

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN EGYPT: WORLD WAR I AND GENOCIDE 1914-1919¹

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WWI, EGYPT AND THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

One of the most important changes on the international political scene brought about by World War I was the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman decision to enter World War I at the end of October 1914 meant engulfing the entire Middle East in a primarily European war. On the other hand, because of the strategic importance of the Suez Canal, Great Britain dragged Egypt - which was under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire - into the war. On 4 August Britain declared war on Germany and pressured the Egyptian Prime Minister Hussein Rushdi to enter the war on the side of the Entente.² Rushdi reluctantly signed the August 5, 1914 Resolution, by which Egypt became a resentful war-time British ally.³

This Resolution created a critical situation between Egypt and its suzerain, the Ottoman Empire. As the latter was still officially neutral, it meant that Egypt no more recognized the sovereignty of the Sublime Porte.⁴ Thus, overnight Egypt became un-Ottoman without, however, becoming independent. This resulted in ambiguous international status for the Egyptian state. Between August and November 1914, relations between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire were tense but not totally cut off.⁵ When eventually the Ottoman Empire entered the War at the end of October 1914, it was to be against the Entente. The final rupture of relations between Egypt and the Sublime Porte came with Great Britain's declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire in November 1914 because the 5 August Resolution stipulated that Egypt cut off relations with Britain's enemies.⁶ This provided the British with the pretext they needed, and finally, on the 18th of December 1914, Egypt was declared a British Protectorate, and Hussein Kamil was made the Sultan of Egypt.⁷ Once the Protectorate was proclaimed, British rule in Egypt became absolute. In January 1915, Sir Henry McMahon arrived in Egypt as High Commissioner. Thenceforth and throughout the War years, as Latifa Salem points out, the Sultan of Egypt was considered an employee of the High Commissioner, while real authority was vested in the hands of the British "counselors" in the different departments of the Egyptian state machinery.⁸

The First World War proved to be a double calamity for Armenians throughout the world, and especially for the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. At the outbreak of World War I, the Russo-Turkish frontier in Transcaucasia - established by the 1878 Berlin Congress after the Russo-

Turkish War - passed through Armenia dividing it into Ottoman Armenia to the west and Russian Armenia to the east. This made Armenia a theater of war throughout 1914-1918, as one of the major battle fronts of World War I. However, for the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire the Young Turk government's decision to use the opportunity offered by war conditions to annihilate its Armenian population had far more devastating consequences than the war itself.

On the eve of World War I, there existed in Egypt a small, (estimated at around 10,000)⁹ but organized, Armenian community. The story of the establishment of this community goes back to the reign of Mohammad 'Ali Pasha (1805-1848) during whose rule in Egypt there was a remarkable rise in the number and fortunes of the Armenians there.¹⁰ Under his patronage a great number of Armenians were either invited or attracted to Egypt as trustworthy and efficient functionaries. As Christians the Armenians did not present any threat to the Pasha either militarily or politically. It followed that the Pasha insured their loyalty to him as their sole patron and in less than half a century the Armenians who settled in Egypt accumulated great wealth and power.¹¹ A number of beys emerged among the expert craftsmen employed at the palace, the wealthy merchants and the state functionaries.¹² A few - like Boghos *bey* Yusufian and Artin *bey* Chrakian who successively held the position of *nazir* in Egypt's Commerce and European Affairs *diwan* until 1850 - reached international prominence.¹³ Influential Armenians such as Nubar *pasha*, Arakel *bey* d'Abro and Tigran *pasha* d'Abro continued to reach high positions as ministers and statesmen till the end of the 19th century.¹⁴ The Armenian notables donated large sums for building and administering religious and educational institutions to serve the needs of the growing Armenian community in Egypt. Upon their death they left large lucrative estates to the community as *waqf-s* which were eventually administered by the Armenian Prelacy.¹⁵ During the turbulent WW1 years of unprecedented national crisis for the Armenian people, the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Gregorian [*Hay Arakelakan Lusavortchakan*] community in Cairo, officially known as the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate in Cairo,¹⁶ acquired a pivotal role in the region. Two major factors gave the Armenian Community in Egypt crucial importance during World War I and its aftermath. First, at the start of WWI the community was well established with a highly institutionalized administrative system. Second, Egypt's strategic position on the front line with Ottoman Palestine and Syria enhanced the geo-political importance of the Armenian Orthodox Prelacy in Cairo as an organized institution in proximity to Ottoman territories where the annihilation of the Armenians was in process and the fate of the Armenian homeland was being determined. Moreover, from early 1918 the British military authorities

considered the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo the national center of administration of all Armenians in Enemy Occupied Territories (EOT) in the Middle East.

It followed that starting from 1915, throughout the war years and until 1919, the Armenian Communal Administration in Egypt (*Azgayin Gavarakan Varchutiun*)¹⁷ was overwhelmed with numerous appeals -for humanitarian aid and support that was vital for the survival of the Armenian nation - which poured into the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo from all over the region. From Transcaucasia came appeals for assistance for the war-zone refugees there and support for the Armenian volunteers in the Russian Army. From Constantinople came appeals for urgent funds to save from certain death the surviving deportees in Ottoman territories. In Port Sa'id 4200 destitute Armenian refugees from Jebel Musa needed care. In 1916 there was the issue of recruiting volunteers for the creation of the *Legion d'Orient*, the nucleus of which was formed in the Port Sa'id refugee camp. This article examines the role played by the Armenian Communal Administration in Egypt in the Armenian national crisis within the context of the geo-political position of this country during WWI.

WAR AND MASSACRES. THE CAUCASUS FRONT: MASSACRES, REFUGEES AND VOLUNTEERS

With the Ottoman Empire joining WWI in late October 1914 on the side of the Central Powers, new war fronts were created in the Caucasus and the Middle East. The Caucasus front ran along the border between the Russian and Ottoman empires. As explained above, this was the frontier that divided Armenia into Ottoman and Russian Armenia. (Map 1) It followed that Armenian men were recruited in both the Ottoman and Russian armies. During the December 1914-January 1915 Anatolian campaign of Enver Pasha, Ottoman Minister of War, while Ottoman Armenian conscripts fought in the Turkish lines,¹⁸ Armenian volunteer units fought alongside the Russian armies in Transcaucasia and in Persian Azerbaijan.¹⁹ That Ottoman Armenians neither intended to nor were capable of sabotaging the Ottoman war effort but submitted to the orders of the authorities is documented, among others, in the German war time correspondence between the representatives of the German government in the Ottoman-Armenian provinces and their Embassy in Constantinople.²⁰ However, the tens of thousands of Armenian conscripts in the Third Ottoman Army were soon (in February 1915) disarmed and sent to work in labor battalions.²¹ Their fate is described in gruesome detail in the memoirs of Ambassador Morgenthau (USA Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913-1916). These men were used as road laborers and pack animals until they dropped dead or were shot when no longer needed.²²

Those who served in the Fourth Ottoman Army based in Palestine escaped this fate²³ and were subsequently captured by Entente armies on different Middle Eastern fronts.

By February 1915, 100,000 Ottoman Armenian refugees had arrived in Transcaucasia²⁴, fleeing massacres in the battle zones as “orders [by the Ottoman authorities] to attack Armenian villages were received in the east between 29 October and 5 November 1914.”²⁵ Fund-raising for the relief of these refugees was not limited to Transcaucasia. In response to the January 1915 appeal made by the “Armenian Central Committee for the Aid of the War-Stricken” (*Paterazmits Vnasvadsneri Ognogh Haikakan Kentronakan Komite*) - an organization which functioned under the auspices of the Catholicos of All Armenians, Kevork V, in Ejmiadsin - Armenian communities worldwide, from the USA to India, started organizing aid campaigns.²⁶ Likewise, the Armenians in Egypt responded to this appeal. Various relief societies were either created or activated. Numerous fund-raising enterprises were organized. As elsewhere, in Egypt too, the Armenians were faced with the increasing need for funds in Transcaucasia, where material support for both the volunteers and the refugees was essential. To begin with, the Armenians in Egypt urgently sent to Transcaucasia 20,000 Rubles.²⁷ As early as February 1915, a “Committee for the Refugees in the Caucasus” was already functioning in Cairo.²⁸ In April 1915, the AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) collected and sent 60,000 Rubles to the Catholicos.²⁹

As Hovannisian points out, “... the sympathy of most Armenians throughout the world was with the Entente, not with the Central Powers.”³⁰ And with good reason. Not only were the 1894-1896 massacres still fresh in the minds of Armenians, but also the various reform schemes promulgated for the Ottoman Armenian provinces between 1878 and 1914 had been repeatedly aborted, the last one being the 8 February 1914 reform plan.³¹ Therefore, while Ottoman Armenians were reluctantly but dutifully enrolling in the Ottoman army, Armenians residing outside Ottoman territories were motivated to participate in the war effort of the Allies. In addition to the Armenians of eastern Armenia, who fulfilled their obligation as subjects of the Russian Empire by enrolling in the Russian army where their number reached 150,000, the Armenian leaders in Tbilisi welcomed the proposal of Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, the Viceroy of Transcaucasia, to form four Armenian volunteer units.³² Young Armenian men from all over the world, mainly from the United States and the Balkans, hurried to Transcaucasia to participate in the volunteer movement.³³

A number of young men from Cairo and Alexandria left for the Caucasus at their own expense while many others expressed readiness to

hasten to the battlefield and requested the Prelacy to pay their travel expenses.³⁴ A committee to support the Armenian volunteers, *Hay Kamavorakan Gunteru Zinvorakan Npast* (Military Contribution for Armenian Volunteer Units) formed by the Dashnak Party in Cairo organized fund-raising. During 1915, the Dashnak Party sent 3,000 Egyptian Pounds to the Transcaucasia war front.³⁵ When the Fund for the Protection of National Interests (*Himnadram Azgayin Shaheru Pashtpanutian*- henceforth, *Himnadram*) was created through the initiative of Boghos Pasha Nubar, under the auspices of the Catholicos,³⁶ the two other Armenian political parties in Egypt, namely the Social Democrat Hnchakian and Sahmanadrakan (Constitutional) Ramgavar decided to collaborate with it. They agreed to join forces and send all the money collected through donations to the *Himnadram*.³⁷ The AGBU also merged its fund-raising with the *Himnadram*,³⁸ and in July, 1915, Boghos Nubar sent the Catholicos 10,000 Rubles from the *Himnadram* to be allotted to the volunteers.³⁹

In the spring of 1915 an Armenian Red Cross started to take shape in Alexandria following the initiative of some Armenian women who prepared clothing for the wounded Armenian volunteers fighting on the Caucasus front in Armenia.⁴⁰ In July 1915, an officially authorized Armenian Red Cross was founded in Cairo, “after a general meeting of all sectarian, benevolent and educational institutions and political parties”,⁴¹ and the newly formed organization acted under the auspices of the Armenian Prelacy.⁴² Soon a training program for nurses was offered to young Armenian women.⁴³

For the Armenian leaders, the aim of the Armenian volunteer movement was political rather than military. From a political point of view, they believed that - in case of an Entente victory - they would earn the right to make demands for the future of their country during post-war settlements. This is mentioned explicitly by Boghos Nubar, the head of the Armenian National Delegation, in a letter addressed to Mikayel Varandian in 1915: “... these volunteers fighting on the side of the Entente... can give us the right to make our voices heard when the time comes to realize our rightful and modest demands”.⁴⁴

While the Armenian community in Egypt was getting organized to lend support to their compatriots in the Caucasus war zone, information about the massacres and deportation of Ottoman Armenians in different regions of Cilicia and Anatolia crept into Transcaucasia with the arriving refugees. When the news of the siege of Van by the Turkish forces in April 1915 reached Transcaucasia, the Russian forces and the Armenian volunteer units accompanying them advanced towards the city and entered it on 18 May. The resistance of the Armenians in Van to the Ottoman

armies besieging the city has been distorted by the Turkish authorities into an alleged “Armenian uprising.” However, numerous foreign eye-witness accounts provide evidence to that the Armenians in Van rose only in self-defense to avoid being slaughtered *en masse* or deported like their compatriots in the neighboring villages.⁴⁵

The occupation of Van by the Russian armies in May 1915 created great enthusiasm among all strata of the Egyptian-Armenian community. The event was considered “a pledge for the liberation of Armenia.”⁴⁶ In June 1915, Boghos Nubar sent 15,000 Rubles to the Catholicos from the *Himnadram*, to be allotted to urgent needs in Van,⁴⁷ where an Armenian governorship had been established.⁴⁸ Appeals to the public for the reconstruction of the homeland were voiced in the pages of Armenian newspapers and journals in Cairo and Alexandria.⁴⁹

Thus, throughout the first half of 1915, the hope that the Allies would soon win the war and the Armenian refugees would return to rebuild their war-devastated homeland in Western Armenia was predominant among Armenians in Transcaucasia and abroad. Little did they know that what had befallen Ottoman Armenia since November 1914 was not ‘merely’ damage caused by the war but the beginning of the process of total destruction of Ottoman Armenians planned by their own government.

The Armenian National Delegation

Based on expectations of an imminent Entente victory and a post war territorial settlement for the Armenian people, the Catholicos of All Armenians appointed Boghos Nubar president of an Armenian National Delegation and his sole representative before the Entente powers.⁵⁰ The purpose of the Delegation was to present the grievances and aspirations of the Armenian people.⁵¹ On 27 April, 1915, the Catholicos cabled Boghos Nubar in Egypt and informed him that persecutions, massacres and bloodshed were taking place in various provinces in Armenia and Cilicia and requested him to make appeals to the President of the United States and to the King of Italy concerning the unbearable situation of the Armenian population in Anatolia and Cilicia.⁵² In a second telegram, the Catholicos stated that the policy of the National Delegation should be based on finding a solution for the Armenian Question through attaining an autonomous Armenia. He also informed Boghos Nubar that the members of the Delegation to Europe were the same as in the 1913-1914 Delegation, namely: Bishop Kevork Utujian (the Primate of Europe), Boghos Nubar, Ya’qub Artin *Pasha* and Mr. Harutiun Mostichian, all Ottoman Armenians.⁵³

On 3 May 1915 Boghos Nubar left Port Sa’id for Europe, where he would be based in Paris. He was to meet Dr. Hakob Zavriev,⁵⁴ who had

been given assurances of an autonomous Armenia by Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister.⁵⁵ According to the Egyptian newspaper *al Muqattam* - which had run an interview with Boghos Nubar on the eve of his departure to Europe - if given the choice, Boghos Nubar would wish administrative independence for his nation, guaranteed by Allied protection, until the time was ripe for political independence.⁵⁶ By the end of June 1915 the future of Armenia was envisioned as “autonomous and neutral”, including part of Cilicia, under the collective protection of the Entente powers.⁵⁷ Boghos Pasha Nubar was very optimistic with the results of the preliminary talks held with the European representatives and worked toward reconciling Armenian aspirations for an autonomous Armenia with the interests of the Powers under whose protection Armenia would fall.⁵⁸ As we shall see later, the formation of the *Legion d'Orient* was part of this political line of thought. However, ironically, it was also at the end of June 1915 that the Armenian Community in Egypt came to realize that the massacres and deportations of the Ottoman Armenians amounted to an attempt by the Ottoman government to annihilate the Armenian nation.⁵⁹

News of Deportations: This Is Annihilation

Like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the bits and pieces of the tragic news reaching Egypt in the first half of 1915 gradually unveiled the situation of Ottoman Armenians. News arriving from Bulgaria made it clear that massacres and barbaric acts in the Armenian vilayets had restarted.⁶⁰ A *Times* correspondent reported from the Balkans that the number of prominent Armenians exiled from Constantinople to the depth of Anatolia had reached 1500 individuals.⁶¹ On 24 May 1915, a cable from the special correspondent of the *Egyptian Gazette* in London stated that the Entente Powers had informed the Porte that they would hold all the members of the Ottoman government responsible for the Armenian massacres.⁶² From Transcaucasia came news of the slaughter in Alashkert of all Armenians between the ages of 11 and 60 by Turks and Kurds.⁶³ On 9 June 1915, translating from a Russian newspaper, *Arev* gave details of killings and pillaging implemented by the Ottoman government against its Armenian subjects in different regions of Ottoman Armenia and Cilicia from the start of the war until the end of April 1915.⁶⁴

On 25 June, Mihran Damadian wrote in *Arev*: “Facing these sad facts, one would be tempted to think that the Armenian population in Armenia was doomed to certain annihilation.” However, he hastened to eliminate this possibility on the basis of an anticipated “near Entente victory.”⁶⁵ A few days later, *Arev* wrote that following the orders of the central government in Constantinople, the Armenian population of Cilicia had been deported *en masse*, males separately from females and children. “This

time, commented *Arev*, it is different from the general massacres; it is more barbaric and more diabolic; it is mass deportation.”⁶⁶ It seems that only when news of the mass deportation of Ottoman Armenians reached Egypt at the end of June 1915, did the Armenians there wake up to the horror of the Young Turks’ Committee of Union and Progress policy of extermination of the Armenian people. By July 1915, there was no doubt in the minds of the Armenians in Egypt that the tragic events in Cilicia and Western Armenia surpassed the red years of the Hamidian massacres of 1894-6. “It is a policy for the annihilation of the Armenian element that is being implemented now”, wrote Damadian on 9 July 1915.⁶⁷

Soon the Cairo Civil Council received an extensive secret report from Constantinople which confirmed the newspaper accounts of the situation in Ottoman Armenia. The report dated 30/13 July 1915, was sent via Bulgaria (which was still neutral) enclosed in a letter written by the Armenian Primate in Bulgaria, dated 9/22 July, 1915. The report mentioned, among other things, that the Armenians living in the six Armenian vilayets (Erzerum, Van, Kharberd, Sivas, Bitlis, and Diyarbakir) had been forcibly uprooted and driven southwards towards Aleppo and Mosul. As a consequence, no Armenians had been left in those provinces and the majority of the deportees had perished on the road, unable to continue the journey on foot.⁶⁸

From January to July 1915, the two major concerns of the Armenian Community in Egypt were to support the volunteer movement on the Caucasus front and to render assistance to the waves of war refugees that poured into Transcaucasia. July 1915 added urgency to measures to save the surviving Ottoman Armenian deportees to Syria and Mesopotamia from their agony. On receiving the report, the Cairo Civil Council decided to launch a general mobilization of the community by holding a joint session of the Civil Councils of Cairo and Alexandria, and invited the following to attend the meeting: the members of the Community Councils; representatives of the Armenian political parties, the AGBU, and the different relief organizations; Armenian lawyers, doctors, prominent bankers, merchants and notables without distinction of creed; as well as the leaders of the Armenian Catholics and Protestants.⁶⁹ The joint session of the two Civil Councils convened on 16/29 August 1915⁷⁰ and decided to allocate 15,000 pounds from the treasuries of both prelacies for the needs of the destitute Armenian survivors in Ottoman territories⁷¹. The joint Councils also proposed unifying the fund-raising efforts of the different organizations in the community into one exclusive committee which would alone be responsible for the collecting and allocation of the funds.⁷²

On 19 September 1915, the General Council, the highest administrative body of the Armenians in Egypt, met in Alexandria and agreed on the

formation of a new, centralized Committee for fund-raising. Sixteen members, 8 from Cairo and 8 from Alexandria were chosen from among “all classes of the people regardless of creed and political party membership” to form the new committee⁷³ which was called *Yegiptahay Npastamatuyts Marmin*⁷⁴ (Egyptian-Armenian Relief Committee-henceforth, *Npastamatuyts*). It was to function under the auspices of Boghos Nubar who would make the final decisions on the allocation of the funds. But now the resolutions of the Communal leaders - in addition to the volunteers and the refugees in the Caucasus and the deportees in the Middle East - had to take into consideration the 4200 Armenian refugees from Jebel Musa who had disembarked in Port Sa'id just a few days earlier. Consequently, the General Council decided that the *Npastamatuyts* would be responsible for providing the immediate, and indispensable funds needed for the refugees in Port Sa'id and for the local Armenian Red Cross within a maximum limit of 1/4 of the total collected sum. The remainder of the funds was to be placed at the disposition of Boghos Nubar.⁷⁵

That the communal leadership realized the gravity of the situation and the magnitude of the expectations placed on them is clear in the minutes of this session. Primate Torkom Gushakian, in his opening speech as president of the Council, referred to the massacres and deportations of Armenians in Ottoman lands as an unprecedented calamity:

...it is a fight for the survival of the Armenian nation that is being launched now. Today, not only the Armenians in Egypt but also the entire Armenian people are waiting in anticipation for the results of this session...it is a moment of ultimate crisis never before lived by our nation in the past...⁷⁶

In October 1915, another letter from the Armenian Primate in Bulgaria, dated 19 September 1915, reached the Armenian Primate in Egypt, appealing for immediate aid for the deportees:

Our unfortunate compatriots, deported from the provinces are dying in hundreds of thousands in the deserts, as a consequence to the hardship and hunger they are being subjected to. In an attempt to alleviate the pain caused by this catastrophe at least partially, we have officially been asked to appeal to Armenians abroad for immediate aid in the form of contributions. According to information from reliable sources, if material assistance is not hastily rendered to regions from Eskişehir to Konya to [...], to Taron, Adana, Aleppo, Zor, Urfa and as far as Mosul and Baghdad, to which Armenians have been uprooted and deported in hundreds of thousands, within the span of 1-2 months, even before the winter starts, all of them will perish. Consequently, on the basis of the demand made to us, we come to request Your

Reverence, that on receiving this letter you hastily launch a fund-raising campaign and instead of sending the collected sums to the Caucasus or elsewhere, you send the money to our address, and hence it will be sent to Constantinople, as all the resources of the Patriarchate there have been drained.⁷⁷

Between the writing of this letter and its arrival in Cairo, Bulgaria had joined the war (October 14, 1915), cutting off one of the few routes of communication between the Armenians in Egypt and Constantinople. (It also cut off the routing of Armenian volunteers from Egypt and Ethiopia to Transcaucasia).⁷⁸ As the Ottoman Government had well calculated, war-time conditions made it almost impossible to rescue the Armenians in Anatolia and the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia from perishing.

Every day hundreds of petitions for contributions are made to the Patriarchate in Constantinople, which in turn, appeals to the AGBU. However, because of the present war conditions, transferring aid to Turkey has become extremely difficult. It is still possible to send money to Constantinople through the banks and dispatches of neutral countries... The main issue, however, is... how can money reach the provinces? Though the Patriarchate has a thousand administrative links, it has remained bewildered... It is not possible to send money through checks from the provinces to Constantinople and vice versa. Free movement is also not allowed... The sole means that remains is through the courtesy of the American Embassy in Constantinople, for those provinces where American Consulates or representatives exist.⁷⁹

By October 1915, the Ottoman government had made sure that this remaining channel became defunct. "According to newspaper accounts Mr. Morgenthau, the American Ambassador in Constantinople, had attempted to distribute aid to deported Armenians, but the Ottoman government had not allowed it."⁸⁰ On 27 October 1915, citing the *Times* correspondent in Washington, *Arev* wrote:

...Neither means nor facilities have been granted by the Turkish government to make use of the sum of 20,000 pounds sent to Mr. Morgenthau from America for the Armenians. Thus, the Ambassador has been reduced to complete inability to render assistance to the victims...⁸¹

This brought to an end the prospects of the Armenians in Egypt sending money to the Armenians in the Ottoman provinces. Thus, as far as aiding the deportees in the Syrian and Mesopotamian deserts was concerned, at the end of 1915, the Armenians in Egypt were in despair,

awaiting the advance of the Allies on these two fronts, which was delayed much longer than expected.

Meanwhile, the eye-witness accounts that arrived in Egypt exposed the horrible conditions of the deportees in the Syrian deserts. A traveler who had recently returned from Mesopotamia and who had been in the Deir al-Zor region for 12 days, recounted that he had found all parts of the region full of Armenians. “They are in an extremely destitute state. Most of them have nowhere to live and survive on grass. A few have a donkey or a goat. You never meet an adult male among those numerous people. They are only women and children and among them there are some very old men.”⁸² Unfortunately for these Armenian survivors of the massacres, throughout 1916 no significant advances were made by the Allies on the Middle Eastern fronts. On the other hand, the advance of the Russian Army on the Caucasus front and the occupation of territories in Ottoman Armenia by the Russians in 1916 did not result in the same enthusiasm which the occupation of Van in May 1915 had created among the Armenians in Egypt. “Our mourning hearts”, wrote Partevian “could not rejoice at the successive occupations of Erzerum, Mush, Baghesh (Bitlis), Trebizond, Paberd, and Erzinjan.”⁸³ The Armenians in Egypt were not alone in their mourning. As Hovannisian points out: “Russian occupation of Erzerum and Trebizond would have elicited delirious celebrations throughout Transcaucasia in 1914, but in 1916 it was greeted with silent interest, for the tsarist armies had occupied ‘Armenia without Armenians’.”⁸⁴ Thus, until the gradual occupation of Ottoman territories in Palestine and Syria by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force between October 1917 and October 1918, concerned Armenian individuals and organizations in Cairo, Alexandria and the Egyptian provinces focused their efforts on the refugees in the Port Sa’id Armenian camp.

THE PORT SA’ID CAMP AND

THE FORMATION OF THE *LEGION D’ORIENT*

The French, the British and the Arrival of Armenian Refugees in Port Sa’id

On 14 September 1915, a telegram sent by Dr. Arsharuni (an Armenian physician who served in Port Sa’id as a government medical doctor) from Port Sa’id informed the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo that 4000 Armenian refugees had just arrived in Port Sa’id.⁸⁵ General Maxwell (the Commander of British Troops in Egypt) informed the Prelacy that these refugees had been brought from Jebel Musa⁸⁶ on board French ships, that habitation [tents] and nutrition would be cared for by British military authorities, and that the Prelacy should provide for their various needs, including clothing.⁸⁷ The following day, an Armenian delegation left for Port Sa’id with an assignment to make the necessary arrangements and to report to the Civil Council on the situation there. Mr. Tokatlian (a member of this

delegation) was appointed the Prelacy's employee-interpreter in the camp and had to act according to the instructions of the Prelacy.⁸⁸

These refugees were the inhabitants of the six Armenian villages of *Suedia*, in the southernmost periphery of Cilicia, in the *sanjak* of Antioch;⁸⁹ hence, in Armenian sources they are interchangeably referred to as *Suediatsiner* or *Suedahaier* (*Suediyans*) and *Kilikiatsiner* (*Cilicians*). Having heard of the tragic fate of the Armenians in Zeitun and Diyarbakir, and convinced that "deportation" meant slow, agonizing death, they had resisted the deportation orders of the *qaim maqam* of Antioch in July 1915 and had taken refuge on Jebel Musa, the slopes of which ran down to the Mediterranean coast.⁹⁰ They had succeeded in holding back regular and irregular Turkish forces which besieged the mountain from inland for almost a month and a half.⁹¹ French warships cruising the Syrian coast for blockade purposes had noticed their SOS flag, evacuated them and brought them to Port Sa'id.⁹² There, with the cooperation of the British military authorities, and thanks to the *corvée* furnished by the French Marines, almost overnight, the tents for a refugee camp were installed on the east bank of the Suez Canal, near the *lazaretto* (quarantine).⁹³ During the first two weeks, the camp was administered by the local British military authorities in Port Sa'id, after which the responsibility for the task was assumed by a civilian administration.⁹⁴ (The State Refugees Administration).

On 16 September 1915, a delegation of prominent Armenians, headed by the Primate, arrived in Port Sa'id, where in a brief address to Rear-Admiral Darrieus, the Primate expressed profound gratitude on behalf of all Armenians to the French government, the French Marines and the President of the French Republic.⁹⁵ After the Primate's return from Port Sa'id the Prelacy sent letters to the French President and the King of England, thanking them for the protection they had offered and the care they had bestowed upon the Armenians of Jebel Musa.⁹⁶ If the Armenians had known the reality in French and British officialdom, the irony of the situation created by their letters would not have escaped them.

It is beyond doubt that the French Marines deserved utmost gratitude from all Armenians for having saved, at great personal risk, the inhabitants of *Suedia* from certain death. However, on examining the communication that circulated among various French officials and government departments from 10 to 22 September 1915, it becomes clear that, if left to the French government, all the Armenians on Jebel Musa would have perished, either by being killed or from starvation.

The SOS sign on Jebel Musa was first detected on 5 September 1915 by the French cruiser *Guichen*, just a few days before the food and ammunition of the Armenians on the mountain ran out. On the same day,

one of the leaders of the resistance, Pierre (Bedros) Dmlakian, met the Commandant of the *Guichen* and revealed to him the desperately grave situation of the Armenians on the mountain. Between 5 and 11 September, the commanders of the *Guichen*, which had stayed on the scene, and the *Desaix*, which had joined the *Guichen* on 6 September, as well as the Commander of the Squadron, Admiral Dartige du Fournet on board the *Jeanne d'Arc*, waited for instructions from Paris.⁹⁷ These instructions never arrived.⁹⁸ In a sarcastic tone, characteristic to his writings, General Elgood, Head of the Intelligence Office in Port Sa'id, mentions:

.. the French Government, however interested in principle in the fate of Armenia, [was] occupied at that moment with matters of greater importance than the problem of rescuing refugees, and postponed consideration of their reply to a more favorable hour... There was a grim humour in the belated reply. Paris, with studied simplicity, inquired 'Where is Jebel Musa'.⁹⁹

This may well be part of Elgood's rhetoric. Yet, the fact remains that orders for the evacuation of the Armenians in Jebel Musa and their transportation to Port Sa'id were given on the night of 11 September by Admiral Dartige du Fournet, who had not yet received any instructions from Paris regarding evacuation nor from the British for their settlement in Egypt. The Admiral's decision was based on the communication made to him on 11 September by the Commander of the *Desaix* stating that it seemed to him the evacuation should take place immediately and unless he got orders to the contrary, he would begin the operation early the next morning.¹⁰⁰

Thus, it was only through the humanity and audacity of a few French naval officers who acted on their own initiative and responsibility that the Armenians of Jebel Musa were transported to safety in Port Sa'id. Obviously, the French government - let alone the President, to whom words of thanks were directed - could not have been less interested in the fate of the 4000 Armenians in Jebel Musa. Later, the French government took full credit for the rescue operation and used it in the formation of the *Legion d'Orient* though it was not necessary to press the point. Having been saved from certain death by French warships, these Armenians were forever grateful to France, the French government, the French Republic, the French President, and to everything that was French. Little did they know what had happened behind the scenes.

The story of the disembarkation of the Armenian refugees in Port Sa'id is similar to that of their embarkation in Jebel Musa. Refused permission by the High Commissioner in Cyprus to settle the Armenian refugees on the island, the French Marine Corps Commander turned to the British

authorities in Egypt.¹⁰¹ Two days after contacting the authorities in Egypt, on 12 September as the embarkation progressed, the Captain of the French vessel *Chamonard* was still answering questions posed by General Maxwell about where these Armenians were from.¹⁰² The British government opposed the settlement of the Armenian refugees either in Cyprus or in Port Sa'id.¹⁰³ Colonel Elgood, faced with the *fait accompli* imposed by the French, offered to settle the refugees in a camp on the Asian bank of the Suez Canal.¹⁰⁴ While the settlement of the refugees by the French Marines and British military officials in Port Sa'id was already in progress, His Majesty's government was still insisting on not giving them asylum in Egypt and urged the French Government "to transport the refugees elsewhere as soon as possible."¹⁰⁵ The Armenians' letter of gratitude to the King of England should have caused His Majesty quite a surprise.

Settling the Refugees

Within a few days of the disembarkation of the refugees from Jebel Musa, under the supervision of Major Pearson, the camp was divided into six "villages", which were sub-divided into sections numbered alphabetically from A to S. Refugees from each village in *Suedia* were settled together in the same camp "village." Each section was composed of 25 tents,¹⁰⁶ which means that each tent had 8-9 residents. A census was prepared as one of the first measures to organize the distribution of food and clothes, and to vaccinate the refugees.¹⁰⁷ In a report sent by Tokatlian from the camp to the Cairo Prelacy, the number of refugees is given as follows: 915 men, 1408 women, 702 boys, 539 girls, 636 children.¹⁰⁸ This made a total of 4200 individuals, all of whom were vaccinated within a short period of time. The process of vaccination was led by the directress of the hospital, Mrs. Elgood, who was assisted by three Armenian Doctors, Dr. Arsharuni, Dr. Churukian and Dr. Teovletian, and three Armenian Red Cross nurses Misses Sirakian, Patmanian and Perperian.¹⁰⁹ From mid-September to mid-October, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Hornblower (the general supervisor and inspector of the camp as well as the Chief Supervisor of the State Refugees Administration which administered the camp and provided the daily food for the refugees), and efficient British personalities, such as Mrs. Elgood (who was later called the camp's "guardian angel"), Major Haron (chief of Health), Major Pearson (organizer of the camp), Captain Freed (the camp's military chief) and others, the refugees were provided with a well organized camp equipped with sanitary necessities, clean water and elementary alimentation.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, during the first week after their arrival, under directives from the communal authorities, a local committee of the leaders

of the resistance on Jebel Musa was formed. Composed of 17 members, this committee had three functions: to care for the internal problems in the camp, to give the refugees moral support and to register the newly born.¹¹¹ It is worth pointing out that the refugees' moral behaviour in the camp presented no difficulties for the authorities, though there were no policemen to oversee public discipline and monitor crimes.¹¹² Also, the Primate had made arrangements with the Armenian residents of Port Sa'id, and a local committee was formed to gather donations and clothing for the refugees.¹¹³ The Civil Council in Cairo held an emergency session, at which a preliminary plan for the aid of the refugees was formed by the communal authorities. Through the Armenian newspapers the Prelacy made appeals to the public for clothes and material. The donations were to be received at the Armenian School in Bulaq and at the Prelacy in Bein al Surein. The Armenian Red Cross - which proved to be the most dedicated and efficient Armenian organization active in the camp throughout the following four years - was to administer the sorting and distribution of the donated goods. Meanwhile, a committee responsible for making clothes for the refugees had already started work in an apartment put at the committee's disposal by Arakel Bey Nubar.¹¹⁴

Throughout September appeals were made, especially for clothes and medication. The appeals also stressed the need for food (rice, lentils, beans, oil, sugar, dairy products, eggs, dry fruit, etc.), as the nutrition provided by government was nothing more than the bare necessity to stay alive.¹¹⁵ People responded by donating money and in kind. Various Armenian merchants made gifts of their goods.¹¹⁶ Within a month of the arrival of the refugees in Port Sa'id, the Armenian Prelacies in Cairo and Alexandria, working in coordination with the AGBU, the Armenian Red Cross and with wide popular support, had provided enough material to meet the basic needs for the subsistence of the Armenians in the tent-city, such as: beds, blankets, covers, kitchen utensils, hats, shoes, and sewing machines.¹¹⁷ By October 1915, on the initiative of the Armenian community, there already existed in the camp the nucleus for a special kitchen, a *vestiaire*, a school and a workshop.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, until substantial communal aid reached the camp-city, a whole month had elapsed during which the refugees in Port Sa'id had lived in unbearable desert conditions.¹¹⁹ This brought the Armenian community in general and the leadership in particular under severe criticism by concerned Armenians. The leaders were accused of apathy and inefficiency while the masses were criticized for not showing enough concern towards the suffering of their compatriots.¹²⁰

“Two weeks have elapsed from the day near 5000 Armenians took refugees in Egypt rescued by the French from the Turkish sword. What did

we do in those 15 days? And especially what did our leaders do? Nothing. Words and meetings, as much as you like. Action: zero.” writes Dr. Arsharuni from Port Sa’id. “...If I list each and every urgent need that should have been provided for without delay our treatment [of these refugees] can be considered criminal.” Addressing his words to the members of the Prelacy Committees, Dr. Arsharuni cries out: “For your information... not one blanket has been delivered till now, and the nights are very chilly. Passing in front of the tents, one hears the children cough... while the babies and the new born - for already a few babies are born- do not have any blankets to be wrapped in. They are all covered with rags. The mothers do not have a drop of milk in their breasts to nurse their babies.... For your information...it is too heart rendering to go on... and yet you still dawdle in your labyrinth [of words].”¹²¹

Another criticism came from Vahan Tekeyan the famous Armenian poet and then editor of *Arev* in his editorial “Do we have a heart?”:

Here at our doorsteps are 4200 refugees, mostly women, children and old people deprived of everything, without clothes, beds, soap and many other basic necessities... we know that the Red Crosses, the AGBU and some individuals did and still do something [to render assistance]...where are the rest? Why doesn’t everyone, old and young, do or give spontaneously what he/she can? We are now convinced that in all of Egypt there are just a few Armenians who have a heart.¹²²

It seems both Dr. Arsharuni’s and Tekeyan’s words did not fall on totally deaf ears for in its 12 November, 1915 issue, *Arev* wrote:

We just received the following telegram from Port Sa’id; please inform the people... not to send anymore blankets and clothing as enough have been distributed. Nutritious food is required.¹²³

Also, in its same issue, *Arev*, which only a month before had accused the masses of indifference, announced:

The Armenian Red Cross, greatly encouraged by the sympathy and enthusiastic support of the masses, decided to establish in the Armenian camp in Port Sa’id a supplementary kitchen, in addition to the hospital founded and administered by it.¹²⁴

Initially, providing alimentation for the refugees was undertaken by the British authorities.¹²⁵ Though food was distributed to them from the day of their arrival, the bad quality¹²⁶ and poor nutritional value of the food resulted in grave consequences. Due to malnutrition, during the first month

the number of the sick in the hospital rose from 50 to 150.¹²⁷ With the purpose of improving health conditions through ameliorating the quality of alimentation Mrs. Arsharuni initiated the establishment of a special kitchen which offered balanced diets to weaklings and convalescents. The Armenian Red Cross allotted a monthly sum of 20 Egyptian Pounds and took upon itself the care of this kitchen, which was run by Mrs. Arsharuni under the supervision of the Armenian Red Cross doctors.¹²⁸ Dr. Arsharuni was the responsible head of this kitchen, which was subject to the higher supervision of the Prelacy.¹²⁹ However, the initial budget allotted to this project allowed only 100 individuals to benefit from it.¹³⁰ In May 1916 pellagra appeared in the camp and claimed 40 lives, half of them from among the old and the weak.¹³¹ Upon the request of Miss Arbetnot (who had replaced Mrs. El-Good as directress of the camp hospital), Mr. Hornblower, the General Supervisor of the camp, allotted a new budget for special food for those between 2 and 6 years old. Following the arrival of the American Red Cross at the camp in October 1916, the number of those who benefited from the special kitchen rose to 300 children and 200 adults.¹³² According to the report of the Ministry of Interior only four people had been infected during April-May 1917.¹³³

Another major concern for the community was providing education for the young. Soon after the arrival of the refugees a school was established in the camp by the AGBU and functioned under the higher supervision of the Prelacy.¹³⁴ Opened on 15 October 1915, and named Sisvan by Primate Gushakian, the school was composed of 36 tents. It offered classes to 1254 children of both sexes, who were mostly uneducated and spoke a Turco-Arabic Armenian dialect. The AGBU, which financed the school, also provided the school children with the necessary stationery, including maps, pictures, sports necessities and toys for the kindergarten.¹³⁵ Sometimes rightly criticized¹³⁶ for its mismanagement, and often praised for the noble cause it pursued, Sisvan, did "justify the hopes placed upon it - even if not completely at least partly - by teaching our exiled children the Armenian language."¹³⁷

In addition to the above-mentioned public services, the camp also had a chapel¹³⁸ and an auditorium.¹³⁹ Ironically, what the refugees could not acquire in the vast deserts of Sinai was a place to bury the dead. At first, they buried their dead in the desert, near the camp. It turned out that the dead trespassed on the property of the Suez Canal Company. Upon the protests of the latter in February 1916, Mr. Hornblower, on behalf of the State Refugee Administration, sent a letter to the Cairo Prelacy, prohibiting the burial of refugees in proximity to the camp and arranging that thenceforth the dead be buried in a public cemetery in the city of Port

Sa'id. The Prelacy was asked to pay for the coffins and the transportation expenses of the dead,¹⁴⁰ a task it delegated to the *Npastamatuyts*.¹⁴¹

Assessment

An assessment of the moral and material contribution of the Armenian community to their unfortunate compatriots in Port Sa'id cannot overlook Elgood's conclusions on the "national feelings" of Armenians in Egypt. Basing his judgment on the insensitive attitude of a handful of rich Armenians, Elgood writes:

Nothing indicates more clearly how little national feeling exists among the Armenians than the poor response given by the well-to-do members of the community to the appeal from Port Sa'id.... Their patriotism was unequal to the suggestion. Few visited the camp: fewer still subscribed money to its support. Except a handful of the more humble members, the colony seemed supremely indifferent whether their unfortunate countrymen and women at Port Sa'id lived or died... The rich and influential Armenian in Egypt contributed little in proportion to his wealth and station.¹⁴²

It is true that contemporary articles in the Armenian press also stated that the contribution of the rich in the community was relatively meager, not only concerning the refugees in the Port Sa'id camp, but also for all the other grievances of the Armenian nation during the war. It would however be greatly misleading to measure the humanitarian and national pulse of a community of 10,000 based on the indifference of a few rich families, especially that they were severely criticized by the Armenians themselves.

Here a question imposes itself: how to assess the overall response of the Armenian community in Egypt to the tragic misfortunes that befell their Ottoman compatriots? Generally speaking one cannot say that the Armenians in Egypt were indifferent to the suffering and needs of their compatriots. Though Cairo and Alexandria were the major centers for fund-raising in Egypt, Armenians in various towns in the Egyptian provinces - where the Primate made a tour for the purpose of fund-raising for the refugees - also participated.¹⁴³ Many instances are described where families and individuals of modest means contributed to the fund-raising by allotting "the price of their daily bread" to the refugees and the volunteers.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the community was criticized for disappointing the expectations placed upon it as a "rich" community.¹⁴⁵

First, the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo was known to be a rich landowner in possession of extensive estates. In 1915, the legality of selling at least part of these estates to allot the money to the refugees and survivors of the massacres was the subject of lengthy disputes in the Communal

Councils.¹⁴⁶ Finally, due to the terms in the testaments by which these estates were bestowed on the Armenian Community and some other legal considerations related to the *waqf-nameh*,¹⁴⁷ the idea was abandoned as illegal. Was this inaptness or unwillingness to find a solution? One wonders.

Second, though the Armenians in Egypt were socio-economically highly stratified and the economic crisis in Egypt during the war pressed hard on many, there were a handful of very rich Armenians in Egypt who had earned for the community as a whole the “rich” label. It was the indifference of this class which came under fierce criticism. Of course there were exceptions like Boghos Nubar, the Kamsarakan Brothers,¹⁴⁸ and a few others. Still, in October 1915, *Arev* wrote: “... we all know who amongst them [the rich] fulfilled their duties. The rest are deserters... The masses have already started to despise them.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, those rich Armenians who either did not participate in the fund-raising or contributed minimal “symbolic” sums were referred to as “*Croesus*”es¹⁵⁰ and were labeled “deserters” and “traitors.”¹⁵¹ The other side of the coin is also shown in *Arev* in the example of an Armenian employee who had sent 200 P.T. for the refugees when all he received as a monthly wage was 250 P.T.¹⁵² However, between the harsh apathy of most of the rich and the touching generosity of some of the poor, there was the middle-class which participated in the fund-raising and worked as volunteers in the Port Sa’id camp. How extensive was this participation? Could they have done more? Again, one wonders. Unfortunately, it seems that during World War I, in the Armenian community in Egypt, the rich were not generous enough, the generous were not rich enough and the concerned active participants were not numerous enough.

French-British Tensions Over the Use of the Refugees

As we saw above, from the day of the disembarkation of the refugees in Port Sa’id, the British were against their settlement in Egypt. Many a time they tried to negotiate with the French to arrange their accommodation on Rhodes or in Algeria.¹⁵³ When, eventually, the refugees remained in Egypt, the British started pressuring the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo to make arrangements for their dispersion. At first, the Prelacy strictly opposed that any refugee leave the camp.¹⁵⁴ But, in mid-October 1915, the British military authorities claimed that it was not possible to continue for long the state grant and protection allotted to the refugees in Port Sa’id, and that, consequently, they should be gradually dispersed.¹⁵⁵ The Cairo Civil Council complied, and formulated a set of pre-conditions for leaving the camp. These conditions were:¹⁵⁶

- 1- Those that have material means¹⁵⁷ and wish to leave the camp may do so.
- 2- Those that have relatives ready to care for them may leave the camp.
- 3- Healthy young men who can find jobs outside must leave the camp.
- 4- Orphans with no parents should be placed in the care of trustworthy families as protégés.

Refugees leaving the camp were asked to sign a declaration to the effect that at no time and under no circumstances would they be a burden on the government or the Prelacy.¹⁵⁸ All the same, Mr. Hornblower, the Chief Supervisor of the State Refugees Administration, continued to urge the Prelacy that the Armenian refugees in Port Sa'id should work and earn a living.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, the Prelacy announced to the public that those who wished to take servants from the camp could apply to the Armenian Prelacies in Cairo and Alexandria. The applicants had to fill in official forms which would guarantee their integrity and had to sign their agreement to the conditions of the Prelacy.¹⁶⁰ Though these precautionary steps were taken, a few cases of maid-abuse were reported during 1917,¹⁶¹ following which the Civil Council brought an end to this practice by refusing the employment of girls from the camp as servants.¹⁶²

The main reason behind the Armenian opposition to the dispersion of the refugees was the political importance of their repatriation to their homeland once the war was over.¹⁶³ As a means to counter-balance dispersion, various workshops were installed in the camp on the basis of the skills of the refugees. At the end of October 1915, 180 women worked on sewing machines in a workshop preparing clothes for the refugees. With the purpose of providing jobs to a greater number of refugees, the Civil Council widened the scope of this existing workshop so the number of workers could reach 350.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, on a space of 2500 square meters allocated by Mr. Hornblower, wooden buildings were constructed where four new workshops were installed:¹⁶⁵ comb-making and weaving for the male refugees (who were skillful in making wooden and ivory combs and weaving); lace and needlework for females.¹⁶⁶ Financed by the Prelacy and administered by the Civil Council's *Workshop Committee*,¹⁶⁷ which procured the needed machinery and raw material, these workshops functioned successfully for some months.¹⁶⁸ By the end of January 1916, some of the sections had already started making profits.¹⁶⁹ Overall, the workshop enterprise was a success, as at the end of February 1916 only 120 people had left the camp.¹⁷⁰

Soon, however, problems occurred between the refugees and the State Refugee Administration, which took 40% of the working refugees' wages as "nutrition expenses." The refugee-workers were paid minimum wages (males 3 P.T. and females 1.50 P.T per day). Protesting against the sum

taken by the Administration, they went on strike in February 1916.¹⁷¹ As the administration of the workshops needed close monitoring, and the members of the *Workshop Committee* did not reside in Port Sa'id, a contract was signed between the Cairo Prelacy and an Armenian entrepreneur whereby the latter became fully responsible for the workshops.¹⁷² Three months later, as a result of the difficulties created by the government, he resigned his post.¹⁷³ Mr. Hornblower, who had objected to the deal, argued that "the Armenian refugees should not be exploited to the advantage of an individual or a company."¹⁷⁴ Thus, the refugees remained unemployed. Not for long, though.

After only a week, the real intentions behind the British concern about "the exploitation of the Armenian refugees" became clear. In a meeting in Port Sa'id on 3 June 1916 with Mr. Kechian - a member of both the Cairo Civil Council and the *Workshop Committee* - Mr. Hornblower expressed the British Military authorities' intentions to employ 550-600 healthy Armenian refugees in British military camps as porters, workers and servants.¹⁷⁵ In fact, on 10 June a labor corps was formed and for one month a few hundred men from the camp worked for the British military authorities in Port Sa'id.¹⁷⁶ The French were displeased with this arrangement as it had been agreed that it was the prerogative of the French authorities to make use of these refugees who had been rescued by the French Marines.¹⁷⁷ The labor corps was soon disbanded.

Immediately after the arrival of the refugees from Jebel Musa in Egypt, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs had asked his representative in Cairo, M. Defrance, for information on their exact number, aptitude for work, and whether it would be possible to recruit among them men for the foreign battalion that operated in the East.¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, on General Maxwell's demand, the leader of the Armenian resistance on Jebel Musa went to Cairo and presented to the British military a report on the Armenian refugees suitable for use in combat. These inquiries revealed that there were 500 able bodied men in the Port Sa'id camp who could be employed as soldiers.¹⁷⁹ Their presence was of great interest to the Entente powers at a time when they were hard pressed for laborers on different war fronts.¹⁸⁰

The British maintained that although these refugees had been saved from the Turks by the French, the fact that the British government was giving them shelter, feeding them and spending considerable sums on their subsistence gave them the right to dispose of them as they pleased.¹⁸¹ Therefore, the British motivation behind the employment of these Armenians differed from that of the French. In addition to their interest in using them as laborers the British also wanted to get rid of - by any means - as large a number as possible of these refugees "dumped" upon them by

the French.¹⁸² The French intended to utilize these Armenians as combatants for their political ambitions in Syria, but did not yet envision the exact manner in which they could be best used for the purpose.¹⁸³ The British military authorities in Egypt urged the French either to use these men or let the British employ them. As French indecision on how to employ them continued, the British sought, and received, the French government's approval to use the able-bodied Armenian refugees in Port Sa'id as workers on the docks at the military base in Moudros.¹⁸⁴ The Armenian refugees in the camp were reluctant to be employed as laborers,¹⁸⁵ especially in Europe, as their sole desire was to be armed and sent to fight against the Turks.¹⁸⁶ Soon enough the French Foreign Ministry's agreement to the British project to use these men as laborers in Moudros was frozen by the French War Ministry on receiving a proposal from the French Marines which suggested utilizing the Armenian refugees in question as an irregular corps in France's Syrian squadron.¹⁸⁷

Lacking insight into the character of these Armenian mountaineers, the British authorities in Egypt chose to ignore their aspirations. Impatient to get rid of them, the British prepared one project after another for their employment as laborers. The British military failed to realize that these proud mountaineers who, refusing to be slaughtered without resistance, had defied the Ottoman armies, would easily defy the British military authorities by refusing to be used as "volunteer" porters in Moudros or mule drivers in Salonika.¹⁸⁸ Accusing the robust Armenian men in the Port Sa'id camp of idleness and laziness, Colonel Elgood sarcastically points out: "Although Englishmen were accepting conscription, Armenians might not be asked to submit to a lesser and safer ordeal. Their persons were apparently sacred."¹⁸⁹

Elgood refused to admit that it was exactly the "lesser" nature of the ordeal that met with the refusal of the Armenians as on more than one occasion the leaders of the Jebel Musa resistance forces had made it known to the French and the British that they were ready to participate in the war efforts of the Entente as combatants against the Turks in Asia. To the French they had expressed their preference to fight under French leadership against the common enemy and their sole purpose was to return to their homeland.¹⁹⁰ However, when French projects to enroll them were delayed, they responded positively to the British military's suggestion to land them near Alexandretta with the purpose of cutting Turkish communication lines.¹⁹¹ That this operation did not take place was not, as Elgood distortedly presents, because "the cautious Armenian, on reflection, preferred to obtain his revenge [from the Turk] vicariously",¹⁹² but because, considering the hazardous and futile nature of the British operation, the French did not agree to it.¹⁹³ The enthusiastic response of

600 able-bodied men from the camp to the French project of the *Légion d'Orient* in November 1916, belies Elgood's description of these men as cowards, unwilling to participate in the Allies' war efforts against the Ottomans.

For a number of reasons, the French were more successful in their designs vis à vis the Armenian men in the camp. First, the rescue operation of the French Marines in Jebel Musa had gained the entire French nation the gratitude, the sympathy and the trust of all Armenians, and most of all, of the rescued population. Second, the French officers in contact with the Armenian refugees had deep insight into their character and stressed the importance of channeling their anti-Turkish vigor for best results in any French military project which intended to utilize them. As early as October 1915, the Rear-Admiral Darrieus reported that the Armenians that had been rescued were not the passive people whom Europe was used to see submitting to their fate without protest. He pointed out that it would be worthwhile to attempt recruiting them for the *Légion Étrangère* because in their hearts there was a very ardent and sincere desire to serve France. But, he added, it would not be possible, even with the use of military authority, to make them accept the idea of serving as diggers and porters.¹⁹⁴

Thus, the French Marines started the recruitment and training of Armenians in the camp in December 1915,¹⁹⁵ long before any definite operation was envisioned for their utilization by the French Ministry of War. *Capitaine* Benoist d'Azy was in charge of the military instruction of the Armenians and was assisted by *Commissaire* Tiran Tekeyan,¹⁹⁶ a French-Armenian naval officer. One of the principal protagonists of the Jebel Musa evacuation operation, Tekeyan had earned the love and trust of his Armenian compatriots, and was a key link in the relations of the refugees with the French Marines Command.¹⁹⁷ A number of projects for the use of the Armenian manpower in Port Sa'id were presented to the French government by French Naval officers,¹⁹⁸ but for various reasons none of them was implemented. After the Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 1916) partitioning the Ottoman territories was signed, the British Foreign Office pressured the French to make their intentions regarding the utilization of the Armenian men in the Port Sa'id camp clear, as the terms of the Agreement allotted a great part of Armenia, including Cilicia, to French control.¹⁹⁹ Due to internal disagreements among different French departments (the Foreign Ministry, the War Ministry and the Military) the French response was delayed. It was not until mid-August that the French asked the British whether they could use the island of Cyprus for the creation of an Armenian corps.²⁰⁰ Now, it was the turn of the British to delay their calculated reply and when it came in September, it was in the

negative. The letter of General Murray, the Commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, about this is very revealing:

...I regret [ted] that the wishes of your Ministry of Marine could not be carried out because arrangements had already been made to enroll all the able bodied Armenians for services with the Allies in Salonika. Their organization is now practically complete.

I regret exceedingly that this step should have been taken just at a moment when the French authorities had also decided to utilize the services of these Armenians, but these men have for 12 months now been maintained in idleness by the Egyptian Government and I do not feel that this waste of money should be allowed to continue.²⁰¹

This response seems to have worried Lieutenant-Colonel Brémond, Chief of the French mission in Egypt, who asked Colonel Elgood to suspend the operation temporarily, and sent a cable followed by a lengthy report about the manpower in the Port Sa'id camp to the French Foreign Affairs Ministry. The report stated that excellent results had been obtained from the instruction of 200 Armenians in the camp: "they are intelligent, remarkable marksmen ... I trust that this number can be doubled."²⁰² Brémond suggested that a center for their training be established in Cyprus where the few hundred Armenian volunteers from the Port Sa'id camp would be used as a nucleus to attract Armenians from all over the world. He envisioned that a substantial force would thus be formed and would see a significant participation in the Expeditionary forces which would, in the near future, occupy Syria.²⁰³ However, the French could not launch this enterprise as long as the British did not give their consent. This episode of French-British tension over the Armenians was brought to an end by the refugees themselves who, on the 12th of September, categorically refused to embark on the ships that were to transport them to Salonika.²⁰⁴ The next day the French received the consent of both the War Office and the Foreign office for the formation of an Armenian regiment on the island of Cyprus.²⁰⁵

The Formation of the Légion d'Orient

Now, negotiations between the French government and the Armenian National Delegation for the formation of an Armenian volunteer corps to fight in the ranks of the Allies against the Turks were activated. The President of the Armenian National Delegation, Boghos Nubar, who had formerly opposed the French intentions to use the refugees in Port Sa'id as volunteers,²⁰⁶ cabled his son, Arakel Nubar in Egypt: "... having received formal assurances that in case of an Allied victory, our national aspirations

will be satisfied, I entrust you to take measures to encourage and facilitate the engagement of the largest number of volunteers possible.....”²⁰⁷

Following these developments, Commander Romieu was sent as head of a mission by the French War Ministry to Cyprus and to Egypt to make the necessary arrangements for the implementation of this project.²⁰⁸ In addition Commander Romieu’s mission met great success with the leadership of the Armenian community. Following a number of meetings with Commander Romieu at the Armenian Prelacy on the issue of recruiting volunteers from the Armenian camp in Port Sa’id, the Cairo Civil Council informed the Commander of their willingness to support the volunteer movement among the Jebel Musa refugees and stressed the following points:

- 1- the refugees would be engaged as soldiers not laborers;
- 2- the troops formed by the refugees would not be mixed with those of the Foreign Legion but would be considered an integral part of the French Army, enrolled under the French flag;
- 3- On the basis of the desires expressed by the refugees themselves, they should be employed in their homeland, namely the battle-fronts in Cilicia.²⁰⁹

The French government having agreed to these points, Romieu attained the full support of the Communal authorities to encourage the Armenian refugees to enroll as volunteers.²¹⁰

Romieu was successful even with the leadership of the Armenian political parties in Egypt. Not only did the ever-disputing Armenian leaders each separately express their solidarity with Romieu’s mission, but they also formed a united front to act in concordance.²¹¹ Moreover, this “United Body of Armenian Political Parties” initiated the formation of a National Central Administrative body,²¹² which was eventually called the Armenian National Union.²¹³ The latter consisted of ten representatives from the four Armenian political parties, and nine representatives from the official leadership of Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant Armenians, the AGBU, the *Npastamatuyts* and the Armenian Military Fund.²¹⁴ Furthermore, the Armenian National Union accepted the terms for collaboration laid down by Boghos Pasha and adopted the policy to work in coordination with the Armenian National Delegation.²¹⁵ Only those informed of the petty inter-communal disputes can fully appreciate the significance of such a development.

Based on the reports sent by Romieu to the French War Ministry, the latter decided to establish in Cyprus a *Légion d’Orient* formed of the 500 Armenian volunteers from the Port Sa’id camp, who were ready to leave, believing that this corps would encourage the enrollment of new Armenian volunteers from Egypt, the USA and India. It was also decided to include

in this corps those Ottoman Syrians who wanted to fight against Turkey.²¹⁶ Accordingly, a document dated 26 November 1916 and entitled *Instruction sur l'organisation de la Légion d'Orient* detailed the terms of the formation of this new military organization.²¹⁷

The expectations of the Armenian volunteers and their political leaders from participation in the French war effort are reflected in the *Conditions d'engagement des volontaires arméniens de la Légion d'Orient*:

Following the agreement concluded between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President of the Armenian National Delegation, a French mission under the direction of Commandant Romieu was sent to Egypt. It arrived in Cairo in November 1916 and entered into communication with the leaders of the various Armenian organizations for the formation of a legion.... named *Légion d'Orient*.

In conformity with the concluded accord, it was agreed:

- 1- That the formation of the *Légion d'Orient* aimed at making the Armenians contribute to the liberation of Cilicia, thus giving them new guarantees for the realization of their national aspirations;
- 2- That the Armenian legionnaires would fight only against the Turks and only in Cilicia;
- 4- That the Armenian legion would form in the future the core of the Armenian Army.²¹⁸

In Egypt, the enlistment of volunteers, which according to the *Dispositions générales* of the *Légion d'Orient* was the responsibility of the Armenians and the Syrians,²¹⁹ was in full swing. Military Committees were formed in Cairo and in Alexandria.²²⁰ In addition to the refugees in the Port Sa'id camp, there were a few hundred Ottoman Armenian prisoners of war who had been captured and brought to Egypt along with the Turkish prisoners of war from the Dardanelles,²²¹ the Sinai²²² and Mesopotamia²²³ fronts. In Alexandria, there were Armenian POWs in the Sidi Bishr camp,²²⁴ while in Cairo they were in the Citadel, and at the camps in Me'adi²²⁵ and in Heliopolis.²²⁶ Most of the Armenian POWs were found fit by medical examination²²⁷ and were incorporated in the *Légion d'Orient*.

Enlistment in the camp started in mid-November and the first group of Jebel Musa men who formed the nucleus of the *Légion d'Orient* left for Monagra, on the island of Cyprus, on 2 December 1916.²²⁸ The first battalion, which was soon organized comprised 5-600 refugees from Jebel Musa, 300 Armenian volunteers from Egypt, and 236 Armenian prisoners of war from the Ottoman Army.²²⁹ The latter were probably recruited among the 200 Armenian POWs in the British military camps in Egypt²³⁰ and the 175 Armenian POWs in India.²³¹ As a result of the efforts of the representatives of the Armenian National Union of Egypt who travelled to the United States and succeeded in creating a branch of the Armenian

National Union there,²³² numerous Armenian volunteers from the USA were enlisted. The first group of legionnaires from the USA arrived in Port Sa'id on 26 August 1917, on their way to Cyprus.²³³ From France those Armenian soldiers who had participated in the *Légion Étrangère* now joined the ranks of the *Légion d'Orient*.²³⁴ Within the span of 6-7 months the number of Armenians in the *Légion d'Orient* reached 3000 fighters.²³⁵

After staying in Cyprus until May 1918 the 1st and 2nd battalions (the former formed mostly of Jebel Musa men while the latter comprised men from the USA and Ottoman POWs) of the *Légion d'Orient* left the island²³⁶ to participate as part of the French troops in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in General Allenby's September 1918 advance on the Palestinian front.²³⁷ Their route to the front passed through Port Sa'id, where they camped on the outskirts of the city (west bank of the Suez Canal).

On arriving in Port Sa'id the Jebel Musa men of the 1st battalion found themselves across from their former tent-city where their families, whom they had not seen for almost two years, were still living... Some of the men swam across at night and returned in the morning. Soon dozens followed their example....²³⁸

The problem was, as Portugalian points out, that the British authorities had refused to give these men legal passes to go and visit their families, so the French commanding officers pretended not to notice and let them continue with their nightly escapades. But one day a group of these men did not return. "With their primitive mentality they did not realize that they were committing one of the gravest crimes – group desertion."²³⁹ Through successive attempts for mediation by high ranking Jebel Musa leaders, Armenian religious authorities and a delegation of the Armenian National Union, Commander Romieu tried to convince these stubborn mountaineers that they had to return. As all attempts failed, a few were bayoneted and the rest were imprisoned in Port Sa'id to be presented for court martial. The convicted got light sentences and were allowed to leave for the front with the Legion.²⁴⁰

After a few weeks, the two battalions were transported south by train to Ismailia where they camped and exercised in extremely harsh desert conditions²⁴¹ until their departure for Majdal in Palestine on July 20, 1918. The members of the Armenian National Union together with a group of Armenians from Egypt went to Ismailia to see the legionaries off to battle. In Majdal General Allenby inspected the *Legion d'Orient* and gave his final consent for its participation in the forthcoming offensive. On the night of 25 August the army started its march to er-Ramle and hence to Ludd (Lydda), which was to be the last station before the battle²⁴² of Megiddo in which "the EEF dealt a decisive blow to the Turks in Palestine."²⁴³ As part

of Colonel de Piepapé's *Detachment Française de Palestine et Syrie*, the *Legion d'Orient* participated in Allenby's main attack on the morning of 19 September and succeeded in capturing the heights of Arara.²⁴⁴ As attested by Lieutenant-Colonel Romieu, the attack of the 2nd Battalion and their holding on to their positions for twelve hours under fierce shelling prevented the advance of the enemy forces.²⁴⁵ The Armenian casualties amounted to 21 dead²⁴⁶ and 70²⁴⁷ wounded.²⁴⁸ On 20 September at the burial of the fallen soldiers both Lieutenant-Colonel Romieu and Captain Azan mentioned in their speeches the bravery of the Armenians and how their sacrifice and victory paved the way for the national aspirations of their compatriots in reconstructing Armenia.²⁴⁹

The wounded Armenian Legionaries were first taken to the hospital in Ludd and then transported on Red Cross ships to the French military hospital in Port Sa'id. On the day of their arrival, the local Armenians gathered at the harbor to welcome the heroes of Arara.²⁵⁰ On 25 October 1918 *Arev* published a list of the 39 wounded in the French military hospital which was sent to the newspaper by the Port Sa'id Armenian Committee "For the Care of the Sick Armenian Volunteer" [Hai Hivand Kamavori Khnamki Marmine].²⁵¹ Eventually all the wounded of Arara were brought to the French military hospital.

In addition to the care given by the authorities, they were surrounded by the warm affection of our small local [Armenian] community. The Committee "For the Care of the Sick Armenian Volunteer"... did its best to meet the incidental needs of our wounded...supported by the Cairo based "Armenian Wounded Soldier Fund" [Hai-Vi-Zin Fond] and by random people and institutions from all over Egypt. Also the representatives of the Armenian National Union in Port Sa'id ... showed great dedication towards all the volunteers and especially the wounded who passed by here.²⁵²

Moreover, a convalescence center in Zeitun (then, a quiet, residential neighborhood near Heliopolis) known as Zeituni Apakinaran was prepared and administered by the Armenian community in Cairo for those Armenian legionnaires who were given a few weeks of holiday to recover after the battle.²⁵³

The successive Allied victories on the Palestinian and Syrian fronts, and the participation of the Armenian volunteers in the defeat of the Ottoman Armies gave great cause for celebration to the Egyptian Armenians, who had done their utmost for the success of this volunteer movement. Hopes for the materialization of an autonomous Armenia under French protection were at their height. Cherishing this vision for the future, the new Armenian POWs brought to Egypt by the British at the end of the

war asked to be enlisted in the *Legion d'Orient*. On 18 December, 1918 *Arev* published an announcement entitled "Extremely Important":

We daily receive petitions from Armenian POWs who wish to register as volunteers in the Armenian Legion. We inform them that they need to apply to the Armenian National Union which is the only body entitled to undertake the necessary formalities with the British Military forces.²⁵⁴

Enemy Occupied Territories (EOT) and the Arrival of New Waves of Refugees: 1918-9

The advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force on the Palestinian front brought with it hope as well as distress to the Armenians in Egypt. With every retreat of the Ottoman forces, the vision of an Armenian state brightened. With every victory gained by Allenby's forces, hopes to save the remnants of the decimated Ottoman Armenian deportees increased. Yet, with the forward move of the Allied forces on the Palestine-Syria and Mesopotamian fronts (Map 2.), the curtain concealing the surviving remnants of Ottoman Armenians was raised, unveiling agonizing scenes. Cries for help from Baghdad, Palestine and Syria filled the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo and waves of surviving deportees reached the Armenian camp in Port Sa'id.²⁵⁵

The first appeals for help came from Baghdad in April 1917,²⁵⁶ following the Allied occupation of the city on 11 March.²⁵⁷ However, due to difficulties of communication and because of the chaotic conditions in Baghdad, the Armenian Community in Egypt was not able to do much to help the deportees there.²⁵⁸ The year 1918 began with appeals for assistance that arrived from Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force on 8/9 December, 1917.²⁵⁹ A letter dated 24 December requested the Prelacy in Cairo to send a delegation to Jerusalem to help the Armenian monastery resolve the problems related to survivors of the deportations in the city.²⁶⁰ The Cairo Prelacy sought the assistance of the British military authorities for the deportees in Palestine, pointing out that the enormous expenses for the nutrition and care of these wretched Armenians could not be met solely by the Armenian community in Egypt for lack of funds.²⁶¹ Three weeks later, another letter from Jerusalem stated that the brotherhood of the monastery, the natives and the 600 refugees in the city were living in destitution and that there was urgent need for loans and aid.²⁶² At first, financial aid was sent to the Armenian clergy in Jerusalem.²⁶³ Then, a number of exiled clergymen started arriving in Egypt, and some were settled in the Port Sa'id camp. The Cairo Prelacy made a list of the exiled clergymen in Egypt and in Jerusalem, and together with the AGBU and the *Npastamatuyts*, allotted them monthly pay.²⁶⁴ Dr.

Arsharuni was sent to Jerusalem to establish an orphanage. Later, groups of the orphans in Jerusalem were transported to the camp in Port Sa'id. The first group of 195 orphans was brought to Port Sa'id by Mrs. Arsharuni on 2 September, 1918.²⁶⁵

As the Egyptian Expeditionary Force advanced further into Ottoman territories, the role and status of the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo increased. The British military authorities considered the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo the national center of administration of all the Armenians in the Enemy Occupied Territories (EOT) in the Middle East.²⁶⁶ Under the circumstances, the local authorities in Egypt recognized the Armenian Primate in Cairo as the sole official representative of the Armenians in the region. As such, he was the only authority who had jurisdiction in matters concerning the Armenian monastery in Jerusalem.²⁶⁷ The chaotic administrative and financial situation of the monastery threatened its existence. To prevent its total deterioration the Armenian Primate of Egypt, who had gone to Jerusalem, was entrusted with carrying out temporary reforms and expenditures until the war ended and final arrangements could be made.²⁶⁸

In November 1918 reports on the miserable conditions of the Armenian deportees in Syria arrived at the Cairo Prelacy. In Damascus and Darja 2300 Armenian deportees dragged out an inhuman existence.²⁶⁹ In November 1918, a letter from Damascus written by Sahak, Catholicos of Cilicia, stated:

In regions occupied recently by the Entente armies, there are 35,000 Armenians in a state of indescribable destitution. The government provides only 1/2 *okha* of bread to some of them. If a place and nutrition can be provided, thousands of orphans who beg in the streets can be gathered.

The Prelacy sent copies of this letter to the AGBU, the *Npastamatuyts*, the *Vorpakhnam* (a relief society for orphans) and the Armenian National Delegation.²⁷⁰ Thus, the tragic condition of the Armenian survivors in Syria was added to the responsibilities of the Armenians in Egypt. Even if all the good will and resources of the Armenian community were amassed, it still could not fulfill the requests directed to it by tens of thousands of refugees. Now, the Cairo Prelacy urged the Armenian National Delegation to double its efforts to attain a loan from the "protector-states", to be used in providing for the enormous needs of the deportees, to save them from certain death.²⁷¹

Meanwhile, waves of Armenian refugees had started to arrive in Egypt. The first group from Ottoman territories arrived in Port Sa'id before Allenby's October 1917 offensive on the Palestinian front-line. This was a

group of 23, natives of Kayseri/Kesarya/Cesaria who had come by route of 'Aqaba and arrived at the camp on 22 August 1917.²⁷² Neither their point of departure nor their exact routing is explained. A guess is that they had somehow crept out of the Syrian Desert south into the Arabian desert, had reached 'Aqaba, which had been captured from the Turks on 6 July 1917 by the forces of the Arab Revolt,²⁷³ and from there had crossed the Sinai desert to Port Sa'id, by route of either 'Aqaba-Suez-Port Sa'id or 'Aqaba-al 'Arish- Port Sa'id.

By 7 December 1917, another 87 Armenians had arrived in Suez from 'Aqaba. Among these, 27 men joined the *Légion d'Orient*, 40 men were found too weak and unfit for recruitment in the *Légion*, while arrangements were made for the rest - 20 women and children- to be transported to the camp in Port Sa'id.²⁷⁴ We are provided with some information on these Armenians arriving from 'Aqaba by a letter dated 21 December 1917, sent to the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo. The writer of the letter (Selim Kalpakji) informed the Prelacy that on a recent visit to 'Aqaba he had had the chance to meet Prince Faisal and he had seen the great affection and care of the Prince towards the 187 Armenians there. He had visited the camp and had learned that some of these Armenians had left to be enrolled in the *Légion d'Orient*.²⁷⁵ The Armenian National Union also recruited volunteers for the *Legion d'Orient* from among the refugees that arrived at the camp during 1918.²⁷⁶

From April to December 1918 larger caravans of Armenian survivors arrived at the Port Sa'id camp from Enemy Occupied Territories in the Middle East. Table 1 (below) shows their numbers and the date of their arrival.²⁷⁷

Table 1: Arrival of Armenian refugees at Port Sa'id camp, April 1918-March 1919

Date of Arrival	From	Number	Remarks
27 April	Jerusalem	150	Mostly natives of Mardin, some Gurin and Hadjin
10 June	es-Salt	180	
17 June	es-Salt	-	2 nd caravan
29 June	es-Salt	-	3 rd caravan
2 July			4 th caravan
8 July		280	
1 August	es-Salt	350	
19 August		330	
25 August		236	
2 Sept.	Jerusalem	195	orphans
18 Dec.	Baghdad	588	300 orphans + 282 widows + 5men + 1 priest
19 Dec.	Jerusalem	166	
6 March 1919	Vladivostok	30	

The AGBU took upon itself the care of the orphans who had arrived via Jerusalem, as well as the protection of the widows who had arrived from Baghdad. The number of orphans in the Port Sa'id camp increased to 400-600. The orphans were settled in separate tents which became their orphanage, financed by the AGBU. A committee for the care and education of the orphans was formed to administer the orphanage-school. The AGBU also installed workshops for the newly arrived widows.²⁷⁸

But the camp, originally set up as a refuge for 4200 people, was now over-crowded. Of the initial refugees who had arrived in September 1915, there were still 3404 individuals in June 1919. The addition of 4740 new refugees brought the number in the camp to 8144 refugees.²⁷⁹ The number of the pupils in Sisvan school increased from 1200 to 2345, not including the orphans who had a separate orphanage-school. At the end of 1918, the responsibility for the nutrition of the refugees was once more placed upon the British military authorities, while the administration and supervision of the welfare of the orphans was entrusted to the American Red Cross,²⁸⁰ though Armenian organizations like the AGBU and the Armenian Red Cross continued to contribute to the expenses and care of the refugees through funds and personnel. However, it is a grossly misleading exaggeration to claim that "In the Fall of 1915, AGBU took over the management of an Armenian refugee camp for natives of Musa Dagh founded by the British in Port Sa'id..."²⁸¹ If anything, overwhelmed by the arrival of the new waves of refugees, the AGBU mismanaged both the orphanage²⁸² and the school. A report about the latter written in September 1918 concluded: "Sisvan is nothing but chaos."²⁸³

Repatriation

Although as soon as the war was over in November 1918 the refugees from *Suedia* made a request to General Allenby to be returned to their homeland,²⁸⁴ the first caravan of refugees did not leave the camp until July, 1919. Table 2²⁸⁵ shows the repatriation of the Armenians from the Port Sa'id camp between July and November 1919.

Table 2: Return of Armenian refugees from Port Sa'id to homeland, July-November 1919

Date of Departure	Number	Natives of
31 July	1 st caravan	Suedia
27 August	1200	Suedia
30 August	300	Marash
15 September	600	Suedia
16 September	300	Marash
27 September	60	Suedia
28 September	340	Suedia

29 September	400	Hadjin/Lapash
1 October	100	Suedia
10 October	60	Suedia
20 October	400	Mostly Garaturan; some Aintab, Marash
24 October	62	Suedia
25 October	300	Suedia
28 October	400	Suedia
29 October	800	Adana/Kars-Bazar/ Deort-Yol/ Elpek/Kilis
5 November	400	Marash/Rum-Galeh
6 November	400	Brusa/Zeitun/Sebastia
8 November	130	Chokmaklu and others; left for Aleppo
21 November	Entire orphanage	transported to Mersin
23 November	180	mostly Constantinople; left for Beirut

Between 7 and 24 November all the institutions of the tent-city were dismantled. Nothing remained of the school, the workshops, the bakeries and the kitchen. On 21 November 1919, the orphanage and its personnel were transported to Mersin (Cilicia). The last to leave the camp were the doctors and nurses of the Armenian Red Cross. On 24 November, after an existence of four years, the camp disappeared.²⁸⁶ The nightmare of war and genocide was thought to be over.

CONCLUSION

Due to the geo-political importance of Egypt in WWI, the Armenian Community there was in a position to play a major role regarding the national crisis of the Armenian people in the years 1914-1919. Hence, it mobilized to support the Armenian volunteer movement in Transcaucasia and send material assistance to the Ottoman Armenian refugees who had fled to eastern Armenia. Moreover, the Jebel Musa refugees in Port Sa'id, the formation of the *Légion d'Orient*, the Ottoman Armenian deportees and the orphans in the Syrian and Mesopotamian deserts became the primary concerns of Egyptian-Armenian organizations and individuals alike. Could the community have done more is a question that needs further research for an accurate assessment. However, judging from some contemporary articles, one tends to conclude that in many instances the community fell short of the expectations laid upon it.

The end of the war came amid rising hopes for the attainment of national aspirations for the peoples in the Middle East. The principle for national self-determination set forth by the United States and supported by Britain and France during 1918 had left no doubt about the goodwill of the West towards these national aspirations. The Egyptians emerged from the war drained and weary from their participation in the British war effort, but looking forward to forging an independent state at long last. For a brief

moment, the fulfillment of the British promise of a unified, independent Arab Kingdom in Greater Syria and Mesopotamia seemed to be attainable. The Armenians, massacred and decimated, set out to return to their homeland, which they were to reconstruct under Allied protection. They could not imagine then that the French would betray them and leave them to face further massacres and re-deportation at the hand of an emerging Turkish state.

The post-war period brought with it the bitter realization that the Armenians, like the rest of the native population of the Ottoman Middle East, were nothing but war-props at the disposal of the French and British governments, whose promises were nothing but war propaganda. The similarities in the unsuccessful missions of these nations in post-war settlements are striking. Even considering all the disagreements among the victorious Entente powers, post-war settlements reveal that the French and the British governments had surpassed each other in their skill in exploiting the national aspirations of the former subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

FOOTNOTES

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- ¹ This article is based on sections of the MA Thesis “The Armenian Community in Egypt During World War I” submitted by the author to the Department of Arabic Studies, American University in Cairo, in April 1997. All translations from Arabic, Armenian and French sources have been made by the author.
 - ² Latifa M. Salem, *Misr fi al Harb al ‘Alamiyah al Ula: 1914-1918* (Egypt during WWI: 1914-1918), Cairo, al haya’h al ‘ammah al masreyah lil kitab, 1984, pp. 17-8. The Khedive ‘Abbas Helmi II was in Istanbul and Hussein Rushdi was serving as his acting Regent (*qaim maqam*). Henceforth, Entente, Allied and Allies are used interchangeably.
 - ³ Ibid., p. 18.
 - ⁴ Ibid., p. 19.
 - ⁵ Great Britain, Foreign Office. Miscellaneous. No. 13 (1914), Correspondence Respecting Events Leading to the Rupture of Relations with Turkey, (London: Harrisons and Sons, 1914).
 - ⁶ Salem, p. 20.
 - ⁷ Ibid., pp. 35, 43. For a detailed account of Egypt’s position vis-à-vis WWI and the Ottoman Empire in August 1914, and for British considerations in the months leading up to the declaration of the Protectorate see Salem, pp.17-20, 29-43.
 - ⁸ Ibid., pp. 51, 49, 103.
 - ⁹ Vahan Tekeyan, “Inch Sirt E Merine” (Do we have a heart?), *Arev*, 29 Sept., 1915, p. 1.
 - ¹⁰ Reduced to 50-60 families residing in Cairo in 1802, the Armenian community increased to 2000 individuals in the first half of the 19th century.
 - ¹¹ Rouben Adalian, “The Armenian Colony of Egypt During the Reign of Muhammad ‘Ali (1805-1848)”, the *Armenian Review*, June 1, 1980, vol. 33, No 2-130, 1980, pp. 117-8.
 - ¹² Ibid, p. 133.
 - ¹³ H. Topuzian, *Yegiptosi Haykakan Gaghouti Patmutiun 1805-1952* (History of the Armenian Community in Egypt 1805-1952), Yerevan: Publication of Armenian SSR Academy of Science, 1978, pp. 28-9.

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- ¹⁴ Adalian, p. 141.
- ¹⁵ Arshak Alpoyadjian, *Arabakan Miyatsyal Hanrapetutian Yegiptosi Nahanke Yev Hayere* (The United Arab Republic's province of Egypt and the Armenians), Cairo, Nor Astgh, 1960, p. 257.
- ¹⁶ Officially the Armenian Church is known as the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church; hence the often used reference to Armenians as “Orthodox”. This, however, creates confusion with the Greek Orthodox. Moreover, there is no Armenian Patriarchal See in Egypt. It is an Armenian bishopric headed by a Primate. The name “patrikkhané” given to the Armenian Prelacy by the Egyptian government was a misconception and was based on the model of the Greek Patriarchs of Alexandria.
- ¹⁷ Based on the *Varchakan Hrahang Vidjakin Yegiptosi* (Administrative decree for the Diocese of Egypt) granted in 1907 by Ormanian, the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, the administrative structure of the mainstream Armenian Orthodox community in Egypt was as follows: A Primate who was the official representative of the community; 2 prelacies, one in Cairo (Central Prelacy) and one in Alexandria, with similar and equivalent administrative councils. Each prelacy had: a Community Council (*Temakan* or *Yerespoghanakan Joghov*) elected by the members of the Armenian Orthodox community (18 representatives for Cairo and 17 for Alexandria); a Civic Council (*Kaghakakan Joghov*) consisting of 7 members elected by and from within the Community Council and accountable to it. The highest body was the Provincial General Council (*Gavarakan Hamagumar Joghov*) formed from both Community Councils (35 members). The Primate was elected by the latter. The Patriarch in Constantinople confirmed his election by a Patriarchal Bull, ratified by an Imperial *firman*. The Primate presided over all Diocese Councils. For this and further details on the communal structure see *Orenk yev Kanonk Azgayin Arajnordarani Hayots Hegiptos* (Laws and Regulations of the Armenian National Prelacy in Egypt), Armenian Prelacy in Cairo Official Publication, Cairo, Vosketar, 1930.
- ¹⁸ Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*, St. Martin Press, New York, 1990, p. 199.
- ¹⁹ Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence: 1918*, California, University of California Press, 1967, pp. 46-7.
- ²⁰ *Archives Du Génocide Des Arméniens: Receuil de Documents Diplomatiques Allemands - Extraits de Deutschland Und Armenien (1914-1918)* compiled by Dr. Johannes Lepsius, trans. by Marie-France Letenoux, edited by Dr. Tessa Hofmann, France, Fayard, 1986.
- ²¹ Raymond H. Kevorkian, “The Origins and Evolution of the Armenian Genocide”, trans. from French by Jennifer Manoukian, in *AGBU News Magazine*, published by the Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, New York, NY, USA, April 2015, p. 12.
- ²² Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 1919: rpt. New York, New Age Publishers, n.d., p. 302.
- ²³ Kevorkian, p. 12.
- ²⁴ Simon Vratsian, *Hin Tgher Nor Patmutian Hamar* (Old Papers for Modern History), Beirut, n.p., 1962, p. 134.
- ²⁵ Walker, p. 200; citing the article written by Aziz Samih, chief of the historical department of the Ottoman ministry during the war, in the Turkish newspaper *Kurun*, in 1935.
- ²⁶ Topuzian, p. 173.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173. The value of 1 British Pound was 9.75 Rubles at its lowest and 15 Rubles at its highest rate (Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 7: 17/30 June 1916, p. 39).

- ²⁸ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, (6/19 June 1914-16/29 March 1916), Session 69, January 20/2 February 1915, p. 100. Here and throughout the text, the double-dates indicate the date of the days and the months according to both the Julian and Gregorian calendars. When only one date is mentioned it is the second one, sometimes marked as 'new', meaning Gregorian which was 13 days ahead of the Julian calendar.
- ²⁹ "Azgayin Kronik: Himnadram Azgayin Shaheru Pashtpanutian" (National chronicle: Fund for the defense of national interests), in *Arev*, 15 May, 1915, p. 3.
- ³⁰ Hovannisian, p. 42. Most of the conscripts in the Russian army were sent to fight on the European front.
- ³¹ Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question 1915-1923*, Crook Helm, London and Sydney, 1984, pp. 8-11; Hovannisian, pp. 38-9.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ³³ Vratsian, "Namak Hay Heghapoghakan Dashnaksutian Amerikayi Kentronakan Komiteyi" (Letter addressed to the Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in America) pp. 131-142. Letter dated 20 February 1915 (*Hin Tghter*, pp. 133-4).
- ³⁴ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 90, 7/20 July 1915, p. 166.
- ³⁵ "Yegiptahay Tarin" (The Egyptian-Armenian Year: 1914-1915) in Suren Partevian ed. *Yegiptahay Taretsuytse* (Egyptian-Armenian Almanac), third year, 1916, n.p., p. 17.
- ³⁶ H. Arakelian, editorial in *Mshak*, April 11, 1915, reprinted in "Azgayin Kronik: Himnadram Azgayin Shaheru Pashtpanutian" (Fund for the Defense of National Interests), *Arev*, 15 May, 1915, p. 3.
- ³⁷ "S. D. Hnchakian Yev Sahmanadrakan Ramgavar Kusaksutians Hamadzaynutiune" (The Agreement of the S. D. Hnchak and Constitutional Ramgavar Parties), *Arev* 13 May, 1915, p. 2.
- ³⁸ H. Arakelian, editorial in *Mshak*, April 11, 1915.
- ³⁹ "Azgayin Kronik: Himnadram Azgayin Shaheru Pashtpanutian" (National chronicle: Fund for the Defense of National Interests), *Arev*, 11 June, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁴⁰ "Azgayin Kronik" (National chronicle), *Arev*, 17 May, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁴¹ M. Salbi, "Hay Karmir-Khache Por-Sa'idi Vranakaghakin Medj" (The Armenian Red Cross in the Port Sa'id Tent-city), M. Salbi ed. *Alyakner Yev Khyakner: Hay Vranakaghaki Taregirk* (Waves and wrecks: Year-book of the Armenian tent-city), A. Kassabian Press, Alexandria, 1920, p. 149.
- ⁴² Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 94, 7 September 1915, p. 188.
- ⁴³ "Teghakan-Azgayin" (Local-communal), *Arev*, 2 February 1916, pp. 2-3.
- ⁴⁴ "Kamavorakan Gortze yev Vsemapail Boghos Pasha Nubar" (Volunteer work and Boghos Pasha Nubar), *Arev*, 5 July 1915, p. 3.
- ⁴⁵ Hovannisian, p. 53. For eye-witness accounts which testify that Armenians were not the aggressors see: the report of the American mission in Van in *Archives du Génocide des Arméniens* compiled by Lepsius, pp. 289-300. "This report has been confirmed by the information provided by Mr. Sporri, the director of the German orphanage in Van, who was the last to leave the city after its destruction" Lepsius, p. 289; Clarence D. Ussher, *An American Physician in Turkey*, Boston, 1917, p. 244; Rafael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, trans. by Muna Lee, New York, 1926, p. 60.
- ⁴⁶ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 83, 31 May 1915, p. 143.
- ⁴⁷ "Azgayin Kronik: Himnadram Azgayin Shaheru Pashtpanutian (National chronicle: Fund for the Defense of National Interests), *Arev*, 11 June 1915, p. 3.
- ⁴⁸ Hovannisian, p. 56. This lasted for only two months as following an Ottoman counter-offensive in July 1915, the Russians retreated and the native population followed them.

- ⁴⁹ “Tarvan Sarsurner: 1915 Garunen Minchev Dzmernamut” (The creeps of a year: from Spring to Fall 1915), *Yegiptahay Taretsuytse*, third year, 1916, n. p., p. 36.
- ⁵⁰ “Haykakan Khndire yev N. V. Boghos Pasha Nubari Pashtone” (The Armenian Question and the mission of His Excellency Boghos Pasha Nubar), *Arev*, 11 May, 1915, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵¹ “Kévork V, Catholico de tous les Arméniens, à M. Viviani, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères”, letter (Vagharchabad, le 5/18 octobre 1915), in Arthur Beylerian (ed.) *Les Grandes Puissances, l'Empire Ottoman et les Arméniens dans les Archives Françaises, (1914-1918): Recueil de Documents*, Paris, Sorbonne, 1983, pp. 126-7.
- ⁵² “Azgayin Kronik: Haykakan Djarteru Guje” (The news of Armenian massacres), *Arev*, 13 May, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁵³ “Haykakan Khndire Yev N. V. Boghos Pasha Nubari Pashtone”, *Arev*, 11 May, 1915, pp. 1-2. The purpose of the 1913 delegation was to secure reforms in Ottoman Armenia through the mediation of the Triple Entente powers. For details on results of negotiations, consult Hovannisian, pp. 32-39; “Haykakan Barenorogutiunner 1913-4” (Armenian Reforms 1913-1914), *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran* (Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia), vol. 6, Yerevan, Armenian SSR Academy of Science, 1980, pp. 170-171.
- ⁵⁴ “Haykakan Khndire yev N. V. Boghos Pasha Nubari Pashtone”, *Arev*, 11 May, 1915.
- ⁵⁵ Walker, p. 457.
- ⁵⁶ “Haykakan Khndrin Batsume” (The emergence of the Armenian Question), translated excerpts from *Al-Muqattam*, 4 May 1915, *Arev*, 15 May, 1915, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵⁷ “Haykakan Patvirakutiun” (Armenian Delegation), *Arev*, 28 June, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ Mihran Damadian, “Katsutiune Hayastani Mej” (The Situation in Armenia), *Arev*, 25 June, 1915, p. 1; “Azgayin Kronik: Kilikyo Tagnapali Katsutyiune” (National Chronicle: Critical situation in Cilicia), *Arev*, 30 June, 1915, p. 3; Mihran Damadian, “Kilikian nor Aghete” (The new calamity in Cilicia), *Arev*, 9 July, 1915, pp. 1-2.
- ⁶⁰ Krikor Sarkissian, “Haykakan Hartse: Boghos Pasha Nubari Patvirakutiune” (The Armenian Question: the Delegation of Boghos Pasha Nubar), *Arev* 13 May, 1915.
- ⁶¹ “Azgayin Kronik: Polsahayots Vitjake” (National chronicle: The Situation of Armenians in Constantinople), *Arev*, 21 May, 1915, p. 2.
- ⁶² “Dashnakits Petutiunk Hayots Djarterun Hantep” (Position of Allied Powers vis-à-vis the Armenian Massacres), *Arev*, 26 May, 1915, based on the same day’s *Egyptian Gazette*.
- ⁶³ “Azgayin Kronik” (National chronicle), *Arev*, 2 June, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁶⁴ “Hayastani Vitjake Nerka Paterazmi Midjotsin” (The Situation in Armenia during the present war), *Arev*, 9 June, 1915, pp. 1-2.
- ⁶⁵ Damadian, “Katsutiune Hayastani”, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶ “Azgayin Kronik: Kilikio Tagnapali”, p. 3.
- ⁶⁷ Damadian, “Kilikian nor Aghete”, pp. 1-2.
- ⁶⁸ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 92, 6/19 August, 1915, p. 173; Zaven Ter Yeghiayan, *Patriarkakan Husheres, Vaveragirner Yev Vkaiutiunner* (My Memoirs as Patriarch: Documents and testimonies), Cairo, 1947, pp. 134-136. The source of this report is not revealed by Bulgaria’s Primate, Ghevond Durian. However, the date of the report (30/13 July, 1915) and part of its content mentioned in the minutes, indicate that it was a copy of the second of 4 reports sent by Archbishop Ter-Yeghiayan, the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, to Ghevond Durian as later these reports were published in Archbishop Zaven’s, *Patriarkakan Hushers...*, pp. 132-149. These published reports reveal that the Patriarch had requested the Armenian Primate in Bulgaria to send copies of the reports, unsigned - with a note stressing that he had received them from “reliable

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- sources in Constantinople” - to various addresses, primarily to the Catholicos of All Armenians and to Boghos Nubar. As a French translation of the unsigned report which arrived at the Armenian Prelacy in Cairo was sent by Primate Gushakian to Mr. Defrance in Cairo, the French text is published in Beylerian (ed.) *Les Grandes...*, pp. 61-3. A comparison of the French text and Archbishop Zaven’s Armenian letter in *Patriarkakan...* confirms that the author of the report sent to Cairo was the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople.
- ⁶⁹ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 92, 6/19 August, 1915, p. 173.
- ⁷⁰ Details of its deliberations are registered in Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, “Joint Session of the Cairo and Alexandria Civil Councils in Bulaq”, 16/29 August 1915, pp. 175-180.
- ⁷¹ This decision was ratified by the General Council in its session of 6/19 September 1915 in “Atenagrutiun Gavarakan Endhanur Joghovo” (Minutes of Provincial General Council), vol. 35, Session 8, 6/19 September 1915, p. 46.
- ⁷² Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, “Joint Session of the Cairo and Alexandria Civil Councils in Bulaq”, 16/29 August 1915, pp. 178-9.
- ⁷³ Minutes of Provincial General Council, vol. 35, Session 8, 6/19 September 1915, pp. 52-3.
- ⁷⁴ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 101, 18/31 October 1915, p. 213.
- ⁷⁵ Minutes of Provincial General Council, vol. 35, Session 8, 6/19 September 1915, p. 52.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 42.
- ⁷⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 101, 18/31 October 1915, p. 211. As the memoirs of Archbishop Zaven *Patriarkakan Hushers* show, this letter had been written at the request of the Patriarch, and the information it contained was based on the Patriarch’s extensive letter, dated August 25/7 September 1915 and sent to the Primate in Bulgaria (pp. 142-149).
- ⁷⁸ Vostanik Ter Gabrielian, “Shit Me Artsunk Im Tagharis” (A teardrop in my pot), *Arara, Haykakan Legeone* (Arara: the Armenian Legion), Alexandria, Aram Stepanian, 1919, p. 75.
- ⁷⁹ “Hayastani Kariknere: Inchpes Krnank Npast Hastsnel” (The Needs in Armenia: How can we contribute?), *Arev*, 24 May, 1915, p. 1. In fact, in April-May 1915 the AGBU Central Committee in Cairo had sent 1000 British pounds to its branch in Constantinople, through the courtesy of the American Consul in Cairo, intended for the most badly affected regions in Armenia. The exact destination of the aid was to be decided after consulting the Patriarch in Constantinople (*Arev*, 11 May, 1915).
- ⁸⁰ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 101, 18/31 October 1915, p. 211.
- ⁸¹ “Azgayin Kronik: Hayots Katsutyiune: Pulkaria Yev Hayere” (National Chronicle: The situation of Armenians. Bulgaria and the Armenians), *Arev*, 27 October, 1915, p. 3.
- ⁸² “Azgayin Kronik: Midjagetki Hay Aksorialnere” (The Armenian exiles in Mesopotamia), translated from *Al Ahrām*, 14 March, 1916 (*Arev*, 15 March, 1916, p. 3).
- ⁸³ Suren Partevian, “Yegiptahay Tarin (1915-1916)” (The Egyptian-Armenian Year (1915-1916), Suren Partevian (ed.), *Yegiptahay Taretsuytse* (Egyptian-Armenian almanac), 4th year, 1917, Alexandria, A. Kassabian Press, 1917, p. 5.
- ⁸⁴ Hovannisian, p. 67.
- ⁸⁵ N. M. Togatlian “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume: Otar Ashkhatoghner” (Arrival of Suediyans in Port Sa’id), *Alyakner yev Khlyakner*, p. 19.
- ⁸⁶ Mountain located north of the city and bay of Antioch, in proximity to Ras al Mina, in the vilayet of Aleppo.
- ⁸⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 95, 1/14 September, 1915, p. 190.

- ⁸⁸ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 95, 1/14 September, 1915, p. 190; Session 96, 5/18 September 1915, p. 192; Tokatlian, “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume”, p. 20. Tokatlian stayed in the camp for nine months, after which he moved to the city of Port Sa’id, where he stayed till the end of the war. As interpreter, he was also the mediator between the refugees and local state authorities. Through a regular correspondence with the Armenian newspaper *Arev*, he kept the Armenian public informed of the developments in the camp and the needs of the refugees.
- ⁸⁹ These 6 villages were: Bitias, Hadji Habibli, Yoghun Oluk, Kebusiyeh, Khederbek and Vakif. Administratively, Suedia, was a *nahiye* in the Kaza of Leffia, in the Sanjak of Antioch, part of the Vilayet of Aleppo. For information on the inhabitants of these villages who were almost exclusively Armenian, see Rev. Tigran Andreassian, “Svetahayere” (The Armenians of Suedia), *Alyakner*, pp. 13-18.
- ⁹⁰ Tigran Andreassian, *A Red Cross Flag That Saved Four Thousand*, translated by Stephen Trowbridge, published for the American Relief Committee in Cairo, Cairo: Nile Mission Press undated, p. 5; “Le Capitaine de vaisseau Chamonard, Chef d’État-major de la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, au Lieutenant-Colonel Elgood, Commandant Militaire britannique à Port-Saïd”, dated Port-Saïd, le 12 septembre 1915 (Beylerian (ed.) *Les Grandes Puissances*, p. 65). The total number of Armenians in these villages was 6311 individuals. When the Armenian heads of these villages held a meeting and decided to defy the Ottoman authorities’ orders, two-thirds of the villagers, 4231 people, chose to resist on the heights of their mountain. The rest chose obedience to the authorities. These were deported and never heard of again (Rev. Tigran Antreassian, “Svetahayere” p. 18).
- ⁹¹ For details on the resistance on Jebel Musa see Beylerian *Les Grandes Puissances*, pp. 65, 85; Walker, pp. 223-5; Andreassian, *A Red Cross*, pp. 5-15; Andreassian, “Svedahayer”, *Alyakner yev*, pp. 13-16.
- ⁹² The French warships which accomplished the embarkation of the Armenians of Jebel Musa were the cruisers of the Third Mediterranean Squadron, namely *le Desaix*, *le Guichen*, *l’Amiral Charner*, *la Foudre* and *le D’Esstrées*. This and all the details of the circumstances of the evacuation of the Armenians from Jebel Musa and their transportation to Port Sa’id are found in “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 293. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, en mer, le 22 septembre 1915, in Beylerian, *Les Grandes Puissances*, pp. 84-89.
- ⁹³ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 286. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, Rade de Port-Saïd, le 17 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes Puissances*, pp. 73-7). The lazaretto had a hospital which, before the war, served as quarantine for travelers. There were also buildings for the doctors and the employees of the hospital (Tokatlian “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume”, p. 20).
- ⁹⁴ P. G. Elgood, *Egypt and the Army*, Humphry Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 186-187.
- ⁹⁵ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 286. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, Rade de Port-Saïd, le 17 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 76).
- ⁹⁶ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 96, 5/18 September, 1915, p. 192; “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner yev Khlyakner*, pp. 248-249.
- ⁹⁷ That Paris was informed of the situation on 10 September 1915 at the latest is revealed in the telegrams sent by “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Delcassé,

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- Ministre des Affaires étrangères” dated Le Caire, le 10 septembre 1915, 16 h 30. (Recu: 16 h 45), and “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Française, Ministre des Affaires étrangères” dated Le Caire, le 11 septembre 1915, 1 h 30. (Recu: 3 h 20) (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 64).
- ⁹⁸ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 293. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, en mer, le 22 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp.86-7).
- ⁹⁹ Elgood, pp.182-3.
- ¹⁰⁰ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 293. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, en mer, le 22 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 86).
- ¹⁰¹ “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Le Caire, le septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 64).
- ¹⁰² “Le Capitaine de vaisseau Chamonard, Chef d’État-Major de la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, au Lieutenant-Colonel Elgood, Commandant Militaire britannique à Port-Said”, Port-Said, le 12 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 65-6).
- ¹⁰³ “Communication de l’Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département”, Paris, 14th September 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 67).
- ¹⁰⁴ Elgood, p. 184; “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, D. no 286. Secret. A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, Rade de Port-Said, le 17 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 74).
- ¹⁰⁵ “Communication de l’Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département”, Paris, 15th September 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 68).
- ¹⁰⁶ Tokatlian, “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume”, p. 22.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.
- ¹⁰⁸ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 98, 8 October, 1915, p. 199; Confusingly, in his above article Togatlian presents the results of the census as follows: 427 children below 4 years of age; 508 girls between the ages of 4 and 11; 628 boys between the ages of 4 and 14; 1441 females and 1054 males above the age of 14; a total of 4058; in Tokatlian “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume”, p. 23.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.23.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-3; Dr. Arsharuni, “Lapurintosi Medj Enk” (We are in a Labyrinth), *Arev*, 4 October, 1915, p. 1.
- ¹¹¹ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 98, 8 October 1915, p. 198.
- ¹¹² Levon Mkrtchian, “Sisvan Varjarni Artiv” (On Sisvan school), *Arev*, 13 December, 1915, p. 1. In fact, the few cases of arrests in the camp reported to the Cairo Prelacy were during 1918, when thousands of new refugees and orphans overcrowded the camp facilities. One case mentions the exile of 4 refugees to Bilbess, while another case states that 2 minors from the camp were kept at a Correction Home in Giza (Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 26, sessions 100, [10 May 1918, p. 43] and 112 [27 September 1918, p. 98]).
- ¹¹³ Tokatlian “Svetatsineru Por Sa’id Jamanume”, p. 20; Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 96, 5/18 September, 1915, p. 193. Arakel Nubar was the son of Boghos Nubar.
- ¹¹⁴ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 96, 5/18 September, 1915, p. 192.
- ¹¹⁵ “Azgayin Kronik” (National chronicle), *Arev*, 29 September 1915, p. 3; Tokatlian, “Kilikiatsinere Por-Sa’idi Medj: Sepakan Teghtaksutiun” (The Cilicians in Port Sa’id: Special correspondence), *Arev*, 15 October, 1915, p. 2.
- ¹¹⁶ Details of the donated items are found in the numerous donation lists published in *Arev*

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- newspaper.
- ¹¹⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 98, 8 October 1915, pp. 197-201; Tokatlian, “Kilikiatsinere Por-Sa’idi”, *Arev*, 20 October, 1915, p. 2.
- ¹¹⁸ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 100, 13/26 October 1915, p. 209.
- ¹¹⁹ “Kilikiatsinere Por-Sa’idi Medj: Sepakan Teghtaksutiun” (Cilicians in Port Sa’id: Special correspondence), *Arev*, 29 September, 1915; Arsharuni, “Lapurintosi”.
- ¹²⁰ Tekeyan, “Inch Sirt”, p. 1; Arsharuni, “Lapurintosi”.
- ¹²¹ Arsharuni, “Lapurintosi”.
- ¹²² Tekeyan, “Inch Sirt”.
- ¹²³ “Azgayin Kronik: Por Sa’idi Petkere” (National Chronicle: the Needs in Port Sa’id), *Arev*, 12 November, 1915, p. 3.
- ¹²⁴ “Azgayin Kronik: Hay Karmir Khach Gahire” (National Chronicle: Armenian Red Cross-Cairo), *Arev*, 12 November, 1915, p. 3.
- ¹²⁵ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2e Division et p.i. Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire”, A bord du *Jauréguiberry*, Rade de Port-Said, le 17 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 98).
- ¹²⁶ “Spoiled cheese, and cereals full of worm” are examples of the quality of food sometimes offered to the refugees by the State Refugees Administration (Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 113, 10/23 February 1916).
- ¹²⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 104, 22 November 1915.
- ¹²⁸ M. Salbi (Aram Sahakian) “Hay Karmri Khache Por Sa’idi Vranakaghakin Medj” (The Armenian Red Cross in the Port Sa’id Tent-city), *Alyakner*, p. 162; Victoria Arsharuni, “Tkarakazmeru Khohanotse” (Kitchen soup for the weak), trans. Nshan Tokatlian, *Alyakner*, pp. 172-174.
- ¹²⁹ Zakar Masikian, “Amerikian Karmir Khache Haykakan Gaghtavayrin Medj” (The American Red Cross in the Armenian refugee camp), *Alyakner*, p. 168; Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 100, 13/26 October, 1915, p. 209.
- ¹³⁰ Victoria Arsharuni, p. 173.
- ¹³¹ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 59, 8 June 1917, p. 244. M. Salbi gives the figure of 191 deaths due to pellagra during 1916 (“Hay Karmir Khache”, p. 166). Pellagra is a disease characterized by skin eruptions and nervous disorders.
- ¹³² Victoria Arsharuni, pp. 174,176.
- ¹³³ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 59, 8 June 1917, p. 244.
- ¹³⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 100, 13/26 October, 1915, p. 209.
- ¹³⁵ Artashes Gartashian, *Nuter Yegiptosi Hayots Patmutian Hamar: Patmutiun Yegiptahay Barerareru Yev Krtakan Hastatutunneru* (Materials for the history of the Armenians in Egypt: The history of Armenian benefactors and educational establishments in Egypt), vol. 3, Venice, St. Lazar, 1981, pp. 278-282.
- ¹³⁶ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 14, 2/15 August 1916, p. 61; Levon Arigian, “Sisvan Varjarane” (The Sisvan school), *Alyakner*, pp. 181-189.
- ¹³⁷ Arigian, p.188.
- ¹³⁸ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 1, 10 May 1916, p. 4.
- ¹³⁹ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, p. 254.
- ¹⁴⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 114, 29 February, 1916; Session 116, 14 March, 1916, p. 271.
- ¹⁴¹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 5, 9 June, 1916, p.31.
- ¹⁴² Elgood, pp. 187-8.
- ¹⁴³ Minutes of Community Council, vol. 43, Session April 18/1 May, 1915, p. 196; “Azgayin Kronik” (National chronicle), *Arev*, 17 May, 1915, p. 3; “Gavari Yegiptahay

- Kyanken” (Egyptian-Armenians in the provinces), *Arev*, 21 May, 1915, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁴ Suren Partevian, “Yegiptahay Tarin: 1914-1915” (The Egyptian-Armenian year:1914-1915), *Yegiptahay Taretsuytse*, third year, 1916, no publication data, p. 16.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ¹⁴⁶ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Joint Session of the Cairo and Alexandria Civil Councils in Bulaq, 16/29 August 1915, p. 179.
- ¹⁴⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 104, 9/22 November 1915, p. 220.
- ¹⁴⁸ “Armenak Bey Kamsarakan”, *Hishatakaran*, p. 71. The Kamsarakan brothers, Armenak and Tigran, the well known cigarette manufacturers, contributed 2400 pounds for the foundation of the *Himnadram*, and later paid a monthly contribution of 300 pounds on a regular basis to the Relief Society (Npastamatuyts), formed in Egypt at the beginning of 1916. They are often mentioned in the Armenian press of the war years as an example to be followed by much richer Armenians (Suren Partevian, “Yegiptahay Dimasdvner: Armenak Kamsarakan”, *Anapatin Hushardzane*, Vol. 2, 8th pamphlet, Cairo, Sokrat Sarrafian, 1917, p. 121; *Arev*, 28 February, 1916, p. 3.
- ¹⁴⁹ Mikayel Gurdjian, “Harustneru Masin” (On the rich), *Arev*, 4 October, 1915, p. 1.
- ¹⁵⁰ Partevian, “Yegiptahay Tarin: 1914-1915” (The Egyptian-Armenian Year:1914-1915), p. 23. The allusion is to Croesus, the King of Lydia (560-546 BC), renowned for his legendary great wealth and love for gold.
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23; Garo Balian, “Khramatneren Heru” (Far from the trenches), *Anapatin Hushardzane*, Vol. 2, 6th pamphlet, Cairo: Zareh Berberian, 1917, p. 95.
- ¹⁵² *Arev*, 6 October 1915.
- ¹⁵³ “Communication de l’Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département”, Paris, 14th September 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes Puissances*, p. 67).
- ¹⁵⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 98, 8 October 1915, p. 197.
- ¹⁵⁵ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 99, 2/15 October 1915, p. 204.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁷ “Material means” were later determined: each person leaving the camp should carry on him 10 pounds for each family member (Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 107, 3/16 December 1915, p. 235).
- ¹⁵⁸ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 107, 3/16 December 1915, p. 235.
- ¹⁵⁹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 106, 6 December 1915, pp. 229-230.
- ¹⁶⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 107, 3/16 December 1915, p. 235; “Azgayin Kronik: Pashtonakan Haytararutiun Azgayin Arachnordarani” (National chronicle: Official declaration of the Armenian Prelacy), *Arev*, 29 December, 1915, p. 3.
- ¹⁶¹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 78, 6/19 October 1917, p. 328; Session 85, 7 December 1917, p. 364.
- ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 365.
- ¹⁶³ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 98, 8 October 1915, p. 197.
- ¹⁶⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 100, 13/26 October 1915, p. 209; Session 105, 17/29 November 1915, p. 223; Session 107, 3/16 December 1915, p. 234.
- ¹⁶⁵ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 107, 3/16 December 1915, p. 234.
- ¹⁶⁶ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 105, 17/29 November 1915, p. 223; Andreassian, “Svedahayer” (Armenians from Suedia), *Alyakner*, pp. 17-18; Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 102, 3/16 November 1915, p. 216.
- ¹⁶⁷ The members of this Committee were: Kevork Tchakejian, Hayk Khayetian, Karapet Kechian, and Harutiun Kemhadjian; the last two were members of the Cairo Civil Council.
- ¹⁶⁸ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 112, 27 January 1916, pp. 255-6.

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- ¹⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 113, 10/23 February 1916, p. 259.
- ¹⁷¹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 111, 21 January 1916, pp. 250-1; Session 113, 10/23 February 1916, pp. 258-9.
- ¹⁷² Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 112, 27 January 1916, pp. 255-6; Session 114, 16/29 February 1916, pp. 263-4. The terms of the agreement are mentioned in detail in this session.
- ¹⁷³ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 2, 6/19 May 1915, p. 8.
- ¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 3, 13/26 May, 1916, p. 17.
- ¹⁷⁵ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 4, 2 June 1916, pp. 22-3; Session 5, 9 June 1916, p. 31.
- ¹⁷⁶ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 9, 1/14 July 1916, p. 46; “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse”, *Alyakner*, p. 255.
- ¹⁷⁷ “Communication de l’Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département”, Paris, October 11th 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 120).
- ¹⁷⁸ “Le Ministre des Affaires étrangères à M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire”, Paris, le 17 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 73).
- ¹⁷⁹ “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire à M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères” Le Caire, le 19 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 78).
- ¹⁸⁰ “Le Ministre de la Guerre au Contre-Amiral Lacaze, Ministre de la Marine”, Paris, le 30 octobre 1915; and “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant p.i. la 3^e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, Rade de Port-Said, le 28 octobre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 136, 137-8).
- ¹⁸¹ It had cost the British 16,000 francs to establish the camp and the monthly expenses for its sustenance were 30,000 francs (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 232).
- ¹⁸² Elgood, p.184.
- ¹⁸³ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant p.i. la 3^e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, Rade de Port-Said, le 28 octobre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp.137-8).
- ¹⁸⁴ “M. Viviani, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères p.i. à M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire”, Paris, le 12 octobre 1915; “M. Alexandre Millerand, Ministre de la Guerre à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine” (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 122-3, 124-5).
- ¹⁸⁵ “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Viviani, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères p.i.”, Le Caire, le 13 Octobre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 123).
- ¹⁸⁶ “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire à M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères” Le Caire, le 23 septembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 96).
- ¹⁸⁷ “M. Alexandre Millerand, Ministre de la Guerre, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, Paris, le 15 October 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 124-5).
- ¹⁸⁸ “Note du Lieutenant Brémond sur les Arméniens réfugiés à Port-Said”, Le Caire, le 7 septembre 1916; and “Note pour la Marine française à Port-Said”, Port-Said, le 12 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 232, 236).
- ¹⁸⁹ Elgood, p. 191.
- ¹⁹⁰ “Le Contre-Amiral Darrieus, Commandant la 2^e Division et p.i. la 3^e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, Rade de Port-Said, le 2 octobre 1915; and “M. Defrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères” Le Caire, le 22 septembre 1915, (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 118, 81).

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- ¹⁹¹ “Le Lieutenant-Colonel Elgood, Commandant Militaire britannique à Port-Said, au Général Maxwell, Commandant en Chef les Armées britanniques en Égypte”, Le Caire, le 23 septembre 1915 (Traduction) (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 99-100).
- ¹⁹² Elgood, p. 190.
- ¹⁹³ “Le Ministre de la Guerre au Lieutenant Doynel de Saint-Quentin, Détaché auprès du Commandement des Forces britanniques en Égypte”, Paris, le 24 septembre 1915 in Beylerian ed. *Les Grandes Puissances...*, p. 101.
- ¹⁹⁴ “Le Contre-Admiral Darrieus, commandant p.i. la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. Victor Augagneur, Ministre de la Marine”, Rade de Port-Said, le 15 octobre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 125-6).
- ¹⁹⁵ “Le Vice-Admiral Moreau, Commandant la 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, au Capitaine de frégate Benoist d’Azy”, A bord la *Jeanne d’Arc*, le 4 décembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 147); and Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 24, Session 107, 3/16 December, 1915, pp. 233-4.
- ¹⁹⁶ Tiran Tekeyan, “Inchpes Tsenav Haykakan Legeone” (How the Armenian Legion was born) trans. from the original by Partevian, *Arara*, p. 69.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid.; “Le Lieutenant Doynel de Saint-Quentin, Détaché auprès du Commandement des Forces britanniques en Égypte, à M. Alexandre Millerand, Ministre de la Guerre”, Le Caire, le 12 octobre 1915, (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 12); “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse”, *Alyakner*, p. 255.
- ¹⁹⁸ Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 137- 230.
- ¹⁹⁹ “M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Londres, le 28 juin 1916; “M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Londres, le 4 juillet 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 212, 213).
- ²⁰⁰ “Le Generale Roques, Ministre de la Guerre, au Colonel de La Panouse, Attaché Militaire de France à Londres, Paris, le 15 aout 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 225).
- ²⁰¹ “Le General Murray, Commandant en Chef les Forces expeditionnaires Britanniques en Egypte, au Contre-amiral de Spitz, Commandant la Division navale de Syrie”, General Headquarters, 7th September, 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 230).
- ²⁰² “M. DeFrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Le Caire, le 9 septembre 1916, and Annexe “Note du Lieutenant Brémond sur les Arméniens réfugiés à Port-Said”, Le Caire, le 7 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 230-2).
- ²⁰³ “M. DeFrance, Ministre de France au Caire, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Le Caire, le 15 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 239-240).
- ²⁰⁴ “Note pour la Marine Française à Port-Said”, Port-Said, le 12 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p.236).
- ²⁰⁵ “Le colonel de La Panouse, Attache Militaire de France a Londres, au General Roques, Ministre de la Guerre”; M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Londres, le 13 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 236-237).
- ²⁰⁶ “Le Vice-Amiral Moreau, Commandant le 3e Escadre de la Méditerranée, à M. DeFrance, Ministre de France au Caire”, Port-Said, le 5 fevrier [1916] (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 163).
- ²⁰⁷ “Le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, à M. DeFrance, Ministre de France au Caire”, Paris, le 10 novembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 267).

- ²⁰⁸ “Le Ministre de la Guerre au Contre-Amiral Lacaze, Ministre de la Marine”, Paris, le 23 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 242).
- ²⁰⁹ Minutes of the Civil Council , vol. 25, Session 29, 6 November 1916, p. 120
- ²¹⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council , vol. 25, Session 31, 17 November 1916, p. 127. For the terms on which the *Légion d’Orient* was created see “Décision prise par le Ministre à la date du 15 novembre 1916” (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 276-7).
- ²¹¹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 32, 11/24 November 1916, p. 130.
- ²¹² Ibid.; Minutes of the Civil Council , vol. 25, Session 34, 5 December 1916, p. 135.
- ²¹³ The office of the Armenian National Union was at 3 Mouillard Street, Cairo; *Arev*, 18 December, 1918, p. 3.
- ²¹⁴ Minutes of the Community Council , vol. 43, Session 63, 3/16 December 1918.
- ²¹⁵ Minutes of the Community Council , vol. 43, Session 58, 3/16 March 1917, p. 233.
- ²¹⁶ “Le Ministre de la Guerre au Contre-Admiral Lacaze, Ministre de la Marine”, Paris, le 20 novembre 1915 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 272).
- ²¹⁷ Full text published (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 278-283).
- ²¹⁸ “Conditions d’engagement des volontaires arméniens de la Légion d’Orient”, Decembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, pp. 291-2).
- ²¹⁹ “Dispositions générales” (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 284).
- ²²⁰ Tekeyan, “Inchpes Tsenav”, *Arara*, p. 71.
- ²²¹ “Azgayin Kronik: Hay Geriner” (National chronicle: Armenian POWs), *Arev*, 8 March, 1916, p. 3.
- ²²² Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 32, 11/24 November 1916, p. 129.
- ²²³ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 7, 17/30 June 1916, p. 38. The POWs from the Mesopotamia front were first taken to India and from thence were brought to Egypt; for the case of four Armenian doctors and 100 soldiers in a village in India see *Arev*, 26 November, 1915.
- ²²⁴ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 47, 26 February 1917, p. 191.
- ²²⁵ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 1, 10 May 1916, p. 5.
- ²²⁶ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 43, 16/24 January 1917, p. 170.
- ²²⁷ Minutes of Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 61, 9/22 June 1917, pp. 254-5.
- ²²⁸ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuyts 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, pp. 255-6.
- ²²⁹ Tigran Poyadjian, *Haykakan Legeone* (The Armenian Legion), Watertown, Baykar, 1965, p. 23.
- ²³⁰ “Le Commandant Romieu, Chargé de mission en Égypte et à Chypre, au Général Roques, Ministre de la Guerre” 19 novembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 270).
- ²³¹ “M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, à M. Aristide Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères”, Londres le 13 septembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 237).
- ²³² “Le Commandant Romieu, Chargé de mission en Égypte et à Chypre, au Général Roques, Ministre de la Guerre”, Port-Said, le 4 decembre 1916 (Beylerian, *Les Grandes*, p. 302); Poyadjian, p. 28. The members of this delegation from Egypt were: Sabah Gulyan (S.D.Hnchak), Artavazd Hanemian (Dashnak) and Mihran Damadian (H. S. Ramgavar).
- ²³³ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuyts 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, p. 256.
- ²³⁴ Tekeyan, “Inchpes Tsenav”, *Arara*, p. 72.
- ²³⁵ Poyadjian, p.26.
- ²³⁶ Ibid., pp. 91-4.
- ²³⁷ Government Press and Survey of Egypt, *A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force: July 1917-October, 1918*, compiled from official sources and

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- published by the Palestine News, Cairo, 1919, p. 45, plates 40-43; for details of the movement of the Armenian legionnaires consult Poyadjian, pp. 98-137.
- ²³⁸ Poyadjian, p. 96. Quoting from an article in the newspaper *Haratch* (Paris, 15 August 1964) by Vahan Portugalian, a volunteer lawyer and a sub-lieutenant in the *Legion d'Orient*.
- ²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98,100.
- ²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 103-109.
- ²⁴³ Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East 1917-1919*, Frank Cass, London, 1999, p. 66.
- ²⁴⁴ Poyadjian, pp. 114-85, pp. 120-123.
- ²⁴⁵ “Haykakan Legeoni Heros-Nahatagneru Taghume” (The Funeral of the martyr-heroes of the Armenian Legion), *Arara*, p. 15.
- ²⁴⁶ The list of the names of the dead is published in *Arara*, p. 13. Some sources mention the number to be 24, as 3 of the wounded were fatally injured and died later.
- ²⁴⁷ The list of the names of the wounded is published in *Arara*, pp. 76-77. It includes 68 names (2 had died), and mentions the place of their origin and the locality they joined from.
- ²⁴⁸ Poyadjian, p.146.
- ²⁴⁹ “Haykakan Legeoni Heros-Nahatagneru Taghume”, pp. 15-18.
- ²⁵⁰ Atom Tagvorian, “Ararayi Viravornere Por Sa’idi Medj” (The wounded of Arara in Port Sa’id), *Arara*, p. 107.
- ²⁵¹ “Arevelian Lekeone” (The *Legion d'Orient*), *Arev* 25 October, 1918, pp. 1-2.
- ²⁵² Tagvorian, p. 109.
- ²⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-8.
- ²⁵⁴ “Huyj Karevor” (Extremely important), *Arev*, 18 December, 1918, p. 3.
- ²⁵⁵ For a detailed account of the movements of Allenby’s army in 1918 consult *The Egyptian Expeditionary Force*, plates 32-55.
- ²⁵⁶ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 61, 9/22 June 1917, p. 255.
- ²⁵⁷ Richard Natkiel, “The Mesopotamia Campaign”, *Atlas of 20th Century History*, London, Hamlyn-Bison, 1982, Map B, p. 61.
- ²⁵⁸ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 83, 10/23 November 1917, pp. 355-6.
- ²⁵⁹ *A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force: July 1917-October, 1918*, facing plate 26.
- ²⁶⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 92, 1 February 1918, p. 396
- ²⁶¹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 88, 15/28 December 1917, pp. 376-7.
- ²⁶² Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 89, 4 January 1918, p. 382.
- ²⁶³ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 95, 8 March 1918, p. 13.
- ²⁶⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 110, 13 September, 1918.
- ²⁶⁵ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, p. 257.
- ²⁶⁶ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 102, 18/31 March 1918, p. 58.
- ²⁶⁷ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 104, 15/ 28 June 1918, p. 63.
- ²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-5.
- ²⁶⁹ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 117, 8 November 1918, p. 124.
- ²⁷⁰ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 26, Session 119, 22 November 1918, p. 133.
- ²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ²⁷² “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, p. 256.
- ²⁷³ “The World Wars” *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 29, p. 972.

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- ²⁷⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 85, 7 December 1917, p. 363.
- ²⁷⁵ Minutes of the Civil Council, vol. 25, Session 88, 15/28 December 1917, pp. 379-380.
- ²⁷⁶ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, p.257.
- ²⁷⁷ The table is formed on the basis of the data provided in “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, pp. 257-260, and Gutulian, “Husher yev pusher”, p. 198, both in *Alyakner*.
- ²⁷⁸ Gartashian, pp. 263, 288.
- ²⁷⁹ Grigor Gutulian, “Husher Yev Pusher”, pp. 199-202. In this article, Gutulian, himself a refugee in the camp, gives detailed statistics on the refugees in the camp in June 1919. Another source mentions 10,000 as the total number of refugees in the camp in 1918 (“V kayutiun Me” (A Testimony), Gartashian, pp. 184-5.
- ²⁸⁰ Gartashian, p. 263.
- ²⁸¹ Boris Adjemian, “In Service to Humanity”, *AGBU News Magazine*, April 2015, p. 16.
- ²⁸² M. Salbi, “Hay Baregortzakan Enthanur Miutian Por Sa’idi Vorbanotse” (The AGBU Orphanage in Port Sa’id), *Alyakner*, pp. 203-213.
- ²⁸³ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, p. 258.
- ²⁸⁴ Minutes of the Civil Council , vol. 26, Session 3, 9/22 November 1918, p. 135.
- ²⁸⁵ The table is formed on the basis of the data provided in “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakne*, pp. 266-269.
- ²⁸⁶ “Vranakaghaki Taretsuytse 1915-1919”, *Alyakner*, pp. 268-270.

ԱՌԱՋԻՆ ՀԱՄԱՇԽԱՐՀԱՅԻՆ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԸ,
ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ ԵՒ ԵԳԻՊՏԱՀԱՅՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ (1914-1919)
(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

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Ուսումնասիրությունը կը քննէ Եգիպտոսի Ազգային Գաւառական Ժողովին դերը հայոց տագնապին մէջ, Ա. Համաշխարհային Պատերազմի ընթացքին Եգիպտոսի ունեցած ռազմաքաղաքական դիրքին ենթախորքին վրայ:

Առաջին Համաշխարհային Պատերազմի առաջացուցած քաղաքական կարեւորագոյն փոփոխութիւններէն մին հանդիսացաւ Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան անկումը: Օսմանեան իշխանութիւններու որոշումը՝ ներքաշուելու Ա. Համաշխարհային Պատերազմ, նշանակեց ամբողջ Միջին Արեւելքի ընդգրկումը առաւելաբար եւրոպական պատերազմի մը մէջ: Միւս կողմէն, Սուէզի Ջրանցքին ռազմագիտական կարեւորութեան պատճառով, Մեծն Բրիտանիա պատերազմի մէջ քաջեց Եգիպտոսը, որ Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան անուանական գերիշխանութեան տակ էր:

Ա. Համաշխարհային Պատերազմի վաղորդայնին, Եգիպտոսի մէջ գոյութիւն ունէր փոքր, բայց կազմակերպուած հայկական գաղութ մը: Պատերազմի խառնակ տարիներուն, Գահիրէի Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցոյ առաջնորդարանը, վճռական դեր ստանձնեց շրջանին մէջ, մինչ հայ ժողովուրդը կը դիմագրաւէր ազգային աննախադէպ Աղէտը: Եգիպտոսի ռազմագիտական դիրքը Օսմանեան Պաղեստինի եւ Սուրիոյ ռազմաճակատին սահմանակցութիւնը, շեշտաւորեց Գահիրէի Առաջնորդարանին աշխարհագրաքաղաքական կարեւորութիւնը, իբրեւ լաւապէս հաստատութեանականացած վարչական կեդրոն մը: Ան մօտ էր Օսմանեան տարածքին, ուր հայոց ոչնչացումի գործընթացը սկիզբ առած էր եւ հայութեան բնօրրանին ճակատագիրը կը վճռուէր: Աւելին, 1914ի սկիզբէն եւեթ, բրիտանական զինուորական իշխանութիւնները Միջին Արեւելքի մէջ թշնամիէն գրաւուած հողատարածքներու վրայ բնակող բոլոր հայերուն ազգային վարչական կեդրոնը նկատեցին Գահիրէի Հայոց Առաջնորդարանը:

Ուստի, 1915էն սկսեալ, պատերազմին ամբողջ տեւողութեան եւ մինչեւ 1919, Եգիպտոսի Ազգային Գաւառական Ժողովը ծանրաբեռնուեցաւ շրջանի զանազան վայրերէն Գահիրէի Առաջնորդարանին վրայ տեղացող բազմաբազում դիմումներով: Օրինակ, Կովկասէն կը դիմէին օգնելու համար պատերազմի գօտիի գաղթականներուն եւ աջակցելու՝ ռուսական բանակի հայ կամաւորներուն: Կոստանդնուպոլիսէն, փրկուած արքայազմներ անմիջական յատկացումներ կը խնդրէին՝ անխուսափելի մահէ ազատելու համար: Միւս կողմէն, Փոքր Սայիտի մէջ մուսալեռցի 4200 հայ գաղթականներ հոգածութեան կարիք ունէին: 1916ին սկիզբ առաւ Արեւելեան Լեզէոնին յառաջացման համար կամաւորներ զինուորագրելու հարցը: