouchure de l'Oronte, aboard the *Guichen*, September 6, 1915.
- <sup>133</sup> D'Azy, *L'Origine*, p. 5.
- <sup>134</sup> France, ACM, SS S 5, Chamonard to Elgood, September 12, 1915; idem, SS ED 125, Darrius to Augagneur, September 22, 1915; du Fournet, *Souvenirs*, pp. 43-44.
- <sup>135</sup> Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 32; Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde, n. p.; *Husaber*, September 21, 1915.
- <sup>136</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 122, France, ACM, SS Ed 122, 1169 – Marine Paris September 15, 1915 (Amiral Jeanne d'Arc à Marine Paris, September 6, 1915).
- <sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>139</sup> Du Fournet, *Souvenirs*, p. 43.
- <sup>140</sup> Great Britain, Public Record Office, Kew, United Kingdom, Class 371: General Correspondence: Political: Turkey (War) 44, Foreign Office (FO) 371/44/2490/129419, decipher Sir H. McMahon (Ramleh), September 10 (received on the 11<sup>th</sup>), 1915; FO 371/44/2490/130287, High Commissioner for Cyprus to Secretary of State for the Colonies, September 10, 1915. See also France, ACM, SS Ed 122, JEANNE D'ARC to Marine Paris, September 10, 1915.
- <sup>141</sup> Great Britain, FO 371/44/2490/129419, H.G.N. notes, September 11, 1915.
- <sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, FO 371/44/2490/129419/130257, Lieut.-General Sir J. Maxwell to Earl Kitchener, September 10, 1915 (secret).
- <sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, FO 371/44/2490/129419, G.T.C. (from War Office) notes, September 11, 1915.
- <sup>144</sup> France, ACM, SS S 5, Chamonard to Elgood, September 12, 1915; Charles-Diran Tékéian, *Quatre Ans de Guerre en Orient; l'Action Franco-Arménienne Pendant la*

- 
- Guerre*, Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1919, pp. 7-9; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 103.
- <sup>145</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 103-05. See also Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 34-37; Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde," n. p. According to *Asparez*, December 1, 1916, the letters were delivered on September 8.
- <sup>146</sup> Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 106-08.
- <sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-19.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10; Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 9-10; *Asparez*, December 1, 1916.
- <sup>149</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, September 22, 1915; *idem*, ACM, SS S 5, Chamonard to Elgood, September 12, 1915; Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 10-11; Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, pp. 110-111; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, pp. 40-41; Margarian, "Svetio Joghovurde," n. p.; Ter-Galstian, "Musa Leran," p. 33; *Asparez*, December 1, 1916. According to Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 96-97, the French asked for six Armenian representatives to come aboard one of the ships (Desaix) to show the enemy positions. The representatives included Movses Ter Galustian, Mikael Petrosian, Grigor Tovmasian, Japra Gazanjan, Petros Tmlakian (who was already staying on the ship), and an unnamed person. The French similarly asked the Armenians on the mountain to remove their headgear to be distinguished from enemy soldiers (Gloria Hachigian Ericson, private papers, Orlando, Florida, Iskandar [Alex] Hachigian, untitled eyewitness account, p. 3).
- <sup>151</sup> Turkey, *Documents*, p. 101.
- <sup>152</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915. See also *idem*, September 22, 1915.
- <sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>154</sup> Great Britain, FO 371/44/2490/129419/131046, Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, Port Said, to Admiralty, September 12, 1915.
- <sup>155</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, ACM SS S 5, Chamonard to Elgood, September 12, 1915; Tékéian, *Quatre Ans de Guerre*, p. 12.
- <sup>157</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915, September 22, 1915; Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 12-14; d'Azy, *L'Origine*, p. 6; Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 44.
- <sup>158</sup> Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 14-15. Two days before the rescue operation, the French had asked the Armenians to prepare a list of all the families and their members. A few youths took the census by visiting each and every shed. On the eve of the evacuation, town criers notified the populace to get ready. As they descended to the beach, a dangerous trip of about four hours through rugged terrain, they congratulated each other for their new lease on life, but were also saddened at abandoning their ancestral lands. For details, see Iskenterian, *Svetio Apstambutiune*, p. 33; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 98-99; Haykazyan, "Husher U Pusher," notebook 4, n. p.; *Asparez*, December 1, 1916.
- <sup>159</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 22, 1915.
- <sup>160</sup> Turkey, *Documents*, p. 101.
- <sup>161</sup> *Arev*, September 17, 1915. See also *Asparez*, December 1, 1916 for the special care that the French showed towards the Musa Daghians.
- <sup>162</sup> France, ACM, SS S 6, Chateauminois to Darrieus, September 23, 1915; Cholakian, *Tsamkadz Aghbiure*, p. 47. According to *Arev*, September 22, 1915, the Port Said military authorities took the weapons and the ammunition from the Armenians and gave them receipts.

- 
- <sup>163</sup> Cholakian, *Tsamkadz Aghbiure*, p. 47; Haykazyan, “Husher U Pusher,” notebook 5, n. p.; *Arev*, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>164</sup> Haykazyan, “Husher U Pusher,” notebook 5, n. p.
- <sup>165</sup> Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 19-20; *Arev*, November 8, 1915.
- <sup>166</sup> Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 21-22; *Arev*, November 7, 1915.
- <sup>167</sup> Boyadjian, *Musa Dagh*, p. 29.
- <sup>168</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>169</sup> Great Britain, FO 371/44/2490/129419/131046, H.G.N. notes, September 13, 1915.
- <sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, G.T.C. notes, September 13, 1915.
- <sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, H.G.N. notes (typewritten), September 13, 1915.
- <sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, G.T.C. notes, September 13, 1915.
- <sup>173</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915, September 22, 1915.
- <sup>174</sup> Tékéian, *Quatre Ans*, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>175</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 22, 1915. Rev. Andreasian, *Zeytuni Taragrutiune*, p. 112, mentions a certain carrier called Raven, which does not appear in any of the French or British documents. Rev. Andreasian must have obtained his information from Paul Chack, *Pavillon Haut*, Paris: Les Editions de France, 1929, p. 139. For a reprint of the chapter on Musa Dagh in Chack’s book, see *Orient*, Beirut, April 20-21, 1930.
- <sup>176</sup> Hilmar Kaiser, ed. and intro., *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel Von Reichenberg, Zeitoun, Mousa Dagh, Ourfa: Letters on the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton, New Jersey: Gomidas Institute Books/Taderon Press, 2001, p. 17.
- <sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- <sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-29.
- <sup>182</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 122, Amiral JAUREGUIBERRY to Marine Paris, September 16, 1915.
- <sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, SS S 4, Darrieus to Elgood, September 1915; *idem*, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 17, 1915.
- <sup>184</sup> Great Britain, FO 371/44/2490/129419/131502, G.T.C. notes, September 15, 2015.
- <sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, decipher Sir H. McMahon (Alexandria), no. 527, September 14, 1915.
- <sup>186</sup> France, AMAE, Guerre 1914-1918, Légion d’Orient, vol. 890, Paul Cambon to Delcassé, received September 15, 1915.
- <sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, September 14, 1915; *idem*, Communication of the Embassy of Great Britain in Paris to Departement, September 14, 1915; *idem*, Arménie, vol. 887, Camille Barrère to Delcassé, September 16, 1915.
- <sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, Arménie, vol. 887, Note to Departement, September 16, 1915; *idem*, AMAE, Légion d’Orient, vol. 890, Annexe to previous document, Delcassé to Lutaud, Governor General of Algeria, Alapetite, Resident General in Tunisia, and General Lyautey, Commissioner Resident General in Morocco, September 16, 1916.
- <sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, Légion d’Orient, vol. 890, Alapetite to Delcassé, September 18, 1915.
- <sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, Lyautey to Delcassé, September 20, 1915.
- <sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, Lutaud to Delcassé, October 9, 1915.
- <sup>192</sup> *Husaber*, November 9, 1915.
- <sup>193</sup> France, AMAE, Légion d’Orient, vol. 890, Minister of Foreign Affairs (signed by de Margerie) to Paul Cambon, September 17, 1915.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., Cambon to Delcassé, September 18, 1915, September 22, 1915 (date received); idem, Delcassé to Cambon, September 21, 1915.

<sup>195</sup> For the Armenian refugee camp at Port Said, see Muhammad Rifa't al-Imam, *Al-Arman fi Misr 1897-1961* (The Armenians in Egypt 1897-1961), Cairo: AGBU Satenik Chakr Fund, 2003, pp. 147-79; Armin Albert Kredian, "The Armenian Community in Egypt during World War I," M.A. thesis, American University in Cairo, 1997, pp. 147-96; Khacher Maturian, "Por Sayiti Hay Gaghtakanats Vranakaghake" (The Armenian refugee camp of Port Said), in Gushagjian and Maturian, *Hushamatean*, pp. 397-418; Sherpetjian, *Patmutiun Svetahayeru*, pp. 102-39; M. Salbi, *Aleakner Yev Khleakner*.

<sup>196</sup> France, ACM, SS Ed 125, Darrieus to Augagneur, September 22, 1915.

<sup>197</sup> For the genesis and activity of the *Légion d'Orient*, consult Andrekos Varnava, "French and British Post-War Imperial Agendas and Forging an Armenian Homeland after the Genocide: The Formation of the Légion d'Orient in October 1916," *The Historical Journal* 57: 4, December, 2014, pp. 997-1025; Guévork Gotikian, "La Légion d'Orient et le Mandat Français en Cilicie (1916-1921), in *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine*, numéro special, *La Cilicie (1909-1921) des Massacres d'Adana au Mandat Français*, volume prepared by Raymond H. Kévorkian, III (1999), pp. 278-313; Aram Karamanoukian, *Les Etrangers et le Service Militaire*, Paris: A. Pedone, 1978, pp. 115-30; Tigran H. Poyajian, *Haykakan Legeone. Patmakan Hushagrutiun* (The Armenian Legion: Historical memoir), Watertown, Massachusetts: Paykar Press, 1965; Hakob Torosian, "Haykakan Legeone" (The Armenian Legion), in Gushagjian and Maturian, *Hushamatean*, pp. 425-49; d' Azy, *L'Origine*.

ՄՈՒՍԱ ԼԵՌԱՆ ԴԻՄԱԴՐՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ՝  
ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ  
(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ՎԱՀՐԱՄ ՇԵՄՄԱՍԵԱՆ  
Vahram.shemmassian@csun.edu

Արխիվային, յուշագրական, տպագիր, ձեռագիր եւ այլ հարուստ նիւթերու հիմամբ հեղինակը կը ներկայացնէ Մուսա Լեռան հերոսամարտը՝ Ա. Աշխարհամարտի համապատկերին վրայ:

Երիտթուրք իշխանութիւն եւ քրիստոնէայ հայ փոքրամասնութիւն փոխյարաբերութիւնը տեղաւորելով ուժերու անհաւասարակշիռ յարաբերութեամբ դրսեւորուող հայեցակարգի մէջ, այդ ենթախորքին վրայ, հեղինակը թրքական գերակշիռ կողմին կամքի բռնի պարտադրանքի դրսեւորում կը նկատէ Հայոց հանդէպ գործադրուած Ցեղասպանութիւնը եւ անոր մէկ մանրապատկերը հանդիսացող Մուսա Լեռան ինքնապաշտպանութիւնը:

Հեղինակը կը ներկայացնէ ինքնապաշտպանութիւնը կանխող օսմանեան *սեֆերպերլիքը*՝ զօրակոչը, եւ մանրամասն կը նկարագրէ մուսալեռցիներու ընդառաջումը զօրակոչին՝ հակառակ տիրող անվստահութեան եւ կասկածներուն: Զինակոչիկները կ'ուղղուին Անտիոք, կ'արձանագրուին, սակայն անոնց մէկ մասը կը խուսափի ճակատ մեկնելէ՝ Պալքանեան Պատերազմին (1912-1913) մասին օսմանեան բանակայիններու սարսափելի պատմութիւնները լսելով: Միւս մասը կը միանայ օսմանեան բանակին, կը տարուի Հալէպի եւ

---

Այնթապի շրջանները եւ ծանր պայմաններու մէջ կը պարտադրուի ճանապարհաշինութեան եւ խրամներ փորելու աշխատանքներուն:

Զօրակոչը ծանր կը կշռէ Մուսա Լեռան տնտեսութեան վրայ, մինչ աւելի սահմոկելի դէպքերը տակաւ կը պարզուին. 26 Յուլիս 1915ին կը հասնի քեսապահայերուն տեղահանութեան հրահանգը: 29 Յուլիսին, Աբրահամ Քինյ. Տէր Գալուստեանի Եողունօլուքի տան մէջ կը գումարուի ժողով մը՝ ճշդելու մուսալեռցիներու պատասխանը՝ անխուսափելի տեղահանութեան հրահանգին: Ի վերջոյ ժողովականներուն երկու երրորդը կ'որոշէ հակառակիլ. 31 Յուլիս-2 Օգոստոս շրջանին, մուսալեռցիք լեռ կը բարձրանան տեղահանութեան հրահանգը գործադրելու եկած օսմանցի զինուորներուն աչքին առջեւ:

Հեղինակը նախ կը նկարագրէ հրահանգին ենթարկուողներուն ճակատագիրը, ապա կը ծանրանայ հակառակողներուն առած քայլերուն եւ դիմադրական շարժումի պատրաստութեան վրայ, ներկայացնելով վայրի ընտրութեան, հրամանատարութեան յառաջացման, զէնքի եւ դիմադրութեան միջոցներու հայթայթման, թիկունքի, հաղորդակցութեանց եւ պաշարի ապահովման, դիմադրական զիծերու եւ դիրքերու գոյացման աշխատանքները:

Ուսումնասիրութիւնը քննական վերլուծութեամբ կը մանրամասնէ դիմադրողներուն հնարաւորութիւնները, առճակատումներու վայրերը, 7-8 Օգոստոսին ծայր առած կռիւներուն ընթացքը, պաշարեալ մուսալեռցիներու փրկութեան ընտրանքներու փնտոտութիւնները, աւելի քան քառասնօրեայ դիմադրութեան ընթացքը եւ հուսկ՝ ազատարար վայրէջքը լեռնէն ու ֆրանսական նաւերով լեռնականներուն փոխադրումը Փոր Սայիտի գաղթակայան, ուր վերջին խումբը կը հասնի Սեպտեմբեր 16ին:

Այս պատումին զուգահեռ, Շեմնասեան կը մէջբերէ թրքական տեսակետերը պաշտպանող Էտուրրտ Էրիքսընի աշխատութեան համապատասխան տուեալները ու փաստերով կը հերքէ զանոնք, ինչպէս օրինակ կը ջրէ Էրիքսընի այն կարծիքը, թէ մարտեր կը մղուին Եողունօլուքի մէջ, որ բնաւ չի համապատասխաներ իրականութեան, որովհետեւ մուսալեռցիք, պաշարումէ զգուշանալով, սկիզբէն եւեթ հրաժարած էին որեւէ գիւղի մէջ համախմբուելէ: