

THE MUSA DAGH ARMENIANS  
*A Socioeconomic and Cultural History*  
1919-1939

*Vahram L. Shemmassian*

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Beirut 2015

Original Title:

**The Musa Dagh Armenians:  
A Socioeconomic and Cultural History 1919-1939**

By

*Vahram L. Shemmassian*

First Edition 2015

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Beirut, Lebanon

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ISBN 978-9953-585-09-3

To My

*Father, Levon Shemmassian of Yoghunoluk-Bitias*

and

*Mother, Manushag Temirian Shemmassian of Kesab*

For their boundless love and warm nurturing  
with filial gratitude

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## PREFACE

Armenian Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses or Muses), a massif overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and situated in Svedia sub-district within the Antioch district of the Ottoman province of Aleppo, consisted of six main villages: Bitias, Haji Habibli, Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, and Kabusiye. Contacts with Western diplomats, travelers, and missionaries, as well as interactions with Armenian clergymen, educators, and revolutionaries during the nineteenth and early twentieth century brought about certain changes that transformed the Musa Daghians, some 6,300 souls on the eve of World War I, from an insulated, obscure and ignorant lot to a conscious collectivity fighting for its very existence as part of the Armenian nation facing annihilation by its own, Ottoman Government.

The Musa Dagh resistance to the Armenian Genocide in 1915 has been immortalized by Franz Werfel's historical novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. Ever since its publication in 1933, the book has been translated from its original German to numerous languages. Armenians and non-Armenians alike have hailed it as a saga that inspires hope. Artists and intellectuals have created works trumpeting the triumph of goodness versus man's inhumanity to man. Celebratory events take place around the world annually and on commemorative occasions. Yet, despite the novel's fame and impact, to date the story of the Musa Dagh people has not been studied and recounted in a historical form. One notable exception is my doctoral dissertation, entitled "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1996), which is under revision for publication. Concurrently, I have decided to publish the history of Musa Dagh Armenians between the two World Wars (1919-1939). This book is the partial culmination of that effort.

Reconstructing Musa Dagh society objectively poses a challenge, because most published and unpublished memoirs and eyewitness accounts penned by natives from a distance of time have by and large romanticized and/or glorified life in their homeland. Besides, growing up in one village, political-ideological camp, socioeconomic group, or religious community or another may have limited the authors' vision and ability to view the wider picture. On the positive side, examined together, those very differences contribute to a fuller understanding of the issues at hand. At the same time, the numerous archival sources unearthed, the newspaper articles consulted, the interviews and correspondence conducted, and the family papers and pictures revealed—most of them for the first time—enable the researcher to present a more factual and

balanced picture of a collective life that ended on the native soil abruptly some seventy-five years ago, in 1939. Therefore, human imperfection aside, this study is an attempt to offer a dispassionate narration of the social, economic, and cultural life of Musa Dagh Armenians during the interwar years. Religion, education, and politics have been covered here only when relevant to the stated topic. They will be more completely treated in a separate volume. That being said, I have no illusion that I have exhausted or fully understood even the three aspects I have chosen to examine in this book. Indeed, with further research, especially in the state archives of Turkey and Syria, many lingering questions may be answered and more crucial matters clarified in the future.

I have deliberately included numerous names and details, even though at times they may seem overwhelming. History writing, being first and foremost a narration of the human experience, should be as personal and intimate as possible. Similarly, with the passage of time and erosion of memory much valuable information will be forever lost if not recorded. Therefore, this is an effort to preserve as much detail as possible. The purpose is also to spur genealogical interest among all generations of readers. Last but not least, I hope that this micro-history will contribute to a better understanding of minorities in the Middle East as well as certain communities of the Armenian diaspora at the macro level.

Nor/New Zeytun near Bitias, a settlement established by the League of Nations in the 1920s to accommodate refugees from Zeytun in Cilicia, is excluded from this study, for two reasons: it was not an autochthonous community, and it functioned detached from the rest of Musa Dagh with a life of its own and therefore warrants a separate treatment.

A word about the illustrations is in order. During the course of my research I came across numerous vintage photographs that brought places, people, and events to life. Attics, garages, walls, boxes, and albums revealed a wealth of hidden treasures turned into chronicles. Through word of mouth the network of proud Musa Dagh descendants in possession of pictures extended from the West Coast to the East Coast of the United States, and to Canada and beyond. Immigrants from the former Soviet Armenia in the United States likewise embraced the cause. Compatriots in Anjar, Lebanon, were no less generous. From all these sources there came a flood of photos to my desk. After a review of them it became clear that among the six villages of Musa Dagh an incredible number of pictures of Bitias had been taken, which can be explained by the fact that it was a popular summer resort attracting hundreds of families and individual visitors including professional and amateur photographers. At the same time, while certain themes seem to have caught the camera's eye more readily, others are virtually absent.

Unfortunately, this is particularly true for the various occupations/businesses. Be that as it may, I thank each and every individual contributor, whose names are listed together with the precious photographs that they have kindly donated for this work.

Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 8 are being published for the first time. On the other hand, chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 originally appeared as articles in volumes 29 (2009), 30 (2010), 31 (2011), and 28 (2008) of the *Haigazian Armenological Review* (HAR). They have been revised for this book. I thank the editorship of the HAR for allowing me to reintroduce those articles as chapters.

The transliteration of Armenian names and words follows standard Western Armenian. More often than not, scholars adopt transliteration keys that are based on Eastern Armenian orthography and which do not do justice to Western Armenian phonetics. I am indeed cognizant of the difficulty my approach may create when it comes to transliterating certain pairs of letters in the Armenian alphabet that are different but sound similar or the same. Nevertheless, it is an approach that underscores the authenticity of pronunciation more than anything else.

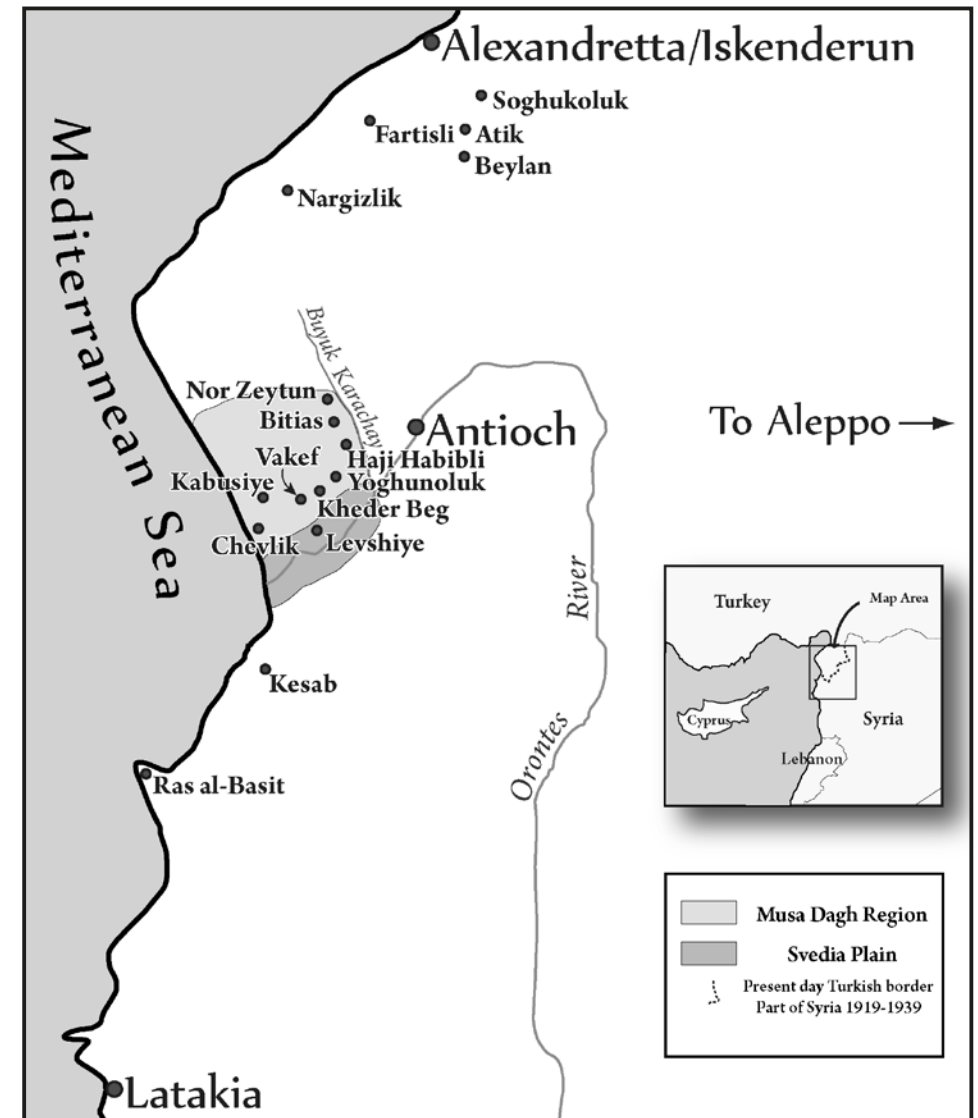
This book came to fruition with the help of several individuals. My wife Maggy rendered assistance in the early stages of research. Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian, my mentor while a doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles, not only furnished travel and research grants, but supported me in difficult times. The many interviewees, correspondents, and family paper donors enriched my knowledge about Musa Dagh through information not found in archives, published and unpublished sources, and the periodical press. Ms. Alberta Magzarian, in particular, contributed with her unique insights. Individuals in charge of archives and libraries, too many to mention by name, were welcoming and most helpful. Michael Adajian edited chapters 1-3 and 8, excluding the footnotes. Author Sona Zeytlian read Chapter 8 and raised several important questions. Mher Najaryan, a student of mine at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN), prepared the indexes. Anthony Hillbruner, Media Production Specialist at CSUN, graciously undertook the scanning of the illustrations from slides and originals. Michael Tacsik, Department Technician at CSUN's Department of Geological Sciences, volunteered to prepare the map. Aurora Adajian Lehmann, Arpi Shemmassian Beylerian, and an anonymous donor contributed generously to this publication. Last but not least, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, the President of Haigazian University, Beirut, and Dr. Antranik Dakessian, Executive Secretary of the *Haigazian Armenological Review* Editorial Board and Director of the Armenian Diaspora Research Center at Haigazian University, supported this study and were involved in the various phases for it to

see the light of day through the Haigazian University Press. I owe my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to all. The responsibility for the book's contents, however, rests with me.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATION DONORS

Adajian, Michael: 50  
Anjar Museum: 33  
Araradian, Khachig: 68, 88  
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Ayarian, Dikran: 47  
Bayramian, Azniv: 65  
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*Musa Dagh and Environs*  
 1919-1939

*Chapter 1*  
**TRYING TIMES AFTER REPATRIATION**

In late July 1915 Musa Dagh received deportation orders that portended unprecedented calamity. After serious debates as to how to respond, two-third of its 6,000-strong Armenian population decided to resist, while the rest opted for compliance. The defiant majority fought the Ottoman army for more than forty days. At the end, it was rescued by French warships monitoring the Syrian coastline and disembarked on the Asiatic side of the Suez Canal across from Port Said, Egypt, where it would spend the next four years in a refugee camp. Those who stayed behind were deported, mostly to the Syrian town of Hama and vicinity. They suffered untold hardships from exposure, diseases, and starvation. As a result, many perished.<sup>1</sup> But the survivors, whether in Hama or in Port Said, received a new lease on life when World War I ended. And as Musa Dagh beckoned, they returned home elated, only to live a new nightmare.

*Return from Exile*

At the end of World War I, when Syria had come under Allied and Arab control, Armenian genocide survivors converged upon Damascus and Aleppo from other towns and the desert hinterland anxious to return home. Deportees from Musa Dagh still alive in Hama and environs likewise congregated in Aleppo. But two factors delayed repatriation: the lack of adequate transportation and the unsettled political conditions in areas from which most Armenians originated. Even so, some refugees ventured to regain their domiciles by renting carts and mules or going on foot. The majority, however, departed beginning in January 1919 in a more orderly manner with permission and material support from the French Central Service (or Bureau) of Repatriation in collaboration with the Armenian National Union (ANU) of Aleppo.<sup>2</sup>

On 22 January, Fr. Margos Yeretsian (Keshishian), notable Kevork Baljian, and Khacher Chiftjian petitioned the ANU on behalf of sixty-nine co-villagers leading a miserable existence in Aleppo to get them to their native Kabusiye before the

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of Musa Dagh in the nineteenth-early twentieth century, see Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915," Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The Repatriation of Armenian Refugees from the Arab Middle East, 1918-1920," in Richard G. Hovannisian and Simon Payaslian, eds., *Armenian Cilicia* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2008): 419-56.

important sericulture season got underway.<sup>3</sup> Six days later eleven persons, including the families of Fr. Yeretsian and Chiftjian, departed after receiving 4 gold liras for their expenses.<sup>4</sup> On 29 January Baljian (again) and Hagop Garabed Papazian from Haji Habibli asked to be sent home together with fellow countrymen. Their wish was granted: they received 17 Egyptian pounds and five carts.<sup>5</sup> By 13 March the number of returnees to Musa Dagh had reached 800.<sup>6</sup> One of the earliest was Kerovpe M. Aslanian (Arslanian/Aslan), a native of Constantinople who had taken up residency in Antioch and who would play a leading role in overseeing relief distributions among the Armenians in his general neighborhood.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequent groups destined for Antioch and/or Svedia and comprising passengers hailing from Kesab (Kessab/Kasab) and Musa Dagh traveled mostly in vehicles, as follows: 86 persons on 26 March; 7 persons (listed among Adana natives found at the Aleppo barracks converted to a refugee camp) on 5 April; 30 persons on 4 June; 64 persons on 6 June; 77 persons in July (no specific day given); 21 persons on 25 August, for a total of 285 persons within a five-month period, from 26 March to 25 August.<sup>8</sup> Only a few survivors returned to the

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<sup>3</sup> Armenian Prelacy of Aleppo Archives, Aleppo, Syria, (hereafter APA), Section VI, *Azkayin Khorhurt* (National Council [must be Armenian National Union]), File 1, *Hay Azkayin Khorhurt. Sdatsvadz Namagner Hayrenagsagan Miutiun[nere] 1918-1919* (Armenian National Council: Incoming Letters from Compatriotic Associations 1918-1919), Fr. Margos Yeretsian, Kevork Baljian, and Khacher Chiftjian to Aleppo Armenian National Union (ANU), 22 January 1919; idem, File 2, *Hay Azkayin Khorhurt. Sdatsvadz Namagner 1919* (Armenian National Council: Incoming Letters 1919), List of Kabusiye village inhabitants from the Antioch district who wish to go to their birthplace.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., File 2, Baljian to Aleppo ANU, 28 January 1919.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Baljian and Hagop Garabed Papazian to Aleppo ANU, 29 January 1919. That their wish was granted is recorded on the back of their letter.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., File 1, Fr. Madteos Giuzelyan, Garabed Zhamgochian, Mgrdich Isgenderian, Movses K. Chaparian, and Hagop Kiuchiukian to Aleppo ANU chair, 13 March 1919.

<sup>7</sup> For Aslanian's return date, see France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Nantes (hereafter AMAE), Beyrouth: Cilicie 1919-1921, Carton 319, *Cilicie-Alep: Service de Rapatriements. Assistance aux arméniens 1919*, File *Alep, 1919*, Antakia, convoie voitures de 30 personnes, le 4 juin 1919, addendum at the bottom of document is dated 5.II.19 and the name Keropé Aslan written.

<sup>8</sup> For the various departure dates and groups, see, respectively, *ibid.*, *Rapatriement des arméniens*, Convoi Antioche parti le 26-3-19; idem, Prochain convoie d'autos, document written in pencil and inserted in and pinned to Liste des originaires d'Adana se trouvant à la Caserne, Convoie de terre no. 4 du 5-4-19; idem, Antakia, Convoie voitures de 30 personnes, 4 June 1919; idem, Statistique des Rapatriement arm[éniens] du 1er au 30 juin 1919, Antioche, 6 juin 1919; idem, Copie du statistique du mois de juillet 1919; idem, File *Alep, Service des rapatriements arméniens, 1919, août à décembre. Listes nominatives des arméniens rapatriés d'Alep avec indication du lieu de destination*, Liste des arméniens partant le 25 août 1919 d'Alep pour Suéydié.

same area thereafter. For example, Sarkis Vanessian, a former prisoner of war originating from Svedia, received permission to travel alone to rejoin his family after the ANU was unable to find “other compatriots... to form a convoy.”<sup>9</sup> A mere eleven persons journeyed to Antioch in October.<sup>10</sup> Information is lacking as to whether other exiles regained their prewar residences in that district from winter through fall 1919. Be that as it may, based on the above givens, a total of 1,097 Armenians returned to the Antioch-Svedia region through Aleppo.

In addition, 200-plus Musa Dagh youths serving in the Légion Arménienne (originally called Légion d'Orient) headed to their native villages following their discharge—together with other Armenian comrades-in-arm—resulting from conflicts between them and Muslim soldiers in the French Army in northwestern Syria and Cilicia.<sup>11</sup> In fact, those legionnaires, who had fought victoriously at the battle of Arara against the Ottoman Army in Palestine on 19 September 1918, numbered among the earliest postwar returnees to Musa Dagh. Despite their meritorious service as valiant soldiers, they arrived dejected and penniless.<sup>12</sup>

As soon as the legionnaires and survivors from Hama set foot in Musa Dagh, they sent word to relatives at Port Said that they were alive and urged them to return home. “One morning—wrote Haroutune P. Boyadjian—while having breakfast, we heard a man shouting in our dialect that a large bag of letters had come to the Priest. They were sent from Musa Dagh people who were either in

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., File *Alep, 1919. Rapatriement des arméniens*, Casparian to Col. Cloucard, 25 September 1919.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., File *Alep, Service des rapatriements arméniens, 1919, août à décembre. Listes nominatives des arméniens rapatriés d'Alep avec indication du lieu de destination*, Liste des arméniens partant le [13?] octobre 1919 d'Alep pour Antioche, 9 octobre 1919, Boghos Boyadjian, nombre de personnes 8 (huit), and Sarkis Ohanian, 3 persons, Mariam Hagopian, and Ohannes Maghzanian, 2 octobre 1919.

<sup>11</sup> For the activity and disbandment of the Légion Arménienne in Cilicia, see Guévork Gotikian, “La Légion d'Orient et le mandat français en Cilicie (1916-1921), in *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine*, numéro special, *La Cilicie (1909-1921) des Massacres d'Adana au Mandat Français*, volume prepared by Raymond H. Kévorkian, Vol. III (1999): 278-313; Garabet K. Moumdjian, “Cilicia under French Administration: Armenian Aspirations, Turkish Resistance, and French Stratagem,” in Richard G. Hovannisian and Simon Payaslian, eds., *Armenian Cilicia* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2008): 465-69.

<sup>12</sup> Armenian Revolutionary Federation Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, (hereafter ARF), File 962/25, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1920 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1920), Serop Sherbetjian and secretary (illegible) to Cilicia ARF Central Committee, 5 October 1919; idem, File 960/23, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1919 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1919), Serop Sherbetjian to Egypt ARF Committee in Cairo, 5 November 1919; *Giligia* (Cilicia) (Adana), 2 August 1919.

the villages or around Antioch.” One of the letters, addressed by Haroutune’s father to his wife, read: “I do not know whether you and the children went to the mountains [in 1915] or not. If you are in the camp, please bring the children as soon as you can... I returned to Haji-Habebli and have repaired the two lower rooms. Eagerly waiting for news.”<sup>13</sup>

Such urgent calls caused restlessness among the camp population already homesick after nearly four years of confinement in an alien milieu. Supplications for quick repatriation consequently inundated the camp offices, but the Armenian and British authorities rejected them; the unsettled political conditions on the home front would expose the returnees to new calamities. Notwithstanding, the pressure on camp personnel continued unabated.<sup>14</sup> In one instance a group of women rallied against Rose V. Kalfayan, an active volunteer helper, accusing her of obstructing their exit. In doing so, the group also betrayed an interesting mindset: “[They say] you [Kalfayan] are the cause of our not being sent [home], we are not Armenian, we are French [dependents], there are French [rulers] on our soil, we will go, we will go.”<sup>15</sup> Assurances given by the American Red Cross that its camp workshops would be transferred to Musa Dagh provided the refugees exercised patience failed to persuade them.<sup>16</sup> Frequent truancies by excited students of the camp’s Sisvan School upped the ante.<sup>17</sup>

Sometime before mid-August 1919 the Musa Daghians likewise petitioned the French Consul at Port Said to get them to their homeland in one group, just as the French Navy in 1915 had rescued and transported them to Egypt as a whole. This was imperative for them to be able to reap maximum benefits from their fruit harvests. They had an additional request: it would be safer for them to land at Svedia, closer to home, because the longer overland trip from the port of Alexandretta to Musa Dagh would be fraught with danger given the presence of a hostile Turkish population in the area.<sup>18</sup> Whether the consul responded remains unknown.

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<sup>13</sup> Haroutune P. Boyadjian, *Musa Dagh and My Personal Memoirs* (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Rosekeer Press, 1981), p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> *Armenia* (Marseille), 11 June 1919, 27 August 1919; *Arev* (Sun) (Alexandria), 26 January 1920.

<sup>15</sup> *Arev*, 26 January 1920.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union Archives, Cairo, Egypt, (hereafter AGBU/Cairo), *H.P.E. Miutiun.Grt.[agan] yev Vorp.[akhnam] Hantsnakhump. Adenakrutiun P. Domar 9.7.1919-16.3.1921- (Shar.[unagutiun] A. Domari)* (AGB Union: Educational and Orphan Care Committee: Minutes, Second Book 9.7.1919-16.3.1921 – [Continuation of First Book]), minutes of 39<sup>th</sup> meeting, 27 August (?) 1919, pp. 109-10,

<sup>18</sup> *Armenia*, 27 August 1919.

Meanwhile, the ANU of Egypt, the British Administration, and the Armenian National Delegation in Paris through circulars and pronouncements tried in vain to dissuade the camp residents from rash action.<sup>19</sup> A frustrated ANU on 29 August issued the following communique:

According to information received, the Port Said refugees are returning to their fatherland en masse, contrary to the repeated advice given to them. Therefore, the National Union, based on the clear recommendations by the [Armenian] National Delegation [in Paris] and British Military Authorities, declares to the departing refugees that it does not assume any responsibility concerning any inopportunities that may arise as the result of this repatriation.<sup>20</sup>

The first repatriates departed haphazardly at their own expense, paying 2 Egyptian pounds per boat ticket. What was more, after threatening the prospective returnees that no free rides would ever be arranged by the responsible camp authorities, middlemen took advantage of them with false promises of cheaper fares. This fraud ended when the French finally decided to transport the refugees free of charge.<sup>21</sup> Each evening thereupon town-criers notified the various camp sections of their scheduled departures. The homebound movement thus assumed a more orderly character. According to a chronology of camp events, between 31 July and 28 October 1919 more than 3,100 refugees headed to Musa Dagh from Port Said.<sup>22</sup> To illustrate one trip, a group of 400 Musa Daghians traveled to Beirut on 19 September aboard the French warship *Diderot*. After staying at the quarantine and subsequently an Armenian refugee camp, the passengers headed to Alexandretta on 6 October aboard another battleship, the *Algol*. Upon arrival at that coastal town, those unwilling to wait rented carts to Antioch and thence regained their villages. The remaining families stayed put for nearly a week before they were dispatched home for free.<sup>23</sup>

### *The Armenian National Union*

Given the anarchy in the Antioch region and the myriad needs at home,

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, and 11 June 1919; *Arev*, 26 January 1920.

<sup>20</sup> Varujan Mardirian, private papers, Beirut / Anjar, Lebanon, Armenian National Union of Egypt, “Announcement,” 29 August 1919.

<sup>21</sup> *Armenia*, 18 September 1919; *Yergir* (Homeland) (Constantinople), 5 October 1919.

<sup>22</sup> M. Salpi (Dr. Aram Sahagian), ed., *Aliagner yev Khliagner. Hay Vranakaghakin Darekirke* (Little Waves and Wrecks: The Yearbook of the Armenian Tent City) (Alexandria, Egypt: A. Kasparian Press, 1920), pp. 266-68.

<sup>23</sup> *Armenia*, 21 January 1920.

a central authority was imperative from the outset to safeguard the physical existence of the people during the transitional phase of resettlement after repatriation. That authority functioned in the form of the Armenian National Union (ANU/*Hay Azkayin Miutian*). While useful, it would eventually manifest the deep political divisions besetting Musa Dagh society. The first ANU, chaired by Kerovpe M. Aslanian, a wealthy proprietor from Constantinople with substantial sericulture interests in the Svedia sub-district, operated from Antioch as survivors from Hama regained their homes in 1919.<sup>24</sup> With the return of refugees from Port Said during summer and fall of the same year, in December 1919 the French district Commandant sanctioned the election of five-member ANU chapters in the six villages of Musa Dagh in the presence of Antioch, Latakia, and Jisr al-Shughur Locum Tenens Very Reverend Movses Vosgerichian. By secret ballot, each village came to have its ANU chapter, whose representatives formed a Central Body chaired by the Protestant (Evangelical) Pastor, Dikran Antreasian.<sup>25</sup> After these elections the Musa Daghians demanded that the ANU headquarters be relocated from Antioch to Yoghunoluk (a move that did take place, but the specific date is unknown).<sup>26</sup>

During 1920 the main positions in the Central Body changed hands thrice. On 31 May Mardiros Misakian, the pre-World War I Vice-Consul of Germany in Antioch, and Movses Mardiros Chaparian, a prominent Bitias native and an Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) member, affixed their signatures to a voucher as the Chair and Secretary of the Antioch-Musa Dagh ANU, respectively.<sup>27</sup> On 1 August Setrag Isgenderian, a scion of that notable Haji Habibli clan and a leading member of the Social Democrat Hnchagian Party

(SDHP), and Chaparian wrote a letter as Chairman and Secretary, respectively.<sup>28</sup> From at least 7 October to 15 December Rev. Antreasian was again mentioned as Chairman, while Serop Sherbetjian, a prominent ARF member and a future Musa Dagh sub-district governor, functioned as Secretary.<sup>29</sup> Wrote Sherbetjian: “We did not have a treasurer, because we did not have treasure.”<sup>30</sup> The circumstances under which these changes occurred remain obscure, but it is clear that Rev. Antreasian’s overall tenure was the longest.

By early 1921 the ANU was in disarray caused by factional bickering. In order to reestablish “total peace,” the ARF convened a consultative meeting with ANU village representatives. The gathering elected a new Central Body, but left the position of Chair vacant, most probably due to a lack of consensus respecting the political affiliation of any possible candidate. The remaining seats were filled as follows: George Kazanjian (ARF), Vice-Chairman; Panos Baghtishian (SDHP), Deputy Vice-Chairman; Nareg Aprahamian (ARF), Secretary; Tovmas Akidian (SDHP), Treasurer. The delegates at the meeting then pledged on “all sanctities” that they and their constituencies would comply with the decisions of the Central Body to maintain law and order.<sup>31</sup>

New elections took place sometime before the end of April 1921. Three of the five ARF candidates running for the Yoghunoluk ANU chapter won by 116, 111, and 89 votes, whereas the SDHP captured only one seat, by 58 votes (there was no mention of a fifth winner).<sup>32</sup> Although the outcome in the remaining villages is not known, the new Central Body consisted of Kazanjian as Chairman,

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<sup>28</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, (hereafter ACC), File 22/1, *Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940*, Setrag Isgenderian and Mardiros Chaparian to Catholicos Sahag II, 1 August 1920.

<sup>29</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 E, *Getr.[onagan] Varch.[utiun] 1920-1921 Kaghakneru Aypupenov D-Z* (Central Committee 1920-1921: In Alphabetical Order of Cities D-Z), Musa Dagh ANU Chair Rev. Dikran Antreasian and Secretary Serop Sherbetjian to AGBU General Secretary Vahan Malezian, 7 October 1920; idem, Rev. Antreasian and Sherbetjian to Hmayag Kranian, 16 November 1920; idem, File 6 D, *Getronagan Varchagan Zhoghov, Kahire. Tghtagtsutiunner Hunvar 1920-Mard 1921, Kaghakneru Aypupenov A-C* (Central Administrative Council, Cairo: Correspondence January 1920-March 1921, in Alphabetical Order of Cities A-C), (name illegible) from Cairo to Musa Dagh ANU Chair Rev. Dikran Antreasian in Yoghunoluk, 15 December 1920.

<sup>30</sup> Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of the Armenians of Svedia), edited by Yesayi Havatian, (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), p. 139.

<sup>31</sup> *Giligia*, 2 February 1921.

<sup>32</sup> ARF, File 966/29, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), George Kazanjian, Hovhannes Bursalian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Serop Sherbetjian, Report of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee.

Hagop Hergelian (SDHP) as Secretary, and Aprahamian as Treasurer.<sup>33</sup> It also designated Aprahamian as Musa Dagh's Representative-Liaison to the French government in Antioch.<sup>34</sup> The anti-ARF forces refused to accept the election results. The SDHP, individual Reformed Hnchagians (*Veragazmial Hnchagian*)—eventually members of the *Ramgavar Azadagan Gusagtsutiun* or Democratic Liberal Party/DLP that was formed in 1921 by the merger of several political parties although no DLP chapter per se existed in Musa Dagh for any known period of time—and the Haji Habibli parish council sought to transform the ANU into a representative, rather than an elective, entity hoping to wield greater influence. Unsuccessful, they withdrew from the ANU and declared it dissolved and henceforth illegal. The SDHP Central Executive explained its position in an official communique released on 16 June 1921. It decried the “many imperfections” inherent in the ANU, actually mistakes that were committed deliberately and not corrected. Accordingly, whereas the Central Body had charged certain people (i.e., Aprahamian) to deal with the French government without SDHP's prior knowledge; whereas the ANU Chairman had conducted and signed correspondence alone, bypassing even the Secretary; whereas such unilateral acts demonstrated “irregularities and bashibozukluk [unruliness],” the SDHP resolved to terminate its association with the ANU.<sup>35</sup>

The ensuing interparty correspondence and news coverage in the partisan press reflected the divergent views. According to the SDHP, the ARF, “with understandable jugglery,” defended this “nest of irregularities [Central Body]” in order to hold onto its chairmanship. The Central Body was answerable to the people, and since the political parties were of the people, and because the SDHP and other groups did not recognize the legitimacy of the Central Body, then “the [Central] Body is dissolved by the demand of the majority of the people.” The SDHP wanted a representative system not because the party would lose in elections, as the ARF had been claiming all along, but for other reasons. First, ANUs elsewhere were formed by representatives of Armenian society. Second, the constituent political parties would thus be responsible for the actions of

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., File 967/30, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), Hovhannes Bursalian, Shant Diran, and Nareg Aprahamian to Lernavayr (Cilicia) ARF Central Committee, 25 April 1921.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., File 966/29, George Kazanjian, Hovhannes Bursalian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Serop Sherbetjian, Report of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee; *Giligia*, 2 June 1921.

<sup>35</sup> Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives, Vienna, Austria, (hereafter AMCC), *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun 1920[-1938]*, *Adenakrutian yev Artzanakrutian Dedrag* ([Social Democrat] Hnchagian Party 1920[-1938], Minutes and Records Notebook) (hereafter *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*), minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> Session, 18 June 1921, Haji Habibli; *Nor Serunt* (New Generation) (Adana), 9 September 1921.

their representatives on the Central Body. Third, only a small minority would participate in elections, and therefore the results could not reflect the majority's will.<sup>36</sup> The ARF, in turn, insisted on an elective system confident of the party's popularity. It likewise deemed continued support to the ANU necessary, because the latter “could have very beneficial roles in the future as it had in the past.”<sup>37</sup> Lastly, the ARF attributed the current ANU weakness to the SDHP and its Reformed Hnchagian and traditionalist cohorts, whose words and deeds resembled those of “Don Quixote.”<sup>38</sup>

By mid-September 1921 most ANU village chapters had been dissolved and replaced by either parish or inter-party councils.<sup>39</sup> The SDHP expressed satisfaction that the “purulent question” of the Central Body was resolved.<sup>40</sup> To explore an alternative, the parties met in Yoghunoluk and reached a compromise. In a council, the three political parties and the six villages would have two representatives each, the former by appointment and the latter by general secret suffrage scheduled for 2 October. The deal's implementation would be contingent upon final approval by the higher authorities of the respective parties.<sup>41</sup> Soon, however, pessimism replaced optimism as the SDHP accused the ARF of procrastination, because the latter had ostensibly come to realize that, contrary to its repeated claims, it would not muster majority support.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the explanation, the idea of a council failed to materialize despite SDHP efforts to revive it, and the issue was “totally abandoned” by the third week of November 1921.<sup>43</sup>

Despite its off-turbulent existence, the Musa Dagh ANU concerned itself with acute health issues, and advocated the cause of forsaken Légion Arménienne veterans and orphans. It also, and primarily, solicited assistance from various Armenian and non-Armenian quarters regarding food for survival and/or arms for self-defense. Those supplications were conducted through correspondence with regional and overseas agencies as well as missions dispatched to Cilicia, Syria, and Lebanon. For instance, Fr. Der Kalusdian traveled to Alexandretta,

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; *Balkanian Mamul* (Balkan Press) (Rusjuk/Ruse, Bulgaria), 30 July 1921.

<sup>37</sup> ARE, File 966/29, Six-Month Report of Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 8 September 1921; *Giligia*, 30 July 1921.

<sup>38</sup> *Giligia*, 20 September 1921.

<sup>39</sup> *Nor Serunt*, 21 September 1921.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 9 October 1921.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.; *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 11 November 1921.

<sup>42</sup> *Balkanian Mamul*, 31 December 1921.

<sup>43</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of (13<sup>th</sup>) Meeting, n. d. (21 November 1921?).

Mersin, and Beirut.<sup>44</sup> A delegation consisting of Very Rev. Vosgerichian, Rev. Antreasian, and Sherbetjian embarked on a journey to Mersin and Adana.<sup>45</sup> The latter two also went to Beirut separately on different occasions,<sup>46</sup> and so on.

While efforts at obtaining foodstuffs are detailed below, a word on weapons is in order. Sherbetjian's primary task in Adana was to procure arms. He received from the Armenian political leadership there a total of 11,000 Turkish liras for that purpose plus 5,000 rounds of ammunition for Russian-made rifles. He also purchased a German Mauser (rifle) and two pistols, one of them a Parabellum. Back in Mersin, Sherbetjian bought another fifteen Mausers with 450 bullets. Together with the quantities of cereal acquired, those weapons were smuggled to Musa Dagh via the sea. The guns were sold to the people; with the proceeds, several youths went to Mersin and bought additional guns. When people in Kheder Beg and Vakef raised another 474 Ottoman gold liras, they wanted Sherbetjian to return to Cilicia to secure more weapons. Accordingly, in July 1920 he traveled to Alexandretta with two new companions, but made a detour to Beirut when told by acquaintances that weapons earmarked for Cilicia emanated from the Lebanese capital. Through contacts there, he found "fifty short French Mausers, each with one hundred bullets, for seven Egyptian pounds." But due to certain circumstances, the deal did not go through.<sup>47</sup>

In another instance, ARF member Dr. Levon Minasian from Adana informed comrade Sherbetjian that the Armenian "inter-party body" (*michgusagtsagan marmin*) in Cilicia had set aside a number of guns for Musa Dagh at Dortyol. Misak (Zora) Isgenderian of Haji Habibli, then an armed band leader in Dortyol, was deemed the most suitable person to get them to Musa Dagh given his intimate knowledge of the area's roads. He reportedly demanded 80 Ottoman liras for transportation expenses. The Musa Dagh villages contributed as follows: Bitias, Haji Habibli, Yoghunoluk, and Kheder Beg 15 liras each, and Vakef and Kabusiye 10 liras each. According to Sherbetjian, Isgenderian took the money, gave a receipt, but did not deliver the goods. Each village then sent one person to Dortyol to bring the guns.<sup>48</sup> There is no other source to either corroborate or refute this information. The precise quantity of weapons that the ANU obtained during this period remains uncertain.

<sup>44</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 C, Natanian to Malezian, 16 November 1920.

<sup>45</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-46; *Giligia*, 5 February 1921; *Hayrenik*, 13 April 1921.

<sup>47</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 144-46.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

### *Conditions on Arrival*

The return of survivors to Musa Dagh elicited mixed emotions. While resumption of life on the native soil brought about immense joy, realization of the loss of loved ones during family reunifications caused deep sorrow. A returnee described one such heartrending scene:

Father, with a lovely beard, tears running down his cheek, ran toward the first horse and helped mother down. He was crying loudly, with mother in his arms. What a scene of reunion! Then he embraced us [the children] one by one, with equal affections [sic] and reactions.

...

... Very soon various neighbors and relatives who had returned again [sic] to the village [Haji Habibli] arrived to welcome us. Joy for the reunion! Grief to learn of so many deaths—uncles, aunts, cousins, all perished in the hot deserts of the Middle East.<sup>49</sup>

Other harsh realities awaited the new arrivals. The wartime Muslim occupants of the Musa Dagh villages, estimated at 1,000-1,500 refugees from African Tripoli in Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg and Vakef alone, had fled the area in September-October 1918 fearful of an Armenian landing at Svedia. When the Armenians returned in 1919, they found their homes and public buildings utterly neglected and cannibalized; doors, windows, shutters, furniture, and everything else had been carried away. The Capuchin mission properties in Kheder Beg alone had sustained a loss of an estimated 29,000 gold francs.<sup>50</sup> Several families often huddled under the same roof, while others slept outdoors.<sup>51</sup> Although December 1919 and January 1920 proved unusually mild, heavy rainfalls and freezing temperatures in mid-February wrought havoc. Massive snow drifts blocked the roads. As a result, people could not leave their homes for several days and/or travel to Antioch for at least two weeks.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Boyadjian, *Musa Dagh*, p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> Capuchin Archives, Maison Saint François, Mtayleb, Lebanon, File *Khodorbek: Dommages 18*, see all nineteen documents listed in the contents, titled "Dégâts causés aux Capucins de Khoderbek par les Turcs 1914-1918." See also *Arev*, 12 January 1920.

<sup>51</sup> Yeznig Boyajian, *Badgerner Musa Leran Tiutsaznerkutenen* (Scenes from the Musa Dagh Heroic Epic) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1973), pp. 196-97; Boghos Madurian, "Hayreni Gdurin Dag" (Under the Roof of the Fatherland), in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), pp. 455-56; *Giligia*, 27 September 1919, 8 October 1919.

<sup>52</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 1 March 1920; *Armenia*, 21 April 1920.

The lack of money posed another problem. Few individuals carried cash from Port Said.<sup>53</sup> Money lenders for their part prevented a speedier economic recovery. The struggle of one family illustrates this. The husband worked hard in their mulberry orchard anticipating the production of one box of silkworm seeds (barely enough to make ends meet). But the usurer came, confiscated the grove, and forbade the picking of mulberry leaves to feed the worms. As the husband left the village in search of employment elsewhere, his wife nurtured the caterpillars with great difficulty, by begging for leaves.<sup>54</sup> The artisans like comb and spoon/ladle manufacturers, in turn, could not export their products due to the insecurity reigning in the general vicinity.<sup>55</sup> Grass and thorny bushes covered the neglected fields and orchards. Many fruit trees had been felled and dried to be used as heating fuel by the Muslim settlers during the war years. Prospects for income from land thus remained negligible in the short run. At the same time, cereals sold at exorbitant prices in Antioch. To feed their families, young girls, newly married women, and particularly widows carried wood, charcoal, and potatoes to sell in Antioch, and returned with heavy loads of wheat—a four to six hours' walk each way.<sup>56</sup> In the absence of sufficient income and staples, the vast majority of people struggled to survive by eating grass.<sup>57</sup> Hunger and malnutrition thus shook Musa Dagh to its core. Headlines such as “Svedia is Dying,”<sup>58</sup> “Invitation to Mourning,”<sup>59</sup> and “The Ruins of White Death”<sup>60</sup> covered the pages of the Armenian press. They elicited both criticism directed against the Musa Daghians, themselves, for disregarding advice not to return home hastily and sympathy and calls to action “For the Lions of Svedia.”<sup>61</sup>

Migration constituted one escape from misery. A number, mostly men, returned to Egypt. Other youths, women, and children traveled to the United

<sup>53</sup> *Friend of Armenia* (London), no. 79 (January 1921): 5-6; *Arev*, 12 January 1920.

<sup>54</sup> *Yeridasart Hayasdan* (Young Armenia) (Providence), 3 July 1920.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 July 1920; *Husaper*, 6 July 1920.

<sup>56</sup> *Friend of Armenia*, no. 77 (July 1920): 5; *Giligia*, 14 July 1921.

<sup>57</sup> ARF, File 962/25, George Nerses Kazanjian and Karnig Der Kalusdian to Cilicia ARF Central Committee, 2 April 1920; *idem*, File 963/26, Musa Dagh (Svedia) ARF Committee to Comrade Apraham Seklemian in Fresno, California, 25 April 1920; AGBU/SB, File E, *Mersini Masnajiugh 1909-1920* ([AGBU] Mersin Chapter 1909-1920), Mersin AGBU Chair (illegible) and secretary Hovhannes Postukian to Vahan Malezian, 8 May 1920.

<sup>58</sup> *Arev*, 12 January 1920. For reactions to this article, see *idem*, 26 January 1920, and *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 5 June 1920.

<sup>59</sup> *Husaper*, 5 December 1919.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 June 1920.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 June 1920.

States to join their kin already established there.<sup>62</sup> To give a specific example of dispersal, the ARF Yoghunoluk chapter reported in 1921 that twenty-two of its forty-three members (51 percent) had gone away.<sup>63</sup> The majority of migrants went to Alexandretta and elsewhere in Cilicia. “Diverse personalities” returning from Dortyol to Adana kept Colonel Edouard Brémond, the French Administrator-in-Chief of Cilicia, abreast of “an emigration movement” from Musa Dagh to Dortyol and environs. Initially comprising only a few families, this movement was “susceptible” to contributing to a “complete exodus.” If realized, the Musa Daghians’ “intention of abandoning their homeland” would contribute, “at first glance,” to “resolve a part, however minimal, of the grand ethnic problem of the Orient.” But Brémond cautioned that “that realization cannot be left uniquely to the initiative of the interested populations, without being overseen and guided by the [French] administrative authorities.” In order for this “administrative action” to be “implemented efficaciously,” two investigations had to be made. The first should be conducted on the spot, in Musa Dagh, to verify whether the people “really...desire quitting their homeland, where they want to emigrate, if they are unanimous in their decision or if only a certain number among them are in favor” of leaving. The second inquiry should take place “in the region where the Musa Daghians want to settle, [to see] if the principle of their establishment is really accepted.” If that possibility existed, the problems of lodging and means of subsistence should be explored.<sup>64</sup> But whatever the outcome, displacement expenses should be borne by the Musa Daghians themselves. Brémond underscored this condition: they “do not have the right to free food,” and even “if individual exceptions to this principle may be accepted, they will not be made except with great reservation and after inquiry.”<sup>65</sup> All these concerns, however, proved premature, because a mass exodus from Musa Dagh never materialized.

### *Health Concerns*

On top of famine epidemic diseases such as typhoid and malaria afflicted

<sup>62</sup> *Husaper*, 20 May 1920; *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 5 June 1920; *Giligia*, 5 February 1921, 11 August 1921.

<sup>63</sup> ARF, File 965/28, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), ARF Yoghunoluk subcommittee Chairman S. Habeshian and Secretary H. Bursalian, untitled membership roster.

<sup>64</sup> France, AMAE, Beyrouth: Cilicie 1919-1921, Carton 270, Mandat Syrie-Liban, 1er versement, Cilicie-Djebel Bereket, Colonel Brémond to General High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria-Cilicia and Commander in Chief of the Army of the Levant, 26 December 1919.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Colonel Brémond to the Governor of Djebel Bereket Sanjak, 20 January 1920.

virtually every household. Scores of people died daily.<sup>66</sup> The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU/*Haygagan Parekordzagan Enthanur Miutiun*) in Cairo addressed this emergency situation as early as November 1919 by instructing its Aleppo affiliate to dispatch to Musa Dagh a medical team composed of a doctor, a pharmacist, and a nurse together with medicines.<sup>67</sup> But, as shall be seen below, that mission did not take place. The AGBU Educational and Orphan Care Committee in Cairo also invited AGBU “Benefactor Member” Yesayi Garigian to its 2 January 1920 meeting to give a report on the situation in Musa Dagh. Garigian, who must have been well informed through contacts with his native Kabusiye, presented a disturbing picture of health conditions in the area, and urged that medicines and doctors be sent expeditiously.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, M. Salpi (Dr. Aram Sahagian), a prominent Armenian in Egypt and a compiler of a book on the Port Said refugee camp,<sup>69</sup> who characterized his community as the “platonic eyewitnesses” to the Musa Daghians’ collective “coma,” suggested that the AGBU organize a mobile medical team in Aleppo or Cilicia that would tour and establish a twenty-bed dispensary in Musa Dagh.<sup>70</sup> But on 12 February 1920 the Cairo AGBU regretted to its Aleppo affiliate “that it had not been possible to organize a special medical mission and send it to the Musa Dagh district,” adding: “We thought that the Armenian doctors would demonstrate a spirit of self-dedication, to positively respond to our invitation. It appears, however, that the necessary security is lacking, which doubly worries us.” Even so, “it is consoling that... [Near East Relief director in Aleppo Dr. Robert. A.] Lambert has agreed to do that [medical] work, but it would have been much more appropriate for our Union to accomplish that mission.”<sup>71</sup> There is no indication that Dr. Lambert rendered that service.

Gravely concerned with the prospect of the people’s total extinction, the Musa Dagh ANU Central Body pleaded for urgent help from the Armenian Medical Mission to Cilicia, a team sponsored by the Armenian National

<sup>66</sup> ARF, File 960/23, Serop Sherbetjian to Egypt ARF Committee, 5 November 1919; AGBU/SB, File 6 C, *Getr.[onagan] Varch.[agan] Zhoghov (Kahire). Tghtagtsutiunner, 1919* (Central Administrative Council [Cairo]: Correspondence, 1919), Madteos Eblighatian to Cairo AGBU, 17 November 1919; *Yergir*, 5 October 1919; *Husaper*, 1 March 1920; *Asbarez* (Arena) (Fresno), 19 August 1921.

<sup>67</sup> *Miutiun* (Union) (Cairo), no. 72 (November-December 1919): 84.

<sup>68</sup> AGBU/Cairo, *H.P.E. Miutiun.Adenakrutium P. Domar*, minutes of 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 1 January 1920, p. 165.

<sup>69</sup> See M. Salpi, *Aliagner yev Khliagner*.

<sup>70</sup> *Husaper*, 6 January 1920.

<sup>71</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 10, Cairo AGBU to Aleppo AGBU, 12 February 1920.

Delegation in Paris, but to no avail. The Central Body then summoned Dr. Avedis Injejikian from Kesab. He visited the Musa Dagh villages around the clock on foot or by animal, examined the sick free of charge, and succeeded in checking the contagious maladies to a large extent.<sup>72</sup> At long last in early summer 1920, the Medical Mission in Cilicia hired Dr. Injejikian—for a monthly salary of 68 Ottoman paper liras and with supplies of medicines from Adana—as its resident physician in Musa Dagh on a six-month contract that would expire in early January 1921.<sup>73</sup> For a few months thereafter Dr. Injejikian continued to work in his private capacity, often charging a nominal fee, before returning to Kesab.<sup>74</sup>

The SDHP and its allies criticized Dr. Injejikian for his alleged partisan conduct. He was an ARF propagandist more than a public servant, they claimed, and as such he favored patients who were members of his own political party. At the same time, they further argued, he either ignored non-ARF patients, demanded a horse instead of other sorts of pack animals for house calls, or charged quadruple for his services.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, in order to get rid of this man who “draws blood from peoples’ nose,” and to uplift the morale of SDHP comrades, it was imperative to replace him with another doctor.<sup>76</sup> George Kazanjian, the ANU Central Body Vice-Chairman at the time, vehemently denied such accusations, and lauded Dr. Injejikian as a patriot who had taken care of all those ailing without discrimination whatsoever.<sup>77</sup>

Musa Dagh remained without a resident physician until spring 1922. On 30 May, the SDHP empowered two comrades to negotiate with Dr. Mihran A. Varbedian from Alexandretta on the following terms: he would visit the Musa Dagh villages thrice weekly, receive a monthly salary of 3-4 liras, and be given

<sup>72</sup> ARF, File 960/23, Serop Sherbetjian to Egypt ARF Committee, 5 November 1919; *Husaper*, 1 March 1920; *Armenia*, 3 March 1920.

<sup>73</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 D, Dr. A. Chavushian of Mission Sanitaire Arménienne, Cilicie, to Cairo AGBU Central Committee Chair, 25 November 1920; *Giligia*, 4 February 1921; *Asbarez*, 19 August 1921.

<sup>74</sup> *Asbarez*, 9 August 1921.

<sup>75</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, letter from Musa Dagh SDHP to Cilicia SDHP Executive Committee copied after the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 5 October 1920, Haji Habibli, minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> Session, 18 April 1921, Haji Habibli, minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> Session (or Meeting), 22 October 1921, Haji Habibli, addendum entitled “Report of Developments in Svedia District”; *Nor Serunt*, 3 February 1921, 11 February 1921.

<sup>76</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> Session, 18 April 1921, Haji Habibli.

<sup>77</sup> *Giligia*, 4 February 1921, 17 February 1921; *Hay Tzayn* (Armenian Voice) (Adana), 18 February 1921.

20 liras for medicines and keep the profits.<sup>78</sup> After assuming his new position, Varbedian, otherwise known as *Dr. Ajayib* (wondrous), failed to satisfy whatever expectations the SDHP might have had of him. Therefore, on 20 August the party decided to deduct a total of 5 liras from his salary “for being delinquent in his general work...”<sup>79</sup> By mid-November he was relieved of his contractual duties, but was allowed to work independently.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Varbedian, who had concurrently been acting as the municipal physician in Svedia, relocated there before the end of 1922 and continued to perform that role for another decade or so.<sup>81</sup>

Dr. Varbedian’s obligations to serve the Musa Dagh community were not limited to his agreement with the SDHP. Before departing Alexandretta in June 1922, the local AGBU chapter had given him about 12 Ottoman gold liras with which to purchase medicines “to be used for the needs of our [AGBU Sisvan schools] students” in Musa Dagh. But Principal Krikor Aroyan and Mikael Natanian, AGBU Field Inspector-General in Cilicia, accused him of not examining even a single student and instead gaining “status and money” for himself among the Alawites in Svedia “with our medicines.” Such deceitful behavior “should not be encouraged.”<sup>82</sup>

Dr. Varbedian offered his version of what transpired. In a letter dated 1 January 1923 to the AGBU Alexandretta chapter president, he indicated that, immediately after arriving in Musa Dagh, he had examined all the students and accordingly administered the medications as needed. It is true that a discussion had taken place while he was still in Alexandretta about rendering those services free of charge. However, after arriving in Musa Dagh he had “found the local conditions altogether changed”; the long distances between the villages had subjected him “to a lot of sacrifices in terms of money and time.” Therefore, he had requested from Aroyan a “minimal” monthly salary of 8–10 Ottoman liras to check the students’ health on a regular basis instead of charging the children themselves per individual visit. In fact, he had only charged half his regular

<sup>78</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 30 May 1922, Yoghunoluk; *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 5 March 1922.

<sup>79</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 20 August 1922, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the Svedia SDHP Second Delegates’ Meeting, 29 October 1922, Yoghunoluk; idem, minutes of 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 14 November 1922, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>81</sup> Tateos Babigian, “Husher. Tebker u Temker” (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, p. 168; *Husaper*, 30 May 1932.

<sup>82</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 D, *Enthanur Knnich M. Natanian. Tghtagtsutiunner Tegd.[emper] 1921-Hulis 1922* (Inspector General M. Natanian: Correspondence December 1921-July 1922), Mikael Natanian to Vahan Malezian, 13 July 1922.

fee per student from well-to-do families. At any rate, his general checkups had yielded the following results. Although the students’ overall health condition was satisfactory, a substantial number suffered from trachoma, which he had taken care of. Similarly, a small number of boys had leprosy; it too was tackled satisfactorily. Seasonal illnesses could be handled as needed, and chickenpox could be treated if vaccine were to be made available. Dr. Varbedian expressed readiness to continue his services to the school population if the AGBU would support him.<sup>83</sup> There is no indication that the latter obliged. Notwithstanding, Principal Aroyan still believed that “it would be extremely beneficial to have a dispensary” and a resident doctor in Musa Dagh, where the need was great in the Sisvan schools especially.<sup>84</sup> Aroyan’s wish remained unrealized.

### *Discharged Legionnaires and Orphans*

Two particular groups drew special attention by virtue of being forsaken by Armenian agencies involved in the rehabilitation of genocide survivors in the Middle East: discharged Légion Arménienne volunteers, and orphans. In a letter dated 12 May 1920 to Hmayag Ughurlian, the AGBU Representative in Cilicia, Antioch-Musa Dagh religious and civil leaders complained that 200-plus former Musa Dagh legionnaires had been sent home from Cilicia without any financial assistance. This neglect was deemed unfair given the fact that fellow combatants dispersed elsewhere had received compensation, as follows (per person): in Egypt, 12-24 Egyptian pounds from the local ANU; in Marseille, 600 French francs; in Adana and Aleppo, daily wages and subsequently jobs. The unjust treatment of the Musa Dagh contingent was even more puzzling because it constituted the Legion’s original core and had made “most sacrifices.” An extension of the same privileges to them would therefore be in order, if not “providential,” especially when their parents and families lived in abject misery.<sup>85</sup> This letter, sent with a traveler, and perhaps due to his forgetfulness, reached Ughurlian much delayed, in late 1920 or early 1921. Regardless, Ughurlian jotted on 3 January: “They deserve the same compensation [as made to other demobilized legionnaires].”<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 242, *Hokadar Marmin (Nubarian Varzharan), Aleksandret Hunvar 1923-Hunis 1931* (Board of Trustees [Nubarian School], Alexandretta, January 1923-June 1931), Dr. Mihran A. Varbedian to the President of the AGBU Local Branch in Alexandretta, 1 January 1923.

<sup>84</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, *H.P.E. Miutian Sisvan Varzharanner (Svedia). Tghtagtsutiunner 1923-1927* (AGBU Sisvan Schools [Svedia]: Correspondence 1923-1927), Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Executive Council Chairman, 18 May 1923.

<sup>85</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 D, V. Rev. Movses Vosgerichian, Rev. Dikran Antreasian, and Serop Sherbetjian to Hmayag Ughurlian, 12 May 1920.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Ughurlian’s note of 3 January 1921 at the bottom of the above letter.

Despite this recommendation, and the fact that by the first quarter of 1921 the number of Legion veterans in Musa Dagh had surpassed 400,<sup>87</sup> it is uncertain if the latter received any payments.

The second group was orphans. The Musa Dagh ANU Central Body on 16 November 1920 congratulated Hmayag Kranian for the establishment of a new AGBU orphanage in Dortyol under his directorship. An educator, Kranyan was familiar with the Musa Daghians from Port Said. They now asked him to admit some 200 orphans from Musa Dagh, ones “who are absolutely relinquished to misery and oblivion.”<sup>88</sup> (Two years later Principal Aroyan reported that 56-60 percent of children in Kabusiye and Haji Habibli—villages from which many families had been deported during the war—were “parentless” and “without custodian”<sup>89</sup> and that Haji Habibli alone had “64 mixed orphans.”<sup>90</sup> In October 1923, he indicated that 72 percent of students at the AGBU schools in those two villages were orphans.)<sup>91</sup> If sheltering those children in Dortyol were impossible, the second alternative would be to open a distinct orphanage in Musa Dagh under the aegis of the AGBU. Suitable buildings were available for that purpose.<sup>92</sup> The AGBU wanted detailed information before committing itself: name, surname, father’s name, birthplace, age, denomination, whether the parents were martyred and where, the child’s last place of exile, education. Furthermore, who had been taking care of the children to date? Where were they sheltered? Who rendered assistance? “It would also be useful to present to us a practical plan and a draft budget, the available suitable buildings, what expenses are anticipated, to what degree can the locals participate?”<sup>93</sup>

Whether or not such a comprehensive report was furnished, no orphanage was opened in Musa Dagh. Notwithstanding, the issue of sheltering parentless children persisted for another two years. Actually, during that period, or perhaps even earlier, some 25-30 orphans of both genders hailing from Musa Dagh and Kesab, plus an undetermined number of compatriots who were being apprenticed in certain trades, were either already found in or taken to the AGBU orphanages

<sup>87</sup> *Arara* (Mount Arara in Palestine) (Adana), no. 4 (48) (15 March 1921): 63-4.

<sup>88</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 E, Rev. Dikran Antreasian and Serop Sherbetjian to Hmayag Kranian, 16 November 1920.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, File 14 D, Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Central Committee Chair and Members, 26 November 1922.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, File 14 D, 26 January 1923.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 October 1923.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, File 6 E, Rev. Antreasian and Sherbetjian to Kranian, 16 November 1920.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, (name illegible) from Cairo to Musa Dagh ANU Chair Rev. Dikran Antreasian in Yoghunoluk, 15 December 1920.

in Dortyol and Beirut. Principal Aroyan, “after long consultations,” came to the conclusion that those waifs, with the exception of the apprentices, “should not be a burden on the AGBU” because, being native to their “nests,” they “are endowed with numerous advantages” over their uprooted, less fortunate peers dragging a miserable existence in villages and cities. It would be more prudent, therefore, to relocate the Musa Dagh and Kesab orphans to Musa Dagh and create orphanage-like living conditions for them temporarily.<sup>94</sup>

The above decision was based on several considerations. First, the girls would either get engaged quickly or be placed in well-to-do families. Second, such families from Antioch and Musa Dagh could adopt or sponsor male pupils as well. Third, the AGBU would thus be able to save money and consequently “dare” to request a subvention from the French government. Additional funds could be raised through “quiet” solicitations (i.e., without posting announcements in the press) from Musa Dagh expatriates living elsewhere, while donations of cereals, vegetables, and fruits could be collected locally. Fourth, the Musa Daghians would appreciate the AGBU’s good intentions and agree to keep one Sisvan school less (five instead of the existing six), which reduction in turn would result in an additional saving. Fifth, the orphans would perform better academically in their homeland or acquire the necessary skills for the local artisanal and agricultural occupations.<sup>95</sup>

Haji Habibli was deemed the most suitable place for the orphanage, for two reasons: it had an active AGBU chapter that could oversee the institution and an available structure. The latter was a partially-built school building that could be completed by the natives once encouraged by the prospect of having an orphanage in their midst. They had already expressed readiness to donate that facility to the AGBU, but their main occupation of sericulture being negatively impacted by the closure of the Syria-Cilicia frontier and hence their export route, they needed outside financial support to finish construction. Should the AGBU defray the cost, the orphanage could accommodate as many as 100 native children as well as other waifs from Cilicia. With this positive development, “the other villages [of Musa Dagh] would adhere more to the AGBU.”<sup>96</sup>

“Because the Haji Habibli community was generally worthy of our protection,” the AGBU headquarters in Egypt agreed to spend 15-20 pounds for the orphans

<sup>94</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Executive Council Chair and Members, 9 May 1923.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

native to that village.<sup>97</sup> Cairo also permitted the sale for a small price of sixty pairs of low-quality shoes shipped from their Beirut orphanage to the poor, parentless students in Haji Habibli.<sup>98</sup> In the end, the AGBU remained unconvinced of the necessity for an orphanage in Musa Dagh given the uncertainty regarding the future of their Sisvan schools there and the myriad needs of the large Armenian refugee population in the Middle East.<sup>99</sup> Interestingly, on request from the Armenian authorities in the region, some Musa Dagh families with means adopted genocide survivors from Near East Relief orphanages as well as other Armenian orphanages in Aleppo and Lebanon.<sup>100</sup>

### *Armenian Relief*

Armenian organizations, particularly the AGBU and the ANU, contributed to the rehabilitation efforts in postwar Musa Dagh. As early as 26 August 1919 Kerovpe M. Aslanian, the ANU Chairman and AGBU Representative in Antioch, reported to the Aleppo AGBU that students from the Port Said refugee camp school were arriving in Musa Dagh barefooted and without head covers, i.e., in rags, but that his organizations to date had ensured that none “walked without some sort of foot cover.” He also acknowledged the receipt of ten bundles of fine yarn and 600 needles for sock knitting machines from the Aleppo AGBU, at the same time asking the latter to instruct its affiliate in Alexandretta to release his district’s share of clothing that had been received (probably from the Aleppo AGBU) in that coastal town. Furthermore, he indicated that he would provide Aleppo with the requested list of those Musa Daghians who were “actual farmers and tillers” (presumably to secure job-related assistance for them). In addition, he gave assurances that the 19 Egyptian pounds, apparently allocated by Aleppo for the Antioch district as reserve capital, would not be spent. Lastly, he thanked Aleppo for dispatching Mikael Natanian to assess the situation and ongoing relief activities on the spot. Aslanian concluded his letter as follows: “We beseech you

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., copy of letter from Cairo AGBU (no name mentioned) to Aroyan, 22 February 1923.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Executive Council Chair and Members, 7 October 1923, 4 December 1923; Cairo AGBU (no name mentioned) to Aroyan, 26 October 1923, 24 December 1923.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Malezian and (name illegible) to Aroyan, 22 January 1923, 26 May 1923.

<sup>100</sup> Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On a Life’s Traces), (Palm Springs, California: Haig’s Printing, 1990), p. 67; Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: “Orenk yev Iraganutian” Printing, 2005), pp. 329-30; Krikor Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutyune* (The Ethnography of Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: Republic of Armenia National Academy of Sciences “Kidutyun” Publication, 2001), p. 143; Madurian, “Hayreni Gdurin Dag”, p. 462; *Husaper*, 23 April 1925. My own grandfather, Kapriel/Jabra Shemmassian of Yoghunoluk, also adopted a boy by the name of Vartan, who, died at a young age.

again not to forget Musa Dagh, that Musa Dagh whose [1915 resistance] episode former [French Prime Minister and] Minister of War Monsieur [Paul] Painlevé has alluded to in his speech [date?] in Paris.”<sup>101</sup>

The Musa Daghians, themselves, showered Armenian agencies in the Middle East and as far as the United States with requests for emergency relief. Madteos Eblighatian, Chairman of the Armenian Caretaking Agency in Constantinople, notified the AGBU in Cairo of an appeal that he had received from the Antioch-Musa Dagh ANU in which hunger, contagious diseases, and death were described in dismal colors.<sup>102</sup> Cairo responded that, as in Port Said, the Musa Daghians “will be under our protective care in their homeland,” adding: “However, the need is boundless and heart-rending supplications are made from everywhere, so that we are totally bewildered, especially given the fact that because of the fatherland tax (*hayreniki durk*) and other general national fundraisings, our Union is compelled to place its hopes only on membership dues and voluntary donations.”<sup>103</sup>

The Aleppo ANU, in turn, upon receiving a letter of gratitude from the Musa Dagh ANU for assistance obtained by the end of January 1920, resolved to send an additional 100 Egyptian pounds after consulting with the local AGBU.<sup>104</sup> The Aleppo ANU similarly wrote to its affiliate in Beirut to hasten aid to the Antioch district: “We trust that you have made the necessary arrangements in this regard.”<sup>105</sup> Similarly, Hovhannes Postukian, Secretary of the AGBU in Mersin, reported to his headquarters in Cairo: “Assistance [for Musa Dagh and Kesab] comes from outside, but what is the use because no matter what their amount, still they cannot fill the void. They are surrounded by *chetes* [brigands] from all sides. If security is not reestablished, the condition of the people is likely to get worse every day. We do not have hope from anyone. God save us.”<sup>106</sup> Postukian and his Chairman, Krikor Zelveian, likewise informed Cairo that Kesab and Musa Dagh natives purchased 300 sacks of flour in Mersin with their own money,

<sup>101</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 8, *HPEM Kahire, Masnajiugh Haleb (910 Abril-Tegd.[emper] 1919)* (AGBU Cairo, Aleppo Chapter [1910 April-December 1919]) Kerovpe M. Aslanian to Aleppo AGBU, 26 August 1919.

<sup>102</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 C, Madteos Eblighatian to Cairo AGBU, 17 November 1919.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., Vahan Malezian and (name illegible) to Eblighatian, 15 December 1919.

<sup>104</sup> APA, VI, File 34, *Hay Azkayin Khorhurt. Artzanakrutuinner Nisderu 1919-1921* (Armenian National Council: Records of Sessions 1919-1921), minutes of 31 January 1920 Session.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., VI, File 24, *Hay Azk.[ayin] Khorhurt. Namagneru Kopi 1919-1920* (Armenian National Council: Copy of Letters 1919-1920), Secretary A. Fettelian and Vice-Chair Fr. K. Kasbarian to Beirut ANU, 1 May 1920.

<sup>106</sup> AGBU/SB, File E, Hovhannes Postukian to Malezian, 20 April 1920.

while the Mersin ANU sent them 100 sacks and 50 sacks, respectively. At the same time, the Alexandretta AGBU decided to send 40 to 50 sacks to those localities.<sup>107</sup>

Actually, the Alexandretta AGBU donated larger amounts of barley (or barley flour), as follows: 129 sacks to Musa Dagh and 71 sacks to Kesab, for a total of 200 sacks amounting to 14,143 okes (about 5 non-metric tons) worth 181,138 Ottoman piasters. In addition, Very Rev. Vosgerichian concluded his special mission to Cilicia by taking back with him 51 sacks of barley to Musa Dagh and 29 sacks to Kesab, totaling 80 sacks. He was able to obtain 67 of those sacks from Adana with relief money placed at his disposal, and the remaining 13 sacks as donation from the (American) Red Cross. Concurrently, the Aleppo AGBU sent 200 gold liras to Kerovpe Aslanian in Antioch, each person in Musa Dagh receiving 250 trams (piasters?) worth of flour.<sup>108</sup>

The AGBU headquarters in Egypt likewise extended a 1,500 Egyptian pounds credit, two-third of which to be dispensed for needs in Dortyol and one-third in Musa Dagh.<sup>109</sup> Given the various amounts of cereal/flour reaching Musa Dagh from different corners, Natanian questioned whether Musa Dagh's share should still be spent to purchase food rations at the onset of summer 1920 (when fruits and vegetables could satisfy the people's needs), or would it not "be better to purchase some oxen, mules and silk tools..." for them?<sup>110</sup> Referring specifically to Musa Dagh and Kesab, his superiors responded: "We think that these two places, as you know, for a long time were bereft of any outside assistance because of the absence of communications, [and consequently] have the right to our Union's broader care. Therefore, please study what the best possible way is to assist Svedia and report to us." Of course, "before sending new relief it is necessary to present the accounts of relief sent previously."<sup>111</sup>

Although Cairo urged Natanian to visit Musa Dagh expeditiously to conduct an inquiry in person, he was unable to travel given the stormy seas and the dangerous situation on the ground in the region. Even so, he continued making

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Mersin AGBU Chair (name illegible) and Postukian to Malezian, 8 May 1920.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., File 13 B, *Enthanur Knmich M. Natanian. Tghtagtsutiunner, 1919-1920* (Inspector General M. Natanian: Correspondence, 1919-1920), Natanian to Malezian, 20 June 1920. See also the addendum to this letter, titled "The Accounts of Relief to Svedia and Kesab" (gleaned from letter of 22 May 1920 written by the AGBU Mersin chapter).

<sup>109</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 B, Natanian to Malezian, 9 June 1920, 20 June 1920; idem, File E, Malezian and treasurer? (name illegible) to Mersin AGBU Chair Krikor Zelveian, 26 May 1920, 5 June 1920.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., File 13 B, Natanian to Malezian, 20 June 1920.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., AGBU Vice-Secretary Nazaret Kechejian and (name illegible) from Cairo to Natanian, 20 July 1920.

investigations from Beirut and Alexandretta. One of his reports revealed that the Alawites in Svedia district had been providing Musa Dagh with groceries as remuneration for their military support against their common Turkish foes.<sup>112</sup> Natanian also continued to insist that acquiring animals for land cultivation and tools and looms for sericulture with AGBU money would be a more beneficial, fundamental or permanent solution to Musa Dagh's crippling economic crisis. But even when the Musa Daghians assured him that "our people have purchased all of those" (the suggested oxen and tools) and instead implored him for food to survive, Natanian remained adamant: "This judgment is wrong."<sup>113</sup>

The pressing need for food to fend off famine compelled the Musa Dagh ANU Central Body to ask for a loan from Cairo. The letter, dated 7 October 1920, read: "Now the [political-military] sword [in the region] has partly lost its influence, but the famine has opened its claws wide threatening the existence of us all. In order to save the people from the impending famine till summer [1921], we request from the AGBU a loan of a few thousand [Egyptian] pounds, which will be guaranteed by our district's notable businessmen and the wealthy, and with which we shall store cereals and sell to the people during the most difficult days at cost price without adding a penny."<sup>114</sup> Cairo declined: "We regret that we cannot satisfy your...request, due to the depletion of even our available relief funds, and because not only is such a transaction incompatible with our means, but also our orientation."<sup>115</sup>

Natanian's dealings with Musa Dagh, it seems, frustrated him. He wrote to his headquarters in Cairo:

The AGBU representative in Antioch [Kerovpe Aslanian], unimportant, not liked very much, and a toy in the hands of certain colorful [i.e. ARF] youths, and in order to maintain his position, obliged to lean on them, was never able to work in the desirable direction. His only and main role was to simply be the echo of and the signatory to the instructions and writings of some individuals directing him, [people] who had barely arrived [in Musa Dagh,] had no other trumpet to blow than "the A.H. [Ararad Republic, i.e., Republic of Armenia led by the ARF] local circle is dying of hunger, that the nation is

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Natanian to Kechejian, Vice-Secretary of Cairo AGBU Central Committee, 2 September 1920.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Natanian to Malezian, 2 October 1920.

<sup>114</sup> AGBU/SB, File 6 E, Chairman Rev. Dikran Antreasian and Secretary Serop Sherbetjian of the Musa Dagh ANU Central Body to Malezian, 7 October 1920.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., Malezian and (name illegible) to Musa Dagh ANU Chair in Yoghunoluk, 3 December 1920.

ready to support and feed those cubs.

Of course without denying the misery of the locals too, which is common also in all places, it can be firmly said that the material need of that district is no more than that in other places—from where less noise comes—and neither is it as pressing as claimed. The danger in those [Musa Dagh] environs, relatively speaking, has been less, and the people have been more able to go and benefit from the local harvests and conditions. And especially the proximity of Iskenderun and the facility of work and labor, have always been more favorable.

The evidence that the external danger for them has been less threatening is that, in the absence, always, of real enemies, they have used their fighting energy against each other...<sup>116</sup>

What must have upset Natanian most was the lack of accountability and/or mismanagement of funds on the part of Aslanian and Very Rev. Vosgerichian. For example, it is true that Aslanian furnished a report respecting the disbursement on 1 May 1920 of the above-mentioned 200 Ottoman gold liras (40,362.50 Egyptian piasters) donated by the Aleppo AGBU, as follows: 3,560 piasters among 445 persons in Vakef; 7,300 piasters among 920 persons in Kheder Beg; 8,560 piasters among 1,070 persons in Yoghunoluk; 3,680 piasters among 460 persons in Kabusiye; 5,760 piasters among 720 persons in Bitias; 7,164 piasters among 898 persons in Haji Habibli; for a total of 36,084 piasters given to 4,513 individuals, with a balance of 4,278.5 piasters remaining. Nevertheless, Natanian found several irregularities. To begin with, there was not a detailed list indicating the name of each individual receiving aid. No consideration was given to the economic status of the recipients; both poor and rich received equal amounts. Kabusiye's share included money for people who were absent from the village, which was then reclaimed. Why was money put aside for absentees in the first place? Why was it taken back if the intended recipients were going to return? A wounded soldier by the name of Boghos Panosian had succeeded in "snatching" 1,631 piasters for medical treatment, and Serop Sherbetjian had obtained 1,000 piasters for his travel expenses to Cilicia. Besides sundries, there was still a balance of 578.50 piasters whose fate remained unknown given Aslanian's unannounced return to his native Constantinople.<sup>117</sup>

As for the Very Rev. Vosgerichian, he failed to provide a detailed account of the flour sacks earmarked for Kesab and Musa Dagh; only the Musa Dagh ANU

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., File 13 C, Natanian to Malezian, 16 November 1920.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

Central Body issued a voucher that they had received them.<sup>118</sup> The AGBU chapters were also faulted for not keeping good books or demanding full accounts for their donations.<sup>119</sup> Cairo responded to Natanian's overall complaints: "We completely agree with you that the exploitations must stop, and the best way of doing that is to push for accountability and for the time being stop the relief credits for prevaricating regions."<sup>120</sup> In the final analysis, inefficiency on the part of men of position in the Antioch-Musa Dagh district was not necessarily entirely a matter of abuse of material and trust; rather, it reflected a degree of carelessness and/or lack of understanding regarding the importance of responsibility and transparency—issues that did not seem terribly critical at a time when life and death hung in the balance.

### *Foreign Aid*

The French mandatory government and American and British humanitarian organizations also extended a helping hand. With the arrival of the first batch of survivors from Hama in late January and early February 1919, the French Commandant of Antioch distributed 12.5 kilograms of cereal per returnee from confiscated Ottoman storages. That distribution, however, lasted only a month, until March. When the recipients implored the Commandant to resume the rations, he turned them down arguing that many people also suffered in France, that his country could no longer afford spending money on the Armenians, and that the latter had to earn their livelihood by cutting stones for the construction of the Alexandretta road. The Armenians then urged the Aleppo ANU to speak "to whom it may concern" to exert pressure on the Antioch Commandant—who was perceived as extremely hateful towards Armenians—to reconsider his decision. After all, the requested relief, consisting of wheat and "stinking and rotten barley," would have to be dumped into the Orontes River shortly and thus wasted.<sup>121</sup> There is no evidence that the French obliged immediately. However, sometime in August or September 1920, that is, a year-and-a-half later, when Fr. Der Kalusdian

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., File 13 B, Natanian to Cairo AGBU Central Committee Vice-Secretary Hayg Inayetian, 15 August 1920; idem, File 13 C, attachment signed by Antioch-Musa Dagh ANU Chairman Mardiros Misakian and Secretary Movses Mardiros Chaparian, 31 May 1920, in Natanian to Malezian, 30 December 1920.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., File 13 C, Malezian and (name illegible) to Natanian, 7 December 1920.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> APA, VI, File 1, Fr. Madteos Giuzelyan representing Kabusiye, Garabed Zhamgochian representing Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, and Vakef, Mgrdich Isgenderian representing Haji Habibli, Movses K. Chaparian representing Bitias, and Hagop Kiuchiukian representing Antioch to Aleppo ANU Chair, 13 March 1919. Kerope Aslan(ian) vouched for the truthfulness of the letter's contents.

traveled to Beirut to solicit relief, they agreed to send a certain amount of wheat/flour to Musa Dagh. Conflicting information exists regarding the quantity and even type of assistance given: the French reported sending 20 tons of flour;<sup>122</sup> the Musa Dagh ANU Central Body indicated 28 tons of cereal, each individual receiving 4 kilograms (which would put the Musa Dagh population at 7,000 persons, certainly an incorrect figure); Fr. Der Kalusdian spoke of 112 *kantars* or 5,600 *okes* (about 2,000 pounds) of wheat, each native getting 1 oke (which would put the population at 5,600, also incorrect).<sup>123</sup> Whatever the amount and/or type of aid, the French similarly expressed readiness to do more once a report on needs in Musa Dagh was furnished to them.<sup>124</sup> It remains unclear whether additional assistance came.

The Antioch ANU on 5 April 1920 explained to its counterpart in Aleppo that pecuniary assistance was meaningless given the unavailability of essential goods for purchase. In this situation sending foodstuffs was preferred, but the closure of land routes due to regional instability rendered that option impractical as well. The solution, therefore, rested in seeking French and/or American Near East Relief (NER) help, both of which had contacts with the coastal city of Latakia,<sup>125</sup> meaning the goods could be shipped to Musa Dagh via the sea. And indeed, by fall 1920 the NER reportedly sent 30 tons of food from Beirut.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, by early January 1921 the Cairo AGBU had reached an agreement with Bayard Dodge of the NER in Beirut to distribute \$15,000 among the destitute in Musa Dagh and Kesab “to satisfy the necessary needs for winter plus to afford means for work and livelihood.” This information prompted Aleppo AGBU Vice-Chairman Rupen Ejzajian to consult with the local NER representative for “explanations and clarifications.” The latter responded that, although they had heard about the above arrangement, they had neither received the money nor official instructions, but promised to look into the matter.<sup>127</sup> In any case, the Aleppo AGBU considered such funds of no practical value because of the near impossibility of establishing contact with Musa Dagh and Kesab.<sup>128</sup> Notwithstanding, news concerning the above agreement between the AGBU in Cairo and the NER in Beirut must have reached Musa Dagh, for Rev. Antreasian traveled to the Lebanese capital to claim

<sup>122</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 B, Natanian to Inayetian, 27 August 1920.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., File 13 C, Natanian to Malezian, 16 November 1920.

<sup>124</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 B, Natanian to Inayetian, 27 August 1920.

<sup>125</sup> APA, VI, File 23, Aleppo ANU to Cairo ANU Chair, 24 April 1920.

<sup>126</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 B, Natanian to Malezian, 2 October 1920.

<sup>127</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 10, M. Kokorian and A. Mazlumian to Cairo AGBU Central Executive Chair, 10 January 1921.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

the reported allocation for his people. Sure enough, he succeeded in obtaining \$7,000 from the NER; part of it was spent on potatoes, and the rest was distributed among the Musa Daghians outright since the sowing season had passed.<sup>129</sup>

Rev. Antreasian had earlier approached the British Friends of Armenia Society as well, by writing to its Secretary on 27 April 1920:

The condition of this poor people at present is barely lamentable. This is the result of many circumstances working together. One kilo of wheat costs here now nine or ten piasters. Many people, women as well as men, are being obliged to transport the cereal which they have to buy at Antioch on their backs to their villages four to six hours' walk away, thus to spare at least the money that they should spend for transportation. They have patiently suffered living in rags, in houses without window-shutters, and without doors, but now hunger has taken them to the verge of the grave. They have been unable to sow, because many of them arrived here too late, and others had no means to get the necessary oxen and implements. The Japonica fruits, which would be quite a revenue to many in this season, were totally destroyed under heavy snows in winter. Comb-making and spoon-making, the two main trades in those villages, have failed to give the expected support, because political circumstances hinder the merchants in Antioch to send them to their proper markets...

The result is cries of hunger and boundless misery. Poor people! Only one way have they found to mitigate their misery, eating herbs and sprouts of vines and some other trees. Like locusts they have stripped some vines of all their leaves... If some helping hand is not stretched to us, it will not be long before starvation arrives here to end many lives.<sup>130</sup>

The Friends of Armenia, which was intimately familiar with and assisted the Musa Daghians at the Port Said camp, responded positively, by sending £200. It was distributed among the neediest, each receiving a maximum of 6 silver piasters. Persistent hardship compelled Rev. Antreasian to ask for more. He wrote on 10 November 1920:

I am sorry that the present state of the people is no better than what it was when I wrote you first. The present state is tragic enough, and the approaching winter is more dreadful. It is the season of sowing here at present, but the pity is that few people are being able to sow, because the people in general had no

<sup>129</sup> *Giligia*, 5 February 1921; *Hayrenik*, 13 April 1921.

<sup>130</sup> *Friend of Armenia*, no. 77 (July 1920): 5-6.

money to buy the necessary seeds. And there are some who cannot afford to give time to till the ground and sow, even if they could get the seed, because they must do something to get their daily bread. A number of oxen have been secured in each village now, although they need many more. It would be a help on the line of helping the people to help themselves, if some money could be used to help them sow their fields. This can be done more easily for millet which is sown in the spring, because a small quantity of millet is enough for seed for a large area.<sup>131</sup>

It is unknown if the Friends of Armenia obliged this, second time.

### *Armed Bands*

A number of Musa Dagh youths, especially those discharged from the Légion Arménienne, formed armed groups as a defensive measure during this chaotic period in the region. A contemporary maintains that those groups acted under the ANU,<sup>132</sup> but this information cannot be corroborated. Be that as it may, one of the armed bands, formed by Hayg Kerteshian, otherwise known as Ashkar, comprised men from Kheder Beg, Yoghunoluk, and Vakef.<sup>133</sup> Another band, led by Arakel Blghashian, operated from Bitias, while two others, led separately by Sdepan Dudaklian and Misak Isgenderian acted from Haji Habibli. Information is lacking as to whether Kabusiye had such bands. The Kheder Beg and Bitias bands collaborated.<sup>134</sup> Some of these groups also joined efforts with the Alawites, especially when threatened by their mutual enemy—the Turks.<sup>135</sup> That said, sometimes Armenians and Alawites clashed to settle personal disputes or when their narrow interests collided. Whatever the case, Armenian-Alawite frictions were mutually antagonistic, and each side blamed the other for instigating this antagonism.<sup>136</sup>

The Armenian bands likewise forayed into neighboring Muslim villages and carried off livestock with which to feed their starving communities. Inter-

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 79 (January 1921): 5-6.

<sup>132</sup> Babigian, “Husher. Tebker u Temker”, p. 12.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 146, states that Hayg Kerteshian and Ashkar had separate bands. In reality, Ashkar was Kerteshian's nickname.

<sup>134</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 146. Sherbetjian maintains that Antreas Kelemian from Haji Habibli had his own band. In all likelihood, Kelemian belonged to Misak Isgenderian's band. On the other hand, Babigian, “Husher,” p. 8, states that the Bitias armed men were part of the Haji Habibli band, led by Setrag (not Misak) Isgenderian. Such a relationship could not possibly have existed given the antagonism between the two neighboring villages, as discussed below.

<sup>135</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 146.

<sup>136</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, p. 138.

group rivalries and frictions with some of the Musa Dagh villages threatened intra-Armenian conflict. For example, when Kerteshian's band attempted to cross Yoghunoluk with a flock of goats looted from the Alawite village of Mishraqiye, the inhabitants of Yoghunoluk blocked their passage in order to avoid a confrontation with the Alawites. The ensuing fight between Kerteshian's band and some Yoghunoluk men left one person dead. Further bloodshed was averted thanks to the intervention of cooler heads.<sup>137</sup>

The conduct of these bands raised concerns among the Arab and Turkish leaderships. United States Consul Jesse B. Jackson of Aleppo wrote on 17 (27?) June 1920: “It is...reliably reported that about 2,000 armed Armenians are attacking and robbing Arab villages in the vicinity of Jebel Moussa [Musa Dagh], between Antioch and Swedia. Overtures have been made by the local Arab authorities to Aleppo Armenians with the object of having the latter proceed to the scene of the trouble in an endeavor to calm the situation, and it is said that they will undoubtedly succeed in their mission.”<sup>138</sup> The figure of 2,000 armed Armenians seems to be overblown. The entire population of Musa Dagh numbered about 4,500 persons at the time, and therefore it would be highly unlikely that 44 percent was involved in brigandage.

Consul Jackson's report was otherwise correct. The Arab Governor of Aleppo on 27 October summoned the Locum Tenens of the Armenian Prelacy to express his concern regarding the Armenian-Arab troubles near Musa Dagh. He likewise informed the clergyman that his government was about to send an envoy to the region, and demanded that the Armenian leadership on its part expedite a letter to Musa Dagh exhorting them to refrain from bothering their Arab neighbors. The Governor then set a deadline of five hours, until 11:00 p.m., for the letter to be written and dispatched. Accordingly, the Armenian leadership—represented by the Locum Tenens, four members of the local ANU, and two appointees from the inter-political party committee—convened an emergency meeting. In their written message to Musa Dagh they explained that an Armenian-Arab fraternal committee had been formed in Aleppo (in the aftermath of the 28 February 1919 massacre of Armenian refugees in town)<sup>139</sup> to cultivate friendly relations between

<sup>137</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 147.

<sup>138</sup> United States, National Archives, Archives of the Department of State, Washington, D.C., (now in College Park, Maryland), Record Group 84, *Correspondence, American Consulate, Aleppo—Syria, 1920*, Jesse B. Jackson to Mark L. Bristol, 17 (27?) June 1920.

<sup>139</sup> For these massacres, see Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 201-07; V. Mistrih, “Un incident à Alep contre les Arméniens (Février 1919),” *Studia Orientalia Christiania Collectanea* 32 (1999): 277-348.

the two peoples and that they, the Musa Daghians, ought to follow a similar policy “because we do not have anything against the Arabs and they against us.” More specifically, “in Syria the Arab interests do not contradict the Armenian interests, and...therefore the position of Armenians vis-à-vis the Arabs and the Arab government is friendly and at the same time neutral towards the French.”<sup>140</sup> The letter, composed in Ottoman Turkish with Arabic script, was sent that same night, with copies made for the Armenian National Delegation in Paris<sup>141</sup> and Aleppo ANU Vice-Chairman, Fr. Kapriel Kasbarian, who was in Beirut on official business.<sup>142</sup> Whether the letter yielded the intended result remains unknown.

At the same time, a French military report spoke of Armenian extortions of Turkish villages in the area.<sup>143</sup> Asem Bey, a major *chete* leader, warned the Armenians of severe punishment unless they stopped harassing those villages. He also assured them that he and his fellow fighters entertained no bad intentions vis-à-vis the Armenians; on the contrary, they wanted to be of help. And as proof of his goodwill, he proposed a meeting between the two groups in Antioch and accordingly sent three invitation cards to yet-undesignated Armenian interlocutors. The Armenians denied such accusations; the entire population could not be blamed for the actions of a few brigands. On the contrary, it was the Armenians who were being threatened, killed and thrown into the Orontes. They nevertheless agreed to meet with Asem Bey at any Svedia village (but not in Antioch) for further clarifications, if necessary.<sup>144</sup> There is no indication that such a meeting took place. In the end, when the French began to take control of the region, the Musa Dagh leadership sought—and succeeded in getting—the bands’ dissolution.<sup>145</sup>

### *Embroidment in the Regional Conflict*

The Sykes-Picot secret agreement of 1916 between Great Britain and France

<sup>140</sup> APA, VI, File 25, *Hay Azk.[ayin] Khorhurt. Sdatvadz Herakrer 1919-1920* (Armenian National Council: Incoming Telegrams 1919-1920) [this title is misleading, because the actual subtitle must be *Namagner Kopy 1920-1921* (Letters: Copy 1920-1921)], Aleppo ANU Chair (name illegible) and Vice-Chair Dr. A. Jebejian to Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan of Constantinople, 29 June 1920.

<sup>141</sup> Armenian National Delegation Archives, microfilm sets at Bibliotheque Nubar, Paris, and AGBU archives in Saddle Brook, New Jersey (now New York, New York), roll C-11, microfilm page no. 1,882.

<sup>142</sup> APA, VI, File 25, Aleppo ANU Secretary A. Fettelian and Vice-Chair to Cairo ANU, 6 July 1920.

<sup>143</sup> France, Archives de l’Armée, Chateau de Vincennes, 20 N 171, [Carton 61]/2, *Rapports Ht Commissariat Armée du Levant, janvier-juin, 1920*, Weekly Reports, week of 22-28 June 1920.

<sup>144</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 138-39.

<sup>145</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 146-47.

gave the latter the right to administer Syria, Lebanon, Cilicia and some other parts of Anatolia after the anticipated defeat and collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. This self-assigned mandate also covered Antioch district and Svedia sub-district, including Musa Dagh. As France tried to establish its hegemony in the area after the conflagration, Turks and Arabic-speaking Alawites pursued their own national and regional interests. The conflicting aspirations and agendas inevitably collided resulting in guerrilla warfare, often referred to as the *chete* movement.<sup>146</sup> It threatened all segments of society in the region including those of Musa Dagh and neighboring Kesab, which were mired in their own internal struggles for existence.

The overall situation deteriorated in the second half of 1919. In September, worrisome news about widespread robberies and killings in the surrounding countryside reached Musa Dagh.<sup>147</sup> On 15 January 1920 Colonel Dubievre, Commander of French troops in the Sanjak of Alexandreta, arrived in Antioch and undertook an inspection tour of the Koseir mountains in the south.<sup>148</sup> But the French presence did not deter a guerrilla attack on the government house, barracks and prison in Antioch on 12 March.<sup>149</sup> This episode gravely concerned the Armenians. Muleteers returning to Musa Dagh brought alarming news: while roaming the streets in Antioch, the *chetes*, led by Turkish informants, had checked the inns in search of Armenians to avenge the Ottoman Army’s humiliation at the hands of Musa Dagh in 1915. Unfortunately, the hunters had succeeded in locating six Armenians who happened to be in town on business; four were killed, two managed to escape with injuries. Shocked, the Musa Daghians took precautionary measures by posting night guards and sending spies to neighboring Muslim villages.<sup>150</sup>

ARF internal correspondence described the menacing situation as “stormy,”

<sup>146</sup> For a brief description of the post-World War I conflict around Antioch, see Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de tourisme*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1931), pp. 318-23. For a Turkish perspective on the subject, consult Ahmet Faik Türkmen, *Mufassal Hatay Tarihi*, 4 üncü cilt, *Hatay Manda Tarihi Silâhli Mücadele Devresi* (İstanbul: TAN Matbaası, 1939).

<sup>147</sup> *Giligia*, 27 September 1919.

<sup>148</sup> (CR) du Hays, *Les Armées françaises au Levant, 1919-1939*, tome 2, *Le temps des combats 1920-1921* (Vincennes, France: Service historique des armées, 1979), pp. 437-38.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439; France, Archives de l’Armée, 20 N 171, [Carton 61]/2, *Rapports Ht Commissariat Armée de Levant, janvier-juin, 1920*, Weekly Report, week of 16-22 March 1920; Jacquot, *Antioche*, II, pp. 320-21; Isgenderian, *Husher*, p. 137.

<sup>150</sup> *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 15 May 1920, 31 July 1920, 30 January 1921; *Husaper*, 17 April 1920; *Armenia*, 1 September 1920. The victims were Hovhannes Kelian of Haji Habibli; Hovhannes Kartunian of Vakef; Samuel Kadeian and Nigoghos Nakulian of Kheder Beg. The wounded persons were Boghos Panosian and an unnamed man.

and hoped that “this Armenocidal rain” would not “wet” the Armenians, otherwise the enemy could well taste the Armenian “hail” as in 1915.<sup>151</sup> Regardless, the danger persisted. Clashes (for an unspecified reason) between Armenians and Alawites prompted Sheikh Maaruf al-Jilli, the spiritual-political leader of Alawites in Svedia, to seek reconciliation. At the same time, the inhabitants of the two Turkish villages in Musa Dagh, namely, Kabakli and Jreiri, left for Antioch and elsewhere fearful of Armenian reprisals for their role as informants to the Ottoman Army during the 1915 resistance.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, on 1 May 1920 muleteers from Yoghunoluk were ambushed on the road to Antioch and their animals and goods confiscated. On the same day unspecified people in Antioch forbade the sale of wheat, corn and other foodstuffs to Armenians.<sup>153</sup>

The French intensified their efforts at pacifying the region during July and August 1920. On 2 July, a new French contingent under Lieutenant-Colonel Jouannetaud arrived in Antioch. The troops thence proceeded to Svedia, where the population accorded them a warm reception. The situation appeared to be returning to normal when many *chete* leaders (of unspecified ethnicity) agreed to lay down their weapons.<sup>154</sup> Although the reason for this turnaround is not clear, at this critical juncture Turkish-Alawite clashes embroiled Musa Dagh. The Alawites, constituting the majority of the population in Svedia sub-district, occupied almost all public offices to the dismay of Turks. The growing tension between the two groups culminated in a major confrontation into which the Armenians were drawn. The latter received two appeals. The first emanated from T. Aramian, an Armenian advocate living in Svedia, who urged his compatriots to send fighters to block a possible Turkish crossing to the left bank of the Orontes, considered the southern gateway to Musa Dagh. The second plea came from Sheikh Maaruf, who requested neighborly assistance to hold the Turks at bay. Musa Dagh obliged by sending a modest force of about forty fighters. This force was instrumental in repelling the first Turkish assault on the Alawite village of Miadun on 25 August. Sheikh Maaruf donated 20 mejidiyes (small coins) to each Armenian fighter as a token of appreciation.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>151</sup> ARF, File 962/25, George Kazanjian and Sarkis Hakisian to Lernavayr ARF Central Committee, 20 March 1920.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., George Kazanjian and Karnig Der Kalusdian to Lernavayr ARF Central Committee, 25 April 1920; *Husaper*, 6 July 1920, 25 April 1922.

<sup>153</sup> *Armenia*, 1 September 1920.

<sup>154</sup> France, Archives de l'Armée, 20 N 176, [Carton 61]/3, *Rapports Ht Commissariat Armée de Levant, juillet-octobre, 1920*, Weekly Reports, weeks of 12-19 August 1920, 18-24 August 1920, 25-31 August 1920; du Hays, *Les armées françaises*, II, p. 444.

<sup>155</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 141-42; *Armenia*, 13 October 1920; *Husaper*, 1 April 1922.

The Armenians returned home to defend their own frontiers against a possible direct Turkish offensive. The Alawites thereafter confronted the enemy alone and, despite putting up a stiff resistance, lost. Turkish *chetes* on 29 August captured Sheikh Maaruf's house and other properties and set them on fire. The Sheikh fled to Alexandretta, seeking French protection. While there, he acquired 100 rifles and eventually returned to Svedia to continue his struggle. The assassination in Svedia of Kheder Beg militia leader Hayg Kerteshian on 20 September put the Armenians and Alawites on a collision course. The French district military governor intervened, confiscated the 100 guns brought from Alexandretta, and ousted Svedia Sub-District Governor (*mudir*) Izeddine, one of Sheikh Maaruf's sons. He was replaced by an Antioch Turk named Khaled Agha.<sup>156</sup>

Fierce fighting erupted once again between Alawites and Turks in mid-December 1920. Surrounded by a hostile Alawite population, Khaled Agha sought but failed to garner Armenian support. Alawite fighters succeeded in reoccupying Levshiye, the administrative center of Svedia sub-district, and unseated Khaled Agha. At this juncture an Armenian from Musa Dagh named Khacher Baghtishian was harassed and gravely wounded while traveling in Alawite territory. A strong Armenian warning elicited a conciliatory Alawite response. The two peoples were brothers without any distinction between them, they said, adding that they did not entertain ill feelings vis-à-vis the Armenians. By mid-March 1921 Izeddine was reinstated as *mudir* of Svedia sub-district and the Armenian-Alawite tension dissipated.<sup>157</sup>

Meanwhile, a French General surnamed Goubeau assumed the administration of the State of Aleppo and Alawite-inhabited territories, including Svedia.<sup>158</sup> One of his first measures involved an inventory of weapons found among the indigenous populations. In April 1921 Musa Dagh submitted a list of sixty-three guns and expressed readiness to relinquish them to “chivalrous France” convinced that it would protect the Armenians. Apparently not satisfied with the furnished figure, Goubeau demanded a fuller count while assuring Musa Dagh that his only intention was to establish law and order. Whether or not the Armenians complied with this second order, the registration of weapons was to

<sup>156</sup> *Armenia*, 13 October 1920; *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 2 February 1921, 11 March 1921.

<sup>157</sup> *Arara*, no. 18 (26 December 1920): 2, no. 4 (28) (15 March 1921): 64; *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 11 March 1921, 14 March 1921.

<sup>158</sup> France, Archives de l'Armée, 20 N 176, [Carton 61]/3, *Rapports H[au]t Commissariat Armée de Levant, juillet-octobre, 1920*, Weekly Reports, week of 12-18 August 1920; du Hays, *Les armées françaises*, II, pp. 451-55.

be repeated the following year.<sup>159</sup>

At this juncture news of imminent threats to life reached Musa Dagh from the Armenian community of Kesab to the south. The political parties in Musa Dagh held several meetings from mid-April through July 1921 in a bid to adopt a common strategy to deal with the situation at Kesab as well as to discuss Armenian-Alawite relations. The talks failed, however, most probably because of the parties' intransigence.<sup>160</sup> Information is lacking about the course of action that the SDHP took thereafter respecting the above issues. As for the ARF, it proceeded in the following manner. Leading activist Movses Der Kalusdian formed a five-member central command with an action plan. In case of an external threat, the ARF central command would declare martial law and establish dictatorial rule. If need be, certain concessions could be made to another party with real power, i.e., the SDHP, without relinquishing the reins of leadership. Moreover, the central command would order general mobilization for all able-bodied Armenian men as well as Alawites, so long as the latter continued their enmity with the Turks; form labor battalions for digging and manning trenches; requisition pack animals; take the necessary measures to obtain outside help (presumably from Armenians in Cilicia); and group the fighters into units under village commanders, with a supreme commander in charge.<sup>161</sup>

Der Kalusdian's plan likewise included three defensive lines. The first covered, from the south, the Orontes River and Svedia Bay; from the north, the Turkmen villages of Chanakli and Seldiren in adjacent Kizil Dagh; from the east, the Buyuk Karachay (Big Black Stream or River); from the west, the Mediterranean Sea. This line would be adopted only in case of Armenian-Alawite collaboration, otherwise the second line would be defended. This was similar to the first line, except in the south, where the immediate peripheries of the Armenian villages would constitute the defenses. In the third line, should the Armenian villages in the south fall to the enemy, the hills above them would become the new frontline. The eastern and western fronts would be adjusted accordingly. No strategic changes were envisaged for the north, where the crucial battles would be fought.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> ARF, File 965/28, Lervayr ARF Central Committee to America ARF Central Committee, 20 May 1921; File 967/30, Hovhannes Bursalian, Shant Diran, and Nareg Aprahamian to Lervayr ARF Central Committee, 25 April 1921.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., File 966/29, Six-Months Report of Svedia ARF Committee, 8 September 1921; AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> Session, 18 June 1921, 8<sup>th</sup> Session, 20 June 1921, 9<sup>th</sup> Session, 20 August 1921.

<sup>161</sup> ARF, File 966/29, Report of Activist Movses Der Kalusdian.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

The ARF similarly assessed its relations with the main actors in the area. Although the party did not have direct contacts with the French Administration—which the party deemed friendly—it conveyed its positions and messages via Liaison Nareg Aprahamian of the ANU Central Body. With the Alawites, whom the ARF did not consider as very reliable, the party coexisted in relative harmony based on solidarity pacts. Lastly, the ARF maintained a reserved attitude vis-à-vis the Turks.<sup>163</sup>

But what worried the ARF most in the summer of 1921 was the menacing situation around Kesab. According to the ARF Central Committee in Cilicia, Kesab had an Armenian population of 2,500, in addition to some 500 Greeks and Alawites who had taken refuge there. Moreover, Musa Dagh and Kesab combined had 500-600 discharged Légion Arménienne volunteers who could hold off the enemy for two years if given sufficient arms and ammunition.<sup>164</sup> Der Kalusdian reported the details of military cooperation between Musa Dagh and Kesab: a group of fighters from Musa Dagh would go to Kesab if and when smoke signaled the start of actual fighting at Kesab. In that eventuality, Kesab migrant workers in Alexandretta would be summoned home as reinforcements.<sup>165</sup>

The above plan was devised by Der Kalusdian and Dr. Avedis Injejian, the ARF leader in Kesab who had gone to Musa Dagh in early July 1921 to ask for help. Strong support was imperative given signs of Alawite rapprochement with the Turks in the light of imminent French evacuation of neighboring Cilicia. Thus the two Armenian leaders also deemed talks with the Alawites crucial. Accordingly, they met in Antioch with the Executive Council of an Alawite political party, called Hearth of Young Alawites, to discuss the conditions and means to put Armenian-Alawite friendship on solid ground. They also held talks with Sheikh Maaruf and his son at Levshiye, asking them to send fighters to the Turkish villages above Miadun to relieve the pressure on Kesab. Sheikh Maaruf declined, arguing that such action would provide the French with an excuse to destroy him. But he wanted the Alawites and Armenians to coexist peacefully and with true love, otherwise they could be annihilated by facing the enemy separately. In the end, the timely arrival of two French detachments prevented bloodshed by dispersing the Turkish bands surrounding Kesab.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., Six-Month Report of Svedia ARF Committee, 8 September 1921.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., File 965/28, Lervayr ARF Central Committee to ARF Overseas Responsible Body, 27 July 1921; idem, File, 967/30, Shant Diran and V. Vahakn to Lervayr ARF Central Committee, 29 November 1921.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., File 966/29, Report of Activist Movses Der Kalusdian.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.; *Husaper*, 1 April 1922.

The road to pacification and normalization took a turn for the better beginning August 1921. Many *chete* leaders had by then either surrendered or fled. The French now endeavored to garner the support of notables and the population to shift gears from military to political, administrative, and economic tasks. French representatives accordingly toured some seventy villages, consulted with dignitaries, and oversaw the election of new village headmen.<sup>167</sup> In this context, the French Administrative Counselor in Antioch summoned Nareg Aprahamian and the village headmen from Musa Dagh to demand a new list of military weapons in their possession. Following an inter-village conference, the headmen posted proclamations on village walls asking the inhabitants to demonstrate their pro-French disposition by registering, and obtaining permits for, their guns by 15 March 1922. Noncompliance was punishable by fines and imprisonment. Even so, nothing new was revealed compared with the previous year's count of guns.<sup>168</sup> In a parallel development, when a Turkish mob alerted the population of Antioch to a purported Armenian attack from Musa Dagh, the French Administrative Counselor arrested the agitators responsible for the rumor.<sup>169</sup> Lastly, in Levshiye the Counselor addressed a gathering of Alawite, Turkish, Greek, and Armenian village headmen and notables exalting them to cohabit harmoniously and peacefully.<sup>170</sup> Although relative peace prevailed in the region thereafter, personal and socioeconomic conflicts with political overtones between villagers from Haji Habibli and Bitias degenerated into a bloodbath.

#### *Internecine Bloodshed*

On 8 August 1921 Haji Habibli notable Setrag Isgenderian was shot and fatally wounded near Bitias while returning from the Turkmen village of Seldiren in adjacent Kizil Dagh, where he had gone to attend a wedding and also to procure timber for his village church roof. Given his stature and connections in the general vicinity, the incident caused indignation among acquaintances of various ethno-religious backgrounds. Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian of Yoghunoluk officiated at the funeral service, condemning the killing and eulogizing the victim as “the pillar of the nation.”<sup>171</sup>

Misak (Zora) Isgenderian, one of the victim's four brothers, saw the imprints of suspected Bitias natives Mihran Renjilian and the brothers Kevork and Taniel

<sup>167</sup> Du Hays, *Les armées françaises*, II, pp. 473-75.

<sup>168</sup> *Husaper*, 23 March 1922.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 April 1922.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 144-45.

Chaparian in the plot.<sup>172</sup> Setrag Isgenderian's political camp, however, rushed to blame the ARF. The SDHP, the ARF's archrival, to which Setrag belonged, furnished the following circumstantial evidence to substantiate its claim. About two weeks before the murder, prominent ARF leaders Movses Der Kalusdian, Serop Sherbetjian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Mihran Renjilian had held daily meetings at the home of comrade Dr. Avedis Injejikian. A SDHP member had overheard Der Kalusdian saying that the ARF should orchestrate a coup in Musa Dagh to become its sole master. No ARF representatives attended Isgenderian's funeral. The ARF press maintained total silence over the assassination. ARF affiliates justified the killing in informal conversations. The killers were ARF members, whom the party's Bitias chapter bailed out with money paid from its coffers. The ARF protected the culprits instead of expelling them from the party. Der Kalusdian and Dr. Injejikian, realizing that the conspiracy would be exposed, left Musa Dagh immediately after the incident. The SDHP went on to say that no written proof was needed to implicate the ARF, which endeavored to establish dictatorial rule, a regime deemed worse than that of the bloody Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909). On the other hand, the SDHP maintained, it tried its utmost to avert widespread bloodshed. If, however, the tension did not dissipate, the SDHP would be forced “to do everything.”<sup>173</sup>

In less than a year another official SDHP report tacitly alluded to the personal nature of the assassination. “They say,” the new version now maintained, that Setrag Isgenderian had slapped a few villagers from Bitias and also caused them other problems. In retaliation, the latter had armed themselves to avenge their humiliation. But these cowardly “lizards” would not have dared to act without approval by the ARF, which denied any role in the killing and instead put the blame on the Turkmen.<sup>174</sup> This revised story notwithstanding, in the wake of the assassination the SDHP press fanned the animosity by unleashing a vicious attack on the ARF as propagator of terrorism and as “some worms—some of those worms which even destroyed Ararad [i.e., the Republic of Armenia, 1918-1920].” At the same time, the press called upon the Catholicosate (Pontificate) of Cilicia and the Prelacy of Adana to mediate, and proposed the formation of a commission of inquiry to investigate the matter on the spot.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47.

<sup>173</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutium, Dedrag*, minutes of (12<sup>th</sup>) Session, 22 October 1921, Haji Habibli.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, undated letter from Musa Dagh SDHP to Aleppo SDHP copied at the end of the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 5 April 1922, Yoghunoluk. For certain details regarding the cause of assassination, see also Sherbetjian, *Badmutium Svedahayeru*, p. 147.

<sup>175</sup> *Hay Tzayn*, 22 September 1921; *Nor Serunt*, 30 September 1921.

On the day of the incident Movses Der Kalusdian wrote: “Most probably, the occurrence is [of] purely personal [nature], because that [Isgenderian] family has many enemies.”<sup>176</sup> He stated in another report: “Some sort of an abnormal situation was created in the region, and our ranks, knowing well that the Tashnagsutiun [ARF] had no role whatsoever in the assassination, were very angry at the slanders leveled at the party.”<sup>177</sup>

In September 1921 the ARF invited the SDHP and Reformed Hnchagians to an interparty conference for clarifications. According to an ARF paper, during the meeting a member of the Isgenderian clan absolved the ARF of guilt, adding, “We know our personal enemies,” who would be punished.<sup>178</sup> The SDHP similarly expressed readiness “to maintain cordial relations with sister parties provided their stance is not contrary to the principle and interest of our party.” It would also do its best to preserve the tranquility of the villages.<sup>179</sup> Notwithstanding, blood continued to flow.

The surviving Isgenderian brothers, including expatriates Garabed and George who had returned from the United States, sought justice through the government in Antioch. Frustrated with the latter’s inaction, they took matters into their own hands to exact revenge.<sup>180</sup> As a result, a number of ARF members including Der Kalusdian, fearing for their lives, went underground or left the area.<sup>181</sup> In this reign of terror tragedy struck the Isgenderians once again. On Palm Sunday, 9 April 1922, Hapet Isgenderian, another brother of Setrag’s, was killed in an ambush that he and six companions were carrying out against Bitias.<sup>182</sup> In retaliation, on 4 July Movses Mardiros Chaparian was murdered in Antioch together with an elderly man and a female relative who happened to be in his rented house.<sup>183</sup> Garabed and George Isgenderian were arrested and

<sup>176</sup> ARE, File 967/30, Movses Der Kalusdian to Editorship of *Giligia* in Adana, 8 August 1921. See also *Giligia*, 20 September 1921.

<sup>177</sup> ARE, File 966/29, Report of Activist Movses Der Kalusdian.

<sup>178</sup> *Hayrenik*, 11 November 1921.

<sup>179</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> Session, 10 September 1921, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., undated letter from Musa Dagh SDHP to Aleppo SDHP copied at the end of the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 5 April 1922; Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 146-48.

<sup>181</sup> ARE, File 966/29, Report of Activist M. Der Kalusdian; *Husaper*, 6 May 1922.

<sup>182</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, undated letter from Musa Dagh SDHP to Aleppo SDHP copied at the end of the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 5 April 1922; Isgenderian, *Husher*, p. 146.

<sup>183</sup> ARE, File 969/32, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1922 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1922), Svedia ARF Committee to Garapnad ARF Central Committee, 11 August 1922; AGBU/SB, File 13 D, Natanian to Malezian, 13 July 1922; *Husaper*, 6 July 1922.

sent to Aleppo as suspects. Garabed was released shortly thereafter, but George remained incarcerated.<sup>184</sup> Be that as it may, the vendettas snowballed, claiming many more lives from both sides.<sup>185</sup>

As before, the partisan press gave vent to self-serving rhetoric and irreconcilable interpretations, further polarizing the camps. The *Yeridasart Hayasdan* (Young Armenia), a SDHP paper published in the United States, viewed the ARF as “a cancer” and its members “immoral dwarfs,” who cared nothing for sacred and other concerns. “The lads,” ridiculed the paper, acted with the same adventurism as in the erstwhile ARF-dominated Republic of Armenia to extend their hegemony in the Diaspora including Musa Dagh. Sadly, they failed to rise above the muck “to see the majestic, the noble, and the North Star of real peace promising happiness to mankind—Communism.” Furthermore, those “square brains” killed Hapet out of jealousy, because they did not have his equal as an ideologist and propagandist.<sup>186</sup> For *Husaper* (Hope Bringer), the ARF mouthpiece in Egypt, on the other hand, the Isgenderian affair symptomized the comatose state into which the traditional, feudal-like *agha* (notable landlord) system had descended. People had now awakened from their “lethargic deep sleep” and become aware of their social rights to a degree. Hence, they no longer allowed “some parasites” to take advantage of them as before, which was perhaps “the first encouraging and consoling” phenomenon in post-World War I Musa Dagh. If the coma was dragging on, the paper further explained, it was because the *aghas* continued to enjoy the protection and cooperation of the “Communist” SDHP. In fact, shielding the old clans constituted the only *raison d’être* of that party even though 95 percent of the people expressed dissatisfaction regarding the “sad role” played by the Isgenderians in Musa Dagh, the paper concluded.<sup>187</sup>

Even before Chaparian’s assassination the bloodletting was no longer perceived as a local issue. Concerned about their own image and a possible French backlash, and implored by Musa Daghians themselves, the Armenian leadership in Aleppo took certain measures to end the crisis. In its 21 April 1922 meeting the Aleppo ANU resolved to charge a certain Hovhannes Nikola to go to

<sup>184</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, p. 149.

<sup>185</sup> For the names and number of victims, consult *ibid.*, pp. 148-49; “Paravor Antsiali me Dkhur yev Tsavali Vakhjane” (The Sad and Painful End of a Glorious Past), in *Trvakner Svedio Antsialen (1893-95 Hephapokhagan Shrchanen)* (Episodes from Svedia’s Past [From the 1893-95 Revolutionary Period]) (Beirut: Ararad Press, 1957): 347-51; Alber S. Temirian, *Kesab (1909-1946)* (Beirut: G. Donigian Press, 1956), p. 134.

<sup>186</sup> *Yeridasart Hayasdan*, 7 August 1922, 11 August 1922. See also *Artzakank Parizi* (Echo of Paris) (Paris), 15 May 1922.

<sup>187</sup> *Husaper*, 6 May 1922, 6 July 1922.

Musa Dagh to “exhort the people.” It would similarly ask the Armenian political parties to designate representatives, while the Prelacy had already requested that Catholicos (Pontiff) Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia dispatch Fr. Paren from Alexandretta.<sup>188</sup> The ARF declined to assign a representative for the following reasons: first, it was “unaware of the [Musa Dagh] incident,” and second, sending an official delegate to another region fell under the jurisdiction of the party’s higher Central Committee. Therefore, it would be “more appropriate...to leave the resolution of the issue only to official Nation[al] entities.”<sup>189</sup> For unspecified reasons, the SDHP and the DLP likewise chose not to appoint envoys. All three parties, instead, preferred to convey their messages to their respective constituencies in Musa Dagh.<sup>190</sup> The actual delegation ultimately consisted of Nikola and Fr. Sahag Der Bedrosian, representing the ANU and the Catholicos, respectively.<sup>191</sup> But their mission, undertaken in early May, failed.<sup>192</sup> At the same time, AGBU Field Inspector-General Mikael Natanian, who happened to be in Musa Dagh on a special visit to the AGBU schools, together with the *vartabed* (celibate priest) Hagop Dolabjian, Vicar-General of the Antioch Diocese and Superintendent of the charitable foundations in Latakia belonging to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, similarly tried to bring the warring factions together. They too failed because of the existing “mutual fear and feeling of revenge.”<sup>193</sup>

Natanian traced the root cause of the crisis to the socioeconomic status of the Isgenderian family patriarch. In the pre-World War I period, “Mardir agha [Isgenderian] had the reputation of *dere-bey* [feudal lord], so that, and as an influential [person] and, in a way, according to some, as a despot [he] also had, alongside his friends, mortal enemies”<sup>194</sup> (two of whom killed him in 1911).<sup>195</sup> In the postwar years, “these family-linked grudges did not remain as such; they

<sup>188</sup> APA, VI, File 29, *Hay Azk[ayin] Khorhurt. Adenakrutian Dedr 1921-1923* (Armenian National Council: Notebook of Minutes 1921-1923), minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> Session, 21 April 1922. See also AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutium, Dedrag*, minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 5 April 1922, Yoghunoluk; ARE, File 969/32, Aleppo ARF Committee to ARF Cilicia and Syria Central Committee, 23 April 1922; *Suriagan Mamul*, 30 April 1922, 17 August 1922.

<sup>189</sup> ARE, File 969/32, Aleppo ARF Committee to ARF Cilicia and Syria Central Committee, 23 April 1922. The second number of “23” is not too clear, hence it could be a different digit.

<sup>190</sup> APA, VI, File 29, minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> Session, 25 April 1922.

<sup>191</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 30 April 1922.

<sup>192</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 D, Natanian to Malezian, 1 June 1922. The DLP official organ in Egypt, *Arev*, in its 16 August 1922 issue regretted that Aleppo had sent “only a religious delegation,” which information was incorrect.

<sup>193</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 D, Natanian to Malezian, 1 June 1922.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 41-3.

were soon also interjected into political party grudge[s] and calculations.” And thus, because “the Isgenderian brothers, as capable and educated figures in Svedia, belonged mostly to the S. D. Hnchagian and the D. Liberal parties, their opponents were soon sponsored [by] and identified with the Tashnagtsutium [ARF].” This clash of interests spread to the two contiguous villages of Haji Habibli and Bitias, which were under the influence of the SDHP-DLP and the ARF, respectively. As both camps had followers in the rest of Musa Dagh, Natanian feared a worse scenario: “God forbid, if in these enmities people from other villages also fall victim, the whole of Svedia will tear each other apart face-to-face.”<sup>196</sup>

The following case offers a glimpse of the menacing situation in Haji Habibli. Fr. Vartan Varteresian, who had returned to his native Haji Habibli from Dortyol on New Year’s Day 1922, regretted his decision and wanted to be reassigned to another parish. Two factors determined his ardent wish: the lack of income creating an “untold and indescribable” situation for his large, eight-member family and the dangerous effervescence surrounding him. Speaking of the latter, he lamented the impossibility of extinguishing the flame of hatred. Not only did no one listen to his advice, but, on the contrary, “they threaten [me with] awe and fear with arms.” Therefore, “today my life is in danger.”<sup>197</sup> This “Sword of Damocles” dangled above his head “because I love truth and justice and I do not wish at all to follow the aghas’ whims-intrigues, which dictatorially usurp people’s rights and pitilessly and unscrupulously dominate everyone.”<sup>198</sup> Despite his professed convictions, Fr. Varteresian ultimately acquiesced to the notables in hopes of making a living.<sup>199</sup> This social malaise was reportedly not confined only to Haji Habibli. According to Principal Aroyan, chaos, debased practices, poisoned minds, treacherous politics, drunkenness, theft, crime, and blackmail pervaded Musa Dagh in general.<sup>200</sup> Notwithstanding, a solution to the bloody conflict had to be found.

The Aleppo ANU on 22 May 1922 discussed a letter sent from Musa Dagh to the Prelacy with the blessing of the warring factions, “which stressed the need for the formation of a [mediating] committee.” The ANU consequently commissioned its Vice-Chairman, the Catholic priest Fr. Kapriel Kasbarian,

<sup>196</sup> AGBU/SB, File 13 D, Natanian to Malezian, 1 June 1922.

<sup>197</sup> CCA, File 22/1, Fr. Varteresian to Catholicos Sahag II, 6 July 1922.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 September 1922.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 September 1923.

<sup>200</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Executive Council Chairman and Members, 26 November 1922.

to ask his Monsignor to raise the issue with the French General de la Motte, asking him not to exert pressure on Musa Dagh, but rather approve the commission to proceed under his aegis with powers to establish peace and deliver the troublemakers to the military authorities if necessary.<sup>201</sup> Yet, upon learning of new killings, on 6 June the ANU set out to warn the Musa Daghians that the problem could not be solved through commissions, and therefore the government would have to intervene.<sup>202</sup> As the tension escalated, the Haji Habibli Parish Council beseeched the Aleppo Prelacy Civil Council to find a solution.<sup>203</sup> In turn, some Musa Dagh expatriates living in Aleppo asked the ANU to send another delegation. Their main concern was that the Bitias camp, “without thinking about consequence[s],” was accusing the Haji Habibli camp “with the vilest means” to the French government, which, as a result, viewed Haji Habibli in a more negative light.<sup>204</sup>

News respecting the strangulation of five persons prompted the Aleppo ANU to write a letter to Dr. Harutiun Der Boghosian in Antioch asking him to form a committee consisting of himself, Aram Boyajian, Trifon Kalemkearian, and Firuz Khanzadian (prominent local Armenians) to examine the problem thoroughly and put an end to the bloodshed.<sup>205</sup> The four met on 3 August together with dignitaries from Bitias, Haji Habibli, and Kabusiye. Der Boghosian, Boyajian, and Khanzadian declined to be part of the proposed committee citing their busy schedules and lack of sufficient knowledge about Musa Dagh in general and the details of the conflict in particular. Only Kalemkearian knew the issue at hand well and could devote his time, but it would be impossible for him to achieve any results singlehandedly. The Musa Daghians present then suggested that Dr. Injeikian, a Kesab native and quite influential in Musa Dagh, form a committee with two representatives from each of the three political parties. But whatever formula might be adopted, those involved in peacemaking had to go and stay in Musa Dagh as long as necessary, because commissions deliberating from Aleppo or Antioch could not be effective. Time was of the essence, and therefore

<sup>201</sup> APA, VI, File 29, minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> Session, 22 May 1922.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., minutes of 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 6 June 1922.

<sup>203</sup> APA, IV, *Azkayin, Kaghakakan yev Kavarayin Zhoghovi Veraperial Namagakrutuinner* (Correspondence Regarding National, Civil, and Provincial Council[s]), File 42, *Aden. [akrutian] Dedr.[ag] Kaghak.[agan]. Zhoghovo 1919[-1922]* (Notebook of the Minutes of the Political Council 1919[-1922]), minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> Session, 21 July 1922. The Haji Habibli Parish Council letter was dated 10 July 1922.

<sup>204</sup> APA, VI, File 7, *Hay Azkayin Khorhurt. Sdatsvadz Namagner 1921-1922* (Armenian National Council: Incoming Correspondence 1921-1922), Kh. Mardirian, Masis Panosian, Bedros (surname illegible), and Ye. Kuyumjian to Aleppo ANU, 16 July 1922.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., File 29, minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> Session, 18 July 1922.

something had to be done before things spiraled further out of control.<sup>206</sup>

The moment’s urgency compelled Catholicos Sahag II to intercede personally. He went to Antioch on 19 August, and for six days “questioned neutral and non-partisan individuals.” He likewise heard those who were either for or against reconciliation: “No one is taking the blame upon himself, although they [prominent families/individuals] have left their villages, home[s] and properties and taken refuge in Antioch.”<sup>207</sup> When word got out that the Pontiff had reportedly resigned from visiting the Armenian villages, Nareg Aprahamian and Keghart Sharayan (Serop Matosian), another prominent ARF member, urged him to change his mind and resolve the conflict on the spot.<sup>208</sup> Whether due to this request or original intent, beginning on 25 August the Pontiff toured Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, Kabusiye, and Magharajik, where inter-party representatives and those of the AGBU Sisvan schools welcomed him and/or requested an audience.<sup>209</sup> After getting the opinion of villagers, he admonished them “to stay away from defensive [?] intervention.” Before going to “the enemy villages,” he similarly paid a visit to Sheikh Maaruf at Levshiye to thank him for defusing the passions raging between Armenians from Kabusiye and Alawites, two of whom had been killed over a watermelon dispute. He finally spent time in Haji Habibli and Bitias from 31 August-5 September. He reminded the factions that they were responsible for the bloodshed and that they had to forget the past in order to prevent further violence and preserve brotherly peace in the community. His counsel fell on deaf ears.<sup>210</sup>

Catholicos Sahag II departed Musa Dagh on 5 September after forming a local committee the day before with a one year mandate to bring about reconciliation and peace. The Apostolic priest of Yoghunoluk, Fr. Der Kalusdian,

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.; idem, minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> Session, 8 August 1922; File 7, Dr. H. Der Boghosian to Aleppo ANU Chairman Dr. A. Jebejian, 4 August 1922.

<sup>207</sup> Sandro Behbudyan, compiler, *Vaverakrer Hay Yegeghetsu Badmutyan*, Book IV, *Sahag P Khabayan Gatoghigos Giligio 1891-1940 TT* (Documents for the History of the Armenian Church, Book IV, Pontiff Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia 1891-1940) (Yerevan: “Vosgan Yerevantsi” Publication, 1997), p. 391.

<sup>208</sup> See, respectively, CCA, File 22/1, Nareg Aprahamian to Sahag II, 21 August 1922, and Keghart Sharayan to Sahag II, 21 August 1922.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., Yoghunoluk SDHP and ARF representatives to Sahag II, 25 August 1922; Svedia ARF Committee to Sahag II, 27 August 1922; Hovhannes Markarian to Sahag II, 29 (25?) August 1922.

<sup>210</sup> Behbudyan, *Vaverakrer*, Book IV, p. 391. See also Varujan Archbishop Hergelian, ed., *Tghtagsutiun Sahag P. Gatoghigosi yev Bedros Ark. [ebisgobos] Sarajiani* (Correspondence of Catholicos Sahag II and Bedros Archbishop Sarajian), a publication of the Armenian Library of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal, and the Archives of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, No. 4 (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), p. 72.

and the Protestant pastor of Bitias, Rev. Antreasian, co-chaired the panel, which comprised five designated members from each of Yoghunoluk, Bitias, and Haji Habibli.<sup>211</sup> Not much is known about the activity of this committee, except that it received a written affidavit from four leading Bitias protagonists, namely, Mihran Renjilian, Taniel Chaparian, Arakel Efendiian, and Armenag Kelian, expounding their perspective on the whole affair. They welcomed the panel and expressed pleasure at the great hopes for peace. But having been deceived after reconciling on a previous occasion, whereby “the one who dared to commit a second crime would be strictly punished and annihilated by the nation,” they remained skeptical that things would be different this time around. For, they claimed, taking advantage of that first peace deal, the Isgenderian brothers had killed Bitias native Hagop Jambazian, fired at gendarmes pursuing fugitives in order to blame the Bitias people for the shootings, threatened members of the (first) “reconciliation council,” and proceeded to Antioch to kill Movses Chaparian. The authors of the affidavit thus believed that, if they were to reconcile under pressure once again, it would only embolden the opposite camp to resume its violent activity as before. Even so, the authors expressed readiness for peace provided the new panel gave them firm assurances of their ability to effect substantial changes. Furthermore, they refused to be branded as criminals because they had not murdered anyone. Instead, they portrayed Setrag Isgenderian as someone with many foes not just in Bitias, but also in Haji Habibli, Yoghunoluk, Sayleja, Seldiren, Antioch, and the coastal areas. To prove their case, they listed fifteen instances illustrating Setrag’s conduct leading to the making of enemies throughout the region. In order to appease their lust for a luxurious life, he and his brothers, especially Misak, through intimidation and bribery, confiscated properties in Haji Habibli, looted non-Armenian villages, collected tithes, gave false testimonies, had innocent people arrested, and turned neighboring Turks and Alawites against the Armenians. All this could end with Misak’s banishment from the region, in which case the affidavit signatories would lay down their weapons, otherwise they could not trust the deceptive Isgenderian tactics.<sup>212</sup> Unfortunately, there

<sup>211</sup> ACC, Notebook 100/2, Copies of Correspondence and Miscellaneous Writings of Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos Sahag, Official Statement, 4 September 1922, Yoghunoluk. The committee members were: from Yoghunoluk: Hagop Atamian, Bedros (?) Aprahamian, Boghos Kuyumjian, Levon Kazanjian, Kevork Jelekian (Shrikian?); from Haji Habibli: Khacher Mardirian, Sdepan (surname illegible), Garabed Juhurian, Krikor Deylamaian (?), Hovnan Isgenderian; from Bitias: Hetum Filian, Sarkis Sherbetjian, Sahag Andekian, Hovhannes Hannesian, Madatia Taminosian.

<sup>212</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Mihran Renjilian, Taniel Chaparian, Arakel Efendiian, and Armenag Kelian to the Presidents of the Reconciliation Council Fr. Der Kalusdian and Rev. Antreasian, 5 September 1922.

is not a similar deposition furnished by the Isgenderians or the Haji Habibli camp making their counterclaims. In any case, like its predecessor, the new panel constituted by Catholicos Sahag II failed to end the crisis.

Catholicos Sahag II considered the Bitias camp “wilder and more vengeful” than that of Haji Habibli.<sup>213</sup> And because a significant Protestant congregation including some of the antagonists existed in Bitias, the Pontiff accordingly urged Rev. Zenop Bezjian, the Constantinople-based head (*azkabed*) of the Armenian Protestant community in the Middle East, to pressure his constituents at Bitias to end the hostilities. It is true that the Pontiff refrained from accusing or defending anyone and instead considered the actual fratricides equally guilty.<sup>214</sup> Nevertheless, his framing of the conflict also as an Apostolic-Protestant confessional clash—which was not the case—further enraged the Bitias people.<sup>215</sup>

The Pontiff similarly drew sharp criticism for his irresoluteness. Principal Aroyan wrote to the AGBU Central Board in Cairo as late as 20 March 1923: “Let the Catholicos rejoice, after making so many promises they are not making any efforts [to end the crisis]; a fluid condition, [an] utter indifference of this magnitude have not been seen [to date]. His visit to Svedia thus became an irony[,] a comedy. Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Alawites, and the Fr.[ench] Government are blaming his spineless behavior, his laxity displayed towards 6-7 malefactors.” Aroyan continued: “The rule of conscience and the nation’s dignity demanded a little firmness vis-à-vis a few malefactors, and serving justice through the government. The Catholicos is directly responsible for the assassinations that have taken place after His departure [from Musa Dagh].”<sup>216</sup> Aroyan reiterated his accusations as he sought AGBU’s intercession: “Please write to the Catholicos to speak the truth and expose the bare reality to the [French] General. All nationalities are astonished at [or blame him for] his wishy-washy attitude... Since the visit of His Eminence [to Musa Dagh] there have been 12 assassinations and numerous wounded, for which the Catholicos is responsible, because in answering the General’s question he has not given a clear explanation, ostensibly afraid that the government would deal [with Musa Dagh] strictly.”<sup>217</sup>

The French Administration ultimately intervened through Hrant Maloyan, the Armenian chief of gendarmerie in Alexandretta and Antioch. Sometime

<sup>213</sup> Behbudyan, *Vaverakrer*, Book IV, p. 391.

<sup>214</sup> ACC, Notebook 100/2, Catholicos Sahag to Zenop Bezjian, 17 September 1922.

<sup>215</sup> AGBU/SB. File 14 D. Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Central Council Chair and Members, 20 March 1923.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 June 1923.

between winter 1922 and spring 1923 Maloyan went to Bitias and Haji Habibli and ordered the armed men to leave the area at once. None complied. He returned to the area and laid siege to Bitias, but failed to force the protagonists out due to torrential rain. He instead arrested the village headman and two notables, jailed them in Antioch, and set one of the notables free on a fine of 150 Ottoman gold liras (the fate of the other two prisoners remains unknown).<sup>218</sup> It was perhaps during Maloyan's second visit to Musa Dagh that Misak Isgenderian went into exile, on 6 May 1923. Whether or not Maloyan's pressure had any role in it, Isgenderian maintains in his memoirs that he departed heeding the advice of relatives and friends. He settled in Iraq and engaged in various businesses, only to relocate to Beirut in 1949, where he became active in the DLP, the AGBU, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and the Compatriotic Association of Musa Dagh.<sup>219</sup>

The crisis in Bitias ended in the following manner. Because Mihran Renjilian and Maloyan had been former classmates in military school and eventually officers in the Ottoman Army, Renjilian sent a personal note to Maloyan in Haji Habibli. Although the note's content is not known, Maloyan instructed his subaltern in Bitias not to take any action until his arrival. Maloyan thereupon went to Bitias and, to allay Renjilian's suspicion of a snare, proposed to meet with him not as a police chief determined to get him dead or alive, but as a civilian. The two former comrades-in-arm thus met privately at an undisclosed location.<sup>220</sup> Maloyan must have persuaded Renjilian to leave his hometown permanently, for the latter traveled to Beirut and thence to Athens, Greece, in 1924. Here he enrolled in the School of Religion, became the associate pastor and school principal of the Armenian Protestant community in the suburb of Kokkinia, and in 1940 emigrated to the United States to occupy the pulpit of the Armenian Protestant church in Troy, New York.<sup>221</sup> To conclude, although Bitias and Haji Habibli continued to entertain ill feelings vis-à-vis each other long after the banishment of Misak Isgenderian and Mihran Renjilian, for all practical

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Isgenderian, *Husher*, pp. 150-85.

<sup>220</sup> Interview with Arakel Izanian, Sunland, California, 31 December 1991. Izanian was the courier that delivered messages between Renjilian and Maloyan.

<sup>221</sup> Dikran J. Khrlopien, *Vosgemadian. Badmutiun Mertz.[avor] Arevelki Hay Aved. [aranagan] Miutian* (Golden Book: History of the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East), a publication of the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East, vol. II (Beirut: A. Der-Sahagian Press, 1951), p. 74; Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, *Pioneer Armenian Evangelical Clergymen in America and Their Successors from 1880 to 1950* (Southfield, Michigan: The Armenian Evangelical World Council and Armenian Heritage Committee, 2005), pp. 229-31.

purposes this inglorious episode in the modern history of Armenian Musa Dagh had come to an end.

### *Conclusion*

In the aftermath of World War I Musa Dagh traveled a very bumpy road. Homesick and impatient, the survivors returned from exile largely unprepared for what was in store for them. A ruined economy, harsh living conditions, inclement weather, chronic insecurity, and internal discord and bloodletting, all portended a catastrophic end. What ultimately saved these Armenians from total destruction were the self-defensive measures they took, the relief they received from outside sources, and the law and order the new mandatory French Administration gradually established in the general district. Although clearly shaken and bruised, the Musa Daghians now set their sights on a more promising future.

## *Chapter 2*

### THE SOCIAL CANVAS

Scrutinizing any society to examine its characteristics may or may not reveal all of them; the result depends on the availability of sources and the amount of information therein. Understanding Musa Dagh society encounters this problem. Another issue arises from the nature of this study: it is a historical rather than an ethnographic treatment of the subject matter, but delineating the boundaries between the two sometimes becomes impossible. Hence overlaps are unavoidable. Be that as it may, this chapter highlights the main features of Musa Dagh's collective profile with certain details, many of which are presented here for the first time.

#### *Population*

One of the most problematic tasks pertaining to any society is counting people with absolute accuracy. Even when methodology is clearly stated, it is still impossible to attain perfection. Musa Dagh is no exception. That being said, there are a number of statistics recorded in governmental and organizational archives or published in the contemporary press that must be presented to give an idea about the population of Musa Dagh during the interwar years.

The two earliest counts of the Musa Dagh population pertain to the year 1920. One of the censuses was taken by the local Armenian National Union (ANU), yielding the following results (specific date not mentioned): Bitias, 775 inhabitants; Haji Habibli, 815; Yoghunoluk, 1,050; Kheder Beg, 835; Vakef, 365; Kabusiye, 415; total, 4,255 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The second tabulation, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is to be found in an Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) report dated 1 May 1920, according to which all 4,513 inhabitants received equal relief regardless of their socioeconomic status, with the following details: 720 inhabitants in Bitias; 898 in Haji Habibli; 1,070 in Yoghunoluk; 920 in Kheder Beg; 445 in Vakef; 460 in Kabusiye.<sup>2</sup> It is not possible to explain with certainty the differences between the two counts. Three-and-a-half years later, in December 1923, the *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) newspaper of Cairo, Egypt, gave

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<sup>1</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 27 December 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union Archives, Saddle Brook, New Jersey (now New York, New York), (hereafter AGBU/SB), File 13 C, *Enthanur Knnich Mikayel Natanian. Tghagtsutiumner Hunvar 1920-Tegd.[emper] 1921* (Inspector General Mikayel Natanian: Correspondence January 1920–December 1921), Mikael Natanian to Vahan Malezian, 16 November 1920.

the figure of 4,625<sup>3</sup>—a net increase of 112 persons over the AGBU count.

In 1924, the autonomous *Sanjak* (county/province) of Alexandretta/Iskenderun within the State of Syria consisted of three districts (*kaza*): Alexandretta, Kirik Khan and Antioch. Each district comprised a number of sub-districts (*nahiye*). Until 1924 Musa Dagh belonged to the Svedia/al-Swaidiyye sub-district within Antioch district. That year, however, Musa Dagh was detached from Svedia sub-district and designated a separate sub-district called Jabal Musa *nahiye*, with Kheder Beg as its administrative center where the Sub-District Governor (*Mudir/Müdüür*) conducted official business.<sup>4</sup> It was in the same year that the French administration took a census of the Sanjak population. According to this count, Musa Dagh had 4,693 “Christian” inhabitants, constituting nearly 35 percent of all Christians (13,478) and 15 percent of the entire population (30,781 Alawites, Turks, Arabs, Christians and miscellaneous others) in Antioch district. When compared with the Sanjak figures at large, Musa Dagh formed 18 percent of all Christians (26,381) and 3.6 percent of the whole population (131,890).<sup>5</sup>

The 1924 statistical table for Musa Dagh per se specifies the population according to village, gender, and religious denomination. Thus, Bitias had 752 inhabitants (16 percent of Musa Dagh), of whom 368 male and 384 female, and 486 Apostolic and 266 Protestant (Evangelical). Haji Habibli had 929 inhabitants (20 percent), of whom 476 male and 453 female, all Apostolic. Kabusiye had 577 inhabitants (12 percent), of whom 291 male and 286 female, all Apostolic. Vakef had 389 inhabitants (8 percent), of whom 187 male and 201 female, all Apostolic with the exception of one Catholic. Yoghunoluk had 1,109 inhabitants (24 percent), of whom 530 male and 579 female, and 891 Apostolic, 113 Catholic, and 105 Protestant. Kheder Beg had 937 inhabitants (20 percent), of whom 457 male and 480 female, and 802 Apostolic, 126 Catholic, and 9 Protestant.<sup>6</sup> The following conclusions can be drawn from these figures. The largest and smallest villages were Yoghunoluk and Vakef, respectively. Gender distribution was roughly fifty-fifty (2,310 male and 2,383 female). The Apostolic community

<sup>3</sup> *Husaper*, 6 December 1923.

<sup>4</sup> France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Nantes (hereafter AMAE), E-Levant, Mandat Syrie-Liban, Cabinet Politique, Carton no. 567, Recensement de la Population (in the Sanjak of Alexandretta), 1924, List no. 1; Ashod Nersisian, *Movses Der Kalusdian*, “Living Heroes” series, no. 5 (Yerevan: Edit Print, 2011), pp. 131-32; Boghos Madurian, “Hayreni Gdurin Dag” (Under the Roof of the Fatherland), in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), p. 464.

<sup>5</sup> France, AMAE, E-Levant, Mandat Syrie-Liban, Cabinet Politique, Carton no. 567, Recensement de la Population (in the Sanjak of Alexandretta), 1924, List no. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Husaper*, 16 September 1924. See also *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 14 February 1925.

(4,073) constituted 87 percent of the population, the Protestant community (380) 8 percent (but 35 percent in Bitias), and the Catholic community (240) 5 percent (but 13 percent in Kheder Beg). (See Table 2).

By 1931, that is, within seven years, the population had reached 5,036—an increase of 343 persons (7 percent) over the 1924 count. The details were as follows: in 1925, 4,590<sup>7</sup>; in 1929, 964 families/4,734 persons<sup>8</sup>; in 1931, 5,036 persons.<sup>9</sup> Corroborating the latter figure independently, the French *Deuxième Bureau* (military intelligence) in Syria and Lebanon in February 1931 estimated the Musa Dagh “grouping” to be about 5,000 persons.<sup>10</sup> A newspaper article, titled “Jebel-Musa (Statistical Numbers),” furnished two additional counts for the first half of the 1930s, without mentioning their source(s): 5,342 for 1932, and 5,650 for 1934.<sup>11</sup>

The next available data pertain to the second half of the 1930s. Official statistics relative to the Sanjak population at the end of the second quarter of 1936 reveal that 6,583 Armenians lived in Musa Dagh sub-district, of whom 6,115 Apostolic and 468 Protestant; for some reason the Catholics were not included.<sup>12</sup> What is also perplexing here is the sharp increase of the general population by 1,203 souls (18 percent) within the relatively short span of one-and-a-half year, from the end of December 1934 (5,650 persons) to the end of June 1936 (6,853 persons). No explanations exist, and no conjectures can be made.

The final three Musa Dagh population counts are from 1939, that is, around the time of the mass exodus from the Sanjak. According to a 28 June 1939 report by the Nansen International Office for Refugees in Beirut on the situation of Armenians in the Sanjak, Musa Dagh had a total population of 6,270 persons, distributed as follows: Bitias, 1,085; Haji Habibli, 1,055; Yoghunoluk, 1,315; Kheder Beg, 1,135; Vakef, 750; Kabusiye, 930. The report added: “It must be taken into account that since the last events [i.e., the Sanjak crisis], 5 to 600 persons have left the mountain, which brings the total population to [about]

<sup>7</sup> *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 14 October 1925.

<sup>8</sup> *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 2 November 1929 (the correspondence date is 30 September). The specific village populations are quite different from other tabulations (see details in Table 1).

<sup>9</sup> *Hayrenik*, 18 June 1931 (the correspondence date is 25 April). The actual number of the population was 4,933 when excluding some 100 youths who had migrated from Yoghunoluk.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas S. Greenshields, “The Settlement of Armenian Refugees in Syria and Lebanon, 1915-1939,” Ph. D. dissertation, Durham University, United Kingdom, 1978, pp. 165-66.

<sup>11</sup> *Husaper*, 27 December 1934.

<sup>12</sup> Greenshields, “The Settlement of Armenian Refugees,” p. 132. The 1936 Census is not included in Table 1 because it does not give details pertaining to the population of each of the six villages of Musa Dagh.

7000.”<sup>13</sup> Sixteen days later, on 14 July, Colonel Philibert Collet, the French officer in charge of the Armenians’ exodus from the Sanjak, furnished the following figures for Musa Dagh’s population: 1,272 families or 7,888 persons. (See Table 1). Both totals include the unspecified but numerically insignificant inhabitants of the League of Nations agricultural settlement of Nor Zeytun in the Bitias counts. Here too one is at a loss to explain the significant increase of 1,303 persons (16.5 percent) from 1936 to 1939, especially when there was an outflow, rather than an inflow, of people caused by the escalation of the Sanjak crisis. At any rate, another census, taken on 22 August, yielded the following results: 1,174 families at Ras al-Basit and 30 families at Kesab, for a total of 1,204 families (68 families less), or 5,025 persons at Ras al-Basit and 100 persons at Kesab, for a total 5,125 persons (2,763 persons less).<sup>14</sup> There were four reasons for these discrepancies. First, the 14 July census seems to be inordinately high. Second, a number of families and/or individuals mostly from Vakef did not migrate but rather stayed behind for good. (See Epilogue). Third, others relocated to Aleppo just before the exodus. (See Chapter 5). Fourth, some Musa Daghians were found to be in the region of Kesab; we do not know if they rejoined their fellow villagers at Ras al-Basit or Anjar later on.

Was Musa Dagh’s population young, middle-aged, or old? Although age was not included in the 1924 survey, the newspaper reporting it indicated that the average age in Musa Dagh “must be considered 37,” the oldest citizens being a 110-year-old woman from Kheder Beg and a 101-year-old man from Bitias.<sup>15</sup> Given the lack of corroborative evidence, it is impossible to ascertain this specific average, but partial statistics give a hint about age. A census of Yoghunoluk natives found at the Ras al-Basit camp on 19 August 1939 yielded the following results. There was a total of 799 persons, of whom 369 male and 430 female. They were also divided by age groups, as follows: 68 children (8.5 percent) between 1 and 5 years of age; 98 boys (12.3 percent) between 5 and 14; 64 girls (8 percent) between 5 and 12; 22 boys (2.75 percent) between 14 and 18; 206 males (25.8 percent) between 18 and 100; 341 females (42.7 percent) between 12 and 100. Therefore, boys ages 1–18 and girls ages 1–12 numbered 252 children, constituting

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<sup>13</sup> France, AMAE, E-Levant, Syrie-Liban, 1930-1940, Sandjak d’Alexandrette, Carton 530, Bart to R. Chambard, Note sur la situation des arméniens dans le Sandjak d’Alexandrette et leur installation éventuelle au Liban, 28 June 1939.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., telephone message from Bart (DELELATTA, i.e., Delegate at Latakia) to High Commissioner, Beirut, 22 August 1939.

<sup>15</sup> *Husaper*, 16 September 1924.

about 32 percent of Yoghunoluk’s population.<sup>16</sup> The specific age brackets for the remaining 68 percent may never be known. Notwithstanding, if teenage girls plus both men and women in their twenties and thirties were to be factored in, it can be concluded with relative certainty that the majority of the population of the largest village of Yoghunoluk was young. Could this observation about Yoghunoluk be generalized to apply to the other Musa Dagh villages?

### *Housing*

The overwhelming majority of Musa Daghians owned homes. A survey dated 11 July 1939 provides us with considerable detail respecting houses, orchards, and fields.<sup>17</sup> Most probably the survey was ordered by the French and carried out by Musa Daghians to have a record of the quantity, size, and value of fixed property—as well as movable belongings and liquid assets—that the Armenians owned at the time of their exodus from the Sanjak before 23 July 1939. In the absence of attendant explanations or clarifications, the methodology and accuracy of the figures contained therein remain unverifiable. Accordingly, they are presented here with caution.

According to the above survey, Bitias had 367 houses with 907 rooms, for an average of 2.47 rooms per house. Their average value stood at 1,343 Syrian liras, totaling 492,880 liras. (See Table 4). Another tabulation, also made in 1939, revealed the following picture. Of the 284 families (946 persons) in Bitias, 207 (73 percent) owned a single house each; 41 (14 percent) owned two houses each; 11 (4 percent) owned three houses each; 2 (less than 1 percent) owned four houses each. The balance of 23 families (8 percent) did not possess a residence. (See Appendix 1). They were either from the poorest class occupying empty or abandoned houses (usually belonging to émigrés in the United States) without rent, returnees (one family) from America living in the home of their parents/in-laws, and/or outsiders there on business. In the absence of additional information, the discrepancy of eighty-three houses between the two 1939 counts cannot be explained.

The 11 July 1939 survey also included housing in the other five villages. There existed in Haji Habibli 278 houses with 666 rooms and an aggregate value of 373,565 Syrian liras, averaging 2.4 rooms and 1,344 liras per house. Yoghunoluk had 243 houses with 907 rooms and an aggregate value of 336,900 liras, averaging 2.64 rooms and 982 liras per house. Kheder Beg included 304 houses with 895

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<sup>16</sup> Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Survey of the population of Yoghunoluk taken at Ras al-Basit, 19 August 1939.

<sup>17</sup> See Table 3 in this chapter as well as Table 1 in Chapter 3.

rooms and an aggregate value of 256,500 liras, averaging 2.83 rooms and 844 liras per house. Vakef encompassed 75 houses with 190 rooms and an aggregate value of 18,250 liras, averaging 2.53 rooms and 343 liras per house. Kabusiye comprised 316 houses with 690 rooms and an aggregate value of 155,979 liras, averaging 2.13 rooms and 494 liras per house. The combined total of housing in the six villages presented the following picture: 1,683 houses, 4,255 rooms with an average of 2.53 rooms per house, and 1,634,074 liras total value with an average of 971 liras per house. (See Table 3). The specific givens thus reveal that Bitias had the largest number of houses with the highest total value, which can be explained by the fact that it was a popular summer resort with a high demand for lodging. Vakef, on the other hand, constituted the smallest village with the lowest total value in housing.

No street names and signs existed in the Musa Dagh villages. By the same token, the houses, community centers like churches and schools, and businesses did not display addresses. To be sure, though, each building had a number recorded at least in certain official registries. Those numbers were utilized in formal dealings, as the following three categories demonstrate. First, in 1924, that is, the year when Musa Dagh was detached from Svedia sub-district and designated a distinct sub-district, its inhabitants received new identification papers that also included the holders' house number. One such document read: card number, 96; registry volume, 32; name and surname, Leon (Levon) Shemmassian; father's name, Jabra (Kapriel); mother's name, Marta; place and date of birth, Yoghunoluk, 1923; denomination, Armenian Protestant; married or bachelor and number of spouses, bachelor; county, Iskenderun; district, Antioch; residence number, 203.<sup>18</sup> Second, church records concerning civic matters indicated residence number. For instance, during his one-year tenure (July 1938-July 1939) as the Apostolic priest of Yoghunoluk, Fr. Movses Shrikian officiated at ten weddings, sixteen baptisms, and nine funerals. A summary sample from each category is given. For weddings: wedding number, 1; groom's name and house number, Misak Berberian, 233; bride's name and residence number, Vartuhi Abdalian, 136; wedding date, 29 July 1938. For baptisms: baptism number, 10; name and residence number, Kevork Bursalian, 169; baptism date, 5 February 1939. For deaths: death number 9; name and residence number, Dzaghig Yarialian, 2; death date, 28 June 1939.<sup>19</sup>

In the third place, the lists of first degree eligible male voters—those men

<sup>18</sup> Vahram Shemmassian, private papers, Granada Hills, California, Sandjak Autonome d'Alexandrette, Carte d'Identité no. 96, Carnet no. 32, Leon (Levon) Shemmassian.

<sup>19</sup> Fr. Shrikian, private papers, "Y. Oluk (J. Musa), Dede Mgrdutiants, Amusnutiants yev Maheru" (Yoghunoluk [Musa Dagh], Record book of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths), pp. 1-5.

twenty years of age or above on 1 July of election year—compiled in 1937 under the auspices of the League of Nations in preparation for the 1938 Sanjak legislative elections included the house number of each voter. The houses were numbered from 1-122 in Bitias (a very low figure when compared with the number of houses indicated above); 1-226 in Haji Habibli; 1-244 in Yoghunoluk; 1-231 in Kheder Beg; 1-96 in Vakef; 1-168 in Kabusiye. Within these ranges some house numbers were missing, as follows: 18 houses (15 percent) in Bitias; 48 houses (21 percent) in Haji Habibli; 43 houses (18 percent) in Yoghunoluk; 34 houses (15 percent) in Kheder Beg; 18 houses (19 percent) in Vakef; 22 houses (13 percent) in Kabusiye.<sup>20</sup> These omissions may be explained as follows: no eligible male voter(s) lived in any one of those dwellings, they were vacant or abandoned, and/or they were nonresidential buildings. Similarly, more than one voter lived in 72 houses (59 percent) in Bitias; 56 houses (25 percent) in Haji Habibli; 95 houses (39 percent) in Yoghunoluk; 67 houses (29 percent) in Kheder Beg; 29 houses (30 percent) in Vakef; 24 houses (14 percent) in Kabusiye. The cohabiters were overwhelmingly fathers and sons or brothers.<sup>21</sup> Whether those offspring and/or siblings were married and living in as extended households under the same roof cannot be ascertained with the information available, although that scenario may well have been the case in many instances. It should also be noted that a few cohabiters carried different last names, but probably they were relatives.

With rare exceptions, the houses in Musa Dagh faced south, "allowing the sun to inundate the rooms in the winter months."<sup>22</sup> Usually one or two stories high, they were built of thick stones with red tile roofs. The floors were plastered with dirt, which women renewed once or twice a year for cleanliness and to get rid of fleas. Because *hissers* (straw mats) or kilims covered the floors, they too were taken out, deloused, and cleaned.<sup>23</sup> As vacationing flourished in Bitias, concrete replaced dirt as floor covering.<sup>24</sup> Women also whitewashed the interior walls with

<sup>20</sup> League of Nations Archives, (hereafter LN), United Nations Library, Geneva, Switzerland, Fonds Extérieurs: Sanjak d'Alexandrette, Commission de la S.D.N., Archives du Tribunal Spécial, Carton C 1058, dossiers 3/37 and 3/38, *Djébel Moussa 2*, Listes des Electeurs du 1<sup>er</sup> Degré du village Bitias, du Hadji-Habibli, du Yoghoun-Olouk, Kheder-Bey, du Vakef, du Kéboussié pour l'Année 1937.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Alberta Magzanian, letter to the author, 23 October 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, "Hushakrutian Movses A. khn. Shrikiani (Avazanin Anun, Yesayi)" (Memoirs of Archpriest Movses Shrikian [Baptismal Name, Yesayi]), unpublished memoirs, p. 18; Khacher Madurian, "Mer Hatse" (Our Bread), in *Hushamadian*, pp. 148, 155-56; Sara Kendirjian Kerkejian, letter to the author, postmarked 19 November 1991; Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, unpublished memoirs, pp. 60, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Kendirjian Kerkejian, letter.

*khavura* (limestone) that possessed disinfectant qualities.<sup>25</sup> Each room normally enjoyed one or more *tabaqo* or *panjara* (window). Certain two-story dwellings had a stationary interior *muqabbo* (ladder) accessing the second floor through a ceiling opening with a safety hatch. But virtually all two-story houses had exterior *gabendak* (stairs) leading to the balcony, from which to enter the rooms. Regardless of the floor level, however, interior doors likewise interconnected the rooms. Lastly, the upper floors were made of wood rather than dirt or concrete.<sup>26</sup>

On the right wall of the main room a partial opening called *gudalviuts* retained two water *gudals* (jugs) and a *parchig* or *lusvig* (small jug) in between for drinking purposes. The *gudals*' mouths were covered with a wooden lid or an *usniuts* (shoulder pad) for carrying water from the springs. Another partial wall opening, called *badihun*, akin to a medicine cabinet, contained miscellaneous articles such as mirror, comb, brush, scissors, sewing box, bottles of iodine and rubbing alcohol, cotton, etc. Mattresses, bed sheets, pillows, comforters, and blankets were stored in a spacious, in-wall closet or *yiukliuk*, and unfolded and folded daily as people slept on the floor and got up next morning. Indeed, a number of Musa Daghians utilized actual *caryolas* (wooden beds) that rested on three-legged stools known as *ishsheog* (derived from the local Armenian word *ish*, meaning, donkey). On a carved-out back room wall there existed a large storage bin for wheat and corn, separated by a wooden partition and two distinct doors and accessed through two small openings at the bottom called *bliz*. Food in jars, dried fruits and vegetables, and other cereals in white, cotton *chantina* (sacks) were kept nearby.<sup>27</sup>

While air conditioners or ventilators like ceiling fans did not exist (due to the absence of electricity), "during the winter months the main source of heat was a charcoal fire in a pit in one of the corners of the living room surrounded by comfortable mats & cushions. When necessary, charcoal fire in a *mangal* [brazier] was used in other rooms. All rooms where charcoal was used had a small opening on the northern wall near the ceiling for ventilation against carbon monoxide poisoning."<sup>28</sup> At bedtime, the pit was covered with a copper tray. On very cold days a low, round or square wooden table was placed on the pit, covered with a *lihif* (comforter) or quilt and a kerosene lamp in the middle, thereby forming a *tander* (hearth). Social life during winter revolved around this heating arrangement as family members and guests sat on *mindars* (cushions)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.; Madurian, "Mer Hatse," pp. 155-56.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, 24 June 1989, Fresno, California.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter; Fr. Shrikian, "Hushakrutian," p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Magzarian, letter.

and conversed, ate snacks, solved puzzles, played cards and backgammon, and read or narrated stories.<sup>29</sup>

The *matpakh* (kitchen) existed as an enclosed cooking space only in well-to-do residences. In the rest of the homes, a corner of a room served that purpose. In both cases, there was no running water. Similarly, there were not distinct dining rooms; people ate at a *sufra* (low wooden table) seated on cushions in the main, multipurpose chamber. Bathing, laundry, cooking pastes, boiling wheat, etc., took place in an outbuilding. The flow of streams running through the village was diverted to these outbuildings to be utilized for the above activities. Where water flowed from a distance or into a central reservoir like that of Yoghunoluk, it was carried in jugs and tin cans. Further away in the yard a modest shack functioned as a privy. But in the resort of Bitias, and among some well-to-do families elsewhere in Musa Dagh, actual in-house toilets began to replace those antiquated outdoor facilities. Virginia Matosian Apelian, whose émigré parents had returned from the United States to Musa Dagh in 1934, wrote about her family's modern toilets in Yoghunoluk:

I was told by dad that our beautiful house had a Spanish tile roof and balconies all around. Not only that, but also American-style toilets, which became a special show place. When word got around, people wanted to see the toilets in our home. Mom told me that it was very annoying after awhile [sic] when people would stop to see the toilets. They were a novelty for the village people.<sup>30</sup>

The houses were scattered among several neighborhoods in each village. A few neighborhoods were actually small clusters situated outside the village peripheries. To be sure, neighborhood names did not have official capacity; rather, the villagers ascribed them informally. A number of neighborhoods bore the name of clans. While such neighborhoods accommodated members of those clans, other members of the same clan also lived in different neighborhoods. By the same token, families with different surnames, whether or not related to the clans, likewise inhabited clan neighborhoods. Other neighborhood names were descriptive, for example, Yurutsunts Mhallan (the Priest's Neighborhood) in Haji Habibli, Kharub Ikkek (Ruined Vineyards) in Yoghunoluk, Plluz Izziyir (Crumbled Edge) in Kabusiye, and Yehudi Mhallan (the Jewish Neighborhood)

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Shemmassian Kundakjian; Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter.

<sup>30</sup> Virginia Matosian Apelian, *Musa Dagh Girl: Daughter of Armenian Genocide Survivors* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2011), p. 141.

in Kheder Beg.<sup>31</sup> The origin of the latter designation is not known. Lastly, social status did not necessarily characterize the neighborhoods except (partially) for two in Yoghunoluk: the wealthy Kazanjian families lived (among others) in the Gedeg neighborhood, and the (mostly) have-nots resided in the Vire Teugh neighborhood.<sup>32</sup>

### *Family, Kinship, and Gender Roles*

Exogamy was the norm in family formation: a distance of “seven navels” of blood relations was kept to avoid genetically transmissible disorders from occurring.<sup>33</sup> As a rule, marriages were arranged. Parents knew best for their son, but obtained his consent after focusing on a suitable girl. They then conducted a background check on her and her family’s socioeconomic status, reputation, and physical/mental fitness. Eventually, before making any commitment, the girl’s family also inquired about their future son-in-law and his kin. These checks were more easily done in village-endogamous cases, where people knew each other rather well, than in village-exogamous ones, which were not too common.<sup>34</sup> Elopements took place occasionally when a boy and a girl were in love and her

<sup>31</sup> The village neighborhoods were as follows: in *Bitias*: Kayraghaye, Balabanlutse Mhallan (the Balabanians’ Neighborhood), Minasen Serte (Minas’ Back), the segment between Minasen Serte and Sherbetjints Kushan, Sherbetjins Kushan (the Sherbetjians’ Corner), Kbranints Chukore (the Kbranians’ Ravine), Yaralek, Vire Gule (the Upper Threshing Floor), the segment between Frangen Aghpayre (the Franks [retired British diplomat John Barker] Water Spring) and Qaberlek, Qaberlek (Cemetery), Laglagen Serte (the Stork’s Back), Andekints Mhallan (the Andekians’ Neighborhood), Shibil Ayn; in *Haji Habibli*: Shersheroye, Terjeneg, Galloye (the Small Threshing Floor), Siupkiuklake (the Siupkiukians), Yaghpayre (the Spring) or Dudaklutse Mhallan (the Dudakians’ Neighborhood), Yurutsunts Mhallan (the Priest’s Neighborhood), Khazzegnen; in *Yoghunoluk*: Gedeg, Vire Teugh (the Upper Neighborhood), Nerke Teugh (the Lower Neighborhood) in the village center, Kharub Ikkek (Ruined Vineyards), Atamlak (the Atamians/Chemenians), Amaj; in *Kheder Beg*: Kezhderlak (the Kezhderians), Baghellak (the Bakkalians), Hajjelak (the Hajians), Havernuts, Chukore (the Ravine), Yehudi Mhallan (the Jewish Neighborhood), VireAzzir (the Upper Edge); in *Vakef*: Hajjelak (the Hajians), Ante Karshen (the Other Side), Aste Karshen (This Side), Manjelak (the Manjians), Central Quarter, Nerke Azzir (the Lower Edge); in *Kabusiye*: Vire Aghpayre (the Upper Spring), Nerke Aghpayre (the Lower Spring), Gallire (the Threshing Floors), Selirke, Kukayr, Plluz Izziyr (the Crumbled Edge), Vire Teugh (the Upper Neighborhood), Chevlik.

<sup>32</sup> Tovmas Habeshian, *Musa-Daghi Babenagan Artzakankner* (Ancestral Echoes of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Ereputi Press, 1986), pp. 204-06; Hovhannes Hajian, “Im Hushere” (My Memoirs), unpublished manuscript, notebook 3, pp. 51-57, 68-74.

<sup>33</sup> Krikor Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutuyune* (The Ethnography of Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences of the Republic Armenia “Kidutyun” Publishing House, 2001), p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

father opposed their union.<sup>35</sup> In case of legal recourse, the girl’s wish prevailed.<sup>36</sup> Girls commonly married in their teens and boys by their mid-twenties. In rare instances, especially when a girl’s material wealth or inheritance prospects exceeded those of the male suitor, she could be older than him.<sup>37</sup>

Generally speaking, asking for a girl’s hand in marriage and obtaining her family’s consent involved three visits to their house by a delegation representing the bachelor’s family. During the first visit, the priest/pastor, chairman of the parish council/church board, a village notable, and/or an elder male member of the family made their intentions known. During the second visit, the team obtained verbal approval. The actual engagement took place during the third visit with both families participating. Festivities marked the occasion. While engaged, the couple could not meet privately or speak to one another even in the presence of others so as to maintain family “honor” or “dignity” and also keep a certain distance just in case things went wrong.<sup>38</sup>

Weddings took place on Saturdays. Specially prepared foods and traditional music, songs, and dances enriched the celebration. The groom and godfather were dressed by the *igitbashi* (leader of braves) and his informal voluntary association of village bachelors. A group of women, including unmarried women and newly-wedded ladies, performed similar rituals at the bride’s house. A joyous procession marched from the groom’s house to the bride’s house, picked her up, and led her to the church, usually on a horse. As a rule, the bride’s parents did not attend the church service, the explanation being that they “mourned” her leaving their home to join another family. After the wedding ceremony, the groom’s relatives converged on his residence to continue the celebrations. Young women from the bride’s side carried the *kumash* (fabric) and other articles as part of her *uzhed* (dowry), while a man carried the heavier dowry chest. Before the couple’s entry into the house, the bride symbolically smashed a clay jar to dispel evil spirits. She also threw a pomegranate to the ground or at a wall in hopes of having as many children as the number of seeds that burst out. Festivities continued through Sunday. The honeymoon took place at the husband’s house (traveling to a preferred or exotic destination was an unknown luxury). Celebratory gunshots fired in the air signaled the bride’s virginity at the time of marriage (the method of verifying virginity is not specified), thereby satisfying both families that their

<sup>35</sup> Chaparian Papakhian, memoirs, p. 57.

<sup>36</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutuyune*, p. 149.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52; Fr. Shrikian, “Hushakrutium,” p. 69; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 163-65.

honor remained unblemished.<sup>39</sup> Last but not least, only death could separate a couple; divorce was virtually unheard of.<sup>40</sup>

Children were expected to be born within the first year of marriage. Traditional treatments, sometimes mixed with folkloric rituals, were employed in case a woman did not become pregnant. But divorce was not an option even if all conception methods failed. People preferred to have a boy as their first child, for two reasons: to continue the family name and to have an economic helping hand. The first male and female children were invariably named after their paternal grandfather and grandmother. Boys and girls were raised differently after a certain age. In the case of boys, emphasis was placed on hard work so that they could support their families in the future. In the case of girls, childhood was a time for learning how to become good housewives. That is why, generally speaking, girls' formal schooling was not considered as important,<sup>41</sup> although that mentality had begun to change.

By all indications, family size in Musa Dagh was not big. Three surveys bear out this fact. To begin with, the average family size in each village based on a 1929 population count was as follows: Bitias, 5.05; Haji Habibli, 4.4; Yoghunoluk, 5; Kheder Beg, 4.83; Vakef, 5.4; Kabusiye, 5, for an average of 4.94. (See Table 1). Second, a survey conducted sometime in 1939 in preparation for the exodus revealed the following figures (unfortunately those of Yoghunoluk and Vakef are not available): Bitias, 278 heads of households, 946 family members. Listed under "head of household" were 63 bachelors (mostly) and unmarried women (and perhaps a few old widows and widowers) with no family members of their own indicated. Therefore, the actual number of heads of households was 215 and the average family size was 4.33, 10 being the largest size. In Haji Habibli, there were 207 heads of households with a total of 909 members, for an average of 4.39 members, 11 being the largest size. In Kheder Beg: 217 heads of households, 1,037 members, 4.77 average household size, 11 being the largest size. In Kabusiye: 184 heads of households, 890 members, 4.83 average household size, 9 being the largest size. To summarize, household size in those four villages varied between 4.33 and 4.83 members, for an average of 4.58 members. (See appendices 1, 3-5).

Third, a 22 August 1939 French survey conducted at the Ras al-Basit encampment yielded the following results: Bitias: 228 families, 982 individuals, 4.3 individuals/family (the averages are mine); Haji Habibli: 215 families, 909

<sup>39</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, pp. 202, 153-67; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 166-70. See also Fr. Shrikian, "Hushakrutium," p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, pp. 147, 149.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-74.

individuals, 4.22 individuals/family; Yoghunoluk: 236 families, 886 individuals, 3.75 individuals/family; Kheder Beg: 243 families, 1,082 individuals, 4.45 individuals/family; Vakef: 89 families, 368 individuals, 4.13 individuals/family; Kabusiye: 193 families, 898 individuals, 4.65 individuals/family.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, family size varied between 3.75 and 4.65 individuals, for an average of 4.25 individuals per family. To conclude, although there are differences among the averages of the three surveys, they still indicate that family size in Musa Dagh was small, under five members per family. Unfortunately, we do not have concrete evidence as to the number of families living together under the same roof, although there is a hint to that effect in the section on housing above.

Husband-wife relationships, and the social status of men and women in general, differed to some extent depending on location and religious denomination. The Musa Dagh villages could be divided into two groups for our purposes: Group 1: Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, Kabusiye; Group 2: Bitias and Haji Habibli. In Group 1, there was marked inequality between the two genders. Men made the important decisions and gave the orders, while women had to obey without questioning them. However, women, not men, carried heavy loads of wood and bushes, as well as water from the springs. Men did not even carry their children in public, considering it inappropriate, if not shameful.<sup>43</sup> Although women shouldered a heavier burden than men in terms of house chores, child rearing, and economic contribution, their duties were not acknowledged or appreciated by society at large. If a couple went out together for some reason, they walked separately, with the wife trailing behind. At the Apostolic Church, men occupied the front section, followed by elderly women in the middle and younger ones at the far end near the entrance.<sup>44</sup>

In Group 2, women felt less constrained by traditional, conservative dictates. Within the Protestant community especially, they were more outspoken in their views. Husbands were less controlling and more respectful towards their spouses. Married couples usually walked next to each other on outings, sometimes even arm-in-arm. No less burdened with heavy labor than women elsewhere, they

<sup>42</sup> France, AMAE, E-Levant, Syrie-Liban, 1930-1940, Sandjak d'Alexandrette, Carton 530, telephone message from Bart (DELELATTA, i.e., Delegate at Latakia) to High Commissioner, Beirut, 22 August 1939.

<sup>43</sup> Telephone interview with Vehanush Kuyumjian Bursalian, 25 September 2013, Granada Hills, California-Fresno, California; telephone interview with Sosen Shrikian Bidanian, 25 September 2013, Granada Hills, California-Fresno, California; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 170.

<sup>44</sup> Telephone interview with Shrikian Bidanian. For the heavy work done by women, consult Madurian, "Mer Hatse," pp. 148-58.

were nevertheless recognized for their substantial contributions to family well-being. There certainly was physical separation between genders during church worship. But it was a parallel division, meaning, the men sat in the right pews and the women in the left pews facing the pulpit, thus not according to a front-back order. The Apostolic community in Bitias, while not as liberal, was influenced by the Protestants and therefore less conservative than its counterparts in Group 1.<sup>45</sup> The Haji Habibli community, although belonging almost entirely to the Apostolic Church, was quite similar to its Bitias coreligionists in terms of women's status and gender relationships. This can be explained in part by the familial relationships that a number of people from both villages had, and by their proximity.<sup>46</sup> Information pertaining to man-woman relations and status in the smaller Catholic communities of Kheder Beg and Yoghunoluk is not available. Notwithstanding, it would be relatively safe to assume that Catholics were closer to conditions existing among their fellow Apostolic villagers.

With some exceptions, the husband in Group 1 did not speak with or refer to his wife by her first name. He instead called her *meir* (our), *chujekhnen muar* (the children's mother), *genag* (wife/woman), *ashgein* (girl/daughter of... [father's name]), etc.<sup>47</sup> In turn, the wife addressed or referred to her husband as *mourt* (man/husband) or *meir mourt* (our man/husband). Why? In the case of men, it was because expressing affection whether at home or in public, even by just mentioning the wife's Christian name, was considered shameful, or not uttering her name would affirm or reinforce his authority or superiority. In the case of women, they had to maintain the expected formality by addressing their spouses in the third person.<sup>48</sup> But in Bitias, both husband and wife called each other by their first names<sup>49</sup>—another manifestation of informality or open affection. This, and some of the above phenomena, could be explained by the many decades of exposure to American Protestant missionary liberalism, at least compared to Musa Dagh conservatism,<sup>50</sup> and as an effect of the bourgeois lifestyles of summer vacationers. (See Chapter 7).

<sup>45</sup> Telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland, 25 September 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 31 December 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Telephone interview with Shrikian Bidanian; telephone interview with Kuyumjian Bursalian; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutyune*, p. 144.

<sup>48</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutyune*, p. 144; telephone interview with Bidanian.

<sup>49</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 21 August 2013.

<sup>50</sup> For the activity of American Protestant missionaries in Musa Dagh during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 81-98.

An elaborate terminology identified the various family members including those of in-laws and godfather. *Dud* and *mar* denoted father and mother, respectively. *Babag* was the designation for paternal as well as maternal grandfather. But "grandmother" was treated differently. While *dadimar* literally meant father's mother, *kiremar* meant maternal uncle's mother. In other words, maternal grandmother came to be known through her son rather than directly through her daughter. This can be viewed as yet another indication that Musa Dagh society was by and large patrilineal. The paternal uncle was *amma*, whereas his wife was called *aghpergen*, that is, (father's) brother's spouse. *Hurker/hurkayr* was paternal aunt and *hurkerar* her husband. *Kira* was maternal uncle and *kiregen* his wife. *Murker/murkayr* was maternal aunt and *murkerar* her husband. A woman's father-in-law and mother-in-law were known as *(e)sgsrar* and *(e)sgiseur*, whereas a man's father-in-law and mother-in-law were called *kayenbaba* and *kaynana*. The word for husband's brother was *dakrari* and that for his wife *nirdigen*. The husband's sister was *dul* or *daldigen*, but no particular name, it seems, existed for her husband. On the other hand, the wife's brother was *keina*. A man's family called his wife *hurs* (bride/daughter-in-law) and their daughter's husband *piso* (groom/son-in-law). Siblings and cousins called each other *aghpar* (brother) and *kayr/kureug* (sister). A grandchild of either sex was *turen*. As for godfather, he was addressed as *bub*, his wife as *mum*, mother as *babumar*, and sister as *babuker*. Strangely, here too the *bub's* father and brother did not have particular designations. However, the godfather's entire family was respectfully addressed as *babenk*. People followed in-law- and godfather-related protocols attentively, as reciprocal invitations, visits, and/or gift exchanges took place on special family occasions and religious holidays.<sup>51</sup>

### *Surnames and Nicknames*

Musa Daghian surnames, which may be divided into six main categories, constituted additional indicators of social roles, status or relationships. To begin with, a significant number of families identified themselves by the first name of a founding ancestor or patriarch plus the "ian" Armenian suffix, in this case meaning "descendent of." Thus, *Tovmasian*, *Torosian*, *Matosian*, *Antreasian*, *Mikaelian*, *Aprahamian*, *Andonian*, *Nigoghosian*, *Melidonian*, *Isgenderian*, and

<sup>51</sup> For family membership terminology, see Sima Aprahamian, "The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa: From Stratified Society through Classlessness to the Re-Appearance of Social Classes," Ph. D. Dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1989, pp. 72-3; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutyune*, p. 144; interview with Isgender Nashalian, 1 July 1989, Glendale, California; interview with Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, 1 September 2013, San Carlos, California.

so on. Because some families hailed from priestly background, they added the *Der* (Father/Lord) title to their surname: *Der Kalusdian*, *Der Bedrosian*, *Der Hovhannesian*, *Der Arakelian*. Second, a tangible fraction of last names revealed the bearers' geographical origin, such as *Bolisian* (from Constantinople), *Stambulian* (from Istanbul), *Izmirlian* (from Izmir/Smyrna), *Bursalian* (from Bursa), *Aintabian* (from Aintab), *Urfalian* (from Urfa), *Kebreslian* (from Cyprus), and *Kesablian* (from Kesab).<sup>52</sup> In other words, the Musa Dagh community comprised a mixture of people from different places, whose forebears had migrated to or taken refuge in Musa Dagh for various reasons, thereby adding to a presumed original core which must have existed since antiquity.

In the third place, certain surnames hinted at occupations. This category included the *Boyajians* (painter), *Kushakjians* (maker/seller of girdles), *Berberians* (barber), *Kuyumjians* (goldsmith), *Demirjians* (ironsmith), *Tenekejians* (tinsmith), *Kazanjians* (cauldron maker), *Keoshkerians* (shoemaker/cobbler), *Sherbetjians* (juice seller), *Kadeian* (judge), *Kassamanian* (tax distributor/divider), etc. To be sure, the 1920s-1930s generation, that is, those who had such family names, did not necessarily practice the stated professions; rather, they carried on those personal identifiers bequeathed to them by previous generations. The same category of surnames also indicated some types of official religious role, for example, *Zhamgochian* (church bell sounder/assistant to the priest) and *Shemmassian* (deacon). Fourth, the peculiar physical feature and/or ability of an ancestor determined a last name (evidently evolving from a nickname). For instance, the *Filians* (elephant) were so called because of their huskiness; the *Jambazians* (acrobat) demonstrated agility; the *Tilkians* (fox) either resembled or acted like that wily animal; the *Kerkezians* (vulture) were somehow associated with that ravenous bird, etc. Fifth, honorific titles formed a few surnames, such as *Begian* (sir/country gentleman), *Aghaian* (notable), *Efendiian* (educated gentleman/high-ranking Ottoman personage), and *Pashaian* (highest title of Ottoman and military officers). Whether they truly testified to the bearers' high rank (in the Ottoman era) cannot be readily determined. And the sixth category of last names consisted of a potpourri of designations, some explicable, others not.<sup>53</sup>

A number of families had the same roots, but carried different surnames. There are two explanations for this phenomenon. The first deals with size. As families in time grew larger, some heads of households decided to adopt their

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<sup>52</sup> For surnames, see appendices 1-5. The names and surnames are listed as spelled in the original documents and therefore often differ from the spellings in the text.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* The translations/interpretations of names are mine.

father's or immediate grandfather's name as last name to avoid confusion. In some of these cases nicknames offered a practical solution, as explained by Bitias native Alberta Magzarian:

Some may dismiss nicknames as a frivolous topic, but not in a place where people were known by their nicknames and not any given names. Besides, in a small community where there is a tradition of naming one's first born after a grandparent, within a couple of generations, one may end with multiple Hagops, Annas, Musas, Maries, etc. Nicknames were creative and solved many identity problems. In some instances, the nickname was adopted as the new family name—a challenge for people who want to trace their genealogy, an issue I am sure did not concern those who made the change. Our family name, Magzarian went through such mutations.<sup>54</sup>

Others, who did not necessarily bear an ancestor's first name as last name, still wanted to go their separate ways. For instance, the original Stambulian split with some family members in Bitias becoming Keshishian. Ethiopia-born Hagop Atamian explains the reason behind the Atamian-Chemenian division in Yoghunoluk:

My grandfather was Khatcher, son of Hagop. Khatcher changed his name from Atamian to Chemenian. According to my aunt's stories, letters, etc. which my father used to send to his father from Ethiopia sometimes reached the other Khatcher Atamian (his cousin??) by mistake. So my grandfather apparently got angry about this and decided to change his name to Chemenian (it is said he liked to eat chemen [a spicy seasoning]). So, part of my dad's family subsequently became Chemenian.<sup>55</sup>

The second reason emanated from a desire to Armenise the family name from its original Turkish version. Such was the case, for instance, of the *Keshishians* (priest in Turkish) and *Yeretsians* and the *Bayramians* (holiday in Turkish) and *Donigians*, both sets of families being from Kabusiye. As these and other families over time splintered into multiple branches, they naturally transcended the traditional understanding of "extended family" as three generations living under the same roof. Hence, one would find in Musa Dagh, as in other societies, people claiming the same roots but with various last names, not just in the case

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<sup>54</sup> Magzarian, letter, 2 February 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Hagop Atamian, email to the author, 15 December 2011.

of females (who would adopt their husband's name), but also males.<sup>56</sup>

It should also be noted that people with the same surname in different villages may or may not have been related. For instance, the Zobians in Haji Habibli and Bitias claimed common ancestry. Because Kheder Beg and Vakef were offshoots of Yoghunoluk, their inhabitants with the same last name were usually related, for example, the Shemmassians of Yoghunoluk and Vakef and the Adajians of Yoghunoluk and Kheder Beg. On the other hand, the Mardirians of Haji Habibli, Kheder Beg, and Kabusiye, and the Sherbetjians of Bitias and Kheder Beg had no common bonds.

Parents named their children at birth, but people ascribed unofficial names to each other according to their preferences or perceptions. Locally referred to as *laghabu* (*laqab* in Arabic, meaning, title/label), nicknames were usually given not during childhood, but rather after adolescence, when a person had formed his distinct personality and/or lived long enough to be recognized by a distinctive feature. No adult male (or some women), it seems, was immune to this practice. That the phenomenon of labeling was prevalent and deeply rooted in Musa Dagh society was underscored by the fact that peoples' actual names/surnames were sometimes, if not often, forgotten as they were supplanted by nicknames commonly used in everyday life.<sup>57</sup>

Various factors determined nicknames. To begin with, they described individuals based on their origins or histories. A lad orphaned as a result of the 1909 massacres in Antioch and subsequently relocated to Bitias for safety became known as *Antakalen* (the Antiochian). Krikor Arushian, a baker in Bitias, and his family were referred to as *Urfatsink* (hailing from Urfa).<sup>58</sup> An expatriate in the United States who returned to his native Yoghunoluk after World War I was recognized as *Amirikitsen* (The American), and so on.<sup>59</sup>

A certain activity, behavior or manner figured prominently in giving informal names. *Uchereb*, a corruption of the Turkish-Arabic compound word meaning "three-quarters" (in this case, of 1 lira), was a man who charged that amount when purchasing orders for fellow villagers in Antioch. *Tahtelbahar*, another compound Arabic word, meaning "under the sea," dove into the Buyuk Karachay to catch fish. *Pst* walked quietly like a cat. *Kute Charek*, meaning, "bad shoe" in Turkish, was a thief. *Kambuza* prepared an eponymous onion dish. *Tk-tk* used to knock on doors in his childhood. *Keklik* imitated the sound of a partridge.

<sup>56</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, p. 141.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 6 January 2002, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 5 January 1990, Hollywood, California.

An old woman called *Atash Nana* worked hard and fast like a consuming fire.<sup>60</sup> *Khuruzink* were known as such, because their family patriarch, Sarkis Igarian, did two things: first, every time that he finished building a house, he climbed to the roof and crowed like a rooster as a sign of accomplishment; second, he organized and/or enjoyed cock fights.<sup>61</sup> A man who gossiped became known as *Fesfes*.<sup>62</sup>

Looks also captured the attention of name givers. *Kallash* was bald. *Ashkar* had blond hair. *Ingiliz* looked fair like an Englishman. *Ezghir's* (Arabic word) body was small, and so was *Petit* Vanis's. *Kerraj* had remained diminutive. *Ishnunink* (derived from the local Armenian word *ishsheunk*, i.e., fall), appeared pale and exposed like a leafless tree in autumn. *Saba* and *Dkhruni* resembled a Greek merchant from Antioch and a Social Democrat Hnchagian (SDHP) leader called Sarkis Dkhruni (Kederian), respectively. *Kartaloghlan* comported himself in a proud manner like an eagle.<sup>63</sup> *Garmer's* (red) face radiated that color; it also betrayed the man's Communist orientation.<sup>64</sup>

People with physical/mental impairments did not escape comment. *Gayr* (blind), *Shashgah* (cross-eyed), *Kheul* (deaf), *Tupal* (lame), *Chulakh* (crippled hand), *Garj* (short), *Kheiv* (fool), and other adjectives were given unabashedly. Certain unsavory acts likewise created nicknames, but these were few and far between. Character (stinginess), one's nature (melancholic), occupation (butcher, clairvoyant), miscellaneous other nicknames, and weird, inexplicable designations also made the list.<sup>65</sup>

Something said by someone, whether just once or repeatedly, would be cause to affix a nickname to that person for life. Magzarian elaborates her mother's case:

The majority of the male inhabitants of Bitias may have earned nicknames in their life time, but the same cannot be said of the women. There were, however, a few exceptions, such as...our mother Victoria Chaparian Magzarian. At a young age, our mother acquired the nickname Keleshum and she retained it

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Sherbetjian.

<sup>61</sup> Telephone interview with Florence Igarian Harutiunian, 27 October 1991, Van Nuys, California-Glendale, California.

<sup>62</sup> Sarkis Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner Musa-Daghen yev Modig Antsialen* (Memorial Scenes from Musa Dagh and the Recent Past) (Los Angeles, CA: Sarko Printing, 1983), p. 81.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Sherbetjian.

<sup>64</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 73-4.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Hajian.

throughout her life. When mother was about four years old, she accompanied her Chaparian cousins to a picnic at the outskirts of the village to gather *manigh*, a wild edible weed. While the older Chaparians were digging up the plants, it seems mother collected some of their harvests and took it to an elderly woman from the village of Yoghun Oluk. The lady was delighted by her action and addressed her by the following words, “*Keleshum, chuts el aghveur lortch itchvinir gunna.*” Translated from the dialect into “pretty one, you have such pretty blue eyes.” That did it! On their way back home, the cousins took turns carrying her almost as a trophy on their shoulders and, of course constantly addressing her as Keleshum.<sup>66</sup>

Another person from Bitias was called *Khashdag* (a corruption of the Arabic word for “enough”) because he used that term profusely. In fact, the entire family became known as Khashdagink. Kevork Sherbetjian carried the label of *Aziz* (dear) for his sweet talk and addressing his fiancée as such. A man greeting others with the Arabic *marhaba* (hello) acquired the nickname *Mahrabe*. When asked what he was up to, a farmhand replied, “*eqlibo*,” meaning, turning the soil upside down. So people nicknamed him *Eqlibo*.<sup>67</sup> A villager from Vakef was anointed *Jsd-Vsd* because he repeatedly said “*jsd-vsd alright*” when supposedly “answering” a visiting Englishman’s questions.<sup>68</sup> The list goes on.

Defying life’s unfairness in terms of low socioeconomic status constituted yet another nickname determinant. This was particularly—and perhaps uniquely—true in the case of the inhabitants of the Vire Teugh neighborhood of Yoghunoluk, who counted among the have-nots. Demonstrating a sense of acceptance mixed with humor, they mocked poverty by bestowing honorific titles on each other. Thus, a poor man was *agha*, a poorer man *pasha*, and the poorest man *efendi*.<sup>69</sup>

The village notables were the unquestioned *aghas* or *barins/bariuns* (barons). Even if in rare cases there was a necessity for another nickname, still it would be applied in conjunction with the honorific title, for example, *Sallan Bariun* (Yesayi Aprahamian of Kheder Beg). Moses Der Kalusdian, on the other hand, arguably the most dominant figure in post-World War I Musa Dagh politics, was referred to as *the Efendi*. (See Chapter 3). As for clergymen of the three denominations (Apostolic, Catholic, Protestant), they were addressed by their proper titles. Fr. Hagop Kelemian, one of the Apostolic priests in Haji Habibli, was additionally

<sup>66</sup> Magzarian, letter, 2 February 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Sherbetjian.

<sup>68</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Habeshian, *Musa-Daghi*, pp. 204-06.

referred to as *Der Hmbalus* (Father Myrtle), perhaps for his excessive craving for that fruit. Similarly, parishioners at Vakef branded a non-native priest as *Char* (naughty/evil) for his selfish, worldly lifestyle.<sup>70</sup>

Unknown to the public at large, nicknames in the form of *noms de guerre* were adopted by members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) for exclusive, insider, clandestine use. Several categories of fictitious names existed. Some were derived from nature, denoting toughness and/or ferociousness: *sar* (mountain); *zhayr/abarazh* (rock); *gaydzag/paylag/shant* (lightning); *hur* (fire); *yergat* (iron). Others were selected from the animal kingdom, manifesting combativeness, peace, and beauty: *ariudz* (lion), *kayl* (wolf), *varaz* (wild boar); *ardziv* (eagle), *paze/shahan* (hawk); *dadrag* (dove); *sokhag* (nightingale). Still others were adaptations of the first names of Armenian political and military leaders, freedom fighters, and ancient pagan gods: Arshag, Vartan, Vahram, Vahan, Mushegh, Smpad, Suren; Keri, Murad; Vahakn. Furthermore, a number contained the “uni” suffix that many *nakharar* (medieval Armenian feudal lord) dynasties carried as part of their surname: *Peruni*, *Nerguni*, *Anmahuni*. A mixture of other designations, including shorter versions of common names as well as strange, inexplicable names, completed the catalog of *noms de guerre*.<sup>71</sup> SDHP members may also have followed this tradition of using pseudonyms, but hard evidence is lacking.

The nicknaming practices of Musa Daghians revealed the character of the people. First, they indicated strong imagination, a characteristic that must have been acquired from nature and from the unhindered freedom of thought that nature afforded, in addition to innate ability. Second, they indicated an acute awareness of the social and physical environment. Being highly perceptive, nothing seemed to escape their eyes (and ears). In this, they described their observations quite accurately. Third, their crudeness did not spare people with physical shortcomings; little consideration was given to human sensitivities, and causing psychological damage did not seem to matter. Fourth, they generally showed respect towards clergymen, educators, and other notables. Fifth, they did not mince words; they were straightforward and unabashed. Sixth, they demonstrated an uninhibited sense of humor. Seventh, they mocked life with all its socioeconomic inequalities. They, in short, reflected characteristics, some positive and some negative, not much different especially from others living in challenging environments.

<sup>70</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 70-1, 106.

<sup>71</sup> Armenian Revolutionary Federation Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, File 965/28, *H.H.T Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide 1921 T.* (A.R.F. Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee 1921), the Roster of Kabusiye Comrades, untitled roster of Yoghunoluk comrades.

### *Food, Health, and Public Safety*

The types of food consumed by Musa Daghians naturally had a direct bearing on their individual and collective well-being. Nearly everything they ate was locally grown and organic. Domestic animals, mainly goats, grazed in the unspoiled pastures, and their droppings were utilized as fertilizer. Meat, dairy products, cereals, fruits, and vegetables were thus not adulterated. No preservatives were added to foods stored in jars for winter use. Drinking water was carried by women from its sources in springs rather than from streams that would contain impurities.<sup>72</sup> Only in Yoghunoluk was a reservoir built for water shortage.

Besides being natural and/or organic, the Musa Dagh diet was quite balanced. All categories of nutrients existed: carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water. The largest number of servings came from the fruit and vegetables groups—usually low in calories and fats. Combined, these two groups formed about 40 percent of the diet. The breads, cereals, and grains group—high in complex carbohydrates, proteins, fibers, B vitamins, and minerals and low in cholesterol—formed about 30 percent of the diet. The meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dried beans, and nuts group—which provided the necessary proteins, vitamins, and minerals—formed about 17 percent of the diet. The milk and dairy products group—which provided calcium, and was high in saturated fat and cholesterol—constituted only about 6 percent of the diet. The fats and sweets group—consisting of foods high in calories and low in nutritional value—formed the balance. It should be noted that olive oil, rather than animal fat, was used. Desserts were prepared only on special occasions, such as holidays, engagements, and weddings.<sup>73</sup>

Besides a healthy and balanced diet, two other factors contributed to the Musa Daghians' overall fitness: physical activity and clean air. All aspects of daily life in this mountainous, agrarian, non-mechanized setting entailed physical labor. The farmers, herders, muleteers, wood cutters, charcoal makers, artisans, hunters, and fishermen walked, carried raw materials or finished products, climbed and descended the hills, and dove into the river or the sea as they worked. The women were even more active. In addition to their daily routine of cooking, cleaning, and

<sup>72</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 21 August 2013.

<sup>73</sup> This assessment is based on the food categories listed in Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian, and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in a Dialect of Its Own* (N.p.: Lulu.com, 2008); telephone interview with Magzarian, 21 August 2013. For the Musa Dagh cuisine, see also Jack Hachigian, *Secrets from an Armenian Kitchen* (N.p.: n.p., 2006); Women's Guild of St. Paul Church, Anjar, Lebanon, *Musa Leran yev Aynjari Dohmig Jasher* (Traditional Foods of Musa Dagh and Anjar) (Beirut: Hamazkayin "Wahe Sethian" Press, 2001).

child-rearing, they washed dishes and laundry by hand, carried water from the springs, assisted their husbands in procuring wood from the forests for comb and spoon making, engaged in cocoon production, crafted embroideries, worked in the fields and orchards, and prepared food supplies for winter. Visiting relatives, friends, and neighbors, as well as visiting churches, schools, and stores/bazaars, all took place on foot.<sup>74</sup> Clean air, too, had its positive effect. The sea breeze, long distance from cities, high elevations, and absence of industrial plants running on charcoal rendered the skies smog-free.<sup>75</sup> After the mid-1920s a few cars were operating, mainly in fair weather; they could not yet have polluted the air to a discernible degree.<sup>76</sup>

Although the Musa Daghians were generally slim and fit, with little or no visible signs of obesity,<sup>77</sup> naturally they, like all other human beings, suffered from certain illnesses. Malaria (especially around Kabusiye near the sea where mosquitoes abounded), pneumonia, jaundice, measles, liver disease, tuberculosis, cancer, etc., all caused some harm.<sup>78</sup> Miscarriages, caused mainly by hard, sustained physical labor and/or carrying heavy loads, likewise took a toll.<sup>79</sup> Venereal diseases contracted by returning Légion Arménienne soldiers and other men traveling to cities for business and other purposes posed serious threats to healthy family life.<sup>80</sup> Lamented one newspaper: "Aphrodisiac maladies are quite widespread, but the unfortunate thing is that they are kept secret and [people] think very little about remedies."<sup>81</sup>

Musa Dagh did not have resident doctors, as was the case in most rural

<sup>74</sup> See chapters 3 and 4 for work-related physical activity. For hunting and/or fishing in general, see Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: "Orenk yev Iraganutyun" Printing, 2005), pp. 127-33; Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 89-90; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, pp. 82-6. For social-ethnographic life in general, see Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 145-85.

<sup>75</sup> The only modern factory that existed in Musa Dagh was that of textile manufacturing in Bitias, where the machines were operated only by hand and motor-generated electricity. For details, see Chapter 4.

<sup>76</sup> For limited motorized traffic, see Chapter 7.

<sup>77</sup> I have come to this conclusion based on my extensive collection of pictures of Musa Daghians.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Mari Shemmashian Bursalian, 16 March 2008, Fresno, California; Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On a Life's Traces), (Palm Springs, CA: Haig's Printing, 1990), p. 15; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, pp. 174-79.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Shemmashian Bursalian.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.; *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 13 November 1925.

<sup>81</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 13 November 1925.

areas in the Antioch district.<sup>82</sup> Medical treatment was available only occasionally. Summoning a physician from Antioch cost a fortune; those who could afford it paid as much as 6-10 gold liras for a house call.<sup>83</sup> Sometimes patients themselves sought help elsewhere. Some patients traveled to Kesab to see Dr. Avedis Injeikian.<sup>84</sup> Doctors on non-work related visits to Musa Dagh or those commissioned by the government filled the void to some extent. For instance, Dr. Albert Giureghian, while in Musa Dagh from Antioch in early March 1922 to partake in an ARF public function, tended the sick free of charge.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, “the mobile doctor of Alexandretta” in July 1927 made two “unannounced” tours, one of Bitias and another of Haji Habibli, gave free consultations, and distributed quinine. Besides their purely medical benefits, these tours had another desired consequence: “The political results of these two tours were considerable. It is the first time that a French doctor has penetrated Musa Dagh (...) (which) has contributed towards the population of Bitias determining to participate in [unpaid] road works in which they had refused to take part until now.”<sup>86</sup> In the same general vein, three professionals in November vaccinated the Sanjak population against smallpox. Cases of typhus, malaria, etc., were immediately reported “to the competent services.”<sup>87</sup> From 1934-38 the French also treated Musa Daghians, especially laborers stricken with malaria in the Orontes valley.<sup>88</sup> Last but not least, according to Alberta Magzarian, during the second half of the 1930s “a certain Miss Schaeffer..., a German medical missionary stationed in Antioch, visited Bitias several times with two young assistants. They checked, gave free advice to the women in the village and distributed free medicines. They spent several days with us and even extended their services to the Tat [Alawite] villagers to the north of us.”<sup>89</sup>

The Syrian Armenian Relief Cross played an important, albeit limited, role in the Musa Daghians’ health. Beginning in 1927 the Armenian Red Cross/

<sup>82</sup> Isabelle Mavian, “La communauté Arménienne de la région de Kessab à l’époque du mandat Français sur la Syrie (1918-1940),” *Mémoire de Maîtrise*, Paris I-Sorbonne, 1993-1994, p. 78.

<sup>83</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 13 November 1925.

<sup>84</sup> Mavian, “La communauté Arménienne,” p. 78.

<sup>85</sup> *Husaper*, 25 March 1922.

<sup>86</sup> From a 1 August 1927 report in the French military archives, as cited in Mavian, “La communauté Arménienne,” p. 78. For a full citation of the French source, see idem, p. 83, endnote no. 35.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Harutiun Sherbetjian, private papers, North Hollywood, California, Rapport du medecin-capitaine Laouenan, chef du service sanitaire du camp d’Andjar sur l’installation dans la Bekaa des émigrés Arméniens du Sandjak d’Alexandrette, 4 June 1940.

<sup>89</sup> Magzarian, letter, 23 October 2008.

ARC (now Armenian Relief Society/ARS) in the United States prepared the groundwork for an affiliate in Syria and Lebanon. Two dates, a year apart, have been mentioned for the start of these efforts. According to an official publication, the ARC in July 1929 charged an educator named Khachig Karugian with visiting and founding chapters in Armenian-inhabited communities in those two countries. Representatives from the dozen chapters thus formed met in Aleppo on 9 August 1929 and created a five-member Temporary Regional Committee to manage what became known as the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross (SARC). By early October this organization succeeded in establishing a combined chapter in Yoghunoluk and Bitias with fifteen members.<sup>90</sup>

According to another report dispatched from Aleppo, Dr. Toros Basmajian and Khachig Karugian explained to the ARC the myriad needs of the large Armenian refugee population concentrated in Syria and Lebanon. Consequently, on 2 June 1930 the ARC asked that Karugian visit the Euphrates basin, which he did. He also toured the Sanjak of Alexandretta. At the same time, an ARF leader named Mihran Herardian, while on vacation in Lebanon, volunteered to recruit SARC members locally. By 25 August 1930 these efforts yielded some fifteen SARC chapters in Syria and Lebanon. Additional chapters, including those of Musa Dagh, would gradually be incorporated once SARC received official recognition from the government.<sup>91</sup> In fact, within a year the SARC in Musa Dagh boasted seven chapters—including that of Haygatashd or Nor/New Nakhichevan, the emerging colony of migrants on the Svedia plain—with a total of 250 male and female members.<sup>92</sup> However, both the number of chapters and their membership declined steadily, to one chapter in Bitias with thirty-seven adherents in 1939.<sup>93</sup> This decline was attributed to the fierce competition

<sup>90</sup> *Album Hay G. Khachi Ir Ksanamiagin Artiv 1910-1930* (Album of the Armenian Red Cross on the Occasion of Its Twentieth Anniversary 1910-1930) (Boston: Hayrenik Press, 1930), p. 237. For the emergence of SARC and its chapters, see also *Hay G. Khachi Dasnerort Enthanur Bad kamavoragan Zhoghovi (Kumarvadz Detroit, 1930, Hulis 4-8) Deghegakerere, Hashvegshirnereyev Voroshumnere* (The Reports, Balance Sheets and Resolutions of the Tenth Delegates’ Meeting of the Armenian Red Cross [Convened in Detroit, 4-8 July 1930]) ([Boston: Hayrenik Press, 1930?]), pp. 21, 49-50, 70.

<sup>91</sup> Armenian Relief Society Archives (hereafter ARS), Boston (now Watertown), Massachusetts, File ARS, SOKH, *Syria, Beg[inning]-1929 [-1939]*, Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Central Board, April 1931- April 1935, 21 April 1935.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Summary of the Minutes of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Second Delegates’ Meeting. The meeting was held on 22 April 1935, Aleppo.

<sup>93</sup> *Deghegaker Suriahay Oknutian Khachi Shrchanayin Varchutian 4 Hunvar 1939-30 Abril 1940* (Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Regional Committee 4 January 1939-30 April 1940) (Aleppo: A. Der-Sahagian Press, 1940), p. 6.

launched by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).<sup>94</sup> Be that as it may, the SARC in Musa Dagh, as elsewhere in Syria, concentrated its activity on education, with some attention given to health.

In 1931, the SARC sent a doctor to Bitias for eye examinations. He also cured other illnesses. Dr. Rupina Ohanchanian, a vacationer at Bitias, performed similar functions on behalf of the SARC for a month free of charge. In addition, the SARC hired a nurse for Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, and Kabusiye. In case of urgent need, a visiting doctor from Svedia would be dispatched to those villages.<sup>95</sup> By the following year health services covered all seven villages (apparently including Haygatashd). Although this work was carried out “with utmost frugality,” the results were deemed far greater than the expenses.<sup>96</sup> After two-and-a-half years, however, this health service stopped due to the lack of funds.<sup>97</sup> Notwithstanding, the Third SARC Delegates Meeting in Aleppo in 1936 resolved “to prepare nurses and midwives from local talents, and if there is available manpower, to utilize it in Musa Dagh and other places with needs.” The meeting likewise instructed the SARC Central Executive “to immediately organize” and “push” the educational and health work in Musa Dagh.<sup>98</sup> Information is not available as to whether those instructions were carried out. Last but not least, in 1938-39 the SARC distributed circulars pertaining to health matters among Armenian village communities across Syria.<sup>99</sup>

A few medicine men and women partially compensated for the lack of licensed resident doctors. Manuel Shemmassian acted as Vakef’s “healer.” He acquired medications from Aleppo together with prescription instructions and stored them in a small pharmacy-infirmery he had built adjacent to his house.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>94</sup> ARS, File ARS, SOKH, 1933-1934 Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross to the ARC Delegates’ Meeting, 28 May 1934.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Sarkis Selian and Toros Basmajian to ARC Central Board in Boston, 6 November 1931.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 7 September 1932.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Central Board, April 1931-April 1935, 21 April 1935.

<sup>98</sup> *Deghegaker Suriahay Oknutian Khachi Getronagan Varchutian yev Masnajiugheru 30 Abril 1935-10 Abril 1936 yev Hashvegshir u K. Badkm. Zhoghovi Voroshumner* (Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Central Committee and Chapters 30 April 1935-10 April 1936 and Balance Sheet and the Third Delegates’ Meeting Resolutions) (Aleppo: A. Der-Sahagian Press, 1936), p. 37.

<sup>99</sup> “Deghegaker Suriahay Okn. Khachi Shrch. Varchutian 1938-1939” (Report of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Regional Committee 1938-1939), *Hay G. Khach* (Armenian Red Cross), 1<sup>st</sup> Year, 1: 3 (July 1939): 50.

<sup>100</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 110-11.

A co-villager extracted aching teeth with a “centuries old,” “rusty” pliers.<sup>101</sup> Mayrum Maghzanian Makhulian of Bitias, nicknamed “Shepert Nana” after the famous American missionary-physician Dr. Fred Shepard of Aintab, “with no training began to practice her skills on everybody who needed help... She gathered fresh herbs, concocted some potion and cured people. Probably, she delivered about 80% of the babies in the village... Even our summer guests [i.e., vacationers] consulted with her after visiting their own doctors in Aleppo.”<sup>102</sup> In fact, she “ministered not only to the Armenians... but to the surrounding Tat villagers.” As such, “she was everyone’s doctor, midwife, veterinarian, specialist and pharmacist. In short, a truly ‘renaissance’ medicine woman.”<sup>103</sup> Members of the Giudeshian clan in Haji Habibli assumed the hereditary role of curing a particular leg ailment called “charcoal fire.”<sup>104</sup>

Yoghunoluk native Armenag Lakisian rendered his medical services using his hands-on experience gained in a formal setting. While a corporal in the Légion Arménienne in post-World War I Cilicia, he was sent by his French superiors to serve in a military hospital on the island of Kastelorizo in the Dodecanese, Greece. When he returned home after the Legion’s demobilization armed with a nursing permit, the sub-district municipality charged him with tending the sick in the six villages of Musa Dagh. As such, he earned the unofficial title of “Dr. Armin,” as pronounced in the local dialect.<sup>105</sup>

Besides these medical workers, the populace at large tried to cure ailments through traditional methods. These included applying potions, olive oil, herbs, etc. Certain conditions required other types of intervention. For example, dysentery was treated by drinking burnt and crushed turtle shell. Diphtheria was treated by branding the aching spot on the neck with a cigarette or a burning piece of cloth. Fear was dispelled by drinking one’s own urine. Leeches were applied to the body to suck out “dirty” blood in case of prolonged headaches, and so on. People sometimes resorted to superstitious practices and/or fortune tellers in search of relief for their medical complaints.<sup>106</sup>

In addition to diseases, mishaps also caused injuries and death. Hunting

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>102</sup> Alberta Magzarian, private papers, Alberta Magzarian letter to Yola Hayes, 6 August 2006.

<sup>103</sup> Magzarian, letter, 1 February 2009. See also Zora Isgenderian, “Zhoghovrtayin gam Ardnin Pzhshgutian” (Popular or Domestic Medicine), in Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 186. For the life of Dr. Shepard, consult Alice Shepard Riggs, *Shepard of Aintab* (New York, NY: Interchurch Press, 1920).

<sup>104</sup> Isgenderian, “Zhoghovrtayin gam Ardnin Pzhshgutian,” p. 187.

<sup>105</sup> Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, pp. 317-18.

<sup>106</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, 174-79.

and fishing (with dynamite) accidents maimed, blinded, and/or killed people. Falls from high places like trees, rocks, roofs, and animals sometimes proved fatal. Poisonous snakes posed a serious threat. The rare instances of drowning or suicide caused deep sorrow to families. In short, people suffered from or lost their lives as a result of a full range of illnesses and catastrophes, in addition to old age.<sup>107</sup>

Widespread alcohol use—particularly *oghi*, an aniseed-based spirit made from grapes or figs and akin to the Arabic araq, Greek ouzo or Turkish raki—and drunkenness among young and old men alike, in addition to having a detrimental impact on physical well-being, raised serious concerns.<sup>108</sup> Life would have been “envious,” wrote a reporter, had just half of the money spent on spirits been devoted to education.<sup>109</sup> Besides, excessive alcohol consumption, coupled with the customary practice of firing gunshots in the air during private celebrations and national holidays, not only disrupted the villages’ tranquility, but also threatened public safety as self-control weakened and stray bullets caused bodily injuries and death. In order to remedy this situation, Movses Der Kalusdian, after assuming the governorship of the newly-formed Musa Dagh sub-district in 1924, in tandem with his ARF chapter, forbade the use of drums and guns during celebrations.<sup>110</sup> But “seeing that our comrades [still] commit acts that disturb the peace of the villages through gunfire and other unbecoming behavior and thus hinder comrade Movses’ work,” the ARF decided to warn affiliates “to come to their senses and stand back from their wrong steps.” Otherwise, Der Kalusdian “is free as governor to strictly punish, according to the spirit of the law, any comrade who is found in undisciplined conduct.”<sup>111</sup> Needless to say, those harmful practices were not confined only to the ARF membership;

<sup>107</sup> For deaths resulting from various mishaps, consult Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of the Armenians of Svedia), edited by Yesayi Havatian, (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), pp. 225, 227, 248, 263.

<sup>108</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 7 October 1924; Rev. Garabed Harutiunian, “Surio Tashde—Avedaranchagan Bduyd me” (The Syrian Field: A Missionary Trip), *Yeramsia Lradu Hay Avedaranchagan Engeragtsutian Amerigayi* (Quarterly Bulletin of the Armenian Missionary Association of America) 5:4 (May 1927): 8.

<sup>109</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 6 November 1925.

<sup>110</sup> Hagop Boghos Jambazian, private papers, North York, Ontario, Canada, photocopy of “Antamatsutsag H. H. Tashnagtsutian Svedio Garmir Ler Yentagomideyin. 1 Mard 1919, Port Said” (Membership Roster of the Svedia ARF Red Mountain Subcommittee, 1 March 1919, Port Said), minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 5 September 1924. In addition to the roster, this notebook contains minutes of meetings from 1920-1921, as well as copies of letters and circulars from 1923-1927. The originals of this and another notebook are in the ARF archives in Watertown, Massachusetts.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> Session, 6 October 1924.

the Vakef SDHP chapter, for instance, likewise opposed “intentional” gunfire during “demonstrations and feasts,” imposing a 20-piaster fine on offenders.<sup>112</sup> Notwithstanding, it is unclear if celebrations were ever brought under full control, because gunshots continued to sound as a means to express the wild spirits of joyous occasions.<sup>113</sup>

The above dangers alone did not define public safety or its lack thereof. Property-related disputes were commonplace. Because real estate borders were not clearly demarcated, especially when fruit trees naturally grew without following property lines, ownership claims oftentimes ended in disputes. Trespassing onto another’s farmland or orchard likewise created problems. For instance, when a shepherd from Vakef led his goats into a neighbor’s grove to graze, thereby causing some damage to vegetation, the neighbor returned the favor by uprooting the herder’s newly-planted olive trees.<sup>114</sup> Another man in Kabusiye stole tiny mulberry trees belonging to the village teacher and sold them to neighboring Alawites.<sup>115</sup> Chicken and animal thefts also took place.<sup>116</sup>

As for some of the more serious crimes, failure to win a girl’s heart, particularly when another competitor was involved, sometimes took young lives.<sup>117</sup> Kidnappings were extremely rare. Only one known case of abduction and rape has been recorded.<sup>118</sup> A year-old boy was snatched from his home and left under a bush in the wilderness to instigate animosity between two families over an engagement issue.<sup>119</sup> Promiscuity seldom happened.<sup>120</sup> Family feuds on occasion claimed lives from both camps. In Haji Habibli, for instance, social-political rivalry pitted certain Dudaklians against Mardirians, evolving into mutual hatred and culminating in assassinations. In 1929 law officers from Antioch intervened and in the process killed Sdepan Dudaklian, a major

<sup>112</sup> Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives, Vienna, Austria, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutian 1928[-1938]* (Hnchagian Party 1928[-1938]), New Period, S.T. *Hnch[agian] Gusagtsutian Vakefi Masnajiughy Artzanakrutian Dedrag, 1928[-1938]* (Social Democrat Hnchagian Party [SDHP] Vakef Chapter Records Notebook, 1928 [-1938]), 4<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting, 9 August 1931.

<sup>113</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiyune*, pp. 152-59; Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 33, 40.

<sup>114</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 106-07.

<sup>115</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 83.

<sup>116</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiyune*, p. 202; telephone interview with Magzarian, 29 July 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 118-19; Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 211.

<sup>118</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 16.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Nubar Boghigian, 9 May 2009, Glendale, California.

<sup>120</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiyune*, pp. 202-05, 207; Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 88.

protagonist. A few others, who were similarly sought by the law, were either wounded or arrested and sent to Antioch to stand trial.<sup>121</sup> Isolated killings in the other villages were also reported.<sup>122</sup>

Statistics pertaining to overall crime in Musa Dagh during the interwar years are not available. The following cases, however, provide an idea about the types and scope of offenses committed. In 1937, there were sixteen male criminals from Musa Dagh aged twenty and above wanted by the authorities or actually serving time in Antioch prison. Eight of them hailed from Haji Habibli, two each from Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, and Kabusiye, and one each from Bitias and Vakef. They were convicted for the following crimes: ten for murder, one for attempted murder, one for causing bodily injury, one for cutting a body part, and three for theft. Their punishment varied. In the murderers' case, one was condemned to death in absentia, one to life in prison in absentia, one to fifteen years of hard labor in absentia, two to fifteen years of hard labor, one to fifteen years in jail, one to ten years of hard labor, one to five years of hard labor, and two to three years in jail. Three years of hard labor was given to the person convicted for attempted murder; three years of prison time to the one who had caused bodily injury; fifteen years of hard labor to the one who cut a body part; six years of hard labor in absentia to the two thieves; and one-and-a-half year of hard labor to the third thief. All sixteen criminals had lost the right to exercise their civic duties such as voting in the Sanjak of Alexandretta legislative elections to be held in 1938.<sup>123</sup> At the time of the Sanjak's cession to Turkey in 1939, these and other offenders were set free.<sup>124</sup>

Offenses in Musa Dagh were first and foremost handled locally. The reason was that society was sensitive to washing its dirty linen in front of the outside world as a matter of honor (the Haji Habibli-Bitias deadly feud in the early 1920s being the exception as it spiraled out of control). Only cases of serious crimes were handed over to the law authorities in Antioch. Although an official court of justice did not exist in Musa Dagh as such, a tribunal consisting of the village headman, his council, and church council tried to resolve the issues at hand. The methods applied to reveal truth and determine commensurate punishment

<sup>121</sup> *Yeprad* (Euphrates) (Aleppo), 2 January 1929, 20 February 1929, 4 May 1929, 29 June 1929.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 December 1928; Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 264-65.

<sup>123</sup> LN, Fonds Extérieurs: Sanjak d'Alexandrette, Carton C 1058, dossiers 3/37, *Djébel Moussa 2*, II. Condamnés, Liste des citoyens né avant 1918 etayant perdu leurs droits civiques par suit de condamnation ou interdiction judiciaire à partir de 1927. See also *idem*, C 1092, dossier *Listes des Demandes d'Inscriptions: Refusees: Djébel-Moussa*.

<sup>124</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 85-6.

included advice, tricks, threats, shaming, beating, and so on.<sup>125</sup> Depending on the nature of the offense, the Sub-District Governor, the village headmen or notables could also adjudicate alone. Teachers, who commanded great respect in the community, on occasion intervened for wrongdoers to change their behavior. In Kabusiye, for instance, Sarkis Urfalian counseled a former student of his, now a married man, to refrain from causing all sorts of trouble that might eventually hurt him. Although the latter promised and earnestly tried to change, in 1936 he was killed for "the injustices he had done over the years."<sup>126</sup> It took law enforcement some time to identify the assassin, because eyewitnesses remained silent for fear of retribution. And when the culprit was arrested, he served a short prison term due to his clan's connections in high places, which enabled his release.<sup>127</sup> But in general, offenses in Musa Dagh were mostly of a petty nature.

### Conclusion

Musa Dagh society between the two World Wars functioned foremost according to traditional norms. A strong family with all its connections remained the core institution. Men retained the upper hand in dealing with important matters. Although women carried a heavier burden than men in sustaining the family, they nevertheless did not have an equal or effective say in the major decisions. It is true that "tradition" oftentimes carries a positive connotation. Nonetheless, when traditional practices are not moderated by civic institutions, they may lead to undesirable consequences. In the case of Musa Dagh, while the villagers voiced the utmost reverence for morality and honor, they often took matters into their own hands and pursued destructive courses of action. Fortunately, however, the sub-district governors, village headmen, influential notables and even teachers mediated to resolve disputes or solve problems on the spot by virtue of their official responsibilities and/or socially-derived authority. In addition, the clean environment people lived in, the natural food they ate, and their rigorous physical activity, made their society a notably healthy one. But this positive picture was somewhat offset by accidents, injuries, violent incidents, and diseases. Given the absence of physicians, dentists, and health facilities like hospitals, infirmaries, dental clinics, and pharmacies, as well as health education, regular checkups for preventive purposes or the possibility of quick intervention or cure was virtually non-existent. In conclusion, like all other comparable societies, the Musa Dagh Armenians lived their lives with certain traditions, difficulties and complexities, trying to maintain an acceptable balance.

<sup>125</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, pp. 201-08; Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter.

<sup>126</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 3-4, 58.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

Table 1

## The Population of Musa Dagh, 1920–1939

Year	Bitias	Haji Habibli	Yoghunoluk	Kheder Beg	Vakef	Kabusiye	Total
1920	775	815	1,050	835	365	415	4,255 (a)
1920	720	898	1,070	920	445	460	4,515 (b)
1923	742	910	1,125	928	445	475	4,625 (c)
1924	752	929	1,109	937	389	577	4,693 (d)
1925	740	910	1,105	929	440	447	4,571 (e)
1925	750	900	1,100	930	440	470	4,590 (f)
1929	556	933	935	653	757	900	4,734 (g)
1931	823	842	1,145	913	476	734	5,036 (h)
1932	916	919	1,285	1,044	425	753	5,342 (a)
1934	950	985	1,350	1,115	465	788	5,650 (a)
1939	1,085	1,055	1,315	1,135	750	930	6,270 (i)
1939	978	1,601	1,471	1,620	581	1,637	7,888 (j)
1939	982	909	886	1,082	368	898	5,125 (k)

Sources: (a) *Husaper*, 27 September 1934; (b) AGBU/SB, File 13 C, Natanian to Malezian, 16 November 1920; (c) *Husaper*, 6 December 1923; (d) *Husaper*, 16 September 1924; (e) “Vijagakrutium Musa Leran Hay Kiugherun” (Survey of the Armenian Villages of Musa Dagh), in M. Ajemian, M. Siserian, E. Vosgerichian, compilers, *Suriayah Daretsuyts* (Syrian Armenian Almanac), 2<sup>nd</sup> year (Aleppo: Arax Printing, 1925): 241-43; (f) *Suriagan Mamul*, 14 October 1925; (g) *Hayrenik*, 2 November 1929; (h) *Hayrenik*, 18 June 1931; (i) France, AMAE, E-Levant, Syrie-Liban, 1930-1940, Sandjak d’Alexandrette, Carton 530, Bart to R. Chambard, Note sur la situation des arméniens dans le Sandjak d’Alexandrette et leur installation éventuelle au Liban, 28 June 1939; (j) Idem, Carton 471, ff. 199-203, Collet, Note de Service, 14 July 1939 (the Bitias count includes the inhabitants of Nor Zeytun as well); (k) Idem, Carton 530, telephone message from Bart (DELELATTA, i.e., Delegate at Latakia) to High Commissioner, Beirut, 22 August 1939.

Table 2

## Official Census of Musa Dagh, 1924

Villages	Apostolic			Evangelical			Catholic			GT
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
BITIAS	240	246	486	128	138	266	-	-	-	752
HAJI HABIBLI	476	453	929	-	-	-	-	-	-	929
YOGHUNOLUK	426	465	891	52	53	105	52	61	113	1,109
KHEDER BEG	389	413	802	6	3	9	62	64	126	937
VAKEF	187	201	388	-	-	-	1	-	1	389
KABUSIYE	291	286	577	-	-	-	-	-	-	577
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>4,693</b>

Legends: M=Male; F=Female; T=Total; GT=Grand Total.

Source: *Husaper*, 16 September 1924.

Table 3

## Home Ownership in Musa Dagh, 11 July 1939

	Bitias	Haji Habibli	Yoghunoluk	Kheder Beg	Vakef	Kabusiye	Totals
Houses	367	278	343	304	75	316	1,683
Rooms	907	666	907	895	190	690	4,255
Rooms/ House	2.47	2.4	2.64	2.83	2.53	2.13	-
Value	492,880	373,565	336,900	256,500	18,250	155,979	1,634,074
Value/ House	1,343	1,344	982	844	243	494	-

Legend: Size is in *donums*; value is in Syrian liras.

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Statistiques des habitants et biens immeubles des populations de Bitias, de Hadji-Habibli, de Yoghoun-Olouk, de Kheder-Bey, de Vakef, de Kéboussié, et poids de leurs bagages.

### Chapter 3

## AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Armenian Musa Dagh was an agrarian society. Although scenic and rich in flora, the landscape nevertheless offered only limited opportunities for farming and livestock rearing. In addition, the lack of modern technology and innovation, as well as the nature of interrelationships among the various socioeconomic groups, rendered progress slow and often difficult. This chapter deals with the various aspects of and actors involved in agriculture and animal husbandry during the interwar years. Due to the lack of sufficient evidence, matters of taxation and property transactions including inheritance are by and large not covered.

### *Arable Land*

Insufficient arable land in Musa Dagh hindered economic growth. Despite the “superhuman efforts” to convert the steep terrain into usable terraces, called *saki* or *mandul*, the available cultivable soil satisfied less than half of the population’s demands.<sup>1</sup> Certain measures were taken from the outset to remedy the imbalance as much as possible. To begin with, because entire clans deported from Kabusiye had been decimated in the Syrian town of Hama and its environs during the World War I genocide, survivors faced new realities upon returning home in 1919. Some utilized lands belonging to deceased relatives, others married sole female survivors to benefit from their inherited or inheritable possessions, and still others filed lawsuits to claim properties that led to “endless grudges and hatreds,” sometimes culminating in bloodshed.<sup>2</sup> Young families likewise sought tillable lands beyond the village boundaries. Some fifteen to twenty households extended their reach to Chevlik, a “very desirable parcel of land” about one-half hour from Kabusiye and 5–6 minutes from the Mediterranean. The settlers were from “the poor class... who are engaged in gardening and vegetable cultivation, and some, if work is to be found, toil as laborers for 2–3 francs.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, about fifteen well-to-do families, like those of Kevork Baljian and Samson Bayramian,

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<sup>1</sup> *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 14 February 1925; *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 7 May 1925; *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 14 October 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On A Life’s Traces) (Palm Springs, California: Haig’s Printing, 1990), pp. 51-2.

<sup>3</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union archives, Cairo, Egypt, (hereafter AGBU/Cairo), Binder 195, eight representatives of the Chevlik Armenian population to the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee in Cairo, 7 September 1936. See also Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 50-1.

spent the summer season on their properties at Magharajik/Magharnen (caves), within the general contours of the Seleucid ruins near the sea, to look after their agricultural interests.<sup>4</sup> A few individuals of means from some of the other villages likewise owned properties in Magharajik.<sup>5</sup>

The cultivable lands of Bitias spread in three main directions. One covered an area extending from Umman to Tataralang, both situated at higher elevations close to Musa Dagh's peaks. The Umman segment, in particular, was divided among four families and produced some of the best potatoes, garbanzo, and corn.<sup>6</sup> The second area extended from Bitias southward to the Buyuk Karachay (Big Black Stream) encompassing orchards belonging to the Balabanians, Jambazians, and other families.<sup>7</sup> The third area covered Chaghlaghan, a lush spot one-half hour walking distance to the northeast of Bitias. Watered by a torrent originating from nearby Kizil Dagh (Red Mountain) and cascading down to empty into the Buyuk Karachay, Chaghlaghan was owned exclusively by seven families from the Maghzanian clan, four of which lived in Bitias and the rest in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Samuel Magzarian (nicknamed "Mashghul"), one of the main holders of the property which he described as "the Garden of Eden," "spent six days a week there from sunrise to sunset, planting, grafting, pruning, bee-keeping and harvesting. Everything alive, vegetation and wildlife, was part of his extended family; he loved it all."<sup>9</sup> Bitias itself, like the rest of the villages of Musa Dagh, perhaps with the partial exception of water-deprived Yoghunoluk, "was one big orchard. The limestone houses with tile roofs were surrounded by grape arbors and fruit and nut trees. From February through November one could see

<sup>4</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 50-1; interview with Sarkis Giuzelyan, 4 June 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>5</sup> Armenians from some of the other villages of Musa Dagh who possessed property in Magharajik included Serop Gebeshian (who had a fig garden and three silk houses operated by Alawite sharecroppers) and Kapriel/Jabra Shemmassian. Interview with Mardiros Hagop Boyajian, 10 June 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>6</sup> Telephone interview with Arakel Izanian, 6 October 1991, Van Nuys, California-Sunland, California. The four plots in Umman were owned by Hetum Filian, Movses Renjilian, the Chaparians ("Kbranink"), and the Sherbetjians (this segment was left unattended, probably because the owners had emigrated to the United States).

<sup>7</sup> Telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 2 June 2010, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. The seven Magzarian owners of Chaghlaghan were the brothers Samuel, Manase (in the US), Hovagim, and Sdepan (in the US), their first cousins Hovagim and Hagop, and another cousin named Sdepan (in the US).

<sup>9</sup> Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian, and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in A Dialect of Its Own* (N.p.: Lulu.com, 2008), p. 148.

flowers and fruit everywhere, most commonly apricots, apples, peaches, plums, grapes, oranges, pomegranates, loquats, walnuts, olives, mulberries, and multiple varieties of figs. Most mulberry orchards were outside the village."<sup>10</sup>

The Armenians of Yoghunoluk expanded their agricultural domains in the early 1920s by coercing the inhabitants of the Turkish village of Kabakli, situated between Yoghunoluk and Kabusiye, into leaving the area and later selling their properties to the Armenians.<sup>11</sup> Yoghunoluk's territory also covered part of Sultumu/Surutme (ruins of a monastery named after St. Thomas), along the road leading to Haji Habibli in the northeast, where several families looked after their vineyards and olive and mulberry gardens.<sup>12</sup> Sakez near the Amaj neighborhood of Yoghunoluk encompassed a number of orchards.<sup>13</sup> The lands of Haji Habibli spread to Terjeneg and Sultumu on the road to Yoghunoluk and the western banks of the Buyuk Karachay.<sup>14</sup> Vakef's territories rubbed shoulders with the hamlets of Kurtderesi/Kurtrasen in the southwest and Jreiri in the southeast, and also enveloped the satellite neighborhood of Nerke Azzir (Lower Edge).<sup>15</sup> The Vire Azzir (Upper Edge) neighborhood and its lands, on the other hand, were part of Kheder Beg's extended domains, which were covered with citrus and other fruit groves giving that village a very verdant quality.<sup>16</sup>

The Musa Daghians categorized their arable lands as follows. *Chereverk* meant plots by running waters and/or irrigable. This type defined most Vakef plots. The *dashdya* group was devoid of water for irrigation. The upper half of

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>11</sup> Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: "Orenk yev Iraganutyun" Printing, 2005), p. 60; Khacher Madurian, "Kebusiye," in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds, *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Boyajian. Some of the individuals who had property at Sultumu were Hovsep Der Bedrosian, Sarkis Hajian, Bedros Aprahamian, Boghos Abajian, Serop Gebeshian, Yesayi Kuzian, and a certain Armen from Kheder Beg.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. Nareg Shrikian, unpublished memoirs, Montebello, California, p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> For descriptions of Haji Habibli and its lands, see Zora Isgenderian, "Haji Habibli," in Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 69-77; National Harach-K. Giulbengian College Archives, Anjar, Lebanon, Kevork Kerekian, "Haji-Habibli," 22 April 1965; interview with Antranig Kerekian, 9 June 1989, Van Nuys, California.

<sup>15</sup> For descriptions of Vakef and its lands, see Khacher Madurian, "Vakef," in *Hushamadian*, pp. 101-04; Sarkis Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner Musa-Daghen yev Modig Antsialen* (Memorial Scenes from Musa Dagh and the Recent Past) (Los Angeles, California: Sarko Printing, 1993), pp. 112-26.

<sup>16</sup> For a description of Kheder Beg and its lands, see Khacher Madurian, "Khederbeg," in *Hushamadian*, pp. 97-100.

Kheder Beg fell under this description, whereas the lower half was *chereverk*. Most Yoghunoluk plots were likewise *dashdya*. The *tarla* or *khupor* was cultivated for cereals and melons. The orchards were called *bakhcha* or *jneyni*.<sup>17</sup> The ratio or percentage of each category cannot be readily determined. For our purposes, the arable lands are treated under two broad headings: orchards and fields.

### *Orchards and Fruit Growing*

In 1938 the French mandatory government began a survey of Musa Dagh through aerial photography and triangulation, without being able to complete it—Bitias, for example, was not covered—due to the change of government in the Sanjak of Alexandretta in 1939.<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, even the survey's partial results, had we known their whereabouts and if they were available, would have shed much light on fixed property in Musa Dagh. Fortunately, however, another survey, dated 11 July 1939, provides us with considerable detail regarding houses (see Chapter 2), orchards, and fields (see Table 1).

According to this survey, the Musa Daghians possessed 3,903 orchards, divided as follows: 951 in Kheder Beg; 740 in Haji Habibli; 713 in Bitias; 652 in Yoghunoluk; 511 in Kabusiye; 336 in Vakef. Their total area measured 7,987 *donums/dönüms* (about 1,997 acres/7,507,780 m<sup>2</sup>), with Kheder Beg claiming 2,087 *donums* (522 acres/1,961,780 m<sup>2</sup>); Yoghunoluk, 1,771 *donums* (443 acres/1,664,740 m<sup>2</sup>); Kabusiye, 1,384 *donums* (346 acres/1,330,960 m<sup>2</sup>); Haji Habibli, 1,250 *donums* (313 acres/1,175,000 m<sup>2</sup>); Bitias, 928 *donums* (232 acres/872,320 m<sup>2</sup>); Vakef, 567 *donums* (142 acres/532,980 m<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, an average orchard in Yoghunoluk measured 2.72 *donums* (.68 acre/2,557 m<sup>2</sup>); Kabusiye, 2.71 *donums* (.68 acre/2,557 m<sup>2</sup>); Kheder Beg, 2.19 *donums* (.55 acre/2,059 m<sup>2</sup>); Haji Habibli, 1.7 *donums* (.43 acre/1,598 m<sup>2</sup>); Vakef, 1.69 *donums* (.42 acre/1,589 m<sup>2</sup>); Bitias, 1.3 *donums* (.33 acre/1,222 m<sup>2</sup>). (See Table 1). The following conclusions can be drawn from these givens. Kheder Beg had the highest number of orchards with the greatest total size, while Vakef had the least orchards with the least total size. Yoghunoluk and Bitias had the largest and smallest size per orchard, respectively. (See Table 1).

The total worth of the above orchards was 2,731,860 Syrian liras, divided as follows: Kheder Beg, 1,055,920 liras; Yoghunoluk, 478,700 liras; Kabusiye, 390,860 liras; Haji Habibli, 338,980 liras; Bitias, 245,850 liras; Vakef, 221,550 liras. The average value per orchard thus amounted to 1,103 liras in Kheder Beg;

765 liras in Kabusiye; 732 liras in Yoghunoluk; 659 liras in Vakef; 458 liras in Haji Habibli; 345 liras in Bitias. As for the average value per *donum*, it was 506 liras in Kheder Beg; 391 liras in Vakef; 282 liras in Kabusiye; 271 liras in Haji Habibli; 270 liras in Yoghunoluk; 265 liras in Bitias. Therefore, the average value of an orchard as well as a *donum* (¼ acre) was the highest in Kheder Beg and the lowest in Bitias. (See Table 1).

The overwhelming majority of Musa Daghians owned orchards. According to a survey conducted in 1939, 95 percent of the 277 households in Bitias held the following: 71 households (26 percent) had 1 orchard each; 88 households (32 percent) had 2 orchards each; 53 households (19 percent) had 3 orchards each; 22 households (8 percent) had 4 orchards each; 10 households (4 percent) had 5 orchards each; 5 households (1.8 percent) had 6 orchards each; 2 households (.7 percent) had 7 orchards each; 1 household (.36 percent) had 8 orchards. (See Appendix 1).<sup>19</sup> The situation in Vakef was described as follows: “Natural resources are coequally divided among the natives. Every family has its own dwelling, its flower bed and garden... It is precisely for this reason that [people] have called the Vakef inhabitants rich. There are not here oppressing and oppressed classes, it is a perfect democratic village.”<sup>20</sup> A utopia or paradise Vakef was certainly not, but this portrayal by a local correspondent, exaggerated and rosy as it was, having been published in *Ararad*, the Beirut-based official mouthpiece of the (Marxist) Social Democrat Hinchagian Party, is quite telling. Although there are not similar statistics or descriptions for the remaining villages, information from contemporaries confirms land ownership by the majority of natives.<sup>21</sup>

Generally speaking, fruits fared better than cereals. In 1923 the Musa Daghians harvested 150,000 *okes/okkas* (420 non-metric tons) of loquat, 100,000 *okes* (280 tons) of grapes, 50,000 *okes* (140 tons) of figs, 20,000 *okes* (56 tons) of olive oil, 10,000 *okes* (28 tons) of bay or laurel berry oil (for soap making), as well as 500,000 oranges and 100,000 walnuts (during the period under study citrus fruits and walnuts were sold by the piece rather than by weight). The loquat,

<sup>19</sup> The actual number of “households” in Appendix 1 is 284, but seven of them are churches, the Vosdayn textile factory, etc.

<sup>20</sup> *Ararad* (Beirut), 4 March 1938.

<sup>21</sup> For Kabusiye land holdings, see Krikor Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune* (The Ethnography of Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences of the Republic Armenia “Kidutyun” Publishing House, 2001), p. 13; Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 9. See also Table 1 for the number/area/value of orchards and fields in each village. It must be noted, however, that although the majority of Musa Daghians owned properties, they were difficult to cultivate given the nature of the terrain.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Misak Blutian, 12 June 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Boyajian.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Arakel Izanian, 28 December 1991, Sunland, California; telephone interview with Izanian, 6 October 1991, Van Nuys, California-Sunland, California.

laurel berry oil, and orange harvests were exported almost in their entirety.<sup>22</sup>

To be sure, fruit growing lagged behind when sericulture enjoyed its heyday through the mid-1920s. To illustrate, of the 42,320 trees planted in Musa Dagh during the first quarter of 1925, 35,000 (83 percent) were mulberry trees; their leaves constituted the only food of silkworms. The balance comprised 1,540 olive trees, 1,350 fig trees, 1,200 apple trees, 800 peach trees, 600 medlar trees, 530 orange trees, 200 pear trees, and 100 plum trees.<sup>23</sup> Even so, an effort toward increasing the number of fruit trees other than mulberry trees can be observed. In his report on the outlook of pistachio nuts in southern Turkey and northern Syria, United States Vice-Consul in charge in Aleppo, Paul H. Alling, wrote in August 1926: “Attempts have been made to plant new trees in the vicinity of Sweidia and Kessab, near Antioch, Syria, where the climatic conditions are said to be favourable for the development of the culture. Although these trees have not yet reached the bearing stage, it is generally believed that their crop in the future will be of considerable importance.”<sup>24</sup>

When rayon, which was cheaper than silk, inundated the global market including that of Syria after the mid-1920s, the time-consuming production of natural silk took a tumble. Faced with this new reality, the Musa Daghians began to uproot their mulberry groves and replace them with other kinds.<sup>25</sup> A 1934 report did not even mention mulberries—although many trees still existed—and instead provided the following figures on other crops: 1 million oranges; 300 *kantars* (about 36 non-metric tons) of peaches; 170 *kantars* (20.7 tons) of loquats and meddler; 155 *kantars* (18.6 tons) of olive oil; 50 *kantars* (6 tons) of apricot; 50 *kantars* (6 tons) of plum; 25 *kantars* (3 tons) of apples; and 25 *kantars* (1.2 ton) of pear. They fetched a total of about 4,000 Turkish gold liras.<sup>26</sup>

The doubling of the number of oranges, from ½ million in 1923 to 1 million in 1934, signalled a marked increase in their export. In this vein, two merchants from Vakef, Tateos Babigian and Khacher B. Kartunian, in 1928 formed a partnership to ship oranges to Antioch, Alexandretta, and Aleppo. Significantly, in early December 1938 Nazif Bey, the Alexandretta-based agent of the Anonymous Company of Turkey, accompanied by an associate named

<sup>22</sup> *Husaper*, 11 December 1923.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 April 1925.

<sup>24</sup> United States National Archives, Department of State, Record Group 84, *Correspondence, American Consulate, Aleppo 1926*, X, Paul H. Alling, Outlook for 1926 Crop of Pistachio Nuts in Northern Syria and Southern Turkey, 5 August 1926.

<sup>25</sup> *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 22 January 1930, 8 July 1930.

<sup>26</sup> *Husaper*, 28 December 1934.

Bahri Bey from Dortyol, visited Vakef and signed an agreement with the two Armenian merchants, whereby the latter undertook to deliver 400,000 oranges to that company.<sup>27</sup> Be that as it may, a reporter noted that the abundance of citrus fruit, which Kheder Beg and Vakef boasted of, did not necessarily bode well for business; too much fruit meant a fall in price. What was needed, instead, was an improvement in quality rather than quantity, as well as the introduction of new fruits seldom grown elsewhere, meaning, Musa Dagh would have to create a new market for these fruits in the region.<sup>28</sup>

Last but not least, besides their cash-generating value, sometimes oranges were used to raise funds for worthy causes. For example, the AGBU Vakef chapter on 7 December 1924 sent 300 oranges to be distributed among churchgoers in Haji Habibli who had solicited donations for “Orphans Sunday.”<sup>29</sup>

### *Fields and Crops*

In 1939, the number of fields in Musa Dagh amounted to 1,733—2,170 less than orchards—distributed as follows: 528 fields in Bitias; 349 in Yoghunoluk; 300 in Kabusiye; 272 in Kheder beg; 235 in Haji Habibli; 49 in Vakef. Their total size was 11,989 *donums* (2,997 acres/11,269,660 m<sup>2</sup>), with Haji Habibli claiming 3,700 *donums* (925 acres/3,478,000 m<sup>2</sup>) or 15.74 *donums* (3.94 acres/14,796 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot; Kheder Beg 2,790 *donums* (698 acres/2,622,600 m<sup>2</sup>) or 10.26 *donums* (2.57 acres/9,644 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot; Yoghunoluk 2,776 *donums* (694 acres/2,609,440 m<sup>2</sup>) or 7.95 *donums* (1.99 acre/7,473 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot; Kabusiye 1,270 *donums* (318 acres/1,193,800 m<sup>2</sup>) or 4.23 *donums* (1.06 acre/3,976 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot; Bitias 1,184 *donums* (296 acres/1,112,960 m<sup>2</sup>) or 2.24 *donums* (0.56 acre/2,106 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot; Vakef 269 *donums* (67 acres/252,860 m<sup>2</sup>) or 5.49 *donums* (1.37 acre/5,161 m<sup>2</sup>) per plot. Accordingly, Bitias had the largest number of fields but the smallest size per plot, whereas Haji Habibli claimed the largest total as well as average size. Vakef, on the other hand, possessed the smallest number of fields and total size (but not average size). (See Table 1).

Those fields were worth 1,410,665 Syrian liras total, specified as follows: 315,490 liras in Kabusiye, with 1,052 liras per field or 248 liras per *donum*; 274,600 liras in Haji Habibli, with 1,169 liras per field or 74 liras per *donum* (about ¼ acre/940 m<sup>2</sup>); 250,750 liras in Yoghunoluk, with 718 liras per field or 90 liras per

<sup>27</sup> Tateos Babigian, “Husher, Tebker u Temker” (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 263-64.

<sup>28</sup> *Husaper*, 28 December 1934.

<sup>29</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, Report of the (AGBU) Vakef Chapter, 1 May 1924-30 November 1924, dated 10 December 1924.

*donum*; 238,950 liras in Bitias, with 453 liras per field or 203 liras per *donum*; 213,125 in Kheder Beg, with 784 liras per field or 76 liras per *donum*; 117,750 liras in Vakef, with 2,403 liras per field or 438 liras per *donum*. To conclude, the fields in Kabusiye were valued the highest in total, and those in Vakef by far the highest per field as well as per *donum*. On the other hand, a field in Bitias and a *donum* in Haji Habibli were the least valuable, respectively. (See Table 1).

Cereals did not grow plentifully on the mountain because of the difficult and limited terrain, the *meltem*, that is, the fog-like “off-shore breeze that blows daily for a period in summer,”<sup>30</sup> and wild boars that fed themselves on the land, especially on its potatoes and corn.<sup>31</sup> Speaking of land in particular, “for those who know Svedia [i.e., Musa Dagh] it is even superfluous to describe at length its unfavourable location for living, the stony and rocky soil from which only a rugged...nation like us, Armenians, could benefit, partially.”<sup>32</sup> At any rate, in 1923 the Musa Daghians produced 40,000 *okes* (112 non-metric tons) of wheat, 10,000 *okes* (28 tons) of corn, 8,000 *okes* (22.4 tons) of barley, and 8,000 *okes* (22.4 tons) of oats. To supplement these modest quantities, the villagers imported 550,000 *okes* (1,540 tons) of wheat, 60,000 *okes* (168 tons) of corn, 15,000 *okes* (42 tons) of barley, 15,000 *okes* (42 tons) of oats, plus 10,000 *okes* (28 tons) of rice and 10,000 *okes* (28 tons) of sugar.<sup>33</sup> The substantial difference between local productions and imports became all the more pronounced due to the skyrocketing price of cereals. At the same time, the peasants borrowed seed money at 20 percent interest.<sup>34</sup> The situation worsened in 1937, when a 30 percent surcharge was added on top of this interest because of the devaluation of the French franc. Consequently, many laborers and artisans, who earned no more than 25 Syrian piasters per diem, were forced to forfeit their lands and other belongings such as precious family heirlooms which they had put up as collateral to borrow money or purchase cereals on credit.<sup>35</sup>

Harsh weather and unpredictable seismological conditions exacerbated the situation periodically. Torrential rains destroyed the cereal crops in 1921, 1923, and 1924.<sup>36</sup> During the second half of October 1935 three major earthquakes,

<sup>30</sup> *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse Press, 1974), p. 752.

<sup>31</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 14 October 1925.

<sup>32</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, Vakef AGBU Chairman Manuel Shemmassian and Secretary B. H. Ashkarian to Chairman and Members of AGBU Executive Council in Cairo, 21 July 1925.

<sup>33</sup> *Husaper*, 6 December 1923.

<sup>34</sup> *Piunig*, 28 January 1925.

<sup>35</sup> *Aztag*, 3 September 1937.

<sup>36</sup> *Giligia* (Cilicia) (Adana), 27 July 1921; *Balkanian Mamul* (Balkan Press) (Rusjuk/Ruse, Bulgaria), 30 July 1921; *Husaper*, 8 October 1921, 3 April 1923, 30 September 1924.

followed by ten aftershocks, jolted Musa Dagh. Although there were no human casualties, heavy rains ending a six-month drought ruined the olive crops and killed sixty goats in Kheder Beg.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, during the night of 16-17 June 1936 rain destroyed almost all of Musa Dagh's cereal crops. Kheder Beg and Vakef in particular sustained extensive damage, as many orchards and at least two cafés were flattened.<sup>38</sup>

The method of cultivation in Musa Dagh was primitive and, as was the case across Syria through the early 1930s, no attempt was made to introduce modern machinery. Ploughing entailed “scratching the surface of the soil to a depth of three or four inches with a simple wooden plow with a wood or iron share attached, guided by hand, and drawn by animals, usually oxen.”<sup>39</sup> The wheat crops in particular, after being harvested with sickles, were carried to threshing floors (*gul* singular, *gallir* plural) which, as a rule, were situated in open spaces on the village peripheries. It is unclear if people legally owned those plots, but many plots carried the names or nicknames of individuals or families, thereby attesting to at least nominal ownership.<sup>40</sup> Threshing in Syria (including Musa Dagh) took place in the following manner:

Threshing is done by means of a sledge (*Mawraj*) made of two boards set at an angle with sockets on the under side into which iron spikes or hard

<sup>37</sup> *Husaper*, 11 November 1935.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 June 1936.

<sup>39</sup> Albert Khuri, “Agriculture,” in Saïd B. Himadeh, ed., *Economic Organization of Syria* (Beirut: American Press, 1936), p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> In Vakef: Kapriel Shemmassian's “Jamilints gule” across from the satellite hamlet of Nerke Azzir; those of Boghos Blutian, Hovhannes Blutian, Misak and Pasha Babigian (“Sertints gule”), and Hagop Kartunian (“Kartunints gule”) in Vakef lands bordering the village of Kurtderesi to the south; and those belonging to Panos Aintabian (“Aintabints gallire”) in Vakef proper. In Haji Habibli: The threshing floor of Hagop Beylenjian was situated between the village and its neighborhood of Terjeneg; those of Sarkis Khamisian, Boghos Kelian (“Hapetints Kale”), Movses Panosian, and Panos Panosian were situated at Terjeneg proper; those of Garabed Andonian (“Bezzeghink”), Hagop Andonian, and Krikor Zobian at a nearby spot called Talaylu; those of Yerusaghem Giudeshian, Mgrdich Kertigian, and Bedros Dudaklian (“Tep”) along the Buyuk Karachay; and that of Boghos Siupkiugian (“Davalig”) at an unspecified location but generally referred to as the “galloye.” In Kabusiye, one Giuzelyan threshing floor was found at Magharajik and another at an unspecified place; that of Antreas and Bedros Ohannesian in the neighborhood of Kukayr; and an additional five threshing floors utilized communally. Information is lacking respecting threshing floors in Bitias, Yoghunoluk, and Kheder Beg. See the following sources: for Vakef, interview with Blutian; for a description of threshing in Vakef, see Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 115-16; for Haji Habibli: interview with Antranig Kerekian, 9 June 1989, Van Nuys, California; interview with Victoria Kerekian Prudian, 28 July 1989, Los Angeles, California; for Kabusiye: interview with Sarkis Giuzelyan, 4 June 1989, Hollywood, California.

stone may be fitted. A person rides on this sledge while it is being drawn by animals round and round over the grain on a circular threshing floor out on the open ground, until the grain is loosened and the straw is cut into small pieces. After threshing, the grain and straw are gathered into large heaps, and wooden rakes are used to toss the mixture into the air. When the wind blows away the straw and the grain fall to the ground. This must be repeated many times to secure a clean grain.<sup>41</sup>

Wheat was crushed and olives and laurel berries pressed in large, round carved stones known as *batoz* (*batteuse* in French) using the power of animals such as donkeys and oxen. Each village had from one to three *batozes*, some privately owned, others publicly. In either case, people used them communally free of charge.<sup>42</sup> The portion of wheat and other types of cereals put aside for making flour was taken to the few available mills. The mill belonging to Serop Giuzelyan and located at a spot called Burnaze Khandeye near an ancient Seleucid tunnel adjacent to Kabusiye, lacked the capacity to process all orders. For this reason, during peak season many from Kabusiye took their loads to two larger mills in the vicinity of Kheder Beg, as did farmers from Vakef and Yoghunoluk.<sup>43</sup> Those mills, powered by the spring water running through the neighborhoods of Aste Karshen (This Side) and Ante Karshen (the Other Side), belonged to the brothers Apraham and Boghos Ibrahimian, respectively. Although they did not charge a user's fee in hard currency, they received a *herrig*, that is, a portion of the flour obtained, usually 8 percent.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, the four Madurian brothers and Tateos Babigian of Vakef, by virtue of their relative wealth, monopolized the two mills for two days a month each.<sup>45</sup> The villagers of Bitias and Haji Habibli shared two mills situated within the periphery of the latter village, one managed by Hajje Khichir Mardirian at a location called Kayruke and another by Isgender Taslakian at Aghpayre (the Spring).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Khuri, "Agriculture," p. 90.

<sup>42</sup> For example, there were three *batozes* in Kabusiye, one at Vire Aghpayre, one at Nerke Aghpayre (or Jekhudz Shayre), and one that Serop Giuzelyan had built in 1935. There was one *batoz* in the center of Haji Habibli, by the Andonian residence. For Kabusiye, interview with Giuzelyan; interview with Ohannes Ohannesian, 27 May 1989, Sun Valley, California; for Haji Habibli, interview with Kerekian.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Giuzelyan. The latter had purchased the mill from three or four owners for 110 Ottoman gold liras. See also, Madurian, "Kebusiye," in *Hushamadian*, p. 104.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Giuzelyan.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Blutian.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Kerekian.

### *Water and Irrigation*

Water sources for personal use and irrigation abounded in some villages but were scarce in others. Over one-third of the total twenty-six springs and streams of significant importance found in Musa Dagh originated in or near Bitias. The main ones were five: Barkeren Aghpayre, Hovhan Vosgeperan, Sev Aghpiur, Shibil Ayn, and Chaghlaghan. Named after John Barker, a retired British consul who spent the summers and the last years of his life in his private home at Bitias (1830s-1849), Barkeren Aghpayre (Barker's Spring, sometimes called Frangen Aghpayre, that is, the Frank's or European's Spring) cascaded from near the Apostolic church in north-central Bitias onto several terraces below before branching out into smaller streams. In the northwest of the village lay scattered the ruins of a church dedicated to a fourth-century saint called Hovhan Vosgeperan (John Chrysostom). In the mid-1930s, when Movses Krikor Chaparian ("Happig") was in the process of opening a café there, a new water source was discovered next to the existing one. Even combined, however, they constituted the smallest of the five main water sources of the village. In the west, Sev Aghpiur (Black Spring), also known by its Turkish name of Kara Pınar/Punghar, was the strongest spring and, as such, also powered one of the two mills shared by Bitias and Haji Habibli. Further west gushed Shibil Ayn, utilized also by the inhabitants of nearby Haji Habibli. Last but not least, the Chaghlaghan streams watered the orchards of the Maghzanian clan, which owned the area.<sup>47</sup>

Movses/Norman Balabanian, the American-born son of emigrants from Bitias who spent the years 1930-32 and 1935-38 in that village, describes the method of water usage for various purposes:

Our toilet was an outhouse. There was no running water. For washing up, we used a 5-gallon tin can, onto the lower end of one side of which a small faucet had been welded. It was placed on a ledge in the garden outside the house; we filled it with water from a well that itself was filled during the wee hours of the morning from water that flowed down hill from the spring at the upper end of the village. People living along the way all used that water for irrigating their vegetable and flower plants, etc. When they diverted the flowing water onto their property, no water would reach further down to the lower end of the village. This meant that we had to wait until everybody higher up the hill from us had their fill, often until late at night. About a mile or two further down the road from our house, the Balabanians had some

<sup>47</sup> Vahan Semerjibashian, "Musa Leran Hankeragnern u Chrakrutiune" (The Mineral Resources and Hydrography of Musa Dagh), in *Hushamadian*, pp. 124-26; Zora Isgenderian, "Bitias," in *Hushamadian*, pp. 85-86; Magzarian, *Recipes of Musa Dagh*, pp. 147-50.

property that we used to plant vegetables in the spring (tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, etc.). Again, I would have to wait till late at night for the spring water to reach down that far. I often watered those tomato plants by moonlight...<sup>48</sup>

As hinted above, plantations situated at lower elevations were at a disadvantage in terms of irrigation. Therefore, in order to avoid disputes and instead achieve equitable distribution of water, certain neighborhoods appointed a waterman (*suja*) to allocate and supervise equal time for water usage, usually set at eight hours. The same method of regulating water was adopted for those gardens which depended on water that powered the two mills shared by the inhabitants of Bitias and Haji Habibli.<sup>49</sup> Information is not available as to whether the rest of the villages had similar arrangements.

Haji Habibli did not enjoy Bitias' abundance of water. It utilized the Sev Aghpiur and Shibil Ayn streams meandering down from Bitias to irrigate its orchards and vegetable gardens. For its washing and drinking needs, it utilized the water flowing out from a cave situated in a ravine called Chamleja to the north of the village. Several smaller sources dotted the outskirts and benefited a limited number of farms.<sup>50</sup> Kabusiye possessed two springs. The Vire Aghpayre (Upper Spring) was not very productive, and therefore, people had to wait in long lines, especially during summer. The Nerke Aghpayre (Lower Spring) had a stronger flow hence shorter lines. Additionally, the Hiyeg fountain on the northern periphery afforded only limited water, as did the Zarat water source used by some families from the Kukayr neighborhood of the village.<sup>51</sup>

In Kheder Beg, a major spring branched out into two streams. One flanked two outdoor cafés, crossed a large orchard, and once again split into two. The latter satisfied the drinking, washing, and irrigation needs of Vakef and Nerke Azzir.<sup>52</sup> The second stream irrigated a number of plantations and powered several flour mills on the Svedia plain before emptying into the Orontes River near Levshiye.<sup>53</sup>

Yoghunoluk was the driest village. The words "yoghun oluk" mean wide water trough. Even so, it is believed that Yoghunoluk lost that presumed abundance

<sup>48</sup> Norman Balabanian, *Life Story* (Gainesville, FL: N.p., 2008), p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 23 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>50</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiyune*, p. 101.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Giuzelyan. He mentions two springs on the village peripheries, one at Turunjok and another at Balenjan. It is not clear if these two were the same as the one at Hiyeg and the other one mentioned in the text.

<sup>52</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, p. 94.

<sup>53</sup> Harutiun Sherbetjian, interview.

or at least adequate quantity of water as a result of a major earthquake in 1872, when the stream's direction shifted to a valley called Kantara and thus its volume diminished. The villagers then built a narrow brick canal to the east-to-west running Gedeg neighborhood at the village entrance, from which women would carry water in jugs on their shoulders. Given the relatively long distance of this Gedeg water source from the rest of the village, as well as the fact that the sewage of the newly-built (or renovated) Kazanjian residence posed a hazard to sanitation, the Yoghunoluk villagers decided to build a new reservoir in the center of the village. They accordingly commissioned a man nicknamed "Aintabtsen" to build the reservoir and connect it to the original water source via a pipeline. Completed in 1928 and situated by the communal *batoz* and the Catholic Church on the road to the central marketplace (*Charshen*), the reservoir could hold some 700 large cans of water, but would be filled to capacity only during the rainy season. People benefited from this new facility through a faucet, and animals from a special outlet.<sup>54</sup>

Despite this improvement, Yoghunoluk continued to suffer from water shortages, especially for irrigation. Two additional possibilities existed to remedy this situation. The first option was pumping up water from the Kheder Beg spring into a reservoir and from it irrigating the Yoghunoluk plantations via a pipeline. The second alternative involved the diversion of the abundant water of Chaghlaghan from northeast of Bitias to above Yoghunoluk. ARF leaders Movses Der Kalusdian and Hrach Papazian commissioned an engineer from Aleppo to study the Chaghlaghan-Yoghunoluk project in 1935. His survey concluded that the distance between the two places was 9 kilometers (about 6 miles); the Chaghlaghan spring elevation was 130 meters above Yoghunoluk; the pipe must be made of cement/concrete; and the estimated cost would be 11,000 Syrian liras (or 2,000 Turkish liras). A special committee of Yoghunoluk villagers formed the following year<sup>55</sup> failed to raise the necessary funds for the next three years, that is, by the time of their exodus from Musa Dagħ in 1939.

### *Landlords*

Although, as stated above, the overwhelming majority of Musa Dagħians owned land, it was not distributed evenly. A few landlords in each village controlled disproportionately large areas, which, together with their import-export business dealings and money-lending practices, placed them on the

<sup>54</sup> Hovhannes Hajian, "Yoghun-Oluki Aghpiure" (The Water Spring of Yoghunoluk), unpublished manuscript written on my request.

<sup>55</sup> *Husaper*, 30 May 1932, 30 July 1935, 29 June 1936.

highest rung of the socioeconomic ladder. As such, they acted like both feudal lords and industrialists/capitalists.<sup>56</sup> These individuals were called *aghas*, an honorific title bestowed upon a “rural lord, master” or “local big landowner,”<sup>57</sup> or *barin/bariun*, derived from the medieval title of “baron.”<sup>58</sup> It has been stated that in Musa Dagh “*aghas* were the highest in status followed by *barins*.”<sup>59</sup> In reality this distinction was somewhat blurred. With one exception in Kheder Beg, the notables in Musa Dagh were referred to as *aghas*. Thus, Kevork Agha Baljian and Samson Agha Bayramian (Donigian) in Kabusiye; Simon Agha Shemmassian and Tovmas Agha Aintabian in Vakef; Jabra Agha Kazanjian and Dikran Agha Kazanjian in Yoghunoluk; the five sons of Mardir Agha Isgenderian, namely, Isgender, Misak/Zora, Hapet, Garabed, and George, as well as Sdepan Agha Dudaklian in Haji Habibli; Movses Agha Renjilian and Mardiros Agha Chaparian in Bitias. As for Kheder Beg, the two notables were Yesayi Aprahamian, generally known as Sallan *Barin*, and Rezqalla Agha Kuyumjian (“Melkunen”).<sup>60</sup> To conclude, the titles (and status) of *agha* and *barin* more or less carried the same weight and could be used interchangeably.

According to some natives, the title of *agha* was given to illiterate notables, whereas the educated ones were called *efendi*.<sup>61</sup> It is true that, generally speaking, “*agha*” also meant “mister (used in addressing an illiterate person)” and that during the Ottoman era the title of *efendi* was accorded to “literate people,” among others.<sup>62</sup> In the case of Musa Dagh, however, this differentiation did not have much practical significance, because at least some of the *aghas* knew how to read and write, and there were only two-three people addressed as *efendi*. For instance, Movses Der Kalusdian of Yoghunoluk bore that title not because he was literate (which he was) and a traditional landed notable (which he was not), but

<sup>56</sup> Sima Aprahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa: From Stratified Society through Classlessness to the Re-Appearance of Social Classes,” Ph. D. Dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1989, pp. 63, 82.

<sup>57</sup> *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> Aprahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa,” p.62.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47, footnote 10.

<sup>60</sup> For the *aghas* in Haji Habibli, consult interview with Kerekian, 14 June 1989; in Vakef, interview with Blutian; in Yoghunoluk, Hrant Dikran Kazanjian, letter to the author, 22 November 1993; interview with Boyajian; in Kabusiye, Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 15-6, 60-1; in Bitias, interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 6 January 2002; in Kheder Beg, Harutian Sherbetjian, untitled list of Kheder Beg inhabitants with their nicknames and occupations, compiled on my request.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Boyajian; interview with Blutian.

<sup>62</sup> *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, pp. 18, 326.

because of his prominence in the modern history of Musa Dagh.<sup>63</sup>

After the highest-ranking notables came several secondary (but important) landlord-businessman-merchants. In Bitias, for instance, Hetum Filian (Hitoum-Arousyak-Filian) operated a popular outdoor café, rented out four shops during the important vacation season, and possessed a silk house which yielded about 40 Ottoman gold liras annually.<sup>64</sup> His four houses, two orchards, and six fields were worth 12,950 Syrian liras in 1939. (See Appendix 1). The vacationers, many of whom spoke Turkish because they hailed from such cities in Cilicia as Aintab, Marash, and Adana, referred to him (and each other) as *agha*, a title given as a token of respect.<sup>65</sup> Filian’s son-in-law, Hovhannes Kelejian (“Saba”), engaged in wholesale business by collecting and exporting cocoons, laurel berry oil, and charcoal, as well as in retail business by operating a grocery store.<sup>66</sup> He similarly purchased the Isgenderian properties at Büglük near Nor Zeytun (formerly Ikiz Köprü) to the northeast of Bitias, a League of Nations agricultural settlement for Armenian refugees, before the surviving brothers (Misak, Garabed, and George) of that notable family were banished from the area for their leading role in the Haji Habibli camp in the bloody feud with Bitias in the early 1920s.<sup>67</sup> In the case of Samuel Magzarian, humble peasants with requests for favors addressed him as *barin*, whereas Alawites utilizing the limestone in one of his properties at Chaghlaghan called him *agha*.<sup>68</sup> Kevork Chaparian, the son of Mardiros Agha mentioned above, was a licensed sericulturist and a mentor to many Alawite and Turkmen workers in the Antioch district.<sup>69</sup> He owned three houses, eight orchards, and four fields, totalling 10,000 Syrian liras in value. (See Appendix 1). Hovhannes Filhannesian (Ohanes Fil. Hanisian/“Kassub”), a butcher by occupation and a prominent Apostolic church board member, possessed three houses, three fields, and five orchards worth a total of 10,500 Syrian liras. (See Appendix 1). He also had four business premises, two occupied by him and two rented out during summer to a man from Aleppo who sold apparel.<sup>70</sup> The brothers Garabed and Serop Keoseian belonged to a family that was generally

<sup>63</sup> Ashod Nersisian, *Moves Der Kalusdian*, “Living Heroes” series, no. 5 (Yerevan: Edit Print, 2011), p. 170.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Movses Hetum Filian, questionnaire, 15 August 1989.

<sup>65</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 29 July 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Movses Karkazian, 25 July 1988, Fresno California.

<sup>67</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 5 July 2010.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 July 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, letter to the author, received 12 April 1989.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Mari Filhannesian Babigian, 24 December 2012, Glendale, California.

known as “Aghink,” that is, the *aghas*.<sup>71</sup> Why or how this nickname had come to characterise them cannot be readily determined. What is certain, however, is the fact that they owned a hotel, called Jabal Musa, engaged in other businesses, and reaped harvests from their lands, netting a total of 1,800 Ottoman gold liras for the period 1934-36.<sup>72</sup> Giragos Kadeian, Movses H. Makhulian, Apraham Renjilian (a licensed sericulturist), Manug Kelejian, and a few others completed the catalog of prominent personalities in Bitias.<sup>73</sup>

After the fading of the Isgenderian brothers as the uncontested *aghas* of Haji Habibli, two of their relatives, Hajje Khichir Mardirian and Hovnan Isgenderian, continued to exercise some influence. Certain members of the Giragosian, Genjian, Dudaklian, Kurdian, Bailuzian, Chembedian, Gudeshian, and other clans similarly numbered among the lesser notables. From Yoghunoluk, Mardiros Habeshian, Boghos Abajian, Dikran Kuyumjian, Boghos Shemmassian, Hagop and Hovhannes Hergelian, and a Serop Gebeshian were considered well-to-do as successful landlord-businessmen. Their counterparts in Kheder Beg included Ohannes Nakulian, Sahrad Aprahamian, Andon Andonian, Misak Zeytlian, Bedros Ashkarian, Vahan Panasian, Ohannes Yeprem Dukanjian, Thomas Shannakian, and a few others.<sup>74</sup>

Tovmas Aintabian was one of the two highest notables in Vakef. Interestingly, as practical evidence of his stature, each Christmas he placed an order of three wild boars to be hunted down in the region of Amuk Lake to the northeast of Antioch, had them barbecued, and for several days fed them to fellow villagers visiting his house to wish him well.<sup>75</sup> Manuel Shemmassian was the other high *agha* in Vakef. Besides having a grocery-novelty store and other sources of revenue, he served as chairman of the parish council and school board for many years. He also founded and led the local AGBU chapter.<sup>76</sup> As a status symbol, he kept one of the rooms in his house open year round for those who wished to visit him, play cards, and/or socialize.<sup>77</sup> His younger brother, Mihran, was even more enterprising in business matters. Elaborates Zohrab, one of his sons:

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<sup>71</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 29 July 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Serop Keoseian, letter to the author, 22 May 1994.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 6 January 2002.

<sup>74</sup> The selection of these secondary notables is based on the value of their fixed properties as listed in appendices 2-5.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Blutian.

<sup>76</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 107, 110-11; “Musa Lertsi Azkanver Antznavorutiunner,” in *Hushamadian*, pp. 569-70.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Blutian.

My father, having a sharp business sense, became a capitalist in the village [Vakef]. A couple of the neighboring Armenian villages were famous for their orchards (apples, oranges, grapes, etc.)... My father decided to go into the exporting business. He exported fruit to cities like Aleppo, Syria and Beirut, Lebanon. In addition, he bought orange blossoms from the villagers, put them in bags, and exported them to the Beirut market where they were used in the perfume industry.

One of his more successful exports were [sic] olives. He processed his own olive oil and he sold it to the villagers in tins [cans]...

Eventually, my father moved into real estate investments. He began to lend money with interest to the people in his village against their collateral which consisted mainly of land... He soon became the largest land owner in the village. He recorded his loans and other important transactions in a small notebook which he carried with him. His business style of investing and money lending mirrored the Jewish stereotype of intelligent business sense which earned him the ...nickname, Yahoudi, meaning Jew. In fact, his children were called the Sons of Yahoudi.

In the Armenian villages [of Musa Dagh], two identifying names were being used: One was Barin (baron in French) who purchased products from villagers and employed people in businesses. The second title was Agha which referred to those who had great wealth, prosperous businesses, or great fame in the village. My father was called by both [titles].<sup>78</sup>

In Kabusiye in 1939, the fixed property value of the 184 households averaged 4,079 Syrian piasters. Twelve households (6.5 percent) among them, excluding that of Samson *Agha* Bayramian, owned fixed property that averaged 14,225 Syrian piasters, that is, about 3.5 times more than the village average. If relative wealth based on real estate value was any indication, among other considerations, the heads of those twelve households could be regarded as secondary notables including Madteos Giuzelyan, one of the two local priests. The rest were, in descending order according to wealth, Zakar Simonian, Hagop Bayramian, Misak Musaian, Asadur Tavitian, Hovsep Baljian, Kerop Baljian, Natan Kassabian, Mardir Mardaian (Mardirian?), Manug Gazurian, Donig Bayramian, and Serop Giuzelyan. Therefore, two were from the Baljian family, two from the Bayramian family, two from the Giuzelyan family, and the rest from different families. In other words, half of the wealth of Kabusiye’s secondary notables was concentrated

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<sup>78</sup> Zohrab Shamassian, email to the author, 24 July 2010.

in the hands of three clans. (See Appendix 5). Since this survey was taken in 1939, it did not include notables (and all other heads of households) who had died earlier. One of the deceased *barins* was the notorious Mahir Baljian. Unlike his much-respected elder relative, Kevork *Agha*, Mahir was the *enfant terrible* of Kabusiye. Shielded by minions, he gained infamy for having at least one person killed, ordering kidnappings, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of an elected village headman, indulging in unchecked promiscuity, hunting and/or feasting on any domestic animal or poultry in the village as his own, and so on. Even the loss of his two hands in a fishing accident did not deter him from such a lifestyle. In the end, a peasant whom Mahir had wronged killed him while he dined with guests in his spacious residence.<sup>79</sup>

By 1938 about two-third of the highest-ranking *aghas/barins* had disappeared due to natural death, assassination, forced exile, or voluntary migration. In Bitias, Movses Renjilian and Mardiros Chaparian died of old age during the second half of the 1920s.<sup>80</sup> In Kabusiye, Kevork Baljian entered his eternal rest in 1935.<sup>81</sup> In Haji Habibli, Setrag Isgenderian and his younger brother, Hapet, in the early 1920s fell victim to internecine bloodshed between that village and Bitias. As for their three surviving brothers, they were banished from the area. (See Chapter 1). Similarly, in 1929 gendarmes killed Sdepan Dudaklian, a man wanted for his unbridled transgressions.<sup>82</sup> In Yoghunoluk, Jabra and Dikran Kazanjian departed the area permanently in 1938 upon seeing a bleak future for the Sanjak of Alexandretta.<sup>83</sup>

As a rule, the *aghas/barins* did not get involved in politics directly; they enjoyed the benefits of their wealth and stature and wielded power behind the scenes in local affairs, as needed.<sup>84</sup> In this vein, it is stated that “the Armenian

<sup>79</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 4-8, 59; interview with Ohannes Ohannesian, 27 May 1989, Sun Valley, California.

<sup>80</sup> Movses Renjilian died in the summer of 1928. See Rev. Hagop Giurlekian, letter to the author, 19 April 1977. For the death of Mardiros Chaparian, see Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, unpublished memoir, Detroit, Michigan, p. 29.

<sup>81</sup> Kevork Baljian died on 29 November 1935. See inscription on his funeral picture in Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, between pp. 33 and 34. For a description of the funeral, see Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> *Yeprad* (Euphrates) (Aleppo), 2 January 1929, 20 February 1929, 4 May 1929, 29 June 1929; interview with Anush Basambakian Hajian, 20 June 1989, Glendale, California. According to this interviewee, Dudaklian's foes from the SDHP camp composed a song about Dudaklian's assassination. The interviewee remembers the lyrics only partially. See also interview with Mariam Fujurian Basambakian, 20 June 1989, Van Nuys, California.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>84</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, p. 189.

Revolutionary Federation (A.R.F.), encouraged local tendencies and resentment against the *aghas* and *barins* and [thus] gradually their influence was reduced. Step by step the A.R.F. took over the economic and social functions of these leaders. Notable members of the A.R.F. - people from outside the villages - became godfathers to many families... Collective economic projects began to be initiated. Collective farms and factories were established. Political involvement was maximised.”<sup>85</sup>

An examination of these assertions leads to different conclusions. To begin with, Musa Dagh was not a monolithic society in terms of party politics. Alongside the ARF existed the Social Democrat Hinchagian Party (SDHP), which roughly equalled, and at times even surpassed, the ARF in terms of membership.<sup>86</sup> Speaking of the villages separately, Haji Habibli was a SDHP stronghold where the ARF could not penetrate to any significant degree let alone have an impact on its socioeconomic life.<sup>87</sup> Although, as discussed above, the influence of the (anti-ARF) Isgenderian family vanished for the most part, a few other members from the same Isgenderian-Mardirian clan continued to exercise some influence. At the same time, Sdepan Dudaklian, a rare ARF member in Haji Habibli, was killed.

Even in Bitias, generally considered to be ARF turf,<sup>88</sup> some of the secondary notables were not in that camp. In fact, in the late 1930s such individuals, mostly hoping to secure funds for the Protestant school in Bitias, joined the local chapter of the AGBU,<sup>89</sup> an independent philanthropic organization (but close to the anti-ARF Democratic Liberal Party). Generally speaking, Kheder Beg and Yoghunoluk leaned toward the ARF, whereas Vakef leaned toward the SDHP.<sup>90</sup> In Kabusiye, Samson Bayramian, who was not a member of the ARF, collaborated with that party in local and regional elections based on an

<sup>85</sup> Aprahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa,” p. 98.

<sup>86</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> For Haji Habibli as a SDHP stronghold, see *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> *Lipanan* (Lebanon) (Beirut), 17 May 1934.

<sup>89</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 167, miscellaneous correspondence.

<sup>90</sup> For the activity of the ARF in Yoghunoluk and Kheder Beg, indeed in all of Musa Dagh, consult the files pertaining to the Cilicia/Syria/Lebanon in the ARF archives in Watertown, Massachusetts. For the activity of the SDHP in the various villages of Musa Dagh, consult the relevant SDHP minutes of meetings in the Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives in Vienna, Austria. Misak Blutian, “Misak Blutiani Gensakrutuine” (The Biography of Misak Blutian), written upon my request, mentions the party affiliation of each and every male head of household/breadwinner in Vakef. For the mood revolving around the SDHP in Vakef, see Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 7-9, 11.

understanding that was mutually beneficial. Kevork Baljian, on the other hand, followed an independent, if not adversarial, course.<sup>91</sup> In the final analysis, while it is true that the majority of the wealthiest notables had faded away by 1938, that situation had little or nothing to do with the ARF. As for the remaining notables, whether primary or secondary, they either cooperated with the ARF or the SDHP, or charted their own courses. In all cases, however, none yielded their economic power to either party; on the contrary, the notables' economic power increased rather than decreased.<sup>92</sup>

There is also no evidence whatsoever that the ARF established collective farms and factories in Musa Dagh with the ultimate goal of overthrowing and then replacing the notables' role in and hold on the economy. Certain silk, weaving, and comb and spoon cottage industries did exist in some of the villages, as did a relatively large traditional silk house belonging to the Kazanjians on the Svedia plain. None of these, however, were owned and/or operated by the ARF.<sup>93</sup> It is true that the Vosdayn Anonymous Textile Company at Bitias (1935-38) was founded by some local and Aleppo ARF leaders and sympathizers; nevertheless, it was not an official party enterprise. (See Chapter 4). It is also true that the ARF encouraged vacationing at Bitias and that two prominent members, Movses Der Kalusdian and Hrach Papazian, contemplated diverting water from Chaghlaghan near Bitias to Yoghunoluk to satisfy the latter's various needs. Nevertheless, for most of the period under study both the ARF and the SDHP expended their energies on the people's physical security as well as how to control public life through municipalities, churches, schools, and regional legislatures. Here it must be stressed that neither the ARF nor SDHP official records contain any substantive references to or discussions of Musa Dagh's economy except, to some degree, for the period immediately following repatriation from Hama and Port Said in 1919, when a life-and-death situation prevailed.<sup>94</sup> In all fairness, though, Armenian newspapers of all political hues whether in Cilicia, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, the United States or elsewhere, periodically concerned themselves with Musa Dagh's material as well as general wellbeing. To conclude, the political parties controlled politics and the notables controlled the economy.

<sup>91</sup> For political rivalries between the ARF and the SDHP in Kabusiye and elsewhere in Musa Dagh, see Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 11-2.

<sup>92</sup> Aprahamian, "The Inhabitants of Haoouch Moussa," p. 82.

<sup>93</sup> There are not any indications in the ARF archives and/or the press that that party had established cottage industries in Musa Dagh. Nor do interviews and correspondence with contemporaries reveal such a fact.

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 1 for economic concerns after repatriation in 1919.

### *Sharecroppers*

Whether primary or secondary, the notables in Musa Dagh employed poorer peasants to take care of their farmlands and perform the various tasks associated with sericulture. These workers were called *marabu*, derived from the Arabic word "*murābi*," which means "partner in an agricultural enterprise (sharing one quarter of the gains or losses)."<sup>95</sup> The *marabus* in Musa Dagh were either landless peasants or those who had insufficient land and, therefore, needed supplementary income to make ends meet.<sup>96</sup> Generally speaking, two types of *marabus* existed: the *errobja* and the *gissena*. The *errobja* was a worker who did not provide his own seeds, implements, and animals, and thus shared only one-fourth of the profits/losses. The *gissena*, on the other hand, invested his own seeds, implements, and animals, thereby sharing half of the profits/losses with his landlord.<sup>97</sup> The ratio of *errobjas* to *gissenas* is not known. Some sharecroppers also worked for one-third of the gains/losses.<sup>98</sup> Whatever the arrangement, preference was given to married *marabus* so that their entire family, including children, would work with them to finish the job in a timely fashion.<sup>99</sup>

There were three groups of sharecroppers: Armenians serving Armenians, Armenians serving Greeks, and Alawites serving Armenians. The following are but examples from the first group. In Haji Habibli, an unnamed native worked for Hovnan Mardirian (Isgenderian), and a fellow villager, likewise unnamed, for a certain Juhurian ("Sabink").<sup>100</sup> In Yoghunoluk, Sarkis Baltajian ("Dekkanints") worked for Boghos Abajian, Sarkis Khachadurian for Dikran Kazanjian, and a man nicknamed "Zetlints Umare" from Kheder Beg for Boghos Shemmassian.<sup>101</sup> In Vakef, Vanis Khancharian worked for Manuel Shemmassian.<sup>102</sup> In Kabusiye, Hagop Manavjian worked for Asadur Tavitian, and Yunif Tosunian for an unnamed landlord.<sup>103</sup>

The second group of tenant farmers (Armenians serving Arabic speaking

<sup>95</sup> J. M. Cowan, ed. *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1976), p. 323.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Ohannesian.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Izanian, 16 March 1993.

<sup>98</sup> Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutyune*, p. 187.

<sup>99</sup> Hovhannes Hajian, "Marabu," unpublished manuscript written on my request.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Kerekian.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Boyajian.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Blutian.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Sarkis Asadur Kasamian, 2 June 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Giuzelyan.

Greek Orthodox) was the smallest of the three. It comprised farmers mostly from Bitias and Haji Habibli. Those from Bitias helped two pairs of Greek brothers from Antioch, Butros and Rizqallah Awwad, and Elian and Ibrahim Lavand/Lawand (also known as “Edlebsink”), primarily in their sericulture interests in that Armenian village. The Lavand/Lawand owned five silk houses on the same farm in Bitias proper.<sup>104</sup> As for Haji Habibli, at least four natives toiled for Greek landlords on their properties at Terjeneg and along the banks of Buyuk Karachay.<sup>105</sup> There was also the case of Simon Shemmassian from Vakef, who managed the Svedia estates of an elderly Greek Orthodox landlord by the name of Musa Deeb in a fifty-fifty deal. When Simon died sometime during the 1920s, his son, Mihran, took over, but with a new partnership agreement: not only would he continue to share 50 percent of the profits/losses, but he would also own half of the Greek’s properties after overseeing them for a certain number of years. Mihran thus would ultimately become a landlord in his own right.<sup>106</sup>

Alawites from the contiguous plain of Svedia to the south of Musa Dagh, where they constituted the majority of the population, formed the third group of *marabus* (Alawites serving Armenians). They were employed mostly by landlords from Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, Vakef, and Kabusiye, that is, the villages nearest to the Svedia plain and in frequent contact with its inhabitants. Thus, from Yoghunoluk, Sarkis Nashalian and Kapriel/Jabra Shemmassian hired Yusef Nuri and a certain Ibrahim, respectively, whereas Mardiros Sarkahian (“Yunan”) and Serop Gebeshian hired two other Alawites each.<sup>107</sup> From Vakef, Panos Aintabian, the four Madurian brothers (Khacher, Tovmas, Mihran, Dikran), and Mihran Shemmassian hired FAli, Ibrahim Alwan, and Naaman, respectively.<sup>108</sup> From Kabusiye, Kevork Baljian, Samson Bayramian, Serop Giuzelyan, Manug Ikizian, and Sarkis Ikizian benefited from the services of a number of Alawites.<sup>109</sup> But it seems that the biggest employers of Alawite sharecroppers were the brothers Jabra and Dikran Kazanjian of Yoghunoluk, on whose substantial mulberry

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Izanian, 28 December 1991. The names of *marabus* assisting Butros and Rizqallah Awwad are not readily known. Those who at one time or another resided and worked in the five silk houses belonging to the Lavand/Lawand brothers were Krikor Kendirjian (“Khuvajik”), Movses Chaparian (“Qataluzen Ashqare”), Sarkis Antablian (Serekian), Movses Kendirjian (“Blut”), Yenovk Nersesian, Yesayi Kadeian, and others.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Victoria Kerekian Prudian, 28 July 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Kerekian, 9 June 1989. The four sharecroppers were Sarkis Khamisian, Movses Panosian, Panos Panosian, and Bedros Gebeshian.

<sup>106</sup> Shamassian, email.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Isgender Nashalian, 1 July 1989, Glendale, California; interview with Boyajian.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Blutian.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Ohannesian; interview with Giuzelyan.

plantation in the Svedia plain alone lived and worked as many as forty Alawite families.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, it can be maintained with relative certainty that the Alawite contingent was the largest—and perhaps the majority—among the three groups of tenant farmers associated with the economic life of Musa Dagh.

### *Other Agriculturists*

The landlords and *marabus* were not the only socioeconomic groups engaged in agriculture and related industries. In fact, both categories constituted a small percentage of Musa Dagh’s economic force, albeit with a greater impact than their numbers would indicate, especially in the case of notables. A third category of agriculturists consisted of independent farmers. They worked in their orchards and fields, which more or less satisfied their financial needs. While technically independent, some of them, at least, sold their products to the larger landlords, who collected products from the lesser proprietors to maximize their profits.<sup>111</sup> A fourth category comprised wage earners. They toiled in nearby fields and districts seasonally, earning 20-25 Syrian piasters per diem.<sup>112</sup>

Besides the wage earners, a handful of *azubs* contributed to the local economy to some modest degree. The word “azub” is derived from the Arabic “*a’zab*,” which means bachelor. In Musa Dagh, however, these were essentially young men orphaned during the genocide and later adopted by certain families. As such, they were furnished food and lodging. In return, they ran errands, assisted in domestic chores and, more importantly, lent a hand in the various agricultural-industrial activities that their adopted families were engaged in.<sup>113</sup> Due to their small number, however, the *azubs* can hardly be considered a viable socioeconomic category or class.

Although specific figures respecting sharecroppers, independent farmers, wage earners, and *azubs* are not available, statistics compiled on the basis of interviews with some natives reveal the following picture regarding agriculturists in general. Of the 192 male breadwinners in Bitias, twenty-six (13.5 percent) were categorized as workers on the land (*hoghakordz*); five (2.6 percent) as gardeners (*bardizban*); four (2.1 percent) as laborers (*panvor*); and one as

<sup>110</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, File 22/1, *Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940*, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan, 12 October 1926.

<sup>111</sup> Aprahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa,” p. 82.

<sup>112</sup> *Aztag*, 3 September 1937.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Izanian, 16 March 1993. According to Izanian, the following were *azubs* in Bitias: Sarkis Kendirjian at Fr. Vahan Kendirjian’s house; Khachig Kbranian at Movses Jambazian’s house; Movses Kendirjian at Sarkis Keosheian’s house, and others. For orphans adopted from outside, see also Chapter 1.

cultivator (*mshag*); for a total of thirty-six agriculturists constituting 19 percent of the entire labor force.<sup>114</sup> Of the 138 male breadwinners in Haji Habibli, twenty-three (16.7 percent) were *hoghakordz*; ten (7.2 percent) were *panvor*; and one was a *bardizban*; totaling thirty-four agriculturists or 24.6 percent of the labor force.<sup>115</sup> In Yoghunoluk, the figures were as follows: of the 212 male breadwinners, twenty-three (10.8 percent) were *hoghakordz*; nine (4.2 percent) were *bardizban*; six (2.8 percent) were vine growers (*aykekordz*); and two (0.9 percent) were *panvor*; totaling forty agriculturists or 19 percent of the labor force.<sup>116</sup> In Kheder Beg, of the 176 male breadwinners, thirty-two (18.2 percent) were landowner (*hoghader*)-*bardizban*; twenty-three (13.1 percent) were *hoghakordz*; and eight (4.5 percent) were *panvor*; totaling sixty-three agriculturists or 36 percent of the labor force.<sup>117</sup> In Vakef, of the 128 male breadwinners, ninety-three (72.6 percent) were *bardizban* and five (3.9 percent) were *hoghakordz*, totaling ninety-eight agriculturists or 76.6 percent of the work force.<sup>118</sup> Statistics for Kabusiye are scanty, but sources in general corroborate the fact that farming was the main source of income in that village as a whole.<sup>119</sup> To conclude, Kabusiye and Vakef aside, where most people earned their livelihood from agriculture, on average only about a quarter of the employed males in the remaining four villages made a living as farmers.

### *Interrelationships*

Generally speaking, “marriage was endogamous within each of the socio-economic categories” mentioned above. Local customs kept those groups separate: “No marriage between female descendants of *aghās* and *barins* and

<sup>114</sup> These surveys/statistics are based on interviews with the following natives: Robert Igarian, 27 March 1989, 7 June 1989, 27 July 1989, Hollywood, California; Lusaper Makhulian Jambazian, 23 November 1988, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California; Sara Sherbetjian Jambazian, 7 June 1989, Hollywood, California; Movses Sherbetjian, 27 March 1989, Hollywood, California; Sima Sherbetjian, 27 March 1989, Hollywood, California; Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 23 November 1988, 24 November 1988.

<sup>115</sup> Interviews with the following natives: Kerekian; Basambakian Hajian; Kerekian Prudian.

<sup>116</sup> Interviews with the following natives: Hovhannes Hajian, 22 March 1989, 5 January 1990, Hollywood, California; Yesayi Hajian, 18 February 1989, 23 May 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>117</sup> Harutiun Sherbetjian, untitled list of Kheder Beg inhabitants with their nicknames and occupations, compiled upon my request.

<sup>118</sup> Misak Blutian, “Misak Blutiani Gensakrutuine” (The Biography of Misak Blutian), unpublished manuscript written upon my request. It includes the names, occupations, and party affiliations of the male breadwinners in Vakef.

<sup>119</sup> Interviews with the following natives: Ohannesian; Giuzelyan; Kasamanian, 2 June 1989, Hollywood, California.

their *marabu* or *kradga* [hired muleteer] lineages have been recorded prior to 1939.”<sup>120</sup> The question of inheritance by women was a major factor in choosing a wife. As a rule, “females did not inherit land or property unless they did not have any male relatives.” This provision did not go unnoticed, as “ninety-three percent of marriages of male members of *agha* and *barin* families were with women (usually of independent farming families) who had no immediate male relatives and, by *adat* [customs], inherited lands and property.”<sup>121</sup> Men from independent farming families in turn aspired to marry women of higher rank to improve their socioeconomic status. But such cases were rare, because the notables “preferred to marry their daughters and sons to other lineages of *barins* and *aghās*, to strengthen their economic and political positions.”<sup>122</sup>

Seeking to establish a godparent relationship constituted yet another means of solidifying one’s status within the ranks of especially independent farmers and small-scale producers. “To secure their positions the small-scale producers entered into many-stranded dyadic and vertical relations with the *aghās* and *barins* through godparenthood relationships...” As a rule, “relations of godparenthood would have been formed between families of equal status. The preferential relationship was between the families of two brothers.” In time, however, “independent small cultivators of commodities for exchange and producers of manufacturing goods asked for the godparenthood of lineages of *aghās* and *barins* in order to acquire their protection. The consequence was a form of patron-client relationship...” Such “fictitious kinship relationships...were used to strengthen the existing bonds.”<sup>123</sup> But the evidence suggests that even ordinary sharecroppers tried to enter into such relationships with their landlords. A case in point was the *marabu* overseeing the Kheder Beg estates of the Kazanjians of Yoghunoluk. As he had succeeded in securing that family’s godfatherhood, he was “allowed to cultivate cash-crops on parts of the *agha*’s lands for his own benefit. Afterwards, with the money thus acquired he was able to buy plots of land—though he had remained *marabu*, which was an inheritable position.”<sup>124</sup> In addition to marriage and godparenthood ties, there were blood connections. Some of the *aghās*, at least, employed kin to run their estates at certain locations. In Yoghunoluk, for instance, Jabra Kazanjian and Mardiros Habeshian appointed their nephews Peniamin Taslakian and Harutiun Gharibian, respectively, as

<sup>120</sup> Arahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa,” p. 78.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-3.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

sharecroppers at their Kabakli pear and peach orchards.<sup>125</sup>

The term “in bondage” (*gabvudz* in the Musa Dagh dialect) has been used in reference to the “landless and property-less” laborers and their families “on the agricultural lands and in the craft-industries of these aghas and barins...”<sup>126</sup> Whether or not a less medieval-sounding, serfdom-evoking designation should or could be adopted in the case of Musa Dagh for the interwar period can be debated given the lack of conclusive evidence in this particular matter. Be that as it may, “Relations of bondage were also based on gender. Married and unmarried women of the families in bondage to a family of an agha (or of a family of a barin) were under the authority of the eldest female of the household of the agha or barin in question. They served in housekeeping chores as well as in the agricultural activities. The men, on the other hand, were under the authority of the agha or barin in question.”<sup>127</sup>

It must be noted that the issues of marriage and godparenthood pertained only to the Armenians. In other words, such relations did not apply in the case of Greek-Armenian and Armenian-Alawite associations, for the Greeks, although Christian, belonged to a different ethnicity and the Alawites to a different religion as well as ethnicity. In both cases, not a single instance of intermarriage or godparenthood has been recorded or remembered as far as Musa Dagh is concerned. “In bondage,” however, could have been a different matter, for it did not involve marriage and/or godparenthood. Therefore, it would be relatively safe to assume that that term could have applied to the Armenian-Armenian, Greek-Armenian, and Armenian-Alawite landlord-sharecropper relationships.

A final observation regarding certain peasants’ perpetual dependency on or “attachment” to notables is in order. As indicated above, given the fact that a number of ordinary folks had difficulty in buying seeds or making ends meet, they were compelled to borrow money at high interest rates from the notables against collateral of family valuables, animals, and/or land. Because such borrowers were often unable to fulfil their payment obligations, they not only remained forever indebted and subservient to their lenders, but sometimes lost their possessions as well. As the Musa Dagh people resettled in Anjar, Lebanon in 1939, tents, money, food rations, and labor were distributed to them by a central committee consisting of the representatives of the six villages of Musa Dagh. Each family from the second half of 1940 through the first trimester of 1941 similarly received a single room of equal size and an adjacent privy as

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Boyajian.

<sup>126</sup> Aprahamian, “The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa,” p. 68.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

housing. As for the agricultural lands surrounding the village proper, in 1941 they too were divided equitably among all households, with additional plots allocated to categories of families of larger size.<sup>128</sup> When some of the former money-lending notables pressured their fellow settlers for old debts, the latter refused to pay any longer. They were probably heartened by the new order that had emerged scrapping, to a large extent, former statuses and socioeconomic interrelationships.<sup>129</sup>

### *Animal Husbandry*

Animal husbandry, despite its obvious importance in an agrarian society, constituted one of the lesser agricultural occupations in Musa Dagh. Three factors determined this relative scarcity: the difficult terrain which impeded easy access to the grazing pastures; the threat posed by predators, especially wolves; and the natives’ inability to combat epidemic diseases.<sup>130</sup> In 1923, the Musa Daghians kept a total of 6,000 chickens and 2,860 animals, the latter being divided as follows: 2,000 goats, 600 cows and oxen, 120 sheep, 100 donkeys, 25 mules, and 15 horses.<sup>131</sup> Eleven years later, in 1934, the villagers owned 3,467 animals, 3,000 of which were goats, 200 cows and oxen, 150 sheep, 65 donkeys, and 52 mules. They generated a total income of 1,700 Turkish liras. This report noted that beehives, of which there were 100, and poultry (quantity not mentioned), were utterly neglected. According to one calculation, if 100 hens would laid 50 eggs per day, and since each egg sold for 1 Syrian piaster, that sort of income would guarantee one’s livelihood. Therefore, lectures and specialized books on poultry, bees, and “applied economics” would certainly educate the people and thus prove useful.<sup>132</sup>

In the summer of 1939, that is, prior to the exodus of Musa Daghians from the Sanjak, two official French counts continued to show modest numbers of animals, with a discrepancy of 463 head between the two counts. The first inventory indicated 3,895 animals including 3,000 goats, 395 donkeys, 320

<sup>128</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Settlement of Musa Dagh Armenians in Anjar, Lebanon 1939-1941,” forthcoming chapter in *The Armenians of Lebanon II* (Beirut: Haigazian University Press, 2015).

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 46–7.

<sup>130</sup> Telephone interview with Fr. Nareg Shrikian, 10 October 2008, Granada Hills, California-Montebello, California.

<sup>131</sup> *Husaper*, 11 December 1923.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 December 1934.

cows and oxen, 165 sheep, and 15 horses and mules.<sup>133</sup> The second inventory mentioned the number of animals per village rather than kind, as follows: 1,832 in Bitias (mostly) and Nor Zeitun; 504 in Kheder Beg; 419 in Haji Habibli; 269 in Kabusiye; 237 in Yoghunoluk; and 171 in Vakef, for a total of 3,432 animals.<sup>134</sup>

A third survey, similarly conducted (most probably by the Musa Daghians themselves) on the eve of the exodus, includes greater details as it furnishes figures per household in Haji Habibli, Bitias, Kheder Beg, and Kabusiye. Statistics respecting Yoghunoluk and Vakef are unfortunately unavailable. The 207 households in Haji Habibli owned 794 goats, 116 cows, 57 oxen, 39 donkeys, 33 sheep, and 3 horses, for a total of 1,042 animals. Of those 207 households, 101 (49 percent) did not keep goats, whereas 22 (11 percent) nurtured 1 goat each, 62 (30 percent) from 2-10 goats each, and 19 (9 percent) from 11-60 goats each. The distribution of other animals is statistically insignificant. The 207 households in Bitias possessed 1,887 goats, 158 cows, 95 donkeys, 78 oxen, 29 pigs, 9 sheep, 8 mules, and 7 horses, for a total of 2,271 animals plus 118 beehives. Of those 207 households, 82 (40 percent) did not own goats, 13 (6 percent) owned 1 goat each, 70 (39 percent) from 2-10 goats each, and 37 (18 percent) from 11-107 goats each, for an average of 9 goats per household. The 217 households in Kheder Beg took care of 579 animals, divided as follows: 327 goats, 112 sheep, 53 cows, 44 donkeys, 42 oxen, and 1 horse. Of those 217 households, 125 (58 percent) did not have goats, 16 (7 percent) had 1 goat each, 73 (34 percent) from 2-10 goats each, and 3 (1 percent) had 25, 28, and 100 goats, respectively. The 184 households in Kabusiye tended 761 goats, 122 donkeys, 114 cows, 56 oxen, and 48 sheep, for a total of 1,101 animals. Of those 184 households, 47 (26 percent) did not own goats, 21 (11 percent) kept 1 goat each, 104 (57 percent) from 2-10 goats each, and 12 (14 percent) from 11-95 goats each. (See appendices 2-5). To conclude, of the four villages surveyed, Bitias and Kheder Beg had the largest and smallest number of animals, respectively; Bitias had the largest number of goats; and Kabusiye had the largest number of donkeys. In addition, only Bitias kept pigs and beehives.

The process of counting and taxing animals consisted of two parts. Part one dealt with verifying, issuing permits for, and levying taxes on animals per head in June. Sheep, goats, pigs, and camels (which did not exist in Musa Dagh) numbered among the taxable animals, but there is no indication that cows, oxen,

<sup>133</sup> France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Nantes, E-Levant, Mandat Syrie-Liban, Cabinet Politique, 1930-1940, Sandjak d'Alexandrette, Carton 530, Bart to R. Chambard, Note sur la situation des arméniens dans le Sandjak d'Alexandrette et leur installation éventuelle au Liban, 28 June 1939.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., vol. 471, folio 199, Collet, Note de service, 14 July 1939.

horses, mules, and donkeys did. From a very limited number of existing receipts we learn that the Musa Daghians paid 40 Syrian piasters as tax per sheep or goat. Part two, conducted in December, had to do with spot-checking of grazing animals. When asked, their owner or shepherd had to produce the verification papers/tax receipts. In the absence of such documents, which had to be carried at all times, the flock would be considered unreported and accordingly issued new papers and assessed new taxes. The owners had no right to appeal. Should flocks be moved from one district (*kaza*) to another, it was the owner's responsibility to report his intentions, which would be recorded on the count/tax receipts. Failing to do so would mean paying taxes plus penalties.<sup>135</sup> This last provision could not have affected Musa Dagh much because of its relatively long distance from the boundaries of any surrounding district.

As a rule, peasants herded their own animals. Young boys in the family also assisted when not in school.<sup>136</sup> People engaged in other occupations such as sericulture, fruit growing, and comb making, however, entrusted their goats to one or more communal herders. Khachig Yaramaghian ("Qttishints Khichiyr") from the Vire Teugh neighborhood of Yoghunoluk, for example, was designated by interested animal owners as the village herder, confirmed by the village headman, and paid ½ mejidiye per head for his services. Armed with a hunting gun, a dagger, a pocket watch, a flute, and a dog, early each morning he led numerous goats from a central fold (*aghel*) to the meadows and penned them up again in their fold before sunset.<sup>137</sup> The Vakef inhabitants, in turn, employed two communal shepherds, namely, Bedros Kerteshian ("Berber") and a certain Khalil. Although a non-resident Arab, the latter knew the local dialect and customs, mingled with the inhabitants freely, and received tips in the form of money, food, snacks, and/or spirits upon delivering newborn goats to their owners.<sup>138</sup> A similar scene prevailed in Bitias:

Newborn baby goats or kids held special significance in every family. They were like having noted guests. Of course, they were even better since they never left. Fifty percent of them were born in the barn and the other half on the mountain where the herds would be grazing. They arrived back at the village

<sup>135</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, private papers, Granada Hills, California, animal tax receipts for 1938 belonging to the following persons from Yoghunoluk: Tovmas Karnazian, Sarkis Lakisian, Hagop Habeshian, and Panos Bursalian. Information regarding animal counts and their movements is found in Article 17 and Article 27, both printed on the back of those animal tax receipts in Arabic and Turkish in Arabic script.

<sup>136</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 76, 85-8; Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>137</sup> Hajian, "Im Hushere" (My Memoirs), unpublished memoirs, notebook 3, pp. 29-41.

<sup>138</sup> Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 76, 85-8.

riding on the shoulders of shepherds or nestled inside their *abbas* with their heads peeking out and bleating all the way down the mountain. The *abba* was a woven goat-hair coat that shepherds wore loosely over their shirts. Shepherds secured their belts over this loose fitting garment creating pockets inside above the belt. There, they would stuff their lunch, necessities and, on these occasions, baby goats to keep them warm, dry or carry them long distances. When we [children] saw the shepherd entering the village, sometimes loaded with three kids, we forgot everything and ran to carry a bleating kid to its home.<sup>139</sup>

When in early summer 1939 the exodus from the Sanjak became imminent, people sold some of their movable belongings, including animals, to neighboring Alawites and Turkmen at much reduced prices. Most owners, however, kept their livestock. While the bulk of people left the area in vehicles and trucks and had their goods like furniture, bedding, and kitchenware transported by sea, animals crossed the border led by shepherds. En route, some Turkish civilians attacked the caravans and stole animals and money. Turkish gendarmes succeeded in retrieving most of the animals, but only a fraction of the money.<sup>140</sup> After a seven-week temporary stay at Ras al-Basit, between Kesab and Latakia along the Mediterranean, the Musa Daghians resettled in Anjar, Lebanon, together with their possessions, including animals.

#### Conclusion

Almost all Musa Daghians owned land. Virtually every household reaped harvests from their vegetable gardens and orchards. But a closer look at economic activity reveals diverse sources of income. (See Chapter 4). In Kabusiye, livelihood depended on the sale of fruits, pistachio nuts, peanuts, and some legumes and cereals. In Kheder Beg and Vakef, citrus fruits, peaches, and plums generated cash. In Yoghunoluk, people lived off the comb and wood industries, shopkeeping, and muleteering. In Bitias, charcoal making, wooden spoon/ladle production, textile manufacturing, and providing services to vacationers constituted the main occupations. In Haji Habibli, weaving of silken articles and money remitted by migrant workers in Beirut sustained the local economy. Sericulture and oil extracted from laurel berries for the manufacture of soap in Antioch constituted important sources of revenue for all the villages. Toilers led a frugal existence as sharecroppers, independent farmers, wage earners, and *azubs*. Animal husbandry remained primarily a limited occupation satisfying

<sup>139</sup> Magzarian, *Recipes of Musa Dagh*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>140</sup> Piuzant Yeghiayan, "Chkhosink Sanjaki Masin" (Let Us Not Talk about the Sanjak), *Hayasdani Gochnag* (Clarion of Armenia) XXXIX: 39 (30 September 1939): 1,031-32; *Aztag*, 23 July 1939; *Zartonk* (Awakening) (Beirut), 25 July 1939.

mostly domestic needs. In short, agriculture, although certainly important, was but one of the Musa Daghians' productive economic activities.

Table 1

#### Gardens and Fields in Musa Dagh, 11 July 1939

	Bitias	Haji Habibli	Yoghunoluk	Kheder Beg	Vakef	Kabusiye	Totals
<b>GARDENS</b>	713	740	652	951	336	511	3,903
Size	928	1,250	1,771	2,087	567	1,384	7,987
Size/ garden	1.3	1.7	2.72	2.19	1.69	2.71	
Value	245,850	338,980	478,700	1,055,920	221,550	390,860	2,731,860
Value/ garden	345	458	732	1,103	659	765	
Value/ donum	265	271	270	506	391	282	
<b>FIELDS</b>	528	235	349	272	49	300	1,733
Size	1,184	3,700	2,776	2,790	269	1,270	11,989
Size/ field	2.24	15.74	7.95	10.26	5.49	4.23	
Value	238,950	274,600	250,750	213,125	117,750	315,490	1,410,665
Value/ field	453	1,169	718	784	2,403	1,052	
Value/ donum	203	74	90	76	438	248	
<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>977,680</b>	<b>987,145</b>	<b>1,066,350</b>	<b>1,525,545</b>	<b>357,550</b>	<b>862,329</b>	<b>5,778,599</b>

Legend: Size is in *donums*; value is in Syrian liras.

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Statistiques des habitants et biens immeubles des populations de Bitias/Hadji-Habibli/Yoghoun-Olouk/Kheder-Bey/Vakef/Kéboussié, et poids de leurs bagages.

*Chapter 4*  
**TRADES, BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES**

After enduring many hardships in the aftermath of World War I, the Armenians of Musa Dagh endeavored to return to normalcy in relative peace under the French mandate. In addition to agriculture and animal husbandry, they engaged in the trades, business, sericulture, and related occupations. But while the future inspired some hope, global financial woes, shifting consumer demands, and changes in the regional political landscape kept the Armenian highlanders ill at ease and rendered their economic progress untenable in the long run. This chapter sheds light on the artisanship, trades, and industries in Musa Dagh which hinged on local resources and efforts as well as outside determinants.

*Trades and Businesses*

Dubbed by the Musa Daghians as *Kaghiuk*, that is, the City, Antioch constituted the district's administrative and commercial center where people from the surrounding countryside acquired their cereals, legumes, sugar, fabrics and other necessities, and concurrently sold their fruit, vegetables, and other products. Armenian muleteers conducted this activity for Musa Dagh. Each day except Sundays and Thursdays they embarked on their trip after midnight and returned the same day, oftentimes in small caravans for safety and support. Some worked independently, earning their wages by charging a transportation fee plus a certain amount on special orders placed by the villagers.<sup>1</sup> Others served exclusively local landlord-merchants.<sup>2</sup> At least one muleteer from Bitias additionally carried the mail to and from Antioch.<sup>3</sup> In 1923, the number of muleteers in Musa Dagh was put at twenty-two.<sup>4</sup> Judging from oral testimonies

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<sup>1</sup> Hovhannes Hajian, "Im Hushere" (My Memoirs), unpublished manuscript, notebook 2, p. 57, notebook 3, pp. 44-50; interview with Yesayi Hajian, 23 May 1989, Hollywood, California. For the utilization of donkeys, horses, and mules in Musa Dagh, see also Krikor Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutiune* (The Ethnography of Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: "Kidutiun" Publishing House of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, 2001), pp. 93-5.

<sup>2</sup> Sima Aprahamian, "The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa: From Stratified Society through Classlessness to the Re-Appearance of Social Classes," Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, March 1989, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California; interview with Lusaper Makhulian Jambazian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>4</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 11 December 1923.

by natives, this count seems to be only about half of the actual figure.<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, with the construction of roads in the second half of the 1920s-early 1930s for motorized traffic, the importance of muleteers for export-import purposes diminished,<sup>6</sup> although they remained indispensable internally given the mountainous terrain and the lack of paved secondary access arteries.

It is true that Antioch was the main trade center in the district. Nevertheless, a number of businesses and workshops existed in Musa Dagh to satisfy some immediate needs and to allow artisans and others to ply their trades. Yoghunoluk was the only village that had a permanent marketplace, called *Charshen*. It ran east-to-west along a 1-kilometer stretch starting at the Gedeg neighborhood and crossing the village center. At least fourteen businesses lined both sides of this thoroughfare, as follows: 2 tinsmith/pewter/gunsmith shops; 2 barber shops; 2 grocery stores; 2 novelty stores; 1 tailoring shop; 1 comb workshop; 1 cobbler's shop; 1 weaving shop; 1 wholesale store; and 1 unnamed store. (See Table 1). To give some specific examples, Levon Kazanjian and his three sons, Makhul, Elisha, and Sarkis expertly repaired all sorts of firearms, made knives, scissors, and sickles, and cleaned copper plates and cauldrons. Simon Khudigian ("Mansur") not only mended shoes but also made men's knee-high boots called *jizme*. Hagop Atamian (or Chemenian) retailed shoes, socks, shirts, underwear, perfumes, combs, etc. Boghos Shemmassian sold fabrics, bed sheets, chintz, embroidery hoops, threads, needles, and kerosene. Hampartzum Hagopian entertained friends visiting his barber shop by taking short breaks and playing a tambourine while shaving customers.<sup>7</sup> In fact, this entire commercial hub also served as space for social interaction; men would gather in their spare time to exchange news, discuss various issues, play board games, and have fun. They would also "secretly" watch unmarried women passing by for consideration as possible future wives. Because these men often used rough language, they did not allow children to gather near them. The *Charchen* similarly attracted gypsies, fortune tellers, magicians, and other transients, who recounted stories about

<sup>5</sup> The number of muleteers according to natives was: in Yoghunoluk, 15; Bitias, 12; Kheder Beg, 8; Haji Habibli, 4 (minimum); Vakef, 3; Kabusiye, number unknown. See, respectively, interview with Yesayi Hajian, 18 February 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; Harutiun Sherbetjian, untitled list of Kheder Beg inhabitants with their nicknames and occupations, compiled upon my request; interview with Antranig Kerekian, 9 June 1989, Van Nuys, California; Misak Blutian, "Misak Blutiani Gensakrutiune" (The Biography of Misak Blutian), written upon my request.

<sup>6</sup> Hajian, "Im Hushere," notebook 3, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Hovhannes Hajian, "Yoghun-Oluki 'Charshen' Shugayi Ngarakrutiune" (The Description of the Yoghunoluk "Charshen" Marketplace), unpublished manuscript prepared upon my request.

ancient heroes, performed tricks, etc.<sup>8</sup> Nine shops additionally operated outside the marketplace, for a total of twenty-three shops. (See Table 1).

Although Yoghunoluk possessed a central marketplace, it was Bitias that boasted the most businesses by virtue of being a popular summer resort. Needless to say, some of them operated seasonally. As for the other villages, they too housed a few modest stores, workshops, and/or cafés each. (See Table 1). Because there were no cafés in Yoghunoluk, its male inhabitants frequented those of Kheder Beg. Interestingly, the customers of two of the four cafés there, all situated within or near the shade of the centrally-located gigantic plane tree, were divided along party lines: sympathizers of the Social Democrat Hinchakian Party spent time at comrade Armenag (or Menag) Kabakian's café, whereas the adherents of the rival Armenian Revolutionary Federation socialized at comrade Nshan Boyajian's café.<sup>9</sup>

Some villagers engaged in other economic activity. Half a dozen men or so from Kabusiye and nearby Chevlik by the sea caught and sold fish. Because these fishermen used dynamite alongside the common net and hook, some of them unfortunately lost their limbs or even their life as a result of accidental explosions. Two men, in addition, used their boats for touristic excursions.<sup>10</sup> A 1923 survey of certain categories of workers also presented the following picture: 110 comb makers; 30 spoon makers; 26 silk manufacturers; 25 wood cutters; 22 masons; 22 muleteers; 20 weavers; 18 carpenters; 15 stone cutters; 12 barbers; 12 cobblers; 10 millers; 5 tinkers; 3 goldsmiths; 3 ironsmiths; 2 tinsmiths, for a total of 335 workers.<sup>11</sup> Whether or not these figures are accurate, they show that skilled labor was quite limited in scope, with the exception of comb and spoon making and silk manufacturing and weaving. But quality compensated for quantity. To illustrate, not only did master masons erect houses, ramparts, and bridges locally, but also in the general vicinity, where their expertise was highly regarded. In the same vein, painters (not mentioned in the above survey) prepared their own dyes from vegetation such as walnut roots and shells (for yellow), pomegranate peel (for black), *dzirandeg* (a certain bush, for red), apple leaves (for shades of red), and so on. The Boyajians (*boya* meaning paint, dye or color in Turkish) excelled in this profession as a hereditary

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Harutiun Sherbetjian, 1 November 1992, North Hollywood, California.

<sup>10</sup> Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On A Life's Traces) (Palm Springs, California: Haig's Printing, 1990), p. 86; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiune*, pp. 82-3; interview with Sarkis Asadur Kasamian, 28 January 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>11</sup> *Husaper*, 11 December 1923.

occupation; one of them, named Harutiun, was considered the most famous painter in the entire region of Antioch.<sup>12</sup>

### *Wood, Charcoal, and Comb Production*

The wild forests covering large swaths of Musa Dagh determined a number of occupations. According to a newspaper report, of the 70,000 hectares (172,900 acres) of forestland in the Sanjak of Alexandretta, 4,000 hectares (9,880 acres) or about 6 percent covered Musa Dagh.<sup>13</sup> Hovhannes Dumanian, an Armenian agronomical engineer hailing from Hajin, beginning on 23 September 1923 served as director of agriculture and forestry in the Sanjak, increasing the government's annual revenues from forestry alone from 1,800 Syrian liras to 20,000 liras.<sup>14</sup> In turn, Hagop Boyajian ("Merjumek") of Yoghunoluk, formerly a sergeant in the French *Légion d'Orient*, acted as mounted ranger, having been charged by the French mandatory authorities with the patrolling of the woodlands of Musa Dagh and Kizil Dagh to the north. As such, he cited woodcutters and charcoal makers who operated without license. But because of complaints lodged against him by non-Armenians alleging discrimination in favor of Armenians, in 1936 he was transferred to the Kesab-Latakia region further south.<sup>15</sup>

Occupations dependent on wood in Musa Dagh suffered some setbacks during the first half of the 1920s. In 1921 a major fire lasting several days burned large forested and bushy areas, prompting the government to launch an investigation.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in 1924 charcoal production in the Sanjak came to a temporary halt because the government forbade charcoal exportation; even the export of piles ready for shipment was frozen. Three factors determined this restriction. The first involved the protection of forests endangered by the unchecked felling of trees. The second dealt with the fact that most charcoal produced in the Sanjak was exported, thereby depriving the indigenous populations of its use during winter. The third pertained to a contemplated

<sup>12</sup> Tovmas Habeshian, *Musa-Daghi Babenagan Artzakankner* (Ancestral Echoes of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Erepuni Press, 1986), pp. 156-59.

<sup>13</sup> *Husaper*, 30 September 1924. This figure of 70,000 hectares of forestland in the Sanjak is 30,000 hectares less than the 100,000 hectares mentioned by Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de tourisme* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1931), vol.I, p. 77. Therefore, the 4,000 hectares figure pertaining to the woodlands covering Musa Dagh must also be used with caution.

<sup>14</sup> Hovhannes T. Dumanian, *Im Hushere* (My Memoirs) (Beirut: Sevan Press, 1977), p. 171.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Mardiros Hagop Boyajian, 10 June 1989, Hollywood, California. See also Albert S. Temirian, *Pats Namagner*... [Open Letters...] (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1965), pp. 123-29.

<sup>16</sup> *Husaper*, 8 October 1921. The outcome of the investigation remains unknown.

electricity plant in Alexandretta that would run on charcoal.<sup>17</sup> But the ban was ultimately lifted and business resumed, assuming a more organized character over the years as attested by the establishment of a chamber of industry in 1935 at Antioch. Interestingly, one of its eighteen constituent members (most probably Dikran Kazanjian) was an "entrepreneur of the small wood industry of Musa Dagh."<sup>18</sup>

Charcoal making evolved in the following manner. From spring through early fall villagers from Bitias in particular left their homes Sunday evening (returning the following Saturday evening) for the *damir* (sheds) built at special locations on the mountain. Here they felled oak trees, chopped wood into pieces 2 feet (61 centimeters) long, and piled them up conically around a central log, thereby forming an *ojakh* (kiln) up to 6 feet (1.83 meter) high with a 40-foot (12 meters) circumference (smaller heaps were called *ojakhe lagiud*). They then arranged rocks around the circle at a distance of 3.9 inches (10 centimeters), and covered the *ojakh* first with *kazal* (dry leaves) and then with earth for insulation. Subsequently they removed the central pivot, dropped fire into the resultant open *pirun* (mouth) at the top by way of an *arreot* (ember), and covered the opening with a small sheet of tin and earth to prevent air from penetrating and causing the wood to burn to ashes. After igniting the heap from within, the charcoal makers checked the wind direction periodically in order to add new myrtle branches in case the wind had caused openings between the rocks and the wood. They similarly inspected the heap every 4-5 hours to patch *badrudz dighir* (cleavages) with *kazal* and earth, and every 9-10 hours to *lellu pirune* (fill the mouth) with green wood to suffocate any flames before they could burst out (again to avoid incineration). This entire process lasted about three days, until the *ojakh* would finally *chekmeshenno* (buckle). At this stage the charcoal makers poked an iron *khanterush* (bar) into the buckled heap from several angles, considering the *ojakh ighudz* (done) upon hearing a sound resembling that of broken glass when stirred. After removing the rocks and the earth, the charcoal makers spread the *qerzilen* (charcoal) apart to cool it off for a few hours, and transported it in *garmer orum debergir* (red darned sacks) back to the village

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 September 1924.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Bazantay, *Enquête sur l'artisanat à Antioche* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1936), pp. 83-4.

on mules (carrying double sacks) or donkeys (carrying a single sack).<sup>19</sup> Charcoal thus obtained in Musa Dagh in 1923 amounted to 1,600,000 *okes* (4,480,000 pounds/2,036 metric tons). Of these, 1,300,000 *okes* (3,640 pounds/1,655 tons) were exported and 300,000 *okes* (840,000 pounds/381 tons) were used locally as heating fuel.<sup>20</sup> As such, charcoal was burned in a pit dug in one corner of the living-room, while students took pieces of wood and charcoal to school daily to warm up their classrooms during the winter months.<sup>21</sup>

Muleteers transported the charcoal to Antioch. Poor young women and widows in the early 1920s likewise carried loads of wood, charcoal, and potatoes on their backs to that city, returning the same day with orders of cereal for a small remuneration with which to feed their families.<sup>22</sup> Very soon the charcoal business became concentrated in the hands of a few entrepreneurs. Movses Renjilian of Bitias and father and son Kevork and Yesayi Shrikian of Yoghunoluk in 1921 forged a partnership to export mostly charcoal to other parts of the Levant and as far as Egypt. The enterprise ended after three years when the license was found to be illegal.<sup>23</sup> In the late 1920s Ardashes Boghigian, a future deputy to the Syrian parliament from Aleppo and a political protégé of the Syrian nationalist leader Ibrahim Hanano, together with his brother, Apkar, and adopted son, Yetvart, monopolized a substantial portion of the charcoal made in Musa Dagh, utilizing the yard of Sarkis Sherbetjian's house in Bitias as depot and distribution point. They were ultimately commissioned out of business by Jabra Kazanjian of Yoghunoluk and his son, Aram, who won the charcoal producers

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<sup>19</sup> Norman Balabanian, *Life Story* (Gainesville, Florida: N.p., 2008), p. 22; Suren Filhannesian, letter to the author, received 14 July 1993; interview with Isgender Stambulian, 5 September 1995, Fresno, California. For charcoal making at Soghukoluk, another exclusively Armenian village in the Sanjak, consult Victoria Giuzelyan, *Beylani Parpare* (The Dialect of Beylan) (Yerevan: VMV-Print Publishing, 2007), pp. 179, 186.

<sup>20</sup> *Husaper*, 6 December 1923.

<sup>21</sup> Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, unpublished memoir, Detroit, Michigan, p. 64; Sara Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter to the author, mailed 19 November 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Rev. Dikran Andreassian (Antreasian) letter to the Secretary of the British Friends of Armenia Society, 27 April 1920, *Friend of Armenia*, New Series, no. 77 (July 1920): 5; *Giligia* (Cilicia) (Adana), 14 July 1921; *Asbarez* (Arena) (Fresno), 26 August 1921; Armenian General Benevolent Union Archives, Saddle Brook, New Jersey (now New York, New York), (hereafter AGBU/SB), File 14 D, *H. P. E. Miutian Sisvan Varzharanner (Svedia). Tghtagtsutiunner 1923-1927* (AGBU Sisvan Schools [Svedia]: Correspondence 1923-1927), Krikor Aroyan to Cairo AGBU Central Executive Board, 26 November 1922.

<sup>23</sup> Fr. Nareg Shrikian, letter to the author, 14 May 2010.

over with advanced credit and better pay.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the French authorities granted the Kazanjian brothers, Jabra and Dikran, the exclusive right to wood cutting in the entire region extending from Kizil Dagh in the north to the frontiers of the Alawite state around the coastal town of Latakia in the south. They employed some 150 cutters and muleteers from the Armenian villages of Musa Dagh, as well as the neighboring Turkmen villages of Chanakli, Sanderang, Sanderangen Amaje, Gumbajen, Arsuz, Ikizoghlu, and Chaghlakuz, with the headman of the latter place, a certain Hamid, acting as the foreman of the Turkmen workers. Dikran resided in Antioch to manage the export and marketing of fuel, charcoal, planks, electricity poles, and vine supports in various cities through a network of agents. Trucks carried the loads overland to Alexandretta (agent: Nersesian), and to Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus (agent: Artin Agha). At the same time, a special cable relay system linking Damlajik atop the mountain to the sea below loaded the merchandise onto three ships—two owned by the Kazanjians and one serviced in partnership with an Alawite—which in turn transported them to Beirut, Lebanon (agent: Agha Baba); Jaffa, Palestine (agent: Ohannes, son of Jabra Kazanjian); and Port Said, Egypt (agent: anonymous).<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, this lucrative business came to an end with the departure of the Kazanjians for Latakia and Beirut in 1938 as the crisis surrounding the Sanjak's status worsened.<sup>26</sup>

The Musa Daghians pursued two other wood-related occupations: comb and spoon making and carpentry. The first category was more widespread and profitable. The majority of men in Yoghunoluk were engaged in comb making, because agricultural opportunities were limited given the lack of adequate water in that village, as explained in the previous chapter. In December 1923, the number of comb makers and spoon/ladle makers in Musa Dagh as a whole was put at 110 (33 percent of the 335 artisans, craftsmen, etc.) and 30 (10 percent), respectively.<sup>27</sup> These artisans made their own tools such as vises, hewing hatchets, hammers, saws, files, nails, etc.<sup>28</sup> Exceptionally a young man built a machine for

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Arakel Izanian, 28 December 1991, Sunland, California. For Ardashes Boghigian's public career, see "Ardashes Boghigian," *Keghart Suriahay Darekirk* (Keghart Syrian Armenian Almanac), Dr. Robert Jebejian, ed., vol. 5 (Aleppo: n.p., 1996), pp. 546-47; Nura (Nora) Arisian, *Al-Nuwwab al-Arman fi al-Majalis al-Niabiyya al-Suriyya 1928-2011* (The Armenian Deputies in the Syrian Parliaments 1928-2011) (Damascus: N. p., 2011), pp. 57-76.

<sup>25</sup> Hrant Dikran Kazanjian, letter to the author, 22 November 1993; interview with Mardiros Hagop Boyajian.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>27</sup> *Husaper*, 11 December 1923.

<sup>28</sup> Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), p. 121.

mass production, but he died prematurely without reaping the benefits of his invention.<sup>29</sup> Two particular trees furnished the bulk of wood: *katlaba* (arbuté) and *dosakh* (boxwood), both of which existed plentifully in Musa Dagh. Animal bones, particularly camel legs, goat and bull horns, and ivory were also utilized. They were procured from markets in Aleppo, Hama, and Antioch, kept in limewater for up to a month to get rid of germs, worms, and bad odor, cut into two to three small pieces, and joined with inserted nails.<sup>30</sup> These kinds of combs were harder to make and were relatively expensive.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the type, however, the finished products were shipped in bundles of twelve for easy counting.<sup>32</sup> In 1923, Musa Dagh exported 500,000 wooden combs and 5,000 bone combs. At the same time, thirty artisans shipped 200,000 wooden spoons and ladles.<sup>33</sup> These manufactures were sold in the various towns of Syria and the desert hinterland, especially Deir al-Zor, as well as in Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, the Sudan, and Tunisia.<sup>34</sup> As for carpentry, it essentially entailed the making of tables, chairs, doors, windows, cabinets, cribs, etc. for local use only.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Sericulture and Related Activity*

Sericulture was the main occupation in Musa Dagh through the mid-1920s. Weather determined the start of the silk season. Because temperature varied from one place to another, mulberry leaves, the exclusive silkworm food, sprouted at different times in different locations. In 1923, for example, leaves began to grow on 22 March in the coastal hamlets of Chevlik below Kabusiye and Miadun in the northern foothills of Jabal Aqra/Mount Cassius, whereas leaves sprouted in Antioch two weeks later and in Bitias on 15 April. The reverse might occur in other years depending on nature's whims. Inclement weather could also ruin a season partly or entirely; in 1923, for instance, hail destroyed

<sup>29</sup> Bedros Torosyan, *Husher* (Memoirs) (Los Angeles: Abril Printing, 2009), pp. 6, 9-11, 16-8; Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: "Orenk yev Iraganutium" Printing, 2005), pp. 50-5, 191.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Bedros Sarkis Hajian, 29 June 1989, Glendale, California; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 121. In the case of wooden combs, the chopped raw pieces had first to be boiled in water and dried in the shade to obtain softness. See Torosyan, *Husher*, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; Hagop Torosian, *Surp Sarkis. Trvakner Musa Leran Gianken* (Saint Sarkis: Episodes from Life in Musa Dagh) (Beirut: G. Donigian & Sons Press, 1970), p. 10; Hajian, "Im Hushere," notebook 1, pp. 53-5.

<sup>32</sup> Hajian, "Im Hushere," notebook 2, p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> *Husaper*, 6 December 1923.

<sup>34</sup> *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 3 September 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Habeshian, *Musa-Daghi*, p. 158.

one-fourth of the leaves in Bitias.<sup>36</sup>

Because the tediousness of sericulture required multiple helping hands, even youngsters were employed in some capacity. During the first half of the 1920s, when cocoon production enjoyed its heyday, the academic calendar was adjusted accordingly. In 1923 Krikor Aroyan, the principal of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) *Sisvan* Schools network in Musa Dagh, postponed classes from 1 till 15 May so that students could assist their parents in silk chores, provided lost instructional time would be recovered in June.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, during 1923-24 students in Haji Habibli, Kabusiye, and Vakef attended school from 6 August 1923-10 May 1924, while their counterparts in Bitias, Yoghunoluk, and Kheder Beg studied from 5-10 September 1923-10 June 1924. This arrangement, made in deference to the villagers' wishes, would allow pupils to harvest olives and bay tree fruit at their peak season as well as help parents in sericulture.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, the excitement generated by feeding silkworms and watching them grow and spin their cocoons kindled the entrepreneurial spirit in some children. Wrote Bitias native Alberta Magzarian:

When I was eleven years old, [my younger sister] Anna and I decided to start our own silk worm business. Failing to gain our parents['] support, we convinced an aunt to part with one of her tiny mulberry leaves covered with a few "seeds" (larvae).

...

We pampered them!...Instead of feeding them three times, we insisted on feeding them fresh leaves five times a day. Our silk worms got big and fat! Soon, even Mom began to brag about them. They became the talk of the village. Merchants approached our parents and suggested that the cocoons should be sold for their eggs instead of their silk but for the following year's crop.

...

...One uncle, a merchant by trade, was my most frequent visitor [when I had the measles] and each time he came, he leaned over my red face and whispered about the gold coins that the cocoon would bring. In my feverish

<sup>36</sup> Victoria Renjilian Sarafian, private papers, Fresno, California, Movses S. Renjilian, letter to "My Dear Children" Victoria and her husband Krikor Sarafian, 2 May 1923.

<sup>37</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, Aroyan to AGBU Executive Board, 6 May 1923. Aroyan announced the forthcoming two-week school closure while on a business trip to Beirut.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Aroyan to AGBU Executive Board, 1 July 1924. According to the original plan, the 1923-24 school calendar would be from 1 August 1923-30 April 1924 for Haji Habibli, Kheder Beg, and Kabusiye, and from 1 September 1923-31 May 1924 for Bitias, Yoghunoluk, and Vakef. Idem, AGBU Executive Board to Aroyan, 19 July 1923.

state, I dreamt about pots of gold waiting for my sister and me.

Ultimately, my uncle did sell the cocoons in Antioch. He had promised to give us the money the following day. The tomorrows kept adding up and finally, a week after his Antioch trip, Mom gave each of us a large silver coin equivalent to half a dollar. But Anna and I knew that the money came from Mom rather than our uncle.<sup>39</sup>

The nurturing of silkworms took place in special houses built in mulberry orchards situated mainly on the village peripheries. After disinfecting the rooms—which had to be kept at a certain temperature—with chemicals to kill germs and keep mice and other harmful insects at bay, cultivators constructed scaffolds and placed long wooden trays on the shelves to be able to feed the silkworms several times daily with fresh, shredded mulberry leaves.<sup>40</sup> According to a study, “it is estimated that the worms consume about 25 pounds of mulberry leaves to a pound of cocoons, or about 300 pounds of mulberry leaves to a pound of raw silk. One worm during the course of its short life will eat about 50 times its own weight... The average maximum production of a mulberry tree, which it reaches at the age of 20 years, is about 210 pounds of leaves—not quite enough to raise a pound of raw silk.”<sup>41</sup>

After undergoing four molting stages and reaching maturation, the moths were transferred onto *avils* (brooms) made of bushes to be able to spin their cocoons.<sup>42</sup> An average cocoon contained “as much as 600 yards of silk filament, and it would take about 1000 miles of this filament to make a pound of silk.”<sup>43</sup> In Musa Dagh, as a native observed,

Gathering the cocoons and scraping their loose threads was usually a community affair. Neighbors and relatives worked together before the silk moth tore a hole and emerged thereby making the silk thread worthless. People wanted to complete this task by dusk and transfer the responsibility

<sup>39</sup> Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in A Dialect of Its Own* (N. p.: www.Lulu.com , 2008), pp. 157-58.

<sup>40</sup> For details consult *ibid.*, p. 157; Chaparian Papakhian, memoir, pp. 9-14; Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkkrutiune*, pp. 70-9; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 119-120. For sericulture in Musa Dagh in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 41-9.

<sup>41</sup> W.D. Darby, *Silk—The Queen of Fabrics* (New York: Federal Printing Co., 1922), p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers,” pp. 41-2.

<sup>43</sup> Darby, *Silk*, p. 24.

of caring for the cocoons to the merchants who traveled from household to household weighing, loading and transporting the cargo to the markets in Antioch. Once the owner was paid for the cocoons, people were relieved from this intensive chore and ready for a celebration. The households who pocketed the profits supplied trays of halva [a sweet] and *tonir* [earthen oven] bread for the villagers. More halva was consumed in Bitias during those few days than for the rest of the year.<sup>44</sup>

The sericulture output in 1923 amounted to 55,000 *okes* (154,000 pounds/70 metric tons) of cocoons and 800 *okes* (2,240 pounds/1 metric ton) of raw silk,<sup>45</sup> the latter increasing by 48 percent (to about 1.5 metric tons) the following year.<sup>46</sup> In the mid-1920s those engaged in sericulture in the six villages annually nurtured a total of 1,810 round boxes (each the size of a *La vache qui rit* or The Laughing Cow cheese box) of silkworm seeds as follows: Kabusiye, 450 boxes; Bitias, 420 boxes; Haji Habibli, 380 boxes; Yoghunoluk, 350 boxes; Kheder Beg, 150 boxes; and Vakef, 60 boxes. Each box yielded an average of 5 Ottoman gold liras, for a total of 9,050 liras.<sup>47</sup> To put things into perspective, “the mulberry plantations are measured in ‘boxes,’ that is to say by the quantity of trees capable of furnishing the leaves necessary for rearing one box of silkworm seed. These boxes being all of the same weight, the unit that they determine is relatively constant from one region to another.”<sup>48</sup> Significantly, of the 42,320 fruit trees planted in Musa Dagh in 1925 as many as 35,000 (83 percent) constituted mulberry arbors.<sup>49</sup>

The Haji Habibli inhabitants, in particular, were expert weavers of silken cloth on hand-made looms placed in one corner of their homes called *hiur* (pit or well). “By mixing their happy peasant song[s] to the fast back-and-forth traffic of the [loom’s] shuttle, they toiled all day long in order to have the possibility of providing for their family’s livelihood and needs with their lawfully-earned labor.”<sup>50</sup> The manufactured fabrics, which nearly competed with European brands, were dyed with natural vegetable dyes and confectioned into

<sup>44</sup> Magzarian et al., *Recipes of Musa Dagh*, p. 157.

<sup>45</sup> *Husaper*, 6 December 1923.

<sup>46</sup> *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 30 August 1924.

<sup>47</sup> *Husaper*, 27 December 1934.

<sup>48</sup> André Latron, *La vie rurale en Syrie et au Liban. Étude d'économie sociale* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1936), p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> *Husaper*, 23 April 1925.

<sup>50</sup> National Harach-K. Giubengian College Archives, Anjar, Lebanon, Kevork Kerkian, “Haji-Habibli,” unpublished manuscript, 22 April 1965, p. 2.

a variety of articles such as belts, headgear, handkerchiefs, men's and women's attire, etc.<sup>51</sup> Aside from local consumption, these were bartered with retailers in nearby Turkmen and Alawite villages in exchange for cereals, legumes, olives, etc., transported directly to Cilicia before the region's incorporation by Turkey after the withdrawal of French troops in 1921, and/or sold to merchants in Antioch, who in turn exported them to Egypt, Italy, and France.<sup>52</sup>

Although the majority of Musa Daghians engaged in sericulture, the village notables, constituting less than 3 percent of the population, controlled the industry with their large farms and/or means to collect the crops from ordinary peasants.<sup>53</sup> The Kazanjians of Yoghun Oluk were a case in point. Their fortunes in this realm rose further with the acquisition of significant real estate originally owned by Kerovpe M. Aslanian, a rich Armenian proprietor from Constantinople and the maternal uncle of the renowned satirist Yervant Odian. At the time of his death in or before 1926 Aslanian possessed a silk farm at the village of Mughayrun on the Svedia plain adjacent to Musa Dagh. The farm, situated as it was on the two banks of a river (the Orontes or a tributary) that powered two mills, included seventeen silk houses plus another structure for "awakening" silkworms, all managed by forty Alawite families, who worked as sharecroppers earning 50 percent of the profits. The business yielded fifty-five boxes of silkworm seeds with a growth potential of an additional ten boxes. Each mulberry grove that "fed" one box was worth 50 gold liras, for a total of more than 3,000 liras. Aslanian bequeathed his estate to his nephew, Ardavan Hovian, who in turn sold it to the Kazanjian brothers.<sup>54</sup> The latter appointed Mihran Ashkarian of Kheder Beg to manage their affairs at Mughayrun.<sup>55</sup>

The Armenian notables were not the only large-scale dealers in sericulture. Mention is also made of Greek Orthodox (Horom/Hurum) merchants from Antioch and Levshiye, the administrative-trade center of Svedia sub-district. In

<sup>51</sup> K. Kabbenjian, "Suria Kaghakagan, Grona-Badmagan, Grtagan yev Dndesagan Desagedov" (Syria from the Political, Religious-Historical, Educational and Economic Perspective), in Ardavazt Siurmeian, ed., *Datev Gronagan Daretsuyts* (Datev Religious Almanac), 3<sup>rd</sup> year (Aleppo: N.p., 1927): 243; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 120; Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, p. 21, II, p. 400, III, p. 511.

<sup>52</sup> Krekian, "Haji-Habibli," p. 2; Jacquot, *Antioche*, II, p. 447.

<sup>53</sup> For the control of the silk industry by notables, see Aprahamian, "The Inhabitants of Haouch Moussa," pp. 62-5.

<sup>54</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, (hereafter ACC), File 22/1, *Jebel Musa – Svedia 1920-1940*, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian (Abraham D. Calousdian) to Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan, 12 October 1926; Hrant Dikran Kazanjian, letter to the author, 22 March 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Kazanjian letter, 22 March 1994.

the early 1920s, during the period of anarchy, Christian merchants living on the Svedia plain received protection from armed Armenian men and transported their cocoon bales ready for shipment to the nearest Armenian village of Vakef for safety until the arrival of vessels.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Antioch residents Butros and Hanania Awwad, who also spoke the Musa Dagh dialect, collected cocoons while summering at their private homes in the Qaberlek neighborhood of Bitias.<sup>57</sup> Elian and Ibrahim Lavand (Lawand), known as Edlechtsink, similarly owned a silk farm in Bitias proper that included five houses occupied at one time or another by several native sharecroppers.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to large-scale collectors and exporters, there existed in Bitias especially a few professionals who dealt with the scientific-technical aspects of the silk industry. Having studied under the direction of Prof. Kevork Torkomian at the prestigious Sericulture Institute of Bursa in Ottoman Turkey during the 1900s, licentiates like Apraham Renjilian, Taniel Chaparian, and his brother, Kevork, inspected the silkworm seeds with microscopes in order to ensure the healthiness of the crops by detecting and discarding infected seeds.<sup>59</sup> Kevork, as a municipal employee, was likewise charged by Onnig Tospat, Director of Silk Control in the Sanjak headquartered at Antioch, to teach Turkmen and Alawite peasants living in the general vicinity the intricacies of the trade.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately, sericulture spiraled downward during the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s not only in Musa Dagh but also across Syria. Statistics showed that "in pre-World War I Syria the total production of cocoons amounted to 6-7,000 tons, whereas by 1931 it had dwindled to about half or 2,850 tons. Similarly, the export of raw silk had downfalled [sic] from 1,313 tons to only

<sup>56</sup> Tateos Babigian, "Husher, Tebker u Temker" (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 9, 18-9.

<sup>57</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Mihran Renjilian, Taniel Chaparian, Arakel Efindian, and Armenag Kelian to Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian and Rev. Dikran Antreasian, 3 September 1922; telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 24 December 2008, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Izanian. The sharecroppers mentioned were Krikor Kendirjian ("Khuvajig"), Sarkis Antablian ("Sereqink"), Movses Kendirjian ("Bllut"), Yenovk Nersesian, Yesayi Kadeian, and others. For other Greek silkworm seed, cocoon, and silk cloth merchants in Antioch, see Jacquot, *Antioche*, II, p. 210.

<sup>59</sup> Chaparian Papakhian, unpublished memoir, pp. 10-2. For Musa Dagh students who studied at Bursa before World War I, see Shemmashian, "Armenian Villagers," pp. 45-6.

<sup>60</sup> Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, letters to the author, 26 May 1989, and another one received on 12 April 1989. For Tosbat's role in the advancement of sericulture in northwestern Syria both before and after World War I, consult Apraham H. Renjilian, "Antakyada Ipekjilik. Ipek Beojeyi Bendinin Sonu" (Sericulture in Antioch: The End of the Silkworm Era), *Nor Avedaper* (New Herald), 6:17 (10 November 1933): 327-28.

89 tons for the same interval. Finally, the number of silk spinning factories had dropped from 194 to 35.<sup>61</sup> Comparable reductions occurred in Musa Dagh. In 1927-28, the villagers of Bitias alone lost 20,000 liras, which was equivalent to their total earnings during the previous five years. By 1932 the villagers' annual income from silk-related business had plummeted to 150 liras.<sup>62</sup> As for the Musa Daghians in general, in 1934 they nurtured a mere 700 boxes of silkworm seeds, each box valued at ½ lira, for a total of 350 liras (down from 9,050 liras).<sup>63</sup> At the end of June 1939 the production of cocoons amounted to 15 tons, which constituted a dismal 0.3 percent of all agricultural crops (5,065 tons) in Musa Dagh.<sup>64</sup>

Three factors caused this sharp decline. First, Japan dominated the global silk market, rendering competition from other producers difficult.<sup>65</sup> Second, artificial silk or rayon, whose production increased ten-fold within a decade, "from about 32,000,000 pounds in 1918 to over 300,000,000 pounds in 1928," appealed to consumers for its cheapness, attractiveness, and good quality.<sup>66</sup> Third, the virtual closure of the Syria-Cilicia frontier following the withdrawal of French troops from the latter region in 1921 impeded the free flow of goods to a large extent. As Cilicia, now part of Turkey, constituted the main direct export destination especially for the Haji Habibli manufacturers, they lost their jobs.<sup>67</sup> Wrote the local priest, Fr. Vartan Varteresian, on 1 September 1922 to Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia, then leading an unsettled life in exile between Syria and Lebanon: "As for our profession of sericulture, it is now dead; the workers always emerge with losses."<sup>68</sup> He painted the same bleak picture about four months later, on 20 December, adding, "money does not exist" anymore.<sup>69</sup> By mid-June 1923 hardly did any buyers of the Haji Habibli fabrics show up even though the price of 1 dirhem (000.7 pound) had decreased by 50 percent, to 2.5 silver piasters

<sup>61</sup> Norman Burns, *The Tariff of Syria 1919-1932*, American University of Beirut Publications of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Social Science Series, no. 5 (Beirut: American Press, 1933), p. 155.

<sup>62</sup> Renjilian, "Antakyada Ipekjilik," pp. 327-28.

<sup>63</sup> *Husaper*, 27 December 1934.

<sup>64</sup> France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Nantes, Mandat Syrie-Liban, Beyrouth: Cabinet Politique 1926-1941, carton 530, Georges Burnier to R. Chambard, "Note sur la situation des arméniens dans le Sandjak d'Alexandrette et leur installation éventuelle au Liban," 28 June 1939.

<sup>65</sup> Burns, *Tariff of Syria*, pp. 155-58, 189-97.

<sup>66</sup> W.D. Darby, *Rayon and Other Synthetic Fibers* (New York: Dry Good Economist Textile Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 12-3.

<sup>67</sup> *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 14 October 1925.

<sup>68</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Fr. Vartan Varteresian to Catholicos Sahag II, 1 September 1922.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1922.

from 5 piasters sold three years before.<sup>70</sup> Circa 1930 a French official stated that "this small industry is presently in stagnation," adding, "it merits not to die."<sup>71</sup> But for all practical purposes expire it did, and as a result many Haji Habibli men sought employment elsewhere, particularly in Beirut, where they worked mainly as cooks, waiters, barmen, and hotel employees. (See Chapter 5).

Price fixing by Greek merchants also proved detrimental to general income from sericulture. In September 1924 such wholesale buyers, "playing games on the people," paid 20 percent less for the cocoons they had collected from the Armenians four months earlier citing price decrease in European markets.<sup>72</sup> In 1929, they machinated in unison once again to reduce the price of cocoons,<sup>73</sup> which fetched only 1 Syrian lira (80 cents) per 2 *okes* (5.6 pounds).<sup>74</sup> Because of this manipulative practice as well as the above, the Musa Daghians resorted to another drastic measure besides migration to cope with the economic downturn—the uprooting of entire mulberry orchards and replacing them with other kinds of fruit trees or converting their property into vegetable and cereal fields.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, by the second half of the 1930s mulberry trees fetched the least compared to other fruit trees in terms of replacement value. The following deal explains. On 19 July 1937 the brothers Serop and Madteos (a priest) Giuzelyan (Geuzelian) from Kabusiye signed a lease agreement with William Alexander Campbell, the representative of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and its Vicinity, a group that included affiliates from the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Worcester Art Museum, Princeton University, and the *Musées Nationaux de France*. The agreement allowed the said Committee to conduct digs in the Giuzelyan property at Mughayrun which encompassed Seleucid ruins. Article 1 of the agreement stipulated that the Committee would pay an annual rent of 8 Syrian liras per planted *donum* (about ¼ acre) and 6 liras per fallow *donum*. Article 2 set 31 December 1938 as the contract's termination date. Article 4 granted the Committee the right to own all of the discovered artifacts, whereas ordinary stones would remain the property of the Giuzelyans. But what is important for our purposes is Article 3, which read:

<sup>70</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, N. B. Saatjian, Investigative Report of the Six Schools of the Svedia Region and the Nubarian School of Alexandretta, 23 June 1923, Beirut, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, p. 511.

<sup>72</sup> AGBU/SB, File 14 D, Aroyan to AGBU Executive Board, 22 September 1924.

<sup>73</sup> *Aztag*, 22 January 1930.

<sup>74</sup> *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 18 June 1931.

<sup>75</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Parish Council of Kabusiye to Catholicos Papken (Giuleserian), 15 January 1936; Renjilian, "Antakyada Ipekjilik," pp. 327-28; *Aztag*, 8 July 1930.

The Committee for the Excavations agrees to pay the price of each tree it destroys during its excavation based on the following rates: - Each mulberry tree of any size the amount of fifty Syrian piasters [equal to ½ Syrian lira]; each small fig tree two Syrian liras and each medium fig tree three Syrian liras and each large fig tree five Syrian liras; and each vine tree one-and-a-half Syrian lira; each laurel tree one-half Syrian lira; and each large peach tree four Syrian liras and the medium and the small [peach trees] one Syrian lira [each]; and each orange [or lemon] tree ten Syrian liras; and each loquat tree four Syrian liras. With the understanding that all wood would be the property of the owner[s] of the land [of the] first [signatory] team.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, mulberry trees were placed at the bottom of the chart with laurel (bay) trees, which grew plentifully in the wilderness.

Two related folk artworks, namely, handkerchief making and embroidering, compensated in some modest measure for the losses sustained in sericulture by becoming gainful occupations. In Yoghunoluk, the Shrikians in the early 1920s collected home-made handkerchiefs for sale in the general region and as far as the United States.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, brothers Garabed and Setrag Tashjian ordered pre-cut fine linen and thread from a wholesale dealer in Aleppo and distributed them among women at home to make handkerchiefs in return for 3-4 piasters per dozen.<sup>78</sup> An average worker could produce one handkerchief per day, whereas a fast one could make two.<sup>79</sup> The Oflazians of Kheder Beg engaged a number of housewives in that village to produce *caneva* (cross stitch), *aubusson* (tapestry), *gergef* (embroidery made stretched on a frame), *Marash*, *makok* (tattooing shuttle), and crochet work, as well as doilies and ornamental pillow cases.<sup>80</sup> Women in Bitias embellished handkerchiefs with *ajour* (fretwork) and

<sup>76</sup> Sarkis Giuzelyan, private papers, Hollywood, California, "Land Lease Agreement" between Sarkis Geuzelian (Giuzelyan) (and his brother, Madteos,) and William Alexander Campbell, 19 July 1937. The agreement is handwritten in Arabic on a letterhead of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and Its Vicinity.

<sup>77</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, "Hushakrutun Movses Av. Khn. Shrikiani (Avazani Anun, Yesayi) (Memoirs of Archpriest Movses Shrikian [Baptismal Name, Yesayi]), unpublished memoirs, Montebello, California, p. 54.

<sup>78</sup> Interview conducted for me by Mardig Chanchanian with Sirvart Chanchanian, 21 February 1993, San Jose, California; interview with Sirvart Tashjian Hajian, 3 January 2009, Pasadena, California.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Mari Shemmashian Bursalian, 16 March 2008, Fresno, California.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Chanchanian.

sewed decorative designs like *trabson* (or *parvaz*) for Sarkis Igarian ("Mebus").<sup>81</sup> His wife, Mayrum nee Taminosian, carried on the handkerchief activity after his untimely death. She took the finished products to a Protestant pastor in Aleppo by the name of Aharon Shirajian,<sup>82</sup> who took orders for handkerchiefs and embroidery from Europe as a means to raise funds for his lifelong mission of sheltering and rehabilitating Armenian genocide remnants in Syria.<sup>83</sup> Also in Bitias, volunteers from the local chapter of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross (*Suriahay Oknutian Khach*) taught girls at the parochial elementary school the art of embroidery, whereas boys practiced target shooting.<sup>84</sup> In Kabusiye, girls generally stayed home instead of attending school to make lace handkerchiefs for a daily wage of 1 piaster.<sup>85</sup> Whether triangular or semi-circular, laces were appreciated according to the count of *khit* (stitches) that ran usually in odd numbers such as five, seven, or nine.<sup>86</sup> At any rate, a good segment of Kabusiye's population engaged in this activity, as Antranig Urfalian, the son of the local head teacher, reminisced:

We the school children, who almost did not have time to get busy with embroidery during daytime, would realize our share of the "plan" every evening until the wee hours by working the needle, under the light of a kerosene lamp, around which would be huddled together fifteen to twenty people. Burning a lamp every night was a luxury for many, and [therefore] one of the neighborhood well-to-do families would generally host the embroidering and chit-chatting compatriots, from both genders. I personally remember with fondness such nights, when we would learn about all the village events, in the minutest detail, and sometimes transferring to the bosom of myth by means of a masterful story teller.<sup>87</sup>

Besides their obvious utilitarian function, handkerchiefs played certain roles

<sup>81</sup> Telephone interview with Florence Igarian Harutiunian, 27 October 1991, Van Nuys, California-Glendale, California.

<sup>82</sup> Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, 13 January 2009.

<sup>83</sup> Vartuhi Keshishian Uzunian, "Trvant Demirjian-Keshishian," in *Keghart*, vol. 5, p. 147. For Rev. Shirajian's activity among Armenian genocide survivors, see "Rev. Aharon A. Shirajian 1867-1939," in idem, pp. 120-23; *Chanaser* (Endeavor Love) (Beirut), combined issue of nos. 7-8 (1 and 15 April 1968); *Friend of Armenia* (London), 1920s-1930s issues.

<sup>84</sup> Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter.

<sup>85</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Kabusiye Parish Council to Catholicos Papken, 15 January 1936; Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 48.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Shemmashian Bursalian.

<sup>87</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 48.

in Musa Dagh ethnography. In a traditional betrothal process a ring, an earring, a bracelet or a similar valuable object wrapped up in or together with a silken scarf or handkerchief would be offered by the fiancé's family to the bride-to-be. Because the modern custom of sending out printed wedding invitations had not yet become the norm, at least in some of the villages handkerchiefs were distributed in lieu of cards to relatives, neighbors, and friends. Similarly, a red handkerchief symbolizing happiness hung from the neck of the horse that carried the bride to church. Finally, often a handkerchief constituted a part of the bride's dowry alongside such items as jewelry, night gowns, shawls, headscarves (*duluq/yazma*), combs, mirrors, towels, pillow cases, and so on. During certain religious processions, superstitious people threw their handkerchiefs to the ground in hopes of securing divine intervention for the healing of an incurable malady or the resolution of a predicament. On certain feasts, the leader (*yigit bashi*) of an informal voluntary association of bachelors donated a handkerchief or similar articles to the village headman in order to obtain permission for the usage of the village square for dancing, playing games, and other merriments. Indeed, the lead dancer of a group invariably waved a handkerchief.<sup>88</sup> Women, in particular, carried money in folded handkerchiefs (instead of purses) inserted in their bosom.<sup>89</sup> The handkerchief also served as a token of reconciliation between feuding factions. Such was the case of the Haji Habibli Parish Council, which in August 1926 sent Catholicos Sahag II six silken handkerchiefs to vouch for its members' rapprochement after a long period of bitter infighting.<sup>90</sup> The list went on.

Carpet production constituted yet another attempt at diversifying the weaving industry. During the mid-1920s, Fr. Khoren Geokjian of Vakef set up looms in his house to teach women and girls the art of carpet weaving. Unfortunately, his departure from the village due to a dispute with the Parish Council brought the project to an early end.<sup>91</sup> In 1932, the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross of Aleppo invested in a modest carpet venture in Musa Dagh, but its fate remains obscure.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 163-64, 171; Zora Isgenderian, "Doner u Donakhmputiunner (Gronagan yev Ashkharhig)" (Holidays and Festivities [Religious and Secular]), in *Hushamadian*, pp. 176, 181.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, 6 January 2009, Fresno, California.

<sup>90</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Haji Habibli Parish Council to Catholicos Sahag II, 9 August 1926; idem, Fr. Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II, 11 August 1926.

<sup>91</sup> Babigian, "Husher," pp. 61-3.

<sup>92</sup> Armenian Relief Society Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, Box SOKH (Syrian Armenian Relief Cross), File SOKH, *Syria, Beg[inning]-1929 [-1939]*, Dr. Toros Basmajian and Sarkis Selian on behalf of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Central Board to the Armenian Red Cross Central Board in Boston, 7 September 1932.

Also in the early 1930s, a certain man from Bitias, nicknamed "Daghjig," placed four *tezgeahs* (looms) in a few homes where teenaged girls wove carpets based on pictorial designs for a daily wage of 25 piasters.<sup>93</sup> And during 1935-37 Sarkis Igarian employed a few children, after school and with minimal or no pay, to make carpets on two looms for an Armenian merchant from Aleppo surnamed Dikranian.<sup>94</sup> These initiatives, however, failed to yield significant profits.

### *Textile Manufacturing*

While handkerchief production, embroidery, and carpet weaving generated some cash, they remained small, limited cottage industries at best, unable to replace the former prominence of sericulture in Musa Dagh economy. Modern textile manufacturing, however, inspired hope as a viable alternative. In 1935, political activist Movses Der Kalusdian and landlord-entrepreneur Aram Kazanjian, in association with three other Armenians from Aleppo, namely, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) leader Hrach Papazian, part-owner of the NICHARTVA Textile Company Nshan Palanjian (Nichan Palandjian), and accountant Vahe Setian (Vahe Sethian) founded the Vosdayn Anonymous Textile Company of Musa Dagh (*Vosdayn Jebel Musayi Hiusvadzegheni Ananun Engerutiun*) in a bid to reinvigorate and diversify Musa Dagh's economy with ambitious goals.<sup>95</sup> According to the second article of Vosdayn's by-laws, "The purpose of the Company is, directly or indirectly, the production and sale of all kinds of silk and cotton cloths in Near Eastern countries under French mandate." The company also aimed at "the creation or the purchase and exploitation of similar or textile industry-related enterprises." Lastly, it sought to engage in "business, industrial, real estate, and financial dealings that directly or indirectly, fully or partly have to do with one of the above-mentioned activities or ones similar to or coming close to them."<sup>96</sup>

By all indications, Vosdayn was not a hastily-conceived austerity measure put forth to salvage Musa Dagh's ailing economy. It rather saw the light of day only after due consideration was given to the business opportunities in Syria and the marketing potentials in the Near East as a whole. More specifically, the founders' assessment of the domestic and regional economic climate had

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Igarian Harutiunian. The workers were Sima Andekian, Dzaghig Bodurian, and two other persons.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Igarian Harutiunian.

<sup>95</sup> Tateos Bakkalian, letter to the author, received 4 January 1992; *Aztag*, 28 June 1935.

<sup>96</sup> *Vosdayn Jebel Musayi Hiusvadzegheni Ananun Engerutiun. Ganonakir* (Vosdayn Anonymous Textile Company of Musa Dagh: By-Laws) (Aleppo: A. Der Sahagian, 1935), p. 5; *Husaper*, 6 August 1935.

led to the following conclusions. First, not only was textile activity in Aleppo and Damascus on the ascendancy, but it also competed qualitatively with European manufactures. Second, thanks to Syrian industrial customs protection regulations, local textiles sold more cheaply, thereby sustaining a vibrant market. Third, given the fact that neighboring countries focused on other kinds of industries, Syria almost solely supplied textiles to the region.<sup>97</sup> Hence, Vosdayn's founders believed its success was assured a priori.

Vosdayn planned for a twenty-year time period, which could be extended or shortened according to circumstance. Its starting capital amounted to 12,000 Syrian liras with 2,000 shares, each worth 6 liras.<sup>98</sup> The five founding members were entitled to a total of 400 shares (20 percent) and the general public to the remainder, although in actuality 200 shares (10 percent) were reserved for the company employees and 1,100 shares (55 percent) for NICHARTVA, arguably the best Armenian-owned textile company in Aleppo at the time.<sup>99</sup> It should be noted that Vosdayn was a subsidiary of NICHARTVA's.<sup>100</sup> Be that as it may, Vosdayn's fiscal year extended from 1 July to 30 June, with the exception of the first period, which lasted two years.<sup>101</sup> At the end of each fiscal year there would be a general meeting attended by members holding 10 shares or more each, while several individuals owning a total of 10 shares could delegate or appoint one representative. Each person with 10 shares could cast one vote.

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<sup>97</sup> *Husaper*, 15 June 1936.

<sup>98</sup> *Vosdayn Jebel Musayi*, p. 6.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>100</sup> Suren Kalender, narrator, *Giank me Nvirum* (A Life of Dedication), Manuel Keoseian, writer, Toros Toranian, editor (Beirut and Aleppo: Technopresse Moderne S.A.L., 1984), p. 133. The name NICHARTVA was formed with the initial letters of its founders' first names as follows: **N**ICHan Palandjian (Nshan Palanjian), **A**RTin (Haroutioun/Harutiun) Vorperian, and **V**ahan Adjamian (Ajemian). Founded on 1 July 1928, its factory was located next to the Giulbengian Maternity in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of Meydan/Nor Kiugh sector of Aleppo, whereas its office and store were situated at 18 Hammam al-Tal in the same sector. Due to a disagreement among the founders, on 1 January 1935 Vorperian quit the company and was replaced by Mardiros Teghrarian. The company, however, retained its original name. Vorperian opened his own textile factory in the Qastal Hajerin neighborhood with twelve machines. NICHARTVA ceased to exist in 1947 or 1948, by which time Palanjian and Ajemian had died and Teghrarian moved to Beirut. Interview with Lilly Vorperian, 29 March 1994, Glendale, California; Lilly Vorperian, private papers, Glendale, California. NICHARTVA change of ownership document in French, 1 January 1935. For more on NICHARTVA, see "Nshartva' Hiusvadzegheni Gankhahas Engerutium me Haleb" (A Premature Textile Company in Aleppo Called NICHARTVA), in Jebejian, ed., *Keghart Suriahay Darekirk*, vol. 5 (1996), pp. 330-35; *Aztag*, 25 May 1939.

<sup>101</sup> *Vosdayn Jebel Musayi*, pp. 10-11.

There was a cap of fifteen votes for individuals with more than 150 shares.<sup>102</sup> At the general meeting, shareholders would elect a five-member Executive Board to run the company for a three-year term with broad powers. The first Executive Board consisted of the five founding members whose term lasted two years, until the summer of 1937.<sup>103</sup> The Syrian Government ratified Vosdayn's by-laws, comprising nine chapters and fifty articles, on 15 June 1935.<sup>104</sup> The sale of shares began on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and an advertisement ran from 28 June-18 July in the Beirut *Aztag* (Factor) newspaper.<sup>105</sup>

Haji Habibli, with its expert but largely unemployed weavers, would be the logical choice for the factory's location. Because, however, that village was under the influence of the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party, Vosdayn's founders, closely affiliated with the rival ARF, disregarded Haji Habibli as an option and instead chose neighboring Bitias. This choice was based on three considerations. First, Bitias was ARF turf. Second, Der Kalusdian often vacationed there; in fact, he even lived there for two years (1936-38). Third, being a developed resort in the Sanjak, it provided the necessary transportation, telephone, telegraph, and mail services.<sup>106</sup> After due consideration, the factory was built "in the N.E. outskirts of the village at the base of our mountain [Musa Dag] which extended to the most western edge of the community. The major transportation road from the center of the village led to the entrance of the factory and then morphed

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-9.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-15; *Aztag*, 5 August 1937, 12 January 1938.

<sup>104</sup> *Vosdayn Jebel Musayi*, cover page and pp. 5-25.

<sup>105</sup> *Aztag*, 28 June-18 July 1935.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Bakkalian. According to Dr. Vazken Der Kaloustian, email to the author, 19 January 2009, after his wedding on 7 May 1936 in Alexandria, Egypt, Movses Der Kalusdian moved to Bitias and lived there. He, Vazken, Movses' only child, was born during that time at a hospital in Antioch. Similarly, according to Bitias native Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter, upon his arrival in Bitias with his new bride, Der Kalusdian was welcomed warmly by admirers from all over Musa Dag with a celebration held at Hotel Jabal Musa amid gunfire and folk music and dances with double drums, something reserved for special occasions. According to another Bitias resident, Der Kalusdian "lived in 'Bulghashints Mayrooms' house with his wife before moving to 'Sutt Marin' Kadeian's house. The couple occupied the three interconnected second fl. [sic] rooms plus a separate kitchen. It was a two-gated structure, the entrance gate led to an outhouse and a vegetable garden. Because of its higher location, the yard, the tile-covered front balcony and the front porch were not visible from the street. It was a sheltered and private environment. Der Kalusdian like [Hrach] Papazian was interested in gardening and within a year he probably had the most beautiful garden at the front of the house in Bitias." Magzarian, letter, 13 January 2009.

into a rocky and rough trail” leading to Chaghlaghan.<sup>107</sup> The consecration of the factory’s foundations took place on Sunday, 28 July 1935 in the presence of a large crowd that included, among others, flag-bearing Boy Scouts, a marching band, traditional folk instrumentalists, and dancers. After the parish priest, Fr. Vahan Kendirjian, blessed the stones and said the *Bahbanich* (a prayer), Hrach Papazian poured cement on a cornerstone, two lambs were sacrificed, and teacher Suren Papakhian delivered the keynote speech. The celebration continued at an outdoor café near the water spring of Sev Aghpiur/Kara Punar.<sup>108</sup>

The finished compound, resting on land the size of three house lots combined<sup>109</sup> and purchased for 4,400 French francs,<sup>110</sup> included a single-story rectangular building with large windows, a flower garden, and a pool where children often swam secretly.<sup>111</sup> Water for drinking, gardening (which Papazian enjoyed as a hobby), the pond, and other purposes was brought from Frangen Aghpayre (the Frank’s, i.e., European John Barker’s Spring) near Hetum Filian’s café via an underground pipeline.<sup>112</sup> A fence with a gate “protected the front section of the yard with the flower garden and part of the eastern wing of the property. There was a high retaining wall to the west and south [must be northeast] which served that purpose.” But “even with the fence some urchins climbed over it and gathered roses, etc., as their rightful compensation for the rocks they had picked for the construction of the factory and they were not paid even a single ‘small baghoot’ [barghut]. No regrets or guilt from this flower pilferer [Alberta Magzarian].”<sup>113</sup> The site likewise attracted visitors such as European health workers, French marines, League of Nations representatives, and dignitaries from Aleppo.<sup>114</sup>

Hrach Papazian was appointed Vosdayn’s executive director, having

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<sup>107</sup> Magzarian, letter, 30 December 2008. She writes: “Now a broad road continues to NE from the right (East) side of the remaining factory ruins avoiding the hills and valleys of the original trail.” See also *Aztag*, 3 September 1937.

<sup>108</sup> *Aztag*, 3 August 1935.

<sup>109</sup> Rev. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, “Djebel Moussa, Village Bitias,” a detailed survey of the fixed properties and their value belonging to the Bitias inhabitants on the eve of their exodus from the Sanjak before 23 July 1939. The then-vacant Vosdayn compound was valued at 12,000 Syrian liras.

<sup>110</sup> *Husaper*, 30 July 1935.

<sup>111</sup> Boghos Snabian, *Aghkadnerun Avantutiune* (The Oral Tradition of the Poor), vol. I, (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 1983), p. 30; Magzarian letter, 30 December 2008.

<sup>112</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 3 January 2009.

<sup>113</sup> Magzarian letter, 30 December 2008.

<sup>114</sup> See illustration nos. 30 and 31. For League of Nations representatives visiting the factory, see *Aztag*, 31 October 1937.

Tateos Bakkalian of Kheder Beg as his right-hand man. The latter became an expert machinist in due time, got involved in personnel matters, and held the daily accounts. When the French-made machine parts arrived via Aleppo, NICHARTVA sent one of its master machinists, George Khandzoghian and his apprentice, a certain Arshavir, to teach Bakkalian how to assemble and operate the machines. When Khandzoghian and his assistant returned to Aleppo after a few months, NISCHARTVA dispatched Garabed Najarian and his son, Hovsep, on a two-year contract to fix the hand-operated machines as needed.<sup>115</sup> Mardiros Chaparian, a Bitias native and an aspiring machinist himself, eventually joined the team.<sup>116</sup> Another 30-35 young men (some of whom from Haji Habibli) and 20-25 young women worked in the factory at various times.<sup>117</sup> Significantly, “within a few months the change in the work force [with women working next to men] was obvious enough that people began to notice the emergence of a ‘new class’ in Bitias.”<sup>118</sup> Men operated thirty-two *Jacquard* hand machines, a man and a woman worked on one *chenage* machine, and women operated eight electrical machines, one *manusa* machine, and one spinning machine, for a total of forty-three machines.<sup>119</sup> “In no time the word *Jacquard* was absorbed into the village Armenian dialect especially after admiring the elaborate patterns of the cloth woven on the looms,” remembered Magzarian, adding: “We kids often puzzled over shreds of punctured cardboards replicated in the designs of the woven fabric.”<sup>120</sup> Other youths who were not on payroll spent time at the factory to acquire the necessary skills in modern weaving. This practice constituted a part of a larger and farsighted scheme: Vosdayn would eventually be able to place hand machines in homes, thereby creating jobs for many families. It would also increase the number of electrical machines in the factory itself, with a projected combined total of 400 machines.<sup>121</sup>

Vosdayn acquired its raw materials such as silk, cotton, and thread from NICHARTVA, produced relatively plain cloth, and shipped it back to NICHARTVA to be dyed, pressed, and sold together with the more intricate and ornate textiles manufactured there.<sup>122</sup> The factory in Bitias ran six days a

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with Bakkalian.

<sup>116</sup> Mardiros Kevork Chaparian, letter to the author, 20 April 1994.

<sup>117</sup> Bakkalian letter; interview with Bakkalian.

<sup>118</sup> Magzarian letter, 30 December 2008.

<sup>119</sup> Bakkalian letter. See also *Husaper*, 25 June 1936.

<sup>120</sup> Magzarian letter, 30 December 2008.

<sup>121</sup> *Husaper*, 30 July 1935, 25 June 1936.

<sup>122</sup> Bakkalian letter.

week, 10 hours per day during the fall and winter seasons and 11 hours per day during the spring and summer seasons.<sup>123</sup> “For the first time... a group of young men and women reported for work at the same hour, took their lunch at the same hour and stopped work at the same hour. A simple factory schedule—was it the beginning of industrialization in Bitias?”<sup>124</sup>

Pay was based on the amount of textile produced rather than the time spent at the workplace. For example, an employee working on electrical machines and putting out 30-33 meters of cloth a day, received 1 Syrian piaster per meter, that is, 30-33 piasters a day. On the other hand, a person operating hand machines and manufacturing 10-12 meters a day, pocketed 3 piasters per meter, for a total of 30-36 piasters a day. A worker at Vosdayn thus earned about one-and-a-half time more than an ordinary laborer, who at the time received a daily wage of 20-25 piasters.<sup>125</sup> In addition, sometimes women received residual fabric for personal use.<sup>126</sup> As for the remaining employees like the executive director, the machinists, and the guard, they were paid according to rank and ability.<sup>127</sup> Information is lacking as to whether disparity in pay between men and women existed.

The first general meeting of shareholders took place on Sunday, 15 August 1937 in Aleppo. According to the Executive Board’s report, “the enterprise is on a very successful track. The monthly production amounts to 10,000 meters.” Moreover, “the result of the first fiscal year ending on 30 June 1937 has been 5,347.04 S[yrian] paper liras, of which, after deducting the general expenses and saving 1,200 Syrian liras, 3,320.10 Syrian liras has remained as net profit.” Upon hearing the report, the general meeting decided to pay 1 Syrian lira for each share as earned profit and to carry over the balance of 422.10 Syrian liras to the new fiscal year. The meeting similarly elected a new Executive Board, which for all practical purposes remained intact, except for Nshan Palanjian, who was replaced by Vahan Ajemian (Adjamian) as NICHARTVA’s representative. In addition, Toros Babigian was appointed comptroller.<sup>128</sup>

Unfortunately, Vosdayn had a short life of only three years, dictated by political exigencies. In the summer of 1938, just prior to the entry of Turkish

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Magzarian letter, 30 December 2008.

<sup>125</sup> Bakkalian letter.

<sup>126</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 3 January 2009.

<sup>127</sup> Bakkalian letter.

<sup>128</sup> *Aztag*, 12 January 1938. For the announcement and agenda of the meeting, see *idem*, 5 August 1937.

troops to the Sanjak following a French-Turkish accord regarding the status of that autonomous Syrian region, the company’s management hastily arranged for the transfer of the machines and all other accessories to NICHARTVA in Aleppo.<sup>129</sup> An extraordinary general meeting of shareholders scheduled for December 29 would decide Vosdayn’s fate.<sup>130</sup> NICHARTVA became the latter’s sole owner after buying all of its shares.<sup>131</sup> Vosdayn’s sudden and inglorious liquidation thus shattered all hopes that it would soon serve as a shining model of a successful industrial venture to be emulated by other entrepreneurs in establishing hydraulic, canned fruit, and other companies; that it would be able to provide new job opportunities to many natives, thereby easing persistent economic hardships; and that it would give the youth a solid reason to stay and prosper in Musa Dagh rather than migrate.<sup>132</sup>

From a social perspective, the factory’s closure deprived its employees of the opportunity to interact on a daily basis, which contacts had evolved in some cases into romantic relationships culminating in marriage.<sup>133</sup> Only workers from Haji Habibli “arrived in the mornings and returned home immediately after work with no social interaction with the locals.” Even so, the mere commutation of those youths was considered a “healthy development between the two villages” given their antagonistic relationship in the recent past.<sup>134</sup> In the same social-cultural vein, natives and vacationers alike lost a unique venue endowed with motor-generated electricity for holding public events such as film screenings during the summer season by an Armenian from Aleppo named Misak Bzhian (or Abajian).<sup>135</sup> Wrote with nostalgia author Boghos Snabian, then a young boy of twelve, on the eve of the Armenians’ exodus from Musa Dagh in the summer of 1939: “It was here, in this [Vosdayn] courtyard, that for the first time I had seen a movie, shot in our village [Bitias], with views, scenes from our village, familiar shepherds, toilers, children, me with my cow, [projected] on the screen.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Mardiros Kevork Chaparian, letter; interview with Bakkalian; *Hayrenik*, 12 May 1939.

<sup>130</sup> *Aztag*, 14 December 1938.

<sup>131</sup> Bakkalian letter.

<sup>132</sup> For the hopes that Vosdayn inspired from the outset, consult *Aztag*, 6 July 1935, 27 July 1935.

<sup>133</sup> Bakkalian, letter, puts the number of those who got married at five-six couples. Magzarian, letter, 30 December 2008, mentions three of those: Yeprem Filian (“Fil”) married Sara Aintabian, a certain Kadeian married Mari Maghzanian (“Barzeremints Marine”), and Boghos Kelejian married Sara Kendirjian (“Kiulakhiunts”).

<sup>134</sup> Magzarian, letter, 30 December 2008. Also see Chapter 1 for the bloody feud between Bitias and Haji Habibli.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Bakkalian.

<sup>136</sup> Snabian, *Aghkadnerun Avantutiune*, I, p. 30.

### Conclusion

For the Armenians of Musa Dagh the interlude between the two World Wars was marked successively by existential concerns, reconstruction, optimism, uncertainty, and despair. Such rapid shifts in the human condition within a relatively short period of two decades did not leave much room for normal transitioning and coping. Furthermore, the lack of creativity and economic savvy outbalanced some of the initiatives projecting a positive outlook. Indeed, a number of critical commentaries appeared in the Armenian press. One newspaper bemoaned the absence of entrepreneurial spirit that would spur and develop different branches of the economy.<sup>137</sup> Another periodical lambasted inaction by arguing that “a people does not grow only by drinking Bitias water, eating Kheder Beg oranges, and taking a nap in the cool shade.”<sup>138</sup> And Vazken Diranian, the penname of Yetvart Boyajian, a budding writer from Kheder Beg, did not mince his words when expressing his “Economic Concern”: “We have already ceased being peasants in the old sense and neither are we urbanites as yet according to the new meaning. We have colorful and huge bourgeois desires, but tell me please, are we not grossly lazy to achieve them?”<sup>139</sup> These unflattering remarks notwithstanding, in the final analysis outside forces ultimately sealed the fate of Armenian Musa Dagh by putting an end to its very existence.

<sup>137</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 14 October 1925.

<sup>138</sup> “Musa Daghe,” *Rahniuma* (True Path) (Aleppo) 9:29 (17 September 1927): 457.

<sup>139</sup> *Aztag*, 27 June 1937.

Table 1  
Businesses and Workshops

Village	Type	Owner	Location
YOGHUNOLUK	Tinsmith /pewter	Hovhannes Kazanjian	Marketplace
	Gunsmith /pewter	Levon Kazanjian & 3 sons	Marketplace
	Tailor	Yervant Nkrurian	Marketplace
	Wholesaler (oil, combs)	Mardiros Habeshian	Marketplace
	Barber	Apraham Pashayan	Marketplace
	Comb maker	Boghos Bidanian	Marketplace
	Grocer	Hagop Hergelian	Marketplace
	Cobbler	Simon Khudigian	Marketplace
	Weaver	Hovhannes Nashalian	Marketplace
	Grocer	Hovhannes Hergelian	Marketplace
	Barber	Hampartzum Hagopian	Marketplace
	Novelties (seller)	Boghos Shemmassian	Marketplace
	N/A	Gebeshian (“Qunkerenk”)	Marketplace
	Novelties (seller)	Hagop Chemenian (Atamian)	Marketplace
	Variety	Garabed & Setrag Tashjian	Vire Teugh
	Flour	Avedis Atamian	Home
	Dairies	Krikor Drtadian	N/A
	N/A	Armenag Vanayan	N/A
	Barber	Kapriel Chanchanian	N/A
	Gunsmith/tinsmith	Boghos Yeghiayan	N/A
Silversmith	Dikran Kasbarian	Home	
Tailor	Garabed Shemmassian	N/A	
Bay oil	Kevork Shrikian	N/A	
BITIAS	Tonir bread (producer)	Movses Jambazian	Vire Gule
	Tonir bread	Asadur Andekian	Qaberlek
	Tonir bread	Boghos Nersesian	Aralek
	Baker	Krikor Arushian	Vire Gule
	Grocer	Krikor Keshishian	Qaberlek

Grocer	Hovhannes Kelejian	Kelejints Mhallan
Grocer	Garabed Keoseian	Sherbetjints Kushan
Grocer	Asadur Anushahodian	N/A
Grocer	Yeremia Balabanian	N/A
Oghi (alcohol producer)	Hagop Chaparian	Sherbetjints Kushan
Grocer	Levon Norashkharian	Aralek
Butcher	Hovhannes Filhannesian	Qaberlek
Butcher	Kevork Melidonian	Sherbetjints Kushan
Butcher	Kevork Chaparian	Vire Gule
Barber	Z. Panoyan/A. Balabanian	Sherbetjints Kushan
Barber	H. Kelejian /M. Makhulian	Frangen Aghpayre
Bicycle renter	B. Topalian/B. Andekian	N/A
Carpenter	Hagop Serekian	Home
Carpenter	Boghos Khuvajikian	Home
Carpenter	Sahag Andekian	Home
Carpenter	Movses Andekian	Home
Ironer	Movses Renjilian	N/A
Tinker	Garabed Panoyan	Itinerant
Clothier	Baghdasar (no surname given)	N/A
Café	Hetum Filian	Frangen Aghpayre
Café	Hagop Filian	Frangen Aghpayre
Café	Movses Chaparian	Hovhan Vosgeperan
Café	Movses Makhulian	Sev Aghpiur
Café	Ohannes Keosheian	Sev Aghpiur
Café	Movses Stambulian	Shebel Ayn

	Hotel	Aharon Izmirlian	Sherbetjints Kushan
	Hotel	Taniel Chaparian	Qaberlek
	Hotel	Garabed & Serop Keoseian	-
<b>VAKEF</b>	Grocer	Manuel Shemmassian	Village center
	Grocer	Tovmas Ayntabian	Village center
	Grocer	Dajad Antabian	Village center
	Grocer	Vartan Penenian	Village center
	Barber	Boghos Penenian	Village center
	Barber	Misak Bllutian	Village center
	Café	Mihran & Dikran Madurian	Village center
<b>KHEDER BEG</b>	Grocer	Nahabed Adajian	N/A
	Grocer	Mardiros Boyajian	N/A
	Grocer	Bedros Kujinian	N/A
	Grocer	Hagop Diukenjian	N/A
	Grocer	Sisag Kzhdrian	N/A
	Wholesale store	Rezqalla Kuyumjian	N/A
	Wholesale store	Yesayi Aprahamian	N/A
	Café	Menag Kabakian	Plane tree
	Café	Nshan Boyajian	Plane tree
	Café	Rizqalla Kuyumjian	Plane tree
	Café	Tateos Kaymakamian	Plane tree
<b>HAJI HABIBLI</b>	Grocer	Asadur Mardirian	Yaghpiuren Sule
	Grocer	Selim Demirjian	Yaghpiuren Sule
	Grocer	Isgender Taslakian	Yaghpiuren Sule
	Grocer	Isgender Isgenderian	Siupkiuglak neighborhood
	Grocer	Markar Markarian	Galloye
	Café	Movses Halulian	Qastule
	Café	Kevork Fishian	Qastule
	Café	Mihran Kiurdian	Village center
	Café	Isgender Taslakian	Yaghpiuren Sule
<b>KABUSIYE</b>	Grocer	Doing Bayramian	Vire Teugh
	Grocer	Misak Kuyumjian	Selirke

	Grocer	Apraham Boghigian	Selirke
	Grocer	Kevork Derderian (Keshishian)	Selirke
	Grocer	Sarkis Kasamanian	Yaghpayre
	Grocer	Mesrob (no last name given)	N/A
	Cobbler	Hovhannes Havatian	Vire Teugh
	Cobbler	Margos Kesablian	Vire Teugh
	Barber	Zakar Simonian	Vire Teigh
	Barber	Sarkis Ashkarian	Vire Teugh
<b>CHEVLIK</b>	Café	Asadur Baljian	By the sea
	Café	Hovhannes Zakarian	By the sea

*Sources:* For Yoghunoluk: interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 22 March 1989, Hollywood, California; for Bitias: interview with Movses Karkazian, 21 May 1987, Fresno, California; interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California; interview with Lusaper Makhulian Jambazian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California; Norman Balabanian, *Life Story* (Gainsville, Florida: N. p., 2008), p. 23; for Vakef: interview with Misak Blutian, 12 June 1989, Hollywood, California; for Kheder Beg: Harutiun Sherbetjian, list of stores in Kheder Beg, prepared upon my request; for Haji Habibli: interview with Antranig Kerekian, 9 June 1989, Van Nuys, California; interview with Anush Basambakian Hajian, 29 June 1989, Glendale, California (according to this interviewee, Kevork Fishian and Isgender Taslakian operated grocery stores, not cafés); for Kabusiye and Chevlik: interview with Sarkis Asadur Kasamanian, 28 January 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Ohannes Ohannesian, 27 May 1989, Sun Valley, California; Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On a Life's Traces) (Palm Springs, California: Haig's Printing, 1990), pp. 80-81, 86.

*Table 2*  
**List of Employees at the Vosdayn Textile Factory in Bitias**

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
<b>FROM ALEPPO</b>	1. Arshavir (last name unknown)		
	2. George Khandzoghian		
	3. Arshag Najarian		
	4. Levon Najarian		
	6. Hrach Papazian		
	<b>FROM BITIAS</b>	7. Armen Andekian	34. Sima Andekian
8. Bedros Andekian		35. Marinos Antablian	
9. Hagop Antablian		36. Sara Antablian	
10. Mardiros Chaparian		37. Sara Bodurian	
11. Yeprem Filian		38. Negtar Chaparian	
12. Bedros Frankian		39. Sara Chaparian	
13. Levon Frankian		40. Marinos Kadeian	
14. Hagop Kadeian		41. Sara DerVahan Kendirjian	
15. Boghos Kelejian		42. Sara Kendirjian	
16. Hovhannes Kelejian		43. Hayguhi Kesablian	
17. Hagop Kelian		44. Negtar Kesablian	
18. Hagop Kojayan		45. Negtar Keshishian	
19. Yeram Stambulian		46. Aghavni Kojayan	
20. Yesayi Stambulian		47. Mari Maghzanian	
21. Arakel Zobian		48. Negtar Makhulian	
		49. Yeranuhi Panosian	
		50. Sara Serekian	
		51. Mayram Zobian	
<b>FROM HAJI HABIBLI</b>		22. Dikran Bakkalian	52. Aghavni Mushdgian
		23. Kevork Basambakian	
	24. Megerdich Der Arakelian		
	25. Hagop Dudaklian		
	26. Khachig Jerejian		
	27. Antranig Kerekian		
	28. Bedros Keshishian		
	29. Movses Taslakian		
	30. Tavit (surname not remembered)		
	<b>FROM KHEDER BEG</b>	31. Bedros Bakkalian	
32. Mihran Bakkalian			
33. Tateos Bakkalian			

*Sources:* Interview with Jemile Sherbetjian Stambulian, 1 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon; interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon; Mardiros Kevork Chaparian, letter to the author, 20 April 1994; Sara Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter to the author, postmarked 19 November 1991.

## *Chapter 5*

### MIGRANTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ETHIOPIA

The Armenian society of Musa Dagh, although perched on uplands, was not isolated and/or static; people moved in and out for various reasons. Aspiration for post-elementary and higher education, marriage, family reunification, repatriation, tourism and vacationing, and fear of the uncertain political future of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, all contributed to this ebb and flow. But the single most important cause of migration between the two World Wars was the economy. Limited cultivable land and income, the demise of natural silk and resultant unemployment, and poverty in general compelled many a Musa Daghian to leave the homeland in search of better opportunities. This chapter chronicles their socioeconomic life in rural and urban localities in the Middle East and in Ethiopia, as the migrants, whether temporary or permanent, sought to ameliorate their lot while maintaining compatriotic bonds amongst themselves and with the native soil.

#### *Sanjak of Alexandretta*

*Svedia:* As residents of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, it was natural for a number of Musa Daghians who wanted to stay close to home to seek their fortunes within the boundaries of that autonomous province in northwest Syria. The nearest destination was the contiguous plain of Svedia/al-Swaidiyya to the south. In October 1924, a newspaper reported that fifteen to twenty families (from Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, and Vakef) had established themselves at the Greek Orthodox village of Zeituniye/Zutenen, purchasing land and houses. A few other families and individuals had chosen Levshiye/Levshek as their destination, as well as Magharajik/Magharnen in the environs of Seleucid ruins, adjacent to Kabusiye and the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> In April 1925, the number of Armenian settlers at Zeituniye was about thirty families, which were in the process of forming a village cluster with a distinct, albeit informal, name: Nor/

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<sup>1</sup> *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 3 October 1924.

New Nakhichevan.<sup>2</sup> In 1938, the colony comprised forty-two families.<sup>3</sup> They included, among others, the Shannakians, Andonians, Ghabakians, Geokjians, Ashkarians, Vanayans, Hagopians, Hergelians, Yaghubians, Oflazians, Penenians, Kiurdians, Khoshians, Boyajians, Silahlans, and Pashayans.<sup>4</sup> The majority, from the farming class, had insufficient cultivable land and income back home. In Zeituniye, therefore, they grew vegetables and fruits—mainly oranges, peaches, apricots, and olives—and sold them in Antioch. They also kept cows and sheep for milk and other dairy products.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the agriculturists, a number of migrants established businesses at the Levshiye central market. Sarkis H. Boyajian of Kheder Beg opened the first post-World War I Armenian-owned store (of fabrics) in Levshiye. Tateos Babigian of Vakef, supported financially by his future father-in-law, Manuel Shemmassian, in 1926 traded commodities such as barley. After a year-and-a-half, he abandoned that activity to concentrate on exporting fruit to Aleppo. Mardiros Kazanjian (“Shikhints”) of Yoghunoluk opened a grocery store after returning from the United States.<sup>6</sup> Dajad Antabian commuted daily on his bicycle between Vakef and Levshiye to earn his livelihood as a clothier.<sup>7</sup>

Other Armenians lived and worked on the Svedia plain alongside Musa Dagghians. Apraham Boghigian of Chemesghadzak in Kharpert/Mamuret ul-Aziz province, Vahan Doghonian of Gesaria/Kayseri province, and Vahan Zanoian of Gemereg in Sepasdia/Sivaz province, all three of whom had married Musa Dagh women, tailored men’s and women’s garments at

<sup>2</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 23 April 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union archives, Cairo, Egypt, (hereafter AGBU/Cairo), Binder 134, Yesayi Yaghubian, Arakel Penenian, and Hovhannes Geokjian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 7 January 1938; idem, Vagharsh B. Oflazian to AGBU *Monthly Report* Editor, 11 February 1938.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ten Zeituniye School parents to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 12 July 1936; idem, The Names, Enrollment Fee, and Monthly Payments of the Zeituniye Village of Svedia AGBU Members, 27 September 1936; Hovhannes Hajian, “Im Hushere” (My Memoirs), unpublished manuscript, Hollywood, California, notebook 2, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Hajian, “Im Hushere,” notebook 2, pp. 86-7.

<sup>6</sup> Tateos Babigian, “Husher. Tebker u Temker” (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 4, 123, 168, 171-72.

<sup>7</sup> Misak Blutian, “Misak Blutiani Gensakrutiane” (The Biography of Misak Blutian), unpublished manuscript written upon my request. It also includes a detailed list of the Vakef heads of households/breadwinners with their nicknames, occupations, and political affiliations; interview with Dajad Antabian, 1 July 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

their private ateliers.<sup>8</sup> A certain George from Kesab (Kessab/Kasab) worked as security guard and Bible seller at the Presbyterian Mission in the Greek Beilani clan neighborhood of Varshi in Zeituniye. His brother-in-law, Nofer, mended shoes. Butchers Setrag and Toros from the newly-established League of Nations rural settlement of Nor Zeytun near Bitias followed suit, as did Hajin native and blacksmith Yetimian with his two sons-in-law, Harutiun and Mgrdich. Harutiun leased Mustafa Terzi’s café in Levshiye, whereas Mgrdich distinguished himself as the first chauffeur to operate a Ford along the new Antioch-Svedia route. As such, he also trained Mehmed Hoja Haydar and Salim Nevshi, thereby becoming the dean of drivers in the area. While escorting a captured fugitive from Svedia to Antioch, a gendarme related to Yetimian named Arsen, was ambushed and gunned down by followers of Nasr al-Din, one of the sons of Sheikh Maaruf al-Jilli, the spiritual-political leader of the district’s Alawite community. Arsen was interred at Vakef. Kegham Anbarjian, a Public Debt Administration employee, and his family also resided in Levshiye, but left town together with the Yetimians sometime during 1928-29. A certain Garabed Efendi and his nephew, Vartan, owned a farm (inhabited by the Karachay family as sharecroppers) at the junction where the Kheder Beg stream emptied into the Orontes River. In the spring of 1927, one Tavit from Aleppo, assisted by two Musa Dagghians, established a sugar-candy factory in Levshiye. However, he quit the venture after just three months, explaining that as an Armenian he needed to reside and function at a transit location, not a dead-end spot.<sup>9</sup> Last but not least, Khosrov Arabian and Aram Der Torosian earned their livelihoods as a photographer and a goldsmith, respectively.<sup>10</sup>

A number of professionals provided health care. Dr. Mihran A. Varbedian, popularly known as Doktor *Ajayib* (Wondrous), after serving in Musa Dagh for several months in 1922, moved to Levshiye to spend a decade as the municipal physician. Even so, he continued to concern himself not only with the physical well-being of Musa Dagghians, but also their economic status.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Serop/Serge Matosian (Keghart Sharayan), a native of Yoghunoluk, on obtaining his diploma in Belgium in 1928, began his career in Antioch. Three years later he and his Belgian wife relocated to Levshiye, where the couple rented an apartment-clinic in the Samir Hallaq building situated on the main thoroughfare. Formerly a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Nubar Boghigian, 9 May 2009, Glendale, California; Babigian, “Husher,” p. 172.

<sup>9</sup> Babigian, “Husher,” pp. 168-69, 171-72.

<sup>10</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, Membership Roster of AGBU Vakef Chapter, 15 July 1924.

<sup>11</sup> M.A. Varbedian, “Jebel Musan” (Musa Dagh), *Husaper*, 30 May 1932, p. 2; Babigian, “Husher,” p. 168.

(ARF/*Hay Heghapokhagan Tashnagtsutiun*) and a man with political ambitions, Dr. Matosian played a certain role in Musa Dagh public life.<sup>12</sup> In 1932, Dr. Toros Basmajian from Aleppo established his private practice in the Varshi neighborhood mentioned above. These physicians rendered their services to all patients in the general vicinity including Musa Dagh, as did pharmacist Nshan and father and son Kevork and Antranig Hekimian, both dentists.<sup>13</sup>

As a distinct Armenian community on the Svedia plain began to take shape, the settlers elected a Board of Trustees to manage their “national and educational” affairs.<sup>14</sup> Visiting clergymen catered to the spiritual needs of the faithful. When in 1927 Dr. Varbedian’s wife died, for instance, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian of Yoghunoluk officiated at her funeral service. She was buried at the Greek Orthodox cemetery in Zeituniye, but other Armenians were laid to rest at an exclusive graveyard acquired by the Board of Trustees at a later date.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Bitias native Rev. Garabed Tilkian, the Protestant (Evangelical) pastor of Yoghunoluk, led a Bible study group in Levshiye.<sup>16</sup> A permanent Apostolic or Protestant church, however, was not established.

A regular grammar school opened its doors in Zeituniye in 1933. It was supported in large part by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU/*Haygagan Parekordzagan Enthanur Miutiun*) Regional Committee in Cairo, Egypt, with an annual subvention of £10 sterling. The balance of the budget was raised from tuition, raffle ticket sales, and donations. Most of the expenses

<sup>12</sup> Boghos Madurian and Mardiros Kushakjian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), p. 588; Babigian, “Husher,” pp. 177, 235.

<sup>13</sup> Babigian, “Husher,” pp. 168, 172, 177.

<sup>14</sup> Khacher Madurian, “Vakef,” in *Hushamadian*, p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.; Babigian, “Husher,” p. 169.

<sup>16</sup> Garabed S. Tilkian, *Musa Dagh Boy: Story of Survival and Service* (Los Angeles: Abril, 1992), p. 79.

were for the teachers’ salaries, the rest for the school rental and sundries.<sup>17</sup> The school building was a single room partitioned from an abandoned silk house. A few student desks, a table with a chair for the teacher, a writing board, and a map in French furnished the interior. The large, grass-covered lot served as playground.<sup>18</sup> The school Board consisted of Yesayi Yaghubian as Chairman, Arakel Penenian as Secretary, and Hovhannes Geokjian as Treasurer.<sup>19</sup> Yezege Boyajian, Bedros Antabian, Hovhannes Hajian, Mihran Madurian, and an unnamed man from Haji Habibli served as teachers at one time or another.<sup>20</sup>

In 1935-36, “the progress of children in the Armenian language is quite palpable.”<sup>21</sup> The curriculum also included arithmetic, French, geography, and physical education.<sup>22</sup> Their academic standard was likewise deemed satisfactory.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, Mihran Ashkarian and Arakel Penenian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, stamped 6 September 1937; idem, Binder 167, Y. Yaghubian and P. Geokjian, Accounts of 1935-1936 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye National Coeducational School, 21 May 1936 (income, in Syrian piasters: tuitions, 370, raffle tickets, 365, AGBU, 1,140, total, 1,875; expenses: teachers’ salaries for January, February, and March 1936, 625 per month, total, 1,875); idem, Y. Yaghubian and H. Ashkarian, Accounts of 1936-1937 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye National Coeducational School, 10 January 1937 (income: tuition, 578, donations, 350, AGBU, 1,572, total, 2,500; expenses: teachers’ salaries for October, November, and December 1936, 700 per month, and miscellaneous, 400, total, 2,500); idem, Y. Yaghubian, A. Penenian, H. Geokjian, Accounts of 1936-1937 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye National Coeducational School, 8 April 1937 (income: tuition, 400, AGBU, 2,100, total, 2,500; expenses: teachers’ salaries for January, February, and March 1937, 700 per month, school rent, 400, total, 2,500); idem, M. Ashkarian and H. Geokjian, Accounts of 1936-1937 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye National School, 29 August 1937 (income: tuition, 600, AGBU, 1,900, total, 2,500; expenses: teachers’ salaries for April, May, and June 1937, 700 per month, expenses, 400, total, 2,500); idem, Y. Yaghubian, M. Ashkarian, and H. Geokjian, Accounts of (1937-1938?) 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye (Svedia) Armenian School, no date, (income: tuitions, 1,250, AGBU, 2,196, total, 3,446; expenses: teachers’ salaries total, 3,196, miscellaneous, 250, total, 3,446).

<sup>18</sup> Hajian, “Im Hushere,” notebook 2, pp. 84-6.

<sup>19</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 167, Yesayi Yaghubian, Chairman, Arakel Penenian, Secretary, and Hovhannes Geokjian, Treasurer of the Zeituniye School Board, Accounts of 1936-1937 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester of Zeituniye National Coeducational School, 8 April 1937.

<sup>20</sup> Hajian, “Im Hushere,” notebook 2, pp. 83-90.

<sup>21</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, ten Zeituniye School parents to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 12 July 1936. The parents were: Isgender Hergelian, Peniamin Geokjian, Antranig Geokjian, Hovhannes/Vanes Geokjian, Yesayi Yaghubian, Khacher Vanayan, Mihran Ashkarian, Yesayi Kabakian, Andon Andonian, and Panos Shannakian.

<sup>22</sup> Hajian, “Im Hushere,” notebook 2, p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 181, *Grt. Desuch yev Grt. Hantznakhump Surio yev Lipanani 1 Mard 1937en 31 Hulis 938* (Education Superintendent and Education Committee of Syria and Lebanon from 1 March 1937 to 31 July 1938), Mikael Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 8 July 1938; idem, copy of letter with two illegible signatures on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to Mikael Natanian, 15 July 1938.

Field trips added to the learning process.<sup>24</sup> The students, usually around twenty-five boys and girls, gained further, hands-on experience through special performances. On 2 January 1938, for example, they entertained their parents and the public at large with a special Christmas program.<sup>25</sup> In the second half of the 1930s ten, mostly male students from Zeituniye expressed interest in furthering their education at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus. In addition, Papken Zanoian, an aspiring educator, applied to the teacher training department at the same institution.<sup>26</sup>

Some members of the Levshiy Armenian colony had joined the AGBU Vakef chapter as early as 1924.<sup>27</sup> Although a separate chapter had been formed at Zeituniye in 1933,<sup>28</sup> it must have been short-lived, for on 27 September 1936 a new chapter was established.<sup>29</sup> It started with nineteen members (sixteen males and three females) and an Executive Committee of seven, chaired by Yesayi Yaghubian. The membership included eleven farmers, five students, a teacher,

<sup>24</sup> Hajian, "Im Hushere," notebook 2, p. 89.

<sup>25</sup> For the number of students, see AGBU/Cairo, Binder 178, M. Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 9 December 1933; idem, Binder 181, M. Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 8 July, 1938. For the Christmas program, see Binder 134, Vagharsh B. Oflazian to AGBU *Monthly Report* Editor, 11 February 1938.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Binder 134, Yesayi Yaghubian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 2 March 1937; idem, copies of letters from the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair to Y. Yaghubian, 10 March 1937, 11 March 1938; idem, copy of letter from Y. Yazejian and Janig Chaker on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 29 March 1938; idem, copy of letter from B. Giragosian and illegible name on behalf of AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 26 August 1938; idem, V. Oflazian and Y. Yaghubian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 5 March 1939, 8 March 1939, 12 March 1939, 15 March 1939, 7 May 1939; idem, copies of letters from illegible signatures on behalf of AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 15 March 1939, 20 March 1939, 17 May 1939; idem, copy of letter from illegible signatures on behalf of AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Beirut Chapter Chair, 29 March 1939; idem, Binder 181, M. Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 18 March 1937. See also the section on Iraq, Palestine, and Cyprus in the text.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Binder 134, Report on the Formation of AGBU Chapters, 1 May 1924, attachment "Vakef" Section, 1<sup>st</sup> Membership Roster of Vakef Chapter, 15 July 1924. The members from Levshiy were: Dr. and Mrs. Mihran and Yevkine Varbedian, Mr. and Mrs. Kegham and Araksi? Anbarjian, Khosrov Arabian, and Aram D. Torosian, all of whom were not native to Musa Dagh. For the AGBU Vakef Chapter, see also AGBU, *Vosgemadian Haygagan Parekordzagan Enthanur Miutian – Ardzatia Hopelian – 1906-1931* (Golden Book of the Armenian General Benevolent Union – Silver Jubilee – 1906-1931) (Paris: Masis, 1935), p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 178, M. Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 26 September 1933, 9 December 1933.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Binder 134, Yesayi Yaghubian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 7 October 1936.

a miller, and a homemaker.<sup>30</sup> Enrollment required a one-time registration fee ranging from 10 to 100 Syrian piasters and a monthly membership fee ranging from 5 to 15 Syrian piasters (in both cases depending on the adherents' financial capabilities).<sup>31</sup> By the end of 1938 the membership had grown to thirty-four, about one-fourth of whom was female. Enthused by this trend, the local chapter sought permission from Cairo for a women's auxiliary and a separate youth group. Cairo approved the first request, but saw no need for the second.<sup>32</sup> The Zeituniye chapter likewise believed that as much as 85 percent of Musa Daghians would join the AGBU should Cairo pay part of the salary of a resident doctor for the Svedia district. This AGBU-sponsored physician would have a "moral influence" on people who, it was argued, were dissatisfied with the existing two doctors (Matosian and Basmajian) for their alleged discriminatory behavior vis-à-vis non-ARF members of the community. Cairo, however, disregarded this "practical proposal."<sup>33</sup> The activity of the AGBU Zeituniye chapter revolved around executive and plenary meetings, fundraising for Culture Sunday (*Mshaguyti Giragi*), selling AGBU wall calendars sent from Cairo, and supporting the local school.<sup>34</sup>

The promising outlook in this burgeoning community encouraged the AGBU world headquarters in Paris to initiate an agricultural project. Originally conceived to be implemented in Nubarashen, Soviet Armenia, but later

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Membership Roster of AGBU Zeituniye Chapter, 27 September 1936. The original nineteen members were, as listed: Boghos Oflazian, miller; Karun Oflazian, homemaker; Yester Oflazian, student; Vagharsh Oflazian, student; Vartuhi Nakulian, teacher; Apraham Nakulian, student; Sahag Nakulian, student; Mihran Ashkarian, farmer; Yesayi Yaghubian, farmer; Nubar Yaghubian, student; Peniamin Geokjian, farmer; Antranig Geokjian, farmer; Hovhannes Geokjian, farmer; Panos Shannakian, farmer; Khacher Silahljian, farmer; Arakel Penenian, farmer; Movses Kerteshian, farmer; Boghos Kiurdian, farmer; and Yesayi Kabakian, farmer.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Y. Yaghubian, H. Geokjian, and illegible name to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 10 April 1938; idem, copy of letter from three illegible signatures on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 16 April 1938.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Y. Yaghubian, A. Penenian, and H. Geokjian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 7 January 1938; idem, copies of letters from illegible signature on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 12 January 1938, 27 June 1939; idem, Y. Yaghubian and V. Oflazian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 16 June 1939; idem, Binder 181, M. Natanian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 16 January 1938; idem, Janig Chaker and illegible signature on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to M. Natanian, 19 January 1938.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Binder 134, copies of letters with no signature on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 24 December 1936, 18 February 1937, 10 March 1937; idem, Y. Yaghubian and Arakel Penenian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 2 March 1937; idem, Vagharsh B. Oflazian to AGBU *Monthly Report* Editor, 11 February 1938.

abandoned as the Soviet authorities banned the AGBU from the country, the scheme aimed “to create a model farm and agricultural school that would use the most modern methods of stock-raising and agriculture then available.” Hrant Dantzian, an agronomist and a teacher at the Melkonian Educational Institute, made a feasibility study on the spot on the Svedia plain, concluding that “the project would cost £1,000 and that the center would have to be subsidized for eight years before it could become financially self-supporting.” The AGBU Central Board in February 1938 approved the plan, which would be executed on a 20-*donum* (about 4.5 acres) site situated between Levshiye and Zeituniye.<sup>35</sup>

Vagharsh B. Oflazian, a native of Kheder Beg then living in the farming community of Jreiri, Svedia plain, endorsed the above project as a salutary concept. A medical student compelled to quit school due to an eye problem and shift his focus to agriculture and animal husbandry, Oflazian urged Vicar General Bedros Archbishop Sarajian of the Catholicosate (Pontificate) of Cilicia in Antlias near Beirut, the spiritual-civic center of Armenians in Syria and Lebanon, to support his vision of acquiring tracts of land in Svedia in order to settle Armenian refugees and provide them with jobs instead of short-term relief as a “permanent solution”. Because the political uncertainty revolving around the Sanjak’s status had reduced the value of land, it would be prudent, he argued, to purchase real estate with a special fund placed under the aegis of the Catholicosate. That fund had to be raised from the rich, and he pledged 100 Syrian liras to demonstrate his active participation.<sup>36</sup> Oflazian and his brother-in-law, Yesayi Yaghubian, similarly communicated with the AGBU in Cairo, expressing readiness to help by any means in order for the project to succeed.<sup>37</sup> Cairo responded cautiously: “The establishment of a model farm is still a plan and it is not clear as to where it will be established. Naturally a location will be selected that is politically safe.”<sup>38</sup> Reminding the AGBU that they themselves had pursued this idea since 1937, in frustration the two men

<sup>35</sup> Raymond H. Kévorkian and Vahé Tachjian, eds., *The Armenian General Benevolent Union: One Hundred Years of History*, vol. I, 1906-1940, translated from French by G.M. Goshgarian (Cairo, Paris, New York: AGBU Central Board of Directors, 2006), pp. 262-63. See also, AGBU Cairo, Binder 181, copy of letter with no signature on behalf of AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to M. Natanian, 30 July 1937.

<sup>36</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, (hereafter ACC), File 22/1, *Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940*, Vagharsh B. Oflazian to Bedros Archbishop Sarajian, 15 November 1937, 27 September 1938.

<sup>37</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, Vagharsh B. Oflazian and Yesayi Yaghubian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 5 March 1939, 15 March 1939.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., copy of letter with illegible signature on behalf of AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 15 March 1939.

retorted sarcastically that only at the South Pole, where no Armenians existed, could a safe place be found, that the Musa Dagh region was the safest, and that time was of the essence.<sup>39</sup> Not only did the AGBU remain unconvinced, but for all practical purposes it shelved the plan as it wrote on 1 April 1939: “Under the current political conditions, the execution of that plan is absolutely impossible.”<sup>40</sup> And indeed, in less than four months the overwhelming majority of Armenians would exit Musa Dagh and the Sanjak at large, unwilling to live under the new Turkish regime in the area.<sup>41</sup> It is true that a “Progressive Body of Musa Dagh (Svedia)” was formed in 1937 as a self-defensive measure to be better prepared for any eventuality and not be caught by surprise like in 1915.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the inevitability of the Sanjak’s annexation to Turkey with French duplicity had rendered that measure irrelevant.

*Antioch:* After World War I a small Armenian community of genocide survivors reemerged in the city of Antioch. Various counts put the Armenian inhabitants in that regional administrative-trade center between 227 and 500 souls.<sup>43</sup> The commercial class among them lived primarily in the Christian neighborhoods of Ward and Hamidiye, whereas the poorer artisans and laborers began to form a new quarter along the Svedia route in the southwest outside the city limits.<sup>44</sup> As hinted, their occupations varied. According to a study done prior to 1931, there were two Armenian-owned pharmacies, four dentists, and three lawyers.<sup>45</sup> Another survey, conducted in January 1935, listed seventy-eight Armenian artisans with twenty-two different specializations.<sup>46</sup> To these must be added a priest and a few teachers, who, together with community leaders,

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Vagharsh B. Oflazian and Yesayi Yaghubian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 29 March 1939. See also idem, V. Oflazian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 30 March 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., copy of letter with illegible signature on behalf of the AGBU Egypt Regional Committee to AGBU Zeituniye Chapter Chair, 1 April 1939. See also idem, 7 April 1939; idem, letter to V. Oflazian, 13 April 1939.

<sup>41</sup> The history of that exodus has not yet been written in a substantiated manner.

<sup>42</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Vagharsh B. Oflazian to Bedros Archbishop Sarajian, 29 July 1937.

<sup>43</sup> S.S. Manoogian, “A Week in Antioch,” *Friend of Armenia* (London), n.s., III: 106 (1928): 15; Jacques Weulersse, “Antioche. Essai de géographie urbaine,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* IV (1934): 27; Pierre Bazantay, *Enquête sur l’artisanat à Antioche* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1936), p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Weulersse, “Antioche,” p. 50.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de tourisme* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1931), vol. II, pp. 208-09.

<sup>46</sup> Bazantay, *Enquête*, pp. 8-10. See also G. Besnard, “Antioche,” *L’Asie Française* no. 299 (April 1932): 130-31.

managed a church, a school, and other civic organizations. The Antioch Prelacy oversaw the spiritual needs of the Armenian communities in the Sanjak of Alexandretta.<sup>47</sup>

Although Musa Daghians frequently commuted to Antioch for business and official purposes, only a few settled there permanently. After repatriating from Port Said, Egypt in 1919, comb maker Garabed Chaparian of Yoghunoluk established himself in Antioch and built a house at an uninhabited location, named Gharib Mahallesi (the Stranger's Quarter). He sent his three sons and only daughter to Beirut in 1938, and rejoined them in Anjar, Lebanon a year later.<sup>48</sup> Some Musa Daghians operated an outdoor café on the banks of the Orontes River.<sup>49</sup> The following were from Kheder Beg. Garabed ("Garabaj") Dumanian served as *maitre* at Hôtel Tourisme; he eventually migrated to Beirut and worked at Hôtel Saint George. Hagop Emlikian ("Ashji"/Cook Hagop) possessed a restaurant on the ground floor of a hotel that belonged to a woman from Istanbul named Nectar Khanum. "Ferenji" Apraham, Hagop's son, was a baker. Non-Musa Dagh native Bedros Jawharjian practiced dentistry; in 1935-36 he relocated to Kheder Beg upon the villagers' invitation. Corporal Hovhannes Markarian, formerly a soldier in the French Légion d'Orient and a teacher in Musa Dagh, acted as chief of police in the nearby sub-district of Sheikh Koy.<sup>50</sup> Hovhannes Keosheian owned seven carts with which he transported building materials to construction sites.<sup>51</sup>

The family of Movses Chaparian, a prominent Bitias native victimized in a series of vendetta killings between feuding factions from that village and Haji Habibli in the early 1920s, likewise lived in Antioch. During summer, his widow, Gulenia, daughters Shushanig, Araxi, and Arshaluys, and son Mardiros relocated to Bitias, where mother and son worked at brother-in-law/uncle Taniel Chaparian's hotel in various capacities.<sup>52</sup> Tailor Nazaret

<sup>47</sup> For Armenian community affairs in Antioch, consult ACC, File 23/1, *Andiok 1914-1940* (Antioch 1914-1940); AGBU/Cairo, Binder 195, "Antioch" section.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Asdghig Urfalian Chaparian, 12 July 2009, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>49</sup> Bedros Torosian, *Husher* (Memoirs) (Los Angeles: Abril Printing, 2009), p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Harutiun Sherbetjian, untitled list of Kheder Beg inhabitants with their nicknames and occupations, prepared upon my request; Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of Svedia Armenians), edited by Yesayi Havatian, (Beirut: Hamazkayin "Wahe Sethian" Press, 2010), pp. 218, 222, 224.

<sup>51</sup> Telephone interview with Dikran Sarkuni (Keosheian), 21 December 2009, Granada Hills, California-Los Angeles, California.

<sup>52</sup> Telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 8 October 2009, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

Sherbetjian, a brother of attorney Armenag Sherbetjian of Bitias who was gunned down by an Ottoman officer in the immediate aftermath of the 1909 massacres, moved from Alexandretta to Antioch in the early 1920s after his wife, Sara nee Renjilian, died and he remarried a Greek woman by the name of Asma Khuri. The couple, who resided in the neighborhood of Ward or Gul Mahallesi, had a daughter named Helen in 1925; she attended the Saint Joseph de l'Apparition catholic nuns' school. Nazaret died in 1926 of pneumonia, but his widow and daughter continued to maintain their contacts with Musa Dagh, by vacationing at Bitias together with Asma's sister and her husband, Franguli Yatros.<sup>53</sup> A few students and soldiers completed the catalog of Musa Daghians in Antioch.<sup>54</sup>

*Kirik Khan:* In the rural town of Kirik Khan, to the northeast of Antioch, a young Haji Habibli native by the name of Arakel Der Arakelian lived in his two-room private house and owned one acre of land. The plot around the house bore fruit from six apricot trees, four vines, three fig trees, three pomegranate trees, two orange trees, and one mulberry tree, for a total of nineteen trees. But his main income seems to have come from a vineyard and an orchard that he owned at Beylan, a summer resort near Alexandretta. The vineyard consisted of 400 vines, whereas the orchard contained ten pomegranate trees, six plum trees, six almond trees, six myrtle trees, four walnut trees, four fig trees, and three apple trees, for a total of thirty-nine trees.<sup>55</sup> Der Arakelian and a married couple from Yoghunoluk, Panos and Victoria Solakian, who had similarly established themselves in Kirik Khan, relocated to Aleppo prior to the annexation of the Sanjak to Turkey in the summer of 1939.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Helen Sherbetjian Makhian, 3 April 2009, Pasadena, California.

<sup>54</sup> Some of the Musa Dagh students attending schools in Antioch were: At the French state *Lycée*, Hagop Keshishian of Kabusiye, Hagop Chaparian of Yoghunoluk, and Nazaret Bidanian of Yoghunoluk; at the St. Pierre Capuchin school, Harutiun/Artin Sherbetjian of Kheder Beg. Movses Keshishian, private papers, Los Angeles, California, picture of Hagop Keshishian as a student in Antioch, 13 May 1927; telephone interview with Nazaret Bidanian, 10 February 2010, Granada Hills, California-Fresno, California; Harutiun/Artin Sherbetjian, private papers, North Hollywood, California, picture of him as a student in Antioch, 1930s. Among Musa Dagh soldiers in the French Army, Hapet Aprahamian ("Sallanints") of Kheder Beg served as the secretary of the French colonel at Antioch. Telephone interview with Bidanian. To be sure, there were other soldiers from Musa Dagh, but information is lacking about their post(s).

<sup>55</sup> Armenian Prelacy of Aleppo Archives, Aleppo, Syria, (hereafter APA), Section III, File 3, 1939 *Hulis ioen Arach Haleb Hasdadvadz Sanjaktsi Hay Kaghtaganneru Anvanatsange* (The Roster of Armenian Refugees from the Sanjak Established in Aleppo before 10 July 1939), information on Arakel Der Arakelian.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Roster of Armenian Refugees Who Have Come from the Sanjak to Aleppo during the Period from 1 July 1938-10 July 1939, dated 29 August 1939, entry no. 207.

*Soghukoluk*: A group of laborers from Musa Dagh migrated to the Armenian resort village of Soghukoluk near Beylan each spring. During their two-month sojourn, they performed certain agricultural activities such as irrigating, plowing, pruning, fertilizing, and raising mounds around vines planted in orderly furrows. During fall, they returned to Soghukoluk to harvest the various crops. They likewise cracked wheat manually and voluntarily as a favor to their hosts, simultaneously keeping their spirits high by singing Musa Dagh folk songs. In addition, the brothers Hovhannes, Garabed, and Sarkis Soghomonian, also from Musa Dagh, prepared and sold pastry to the local hotels as well as via street stands.<sup>57</sup>

*Fartisli*: A few Musa Daghians resided in Fartisli, an Armenian hamlet situated to the south of Alexandretta. Around 1925 Movses Amoghlian moved there from Bitias to work for a wholesale cloth merchant from Alexandretta named Levon Shamlian. Movses sold chintz, embroidery hoops, and similar items in nearby villages, gaining the nickname of “Cherchi Musa,” that is, Moses the Peddler. His income enabled him to purchase a house, part of which served for business purposes. Wife Rosa nee Sherbetjian tended the store in her husband’s absence.<sup>58</sup> Another woman from Bitias similarly settled in Fartisli after wedding a local man. The frequency of her brother Movses Kendirjian’s visits from Musa Dagh earned him the nickname of “Mushta,” construed to mean “boot.”<sup>59</sup>

*Alexandretta*: Alexandretta offered job opportunities for a number of Musa Dagh men. Yesayi Stambulian from Kabusiye worked as a cook. His nephew, Apraham Kasamanian (“Qrraj Apraham”), joined him and waited on French truck drivers, who delivered food to French troops deployed in the area. For his services Apraham received bundles of garments, which he traded with the locals for cash. He additionally found customers from among the many Kesab Armenian émigrés in town for French arms discarded by the above chauffeurs in their station. Last but not least, he pursued photography, sending part of his earnings from all these activities to his mother back in Kabusiye before rejoining her.<sup>60</sup> Another fellow villager, Mesrob Zakarian, tried his fortunes in Antioch, Beirut, and Alexandretta, and returned to Kabusiye with some

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Victoria Giuzelyan, 23 February 2009, Glendale, California.

<sup>58</sup> Hovhannes Amoghlian, letter to the author, received 29 October 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Moves Sarkis Sherbetjian, 6 January 2002, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>60</sup> Apraham Kasamanian, taped autobiography, cassette no. 6, Glendale, California. See also Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 70.

savings.<sup>61</sup> Khosrov Iprajian of Kheder Beg functioned as a customs agent at the port of Alexandretta.<sup>62</sup> Here too lived a certain Dzeron Krikor Kbburian of Yoghun Oluk,<sup>63</sup> whose occupation remains unknown. The list may have been longer.

### Syria

Musa Daghian footprints can also be traced to other major cities in Syria. Sarkis Boyajian owned a business in the coastal town of Latakia and did not contemplate returning to Kheder Beg although he possessed a cultivable plot of land there, purchased another orchard, and planned to acquire others depending on future earnings.<sup>64</sup> In the early- to mid-1920s Kapriel/Jabra Shemmassian (“Garbushints Bzdaye”) of Yoghunoluk worked in the Suq al-Tawil in Hama, where he was known as Jabra al-Mshati (Gabriel the Comb Maker).<sup>65</sup> An additional four co-villagers had settled there by 1937.<sup>66</sup> In Damascus, Boghos Blutian, who had migrated from Vakef together with his family at a young age, married a Greek Orthodox woman and stayed permanently.<sup>67</sup> Seven other compatriots from Yoghunoluk, Kheder Beg, and Haji Habibli had joined him by the second half of the 1930s.<sup>68</sup>

Aleppo city in the north beckoned the largest number of Musa Daghians by virtue of its centrality in regional commerce and inland trade. Most of the newcomers originated from Yoghunoluk. They engaged primarily in the manufacture of wooden and bone combs, which were in great demand among the lice-infested fellahin and Bedouins of the surrounding countryside. The settlers included, among others, the Vanayan brothers, Hovhannes, Mikayel and Yesayi; the Sherbetians, Vartan, Sarkis and Boghos; two Adajians with the

<sup>61</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov*, p. 87.

<sup>62</sup> Sherbetjian, untitled list.

<sup>63</sup> League of Nations Archives, United Nations Library, Geneva, Switzerland, (hereafter LN), Sanjak d’Alexandrette, Commission de la S.D.N., C 1058, no. 3/37, File *Djebel Moussa 2*, Liste de tout les électeurs du Yoghoun Olouk inscrit dans les listes électorales revisées au debut de 1937 qui ont perdu le benefice de leurs droits civiques.

<sup>64</sup> Nazareth Emlikian, private papers, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, Sarkis Boyajian, letter to brother-in-law Kapriel Emlikian, 18 January 1929.

<sup>65</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, private papers, address on envelope (letter missing) sent from the United States to Jabra al-Mshati (Kapriel Shemmassian) in Hama, Syria in 1925.

<sup>66</sup> LN, C 1058, no. 3/37, File *Djebel Moussa 2*, Liste de tout les électeurs du Yoghoun Olouk.

<sup>67</sup> Blutian, “Misak Blutiani Gensakrutiune.”

<sup>68</sup> LN, C 1058, no. 3/37, File *Djebel Moussa 2*, Liste de tout les électeurs du Yoghoun Olouk/Khidr Bek/Haji Habable.

same name, Hovhannes and Hannes; and Apraham Shemmassian. Hovhannes and Hayrabed Tashjian, who operated a workshop at the Suweiqi market, were joined by their mother, Isguhi nee Atamian, and sister, Sirvart in 1936. Kheder Beg native Ghugas/Luqa Mardirian and his sister, Mari/Marukhi, tailored men's and women's apparel from their rented apartment, where their other siblings, Lucia and Yester, also lived.<sup>69</sup>

Setrag Haygazyan's experience was unlike any other. A member of the Social Democrat Hinchagian party (SDHP/*Sotsial Temograd Hinchagian Gusagtsutiun*) chapter of Yoghunoluk, Haigazian in 1924 was dispatched by his leadership to Aleppo to work for the party's *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) newspaper as well as for self-improvement. Falling under the influence of the chief typesetter, a fellow countryman of communist persuasion by the name of Masis Panosian, he embraced the Marxist-Leninist ideology and joined the *Sbardag* (Spartacus) youth group. Given the lack of sufficient income, he took another job at the Arax printing press, but his troubles persisted resulting in poor health. After just ten months in Aleppo, Haygazyan returned to his native village a changed man and became one of the founders of the Musa Dagh communist cell in 1925.<sup>70</sup>

The case of one family undergoing assimilation in exile deserves attention, although most Armenians succeeded in preserving their ethnic identity. In the Jdeide sector of Aleppo lived the Dmlakians, who had assumed the surname of Mardinli, meaning, from or of Mardin. This change could have taken place a) in Mardin, a town in southern Turkey near the Syrian border, where Boghos, the patriarch of the household, had migrated from Yoghunoluk at some point in time and married a Christian Arab woman before relocating to Aleppo,<sup>71</sup> or b) in line with the tradition of Aleppo's "native" or "old" Armenians (*Arman qadeem*), that is, those long-established residents who had been at least partly Arabized.<sup>72</sup> Abd al-Masih (Abdo), one of Boghos' four sons, owned a workshop

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Sirvart Tashjian Hajian, 3 January 2009, Pasadena, California.

<sup>70</sup> Setrag Haygazyan, "Setrag Haygazyan Husherits," (From the Memoirs of Setrag Haygazyan), unpublished manuscript, Musa Ler Monument-Museum, Musa Ler Town, Armenia, notebook I, n.p.

<sup>71</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 205-06. Boghos Dmlakian had four sons: Shafik, Karim, Abd al-Masih, and Hovhannes. For Shafik and Karim, see section on Egypt in this chapter. Hovhannes died at a young age.

<sup>72</sup> For the partly-assimilated Armenians in Aleppo, consult Varti Keshishian, *Halebi Haygagan Kaghtojakhi Hasaragagan-Mshagutayin Gazmagerbutiunnere (1846-1915)* (The Social-Cultural Organizations of the Armenian Colony of Aleppo [1846-1915]) (Antlias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, 2001), pp. 24-25, 36.

in Aleppo's ancient covered bazaar, where he made bone combs with a number of artisans including his brothers-in-law and other compatriots. His mother-in-law "cooked lunch every day and walked several miles to the bazaar to share it with Abdo and the other employees." Abd al-Masih and his wife, Victoria, also from Musa Dagh, had three sons, Fuad, Edmond, and Bulos, who attended the Arab Protestant grammar school situated on the ground floor of the American High School for Girls. Their daughter, Victoria, was born circa 1941. The children spoke Arabic, while the adults communicated in the Musa Dagh dialect. The grandmother similarly tried to reincarnate her native village in the alien surrounding.<sup>73</sup> Reminisced Bitias native Alberta Magzarian, who lived across the street from 1940 to 1945:

For us, the young folk, grandmother, Victoria's mom, was the most fascinating member of that family. She grew several potted flower plants on the roof [of their house], identical to replicas grown in Musa Dagh – carnations, scented geraniums, amaranth, globe basil, etc. It seems she was trying to create a mini Yoghunoluk with her flowers, [and] two sheep which she would buy every summer, fatten them and have a big celebration every fall [probably marking the 1915 resistance to the genocide]. Of course sheep droppings were cheap and handy fertilizer for her flowers. When we found out about her lambs, we made sure to save our melon peels for her. She appreciated our support and rewarded us with flowers.<sup>74</sup>

As winds of sovereignty change from French to Turkish rule blew in the Sanjak of Alexandretta, in the months preceding 10 July 1939 about sixty concerned families departed Musa Dagh for Aleppo.<sup>75</sup> They stayed mainly in the following neighborhoods and camps: Aziziye, Jdeide, Suleimaniye, Hazzaze, Saha, Meidan, Sheikh Maqsud, Zoqaq Zahr, Zoqaq Khall, Zoqaq Arbaain, Jisr al-Kaake, Bab al-Nasr, Abu Ajjur, and the Gurun and Assyrian camps.<sup>76</sup> Another twenty-one families and four individuals from Musa Dagh

<sup>73</sup> Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, received 6 April 2009.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> APA, Section III, File 1, *Sanjaki Kaghtaganats Esdatsvadv Namagner 1939-1940* (Incoming Correspondence from Sanjak Refugees 1939-1940), Hovhannes Vanayan, Movses K. Keshishian, and Tovmas Abdenurian to Aleppo Prelate Ardavazt Archbishop Surmeian, 14 August 1939.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., File 2, *Anvanatsang yev Adenakrutiun [Sanjaki Kaghtaganats] 1939-1940* (Roster and Minutes of Meetings [Pertaining to Sanjak Refugees] 1939-1940), The Roster of Armenian Nationals Who Have Migrated to Aleppo before the Annexation of the Sanjak to Turkey.

took refuge in Aleppo after 17 July 1939,<sup>77</sup> while the bulk of their compatriots temporarily encamped at Ras al-Basit on the Mediterranean until a permanent settlement site could be found for them in Lebanon.<sup>78</sup> As the refugees in Aleppo felt discriminated against due to being left out of relief lists and lists prepared for the eventual distribution of housing and farmlands among their fellow Musa Daghians at Ras al-Basit, they asked for the same privileges through the intermediary of the Aleppo Prelacy.<sup>79</sup> In mid-September 1939 about twenty refugee families similarly applied to rejoin their kin, who by then had been relocated from Ras al-Basit to Anjar. In order to avoid possible complications, the Aleppo Prelacy sought approval from the Central Refugees Settlement Committee in Anjar.<sup>80</sup> The latter obliged, but for some reason only nine families, two siblings, four individuals, and nine unidentified persons totaling fifty-four souls were entrained from Aleppo to Anjar via Homs, Zahle, and Rayaq aboard two wagons in the afternoon of 26 September 1939.<sup>81</sup> The rest stayed in Aleppo permanently.

### *Lebanon*

Lebanon attracted a relatively large number of Musa Dagh migrants. About ten families from Yoghunoluk chose the northern city of Tripoli as their new home. The breadwinners manufactured combs in the old bazaars. Kapriel/Jabra Shemmassian was perhaps the only exception; beginning in

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., files 1 and 2, The Roster of Musa Dagh Armenian Refugees Who Have Come to Aleppo after 17 July 1939.

<sup>78</sup> For the temporary stay of Musa Dagh refugees at Ras al-Basit, consult M. Kushakjian, "Musa Lertsik Ainjari Mech" (Musa Daghians in Anjar), in *Hushamadian*, pp. 497-500; Torosian, *Husher*, pp. 46-61.

<sup>79</sup> APA, Section III, File 1, Vanayan, Keshishian, and Abdenurian to Archbishop Surmeian, 14 August 1939; idem, File 2, Archbishop Surmeian to Bedros Archbishop Sarajian, Vicar General of the Catholicosate of Cilicia and President of the Armenian National Union in Lebanon, 29 August 1939.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., File 2, Archbishop Surmeian to the Central Committee for the Settlement of Musa Dagh Refugees in Anjar, 15 September 1939.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Archbishop Surmeian in a letter to Mardiros Kushakjian, 23 September 1939, maintains that twenty-eight families totaling ninety persons were ready to be entrained. But refugees waiting to be transported to Anjar stated that, although twenty families had received permission to go, only seventeen had showed up at the train station. See idem, File 1, Maritsa Stambulian, Mari Keosheian, and Mari Karageuzian to Archbishop Surmeian, 28 September 1939. For the list of Musa Daghians who actually left, see idem, File 5, *Artzanakrutuiun. Sanjaki Kaghtaganats Khnamadarutiun. Comité d'Assistance aux Réfugiés ALEP, 1939-1940* (Record. Caretaking Agency for Sanjak Refugees. Refugees Assistance Committee Aleppo, 1939-1940), Roster of Sanjak Refugees Sent to Homs-Anjar via Rayaq and to Beirut by a Special Train at 2:30 p.m. on 26 September 1939.

1938 he sold secondhand garments at the Suq al-Bazergan, with several poor Armenian women employed for alterations and laundering.<sup>82</sup> Between 1925 and 1928 Kheder Beg native Hovhannes Zeitlian—later nicknamed "*Occasion*," meaning, discount salesman—served as kitchen aide at a French Catholic friars' boarding school in Beirut, only to leave for Tripoli as a cook for the French Navy. He then became the head chef of Hotel-Casino Sofar in Mount Lebanon. In 1931, a European oil engineering group, while on a mission to recruit workers in Lebanon for the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), hired Zeitlian as the head chef of its oil excavating team comprising some forty British, French, and German nationals. The team conducted its geological surveys in eastern Syria, where Zeitlian, while performing his prescribed duties, also experimented with a chicken hatching machine imported by a British employee. The machine ultimately found its way to Anjar.<sup>83</sup> In 1927 Levon Mardirian, also from Kheder Beg, worked at the French naval base in Beirut for about a year-and-a-half before becoming the gardener of the Admiralty headquarters (the future site of the Nshan Palanjan Gymnasium/*Jemaran*). In his spare time, he made and sold wooden spoons, forks, and mallets. The Admiralty's chef was co-villager Hovhannes/Jean Dumanian.<sup>84</sup> Setrag Blutian from Vakef served as a translator at the Beirut harbor until his assassination purportedly due to jealousy.<sup>85</sup>

At least three needy widows from Musa Dagh likewise headed to Lebanon, where one subsisted as a domestic and the other two as helpers in an orphanage in the village of Shimlan.<sup>86</sup> The orphanage also sheltered a Yoghunoluk boy and his three sisters. The boy ultimately ran away and returned to his birthplace.<sup>87</sup> Another three siblings from Bitias, whose parents had died in Hama during the World War I deportations, continued to live in Beirut after leaving an Armenian orphanage upon reaching adolescence.<sup>88</sup>

Krikor Geozalyan (Keghuni) of Kabusiye, who held an electrical engineering degree from Paris, after teaching industrial drafting at the French *Lycée* in Antioch for a year (1931-32), moved to Damascus and from there to Beirut.

<sup>82</sup> Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, letter to the author, received 29 November 1996; interview with Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, 30 January 2010, Fresno, California.

<sup>83</sup> Gaidzag Zeitlian, email to the author, 15 May 2009.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Varujan Mardirian, 10 July 2009, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>85</sup> Blutian, "Misak Blutiani Gensakrutuine."

<sup>86</sup> Torosian, *Husher*, pp. 25, 35.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-36.

<sup>88</sup> Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, 6 September 2009.

Here he became inspector at the French government-owned *Central Étoile* telephone company from 1932, troubleshooting and ensuring uninterrupted communications for military as well as civilian purposes until his repatriation to Soviet Armenia in 1947. At the same time, he actively participated in public life as a member and chair of the Sahagian School Board of Trustees, secretary of the SDHP, and a candidate of that party's Musa Dagħ chapter in the Sanjak of Alexandretta legislative elections in 1932 and 1936. He similarly ran a propaganda campaign among the inhabitants of Anjar, urging them to relocate to Soviet Armenia after World War II.<sup>89</sup>

By 1936 some sixty-five youths from Haji Habibli alone had moved to Beirut in search of employment. Another fifty-sixty co-villagers awaited their turn once they could afford 20-25 French francs to be able to travel.<sup>90</sup> Because most of the new arrivals were traditional silk weavers, a profession that was no longer in great demand, they had to change venue in order to make a living. They accordingly took up jobs in the hospitality-culinary sector almost to a man. Significant numbers worked at the famed Saint George and Normandy hotels in the coastal Ain Mrayse tourist-night life district of Beirut. In Saint George, for instance, Hayg Mardirian, Yervant Chembetian, Aleko Markarian, and Mikael Mikaelian (Mardirian) served as waiters; Garabed ("Garabaj") Dumanian of Kheder Beg, son Haigaz, and Hovhannes Kojayan worked as *cuisiniers* or kitchen men; two Yoghunoluk youths made coffee as *cafetiers*; Hayg Mardirian (mentioned above) and Aleksan Isgenderian offered drinks as *sommeliers*; Arshag Khalulian tended at the bar; and Apraham Dermishian cooked meals. At Normandy, the same Dermishian (working alternately) and Ardashes Mardirian acted as chefs.<sup>91</sup>

Certain clubs and eateries within and outside the above district employed fellow countrymen. Mardiros Mikaelian (Mardirian), for instance, was a *cuisinier* at the French *Cercle Officiers* (Officers Club) located between the two aforementioned hotels. Isgender Mardirian prepared food at Restaurant Lucullus, while Hovsep Kerekian, Garabed Kerekian, Antranig Kerekian, and Yesayi Kiuspekian waited on customers. George Khalulian and Avedis

<sup>89</sup> Manvel Giuzelyan, "Krikor Kēghunu Dndesagan Hasaragagan Kordzuneutyune" (The Economic Public Activity of Krikor Kēghuni), written upon my request.

<sup>90</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 180, *Gr. Desuch yev Gr. Hantznakhump Surio yev Lipanani 22 Okosd. 1935en 26 Pedr. 1937* (Education Superintendent and Education Committee of Syria and Lebanon from 22 August 1935 until 26 February 1937), Giragos Giragosian and Movses Melidonian to AGBU Egypt Regional Committee Chair, 24 May 1936.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Mikael Mikaelian, 2 April 2009, Hollywood, California.

Magarian served as *garçons* at the Kit Kat nightclub.<sup>92</sup> It appears that Magarian also worked at the Grand Café de la République in the Place des Canons (Sahat al-Shuhada/Martyrs' Square).<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, Hovhannes Garabedian of Yoghunoluk, after working at Saint George briefly, moved to Tanios' Piscine Aley café-entertainment club in the eponymous resort town near Beirut during the summer season as *garçon* and then *maitre*, spending the rest of the year at the Express fast food joint in the Place des Canons. His brother, Garabed, landed a similar job in the same central square.<sup>94</sup>

These workers, who had to learn Arabic, French, and English to be able to entertain world leaders, military officers, and other celebrities, had to be members of the Lebanese *Syndicat Hôtelier* and received salaries fixed by it. Monthly pay usually ranged between 50 and 60 Lebanese liras excluding tips.<sup>95</sup> Certain youths like Mikael Mikaelian got promoted through formal training. His *Certificat* of verification, signed by Saint George General Manager André Métailler and issued on the eve of his repatriation to Soviet Armenia in 1947, read:

The Direction of Hotel Saint Georges, certifies that the named MIKAELIAN MIKAEL, had been at its service from JUNE 1937 to JULY 1940 in the capacity of Restaurant apprentice, and from JULY 1940 to JULY 1947 in the capacity of VICE HEADWAITER [*CHEF DE RANG*].

He leaves us free of all engagements and we have always been satisfied with his conduct and with his work.<sup>96</sup>

The separation of these men (and accompanying women) from home and the initial shock they must have sustained in a big and cosmopolitan city like Beirut necessitated the creation of collective mechanisms to cope with their alienation. The Haji Habibli Compatriotic Association, formed

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Nantes, (hereafter AMAE), Mandat Syrie-Liban, Beyrouth: Cabinet Politique 1926-1941, Carton 513, Le Délégué-Adjoint du Haut-Commissaire pour le mohafazat de Lattaquié à Monsieur l'Ambassadeur de France Haut-Commissaire de la République en Syrie et au Liban, 15 June 1938, attachment titled "Declaration" and signed by Avedis Magarian, (no first name) Ignatossian, and Garabed Kirikian, 14 June 1938.

<sup>94</sup> Telephone interview with Zakar Garabedian, 25 October 2009, Granada Hills, California-Corona, California.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Mikaelian.

<sup>96</sup> Mikael Mikaelian, private papers, André Métailler, *Certificat* to Mikael Mikaelian, 14 July 1947, Hôtel Saint Georges, Beirut.

in 1931, constituted one such group whose aims were “mutual assistance” and lending financial and educational support to fellow villagers back in Musa Dagh. Two years later another union with similar goals and dubbed the Compatriotic Association of Musa Dagh emerged. The two organizations, which comprised forty-fifty members each, merged in 1935 under the common name of Compatriotic Association of Musa Dagh. Its central board coordinated the activities of two branches, one called Tatar Alang at Zeituniye in the Ain Mrayse district (with membership comprising mainly Haji Habibli natives), and another called Damlajik at Mar Mkhayel in the Nahr district (with membership comprising mainly Yoghunoluk natives).<sup>97</sup> Both names were adopted symbolically from two spots in Musa Dagh, where some of the fiercest and most fateful battles had taken place during the 1915 resistance.<sup>98</sup>

The Association evidently needed a shot in the arm to be able to address the new challenges brought about by the Sanjak conflict and the resultant economic crisis. A press release issued on 17 September 1938 explained that “the present situation” in the homeland required “extraordinary work” to be carried out on “a wider and deeper foundation.” As before, that work aimed to financially assist, as much possible, poor and capable students and needy compatriots. The “newly-formed [i.e., rejuvenated] Musa Dagh Compatriotic Association” accordingly called upon all compatriots above fifteen years of age living in Beirut to adhere to it. There would be no discrimination based on gender or political affiliation. Musa Daghians living in other cities were urged to form their own chapters.<sup>99</sup>

Despite avowals of political neutrality, the Association’s choice of venues for its public functions and general activities betrayed the political divisions that existed among compatriots. A social-cultural gathering organized by the Damlajik chapter on 14 January 1939 at the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP)-affiliated Armenian Youth Association (*Hay Yeridasartats Engeragtsutiun*) Antranig Club underscored the tension. Aimed at “keeping alive the love and admiration of compatriots towards their birthplace,” the program consisted of three segments. Part one included speeches by four individuals (belonging to the SDHP), namely, Isgender Kh. Mardirian, Vahe Mardirian, Garabed Garabedian, and Krikor Geozalyan, all of whom exhorted unity and harmony in their messages. Part two featured a comedy entitled “Two Deaf People.” Part

<sup>97</sup> Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, pp. 843-44.

<sup>98</sup> For the various locations of the fights, see Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 201-10.

<sup>99</sup> *Ararad* (Beirut), 17 September 1938.

three entailed a feast, during which a few participants affiliated with the ARF began to sing a partisan song. Despite the organizers’ attempt to explain the “neutral” nature of the evening, those “troublemakers” defiantly threw bottles and glasses around them, and disappeared during the ensuing commotion before police could disperse the crowd by force.<sup>100</sup>

When in 1938 the economic situation in Musa Dagh deteriorated as a result of the Sanjak crisis, the Association in Beirut formed a nine-member committee to steer a fund-raising campaign in a bid to assist the destitute and schools back home. The committee met with Archbishop Sarajian at Antlias to obtain permission for its initiative. According to a press release issued by the Association, Sarajian, after “appreciating the work and willingness [of the committee] in this regard, has promised to sponsor it [the drive] by all means and sanction [it] in his prelacies.” Based on this purported pledge of support, the relief committee decided to commence solicitations officially on Sunday, 18 September. Donations could be sent to Treasurer Hayg Mardirian, and “the list of donors will be published in the Armenian press of Beirut on a daily basis.”<sup>101</sup> Money thus raised amounted to at least 7,260 Syrian piasters, including a contribution of 1,000 piasters by the “Mardirian-Isgenderian Clan Association.”<sup>102</sup> A dinner-dance on Sunday, 20 November 1938 at the DLP-affiliated Zareh-Nubar Club was organized for the same purpose.<sup>103</sup> These activities could have been more productive had the Prelacy Civil Council of Lebanon not denied authorization for a communitywide drive; it allowed solicitations only within Musa Daghian circles in town. No specific reason was provided for this restriction.<sup>104</sup> Be that as it may, the Association entered a period of dormancy during World War II, but resumed its activities thereafter.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to being members of the Compatriotic Association of Musa Dagh, a number of individuals broke out of their narrow, parochial parameters

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1939.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 September 1938.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 September 1938, 28 September 1938, 29 September 1938. The Mardirian-Isgenderian clan’s donation excluded Hayg Mardirian’s personal contribution of 500 piasters.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November 1938.

<sup>104</sup> *Zhoghovurti Tzayn* (People’s Voice) (Beirut), 16 October 1938, 23 October 1938.

<sup>105</sup> “Jebel Musayi,” in *Hushamadian*, pp. 844-45. For Hapet Isgenderian’s literary and public life, see Hapet M. Isgenderian, *Kertvadzner yev Artzag Echer* (Poems and Prose Pages) (Beirut: G. Donigian, 1959); Manuel Beylerian, “Hapet M. Isgenderiani Giankn u Kordzuneutiune” (Hapet M. Isgenderian’s Life and Activity), in *Trvakner Svedio Antsialen (1893-95 Heghapokhagan Shrchanen)* (Episodes from Svedia’s Past [From the 1893-95 Revolutionary Period]), (Beirut: Ararad, 1957), pp. 275-307.

and joined the SDHP, if they had not already done so in Musa Dagh. But even in such cases, it seems, like birds of the same feather, they tended to flock together. In fact, one of the SDHP's newest chapters, that of Ain Mrayse, consisted almost exclusively of Haji Habibli migrants. Its inauguration took place on 23 July 1938 at the home of Aleksan Isgenderian. The highlight of the program was the naming of the chapter as "[Vahe] Aradzani," the penname of Hapet Isgenderian, a young scion of that notable Haji Habibli clan, a leader in the SDHP, and a contributor to various Armenian newspapers, whose life was cut short due to the Haji Habibli-Bitias internecine bloody feud in the early 1920s. The presiding host welcomed the attendees, sketched Hapet's life, and invited Yeznig Boyajian, a compatriot visiting from Haifa, Palestine, to lead the remainder of the event. Antranig Kh. Juhurian's recitation of the poem, "The Workers," then set the stage for the two subsequent speeches. Vahe Mardirian underscored Hapet's unadulterated Marxist convictions and the party's communist orientation in pursuit of proletariat rights. As such, Vahe maintained, the SDHP transcended a purely nationalistic platform to embrace lofty internationalist ideals. Invited keynote speaker Arsen Gidur, editor of the SDHP *Ararad* newspaper and perhaps the only non-Musa Daghian comrade present, expressed similar thoughts following another rendition of poetry, by Takuhi Mardirian, a female party member. The gathering adjourned with refreshments and the singing of "*Hrazharink Engerner*" (Let Us Resign, Comrades).<sup>106</sup>

Political activism was not confined to membership in the SDHP or any other party; civic duty in the home district also loomed large among the expatriates. A case in point was the 1938 legislative elections in the Sanjak that would determine its future status. Although the suffrage outcome was predetermined thanks to not-so-veiled French duplicity in favor of Turkey, on 7 June sixty-seven male émigrés of voting age traveled from Beirut to Musa Dagh in vehicles and boats to cast their ballot. Unfortunately, twelve participants were stranded in Latakia on their way back because of the lack of sufficient food and travel money as promised by the Armenian and Arab organizers of the trip, while others waited in Musa Dagh for the matter to be resolved. This situation prompted a representative committee of three among the returnees to lodge a complaint with the French authorities.<sup>107</sup>

To conclude, a number of Musa Daghians in Beirut, like many other

<sup>106</sup> *Ararad*, 29 July 1938.

<sup>107</sup> AMAE, Mandat Syrie-Liban, Carton 513, Magarian, Ignatossian, and Kirikian, "Declaration," 14 June 1938.

Armenians, moved to Soviet Armenia during 1946-47. Most of those who stayed behind continued to work in the hospitality industry, and were identified as such within the larger Armenian community for the rest of their lives.

### *Iraq, Palestine, Cyprus*

A few Musa Daghians were scattered to other parts of the Middle East and Cyprus, for reasons other than economic. A man from Yoghunoluk escaped to Iraq after killing an Alawite. Another person from Kheder Beg found his way to that country, only to be killed by Kurds. And traces of a youth from Kabusiye were lost somewhere around Baghdad.<sup>108</sup> Misak/Zora Isgenderian was banished to Iraq together with a friend as a solution to end the bloodshed raging between his native Haji Habibli and Bitias in the early 1920s. In Mosul, he sold cigarettes. After a failed joint venture with a local Armenian doctor and another partner in the tobacco industry, Isgenderian and a fugitive first cousin from Musa Dagh oversaw the construction of a 5-kilometer segment of the railway near Kirkuk. Isgenderian then sold petroleum for cars and concurrently managed a small transportation company. By 1927 he was joined by one of his brothers, Garo, and future wife, Jemile. Isgenderian's entrepreneurial zeal also led him to operate a movie theater beginning in 1938. Alongside money-making activity he got involved in community affairs, assuming leadership roles in the formation and running of the Armenian community in Kirkuk. But political turmoil and uncertainty compelled him to leave Iraq in 1949 and establish himself and his family in Beirut.<sup>109</sup>

A number of Musa Daghians lived in Palestine, but information is lacking about their occupations.<sup>110</sup> Some Musa Dagh refugee boys and orphans similarly spent part of their lives in the Holy Land. When Kenneth L. Reynolds, the Headmaster of the British St. George's School in Jerusalem, fled to Egypt at the start of World War I, he eventually applied to teach English at the Port Said refugee camp. In addition he took charge of the Boy Scouts and also taught them how to play football (soccer). After the armistice of 1918, he decided to return to his previous post. Before leaving, however, he took with him four promising boys from the camp with full scholarships. A fifth one, Haroutune P. Boyadjian, joined them in 1921 from Musa Dagh. While the details of the

<sup>108</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 211, 225, 260.

<sup>109</sup> Zora Isgenderian, *Husher Badmutian Hamar* (Memoirs for History) (Beirut: Sevan Printing House, 1974), pp. 149-71.

<sup>110</sup> Haroutune P. Boyadjian, *Musa Dagh and My Personal Memoirs* (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Rosekeer Press, 1981), pp. 90-91; Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 203, 224; *Ararad*, 29 July 1938.

experiences of the original four youngsters are not readily known, Boyadjian “had become the head prefect of the school, was troop leader of scouts and had earned the King/Queen Scout Badge (Eagle Scout in U.S.A.), captained the soccer, cricket, basketball, athletic, and cross-country teams of St. George’s.” He similarly assumed various teaching and administrative responsibilities in later decades.<sup>111</sup>

The five Musa Dagh boys befriended other Musa Daghian enrollees at the school and beyond. When a certain Krikor Mgrdich Kendirjian passed away in 1933 after having returned from the Port Said camp to Bitias in 1919, his widow took their three children, Antranig, Hovhannes, and Zaruhi, to St. George’s, which apparently admitted orphans as well. The waifs spent their summers at the Shimlan orphanage, working in nearby fields in the case of boys and as helpers in wealthy Arab Christian and Armenian homes in the case of girls. During the Arab-Jewish war of 1948, the three Kendirjian siblings resettled in Anjar to be with their people. While not much is known about the fate of his brother and sister, Antranig purchased a house, got married, and raised a family of five children. More importantly, with vision, determination, and a positive attitude, he played a unique role in the education and character-building of youngsters in their spare time, as well the beautification of the village. For his discipline and perhaps looks too, he was dubbed *Engelezman* (the Englishman).<sup>112</sup>

Some fifteen to twenty, mostly male students from the six villages of Musa Dagh attended the Melkonian Educational Institute (MEI) in Nicosia, Cyprus for their post-elementary schooling.<sup>113</sup> The first MEI graduate of Musa Dagh origin is believed to be Tovmas Kartunian from Vakef, who furthered his studies at a university in Brussels, Belgium.<sup>114</sup> The bulk of learners from Musa Dagh went to Cyprus in 1937-38.<sup>115</sup> Their eligibility was determined

<sup>111</sup> Boyadjian, *Musa Dagh*, pp. 31-3, 40-1, 57 ff.

<sup>112</sup> Mesrob Kendirjian, compiler and writer, *Zhamanagin Anjari mech MART me Gar, “Engelezman”e. Antranig Kendirjian (1921-1977)* (Once There Was a MAN in Anjar, the “Englishman”: Antranig Kendirjian [1921-1977]), edited by Antranik Dakessian, (Beirut: N. p., 2013).

<sup>113</sup> Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: “Orenk yev Iraganutiun” Publishing House, 2005), pp. 272-75; Sarkis Penenyanyan, *Hushabadgerner Musa-Daghen yev Modig Antsialen* (Memorial Scenes from Musa Dagh and the Recent Past) (Los Angeles: Sarko Printing, 1993), pp. 124-57.

<sup>114</sup> Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, p. 272; Penenyanyan, *Hushabadgerner*, p. 145; Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 575.

<sup>115</sup> Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, p. 272.

after serious screening of their applications by the school administration<sup>116</sup> and entrance examinations on the spot, in Musa Dagh, by a visiting inspector named Hovhannes Sheohmelian.<sup>117</sup> Because the MEI functioned under the jurisdiction of the AGBU, an organization closely associated with the DLP, youngsters hailing from families affiliated with the rival ARF were generally not admitted at the time.<sup>118</sup> In any case, the Musa Dagh graduates returned to Anjar, from where many relocated to Soviet Armenia together with their families in 1946-47.<sup>119</sup>

### Egypt

Egypt also hosted a number of families and individuals from Musa Dagh. That interrelationship had begun before World War I with the arrival of a few comb merchants and fugitives.<sup>120</sup> In mid-September 1915, about 4,000 survivors of the Musa Dagh resistance to the genocide were rescued by the French Navy and transported to Port Said, where they lived in a camp for four years.<sup>121</sup> Although the Armenian leadership was generally opposed to the dispersal of refugees in order to repatriate them intact as a group at the propitious moment, many gradually left the camp to rejoin their kin already in the United States and/or seek employment elsewhere in Egypt.<sup>122</sup> The latter constituted the backbone of the Musa Daghian colony in post-World War I Egypt. It was, however, augmented by other individuals who, unable to cope with the harsh economic conditions back home after repatriating in 1919,

<sup>116</sup> For the applications to and responses from the MEI, see the various AGBU files in footnotes 3-40 passim.

<sup>117</sup> Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, p. 272.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Penenyanyan, *Hushabadgerner*, pp. 155-84. The full story of repatriation from Anjar to Soviet Armenia in 1946-47 is not yet written.

<sup>120</sup> Telephone interview with Aurora Adajian Lehmann, 20 January 2010, Granada Hills, California-Chatsworth, California; Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers,” p. 57.

<sup>121</sup> For the rescue operations, see Georges Kévorkian, *La flotte française au secours des Arméniens en 1909 et 1915* (Rennes, France: Marines Éditions, 2008), pp. 71-89; Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers,” pp. 210-23. For the Port Said refugee camp, see M. Salpi, ed., *Aliagner yev Khliagner. Hay Vranakaghakin Darekirke* (Little Waves and Wrecks: The Yearbook of the Armenian Tent City) (Alexandria, Egypt: A. Kasabian, 1920); Armin Albert Kredian, “The Armenian Community in Egypt during World War I,” M.A. thesis, American University in Cairo, 1997, pp. 147-96; Muhammad Rifaat al-Imam, *Al-Arman fi Misr* (the Armenians in Egypt) (Cairo: AGBU Satenig Chakr Fund, 2003), pp. 147-79.

<sup>122</sup> *Arev* (Sun) (Alexandria), 6 December 1915, 28 January 1916, 4 February 1916, 18 February 1916; *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 18 February 1916, 27 January 1917.

returned to the land of Pharaohs.<sup>123</sup>

The overwhelming majority of settlers hailed from Yoghunoluk. Most took up residency in Cairo's suburbs of Zeytun, Matariye, and Shoubra. Some lived in the old Bein al-Surein sector, which encompassed the *Surp Asdvadzadzin* (Holy Mother of God) Armenian Apostolic Church. One way the immigrants demonstrated their devotion to the church was by asking "young single girls to sweep the floors of the church to be blessed with a wealthy husband... they would vow to do it every week."<sup>124</sup> But whether because of such practices or not, youth from both genders found their mates by and large within the closely-knit Musa Daghatian community.

At some point in their careers most Musa Daghians in Egypt engaged in the comb business, their traditional occupation. Speaking of her childhood years in Cairo, Alice Bursalian Markarian wrote: "I remember some men had built a small workshop in their backyard, and were doing this [comb] work by hand. Others opened factories, or built one in their backyard, if their property was big enough, and used machinery for this production."<sup>125</sup> The artisan class consisted of Boghos Boyajian, Karnig Der Kalusdian, Setrag and Hovhannes Bursalian, Mardiros Kbburian, Yenovk Hajian, Dikran and Zakar Garabedian, Shafik and Karim Dmlakian, Hovhannes and Rupen Kasnakian, Apraham Chaparian, as well as the Keoshkerians, Tashjians, Gebeshians, Masmanians, and others. They either functioned independently or worked for wholesale dealers, who invariably were compatriots.<sup>126</sup>

A few entrepreneurs achieved notable success. Shafik Dmlakian, for instance, after establishing himself in Cairo in 1919, developed ivory combs individually handmade on kitchen tables "into streamlined factory product[s] worthy of export." He similarly "modernized the concept of one expensive ivory comb per household to one wooden comb per family member and the factory could hardly keep up with the orders." But when plastic combs inundated the market, Shafik, with his younger brother Karim by his side, shifted gears to manufacture knitwear to satisfy the demands of a westernized Egyptian population and those of World War II. Significantly, "most of Rateb Basha Street in Shoubra[,] a district of Cairo[,] became Shafik's headquarters with his complex factories and mills operating around the clock. An interesting

<sup>123</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 199, 210. See also Chapter 1.

<sup>124</sup> Aghavni/Vani Keshishian Tashjian, email to the author, 4 April 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Alice Bursalian Markarian, email to the author, 7 February 2009.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*; telephone interviews with Marie Hadjian Chitdjian, 6 February 2009, 4 March 2009, Granada Hills, California-North Haven, Connecticut.

sideline scheme of his was to import human hair from China, have it braided in his factory and then ship the new product to central Africa where long, straight hair was highly valued." Despite his busy schedule, Shafik also got involved in community affairs, co-founding, among other contributions, the ARF-affiliated Husaper Club in 1944 for the preservation of Armenian culture. Similarly, due to his stature and proficiency in Arabic, "he was always called upon to represent the Armenian community during official functions and at meetings with Egyptian dignitaries."<sup>127</sup>

In turn, the brothers Hovhannes and Rupen Kasnakian "used to travel to Upper Egypt[,] Luxor and Aswan along the river Nile into Sudan and purchase ivory to bring to Cairo for their handmade combs and other work[s] of art like beautiful handmade statues and accessories like rings and ear-rings[,] bracelets and belts."<sup>128</sup> Setrag Bursalian, initially a flannel manufacturer in Alexandria and subsequently in Cairo, after closing his company, returned to his old profession of comb making as a profitable endeavor among the lice-infested rural population.<sup>129</sup> Hovhannes Kbburian, a prominent member of his community, owned a factory of wood products.<sup>130</sup> Yenovk Hajian, a former comb maker, operated a gift shop at the Khan al-Khalil marketplace, a famous tourist attraction in the centrally-located Mousky district of Cairo.<sup>131</sup> Last but not least, an enterprising youth hailing from Kheder Beg named Sarkis Boghos Oflazian exported handkerchiefs and other embroidered articles to Marseille for about a decade, personally accompanying his merchandise aboard French commercial vessels. In 1930, he and three siblings emigrated to Hartford, Connecticut, where he operated a restaurant for fifteen years before moving again, to Beirut.<sup>132</sup>

Not all Musa Daghians in Egypt were manufacturers or businessmen; some pursued different careers in companies. Peniamin Keshishian (Benjamin Kechichian), for example, who had studied at the French Jesuit College, made his living as an accountant in a company that ferried petroleum along the Nile.<sup>133</sup> Mardiros Hajian, on the other hand, during the 1930s held a high position in General Motors of Alexandria, indeed a rare phenomenon among

<sup>127</sup> Nairi Dmlakian Souvalian, email to the author, 9 March 2009.

<sup>128</sup> Keshishian Tashjian, email.

<sup>129</sup> Bursalian Markarian, email.

<sup>130</sup> Telephone interviews with Hadjian Chitdjian.

<sup>131</sup> Keshishian Tashjian, email.

<sup>132</sup> Berjoughie Oflazian Devejian, email to the author, 20 April 2009.

<sup>133</sup> Bursalian Markarian, email.

his compatriots at the time. He later relocated to South America to work for the same corporation.<sup>134</sup>

Generally speaking, the Armenian community in Egypt maintained a special relationship with Musa Dagħ during the period under study. The reason was obvious: it had cared for the survivors of the Musa Dagħ resistance at the Port Said refugee camp for four years and therefore felt an affinity with and a moral obligation to them. The press frequently disseminated information on conditions in Musa Dagħ, raising awareness among the public about the pressing needs there.<sup>135</sup> The AGBU continued to lend its support in various capacities, especially in education.<sup>136</sup> The Prelacy in Cairo served as a channel to raise funds for the completion of the Apostolic Church in Bitias and the parochial school in Yoghunoluk, as well as to resolve certain civic issues pertaining to expatriates in Egypt and their relatives in Musa Dagħ.<sup>137</sup> And a number of Egyptian Armenian families and individuals (like the Balekjians and Markarians) each year chose Bitias as their summer resort. (See Chapter 7). As for the Musa Dagħ émigrés themselves, they maintained their ties with the native soil through correspondence, visits, pecuniary remittances, and acquisitions of real estate.<sup>138</sup> After the founding of Anjar in 1939, some spent part of their retirement years there.<sup>139</sup> Like the overwhelming majority of Armenians in Egypt, however, after the mid-1950s the Musa Dagħians left their adopted country for Australia, Canada, and the United States, mainly due to the change in the political-economic climate under president Gamal Abd al-Naser's regime.

### *Ethiopia*

Egypt was not the only country on the African continent that lured Musa Dagħians; they traveled further south, to Ethiopia. A small Armenian colony had been formed there during the 1890s following the arrival of refugees

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> See *Husaper* and *Arev*, 1920s-1930s issues.

<sup>136</sup> Consult AGBU/SB, File 14 D; AGBU/Cairo, binders 134, 167, and 195.

<sup>137</sup> Armenian Prelacy of Cairo Archives, Binder 2,031, *Surio Hay Kaghut* (Armenian Community of Syria), miscellaneous letters.

<sup>138</sup> Telephone interviews with Hadjian Chitdjian.

<sup>139</sup> Dmlakian Souvalian, email.

fleeing massacres and persecutions taking place in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>140</sup> The newcomers included the brothers Yesayi and Garabed Garigian, both political fugitives from Kabusiye.<sup>141</sup> Two other known Musa Dagħians settled in Ethiopia before World War I: Boghos Kaypakian (or Kalpakian) and Boghos Atamian.<sup>142</sup> A successful businessman and a philanthropist, Yesayi Garigian made significant contributions to his fellow countrymen at the Port Said refugee camp as well as after their repatriation to Musa Dagħ in 1919.<sup>143</sup> Atamian too assisted his relatives at the camp, before his life was cut short at a young age.<sup>144</sup>

Ethiopia's allure as a land of opportunities increased through word of mouth during the 1920s and early 1930s. Some ambitious and/or struggling businessmen and artisans, mainly from Yoghunoluk, sought their fortunes there. They initially traveled and lived alone, sending remittances to their families back home. But the separation from loved ones, sometimes lasting three to four years, compelled the émigrés to send for them—parents, siblings, wives, children, and/or other relatives. The journey in groups, conducted through Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, and French Somaliland, lasted several weeks as they rode vehicles, ships, trains, and carts, by and large oblivious to customs formalities and other essential procedures and information. But things changed at the receiving end, at the port city of Djibouti, as fathers, husbands, sons or their designees greeted and led the new arrivals overland to their various destinations in Ethiopia: the capital Addis Ababa, Asba Tafari, Baddesa, Dire Dawa, and Hirna.<sup>145</sup>

The native Ethiopians referred to all “whites,” including the Armenians, as

<sup>140</sup> For the Armenians in Ethiopia before 1930, see Hayg Patapan, *Arti Yetovbian yev Hay Kaghute* (Modern Ethiopia and the Armenian Community) (Venice: San Lazzaro Press, 1930). For information gleaned from Patapan's book in a Western language, consult Adrien Zevros, *L'Empire d'Éthiopie. Le miroir de l'Éthiopie moderne 1906-1935* (Alexandria, Egypt: Imprimerie de l'École Professionnelle des Frères, [1935?]).

<sup>141</sup> Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 559; Shebetjian, *Badmutium Svedahayeru*, pp. 261-62.

<sup>142</sup> See, respectively, Mouchegh Yerevanian, *The Ethiopian-Armenian Community from 1941 to 1975* (Glendale, CA: Sarko Printing, 1996), p. 24; Hagop Garabed Atamian, emails to the author, 7 December 2011, 15 December 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 559.

<sup>144</sup> Atamian, email, 8 December 2011.

<sup>145</sup> Fr. Nareg Shrikian, unpublished memoirs, Montebello, California, pp. 41-3; Arsha-Louise Rubyan (Arshaluys Shemmassian), “Ethiopia,” unpublished term paper for Anthropology 101, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, Fall 1970, “Introduction” (not paginated) and pp. 1-4.

*Franji*, meaning, foreigner or European. The Europeans were distinguished by their dwellings, lifestyles, and outfits. The Musa Daghians continued to eat their traditional foods, with only a few adaptations from the local cuisine such as a spicy stew called *wot* and a pancake-like bread called *injera*. It was customary for the Franjis to have *askars*, that is, male assistants who ran errands, transported merchandise, and accompanied their employers on business trips as armed guards.<sup>146</sup>

While some children accompanied their parents to Ethiopia, others were actually born there, for example, Hrayr and Krikor Bursalian, Hermine and Kurken Shrikian, Kevork Shemmassian, and so on.<sup>147</sup> Girls and boys played together as their families remained inseparable in this alien land.<sup>148</sup> Some children also made friends with their native peers. Recounts Arsha-Louise Rubyan (Arshaluys Shemmassian) about her first encounter with a neighbor's daughter:

A couple hundreds [sic] yards away [from our home in Addis Ababa] there was another house completely different from ours.... My father explained that it belonged to our Ethiopian neighbor. She was a widow with two sons and a daughter. Hailum, the oldest son was about 22 years old. Seyoom about 13, and Etaganio a girl about 8 years old. This made me very happy. Hurray! there [sic] was a little girl with whom I could play. Indeed it did not take very long before Etaganio peeped through the door... We stood there for a while examining each other carefully. Then gradually we came closer and closer until we touched each other... It did not take me more than about three months to learn enough Amharic to play with Etaganio.<sup>149</sup>

Youngsters received homeschooling where educational establishments did not exist. For instance, Kevork (later Fr. Nareg) Shrikian was exposed to the Armenian alphabet for the first time through his maternal uncle, Hovhannes Bursalian, at the latter's Hirna store. Kevork then enrolled at the Italian school run by nuns in Dire Dawa, and subsequently another school belonging to French nuns.<sup>150</sup> Other Musa Daghian children likewise attended these and other schools. Due to circumstances, Levon Shemmassian attended three schools in as many years in Addis Ababa—one run by an Armenian

<sup>146</sup> Fr. Shrikian, memoirs, pp. 44-6.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 49; Fr. Shrikian, letter to the author, 19 March 1997.

<sup>148</sup> Fr. Shrikian, memoirs, p. 47.

<sup>149</sup> Rubyan, "Ethiopia," p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> Fr. Shrikian, memoirs, pp. 47-9.

Protestant minister, the Armenian "national" school, and an American missionary school, respectively.<sup>151</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Musa Dagh migrants in Ethiopia engaged in commerce. The prominent businessmen employed mostly their compatriots, many of whom eventually went their separate ways. Mihran Kazanjian and his brothers, Apraham and Haygazun, were the biggest merchants, whose offices/stores in the various cities mentioned above were managed by their relatives and other acquaintances. They and other traders sold linen as the main clothing fabric for commoners, and khaki and silk for the upper class and foreigners. They also sold soap, petroleum, coffee, and ox, goat, and tiger leather. Nshan Der Kalusdian, political activist Movses Der Kalusdian's uncle, partnered with the Kazanjians to ship wood for comb making to his native Yoghunoluk.<sup>152</sup>

Yesayi Shrikian managed the Kazanjian affairs at their Hirna branch as well as oversaw their general accounts from 1929-35. To provide an idea about the Hirna transactions, during the first five months of 1934 they sold 2,825 sacks of coffee alone, Shrikian's commission being 12.5 percent of the profit.<sup>153</sup> In early 1936 Yesayi and his brother, Hovhannes, forged a business partnership with the Tcheoptchian brothers, Onnig and Kasbar, naming it the Shrikian & Tcheoptchian Co. It had two branches, one in Asba Tafari (the main office) and one in Baddesa. They sold coffee and leather wholesale, and supplied petroleum and military uniform fabric to the Army. Although the company made good profits within a short period, it had to close down in July due to the chaos and anarchy reigning at the time of the Italian invasion.<sup>154</sup>

While most Musa Daghians in Ethiopia engaged in wholesale and retail commerce, some pursued other vocations. Jabra Shemmassian ran a two-story gunsmith workshop at a marketplace in Addis Ababa called Tomatim Tara, catering to the needs of the native male population, which carried rifles as part of their traditional garb.<sup>155</sup> He also reportedly served as the chief gunsmith of Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, making and/

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Levon Shemmassian, 16 October 2008, San Carlos, California.

<sup>152</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, "Hushakrutiun Movses Av. Khn. Shrikiani (Avazani Anun, Yesayi)" (Memoirs of Archpriest Movses Shrikian [Baptismal Name, Yesayi]). Montebello, California, pp. 71-2; Fr. Nareg Shrikian, letter, 19 March 1997.

<sup>153</sup> Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Yesayi Shrikian to Kazanjian Co., 12 June 1934.

<sup>154</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, "Hushakrutiun," pp. 71-3; Fr. Nareg Shrikian, letter, 19 March 1997.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Shemmassian, 16 October 2008.

or repairing “most of the guns of his noble warriors.”<sup>156</sup> After the Italian invasion in 1936, Jabra sold non-alcoholic beverages for another two years.<sup>157</sup> Hovhannes Bursalian, Jabra’s son-in-law, after managing a store in Hirna, administered the Armenian school in the capital for a year (1935-36).<sup>158</sup> Hovhannes Kaypakian, son of Boghos, held a prominent position in the nation’s insurance industry, as averred by a contemporary:

Hovhannes first studied at Alliance Francais and...after graduating from Haille Selasse University, ... graduated from the Wellesley College of Law in London. He briefly worked in an insurance company, but soon founded his own Insurance [sic] company by the name of the Lyons Insurance Company, which very soon became Ethiopia’s number one insurance provider. This was due to Hovhannes’s wise business practices and the confidence he inspired in all his clients. But his social and financial ascent never affected his personality. He remained always a true and tested friend with all those who needed his help. He never allowed his large monetary contributions to the community to be announced publicly.<sup>159</sup>

The Ethiopian experience for many a Musa Daghatian and other foreigners came to an abrupt, bitter end caused by the Italian invasion and the concomitant looting and burning of businesses by Ethiopian soldiers and ordinary citizens. The Armenians at Asba Tafari, mainly Yoghunoluk expatriates, armed themselves under the leadership of Yesayi Shrikian and withdrew to a Catholic monastery situated on a hilltop for safety. But the fear of imminent attack, and the lack of food and water, compelled the group to escape at night under very adverse conditions and find its way out of the country by the end of 1936. Most other Musa Daghians in Ethiopia also left through various channels, with only a few staying behind either temporarily or permanently. In any case, years of hard work and savings came to naught virtually overnight. Not all who departed resettled in Musa Dagh; some went to Aleppo, others to Tripoli, in Lebanon, and still others to Beirut.<sup>160</sup> But whatever their destinations, their bonds with the native soil, and later with Anjar, remained forever strong.

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<sup>156</sup> Rubyan, “Ethiopia,” p. 14.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Shemmassian, 16 October 2008.

<sup>158</sup> Fr. Nareg Shrikian, letter, 19 March 1997.

<sup>159</sup> Yerevanian, *The Ethiopian-Armenian Community*, p. 26.

<sup>160</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, “Hushakrutian,” pp. 71-73; Fr. Nareg Shrikian, letter, 19 March 1997.

### Conclusion

By relocating to Anjar in 1939, nearly the entire population of Musa Dagh now became an integral part of the larger Armenian Diaspora. But their saga did not end there. During 1946-47 more than half of Anjar’s inhabitants moved to Soviet Armenia. Many in turn left that restrictive and communist regime for the United States beginning in the 1970s, as well as after independence in 1991, due to socioeconomic hardships. Those who stayed in Anjar eventually moved out in palpable numbers as a result of the 1975-1990 civil war in Lebanon and scattered to the Gulf countries, Australia, Europe, Africa, Canada, and the United States. These expatriates have been trying to preserve their dual Musa Daghian-Anjarian identity by forming compatriotic associations, celebrating their heroic feat against the Ottoman exterminatory onslaught annually, and/or communicating with, supporting or visiting Anjar.

## *Chapter 6*

### THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Armenian migration from Musa Dagh took place in two main directions: the Arab Middle East and further south to Ethiopia in Africa (see Chapter 5), as well as the United States and a tiny fraction to South America.<sup>1</sup> This chapter focuses on the United States. The westbound movement had begun in the late nineteenth century, intensified after 1908-09, continued to some degree during World War I, and assumed new proportions after repatriation from the exile imposed by the genocide. In the United States, the new arrivals sought employment in factories and small businesses, stuck together while maintaining strong ties with the native soil, and gradually integrated in American society. What follows is their prosopography in the New World. Certain features of that profile have been treated beyond the chronological scope of this study as a matter of natural progression, reinforcement and/or culmination.

#### *Emigration*

The earliest known Musa Dagh Armenian to set foot in the United States was George H. Filian, from “a suburb of Antioch,” who arrived in New York in July 1879, studied theology at the Oberlin, Ohio and Chicago, Illinois theological seminaries, and became a Protestant minister.<sup>2</sup> Only a few others followed him by the turn of the century. One of them was Bitias native Apraham Seklemian, who cofounded and became the first editor (1908-1913) of the *Asbarez* (Arena) Armenian newspaper in Fresno, California.<sup>3</sup> The bulk of immigrants from Musa Dagh left the Ottoman Empire as a result of the compulsory military service

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<sup>1</sup> The paucity of sources does not allow for a meaningful discussion of the situation of Musa Dagh migrants in South America. For references to a few cases in Argentina and Brazil, consult Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of the Armenians of Svedia), edited by Yesayi Havatian, (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), pp. 193-267 *passim*; “Sarkahian Family Tree [updated 2009],” in [http://www34.homepage.villanova.edu/robert.jantzen/drbob/graphics/03/sarkahian\\_family\\_tree.htm](http://www34.homepage.villanova.edu/robert.jantzen/drbob/graphics/03/sarkahian_family_tree.htm), retrieved 2 October 2009; idem, /03/djanseziantree.htm, “Djansezian family tree 2003 [updated 2009...]” retrieved 2 October 2009.

<sup>2</sup> George H. Filian, *Armenia and Her People or the Story of Armenia by an Armenian* (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Company, 1896), pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>3</sup> A.K. Seklemian, “Asbarez’i Dzakume” (The Genesis of Asbarez), *Asbarez Zhoghovadzu Dasnamiagi Artiv, 1908-1918* (Anthology of Asbarez on the Occasion of Its Tenth Anniversary, 1908-1918) (Fresno, California: Asbarez, 1918), pp. 9-15; A. Ghugasian, “A.K. Seklemian,” *Asbarez Hisnamiag 1908-1958* (Fiftieth Anniversary of Asbarez 1908-1958) (Fresno, California: Asbarez, [1958]), pp. 192-74.

after the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the Armenian massacres in Cilicia and north Syria that took place the following year. Many of the newcomers were young bachelors and married men who had left their families behind.<sup>4</sup>

During World War I contacts between the immigrants and their overseas families continued to some extent, but under different circumstances. In 1915, the Armenians of Musa Dagh, like the rest of their ethnic brethren across the Ottoman Empire, received deportation orders. One-third of the villagers obeyed the command and was deported to Hama, Syria. However, the two-thirds majority resisted and, in a fateful twist, was rescued by the French Navy and settled in a refugee camp on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal near Port Said, Egypt.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, the expatriates in the United States succeeded in communicating with their relatives. Émigrés in Erie, Pennsylvania, for instance, upon getting word regarding kin exiled to Hama, inquired about their fate through the intermediary of Rev. E.H. Shanks of the First Baptist Church, who contacted U.S. Consul Jesse B. Jackson in Aleppo. Correspondence between the two men, and between Jackson and certain deportees, lasted for over a year, from October 1915 to November 1916.<sup>6</sup> Further contacts became impossible after April 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany and its allies and American diplomatic personnel and Protestant missionaries departed the Ottoman Empire. But in late 1918, when the conflagration had ended, communications resumed revealing the scope of the losses that the Musa Daghians, among countless other

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<sup>4</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 62-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 184-234.

<sup>6</sup> United States National Archives (USNA), Record Group (RG) 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Consulate of Aleppo, File *Correspondence, American Consulate, Aleppo, Syria, 1916* (Part 2, Classes 125.8 to 310), vol. 64, Jesse B. Jackson to Rev. E. H. Shanks, 10 February 1916, 29 October 1915, 12 June 1916; Rev. Shanks to Jackson, 15 April 1916, 25 September 1916; idem, (Part 7, Class 310), vol. 69, Jackson to Rev. Shanks, 17 June 1916; Jackson to Moses Ranjilian (Ranjilian), 14 September 1916; handwritten letter regarding Taslakian family, 20 November 1916; Jackson to Taslakian, 23 November 1916. In the summer of 1982 I conducted research at the USNA in Washington, D.C., and placed an order for documents to be microfilmed. The microfilms were mailed to me, but I did not check their contents at the time. When I read the microfilms years later for my doctoral dissertation, the documents cited in this footnote were missing. I inquired about them on two different occasions, but to no avail; the documents were nowhere to be found in their files. I have concluded that they had been removed from the files for microfilming but never microfilmed due to inattention and unfortunately misplaced or lost.

Armenians, had sustained during the genocide.<sup>7</sup>

Contacts with Port Said took place in three ways. First, the refugees at Port Said sent letters to their relatives in the United States and vice versa.<sup>8</sup> Second, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF/*Hay Heghapokhagan Tashnagtsutiun*) on the East Coast raised \$1,000 that was distributed among the camp residents. In all likelihood, Musa Daghians actively participated in that drive.<sup>9</sup> Third, a number of compatriots from New Britain, Connecticut and elsewhere volunteered for the French *Légion d'Orient*, which was originally formed by some 500-600 Musa Dagh men at Port Said to fight the Turkish enemy in the Levant alongside the Allies.<sup>10</sup> In addition, a group of youths from New Britain organized fundraisers to support the legionnaires. At least five

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., File *American Consulate, Aleppo, Syria, 1919* (Part 1-5, Class - 3), vol. 81, Rev. Shanks to Jackson, 15 December 1918, 14 June 1919; Jackson to Rev. Shanks, 14 June 1919 (this letter was microfilmed).

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Aurora Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Chatsworth, California, letters mailed from Port Said to H.K. Phillian at 841 Main Street, Paterson, New Jersey, 8 October 1915 (date on envelope), Hovhannes Philian (same person) at 142 Pine Street, Manchester, Connecticut, 23 March 1916 (date on envelope). It is not too clear as to who sent the letters. See also idem, Boghos Der Bedrosian (Paul Bedrosian) to Ohannes K. Filian (same person), 21 March 1916. Unfortunately, letters sent from the United States to Port Said are nowhere to be found.

<sup>9</sup> Armenian Revolutionary Federation Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, (hereafter ARF), File 1054/35, *H.H.T. Yekibdosi G. Gomide 1918 t.* (ARF Central Committee of Egypt 1918), Account of Money Distributed in the Port Said Camp (Money from America).

<sup>10</sup> Zohrab Hanisian, private papers, Napa, California, untitled and unpublished family history booklet, p. 8; idem, List of U.S. Based Armenian Volunteers in *Légion d'Orient* – WWI, list prepared by the Zoryan Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Six of the volunteers were originally from Musa Dagh ("Svedia") then living in New Britain, Connecticut: Serop Adajian, Hampartzoom Hagopian, Hovhannes Hovhannesian (Hanisian), Sarkis Karamanian (Kasamanian?), Sarkis Sarkahian, and Bedros Taslakian. For information on and the activity of the *Légion d'Orient* in general, consult Guévork Gotikian, "La Légion d'Orient et le mandate français en Cilicie (1916-1921)," *Revue d'histoire Arménienne contemporaine*, Tome III, numéro spécial, prepared by Raymond H. Kévorkian (1999): 251-324; Aram Karamanoukian, *Les étrangers et le service militaire* (Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1978), pp. 115-50; Hagop Torosian, "Haigagan Lekeone" (the Armenian Legion), in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds, *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), pp. 425-49; Dikran H. Boyajian, *Haygagan Lekeone. Badmagan Hushakrutium* (The Armenian Legion: A Historical Memoir) (Boston, Massachusetts: Baykar Printing Press, 1965).

members of that group were Musa Dagh natives.<sup>11</sup> It must also be noted that a number of Musa Daghians registered for the draft in the United States Army despite the fact that many were not yet citizens.<sup>12</sup>

As soon as the émigrés in the United States learned of the Port Said refugee camp, they made arrangements to get their families to America. The first batch was reported to be ready for departure on 2 December 1915. It comprised the Yegharians (Igarians/Egarians) and the Seklemians from Bitias, sixteen in all, including three teachers of the camp's Sisvan School, namely, Nvart Yegharian, Adel Yegharian, and Elizabeth Seklemian; they would reunite with their twenty-two relatives living in the United State. The police chief and the Italian consul at Port Said facilitated the impending journey by issuing passports and promising transit visas free of charge.<sup>13</sup> For some reason the trip was postponed, giving the press time to ponder the merits of emigration. When asked to dissuade the refugees from going, political activist, poet, and editor of *Arev* (Sun) newspaper Vahan Tekeyan declined to advise them about their decision, and instead calibrated the pros and cons of leaving and staying. It is true that living conditions in the camp left much to be desired and that a sheltered home with a meal awaited the refugees in America. Nevertheless, they would also be sequestered in factories for long hours among foreigners. Armenian national interests likewise behooved that the refugees remain in the camp for an eventual return to the homeland from a short distance after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of law and order. Should the refugees argue that

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<sup>11</sup> Vahram L. Shemmassian, private papers, photocopy of a 1918 picture depicting the fourteen members of the *Légion d'Orient* support group in New Britain. The five Musa Daghians in the group were: Sarkis Sarkahian, Boghos Matosian, Peniamin Geokjian, Zakar Kbburian, and Sarkis Kasamanian. Seven others were from Iran and one was from Kharpert. The provenance of the fourteenth member is unknown.

<sup>12</sup> Hanisian, private papers, family history booklet, p. 9 writes: "With the signing of the Selective Service Act in May 1917, U.S. citizens and aliens between the ages of 21 and 31 years old were required to register for the WWI Draft system. Zakaria and Sarkis [Hanisian], registered on June 5, 1917, the first of three designated registration dates. Aliens were required to register but were not subject to induction into the American military service." Similarly, George Barkev Phillian registered for the draft on 5 June 1917 in Lee County, Florida, and Rupen Hayrig Phillian on 24 August 1918 in Erie, Pennsylvania. See Bill Larkin, email to the author, 1 May 2009. Manase and Samuel Magzarian likewise registered. See Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, 26 September 2009. The brothers Madatia Gozman (b. 14 November 1881) and Badros (Bedros) Gozman (b. 27 March 1885) Taminosian in Florida, too, were among the prospective soldiers. Consult Raymond H. Banks, US Gen Web Archives, rayhbanks@aol.com, retrieved 23 May 2009. Other Musa Daghians may also have registered.

<sup>13</sup> *Arev* (Sun) (Alexandria), 6 December 1915. For departure preparations, consult Rose Egarian Fiscus, "Rose's Story (As Recorded in 1953)," unpublished memoir, pp. 16-7.

they had paid their dues by fighting the Turks, they ought to be reminded that soldiers heed the call of duty as often as deemed necessary. Besides, by returning to Musa Dagh they would enjoy the fruits of their victory.<sup>14</sup>

On the western shores of the Atlantic, the Boston *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) in an editorial characterized the pending arrival of Musa Daghians as "sad news." It had actually anticipated the reverse to occur: the Musa Dagh émigrés already in the US would hopefully go to Port Said and take the final "leap" to the homeland whenever possible. Although the newspaper expressed confidence that the Musa Daghians would not assimilate in America, it nevertheless criticized the Egyptian Armenians, especially the rich, for failing to create better conditions at the camp (thereby preventing the migration).<sup>15</sup> But despite the ongoing public debate, a group of forty-five refugees—including the original Yegharians and Seklemians plus members of the Keosheian, Giragosian, Vartanesian, and Kelejian families—set sail for New York in February 1916. After a stopover in Genoa, Italy, they resumed their journey on 21 February aboard the S.S. *America*.<sup>16</sup> Upon their arrival in New York, someone took their picture, which later appeared in an American history book. The caption read: "FUTURE AMERICANS. A photograph of a band of Armenians landed at Ellis Island, March 9, 1916,—the advance guard of a body of 4200 who were rescued at one time from Turkish massacre during the World War, by a French cruiser off the coast of Syria."<sup>17</sup> Three of the new arrivals further disseminated this story: Ohannes Klijeian (Hovhannes Kelejian, nicknamed "Saba") shared his experience with the *New York Times*<sup>18</sup>; Nvart Yegharian published her eyewitness

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<sup>14</sup> *Arev*, 28 January 1916. See also the issue of 4 February 1916.

<sup>15</sup> *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 18 February 1916.

<sup>16</sup> USNA, RG 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs, Passenger Lists of Vessels arriving at New York, 1897-1916, Microfilm Publication T715, Roll 2,455, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival, S.S. *America* sailing from Genoa, February 21, 1916, arriving at Port of New York, March 8, 1916. Although the date of arrival is listed as 8 March, the source in note 17 below indicates 9 March. The latter date is also corroborated by Bill Larkin, email to the author, 15 November 2010. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the new arrivals were probably kept at Ellis Island overnight for customs formalities, especially health inspection; or, although the manifest indicated 8 March, the actual arrival date was 9 March.

<sup>17</sup> Willis Mason West, *The Story of American Democracy Political and Industrial* (Boston, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco: Allyn and Bacon, 1922), p. 581.

<sup>18</sup> *New York Times*, 12 March 1916, as cited in Richard Diran Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide—First 20<sup>th</sup> Century Holocaust* (Richmond, California: Armenian Commemorative Committee, 1980), p. 133.

account in the *Asbarez* newspaper<sup>19</sup>; and Elizabeth Seklemian contributed an article (translated into French) to a tome devoted to Armenian women.<sup>20</sup>

Other groups from Port Said followed suit. Bedros Der Bedrosian (“Ashkar”) in America “sent enough money for fare and a ticket so [his] young [son,] Paul, along with his two uncles, some cousins, and his grandmother took a boat to neutral Greece in early March, 1916. After almost a month in Greece, they took a Greek ship across the ocean and arrived 16-20 days later at Ellis Island, in April 1916, just as Paul turned 16! His mother, however, did not want to go to the United States but preferred to return home to their village [Yoghunoluk] after the war.”<sup>21</sup> Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian likewise wrote: “Sometime in the spring of 1916, my father [Oskan] had saved enough money to get passage for his mother, Elizabeth Hovagimian-Vartanesian, his brother Alex, sister Mary Vartanesian-Skenderian, her son Alex, and his sister Isgoohi Vartanesian-Kalamian, and her daughter Elizabeth. My father’s brothers-in-law were both in the Turkish army, and never got to America.”<sup>22</sup> Another family reunification took place in the following manner, as recounted by Aurora Adajian Lehmann: “Nana [Sara Maghzanian Phillian] wrote to [her husband] Baboo [Hovhannes Phillian] that they were alive and in Egypt. He was so happy, he immediately sent them boat fare and they traveled to America to join him. My Mother [Sarah] and Uncle Alex, Baboo’s children, had been separated from him for ten years. They did not recognize him when...they disembarked”<sup>23</sup> on 26 May 1916.<sup>24</sup> Sarkis Soghomon Adajian sent for his fiancée, Elmas Oflazian and her brother, Movses. They arrived in New York in July 1916, and the couple married in early 1917.<sup>25</sup> Other survivors at Port Said may also have joined their loved ones in the United States.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [Nvart Igarian], “1915 Svedia Muharebesi” (The 1915 Svedia War), an eyewitness account (original donated by the author to me). This account, written in Turkish in Armenian characters, was published in Armenian translation in *Asbarez*, 27 October 1916, 3 November 1916, 10 November 1916, 17 November 1916, 24 November 1916, 1 December 1916.

<sup>20</sup> Elisa Seklémian, “Récit de l’épisode de Djébel Moussa,” in Archag Tchobanian, ed., *La femme arménienne* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1918), pp. 78-82.

<sup>21</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, Richard J. Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian: 25 April 1900-21 October 1993,” a four-page necrology.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian, email to the author, 19 March 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Aurora Adajian Lehmann, email to the author, 24 March 2010.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, private papers, Sarah Adajian’s Application for Information from or Copies of Immigration and Naturalization Records.

<sup>25</sup> Telephone interview with Regina P. Adajian, 7 June 2009, Granada Hills, California-Wethersfield, Connecticut.

<sup>26</sup> *Hayrenik*, 27 January 1917, correspondence from Leylani (Movses Der Kalusdian) dated 20 October 1916.

Also in 1916, a second, albeit smaller, group of Musa Daghians traveled to the United States from Buenos Aires, Argentina. They were actually young Yoghunoluk men who had left the Ottoman Empire for South America in 1911 to avoid the military draft. After living in Argentina for about five years, they decided to relocate to the United States.<sup>27</sup> Missak Aprahamian’s journey from Buenos Aires to Ellis Island aboard the S.S. *Vasari* lasted three-and-a-half weeks, from 27 July to 20 August 1916.<sup>28</sup> Six others including the Hanisian brothers embarked on their trip from Las Palmas harbor aboard the S.S. *Vauban* on 19 October 1916, arriving in New York on 11 November. Their average age was twenty-nine, and all but one mentioned “laborer” as their occupation and South Manchester, Connecticut as their destination.<sup>29</sup>

Emigration from Musa Dagh proper—where the survivors from Hama and Port Said had returned in 1919—resumed in 1920 after a hiatus of six years. Economic hardships, marriage plans, and the desire to reunite with loved ones in the United States constituted the main factors for leaving the native soil. Although statistics are lacking, the following cases reflected the trend. In 1919 the brothers Yeremia and Sarkis Renjilian returned from the United States to Bitias, where the latter died due to a contagious disease he had contracted earlier.<sup>30</sup> Yeremia did not stay long; he took with him his sister, Victoria, her fiancé, Krikor Sarafian of Aintab, and two other female relatives back to the United States in late 1920.<sup>31</sup> At about the same time, Marie Igarian and her eleven-year-old daughter, Sara, left for South Manchester to be with their spouse/father.<sup>32</sup> Mary

<sup>27</sup> Armen Hanisian, letters to the author, 26 September 1977, 1 October 1977.

<sup>28</sup> Julie Aprahamian, private papers, New York, New York, Inspection [Vaccination] Card (Immigrants and Steerage Passengers) of Missak Aprahamian, List or Manifest, *Vasari*, 13, no. on ship’s list or manifest, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Zohrab Hanisian, private papers, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, S.S. *Vauban*, sailing from Buenos Aires (La Plata), 19 October, 1916, arriving at Port of New York, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1916. The immigrants were Vanes Geukdjian, Zacaria Hanesian, Hampartzoom Agopian, Sarkis Hanesian, Mooses Keuserian, and Manvel Kebisian (names spelled as in original document).

<sup>30</sup> John Renjilian, letter to the author, 13 October 1988.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, private papers, Newtown, Connecticut, Yérémia Rangelian (Renjilian) Laissez-Passer, no. 8284, issued by the Sandjak Autonome d’Alexandrette, 12 October 1920. The photo of Krikor Sarafian is also affixed to this document; *idem*, Sarah Rengilian (Renjilian) Laissez-Passer, no. 8289, issued by the Sandjak Autonome d’Alexandrette, 12 October 1920. The photos of Victoria Renjilian, twenty-two years of age, and Helen Renjilian, twelve years of age, are also affixed to this document.

<sup>32</sup> Florence Igarian Harutiunian, private papers, Pismo Beach, California, Marie Igarian’s and her daughter, Sara’s passport, issued by the Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Syrie & Cilicie, 19 October 1920.

Vartanesian Dabbakian wrote: “In 1920, Uncle Alex sent for his fiancée, Mary Markarian, so they could be married. In 1921, my father [Oskan] sent for Mary Markarian’s cousin, Yeranuhe Genjian, to be his wife.”<sup>33</sup> Ohannes Atamian, Maritsa Ohanessian (Hanisian) and her son, Antranik, all three from Yoghunoluk, arrived in America from Piraeus, Greece, aboard the S.S. *Megali Hellas* on 25 November 1920.<sup>34</sup> Fellow villagers Armenan [sic] Ohanessian (Armenag/Armen Hanisian) and his friend, Stepan Panossian, set sail from Patras, Greece, aboard the S.S. *Pannonia* on 21 December 1920, reaching New York on 10 January 1921.<sup>35</sup> Maritza Boyadjian of Kheder Beg journeyed to Philadelphia to marry Kapriel Emlikian in March 1921.<sup>36</sup> Marie Subkyan (Siupkiukian) of Haji Habibli joined her fiancé, Garabed Hovagimian, in Manchester, Connecticut later that year.<sup>37</sup> Nouritsa Miratoutian (Mlaytutian) entered the US at Providence, Rhode Island, aboard the S.S. *Roma* on 16 September 1921.<sup>38</sup> Mihran Serekian sent for his mother, Mayrum, brother Armen, and sister, Sara in 1923.<sup>39</sup> The office of V. Morlian in Boston, which handled the travel formalities, in addition to requesting pertinent information and supporting documentation, charged \$10 cash per person for the various tasks and a \$50 deposit per person to be cashed upon their arrival.<sup>40</sup> These expenses did not include the ticket fares.

It appears that not all immigrants entered the United States directly. For example, Mihran Serekian traveled to Cuba in 1931 to pick up his sister-in-law,

<sup>33</sup> Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Hanisian, private papers, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, S.S. *Megali Hellas*, Passengers sailing from Pireus on 8 November 1920, arriving at Port of New York 25 November 1920.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, S.S. *Pannonia*, Passengers sailing from Patras on 21 December 1920, arriving at Port of New York 10 January 1921.

<sup>36</sup> Nazareth Emlikian, private papers, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, Maritza Boyadjian’s passport, issued by the Haut Commissariat de la Republique Française en Syrie & Cilicie, Grand Liban, 2 March 1921.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald C. Gemian, private papers, Towaco, New Jersey, Marie Subkyan’s passport issued by the Haut Commissariat de la Republique Française en Syrie & au Liban, 9 July 1921.

<sup>38</sup> Miriam Kalamian, private papers, Hamilton, Montana, Statement of Facts for Preparation of Petition: Section of Law, Alien Registration no. A-3971583, name: Nora Serekian [Nouritza Mlaytutian].

<sup>39</sup> Miriam Kalamian, email to the author, 21 September 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., private papers, Bedros (surname illegible) to Mihran Serekian, 31 March 1923. The letter is written on the stationery of V. Morlian, Ph.D., LL.B, 294 Washington Street, Room 431, Boston, MA.

Azniv Melidonian.<sup>41</sup> That island served as a conduit for others as well. After arriving in Cuba, Hagop (“Aguna”) and Gulenia Egarian of Bitias continued their journey to the United States separately, because Gulenia had to wait in Cuba longer pending the approval of her papers. The song below, composed by the lonely husband one cold New Jersey night, relates their experience:

*[In May we took the road]  
In July we arrived in Cuba  
Send me my fur coat  
And in my place hug the pillow  
La lala, La lala.*<sup>42</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Musa Daggh immigrants in the United States lived on the East Coast. They concentrated in Hartford, New Britain, New London, and Manchester, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Erie, Monessen, and Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and Paterson, New Jersey. Smaller numbers settled in Holyoke, Massachusetts; Niagara Falls, New York; Fort Myers, Florida, and so on. In Paterson especially, they clustered in the southern sector of town, on Main, Atlantic, Pacific, Day, Paxton, and Sussex streets, as well as Getty, Madison, and Montclair avenues. Only Movses Hachigian’s family lived downtown, on Market Street.<sup>43</sup> Changing addresses frequently within the same enclave was quite common. Movses/Norman Balabanian detailed his family’s peregrinations between 1932 and 1935:

In those years, we moved often; from Main Street, we moved 2 or 3 blocks south to Getty Avenue, next door to the Sam Magzianians, across the street from School Number 9. A year later, we moved just a block or two to the street parallel to Getty Avenue and Main Street, just North of School No. 9. Within a year we had moved again, this time to a street a few blocks north of Main Street. We lived on the first floor of a 3-story house. Tony Soghomonian lived on the second floor and Armen Hanessian and family lived on the third floor... This constant moving was the result of seeking cheaper accommodations.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., email, 21 September 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Jack Hachigian, *Secrets from an Armenian Kitchen* (N.p.: N. p., 2006), pp. 22-3.

<sup>43</sup> Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010; telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010, Granada Hills, California-Boynton Beach, Florida.

<sup>44</sup> Norman Balabanian, *Life Story* (Gainesville, Florida: N.p., 2008), p. 18.

Owning a house proved elusive for a number of years. In fact, only the Chaparians and Mardiros Hachigian co-owned a house, on Day Street, which they nevertheless lost during the Depression, when they moved to East 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Purchasing private homes became possible as of the 1940s, when families gradually moved out to other parts of Paterson, nearby Clifton, and elsewhere.<sup>45</sup>

On the West Coast, a 1919 census of Armenians in Fresno listed six families plus fourteen persons from Antioch (most probably from Musa Dagh).<sup>46</sup> In addition, two known individuals, namely, Hrant Igarian from Bitias and Paul Bedrosian from Yoghunoluk, lived in Los Angeles in the 1930s.<sup>47</sup> The families of Rupen Hayrig/Harry and Rose Igarian Phillian and Hovhannes/John and Rahel Seklemian Igarian resided in West Riverside, California.<sup>48</sup> They had all migrated from the East Coast.

The total number of Musa Daghians in the United States may never be known due to the lack of statistics or censuses. Notwithstanding, at a very rough estimate they may have numbered a few hundred. As for their provenance, the largest single group came from Bitias, probably because of their adherence to the Armenian Protestant/Evangelical church, which was established in that village thanks to the efforts of American Protestant missionaries beginning in 1840. In fact, many families in Bitias had close or distant relatives in America. The rest hailed mostly from Yoghunoluk, Haji Habibli, and Kheder Beg.

### *Occupations*

Most Musa Dagh immigrants, who were sericulture experts and weavers, plied their profession in large industrial settings. In South Manchester, the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century “actively recruited both skilled and unskilled immigrant labor. By the 1920s, foreign worker[s] dominated the labor force.”<sup>49</sup> Virtually all Musa Dagh Armenians living in the area, men, women, and teenagers,

<sup>45</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>46</sup> A. Araradian, “Hay Kaghtaganutiune Amerigayi Mech” (The Armenian Immigrants in America), *Arshaluys Badgerazart Darekirk* (Dawn Illustrated Yearbook), prepared by Armenag Melikian (Fresno, California: Asbarez, 1922): 52.

<sup>47</sup> Bill Larkin, email to the author, 2 November 2009.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 November 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company Records, Archives and Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, Series II: Personnel Records (1900-1962), Subseries E: Employee Record Cards (1860-1960), <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/findaids/Cheney/MSS19840026.html>. Retrieved 10 March 2010.

worked for that company, thereby constituting a tiny fraction of its labor force.<sup>50</sup> But after 1923 the company “quickly declined due to industry wide over production and competition from other synthetic fibers such as rayon” and filed for bankruptcy in 1937, forcing many an employee to seek a job elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, during the 1920s a number of Musa Daghians relocated to Paterson, dubbed the Silk City and the Silk Capital of the World. “Most of the men worked in the silk mills... They were proud of their skills and managing 6 and 7 looms at a time.”<sup>52</sup> But that satisfaction came at a cost: a youth working a loom, for instance, “was unable to hear the bus driver on a trip home after being exposed to the deafening sound of so many looms running simultaneously.”<sup>53</sup>

South Manchester and Paterson were not the only silk centers that lured these Armenians. Movses Sherbetjian worked in the Holmes Silk Company in Williamsport, PA. Others tried their fortunes in Holyoke, MA. Yeprem Frankian of Bitias, a graduate of the prestigious Silk Institute of Bursa in Ottoman Turkey, labored at the William Skinner & Sons silk mills from 1923 until his retirement in 1956 at the age of seventy.<sup>54</sup> In the early 1930s a fellow countryman named Sarkis Madteos Renjilian joined him at the same place for some time.<sup>55</sup> Mihran P. Serekian of Yoghunoluk for twenty-two years beginning in 1933 likewise labored at Skinner & Sons, and at the Prentiss Wire Mills Division of H.K. Porter Company, Inc., thereafter, retiring in 1966.<sup>56</sup>

Satenig/Sallie Phillian captured the segueing of weavers from rural Musa Dagh to the urban, industrial American Northeast in a poem dedicated to her uncle, Hovhannes K. Phillian:

The highest he had been was Musa Dagh.

<sup>50</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 30 October 2009; Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010; Sarah/Sally Renjilian Peeke, “Notes Regarding the Sarkis and Aznive Renjilian Family,” written upon my request.

<sup>51</sup> <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/findaids/Cheney/MSS19840026.html>.

<sup>52</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News* xxxv: 5 (September-October 2001): 14.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Frankian Standen, private papers, Holyoke, Massachusetts, “John E. Franklin, 87, Was Silk Producer,” newspaper clipping dated 27 January 1973. Probably the newspaper is the local *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.

<sup>55</sup> Sarah Renjilian Peeke, private papers, Wellesley, Massachusetts, “Samuel S. Renjilian, 79,” a clipping from an untitled newspaper. Probably the newspaper is the local *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.

<sup>56</sup> Frankian Standen, private papers, “Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Wedding,” a clipping from the *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*, 24 July 1972, p. 10.

A secret strong-hold.  
Always to the ground, in heavy boots,  
He walked or rode a mule  
With a pack on his back.

He wove the silk-worm string.  
Into sheen-full silk  
Came here circuitously by boat.  
And spun and wove.  
Not at home.  
But under a boss.

Now there was no mule  
His boots were not heavy  
Earth no longer needed boots or mule  
Feet felt no longer  
Buses and cars, flights to Mars  
Higher and higher  
Than Musa Dagh and Ararat.<sup>57</sup>

Other compatriots occupied jobs in a related field, that of apparel. Stepan Panossian, beginning in 1928, ran a dry-cleaning business in the Philadelphia area for about a half-century.<sup>58</sup> Hagop Matosian similarly “established a very good business in Philadelphia, having purchased the large store of a dry cleaning firm with many workers. He was also very creative in being able to mix dyes to get certain desired coloring for people’s coats and jackets. . . . He had originally started working there as one of the employees, when he first arrived in America, and now he was the owner of this business.”<sup>59</sup> Movses/Moses and Aghsapit/Elizabeth Hachigian opened their own successful cleaning and tailoring shop during the Depression years in Paterson.<sup>60</sup> The brothers Movses/George and Sarkis/Albert Sherbetjian/Shirn (“Azizints”) managed the Liberty Cleaning & Dyeing Company

<sup>57</sup> Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Satenig/Sallie Phillian, a typed poem entitled “MY UNCLE.”

<sup>58</sup> Edgar Williams, “40 Days of Musa Dagh: A Bloodbath That Never Was,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 September 1980, p. 2-B. This is an interview with Stepan Panossian.

<sup>59</sup> Virginia Matosian Apelian, *Musa Dagh Girl: Daughter of Armenian Genocide Survivors* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2011), p. 132.

<sup>60</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 141.

in Philadelphia.<sup>61</sup> Movses died of tuberculosis at a young age circa 1932, and Sarkis later opened his own store at 250 Pine Street in Williamsport. His business card advertised: “ALBERT’s Fur Repairing and Restyling. All types of Tailoring. WE ALSO BUILD NEW FUR COATS.”<sup>62</sup> Dikran Ayarian, in turn, wrote: “My mother [Mary] owned her own tailor shop in NJ. The clothes you see my mother, myself and my sister wearing in the photo [no. 47] in front of the Armenian church in NJ were all made by my mother. She was a female Versace.”<sup>63</sup> Mary (m. Alex) Vartanesian circa 1940 worked at the Novelty Shawl Company on Getty Avenue in Paterson, which also manufactured baby blankets. In addition to her regular tasks, she distributed unfinished bundles among fellow Musa Daghian women staying at home for them to tie end knots and hand-embroider certain segments. The finished products would then be taken back to the factory. As this arrangement was only on a trial basis, those women ultimately ended up working in the factory itself for about fifteen years.<sup>64</sup>

The rug business attracted some immigrants. Oskan Vartanesian, for one, after losing his job at a Paterson silk mill due to a physical condition, installed a loom in his house and manufactured rag rugs.<sup>65</sup> In Holyoke, Sarkis Madteos Renjilian started “a rag rug business in a small shop” and subsequently “an Oriental and Broadloom business” during the 1940s. As this enterprise “was modestly successful,” he and his wife, Azniv/Agnes, supplemented their income through other means. He became “a smash fixer at the Bay State textile mill” and she “worked for the American Pad and Paper Company where she won prizes for finding more efficient ways to perform the various tasks.”<sup>66</sup> The Kalamian family business can be singled out as the most successful one. “Our History” reads:

Kalamian’s Inc. is a locally owned third-generation family business that was founded in 1925 by Armenian immigrants David and Mary Kalamian. They started a small business in the basement of their New London home washing and repairing Oriental rugs. David used the little bit of cash their hard labor generated to buy rugs he admired from local estates. These he took door to

<sup>61</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, three pictures depicting the two brothers at their workshop either together or individually. For Sarkis/Albert outside and inside their store, see illustration nos. 52 and 53.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., business card of Albert Sherbetjian.

<sup>63</sup> Dikran Ayarian, email to the author, 10 September 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Renjilian Peeke, private papers, “Mrs. Samuel S. Renjilian, 67,” a clipping from an untitled newspaper. Probably the newspaper is the local *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.

door. Soon they moved the business from their home to a small storefront at the base of Town Hill... The business now [2009] occupies a building further up Rte 1, closer to the Waterford town line.

When David's son Alex returned from World War II, he took over the reins of the family business. With the help of his wife Mary, they grew the business over the next 50 years, officially retiring in the early 1990's. However, Alex was often on the scene, ready to share his general knowledge of flooring and his specific love of Oriental rugs with the friends he had made over the years. He died in October of 2006.

Today Kalamians is proudly run by two of Alex & Mary's daughters. Third generation owners Mimi and Lisa Kalamian learned the business from the ground up as teenagers by working in the family business after school, on weekends and during vacations. Together they have 45 years of experience.<sup>67</sup>

In New Britain, an industrial town known as The Hardware City, Musa Dagh men labored in metal plants. Hovsep Adajian was a lock maker at Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company, part of American Hardware Corporation. His sons followed him in the metal fabrication industries. Vartan was a machinist at Fafnir Bearing Company, as well as a musician and a photographer. Michael was a production manager at Landers, Frary & Clark, a housewares manufacturer, then Plant Manager and Vice President of Operations at Waring Blender. He was also an inventor and a flyer. Armen ("Jack") was an office boy at Stanley Works while a student. Hovsep's nephew Aram, son of Jarjar ("John") Amma, was a production clerk at Fafnir Bearing. Edward Tanguay, the husband of Hovsep's daughter, Lillian, was a tool and die maker for Chandler Evans. In the next generation Gary, Michael's son, was a tool and die maker at The Torrington Company, and is a noted appraiser and dealer in antique tools. Vartan's son, Edward, became an engineer. Edward and Lillian Tanguay's son, David, was a tool maker at Chandler Evans, and was a race car builder and driver.<sup>68</sup>

Aside from the Adajians, Hovhannes Hanisian during World War I manufactured "'Universal' appliances i.e. electric irons, percolators, toasters and electric ranges" at the Landers, Frary & Clark.<sup>69</sup> Toward the end of the conflagration Rupen Hayrig Phillian indicated the American Brake & Shoe

<sup>67</sup> "Our History," Kalamians's Inc. website by Mystic Net Marketing, <http://kalamians.com/history.html>, retrieved 2 June 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Telephone interview with Armen ("Jack") Adajian, 15 May 2009, Granada Hills, California-Lake Bluff, Illinois; Michael Adajian, email to the author, 10 June 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Hanisian, private papers, family history booklet, p. 8.

Foundry Company in Erie as his employer.<sup>70</sup> His brother, George, in 1920 and 1930 declared himself to be a molder and a foreman in an iron foundry. Their father, Levon Barkev, worked as a plank roller in a tin mill in Monessen, PA in 1920.<sup>71</sup>

Some émigrés, like many of their migrant brethren in Beirut, Lebanon at the time, charted their economic course toward the restaurant, hotel, and/or food business. Kheder Beg native Sarkis/Joseph Soghomon Adajian appears to be one of the most successful entrepreneurs. After studying at the St. James Armenian Brotherhood seminary in Jerusalem and the Syrian Protestant College (renamed American University of Beirut after 1921) for a total of twelve years, Adajian emigrated to the United States in 1913 at the age of twenty-one and took up a job as a waiter at the Longley's diner in Hartford, earning 10 cents per hour. Because he was proficient in English and had beautiful penmanship, he was assigned the additional task of scripting the menu and eventually became the manager. In 1920 he opened his own restaurant, called the Dixie Lunch, at the corner of Park and Lawrence streets. To achieve this end, he rented a vacant space by the Winkler's auto parts store and began charging customers, mainly factory workers, 35 cents per meal. He and his wife, Elmas/Pearl, "baked 40 to 50 pies a day in a coal stove." As the business catapulted, Winkler wanted to increase the rent while the lease was still in effect. In 1925 a reluctant Adajian relocated to a new spot by a bank on Park Street, renaming the restaurant the New Dixie Lunch. In 1935, he rented the place to an Armenian couple, Mr. and Mrs. George Atamian, so as to take his family on an extended tour to the Middle East including Musa Dagh, and Europe. Two years later he opened a new restaurant, the Round Table, at 15 Asylum Street. Despite the good income, Adajian had to close the business in 1943 due to his participation in World War II as a member of the US Armed Forces. After his return, he bought a hotel near the Capitol Building in 1947 and named it the Adajian's.<sup>72</sup> With "full creative license," he commissioned artist Thurston Munson to design and decorate the interior: "The result was four art-deco rooms full of exotic murals with a Near East motif." The establishment drew "a steady clientele of politicians, entertainers, athletes and artists" including then-presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, who in the 1970s held one of his campaign fundraisers there. In this family business, "son, Eddie, could be found on any given night behind the

<sup>70</sup> Larkin, email, 2 May 2009.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 1 May 2009.

<sup>72</sup> Telephone interview with Regina P. Adajian, 7 June 2009; Michael Adajian, private papers, Chicago, Illinois, "Joseph S. Adajian Dies at 96: Longtime Owner of Popular Downtown Restaurant," a clipping from *The Hartford Courant*, 1 December 1988, pp. B1, B5.

bar, reciting Kipling, while his daughter, Regina, was hostess.” This Hartford landmark closed its doors on New Year’s Eve 1986.<sup>73</sup>

John Adajian, better known as Jarjar Amma (Uncle Jarjar), established a coffee house in the second floor lobby of the Palace Theatre on Main Street in New Britain. It served as a popular gathering place for Armenian bachelors to eat lunch, drink coffee and gamble. At one point Jarjar was arrested for selling liquor without a license.<sup>74</sup> Movses (Misak) Magzarian and Hovhannes K. Phillian, both from Bitias, ran the Hotel Washington in Niagara Falls,<sup>75</sup> where Hagop (“Kusheye”) Keosheian also ran a restaurant with a good income.<sup>76</sup>

Serop Hagop Adajian, Hovsep’s brother and a veteran of the Armenian Legion, established his Reliable Diner (later renamed Sam’s Diner) in 1935 on Bloomfield Ave. in Newark, New Jersey. This was essentially a one-man operation, as his daughter Aurora Adajian Lehmann recalled: “My father cooked all the soups, the roasts, the side dishes, made all the sandwiches and was also the short-order cook. He was the waiter and he washed all the dishes (until he could afford a man to wash them) and he also cleaned the restaurant after closing, i.e. he did everything.” As for the people he served, “he had a very loyal clientele who were mostly people who worked in the area and came in almost every week day. Because this was an area filled with Italians, most of his customers and his specials were Italian. Occasionally, he would sneak in an Armenian dish...” Heeding the advice of his brother-in-law Alex J. Phillian, Serop in 1947 opened a “fancier” eatery, called The Tower Lunch & Restaurant, a few blocks away at 396 Bloomfield Ave. Given Serop’s exhausting schedule, he suffered a heart attack, sold the place, and in 1952 moved to California, where he died a year later.<sup>77</sup>

A few compatriots ventured into other sides of the food industry. After working in various silk mills on the East Coast from mid-1916 until December 1927, Paul Bedrosian relocated to California to start a new life. He “soon ended up working for an uncle, a date producer, in Indio, California. There he gained experience growing dates, grapefruits, and tangerines.” He then earned his living at the produce departments of the McMoore Grocery chain store in Los

<sup>73</sup> Michael Adajian, private papers, “Joseph S. Adajian Dies.”

<sup>74</sup> Telephone interview with Armen Jack Adajian, 18 May 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Adajian Lehmann, emails, 3 November 2009, 30 November 2009; telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 21 December 2009, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

<sup>76</sup> Telephone interview with Dikran Sarkuni (Keusheian), 21 December 2009, Granada Hills, California-Los Angeles, California.

<sup>77</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 24 December 2009.

Angeles and the Safeway store in Beverly Hills. This phase ended when “A friend helped him convert the rumble seat of his 1929 Chevrolet Roadster into a truck with sides and he went into the grocery business for himself peddling fruit and vegetables from his truck in the neighborhood of Santa Monica & Sunset Blvd. This was from about 1931 to 1934.” He was compelled to change his work after he married a fellow Musa Daghatian by the name of Sally Egarian in August 1934 because his income from peddling vegetables was not sufficient to support the family. So he became an independent gardener from 1936-40 for \$3 per day. He continued that career as an employee of the Los Angeles Unified School District until his retirement in 1965.<sup>78</sup>

John Adajian sold fruit at 17 Lafayette Street in New Britain from 1924 at least until 1930.<sup>79</sup> Hrant Igarian, who lived in Los Angeles County after October 1930, managed a produce market.<sup>80</sup> George and Mary Phillian owned a grocery store at 540 Mission Boulevard, West Riverside (Rubidoux), California.<sup>81</sup> After marrying in 1917 and constantly moving from one place to another and losing money in the process, Rupen/Hayrig and Rose Igarian Phillian finally settled on a ranch in Indio, Riverside County, California, on a four-year labor contract with the proprietor. With some saving, in 1929 they purchased a grocery store at 902 Mission Boulevard in West Riverside. Rupen died in 1940, and Rose sold the business in 1948.<sup>82</sup> But the way Rose started the market—as her husband was busy making rounds to deliver vegetables to other customers—perhaps exemplifies the language barrier that many of the immigrants had to surmount. She described her experience, in broken English, as follows:

So we bought the store, and they took me to the store, and the very next morning, and just, I had to operate the store, mind you... No experience whatsoever, no ever had done anything like that. I can’t even speak English. Don’t even know the articles names... All right then, I stand, I stood behind the counter and supposed to run that store. And I’m scared to death, I’m so bashful, I could die... And here comes my first customer...she says, “I want a package on None Such Mince Meat.” Package of the mince meat, that was the brand name. So I stood there like a statue and didn’t move, because I didn’t even know there was such a thing, mince meat, in the package! Never

<sup>78</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian.”

<sup>79</sup> Adajian, private papers, photocopies of pertinent pages from the *New Britain Directory* for the years 1924-1930.

<sup>80</sup> Larkin, email, 2 November 2009.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 January 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Egarian Fiscus, “Rose’s Story,” pp. 18, 25.

heard the name before. And she gave me a warm smile, that said, “I know you don’t know what I’m talkin’ about, but it’s all right.” She went around the counter, she took off the package of mince meat, she said, “It’s 15 cents, here, dear.” I’ll never forget that corner and that package of mince meat... So, that customer was my good friend later on. And so that’s the way I started running the store.<sup>83</sup>

The rest of the immigrants earned their livelihood by pursuing other careers. Yeremia Renjilian was perhaps the only physician (osteopathic) in the entire lot.<sup>84</sup> Alex Gregory Phillian practiced law and became a judge in New York and New Jersey after World War II.<sup>85</sup> Alex Hachigian engaged in carpentry, Alex Iskenderian in photo engraving, and Leon Hagopian in jewelry.<sup>86</sup> The Taminosians in Fort Myers were cobblers.<sup>87</sup> Armen Serekian in Manchester, CT, likewise mended shoes.<sup>88</sup> Hagop/Jack Ayarian and Mardiros Tumberian worked as a washer and an assistant, respectively, at a South Paterson laundry owned by an Armenian from Dikranagerd named Tashjian. Khachig Keoseian manufactured roofing tiles at the Flynt Coke Co. in Rutherford, NJ,<sup>89</sup> and so on.

Like everyone else in the United States, the Musa Daghians fell on hard times during the Great Depression beginning in 1929. Paterson resident Armenag Hanisian states that “lucky was the person who had a job for a weekly wage of 15 dollars.”<sup>90</sup> The immigrants certainly looked for ways to be able to weather the crisis. A small group returned to Musa Dagh in umbrage,<sup>91</sup> but the bulk stayed and struggled. Oskan Vartanesian, for one, “survived...by brewing Arak [a spirit akin to the Greek uzou or the Turkish raki], selling it for \$5.00 a gallon[.] Ouskan [sic] didn’t make a lot of money, just enough to avoid the Relief rolls for his family.”<sup>92</sup> His daughter, Mary, provided additional details: “Our families were very careful with every penny earned. We walked everywhere, and when we could afford it, we rode the bus. Only four of the Suvediatsi [Musa Daghian]

families we knew owned cars.”<sup>93</sup>

Mutual support also carried people through. Jack Hachigian elaborated: “The Armenians in Paterson were proud, virtually, no one accepted government aid. These were mountain village people and believed in self-reliance. Friends would support friends.”<sup>94</sup> He further recalled: “Growing up in New Jersey during the Depression was a depressing experience! My parents did what they could to shelter us from the misery. Our family was like an island spared from a tumultuous sea. My father gave up being a silk weaver and opened a cleaning/tailoring shop. It was a success... We supported several families. We were relatively well off: we had a car and a telephone.”<sup>95</sup> One of the beneficiaries of the Hachigians’ altruism was Sarkis Phillian, their best man and godfather. As the guest of their house for three years, “he slept on a cot in the kitchen, having neither job nor family of his own.”<sup>96</sup> Those relatively better off assisted the less fortunate by paying their utility bills, especially that of electricity.<sup>97</sup> But not everyone seems to have received the same attention. Gerald C. Gemian (Hovagim Hovagimian), then a young boy living on Sussex Street in Paterson together with his father, uncle, and cousin, wrote: “The Armenian community drifted apart from us when we needed them the most as we were going into the Great Depression... We finally went on Relief (welfare as it is known today). Nobody in the Armenian community came to help us. As a result I became angered and said ‘...who the hell needs them!’ I became a renegade...”<sup>98</sup>

Besides distributing relief, one of the measures that president Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s administration took to alleviate the economic hardship and also improve working conditions was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Before its introduction in 1933, laborers used to work Monday-Friday 8 hours per day plus 4 hours on Saturdays, for a total of 44 hours per week. With the new Act, they had to work only 40 hours a week with a guaranteed earning of \$13 per week. Obviously, the Musa Daghians, too, benefited from this salutary change.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>84</sup> Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers,” p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Levon Filian, email to the author, 20 May 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Larkin, email, 21 November 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Kalamian, email, 21 September 2009.

<sup>89</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Armen Hanisian, letter to the author, 26 September 1977.

<sup>91</sup> Magzanian, letter, 4 October 2009.

<sup>92</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 131.

<sup>93</sup> Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010.

<sup>94</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 131.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>97</sup> Telephone interview with Magzanian, 24 December 2008.

<sup>98</sup> Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

### *Compatriotic Bonds*

The geographical distance between the United States and Musa Dagh did not prevent the immigrants from maintaining strong ties with the homeland. Several channels connected the two sides. Correspondence constituted a common mode of communication. Usually written in Turkish with Armenian characters, the letters exchanged greetings, family and general information, pictures, queries, instructions respecting monetary transmissions through banks, etc. The latter category, besides assisting families financially, enabled immigrants to purchase land in Musa Dagh via relatives.<sup>100</sup> Actual visits also took place. Movses/George Sherbetjian, for instance, who had not seen his parents Kevork (“Aziz”) and Vartir nee Maghzanian as well as four sisters for about twelve years, in 1925 crossed the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to meet them once again.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, after a twenty-two year absence, in 1935 Sarkis/Joseph Soghomon Adajian took his family of seven on a six-month tour to Europe and the Middle East. They spent half of the trip with father-in-law Boghos Oflazian’s family at Svedia, taking frequent excursions to adjacent Musa Dagh during their stay.<sup>102</sup>

Supporting organizations and institutions in Musa Dagh remained a fixed objective for certain individuals and groups. Isgender/Alex Khachig Phillian, a member of the Social Democrat Hnchagian Party in Paterson, often corresponded with and assisted the party’s Musa Dagh branch. One of his parcels, sent in late 1930, contained a check for raffle ticket sales, twelve coats of arms, some fourteen books, and enlarged pictures depicting the party’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations (1887-1927). The recipients thanked him for his generosity, but also regretted that others in the United States, France, Egypt or elsewhere disregarded their

<sup>100</sup> While a number of letters from Musa Dagh to relatives and friends in the United States are found in family collections in the United States, letters sent from the United States to Musa Dagh are hard to find. For correspondence in the first category, see Adajian Lehmann, private papers, miscellaneous letters and business papers sent by H.A.M. Filian from Bitias to relatives in the United States, 1920-21; Hagop Dzaghguni (Hergelian?) from Yoghunoluk to Ohannes K. Phillian, 22 February 1923; Victoria J. Shemmassian from Vakef to Mr. and Mrs. Hovhannes K. and Sara Magzarian Phillian, 23 February 1923; Megerdich Der Arakelian from Haji Habibli to aunt Sarah Phillian, 7/22 January 1926. See also Victoria Renjilian Sarafian, private papers, Fresno, California, Movses S. Renjilian from Bitias to “My Dear Children” Victoria and her husband Krikor Sarafian, 2 May 1923; Emlikian, private papers, Sarkis Boyajian to brother-in-law Kapriel Emlikian, 18 January 1929.

<sup>101</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, two postcards sent by Movses/George Sherbetjian/Shirn to his brother, Albert in the US from two different legs of his trip. The first postcard was sent from Delgada, Portugal on 27 July 1925 and the second one from Cairo, Egypt on 12 August 1925; idem, family reunion pictures.

<sup>102</sup> Telephone interview with Regina P. Adajian, 6 July 2009.

requests.<sup>103</sup> The ARF in Musa Dagh likewise communicated with its counterpart on the East Coast during 1921-22 with requests for money for the establishment of a central school in Musa Dagh and books for the enrichment of a newly-founded library. While information on financial support is lacking, books were in fact donated.<sup>104</sup> Movses Hachigian, in turn, collected and sent money for the completion of the Apostolic Church in his native Bitias.<sup>105</sup>

Sometime between 1908 and 1910 concerned individuals in Yoghunoluk formed an educational society to sustain the local parochial school through interest accrued from a fixed fund.<sup>106</sup> Émigrés in Buenos Aires established a branch after their arrival in 1911 and joined another one, formed in 1914, following their relocation to Connecticut in 1916. Given the enlistment in the United States Army, death, and dispersal of some members, the chapter ceased to exist in a few years. Of the \$1,400 raised by then, about \$400 was loaned to two sick comrades but never reimbursed. The balance remained in a bank account in the name of three ex-members. After World War II Armenag Hanisian and others in Paterson as well as in Philadelphia resuscitated the association, raised money through various functions, and supported the Harach College in Anjar. As for the original bank deposit, now \$1,114.10, Hanisian personally delivered it to the school Board of Trustees in Anjar in 1961, with the understanding that two classrooms would be added to the school facility in the name of the Educational Society of Yoghunoluk.<sup>107</sup> A plaque posted atop the two adjacent

<sup>103</sup> Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives, Vienna, Austria, File *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun 1920[-1938]*. *Adenakrutian yev Artzanakrutian Dedrag S. T. Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun Svedio Shrchanagi Miatsial M. Varchutian 1920 Noyemper[-1938 Okosdos]* (Hnchagian Party 1920(-1938): Notebook of Minutes and Recordings of the United Body Committee of the Svedia District Social Democrat Hnchagian Party 1920 November (-1938 August), Copy of a letter to Comrade Isgender Kh. Filian in Paterson, New Jersey, 18 January 1931.

<sup>104</sup> ARF, File 965/28, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide 1921 t.* (ARF Central Committee of Cilicia or Lernavayr 1921), ARF Svedia Committee Chair V. Vahakn and Secretary Shant-Diran, to ARF Central Committee of America in Boston, 8 November 1921; idem, File 969/32, 1922, 16 March 1922.

<sup>105</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 47.

<sup>106</sup> “Vijagakrutium Jebel Musayi Hay Kiugherun” (Survey of the Armenian Villages of Musa Dagh), *Suriahay Daretsuys* (Syiran Armenian Almanac), prepared by M. Ajemian, M. Siserian, and Y. Vosgerichian, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Aleppo (1925): 241; *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 9 July 1927.

<sup>107</sup> Armen Hanisian, letters to the author, 26 September 1977, 1 October 1977, 7 February 1989; National Harach-K. Giulbengian College Archives, Anjar, Lebanon, Zakaria Hanisian, Chairman, Mihran Serekian, Secretary, and Hagop Sarkahian, Treasurer of the Yoghunoluk Educational Society in the United States to the Anjar (St. Paul) Church Construction Committee, 3 July 1961.

chambers stands as a testament to the immigrants' attachment to Anjar, their new Musa Dagh.<sup>108</sup>

Non-Musa Dagh Armenian immigrants of some import contributed their share to alleviating penury in Musa Dagh. The following were two cases in point. In 1935, Rev. Sdepan Asadurian (Yarpuzlian), who had served the Yoghunoluk Protestant congregation during the 1890s, sent \$3,000. It was distributed by Rev. Dikran Antreasian among the needy as follows: \$750 in Yoghunoluk; \$625 in Bitias; \$500 in Haji Habibli; \$500 in Kabusiye; \$375 in Kheder Beg; \$250 in Vakef; and \$250 in Antioch.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Prof. Manase Sevag of Philadelphia in 1936 made an urgent appeal to fellow Armenian Americans to come to the aid of their heroic compatriots in Musa Dagh by raising \$20,000-\$30,000 within a year.<sup>110</sup> There is no record to indicate whether or not this call produced any results.

The New and Old worlds were similarly bridged nostalgically through the immigrants' adoration of nature. Reminisced Jack Hachigian about the bygone days as he was growing up in Paterson in the 1930s and 1940s:

On occasion, during the summer, we would go to Bridgeport, Connecticut to enjoy the beach at Barnum Park with the Roomian family. What I remember most are the short trips we used to take out to the Garret Mountain and nearby farms. We would take 4 or 5 empty glass gallons to collect spring water.

The environment on Garret Mountain was pristine and the water was not polluted. Spring water trips were one of my father's favorite pass-times. It reminded him of his youth in the village of Bitias where mountain springs were famous and attracted tourists from nearby Antioch, Syria and as far away as Latakiya on the Mediterranean Sea.

...

The spring unfortunately does not exist as Highway #46, a four lane super highway, was built right over it. My father was livid and sad. He thought

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Harach School Board of Trustees to Musa Dagh Compatriots Living in the United States, 8 May 1962. An attachment to this letter, likewise dated 8 May 1962, furnishes details of the construction cost (3,570 Lebanese liras).

<sup>109</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 15 January 1936, 12 February 1936.

<sup>110</sup> Manase Sevag, "Musa Daghê yev Kaghutahay Badvakhntrutiune" ("Musa Dagh" and the Dignity of the Armenian Community), *Hayasdani Gochmag* (Clarion of Armenia) XXXVI: 43 (24 October 1936): 1,022-23.

Americans were fools to ruin the environment.<sup>111</sup>

Samuel Magzarian's life-long travails also reflected the above phenomenon, albeit at a later period. A native of Bitias, Magzarian had emigrated to the United States in 1910 but had returned home in 1924, only to leave the native soil once again as a result of the Sanjak of Alexandretta's cession to Turkey in 1939. Recounted his daughter, Alberta, as to what transpired afterwards:

Pop's love and devotion for Chaghlaghan [spot near Bitias] didn't end when we left Turkey in 1939. Almost twenty years later, he began building walls and planting gardens on the half acre of our New Jersey home. We watched as he transformed our rocky hillside into a miniature Chaghlaghan orchard with its peaches, apricots, cherries, grapes and vegetables. He used strings and sticks, to create the perfect arcs for his level, stone walls, some of which stood five feet tall. He himself did not stand much taller! He left just enough room on the land to build our house.<sup>112</sup>

Whether Musa Dagh-born or American-born, children too seemed to have inherited that fascination with nature. For example, Stephen H. Taminosian, who was born in Bitias but grew up and spent the rest of his life in Fort Myers, "reveled in the area's natural environment." As such, "he hunted in the surrounding area for turkey, deer, dove and hogs, enjoyed fishing in fresh and salt water, and owned a hunting camp in the Everglades." According to one of his sons, "he was so in tune with nature and plants, trees and animals," that "he would rather hunt than eat when he was hungry."<sup>113</sup> In the same vein, Hartford-native but Paterson-resident Alexander M. Phillian's "real love was the outdoors and its accompanying freedom, which led to a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, inspecting and maintaining forest trees in northern New Jersey." Indeed, "trees were a lifelong passion for Alex, and he surrounded his home with sycamores, maples and mulberries, taking care to prune them just the right way with the right tools." Later on, as a lineman in the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, he was able "to continue to work outdoors, climb telephone poles and secure a good standard of living for the rest of his working life."<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>112</sup> Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian, and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in a Dialect of Its Own* (N.p.: Lulu.com, 2008), p. 162.

<sup>113</sup> Cathy Chestnut, "Stephen Taminosian, 69, Was Mentor to Family, Loved Nature," obituary in the Fort Myers, Florida, *News-Press*, 17 August 1990, p. 6B; "Stephen H. Taminosian," *News-Press*, p. 6B.

<sup>114</sup> "Alexander M. Phillian," *AMAA News*, p. 14.

With rare exceptions, the immigrant generation remained endogamous. Some bachelors went back to Musa Dagħ, got married and returned to the United States.<sup>115</sup> A number of marriages were arranged locally and/or through acquaintances in the New and Old worlds. In addition to other family members, for instance, Mihran Serekian brought over sister-in-law Azniv Melidonian, who was supposed to wed a man from New Jersey. But because “the meeting didn’t go well,” she lived with her sister’s family in Holyoke until another suitor, Sarkis Madteos Renjilian, asked for her hand in 1936.<sup>116</sup> Another interesting situation involved Jack Hachigian’s parents:

In the United States, my father had saved enough money to send for his brothers and sisters. The letter containing one-way tickets...also contained a round-trip ticket. In this letter to his mother, he wrote that he was unable to find a “suitable” (read ‘Armenian’) woman to marry (at age 35!). If there was a woman whom she felt would make a suitable wife, then enclosed was a round-trip ticket for this woman to come to the United States. The conditions he offered were: 1) She could live with his brothers and sisters with all expenses to be borne by him, 2) She would be free to choose another man to marry if she so wished, and, 3) If after nine months she found that he was not suitable, or found no one else to her liking, she could return home to Bitias. The ticket would always remain in her possession.

My mother and father were married in 1922 and were happily married for 40 years when my father died.<sup>117</sup>

Jarjar Amma’s daily interactions with customers at his coffee shop enabled him to act as a matchmaker between eligible Musa Dagħ men and women on his list of acquaintances (“he knew all their family details”).<sup>118</sup> A number of successful outcomes can be credited to him. Illustrated Adajian Lehmann: “Uncle Jarjar decided to try to match my father [Serop/Samuel Hagop Adajian] up with a fine young woman named Mary Mikaelian... When Jarjar discovered that Mary was older than Sam, he introduced her to Sam’s brother Joe. They decided to marry and had a long and happy marriage. Their union produced my only first

<sup>115</sup> Magzarian, letter, 4 October 2009. Some of the bachelors who went back to Musa Dagħ, got married, and returned to the United States were Garabed/Charlie Chaparian, Sdepan Kelejian, Manase Magzarian, Madatia Taminosian, and Sdepan Panosian.

<sup>116</sup> Kalamian, email, 21 September 2009.

<sup>117</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 22.

<sup>118</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 24 December 2009.

cousins...”<sup>119</sup> But Jarjar persisted and found Serop another girl, named Sarah Phillian. The couple tied the knot on 7 March 1925 in New London and had five children.<sup>120</sup> With this next generation things began to change as a number of men and women entered matrimony with *odars*, that is, non-Armenians.<sup>121</sup> The assimilation had commenced.

Altering names to fit in the American mold was a common practice even among the immigrant generation. The American versions replaced original Armenian Christian names as follows: Serop became Sam, Hovsep became Joseph, Boghos became Paul, Manase became Mac, Elmas became Pearl, Azniv became Agnes, and so on. Some surnames were Westernized, simplified or changed altogether: Filian was spelled as Philian or Phillian; the initial “K” was deleted from Khachigian to read Hachigian; the “Der” vanished from Der Bedrosian; Hrant Yegharian/Egarian/Igarian applied for citizenship preferring a new identity under the name Henry Vance Garian; Yeprem Frankian reintroduced himself as John E. Franklin; Sherbetjian was transformed to Shirn.<sup>122</sup>

One thing, though, remained true to tradition—nicknames. Jack Hachigian stated: “Suvediatzis [Musa Dagħians] have a quaint tradition of nicknaming everyone... Nicknames were always used with affection. My nickname was Agyup, actually I was called “Bizdag Agyup” since I was the younger of two Jacks. The other Jack was the son of Armenag Antablian...”<sup>123</sup> Other sobriquets included the following: “Mr. & Mrs.” for Movses Chaparian and his wife; “Gunk” (*g(u)nkahayr* or godfather) for Sarkis Phillian; “Khoshor” (big) for Armenag Antablian; “Jackie-ou-Nes” (Jackie-and-a-Half) for Hagop Kbburian; “Aguna” (a corruption of Hagop?) for Hagop Igarian; “Pij” (bastard) for a certain Bitias native; “Talap” (destruction/ruin) for Tateos Shirinian’s brother; “Aslan John” (lion) for Hovhannes/John Atamian; “Tupal Jack” (lame) for a certain Bitias

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 10 September 2009.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 24 December 2009.

<sup>121</sup> Those who married *odars* included, among others, the four siblings of Serop and Sarah Adajian (a fifth sibling never got married); the four daughters of Sarkis and Azniv Renjilian; and the two daughters of Yeprem and Marta Frankian (a third daughter married an Armenian). See, respectively, Adajian Lehmann, email, 28 February 2010, Renjilian Peeke, private papers, “Samuel S. Renjilian, 79,” and Frankian Standen, private papers, “John E. Franklin, 79.”

<sup>122</sup> Barry R. Shirn, *The Sharbatjian’s [sic] of Musa Dagħ: What Flows Within* (Bloomington, Indiana: Authorhouse, 2005), pp. 20, 26-7; Larkin, email, 2 November 2009; Frankian Standen, private papers, “John E. Franklin, 87.”

<sup>123</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 26.

native<sup>124</sup>; “Captain” for Hovhannes/John Phillian, who at one time had worked in a shipyard. People also called him “Vando” or “Vandig,” a corruption of Hovhannes.<sup>125</sup> Garabed Hovagimian became known as “Charlie Brown.”<sup>126</sup> Last but not least, the customary practice of naming first sons after their grandfather continued in the United States. Nicknames, in addition to middle names, dissipated the confusion when there were several grandsons by the same name. Wrote Adajian Lehmann:

I believe that “Krikor Phil” was my grandfather’s grandfather. One of his sons was my grandfather’s father, Iskander (Alexander) Phillian. He had several sons. Krikor (named after his father), Hachig, Hovanness and Moses are the ones that I am aware of... All four of the above named son’s [sic] named their first born sons after their father Iskander. In America they became Alexander. They were all Alexander Phillians. To differentiate themselves from each other, they used their fathers’ names for their middle names. Hence, Krikor’s son became Alexander G. (Gregory, Krikor?) Phillian. His nickname was “Karkour.” Hachig’s son became Alexander H. (Hachig) Phillian. He was called “Phil.” Hovanness’s son (my uncle) became Alexander J. (John) Phillian. His nickname was “Abie.” Moses Phillian’s son was Alexander M. (Moses) Phillian. He was called “Goldie.” I knew “Uncle” Phil, “Uncle” Goldie and, of course “Uncle” Abie very well. [“Uncle” Karkour I didn’t see very much.<sup>127</sup>

It appears that some of the immigrants who repatriated to Musa Dagh earned or ascribed nicknames having to do with their American experience directly or indirectly. For example, a certain Janbazian was labeled “Alright” for using the expression “everything [is] alright” profusely.<sup>128</sup> Yoghunoluk native Setrag Sulakian was simply recognized as “Amirikitsen,” that is, the American.<sup>129</sup> Hagop Matosian, another returnee to Yoghunoluk, “...soon attained the nickname of *Hairenagits* (compatriot). He greeted everyone he met with a smile with that word saying, ‘*Parev*, (‘Hello’) *Hairenagits*.’ That stayed with him until the very

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., untitled list of Musa Daghians in the United States; interview with Paul Bedrosian, 27 May 1990, Pismo Beach, California; Magzarian, letter, 26 September 2009; Filian, email, 20 May 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Filian, email, 20 May 2009.

<sup>126</sup> Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.

<sup>127</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 9 November 2010.

<sup>128</sup> Magzarian, letter, 4 October 2009; telephone interview with Magzarian, 26 December 2009.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 5 January 1990, Hollywood, California.

last time when we [the family] came to the USA [from Anjar] in 1950.”<sup>130</sup> When Samuel Magzarian returned to his native Bitias in 1924, upon his entering the village curious people asked him about life in the United States, but he deferred his answer by saying in the local dialect, “hamo mashghulim” (now I am busy). From then on the nickname “Mashghul” stuck to his person. His cousin, Hovagim Maghazian, was called “Meteryoz” (*mitrailleuse* in French) for having claimed that he had brought a machinegun from the United States. Yeremia Balabanian branded Sarkis Dadushian as “Crazy” for ostensibly behaving as such after consuming some alcohol.<sup>131</sup>

Social life revolved around frequent, unannounced visits. Cooking and sharing authentic Musa Dagh food, often consumed with home-brewed *arak*, was the norm. Traditional customs, such as preparing boiled wheat (*hadag*) sprinkled with sweeteners for teething, persisted. Playing cards, especially pinochle, constituted a major pastime.<sup>132</sup> Violet Skenderian captured the times through her prism:

As a young child growing up during Paterson, NJ days, I remember hearing some stories from my grandmother and other Musa Dagh survivors of her generation. I remember hearing names such as Ataturk, Abdul Hamid, French ships, Port Said and, of course, the silk industry in their villages. At that time, I was too young to understand any of it, but living in Paterson, NJ during the 1940’s was like living in Musa Dagh, and not in the United States.<sup>133</sup>

Adajian Lehmann painted a more sober picture of her parents’ and grandparents’ feelings about their life in the old country:

Though they only spoke openly of the things that they missed, I always sensed (probably because I over-heard conversations) that there were some dark aspects of living in these small [Musa Dagh] villages. Problems, common to all small, contained rural populations (violent disagreements between families, honor killings, hunger the result of nature’s fickleness..., lack of educational facilities, dishonest clergy, etc.)... I believe that my people tended to exaggerate the good parts as time passed and the bad parts,

<sup>130</sup> Matosian Apelian, *Musa Dagh Girl*, p. 141.

<sup>131</sup> Telephone interview with Magzarian, 26 December 2009.

<sup>132</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, pp. 131, 168, 183.

<sup>133</sup> Violet Skenderian, letter to the author, 29 January 2008.

too painful to be remembered, tended to be forgotten.<sup>134</sup>

If some immigrants spoke selectively about the bygone days in their homeland, others elected not to discuss them at all. Such was the case with Yeprem and Marta Sherbetjian Frankian, both born in Bitias and living in Holyoke. Wrote their eldest daughter, Elezabeth: "...We don't know too much about what happened [in the old country]. The reason for this is that every time we would approach the subject to our dear parents, they would say... 'zat shoreera gudreetzeek'...meaning...let's not talk about things/or/ [sic] happenings. They just did not want to talk about the past, we believe, because it was too painful and sad for them to do so."<sup>135</sup>

Besides seeking each other's company within a particular locale, immigrant families residing in different places made every effort to gather together and socialize on every conceivable occasion. According to Sarah/Sally Renjilian Peeke,

During the period of 1919 to 1939,... there were only three or four Armenian families in Holyoke but they interacted with the Armenian communities in Springfield and Indian Orchard, Massachusetts. They also kept in touch with the Musa Dagh Armenians in Connecticut and attended many gatherings in New Jersey where they reunited with others from the villages they had left in Musa Dagh. At these weddings, funerals, and picnics, experiences were shared, and news of others' fates was discussed. There was dancing, poetry reading, and shedding of tears, along with enjoying traditional foods.<sup>136</sup>

Whether at home, on visits, or in public gatherings, the Musa Daghians communicated with each other in their distinct dialect, called *Kistinig*, meaning, the language of Christians. Children too spoke the language, without necessarily knowing the Western Armenian vernacular. When Mary Vartanesian (m. Dabbakian) attended kindergarten in Manchester, CT in the second half of the 1920s, she was totally ignorant of English, so the teacher made her speak her dialect to show other students a foreign language.<sup>137</sup> My own experience with Elizabeth Frankian Standen, a third cousin born in Holyoke in 1916, further

<sup>134</sup> Michael Adajian, private papers, Mary (Aurora Adajian Lehmann), copy of an email to "Dear Cousins," 15 June 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Frankian Standen, letter, 12 September 1988.

<sup>136</sup> Renjilian Peeke, "Notes Regarding the Sarkis and Aznive Renjilian Family," written upon my request.

<sup>137</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

elaborates. In the summer of 1982, while on a visit to Boston, I received a phone call from a stranger (Elizabeth) who communicated in perfect *Kistinig* without an accent. As it turned out, her mother and my paternal grandmother, both named Marta Sherbetjian, were first cousins. Subsequent contacts between Elizabeth and me revealed that while she spoke *Kistinig* fluently, as if unplugged from Musa Dagh only recently, she was totally ignorant of standard Armenian.

A memorable formal event conducted strictly in *Kistinig* excited the community and marked the beginning of an annual tradition. In September 1949, a group of four compatriots staged a drama in the basement of Saint Leon (*Srpots Ghevontiank*) Armenian Apostolic Church in Paterson in observance of the 1915 Musa Dagh resistance. Authored by Elizabeth Seklemian Balabanian, the story depicted the mass exodus of Musa Dagh Armenians from the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the summer of 1939 and their seven-week miserable sojourn at Ras al-Basit along the Mediterranean en route to their final destination of Anjar in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. "All the Musa Daghians of New Jersey were present, and others who had received announcements, came from New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Ohio. Several hundred attended the celebration." The plot revolved around a family of four: Armenag Hanisian as the father; Elizabeth Seklemian Balabanian as the mother; Michael Matosian as the son; and Alberta Magzarian as the daughter. Like the rest of their uprooted countrymen, this household lived in a shack made of tree branches and had to cope with a devastating torrential rain one midnight. The entire camp reacted instinctively and defiantly, by dancing till morning to the tune of traditional musical instruments, thereby boosting their own morale. With the exception of Hanisian, who was in America at the time, the performers had actually witnessed that sight as refugees at Ras al-Basit. As for the scene on stage, it portrayed "the early morning after the rain storm where the mother is calling on the children to spread the wet bedding, clothes, etc. on rocks and dry branches, hoping to save some things from the night's disaster. She knows some of her food, such as sugar, salt, flour have turned into mush." When at some point the four actors joined hands and began to sing and dance to the signature Musa Dagh folksong, "*Garmer Fstan Hakudz e, Hele, Hele Ninnaye*," (she has worn a red dress...), the audience accompanied them "while clapping along several verses." Similarly, the playwright "had replaced family surnames with corresponding nicknames that were well known in Musa Dagh." So that, "with every nickname mentioned, the audience roared in loud laughter."<sup>138</sup>

This activity left a lasting impact for many years to come, as explained:

<sup>138</sup> Magzarian, letter, (no day) January 2010.

After this party, the Musa Dagh celebration became an annual event but with less fanfare. The party was held in the same church hall in Paterson. Children recited poems and sang songs, and some adults delivered multi-lingual speeches in kistinik, in standard Armenian and even in Turkish. Each year, everyone enjoyed fantastic Musa Dagh dishes...all prepared by the Musa Dagh ladies of Paterson, NJ... The ladies deserve much praise for their hard work and effort for keeping the celebration alive and the Musa Dagh community together.<sup>139</sup>

### *Integration*

As hinted above, many fresh immigrants, although at least bilingual (they knew Armenian/*Kistinig* and Turkish at a minimum), lacked knowledge of English. For example, Serop/Samuel Hagop Adajian, despite being polyglot, did not speak English and accordingly enrolled at the American International College in Springfield, MA, an institution chartered in 1885 to educate new arrivals in the United States.<sup>140</sup> Interestingly, some of the assigned compositions that he wrote dealt with his native Kheder Beg, more specifically, the nurturing of silkworms and the landmark plane tree in the village center.<sup>141</sup> Paul Bedrosian in the early 1930s took “afternoon classes in business and evening classes in English at Thomas Starr King School” in Los Angeles.<sup>142</sup> Things differed with children, who attended local public schools, integrated among their American peers, and got involved in extracurricular activities such as sports. In Paterson, for example, youngsters residing in the southern sector of town—and they were the majority—attended School No. 9 on Getty Avenue and subsequently the Central High School. Those living in downtown enrolled at the East Side High School.<sup>143</sup> Alexander M. Phillian, a graduate of the latter institution, played on its football team.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, Stephen H. Taminosian, who went to Fort Myers High School in Florida, “played football and baseball, and was a prospect for scholarships or the professionals.”<sup>145</sup> Higher education became possible essentially after World War II. Detailed Jack Hachigian:

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 10 September 2009.

<sup>141</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, S. H. Adajian “English a [sic]” composition assignment book. The two compositions are entitled “The Description of A Tree” and “Description of A Silkworm.”

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian.”

<sup>143</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>144</sup> “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.

<sup>145</sup> Chestnut, “Stephen Taminosian.”

When the war was over everyone attempted to return to a normal life with a number of the veterans going on to college before getting married. Because I was four years younger I went to college at the same time that the WWII veterans... During the 1950s, from 40 or so families of Musa Dagh decent [sic], five of the children went on to get Ph.D.s. [sic] and achieved some form of prominence. For example: Norman Balabanian, became a professor in Electrical Engineering writing several books on Switching Theory which were translated into many languages including Russian. Arshag Berj Hajian became a professor of Mathematics at Northeastern University specializing in Ergodic Theory. Besides myself there were two others who received PhDs in mathematics or engineering. Five advanced degrees from some 40 families attest to the importance of education among the Musa Daghizis.<sup>146</sup>

Many immigrants joined Armenian and non-Armenian churches to burnish their Christian faith. Movses Hachigian in 1933 took part in the founding of the Saint Leon Armenian Apostolic Church in Paterson (presently in Fair Lawn), which became the hub of Armenian activity.<sup>147</sup> Until then, the Armenians associated with one another based on their places of origin such as Kharpert, Dikranagerd, Van, Marash, Kesab, and Musa Dagh. Once the church was established, however, people of various backgrounds began to intermingle.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays small children attended after-school Armenian classes at the church, taught by a certain *Oriort* (Miss) Nvart, from 4-5 p.m. and older children from 5-6 p.m. Throughout the year they held several cultural programs called *hantes* (plural *hantesner*). In 1938, for instance, they performed the Armenian national opera, *Anush* (the heroine’s name), together with Newark, NJ Armenian children. Friday evenings were reserved for choir rehearsals.<sup>149</sup> Gerald C. Gemian shared his recollections: “We were attending St. Leon’s Armenian Church on Bloomfield Avenue, and many times during the year we had picnics, hontess [hantes], etc., and at one of the ‘hontess[ner]’ I was duly sworn in at the age of 12 into the Dashnag Society [ARF]!”<sup>150</sup>

Since the majority of Musa Daghians in Paterson adhered to the Armenian Protestant/Evangelical denomination, they had their separate Sunday evening

<sup>146</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 27.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>148</sup> Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010; telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>149</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>150</sup> Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.

worship services at a local American Protestant church led by an Armenian pastor from a nearby town.<sup>151</sup> In places where an Armenian church did not exist, the immigrants, especially of the Protestant/Evangelical denomination, attended American churches. Wrote the Rev. P.H. Welsheimer in a letter of verification: “This is to certify that Samuel Magzarian took membership with the First Christian Church, Canton, Ohio on April 20, 1924. He has been faithful to the church, and we commend him as a Christian gentleman.”<sup>152</sup> Alexander M. Phillian, who in 1935 was baptized at the First Baptist Church in Paterson, served on its Council while a life-long member.<sup>153</sup> The Frankians and Serekians worshipped at the Second Congregational Church in Holyoke.<sup>154</sup> After attending the Community Church in West Riverside for some time, the Igarians and Phillians switched to the Church of Christ, where they found more fulfilling spiritual nourishment.<sup>155</sup> The list went on.

Besides churches, Musa Daghians got involved in Armenian and non-Armenian voluntary associations and social-political movements. Certain immigrants joined the three Armenian political parties, namely, the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Democratic Liberal Party.<sup>156</sup> Yeprem Frankian was admitted into the Young Men’s Christian Association in Troy, NY.<sup>157</sup> Sarkis Phillian carried a Communist Party membership card.<sup>158</sup> John Atamian volunteered in the International Brigade to fight Fascism in Spain in 1938.<sup>159</sup> John Renjilian wrote: “The sheet entitled ‘Fairfielder Planned to Record Thrilling Account of Musa Dagh’ is apparently a summary of a speech my father [Yeremia] made to the Fairfield (CT) Rotary Club of which he was a most loyal member, not having missed a meeting for over twenty years.”<sup>160</sup> Sarkis Madteos Renjilian in 1938 became a Free Mason with the Mount Tom Lodge, whereas Mihran Serekian belonged

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<sup>151</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>152</sup> Alberta Magzarian, private papers, Olney, Maryland, Rev. P.H. Welsheimer, letter of recommendation for Samuel Magzarian, 29 July 1924.

<sup>153</sup> “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.

<sup>154</sup> Frankian Standen, private papers, newspaper clippings titled “John E. Frankian, 87, Was Silk Producer” and “Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Wedding.”

<sup>155</sup> Egarian Fiscus, “Rose’s Story,” pp. 19-23; Larkin, email, 1 May 2009.

<sup>156</sup> Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.

<sup>157</sup> Frankian Standen, private papers, YMCA Certificate of Membership of Yeprem Frankian, July 1911, Troy, NY.

<sup>158</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 26.

<sup>159</sup> Frankian Standen, private papers, caption of a picture of John Atamian.

<sup>160</sup> Renjilian, letter, 13 October 1988.

to the William Whiting Lodge, both in Holyoke.<sup>161</sup> Paul Bedrosian, a weaver in textile factories in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for about eleven years (1916-1927), “on at least one occasion, . . . got fired from his job for attempting to organize workers against long hours and unfair labor practices!”<sup>162</sup> Alex J. Phillian, Paul’s cousin, was also a union activist: “When Labor Unions [sic] were starting to form [in Paterson in the 1920s], Alex and other workers began to picket for better wages and conditions. Many, including Alex, were dragged off to jail many times because picketing was not yet legal. Alex later joined the march for Social Security in Washington and even had a 10 minute interview with Eleanor Roosevelt.”<sup>163</sup>

Alex similarly aspired to become an actor and a playwright and accordingly took classes in theater and writing in Los Angeles (1927-29). It was at this time that he began to write a play about the Musa Dagh resistance. When he finished the draft after returning to the East Coast, “it was accepted to be played on Broadway and casting was begun. Alas, it was 1929 and the crash occurred and the play was cancelled. Either he never tried to have it played again or could not get anyone interested later on.”<sup>164</sup> Similarly, Sarkis Igarian (“Chakest”), also known by his stage name of Emory Dennis, hoped to become a screen actor. He ultimately fulfilled his dream by appearing as an extra in the following movies: *Androcles and the Lion* (1952), *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956).<sup>165</sup>

Health and safety issues concerned the immigrants as much as the American public at large. Those who could afford it purchased health insurance—an unknown commodity in Musa Dagh. A relevant anecdote: in the process of filling out an application form, when asked by an insurance agent whether a history of mental illness existed in the family, Hovhannes Phillian responded through a translator, that he was the sanest of them all.<sup>166</sup> Pandemics and contagious diseases felled a number of people. A devastating diphtheria epidemic in 1923-24 swept the country killing many, especially children. One of the victims was Jacob Magzarian. His grieving mother suffered a stroke and was paralyzed

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<sup>161</sup> Renjilian Peeke, private papers, “Samuel S. Renjilian”; Frankian Standen, private papers, “Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Anniversary,” newspaper clipping.

<sup>162</sup> Shemmassian, private papers, Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian.”

<sup>163</sup> Adajian Lehmann, emails, 30 December 2009, 1 March 2010.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 9 November 2010.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 24 March 2010.

until her death at a very young age.<sup>167</sup> Gerald C. Gemian wrote: “My mother contracted tuberculosis and suffered terribly dying in December 1929 leaving a 7 year old child (me).”<sup>168</sup> Car accident injuries or deaths resulted in part from the newcomers’ lack of awareness about the dangers posed by urban traffic. Norman Balabanian related an incident involving his brother:

In December 1932, a few months after our return [from Bitias] to Paterson, when returning home from Sunday School at the Methodist Church one Sunday – before Armen and I had been re-educated to automobile traffic, nonexistent in Bitias – Armen ran ahead of me across Main Street toward our house, without looking out for traffic, oblivious of the New York bus bearing down the street, traveling from Clifton to downtown Paterson. The bus hit him and dragged him for about a block. It was a shock for me as I ran home to tell my parents. He still carries the evidence, a scar on his forehead.<sup>169</sup>

Men and women of Musa Dagh descent also served the adopted country in various capacities during World War II. Alexander M. Phillian took a leave of absence from his work to join the Merchant Marine “as a radio operator on ships that included the Caesar Rodney, which ferried supplies across the Atlantic under treacherous conditions to the port of Murmansk, USSR. He received the Atlantic, Pacific and Mediterranean Middle East War Zone Bars for his service.” His future wife, Victoria Renjilian, was one of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES).<sup>170</sup> Mary Magzarian entered the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).<sup>171</sup> Shushanig/Suzie Phillian contributed as a nurse.<sup>172</sup> Albert Egarian “worked for Curtis Wright in

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<sup>167</sup> Frankian Standen, private papers, caption of Jacob Magzarian picture. Similarly, Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian wrote: “My Aunt Mary Skenderian and her son, Alex went to live with her brother-in-law in College Point, NY where she passed away during a flu epidemic.” See email, 19 March 2010.

<sup>168</sup> Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.

<sup>169</sup> Balabanian, *Life Story*, p. 18. Others also fell victim to car accidents. In Manchester, Connecticut, for example, “Isgoohi [Vartanesian Kalamian] was hit by a car and killed, while walking from work.” Mary Chaparian Phillian died in Paterson in 1926 under similar circumstances, leaving behind three young children. See, respectively, Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010, and “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14. See also illustration no. 44 for Chaparian Phillian’s funeral.

<sup>170</sup> “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Filian, email, 20 May 2009.

Fairfield, New Jersey, manufacturing propellers for the B29 bombers.”<sup>173</sup> Paul Hachigian participated “as a flight mechanic in the Air Force. Jack Antablian and the Egarian brothers, John and Jim, all served.” Sarkis Philian “saw action as an OSS operative behind Nazi lines.”<sup>174</sup> Stephen H. Taminosian “was drafted into the U.S. Navy and served in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans...”<sup>175</sup> After graduating from high school, Zohrab “Zoe” Hanisian “enlisted in the Army Air Corps in January of 1943. During World War II, he flew 32 missions as an aerial gunner on a B-24 long-range bomber.”<sup>176</sup> Aram J. Adajian “was stationed on several South Pacific islands. Serving with an anti-aircraft gun battalion, Adajian helped protect air strips being bombed by Japanese planes.” After being discharged in 1945, he joined several veterans’ groups in New Britain and assumed leadership roles. He also founded the Armenian-American veterans post.<sup>177</sup> The list went on.

An interesting situation involved Alex J. Phillian. A zealous pacifist, he nevertheless volunteered for the US Army after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Initially considered old for military service (he was thirty-seven years of age), he was accepted after performing twenty pushups with great agility. During his stay in Europe, where he saw action in the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of Paris, he regularly received packages from home containing onions, nuts, and “camel candy” (ground raisins and raw peanuts in small egg shape) that satisfied his strict vegetarian diet.<sup>178</sup> He also asked for the Musa Dagh version of molded, spicy cottage cheese as he wrote to his sister, “Send me some Sourki and olives when you get a chance.”<sup>179</sup> In turn, Alex’s father, Hovhannes, planted a vegetable garden in a large vacant lot near his house on Pacific Street in Paterson. “During WWII, citizens were encouraged to plant gardens to help the war effort and these were called Victory Gardens. Baboo [Hovhannes] even had a sign saying it was a ‘Victory Garden.’” Interestingly enough, “around the edges of the garden Baboo planted Hollyhocks to remind

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<sup>173</sup> Larkin, email, 5 June 2010.

<sup>174</sup> Hachigian, *Secrets* p. 26.

<sup>175</sup> Chestnut, “Stephen Taminosian.”

<sup>176</sup> Obituary of Zohrab (Zoe) Hanisian 1923-2011, *Napa Valley Register.com*, as cited in Mousa Ler Online, 11 October 2011.

<sup>177</sup> Michael Adajian, email, 10 June 2009; idem, private papers, Johnny Mason Jr., “Plainville Veteran to be Honored Monday,” newspaper clipping from *The Hartford Courant*, 9 November 1991.

<sup>178</sup> Adajian Lehmann, email, 1 March 2010.

<sup>179</sup> Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Alex J. Phillian to “Dear Sister” (Sarah Phillian Adajian), 10 August 1944, from “Somewhere in France.”

him of Bitias.”<sup>180</sup>

Unfortunately, not all soldiers returned from their overseas mission alive. Paul Frankian, an only son, was killed at the age of twenty-one,<sup>181</sup> and so was the seventeen-year-old Harold Sarafian in the Battle of the Bulge.<sup>182</sup> Other men and women in uniform may also have made the ultimate sacrifice. For most veterans, however, a new life would begin with opportunities in higher education and promising careers, as well as with the formation of young families.

### *Conclusion*

The Musa Dagh immigrants continued to network with one another and celebrate the 1915 resistance through the 1970s. The 40<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in 1955 and 1965 were marked with noted enthusiasm, as compatriots gathered in hotels to cherish their common ancestry with pride. As the immigrant generation faded away and their progeny moved out of areas of concentration and gradually assimilated, the disconnect with Musa Dagh—and things Armenian in general—became more and more apparent. But this sobering reality coincided with a new development—the arrival of fresh waves of immigrants from Soviet Armenia beginning in the 1970s and independent Armenia from 1991, as well as from Lebanon as a result of the 1975-90 civil war. Unlike their predecessors, most newcomers settled not on the East Coast but rather in California with concentrations in greater Los Angeles, Fresno, and the San Francisco Bay area. The Musa Daghian vibrancy thus shifted to a new locus and era. Nowadays, no longer is the workforce employed in large-scale industries; instead, they earn their livelihoods as technicians, professionals, artisans, educators, entrepreneurs, and so on. From a social, cultural, and psychological perspective, formal compatriotic associations established since 1980 have served as safety nets for the preservation of the peculiar fabric and identity of this ethnic subgroup.

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<sup>180</sup> Idem, email, 14 March 2010.

<sup>181</sup> Frankian Standen, letter, 12 September 1988.

<sup>182</sup> Filian, email, 20 May 2009.

## *Chapter 7*

### VACATIONING AND TOURISM

For a number of Armenians in Syria vacationing offered a respite from the resettlement hardships after the World War I genocide and the scorching summer heat characteristic to cities and other places. It also constituted a channel for refugees to reconnect spiritually with their lost village life in the homeland, by sojourning at Armenian-inhabited hamlets nestled on hills in the host country. Other Armenians and ethnically diverse people came from Egypt, France, and elsewhere. This activity took place mainly in the Sanjak (province/county) of Alexandretta/Iskenderun (hereafter Sanjak). Against the backdrop of Armenian summer resorts in the Sanjak in general, this chapter describes the scene in Musa Dagh, particularly in the village of Bitias, considered by one newspaper as “the main” vacation spot in the said province.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Armenian Summer Resorts in the Sanjak of Alexandretta*

Vacationing and tourism in Syria and Lebanon developed with some success under the French mandate. Political upheavals during 1925-1927, the world economic depression later in the decade and in the 1930s, and an aggressive campaign by other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean such as Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey to attract visitors had had an adverse impact on vacationing in the French mandated territories. However, several thousand visitors came, particularly from Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq.<sup>2</sup> The Sanjak benefited from this trend as well.

Four main areas of Armenian concentration existed in the Sanjak. The first encompassed the eponymous coastal town of Alexandretta and several communities perched on the surrounding uplands. The second included the rural town of Kirik Khan and a smaller settlement called Rihaniye. The third encompassed Musa Dagh and Antioch city. The fourth consisted of Kesab

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<sup>1</sup> For the primacy of Bitias as a vacationing center, see editorial of *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 11 July 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Husni Sawwaf, “Natural Resources,” in Saïd B. Himadeh, ed., *Economic Organization of Syria* (Beirut: The American Press, 1936), pp. 27-47.

(Kessab/Kasab) on Jabal Aqra/Mount Cassius and its satellite hamlets.<sup>3</sup> Whereas the communities around Alexandretta town as well as in Musa Dagħ became vacation centers during the period under study, Kirik Khan and Rihaniye did not. Kesab, on the other hand, emerged as an important summer resort after 1939 especially. When France ceded the Sanjak to Turkey, Kesab, despite sustaining substantial territorial losses in the process, remained within the redrawn map of Syria and replaced the depopulated Armenian vacation spots in the Sanjak.<sup>4</sup>

In the Alexandretta zone, four Armenian communities evolved into vacation destinations: Nargizlik, Atik, Beylan, and Soghukoluk. Nargizlik had a mixed population of 250 Armenians and Turks in the late 1920s-early 1930s. It attracted vacationers with its water sources, greenery, and houses somewhat reminiscent of chalets in the mountains of Europe, especially those in Switzerland and the Tyrol.<sup>5</sup> Home to 350 Armenians, Atik had a small hotel consisting of tiny chambers and a *pension*. Visitors also rented the thirty available houses for 6-7 gold liras per house per season. The construction of additional three-unit buildings aimed to accommodate more guests.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the French Protestant *Action Chrétienne en Orient* possessed a “vacation colony” near Atik, where Hedwig Büll, an Estonian associate stationed in Aleppo, each year took undernourished Armenian children to improve their health.<sup>7</sup> Divided by a ravine into two sectors, one inhabited circa 1930 by about 1,000 Armenians and another by 2,000 Turks, Beylan hosted “the majority of well-to-do families” from Alexandretta. Some spent their summers on their own properties. Others lodged at the Canal Hotel or rented residences.<sup>8</sup>

The most attractive summer resort within the Alexandretta zone was the

<sup>3</sup> There is not a general work on the Armenians in the Sanjak of Alexandretta; however, the following study provides a plethora of information on the number and placement of Armenian refugees there during the interwar years: Thomas H. Greenshields, “The Settlement of Armenian Refugees in Syria and Lebanon, 1915-1939,” Ph.D. dissertation, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> For the case of Kesab (Kessab/Kasab), consult Hakob Cholakian, *Kesab* (Aleppo: Hamazkayin, 1995), vol. I, pp. 139-40, 142; Dr. Robert Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutun. Husher yev Kordzuneutiunner* (Autobiography: Memoirs and Activities) (Aleppo: Asfahani Press, 1999), pp.169-73.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Jacquot, *Antioche. Centre de tourisme* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1931), vol. I, pp. 134-35.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Berron, *Une oeuvre missionnaire en Orient. Origine et développement de l'Action Chrétienne en Orient* (Strasbourg: Editions Oberlin, n. d.), pp. 50-1.

<sup>8</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 110-11.

Armenian village of Soghukoluk, which in 1927 consisted of forty families. Situated at an elevation of 650 meters on one of the thickly wooded hills of Jabal (Mount) Nama, Soghukoluk abounded with springs, breathtaking vistas, and nearby leisure spots such as Knali Tepe, Tesbihli, Arnavutluk, Dasholuk, Chatal Arik, Zevdalioluk, Geozelli and Jizmejiler. Soghukoluk’s pristine setting and cool, healthy air were advantageous.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, it acquired fame not only among Armenians in Alexandretta, but also in Aleppo. Families, groups, and individuals arrived in large numbers after the mid-1920s, renting cottages or reserving rooms at Hotel Joseph Ayvazian—which consisted of eight two-story buildings with a total of 100 rooms, a dining hall, a spacious open dance floor, and a tennis court<sup>10</sup>—and Isgender Yazejian’s Hotel Belleview/Manzar al-Jamil comprising a single-story building with fifteen to twenty rooms.<sup>11</sup>

Each summer, a segment of Aleppo’s Armenian elite spent time at Soghukoluk, among them Dr. Asadur Altunian, owner of the eponymous hospital, and the Mazlumians of the famed Hotel Baron.<sup>12</sup> Hovhannes Dumanian, director of agronomy, forestry, and the League of Nations Nansen Office for Refugees in the Sanjak, purchased four parcels of land in Soghukoluk and built three houses on one of them for himself and vacationers alike, netting 20-25 gold liras from rent annually.<sup>13</sup> Foreigners likewise sojourned at Soghukoluk, for example, Karen Jeppe, the Danish humanitarian and her Armenian protégés rescued from captivity in the Syrian deserts<sup>14</sup>; Dr. Samuel Kennedy, a British Presbyterian Church missionary<sup>15</sup>; the Greek, Persian, and German consuls stationed at Alexandretta; French catholic nuns, and others.<sup>16</sup> The vacationers spent their time hiking, picnicking, hunting, attending cultural events, playing games, and

<sup>9</sup> *Aztag*, 14 September 1927.

<sup>10</sup> Victoria Giuzelyan, “Sovuk-Oluk. Hiuranotsnere” (Soghukoluk: The Hotels), written upon my request.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*; Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 14, 16, 104.

<sup>12</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, p. 104; Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutun*, pp. 168-69; Giuzelyan, “Sovuk-Oluk.”

<sup>13</sup> Hovhannes T. Dumanian, *Im Hushere* (My Memoirs) (Beirut: Sevan Press, 1977), p. 180.

<sup>14</sup> Hagop Cholakian, *Karen Yeppe Hay Koghkotayin yev Veradznuntin hed* (Karen Jeppe with the Armenian Calvary and Rebirth) (Aleppo: Arevelk Press, 2001), pp. 101-04, 156.

<sup>15</sup> Mihran Moses Koeroghlian, *A Latter-Day Odyssey: The Autobiography of the Man Who Would Not Give Up* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Dorrance & Company, Inc., 1986), p. 207. For a general conference of American and Irish missionaries held at Soghukoluk in 1923, see Isobel Lytle, *James Martin: Pioneer Medical Missionary in Antioch: A Thrilling Account of Faith and Courage* (Belfast: Cameron Press, 2003), pp. 73-4.

<sup>16</sup> Giuzelyan, “Sovuk-Oluk.”

gambling.<sup>17</sup> Musa Dagh, however, had the best name recognition among all Armenian summer resorts in the Sanjak not only regionally, but internationally.

### *Transportation*

Vacationing and tourism in Musa Dagh, as elsewhere in the Sanjak, started slowly, because until the mid-1920s transportation to and from the Armenian villages was conducted via pack animals.<sup>18</sup> Wrote Catholicos (Pontiff) Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia about his unpleasant experience in 1922: “I was so annoyed by traveling by horse and mule that I asked God to send anyone deserving of the punishment of hell to Svedia [i.e., Musa Dagh].”<sup>19</sup> The families of Dr. Avedis Jebejian and Dr. Philip Hovnanian of Aleppo journeyed to Bitias in the summer of 1924 under the following conditions, as described by Jebejian’s son, (Dr.) Robert:

[After traveling from Aleppo to Kirik Khan by car and] making a detour at Kirik Khan, we arrived in Antioch past noon (the Aleppo-Antioch road had not yet been completed). Here we stayed overnight. On the following day, pack-horses were rented to ascend to Bitias; there was no auto route. The re-bundled packs were mounted on the sides of the beasts. [The] adults settled between them [the sides], one person on each transport. We, the children, had to travel stuffed in [empty] petroleum containers fastened on the sides of the pack-horses: the little ones, Vahe and Anahid, together on one side, whereas I alone, squeezed cross-legged in the other container.

Thus we traveled four hours by caravan along circuitous trails passing through graduated dense vegetation... After crossing the ancient tall bridge [over the Buyuk Karachay River], we climbed yet another hour along the slopes of the wooded mountain, arriving in the village of Bitias.<sup>20</sup>

In order to modernize communications, the French authorities attached

<sup>17</sup> Yervant Babayan, *Hishadagneru Arahednerov* (On the Lanes of Memories) (Los Angeles: Araks Press, 1998), pp. 125-30; Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutium*, pp. 168-69; *Aztag*, 14 September 1927.

<sup>18</sup> *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 30 September 1924; *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 7 October 1924; *Aztag*, 8 June 1935.

<sup>19</sup> Varujan Archbishop Hergelian, ed., *Tghtagsutium Sahag P. Gatoghigosi yev Bedros Ark. [ebisgobos] Sarajiani* (Correspondence of Catholicos Sahag II and Bedros Archbishop Sarajian), a publication of the Armenian Library of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal, and the Archives of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, No. 4 (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutium*, p. 166.

great importance to the construction of roads across Syria and Lebanon. Accordingly,

The road system was...brought to a level of excellence entirely new to the territory, and well in advance of any of its neighbours. The phenomenal increase in wheeled traffic was met by hundreds of miles of newly-constructed and usually asphalted roads of high standard, scores of passable tracks, and many greater or smaller bridges. Many areas were given road access for the first time, and the importance of omnibuses and lorry traffic was recognized. Reliable highways joined all the main centers, and local and village authorities were helped in their parochial plans by grants, and the permitted use of volunteer labour.<sup>21</sup>

Northwestern Syria also witnessed a rapid expansion of the road network. The linking of Antioch to Svedia/al-Swaidiyye constituted an important initial phase. In the spring of 1925, a commission representing the various ethnic groups in the region studied this project, but failed to reach a consensus. The Turkish notables of Antioch, holders of substantial real estate in the district, insisted that the road pass along the left bank of the Orontes River and then cross it to the right over a bridge at the St. Simeon the Stylite junction. Their argument rested on two premises: first, there already existed the half-constructed Antioch-Daphne/Harbiye road which simply needed completion, and second, their proposal would be less costly given the fewer bridges to build. The Armenians and the Arabic-speaking Alawites (referred to as *Tats* by the local Armenians), on the other hand, preferred the road to pass along the north bank encompassing the three sub-districts (*nahiyes*) of Svedia, Kara Murt, and Musa Dagh, thereby benefiting 75 percent of the population in the Antioch-Svedia district. The latter position ultimately prevailed despite serious reservations by the Administrative Council of Antioch.<sup>22</sup> But the Armenians of Musa Dagh paid a heavy price for their success. Each of the six main villages was required to pay an annual tax of 800-900 Syrian liras for three years and to provide 120-150 workers with no pay. The Musa Daghian workers had also to supply their own provisions while staying away from home with Alawite families on the plain of Antioch for a number of days at a time. It is true that houses and other buildings were circumvented and thus spared when the work reached Musa Dagh; nevertheless,

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), p. 277.

<sup>22</sup> *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 9 May 1925.

fruit trees were felled without any compensation to the owners.<sup>23</sup>

Written complaints lodged from the outset proved futile. When the senior French Officer (*Musteshar*) at Antioch visited Musa Dagh in late June 1925, he met with Musa Dagh Sub-District Governor (*Mudir*) Movses Der Kalusdian, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian of Yoghunoluk, and all the village headmen (*mukhtars*), and urged them not to accept the imposed levies and to continue sending written entreaties. But when implored to mediate, the Frenchman deflected responsibility by claiming that they, the French, were there as guests and observers subject to League of Nations directives.<sup>24</sup> Despite a strike by the local underground communist cell that halted construction partially and temporarily,<sup>25</sup> the project proceeded as planned. As a result, beginning summer 1926 automobiles could access Kheder Beg by taking the Antioch-Svedia route.<sup>26</sup> For the inauguration of the Kheder Beg road, to be held on 22 August, the ARF urged its members to gather around the central plane tree of the village to greet the High Commissioner's Delegate in the Sanjak, Pierre Durieux, and other dignitaries.<sup>27</sup> In turn, Fr. Der Kalusdian invited Catholicos Sahag II, then residing in Aleppo, to visit Musa Dagh now that transportation by car had become possible.<sup>28</sup>

The Antioch-Svedia road was also important because it covered about half the distance between Antioch and Bitias; the remaining segment of about 8

<sup>23</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, (hereafter ACC), File 22/1, *Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940*, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan, 27 June 1925; Hovhannes Hajian, "Im Hushere" (My Memoirs), unpublished manuscript, Hollywood, California, notebook 3, pp. 69-70.

<sup>24</sup> ACC, File 22/1, A. Der Kalusdian to Sahag II, 27 June 1925.

<sup>25</sup> Setrag Haygazyan, "Setrag Haygazyan Husherits" (From the Memoirs of Setrag Haygazyan), unpublished manuscript, Musa Ler Monument-Museum, Musa Ler Town, Armenia, notebook I, n.p.

<sup>26</sup> ACC, File 22/1, A. Der Kalusdian to Sahag II, 12 October 1926.

<sup>27</sup> Hagop Boghos Jambazian, private papers, North York, Ontario, Canada, "Antamatsutsag H. H. Tashnagtsutian Svedio Garmir Ler Yentagomideyin. 1 Mard 1919, Port Said" (Membership Roster of the Svedia Red Mountain Subcommittee, 1 March 1919, Port Said), circular-letter no. 28, ARF Musa Dagh Red Mountain Committee to comrades of all ARF village chapters, 18 August 1926. (Hereafter Jambazian, ARF "Antamatsutsag"). A copy of the original of this notebook was made available to me by my friend Hagop B. Jambazian, for which I thank him sincerely. When I conducted research in the ARF archives in Boston (now in Watertown) in the summer of 1982, this and another notebook (see Chapter 8, note 82) did not yet exist in the collection. Some years later it was donated to the ARF archives by Nazaret Bidanian of Yoghunoluk, then living in Fresno, California through Mr. Jambazian and another person. Mr. Jambazian had kept a copy for himself.

<sup>28</sup> ACC, File 22/1, A. Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II, 12 October 1926.

kilometers was completed in 1927. Its inauguration took place on Sunday, 4 December, with great fanfare. A delegation of high-ranking French officials, Arab and Turkish governmental figures, Armenian dignitaries, and reporters arrived at the junction where the Bitias road diverged from that of Svedia and was greeted by Movses Der Kalusdian. Durieux and the Governor of the Sanjak, Ibrahim Adham Bey, cut the ribbon of the "Route Capitaine Renucci" (thus named after its chief supervisor from the Antioch Information Service), declaring it officially open for traffic. The procession of vehicles then rolled up the hills to Bitias through a corridor of cheering peasants. Serop Sherbetjian, the new Governor of the Musa Dagh sub-district, escorted the guests to Hetum Filian's café. After musical renditions by an Armenian band from Antioch, Der Kalusdian extolled the French for their efforts at expanding the roads, George Madani delivered a speech in Arabic on behalf of the press, and Durieux underscored the importance of the Bitias access road. Armenian, Arabic, and French newspapers in Antioch, Alexandretta, and Beirut covered the event.<sup>29</sup>

The construction of roads resumed in the spring of 1928 to interconnect the Musa Dagh villages. Each local community was assigned completion of a certain distance, as follows: from the village of Jreiri, situated to the southeast of Vakef, till the Kheder Beg border, Kabusiye's share; thence to the water spring on the Yoghunoluk-Haji Habibli road, Vakef's share; thence to Sultumu/Surutme (ruins of St. Thomas monastery) in the same direction, Kheder Beg's share; thence to the Terjeneg neighborhood of Haji Habibli, Yoghunoluk's share; thence to the old bridge on the Buyuk Karachay (Big Black Stream), Haji Habibli's share; and thence to Gulalang at the Svedia road junction, Bitias's share. For some reason, only Kabusiye remained inaccessible by car.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, in the case of Vakef labor was divided along party lines due to political bickering. Thus, the road segment entrusted to that village was divided into nine parts, five of which to be built by the local SDHP chapter (which had seventy-four members) and three by the ARF chapter (which had forty-two members). As for the remaining one part, its responsibility had to be determined at a later date.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Husaper*, 29 December 1927; *Aztag*, 21 January 1928.

<sup>30</sup> Tateos Babigian, "Husher. Tebker u Temker" (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), Istanbul, 1982, unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 227-29.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives, Vienna, Austria, (hereafter AMCC), *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun 1928[-1938]* (Hnchagian Party 1928[-1938]), New Period, *S.T. Hnch[agian] Gusagtsutiun Vakefi Masnajiughi Artzanakrutian Dedrag, 1928[-1938]* (Social Democrat Hnchagian Party [SDHP] Vakef Chapter Records Notebook, 1928 [-1938]), (hereafter SDHP *Vakefi Dedrag*), Mixed Gatherings, 21 February 1932; idem, 3<sup>rd</sup> Consultative Meeting, 27 February 1932.

Road construction continued in the general region as well, connecting Beirut, Latakia and Kesab with Antioch, and Aleppo with Antioch.<sup>32</sup> As a result, travelers could now reach Bitias from Aleppo in just an hour-and-a-half.<sup>33</sup> Armenian chauffeurs from Musa Dagh serviced some of the vehicles. Yeremia Balabanian, who returned from the United States to Bitias twice (in 1930-32 and 1935-38), ran a Chevrolet (during his second stay): “He would use it as a cab and transport service for passengers and goods to and from Antioch... But he never charged enough to recover much more than car expenses, nothing to replace the investment in the car, so as to permit eventual replacement after the end of the car’s life...”<sup>34</sup> Partners Arakel Kendirjian and Ohannes Keosheian, also from Bitias, operated a Ford until it was wrecked in an accident.<sup>35</sup> The brothers Vanes and Hagop Hagopian drove a Chevrolet between Antioch and Svedia until 1932, when Hagop died and the car was sold. Misak Yaralian (“Vatani”) of Vire Azzir, an extension of Kheder Beg, carried passengers in his Chevrolet along the Antioch-Bitias-Kheder Beg-Svedia line, and Apraham Abajian (“Batakjen”) of Yoghunoluk drove a Ford between Antioch and Bitias.<sup>36</sup> In the early 1930s, Tateos Bakkalian and an Alawite friend named Saleh Hashemi managed a Chevrolet truck carrying people and merchandize between Antioch and Svedia, but the business failed because of the lack of sufficient income.<sup>37</sup>

Antioch taxis destined for Bitias charged 35 French francs per passenger or 120 francs per car round trip,<sup>38</sup> and parked at a garage “with a thatched roof for shading” near Hetum’s café and Taniel Chaparian’s hotel.<sup>39</sup> To be sure, neither the roads nor the vehicles in those decades provided smooth, comfortable travel. But the visitors seemed undeterred by such inconveniences because of the “hundred-fold” gratification they felt after staying at Bitias. As an Egyptian Armenian man summering in that village for three seasons during the first half of the 1930s testified, the exhausting twelve-hour Beirut, Tripoli, Latakia, Antioch, Bitias overland trip was worth taking given the beautiful scenery enjoyed en route and especially the delightful and unforgettable days and nights spent in

<sup>32</sup> Isabelle Mavian, “La communauté arménienne de la région de Kessab à l’époque du mandat français sur la Syrie (1918-1940),” mémoire de maîtrise, Paris I-Sorbonne, 1993-1994, pp. 75-6; Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, 1931, pp. 473-74, 505, 508-10; *Aztag*, 21 January 1928, 16 July 1932.

<sup>33</sup> *Aztag*, 11 October 1932.

<sup>34</sup> Norman Balabanian, *Life Story* (Gainesville, Florida: N. p., 2008), p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Lusaper Makhulian Jambazian, 24 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 22 March 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 4 August 1994, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>38</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, II, 1931, p. 211.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. Hagop D. Yacoubian, letter to the author, received 18 November 1997.

exploring Musa Dagh and its folklore.<sup>40</sup>

### *Sources of Attraction*

Several factors propelled Musa Dagh in general and Bitias in particular to prominence as a summer resort. First and foremost, the name Musa Dagh evoked romanticism, pride, admiration, and a sense of indebtedness, all inextricably associated with the heroic exploit of its people against the Ottoman Turkish exterminatory campaign in 1915. Indeed, the publication of Franz Werfel’s *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* in 1933 and its subsequent rendition from the original German to numerous languages captured the imagination of the international readership, making Musa Dagh a household name in various parts of the world.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Werfel himself had visited Musa Dagh in 1929 and, with the help of a muleteer from Bitias named Rupen Sherbetjian, toured and taken notes on the actual 1915 resistance sites for four days.<sup>42</sup> Second, for Armenian vacationers especially, this “little Armenia,” i.e. Bitias, with its dialect, customs, folklore, and hospitality, epitomized the traditional village in the Armenian homeland, now vanished as a result of the genocide.<sup>43</sup> A newspaper editorial exhorted Armenian intellectuals, teachers, and students alike to spend their summer break in Musa Dagh, as well as in Kesab, so that they, as future community leaders, could interact with “our toiling masses” to gain invaluable experience.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Sahag Balekjian, “Bitiasi Hayerene” (The Armenian Dialect of Bitias), *Baykar Nor Darva Patsarig* (New Year’s Special of *Baykar*) (Boston: Baikar Press, [1958]): 190.

<sup>41</sup> For the various aspects of and reactions to Franz Werfel’s novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1933), see Edward Minasian, *Musa Dagh: A Chronicle of the Armenian Genocide Factor in the Subsequent Suppression, by the Intervention of the United States Government, of the Movie based on Franz Werfel’s The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (Nashville, Tennessee: Cold Tree Press, 2007); Vahram L. Shemmassian, “Literature, Film, and Genocide Denial: The Case of Franz Werfel’s *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*,” in Barlow Der Mugerdechian, ed., *Between Paris and Fresno: Studies in Honor of Dickran Kouymjian* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publications, Inc., 2007), pp. 547-69; Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism & the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, USA, and London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2000), pp. 293-311; Rachel Kirby, *The Culturally Complex Individual: Franz Werfel’s Reflections on Minority Identity and Historical Depiction in The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999), pp. 150-80.

<sup>42</sup> Kevork Vrtanesyan, “Medz Vibasane Musalerum” (The Great Novelist in Musa Dagh), *Vagharshabad* (City of Vagharshabad) (21 September 1991): 3-4. This article was written based on Rupen Sharbatyan’s (Sherbetjian) account. I thank my cousin, Vahan Zanoian, for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>43</sup> Melkon Eblighatian, *Kaghtagayanen Khorhrtaran...* (From the Refugee Camp to Parliament...) (Aleppo: Cilicia Publishing House, 1998), pp. 35-6; *Aztag*, 12 July 1934.

<sup>44</sup> *Aztag*, 12 July 1933, 25 July 1936.

Third, Musa Dagh's beautiful and unspoiled landscape, springs and streams, salubrious climate, and serenity, offered urbanites a much needed respite from the relatively hectic and stressful life and excessive summer heat in the cities. For these reasons Bitias was dubbed "The Armenian Lebanon" and "The Lebanon of Syria."<sup>45</sup> Fourth, the proximity of the larger towns, especially Aleppo, made it possible for working fathers to visit their families over weekends.<sup>46</sup> Fifth, life was inexpensive; locally produced vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and other foodstuffs were cheaper than those sold in cities.<sup>47</sup>

Certain individuals and groups visited Musa Dagh as part of archeological expeditions to the historical sites dotting the general vicinity, from Antioch to the Seleucid ruins along the Mediterranean coast.<sup>48</sup> In September-October 1924, for example, Professor Paul Perdrizet of Strasbourg University in France and Henri Seyrig of the Antiquities Service in Syria and Lebanon and a member of the School of Athens visited. They came armed with special recommendations from High Commissioner General Maxime Weygand and the President of the Federal Council of Syria, Subhi Bey Barakat, spent seventeen days in the Seleucid ruins and took pictures of the Surutme/Sultumu ruins situated between Yoghunoluk and Haji Habibli for further studies.<sup>49</sup> Seyrig returned to the Seleucid antiquities in the spring of 1928.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Fr. Jean Mécérian, an Armenian Jesuit priest teaching at the St. Joseph University in Beirut, endeavored in 1929 and in 1932 to uncover the origins of the ancient monasteries and edifices dotting Musa Dagh, publishing his findings in a monograph.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, on 19 July 1937 an agreement was signed between William Alexander Campbell, the representative of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and its Vicinity, and the brothers Madteos (a priest) and Serop Giuzelyan of Kabusiye, whereby the latter leased their orchards encompassing the Seleucid ruins at Magharajik

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 7 June 1932, 2 August 1933.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 8 June 1935. For the waters of Bitias, see *Yeprad* (Euphrates) (Aleppo), 28 August 1934.

<sup>47</sup> *Aztag*, 11 July 1933.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Jacquot, *L'état des alaouites. Terre d'art, de souvenirs et de mystère. Guide* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1929), pp. 198-201; idem, *Antioche*, III, pp. 469, 510; Leonard Woolley, "Excavations near Antioch in 1936," *The Antiquaries Journal* XVII: 1 (January 1939): 1-15; *Abaka* (Future) (Paris), 2 April 1936.

<sup>49</sup> *Syria. Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* V: Quatrième fascicule (1924): 385; *Piunig*, 18 October 1924; *Husaper*, 11 November 1924.

<sup>50</sup> *Syria* IX: Deuxième fascicule (1928): 169.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., XV: Première fascicule (1934): 104; *Yeprad*, 14 August 1929. Fr. Mécérian's monograph is titled *Expédition archéologique dans l'Antiochène Occidentale* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1964).

near the sea for excavations through 31 December 1938.<sup>52</sup> Although no agencies or tour guides existed to organize excursions for the general public, Movses Der Kalusdian, Serop Sherbetjian, and Fr. Benôit, the resident Capuchin missionary at Kheder Beg, furnished useful information for curious tourists.<sup>53</sup>

### Vacationers

The improvements effected in transportation and the heightened public awareness about Musa Dagh as a viable resort spurred a surge in the number of visitors after the mid-1920s. Not only did this "growing development"<sup>54</sup> lure Armenians from Aleppo, Beirut, Alexandretta, Egypt, Iraq, and the Sudan, but also Arabs, Turks, Jews, and Frenchmen.<sup>55</sup> Some members of the Aleppo Armenian elite, particularly from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF/*Hay Heghapokhagan Tashnagtsutiun*) circle, often visited Bitias, among them the brothers Yetvart and Hagop ("Simoni") Dasnabedian, both educators; teacher and author Yetvart Daronian; teacher and poet Armen Marashlian (Anush); writer Antranig Dzarugian; Dr. Adur Kabakian; Dr. Hovhannes Kantarjian; Fr. Mgrdich Muradian; entrepreneur Kasbar Ipekian; and Dr. Hamazasp Ohanchanian, one of the prime ministers of the former Republic of Armenia (1918-1920). ARF leader Hrach Papazian, as director of the *Vosdayn* textile factory in Bitias, and Suren Papakhian, as a teacher at the local parochial school, obviously had to live in Bitias. Other notable vacationing families and individuals included the Azirians, Fattals, Hreshdagians, Marutians, Norians, Babigians of the Musica Leon establishment, and Sargis Laleian of the Aleppo College Press.<sup>56</sup> "The Norians, especially, were noted for their generous financial support to the restoration fund of Surp Asdvadzadzin [Holy Mother of God] church" in Bitias.<sup>57</sup> Last but not least, the Armenian American author, Hamasdegh (Hampartsum Gelenian), visited Musa Dagh during his 1929 tour

<sup>52</sup> Sarkis Giuzelyan, private papers, Hollywood, California, agreement (in Arabic) signed by W. A. Campbell and Sarkis Geuzelian (Giuzelyan), 19 July 1937.

<sup>53</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, I, pp. 17-8.

<sup>54</sup> Sawwaf, "Natural Resources," p. 46.

<sup>55</sup> *Aztag*, 8 June 1935.

<sup>56</sup> Alis Siudjian Araradian, *Mdorunner Hin u Nor Ashkharhen* (Contemplations on the Old and New Worlds) (Los Angeles: Sarko Press, 1993), p. 168; *Asbarez* (Arena) (Glendale), 2 April 1997, 28 August 2007; Dr. Hrayr A. Kabakian, letter to the author, January 2008 (received 4 February); Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, 23 October 2008; interview with Gaydzag Khachadurian, 4 October 2001, Encino, California.

<sup>57</sup> Magzarian letter, 23 October 2008.

of the Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>58</sup>

Protestant pastor Rev. Hakob Chakmakjian likewise enjoyed the Bitias summers, as did his colleague, Rev. Hagop Kumruian, who actually spent his twilight years in his private house there.<sup>59</sup> After his death in 1931, his daughter Okosdina Khanum, the widow of dentist Sdepan Rubian, continued to visit Bitias together with her four adult children. Upon her emigration to the United States in the mid-1930s, one of her two daughters, Rosaline, her husband, Prof. Taniel Voskian of Aleppo College, infant daughter, and mother-in-law occupied the summer house. “The Rubian-Voskian connection to our village definitely benefited our students in furthering their education,” noted Alberta Magzarian, because Prof. Vosgian’s presence in Bitias led to a close association with the local Protestant pastor, Rev. Aram Hadidian. This relationship proved “instrumental in starting a secondary boarding facility for Aleppo College within the city.” Here worked Bitias native Mayrum Taminosian Igarian as “the caterer (*mayrig*) of the small group of boys (8-10) from Kessab and Bitias—Nubar and Norman Balabanian [as well as] Soghomon Phillian, also from Bitias, started attending Aleppo College that same year [1938]...”<sup>60</sup>

Two ARF general congresses of Syria and Lebanon convened at Bitias, one in 1928 and another in 1932 (or 1933).<sup>61</sup> Here, too, camped boy scouts from the Aleppo and Kirik Khan chapters of the ARF-affiliated Armenian General Athletic Association (*Hay Marmnagrtagan Enthanur Miutiun/Homenetmen*), often parading in the village streets with torches, thereby electrifying the atmosphere.<sup>62</sup> Circa 1930 another group, consisting of underprivileged students

<sup>58</sup> Fr. Suren Papakhian, *Daronashunch Abrumner* (Sentiments of the Daron Spirit) (Los Angeles: Nor Giank Publication, 1987), p. 121.

<sup>59</sup> According to Koeroghlian, *A Latter-Day Odyssey*, p. 177, Rev. Kumruian had “invested most of his savings into the building of a house on a piece of land that belonged to the [Armenian Protestant] church [in Bitias]. The agreement was that he would live in part of the house until his death, after which the house would belong to the church.”

<sup>60</sup> Magzarian, letter, (no day) April 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of Svedia Armenians), edited by Yesayi Havatian, (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), p. 151. The ARF conference dates are revealed through group pictures of participants. The caption of the second ARF regional conference group picture indicates the date 1932 in Ashod Nersisian, *Movses Der Kalusdian*, “Living Heroes” series, no. 5 (Yerevan: Edit Print, 2011), n. p., whereas Fr. Papakhian, *Daronashunch Abrumner*, p. 196, mentions 1933 as the date of the same conference group picture.

<sup>62</sup> Fr. Sahag Antreasian, *Darakirn u Hayrenike Tem Timats* (The Exile and the Fatherland Face-to-Face) (Pasadena, California: Araks Press, 1995), p. 132; Sara Kendirjian Kerkezian, untitled memoirs, written upon my request, p. 18; Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutium*, p. 167; *Aztag*, 14 September 1929.

enrolled at the Emmanuel Armenian Evangelical School in Aleppo, was brought to Bitias for a week. The youngsters slept in tents, studied Arabic part of the morning, and engaged in recreational activity for the rest of the day.<sup>63</sup>

Among the non-Armenian vacationers mention is made of the governor of Aleppo, Nabih Mardini, the mayors of Antioch and Alexandretta, the commander-in-chief of French troops in north Syria and other French military officers, and several Turkish and Arab families from Antioch which, despite possessing villas on their farms at nearby Daphne/Harbiye, chose Bitias as their summer resort.<sup>64</sup> One summer in the early- to mid-1930s a group of about forty Jews from Aleppo went to Bitias, among them the families of the Orosdi-Bek department store manager and his brother. Wrote Alberta Magzarian: “I definitely remember 3 families who had rented rooms in our house and there must have been enough Jewish people in the village to have a religious...leader... among them to slaughter the chickens [for kosher meat] bought at the local bazaars. I remember one of the families had their maid with them.”<sup>65</sup> Magzarian likewise remembered “four young musical Mormon visitors,” who “spent several nights in the [Protestant] church singing hymns in English, while we sang the same hymns in Armenian.” At the same time, “they admired the natural beauty of the village and the warm hospitality they received there.” What was more, “they even mentioned the western style beds in Bitias...”<sup>66</sup>

Some visitors with health problems stayed for longer periods of time to be healed. It was reported in 1926 that “the health of [Armenian Protestant] Pastor [Garabed Movses] Ketenjian of the Camp church, Aleppo, has been much improved by a long vacation in the Musa Dagh, near Antioch.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, in the early 1930s “the eldest...son [of a notable family], Nishan, spent the winter months in Bitias for health reasons... He was in his 20s [and] had lived most of his life in the U.S. He seems to have exhausted the remedy of the city doctors & trusted his cure to our very own ‘doctor’—Shepert néné [Mayrum Maghzanian Makhulian] noted [medicine woman] throughout Musa Dagh. He strictly followed her recommendations and his health improved greatly.” As an ancillary benefit, “he shared his American publications with the local youths

<sup>63</sup> Telephone interview with Hagop Mesrobian, Granada Hills, California-Pasadena, California, 7 October 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, pp. 150, 177-78.

<sup>65</sup> Magzarian, letter, 23 October 2008.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *News Bulletin of the American Board Mission in Syria* (Aleppo), no. 2 (November 1926): n. p.

who visited him regularly and thumbed through *Life*, etc.”<sup>68</sup> Nshan Tuysuzian, a Homenetmen Boy Scout leader from Aleppo, besides camping periodically at Bitias with his troupes, actually lived there during 1931-32 to regain his physical strength.<sup>69</sup> Guest physicians such as Dr. Toros Basmajian and Dr. Rupina Ohanchanian, often acting on behalf of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross (*Suriahay Oknutian Khach*), rendered free health services to vacationers and natives alike.<sup>70</sup>

While certain individuals and groups spent a limited time at Bitias, families staying the entire summer season constituted the bulk of vacationers. Their numbers increased from eighty households in the late 1920s to 400 households by 1937.<sup>71</sup> Speaking of her experience at Bitias as a little girl, Alice Araradian Siudjian wrote:

In our childhood, during summer each year, we would go there from Aleppo to change air, as did many other friendly families. We were not rich, but my father would somehow manage the extra expense incurred upon our large family. It was a great joy for us to be free from school, from the desert heat of the city, and to go to that wonderful village.

...

During the week the mothers and the children would stay in the village, [and] at the end of the week, on Friday evening, we would line up along the sides of the only [main] street, awaiting the arrival of our fathers [sic]. What a joy...! We would jump on the auto busses, attempting to welcome father before anyone else.

My father, [carrying] a basket filled with food in one hand, [holding] the *saz* [a string musical instrument] in the other, and lifting one of us, we [sic] would go home, and that Saturday and Sunday would become holidays.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Magzarian letter. 23 October 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Sisag Hagop Varzhabedian, *Hayere Lipanani Mech. Hanrakidaran Lipananahay Kaghuti* (The Armenians in Lebanon: Encyclopedia of the Lebanese Armenian Community), vol. 5 (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 1983), p. 137.

<sup>70</sup> Armenian Relief Society (ARS) Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts, File ARS, SOKH, *Syria, Beginning-1929 [-1936]*, Dr. Toros Basmajian and Sarkis Selian on behalf of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross Central Board to the Armenian Red Cross Central Board in Boston, 6 November 1931; Siudjian Araradian, *Mdorumner*, p. 47; Babigian, “Husher,” pp. 26, 177-78; *Aztag*, 28 February 1935.

<sup>71</sup> For estimates of vacationers in Bitias during various seasons, see *Aztag*, 11 September 1929, 27 January 1930, 27 June 1936, 11 August 1938; *Husaper*, 30 May 1932, 30 July 1935.

<sup>72</sup> Siudjian Araradian, *Mdorumner*, pp. 165-67.

Apparently not everyone was welcomed to Bitias, for political reasons. According to *Yeprad* (Euphrates) of Aleppo, the mouthpiece of the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP/*Ramgavar Azadagan Gusagtsutiun*), it often received verbal and written complaints from vacationers for being harassed by ARF members in Bitias. Those without special permits from the Aleppo ARF to enter Musa Dagh would allegedly be questioned by “irresponsible youths” and, if deemed undesirable, expelled. Therefore, “who dares to go to Musa Dagh under these circumstances” unless the Catholicos, other leaders and, if need be, the French authorities found a remedy?<sup>73</sup> Another incident of a political nature involved Zihni Akdur, Consul General of Turkey in Beirut, who wished to visit Bitias in August 1937. Reacting to the news, a deputation of Armenian notables met with the High Commissioner’s Delegate in the Sanjak to express their resentment and concern, warning that they could not be responsible for any demonstrations or mishaps that might occur should the consul visit. The crisis ended when about fifty armed youths, carrying French and Syrian flags, blocked the village entrance, forcing the consul to cancel his plan, at the same time leaving a good impression in Arab circles.<sup>74</sup> This episode has been described within the larger Sanjak of Alexandretta question as follows: “French officials complained that he [Akdur] was meddling in local affairs. The cancellation of his planned visit to the Armenian town of Bytias had narrowly avoided an international incident when the population, ‘seriously displeased at the announcement of this visit,’ had prepared to welcome him by throwing stones.”<sup>75</sup>

#### *Lodging and Other Services*

The demand for accommodation was commensurate with the increase in the number of vacationers each summer. Three hotels in Bitias partially satisfied this need. Taniel Chaparian’s inn, originally a two-story silk house, consisted of several renovated rooms with comfortable European-style beds, a restaurant, a bath, and a covered dance floor in the backyard where many soirees took place.<sup>76</sup> In the impressionable mind of Dr. Hagop D. Yacoubian, then (in 1932) a young boy, Chaparian’s inn “was the only presentable building in the village, at least outwardly, with hewed stone walls, red tiled roof, and painted shutters on the windows. It was... elevated from the main road by a stone wall and had a flower

<sup>73</sup> *Yeprad*, 29 December 1928. See also the issues of 27 July 1929 and 14 August 1929.

<sup>74</sup> *Aztag*, 28 August 1937, 29 August 1937.

<sup>75</sup> Sarah D. Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 135.

<sup>76</sup> *Aztag*, 10 August 1933.

garden in the front.”<sup>77</sup> The second inn emerged as follows. The local Apostolic Church Lovers’ Association (*Yegeghetsasirats Miutiun*), in search of a suitable parochial school facility, leased a religious foundation to Aharon Izmirlan, a restaurateur from Antioch, with the understanding that he would build a hotel on the land, operate it for ten years without rent, and turn it over to the parish council during off season to be used as school.<sup>78</sup> According to a newspaper advertisement, Hotel Aharon, as the emergent inn became known, compared to the best hotels in Syria and Lebanon, boasting beautifully furnished modern rooms, a spacious hall where concerts, dramas, lectures, and gambling took place, a bath, and European and Middle Eastern cuisine.<sup>79</sup> Margos Iprajian served as *maitre d’hotel* and accountant for five seasons during the 1930s. The remaining staff consisted of a chef named Isgender, two waiters, an aide, and a few women responsible for laundry, cleaning, and washing dishes. French military families and Aleppo Armenians constituted the bulk of the guests.<sup>80</sup>

In about 1930 Nasib Khuri, the owner of Hotel Silpius in Antioch, forged a partnership with the brothers Garabed and Serop Keoseian of Bitias, whereby the latter provided their two-story, ten-room house and the former furnished it (moderately) as a hotel. After a year the Keoseians paid their partner off and became the sole owners of Hotel Khuri, renaming it Hotel Jabal Musa. With the partition of some of the larger chambers and the addition of a new wing, the hotel now consisted of a regular bathroom with a tub (a novelty at the time), twenty rooms with fifty beds, and many more mattresses that were spread on the spacious veranda and even on tables in the courtyard to accommodate the numerous visitors converging upon Musa Dagh on special occasions. When the hotel was full, new arrivals were placed in ordinary homes according to a prearranged deal with the owners. Similarly, a part of the adjacent garden was converted into a restaurant with space for fifty tables. The hotel fee of 6 Syrian liras per customer per day covered three meals as well, served *table d’hôte*, that is, with a fixed menu and at scheduled times. Breakfast included milk, eggs, jam, butter, olives, and five kinds of cheeses to choose from. Lunch consisted of five entrees, fruit, and coffee. Dinner comprised four entrees, soup, fruit, and coffee. Drinks cost extra. Since French military families and civilian officials constituted the bulk of the customers on any given day, chefs Isgender Khamisian and Setrag Libaridian prepared mainly European dishes. In the

<sup>77</sup> Dr.Yacoubian, letter.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Movses Makhulian, 10 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>79</sup> *Aztag*, 7 June-3 September 1932.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Margos Iprajian, 20 August 2001, Anjar, Lebanon. For a banquet at Hotel Aharon given in honor of an official French delegation visiting Bitias, see *Husaper*, 27 July 1935.

absence of electricity and refrigerators, ice in the form of frozen snow gathered during winter and preserved by a company in Antioch was utilized to keep perishable foods fresh.<sup>81</sup>

Unlike the two other hotels, which operated only during the summer season, Hotel Jabal Musa was open year-round to accommodate, often free of charge, the proprietors’ personal guests including ARF leaders, the governor of Aleppo, the French High Commissioner’s Delegate in the Sanjak, and their retinues and families, in addition to occasional travelers. The hotel also became a preferred spot for official functions, parties, and wedding celebrations (including that of Movses Der Kalusdian in 1936) that sometimes lasted well into the night under the glimmer of “Lux” kerosene lamps. Despite free spending and the considerable expenses including the payroll of the cooks, the accountant, and some fifteen waiters and helpers, accurate books kept for 1934-36 showed a net profit of 1,800 ottoman gold liras for the owners from their orchards, miscellaneous business dealings, and tourism combined. After 1936, however, the fortunes of Hotel Jabal Musa declined as Serop Keoseian departed Musa Dagh for political reasons and brother Garabed, like the rest of his compatriots, was left wondering in the face of the escalating Sanjak crisis.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, the three hotels alone could not accommodate the numerous visitors seeking lodging. The solution rested in the unfurnished and furnished housing provided by the villagers. About 1930 unfurnished housing in Bitias consisted of two categories: those on the second floor and those on the ground level. The first category included seven lodgings with three units each; thirteen lodgings with two units each; and nine lodgings with one unit each, for a total of twenty-nine lodgings with fifty-six units. The second category included three lodgings with three units each; fifteen lodgings with two units each; and ten lodgings with one unit each, for a total of twenty-eight lodgings with forty-nine units. The grand total of unfurnished housing thus amounted to fifty-seven lodgings with 105 units. A second floor unit rented for 4-5 Turkish liras per season, generating a gross income of 224-280 liras. A ground level unit rented for 3-4 liras, for a total of 147-196 liras. Thus, the overall income from unfurnished accommodation varied from 371 to 476 liras.<sup>83</sup>

The growing influx of vacationers caused a parallel increase in the number of furnished lodgings. In fact, virtually every household in Bitias was converted into some kind of a *pension*, compelling many a family member to sleep

<sup>81</sup> Serop Keoseian, letter to the author, 22 May 1994. See also *Aztag*, 1 August 1935.

<sup>82</sup> Keoseian, letter.

<sup>83</sup> Jacquot, *Antioche*, III, pp. 509-10.

outdoors on his veranda (if not already rented), or in the backyard, or barn to make room for the sojourners. The latter's presence necessitated yet another adjustment—the building of toilets, which until then seldom existed, a corner in nature having played that role since time immemorial. At any rate, homeowners did not mind the extra expenses, ones that also ameliorated their own living conditions. Some visitors of means “always reserved rooms and left a deposit behind for the following summer before departure.”<sup>84</sup> For the rest, however, finding vacancies often proved difficult. In order to facilitate the search for empty spaces, a special village committee assigned one or two men (usually the municipal guards) to greet cars at the parking lot near Hetum's Café, guide the passengers to available guestrooms for a commission, and mediate disputes arising between homeowners and tenants. Street-smart lads sometimes upstaged the official middlemen to earn pocket money.<sup>85</sup>

Income from the sale of homegrown and/or homemade food and other commodities augmented the revenues from rents. Many households kept a few goats and/or cows, chickens, and beehives to produce milk, yogurt, cheese, other dairy products, eggs, and honey for personal consumption as well as to generate extra cash. They also grew vegetables and fruits which were sold fresh, dried, or cooked. For example, vacationers purchased sun-dried eggplants and peppers, tomato and pepper paste, and jam for winter rations. *Tiner* (earthen/brick oven) bread was likewise in great demand, as were wooden combs, ladles, and charcoal produced by local manufacturers. The vacationers similarly frequented a daily bazaar of fresh produce at a central neighborhood called Qaberlek.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to the home industries and the bazaar, there existed a number of businesses to satisfy similar and other needs. Several grocery stores operated in Bitias during summer.<sup>87</sup> One newspaper advertisement read: “To the attention of vacationers in Bitias: Levon Norashkharhian's grocery store is open, where all sorts of groceries are sold at regular prices, so that vacationers are rendered free of the hassle of transporting food.”<sup>88</sup> Three bakeries prepared *tiner* bread, while a fourth one, that of George Arushian (“Urfatsen”), sold European-style breads and pastry including an aromatic favorite called *Pâte d'Espagne*.<sup>89</sup> Three

<sup>84</sup> Magzarian, letter.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Arakel Izanian, 28 December 1991, Sunland, California; interview with Movses Karkazian, 13 August 1988, Fresno, California.

<sup>86</sup> Kendirjian Kerkejian, memoirs, pp. 12-13; interview with Khachadurian.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian, 23 November 1988, Thousand Oaks, California; interview with Makhulian Jambazian.

<sup>88</sup> *Yeprad*, 15 July 1931.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Levon Shemmassian, 16 October 2008, San Carlos, California.

butchers provided daily supplies of fresh meat. A few barbers catered to the customers' needs. For example, “Apraham Balabanian[,] whose barbershop was near Hotel Aharon, gave hair cuts to young women and children. Most women and young girls had long hair which did not require frequent haircuts.”<sup>90</sup> Lastly, Movses Renjilian operated an ironing service, a certain Baghdasar from Aleppo sold clothes, and Garabed Panoyan (“Antakalen”) tinkered metal houseware.<sup>91</sup>

The importance of tourism in Musa Dagh was also underscored by the relocation of the sub-district's governorship from its headquarters at Kheder Beg to Bitias during the summer season beginning in 1927.<sup>92</sup> This move must also be credited for the introduction of public services not available before. For example, uniformed municipal guards watched security, lit “Lux” kerosene lamps on street corners from sunset until midnight, and visited the daily bazaar at Qaberlek to tax vendors—usually Alawite farmers from neighboring villages—and make sure consumers were not overcharged. Similarly, a few assigned men collected garbage, swept the streets with *bellan* bushes, and sprinkled water to settle dust.<sup>93</sup> The inhabitants also partook in the cleanup. A native elaborated:

With the influx of so many summer visitors came trash! Our garbage collector, one man and his donkey, increased his services to several times a week during this, his peak season. He went from house to house, emptied full cans of garbage into baskets hoisted on the donkey and carried them to the dump. The “baledieh,” the village committee, swept the main street, but each family was responsible for the area around their houses. This latter responsibility fell to the children who often coaxed their summer friends to join in.<sup>94</sup>

The villagers also beautified their homes and surroundings by planting flowers in their front yards, jokingly and sometimes boastfully terming their habitat “Paris” as opposed to “Africa,” denoting backwardness in reference to some of the other villages and occasionally eliciting angry reactions from their

<sup>90</sup> Magzarian, letter, 23 October 2008.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.

<sup>92</sup> *Husaper*, 27 December 1934.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*; interview with Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.

<sup>94</sup> Magzarian, letter, 2 February 2011. See also Kendirjian Kerkejian, memoirs, pp. 13-4.

inhabitants.<sup>95</sup> This claim of looking Western must have drawn its perceived legitimacy from yet another important phenomenon: by coming into daily contact with some segments of the middle and upper middle class bourgeoisie visiting from the Middle East and Europe, the inhabitants of Bitias had consciously or inadvertently developed more refined manners, communication skills, and clothing tastes than was the case in the rest of Musa Dagh, generally speaking.<sup>96</sup> Last but not least, the Bitias Municipality established a central telephone and telegraph system at Kevork Sherbetjian's ("Aziz") house near Hotel Aharon, as well as initiated a regular postal service between Antioch and Bitias.<sup>97</sup> These modernizing measures, however elementary, simple and/or limited in scope and application, improved the overall standard of living.

### *Leisure and Entertainment*

The atmosphere in Bitias during the summer months could be characterized as festive. Hiking, camping, picnicking, flower and thyme picking, promenading, and serenading by amorous couples in nature's bosom occurred daily.<sup>98</sup> Families visited each other, chit-chatted, indulged in spirits, and sang folk, love, and patriotic songs.<sup>99</sup>

The main natural attractions of the village and its environs included the Dum-Dum Mughara, a cave where, it was believed, the ancients buried their dead; Serder Mughara, another cavern; Hovhan Vosgeperan, the ruins of an old church named after St. John Chrysostom or the Golden Mouth; Chamlik, a pine grove; and Chaghlaghan and Sev Aghpiur/Kara Punar or Punghar, two water sources surrounded by luxuriant greenery.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, Minasen Serte (Minas' Back), situated at the village entrance, "was a small flat outcropping

<sup>95</sup> Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki Me Hedkerov* (On A Life's Traces) (Palm Springs, California: Haig's Printing, 1990), pp. 310-11; Sarkis Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner Musa-Daghen yev Modig Antsialen* (Memorial Scenes from Musa Dagh and the Recent Past) (Los Angeles, California: Sarko Printing, 1993), pp. 49-50.

<sup>96</sup> Urfalian, *Gianki Me Hedkerov*, pp. 310-11. Also, a comparison of hundreds of photographs in my private collection reveals differences in attire between the Bitias inhabitants and those in the rest of Musa Dagh.

<sup>97</sup> *Husaper*, 27 December 1934; interview with Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Karkazian. The central telephone was originally established at Sarkis Sherbetjian's ("Khashdagink") house and then relocated to the residence of Kevork Sherbetjian ("Aziz").

<sup>98</sup> *Aztag*, 10 August 1933; interview with Khachadurian; Dr. Kabakian, letter.

<sup>99</sup> Dr. Kabakian, letter.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*; Dr. Yacoubian, letter; interview with Robert Igarian, 27 March 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Sima Sherbetjian, 27 March 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Movses Sherbetjian, 27 March 1989, Hollywood, California; *Husaper*, 30 July 1935, 15 January 1936.

(plateau), with a beautiful view of the [Antioch] plain." "In the afternoon—Dr. Yacoubian continued his narrative—the setting sun provided a spectacular view. We often visited there with adult friends and just sat on the plateau and enjoy[ed] the scenery in the gathering dusk." Soghukoluk (unrelated to the eponymous village near Alexandretta), at some distance from Bitias, constituted yet another enchanting corner to explore: "We went camping there for 4 days pitching our two tents in an open glade... We were surrounded on all sides with mist shrouded dense forest. The bark of the trees was covered with moss due to the moisture from the sea, which was not too far away. A fire was built in the center of the glade and was kept going throughout our stay there to keep away bears and wild boars. We never saw any."<sup>101</sup>

Children improvised toys, played a board game called "Lido," caught water crabs, threw stones at walnut trees in hopes of obtaining some walnuts, or simply frolicked.<sup>102</sup> Mingling with local children came about naturally, as Alberta Magzarian reminisced:

Once the school closed its doors for the summer, we impatiently waited for the arrival of our summer residents from the cities... Once the family arrived, we children eyed each other for a few moments and then began to catch up by asking questions and relating tales. Any schedules for French or embroidery lessons that their mother might have planned for her daughters were scuttled within a week. Our summer friends joined us for old and new games and for exploring the woods and splashing in cool springs.<sup>103</sup>

One particular young teenager, among others perhaps like him, "almost went native. He played with the neighborhood, local urchins, tried to learn our [Musa Dagh] dialect, especially all the cuss words. He went as far as bribing them for their efforts. He of course found out the location of the best orchards, did not hesitate to freely help himself and frequently shared his loot with the other respectful members of the family."<sup>104</sup> Youngsters likewise joined youths in swimming outings. Wrote Dr. Yacoubian: "At least once a week, 15 or 16 of us would pile into one taxi and ride down to the [nearby] river [called Karachay]. Some used to stand on the running boards, some would be sitting on the fenders. We kids would be inside for safety reasons. We would pass a few hours in enjoyable swimming, diving into it [the river] from the rocks on

<sup>101</sup> Dr. Yacoubian, letter.

<sup>102</sup> *Asbarez*, 2 April 1997; interview with Khachadurian.

<sup>103</sup> Magzarian, letter, 23 October 2008.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

the edges, in places where deep pools were formed. By the end of summer we had all tanned to a dark brown.”<sup>105</sup> It was also common for children and adults alike to hike or ride to Kheder Beg to view its landmark gigantic plane tree and the spring gushing nearby. They would thence continue their excursion to the Mediterranean.<sup>106</sup>

Other sorts of entertainment added to the merriment. Armenian classical music, interpreted by violinist Hagop Nalbandian and vocalist Hovsep Seraydarian on Aleppo businessman-producer Khachadur Shahin’s “Odeon” records, filled the air.<sup>107</sup> Kemanchist Rupen (Karakhanian) in 1930 or 1931 gave a solo concert with his traditional folk instrument, *kemancha*, accompanied on the piano by his wife.<sup>108</sup> To the natives’ delight, in 1933 composer-songwriter Parsegh Ganachian arranged the popular local folksong “*Garmer Fstan Hakudz e, Hele-Hele Ninnaye*” (she has worn a red dress...) and presented it for the first time as part of his choral repertoire in a concert at Hotel Aharon.<sup>109</sup> Actor-director Parsegh Apovian in the summer of 1931 toured Musa Dagh staging “*Ashkharhi Tadasdane*” (The World’s Judgment) at Bitias and Kabusiye, and “*Ashik Gharib*” (or “*Ashik Kerib*,” meaning, a minstrel called Gharib/Kerib) at Kheder Beg.<sup>110</sup> Local teenagers and youths from both genders participated in and drew inspiration from some of these cultural activities, and further developed their talents in similar events organized on various occasions throughout the year.<sup>111</sup>

Two Armenian religious-national holidays attracted thousands of celebrants to Bitias and Damlajik, one of the central spots on Musa Dagh where the 1915 resistance had taken place. The first event, held in mid-August, was dedicated to *Surp Asdvadzadzin* (Holy Mother of God). After collecting donations of

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<sup>105</sup> Dr. Yacoubian, letter.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Jebejian, *Inknagensakrutium*, p. 167.

<sup>108</sup> Hagop Manugian, *Kemanchisd Rupeni Hushere* (The Memoirs of Kemanchist Rupen), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Toronto, Canada: Postnet, 2011), pp. 106, 329; *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 19 June 1931.

<sup>109</sup> *Aztag*, 10 August 1933. For the lyrics and notes of this folk song, see Verzhine Svazlyan, *Musa Ler* (Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1984), pp. 118-124, 134.

<sup>110</sup> Toros Toranian, *Agnarg Suriahay Taderagan Badmutian yev Terasan Parsegh Apoviani Hushere* (A Glance at the History of the Syrian Armenian Theater and the Memoirs of Actor Parsegh Apovian) (Beirut: Sevan Press, 1973), p. 115. Apovian had apparently visited Musa Dagh earlier as well. See *Husaper*, 2 June 1927.

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, *Piunig*, 7 May 1924; M. M. Keoroghluian, “Bitiastan Khaberler” (News from Bitias), *Nor Avedaper* (New Herald) (Aleppo), 2: 10 (26 May 1929): 367; *Ararad* (Beirut), 4 March 1938. See also Chapter 8.

sacrificial lambs, wheat, salt, and wood from the natives, the parish council oversaw the cooking of the traditional food of *harisa* (cracked wheat mixed with meat) in large copper cauldrons in ceremonious rituals that lasted from Saturday evening until Sunday morning. Following mass, the priest blessed the *harisa* before it was distributed to the churchgoers. Then *zurnaja* (player of a flute-like wooden instrument) Hagop Tosunian (“Devej”) and *tmbgaja* (drummer) Giragos Khoshian, both from Kheder Beg, led dancers in a circle to the tunes of local folk music.<sup>112</sup>

The second feast, commemorating Musa Dagh’s successful resistance to the Turkish genocidal onslaught in 1915, took place at Damlajik, where a pile of rocks had served as a makeshift altar during the actual fights. For almost a decade mass was celebrated at this site, and requiem for the repose of those who had fallen on the battlefield was conducted in a nearby lot where eighteen wooden crosses were stuck into the ground. In 1932, this preliminary arrangement was replaced by a fenced graveyard that included eighteen tombstones, each inscribed with the name of a fallen fighter.<sup>113</sup> Each year, the celebrants, natives and vacationers alike, gathered at Damlajik from Saturday until Sunday afternoon, making their way on foot for several hours through difficult terrain. Upon arrival, they hoisted the Armenian and French tricolors and indulged themselves in feasting, launching fireworks, singing and dancing, reciting poetry, and reminiscing myriad details pertaining to the resistance. Sunday morning was reserved for the official program consisting of a mass, a requiem, and speeches by Armenian and French dignitaries. The organizers likewise sent telegrams to the French Minister of the Marine and the High Commissioner of Syria and Lebanon to express their appreciation and gratitude for the French goodwill vis-à-vis the

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<sup>112</sup> For the celebration of the Holy Mother of God holiday in Musa Dagh in general, consult Krikor Geozalyan, *Musa Leran Azkakrutiyune* (The Ethnography of Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: “Kidutyun” Publishing House of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, 2001), p. 260; Zora Isgenderian, “Doner u Donakhmputiunner (Gronagan yev Askharhig)” (Holidays and Festivities [Religious and Secular]), in Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds., *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), pp. 181-82; Balekjian, “Bitias Hayerene,” p. 191; Harutiun Der-Balian, “Hamerk Aleksandreti mech. Ech me Im Husheres” (Concert in Alexandretta: A Page from My Memoirs), *Nor Giank* (New Life) (Glendale, California), 26 February 1998, p. 19. For Musa Dagh folk dances, consult N. K. Tahmizyan, *Yerazhshdutyune Haygagan Giligiayum* (Music in Armenian Cilicia) (Yerevan: ASSR “Kidelik” Association, 1989), pp. 7-8; Mardiros Kushakjian, “Zhoghovrtayin Yerkn u Bare Musa Leran mech” (The Folk Song and Dance in Musa Dagh), in *Hushamadian*, pp. 221-27; Armen Mantagunian, *Musa Leran Bareghanagner* (Folk Dance Music of Musa Dagh), compact disc produced by the Musa Ler Association of San Francisco, 2005.

<sup>113</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 152; *Aztag*, 24 September 1932.

Armenians of Musa Dagh.<sup>114</sup>

In 1924, the Musa Dagh ARF decided to erect a memorial monument and accordingly formed a committee chaired by Sarkis Tosunian. The committee invited the SDHP and other organizations and committees for a consultative meeting to garner communitywide involvement. For some reason the SDHP refused to collaborate.<sup>115</sup> Be that as it may, the project remained unrealized for the next eight years for lack of money. In June 1930, upon calls from the committee, Charles Diran Tékéian, a French Armenian officer-interpreter who had participated in the Musa Dagh rescue operations by the French Navy in 1915, formed a fund-raising committee in France including such honorary members as General Eduard Brémond, Captain Eduard-Alphonse Vergos, and Benôit d'Azy. Tékéian and author, journalist, and political activist Arshag Chobanian wrote articles in newspapers like *Abaka* (Future) and *Le Foyer*, asking Armenians across Europe for donations.<sup>116</sup> Musa Dagh émigrés in the United States also contributed.<sup>117</sup> The project, based on a design by architect Mardiros Altunian and under the supervision of builder Haig Kelenderian, finally materialized after two years.<sup>118</sup>

The seventeenth anniversary celebrations took place on 18 September 1932 with pomp and circumstance, as the new monument glorifying the resistance

<sup>114</sup> For commemorations before 1932, consult *Piunig*, 24 September 1924; *Husaper*, 16 September 1924, 30 September 1926, 29 November 1929; *Hayrenik*, 14 September 1930, 14 September 1955 (reminiscences of the 1928 inauguration); *Aztag*, 24 September 1931; Hovhannes Bajakian, *Kiughagan Badgerner* (Village Scenes) (Beirut: N. p., 2002), pp. 185-87.

<sup>115</sup> Jambazian, ARF, "Hashvadedr Svedio Gomideyi 1920" (Book of Accounts of Svedia Committee 1920) (actually, this is a notebook that also, and in large part, contains the minutes of the Committee meetings from 1921-1927), 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 5 September 1924; 10<sup>th</sup> Session, 27 December 1924; 11<sup>th</sup> Session, 27 January 1927; Jambazian, ARF "Antamatsutsag," copy of letter from Musa Dagh ARF to Musa Dagh SDHP, 12 September 1924, and letter no. 11 (no date).

Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 151, maintains that the monument committee was formed in 1930, which was not the case, unless he is referring to its reconstitution after a hiatus of six years. He also lists the committee members (pp. 151-52): Movses Der Kalusdian, Chairman; Sarkis Tosunian, Secretary; Aram Kazanjian, Treasurer; Hovhannes Markarian and Sarkis Kalusdian, members at large. This information is also incorrect, at least in part, because Tosunian was still the Chairman during the monument inauguration in 1932. Lastly, Sherbetjian corroborates the fact that the SDHP refused to collaborate with the ARF in the monument project.

For issues pertaining to the monument since its conception, see *Husaper*, 16 September 1924; *Piunig*, 24 September 1924; *Aztag*, 16 November 1929, 2 August 1933; *Yeprad*, 5 September 1931.

<sup>116</sup> Georges Kévorkian, *La flotte française au secours des Arméniens en 1909 et 1915* (Rennes, France: Marines Éditions, 2008), p. 92.

<sup>117</sup> Magzarian, letter, 1 April 2010.

<sup>118</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru*, p. 152.

was unveiled. From one perspective, this edifice resembled one of the French frigates that had participated in the rescue operations in 1915; from a different angle, it represented and served as a church altar. There was an inscribed marble plaque under each of the two small domes. One read in Armenian: "TO THE LIBERATOR FRANCE: The Armenians of Musa Dagh for sixty days resisted the enemy heroically and were rescued from the danger of annihilation on 14 September 1915, with the help of the [French] marine of the Syrian region, which was commanded by vice-admiral DARTIGE DU FOURNET." Written in French, the other plaque had a slightly different content: "TO THE FRENCH MARINE: The Armenians of MUSA DAGH, threatened by extermination, after a heroic resistance, saved by the [French] squadron of Syria under the command of vice-admiral DARTIGE DU FOURNET, 14 Sept. 1915, IN MEMORY AND GRATITUDE."<sup>119</sup> The inauguration began with the "*Marseillaise*," after which Movses Der Kalusdian thanked and praised "magnificent France" for using its weapons not to destroy, but rather to safeguard peace. In turn, Sarkis Tosunian delivered "a beautiful address" in French.<sup>120</sup> It must be noted that the Armenians did not mention "Turks" and "Turkey" in their speeches, because they were censored by the French authorities for fear of antagonizing the Turkish government, a concern that Charles de Chambrun, the French Ambassador to Ankara from 1928-33, raised.<sup>121</sup> The French also reportedly prevented "many" other speeches and special celebratory events from taking place.<sup>122</sup> Speaking on behalf of the High Commissioner, Colonel Huguenet surveyed amicable Franco-Armenian bonds through the course of history, considering the French assistance in 1915 a natural continuation of that close relationship. In a clearly political message, he also reminded the audience—estimated at several thousand persons—that only under French protection could such a monument symbolize freedom and friendship among peoples. A French poet and teacher from Aleppo named Paul Baurain then read an unpublished poem dedicated to Musa Dagh, after which Vice-Admiral Henri Joubert, commander of the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet, paid homage to the Armenian martyrs. The celebrations continued with an official banquet held near the centuries-old plane tree of Kheder Beg.<sup>123</sup> On the following day, Tosunian, as the President of the Deliverance Monument Committee of Musa Dagh, sent a courier to Admiral Dartige du Fournet, then living in retirement in Périgueux en Dordogne, France,

<sup>119</sup> *Aztag*, 24 September 1932, 28 September 1932.

<sup>120</sup> For Der Kalusdian's speech, see *ibid.*, 29 September 1932.

<sup>121</sup> Kévorkian, *La flotte française*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>122</sup> *Harach*, 5 October 1932.

<sup>123</sup> *Aztag*, 24 September 1932, 28 September 1932, 29 September 1932, 13 October 1932.

expressing his deep gratitude.<sup>124</sup>

As before, the SDHP declined to take part in the inauguration. The Vakef chapter, for instance, opted against official participation, instead letting its comrades decide on their own. It likewise discussed the possibility of forcefully bringing down the Armenian tricolor that would be hoisted atop a makeshift arch welcoming the French guests and replacing it with “the real flag of the Musa Dagh heroic battle.” In the end, “considering the fact that they [the ARF] will prevent us by a military force, and that we can become the cause of bloodshed,” the Vakef chapter refrained from taking such action.<sup>125</sup>

Beside holidays and celebrations, outdoor cafés served as popular hangouts. Of the total of seventeen cafés operating in Musa Dagh, one was located in Vakef,<sup>126</sup> two in Chevlik on the beach,<sup>127</sup> four in Haji Habibli,<sup>128</sup> four in Kheder Beg,<sup>129</sup> and six in Bitias,<sup>130</sup> Yoghunoluk and Kabusiye having none.<sup>131</sup> While the ones in the first three places entertained natives mainly, those in Kheder Beg and especially Bitias received a large number of vacationers and weekend visitors as well. Three of the Kheder Beg cafés were situated beside the plane tree mentioned above, and the fourth one at a short distance away.<sup>132</sup> The cafés in Bitias were also established near water: Hagop Filian’s (“Fllig”) at Frangen Aghpayre (The European’s Spring); Movses Makhulian’s and Ohannes Keosheian’s at Sev Aghpiur; Movses Chaparian’s (“Happig”) at Hovhan Vosgeperan; and Movses Stambulian’s (“Chellig”) at Shibil Ayn.<sup>133</sup> The sixth café, that of Hetum Filian, a man known for his wit and shrewdness, was arranged around a large pool built by a retired British diplomat called John Barker (The Frank, i.e., European) a

<sup>124</sup> Kévorkian, *La flotte française*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>125</sup> AMCC, SDHP *Vakefi Dedrag*, Consultative Meeting, 16 September 1932.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Misak Blutian, 12 June 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Sarkis Asadur Kasamian, 28 January 1989, Hollywood, California; interview with Sarkis Serop Giuzelyan, 28 January 1989, Hollywood, California.

<sup>128</sup> Boghos Madurian, “Hayreni Gdurin Dag” (Under the Roof of the Fatherland), in *Hushamadian*, p. 463.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.

<sup>131</sup> For Yoghunoluk, interview with Hajian; for Kabusiye, interview with Kasamian; interview with Giuzelyan.

<sup>132</sup> Madurian, “Hayreni Gdurin Dag,” p. 463

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian; interview with Karkazian.

century before.<sup>134</sup> According to an eyewitness, “home prepared meals were often carried and served in the various cafés especially on weekends when fathers and guests joined the family.”<sup>135</sup> Hetum’s Café, as it was popularly known, also offered “cold beer, soda, olives, mezza or hors d’oeuvres and fresh baked *tonir* bread,”<sup>136</sup> in addition to hookahs and *lokhum* (a delight).<sup>137</sup> “One could also have a cup of Turkish coffee with friends and expect the proprietor to tell one’s fortune at the end.”<sup>138</sup> In short, a pleasant ambience prevailed, whereby families and friends gathered together to have fun, chit-chat, knit, play cards and backgammon, and listen to music broadcast via a “His Master’s Voice” gramophone.<sup>139</sup>

Amateur as well as professional photographers took snapshots of vacationers enjoying such leisure, important events, and scenery. Among the professional photographers one could find the highly reputed Vartan Derunian of Aleppo, who was commissioned by the Syrian government to take pictures of noteworthy places in the Sanjak for official use,<sup>140</sup> and Photo Gulbeng, also from Aleppo, whose photographs of the 1932 inauguration of the Damlajik monument appeared on the front pages of *Aztag* newspaper.<sup>141</sup> Interestingly, some films were screened at the Vosdayn textile factory by an Armenian from Aleppo named Misak Bzhian (or Abajian), who utilized the factory’s motor-generated electricity, something that did not exist elsewhere in Musa Dagh.<sup>142</sup> In addition, three tennis courts delighted sports enthusiasts. More specifically, “the central tennis court on Renjilian property was not paved, but it was enclosed by vertical *batteurs* (bamboo mats). Two alternate courts were constructed in the northern section of the village, but discarded after a year. Of course the courts were primarily for our visitors, but occasionally some of our young men participated

<sup>134</sup> For John Barker’s association with Musa Dagh, see Vahram Leon Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 37-41.

<sup>135</sup> Magzarian, letter.

<sup>136</sup> Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian, and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in A Dialect of Its Own* (N. p.: www.Lulu.com, 2008), p. 160.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Movses Filian, 12 September 1977, San Francisco, California.

<sup>138</sup> Magzarian et al., *Recipes*, p. 160.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Filian; Dr. Yacoubian, letter.

<sup>140</sup> “Varbed Lusangarich me” (A Master Photographer), in Teotig, ed., *Amenun Daretsuytse 1928* (Everyone’s Almanac 1928), 22<sup>nd</sup> year (Paris: Masis Press, 1928): 549-50. Derunian’s pictures in my private collection are published as postcards and depict Alexandretta, Soghukoluk, Beylan, Kirik Khan, Antioch, Yoghunoluk, etc.

<sup>141</sup> See *Aztag*, 24 September 1932, 28 September 1932, 29 September 1932.

<sup>142</sup> Interview with Tateos Bakkalian, 14 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

in a match.”<sup>143</sup> Bicycle rentals helped other outdoorsmen to ride the village trails through lush vegetation.<sup>144</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Ominous political clouds marred the 1938 vacation season. Referring to the new Franco-Turkish regime in the Sanjak, now called the Republic of Hatay, an Armenian newspaper asked: “Who can think about vacationing in this political turmoil when the general mood is one of changing places, that is, leaving the Sanjak altogether?”<sup>145</sup> Despite the nice weather and the abundance and affordability of fruit, the number of vacationers dropped by 75 percent, from 400 families in the previous year to 100 families.<sup>146</sup> In addition to voluntary restraint, there existed official restrictions. Beginning on 6 August the French authorities in Beirut forbade leisure travel to Musa Dagh; only those with previously-obtained round-trip permits were allowed to go.<sup>147</sup> In Aleppo, while permission was granted for travel to other Armenian resorts in the Sanjak such as Atik and Soghukoluk, families destined for Bitias were denied a visa. This policy, “it is said,” resulted from French deference to the wishes of the Turkish authorities in Alexandretta.<sup>148</sup> In any case, neither the French nor the Turks saw a need to pursue this policy thereafter, for in the following summer most Armenians and other ethnic groups exited the Sanjak fearful of direct Turkish rule (to be established on 23 July 1939).

As the Armenians of Musa Dagh resettled in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley, their new home, called Anjar, gradually developed as a summer resort for a number of Armenians from Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere. This reincarnation has retained some of the features characteristic of the bygone days in Bitias and Musa Dagh in general.

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<sup>143</sup> Magzarian letter, 23 October 2008.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Movses Sarkis Sherbetjian; interview with Makhulian Jambazian.

<sup>145</sup> *Aztag*, 18 June 1938.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 July 1938, 11 August 1938, 26 August 1938; *Yeprad*, 7 August 1938.

<sup>147</sup> *Zartonk* (Awakening) (Beirut), 16 August 1938.

<sup>148</sup> *Aztag*, 26 August 1938.

## *Chapter 8* CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS

Socioeconomic woes that kept the Musa Daghians generally poor failed to suppress their cultural yearnings. Despite their limited means and formal education, they spared no effort in displaying their artistic and intellectual potentials in a variety of ways. They established libraries, read books, narrated stories, produced plays, published and subscribed to periodicals, gave and/or attended lectures, and organized all sorts of cultural programs. The Musa Daghians were rich in talents and aspirations and ingeniously developed these into a full range of cultural and community expressions. Voluntary associations played a major role in this overall drive. As a result of these developments, participants and audiences alike found cause to appreciate and enjoy some of the finer things in life amidst persistent existential challenges. Folk music, songs, and dances, while important from an ethnographic point of view, fall outside the scope of this chapter.

### *Libraries, Reading, Storytelling*

The two Armenian political parties, namely, the Social Democrat Hnchagian Party (SDHP) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), spurred reading in Musa Dagh for the dual purpose of educating and indoctrinating their respective memberships and enlightening the public at large. On returning to his native Haji Habibli in early October 1920, SDHP activist Hapet Isgenderian tried in vain (due to memory lapse) to recover the party’s library books that he and a comrade had hidden in a cave in 1915. Only after stumbling on some scattered loose leaflets was he able to discover the books, some of which had deteriorated beyond repair. Those found intact carried such titles as *Young Turkey*, *Garibaldi*, *We and They*, *The Working Class*, etc.<sup>1</sup> This meager collection constituted the SDHP library in Haji Habibli, dubbed *Bantukhd* (Temporary Migrant Worker). For its enrichment, books, newspapers, and pictures were solicited through the official party mouthpiece in Aleppo.<sup>2</sup> A modest SDHP library likewise existed in Vakef.<sup>3</sup>

After the fading of Haji Habibli’s prominence in the SDHP caused by the assassination of leading members Setrag and Hapet Isgenderian in 1921-22,

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<sup>1</sup> *Yeridasart Hayasdan* (Young Armenia) (Providence), 7 March 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) (Aleppo), 5 March 1922.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November 1924.

as well as the subsequent banishment of their three surviving brothers from the area, SDHP power gravitated to Yoghunoluk. This shift also necessitated the relocation there of *Bantukhd* as the party's central library. Its management was entrusted to a board, which in 1925 consisted of nine members elected by the party's Fourth Regional General Representative Assembly.<sup>4</sup> In the Sixth Assembly, held in September 1930, delegates pledged to donate their personal books to the collection.<sup>5</sup> These measures notwithstanding, for unspecified reasons, the library failed to grow and even became defunct, at least for a while. Accordingly, the Seventh Assembly in December 1932 resolved to hasten the library's reorganization. This could be achieved by charging two suitable comrades with collecting books from individuals, sorting them, and placing them at the disposal of the party's Representative Body.<sup>6</sup> A month later, in January 1933, that Body took upon itself to tour the various villages, gather books found among comrades, and ultimately shelve them in a depository that was not yet built.<sup>7</sup> Due to the lack of further evidence, it is hard to tell whether the *Bantukhd* became more functional thereafter.

The ARF also established a central library in Yoghunoluk. As early as 28 February 1920 the party resolved to inaugurate a library for the Musa Dagh district. Its "doors will be open for nationals from both genders, so that the entire book-loving public will benefit."<sup>8</sup> In order to augment the existing core of fifty to sixty tomes, donations were solicited from affiliates abroad. The Egypt ARF obliged by sending about 400 books and the United States East Coast ARF an undetermined number, as a result of which the Yoghunoluk library boasted more than 500 volumes. A local Musa Dagh raffle also netted 5 Ottoman gold

<sup>4</sup> Armenian Mekhitarist Catholic Congregation Archives, Vienna, Austria, (hereafter AMCC), *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun 1920[-1938]*, *Adenakrutian yev Artzanakrutian Dedrag* ([Social Democrat] Hnchagian Party 1920[-1938], Minutes and Records Notebook) (hereafter *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*), minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 26 October 1924, Yoghunoluk; Fourth Regional Delegates' Meeting of Musa Dagh SDHP Chapters, 1 March 1925, Vakef. The library board members were Isgender Mardirian, Setrag Haygazyan, Khacher Kartunian, Kh. Boghosian, Sarkis Havadian, Tateos Babigian, H. Yeramian, Nshan Iprajian, and MisakYaralian.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., minutes of the Sixth SDHP Musa Dagh Region Delegates' Meeting, 11 September 1930, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., minutes of the Seventh SDHP Musa Dagh Region Delegates' Meeting, 25 December 1932, Kheder Beg.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 21 January 1933, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>8</sup> Armenian Revolutionary Federation Archives, Boston (now in Watertown), Massachusetts (hereafter ARF), File 963/26, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1920 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1920), Second Consultative Meeting of Musa Dagh ARF, 28 February 1920, Kheder Beg.

liras to be used for the same purpose.<sup>9</sup> Alongside this "gloriously decorated" library<sup>10</sup> there operated a "reading hall" named after Papken Siuni (Bedros Parian),<sup>11</sup> the young ARF leader who lost his life while attempting to occupy the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople in 1896 in order to draw the attention of the Great Powers to the plight of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>12</sup> The ARF leadership in Syria and Lebanon in its 1932-33 activities report listed the Yoghunoluk central library as one of the most important ones alongside those found in Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, and Kesab.<sup>13</sup> In 1921, an ARF library of unspecified size also operated in Kheder Beg.<sup>14</sup>

Outside the political realm, the Bitias Protestants developed their own library thanks in part to a number of books donated by the *Krisdoneagan Chanits Engeragtsutiun* (Christian Endeavor Society) of Aleppo to "the Library of the Christian Youth CHANITS Society of Bitias."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, although the AGBU chapters did not have their separate libraries or central library, the Union's headquarters in Cairo regularly sent official publications to Musa Dagh. Among them wall calendars, as "an illustrated symbolic portrayal of AGBU life and activity," were to be used as "a propaganda tool."<sup>16</sup> Their quantity and price

<sup>9</sup> ARF, File 966/29, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), Report of Activist M. Der Kalusdian; idem, S. Sherbetjian and Shant Diran, Six-Month Report of Svedia ARF to Lernavayr (Cilicia) ARF Central Committee, 9 September 1921; idem, File 969/32, ARF Red Mountain Committee of Svedia to ARF Central Committee of America in Boston, 16 March 1922; *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) (Cairo), 8 October 1921; *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) (Boston), 26 November 1921.

<sup>10</sup> *Hayrenik*, 12 February 1922.

<sup>11</sup> *Husaper*, 12 February 1924.

<sup>12</sup> For the Bank Ottoman incident, consult Armen Garo (Karekin Bastrmajian), *Bank Ottoman: Memoirs of Armen Garo*, Haig T. Partizian, trans., Simon Vratzian, ed. (Detroit, Michigan: Armen Topouzian, publisher, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> ARF, File 997/d/1, *H.H.T. Lernavayri G.G. Shrchaperaganner yev Zanazan Tghtagtsutiunner, 1933/1934 t.* (ARF Lernavayr Central Committee Circulars and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1933-1934), Report of Lernavayr Central Committee (1932 September-1933 July) to the Fourteenth Regional Delegates Congress.

<sup>14</sup> *Giligia* (Cilicia) (Adana), 30 July 1921.

<sup>15</sup> This information is based on the fact that in the early 1970s in the CHANITS social hall in Anjar, Lebanon, I came across the following book with dual titles: *Mdadzutiunk Kisagi* (Contemplations by Kisagi); *Donag.[an] Orer* (Holidays) (Fr. [?]: Armenian Educational Foundation of New York, 1925), which contained a hand-written inscription about the donation.

<sup>16</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union Archives, Saddle Brook, New Jersey (now New York, New York) (hereafter AGBU/SB), File 14 D, *H.P.E. Miutian Sisvan Varzharanner (Svedia), Tghtagtsutiunner 1923-1927* (AGBU Sisvan Schools [Svedia]: Correspondence 1923-1927), AGBU Cairo to Krikor Aroyan, 19 November 1925. In all, seventeen 1925 calendars were sent.

differed from place to place and year to year: twelve 1937 calendars mailed to Kabusiye were to be sold for 40 Syrian piasters each<sup>17</sup>; six and five 1938 calendars to Yoghunoluk and Vakef, respectively, for 10 French francs each<sup>18</sup>; ten 1939 calendars to Vakef, for 60 Syrian piasters each,<sup>19</sup> and so on. Similarly, Cairo in 1925 dispatched twenty copies of an explanatory booklet regarding donations and bequests. The booklet was to be distributed free of charge to AGBU members at Haji Habibli. “Apply any possible means,” urged Cairo, to “secure donations and bequests.” Should difficulties arise, “[we are] ready to provide you with the necessary clarifications, by means of the Cairo Wills Committee.”<sup>20</sup> Last but not least, the Vakef and Haji Habibli chapters each received five copies of Vahan Kiurkjian’s *H.P.E. Miutian Ksanamiage (1906-1926)* (AGB Union’s Twentieth Anniversary [1906-1926]), to be donated to members and sympathizers.<sup>21</sup>

Besides the organizational libraries and AGBU publications, certain individuals owned private collections. Fr. Vartan Varteresian of Haji Habibli was the most active bibliophile in all of Musa Dagh. As such, he solicited all sorts of published material from Armenian libraries, editorial offices, and churches around the world, restoring and/or binding them as needed. He started his collection before World War I. For instance, in 1912 he requested from the ARF *Troshag* (Flag) editorial office in Geneva, Switzerland, miscellaneous issues from 1908-12 missing from his private collection of that official organ, in addition to the works of the poet Siamanto (Adom Yarjanian) and other books.<sup>22</sup> On the eve of the 1915 resistance to the Genocide, he hid five boxes of books as “noble treasure” in a secure location hoping to retrieve them once the cataclysm ended. At the Port Said refugee camp, Fr. Varteresian resumed correspondence with other Armenian centers in pursuit of his passion. For example, in a letter dated 9 November 1915 to Catholicos of All Armenians Kevork V Sureniants at Echmiadzin, Russian (Eastern) Armenia, he requested twenty missing issues of the *Ararad* journal from the 1912-15 period, eighteen New Year calendars from the 1880-1915 period and up to twenty-five copies of the 1916 calendar, five

<sup>17</sup> Armenian General Benevolent Union Archives, Cairo, Egypt, (hereafter AGBU/Cairo), Binder 195, Cairo AGBU to Kabusiye AGBU Chair, 24 December 1936.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Binder 167, letter from Cairo AGBU to Yoghunoluk AGBU Chair, 27 November 1937; Dikran Kuyumjian and Movses Khayoian to AGBU Central Board of Egypt, 10 January 1938.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Binder 134, Cairo AGBU to Vakef AGBU Chair, 5 December 1938.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Cairo AGBU to Haji Habibli AGBU Chair, 29 December 1925.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Cairo AGBU to Vakef AGBU Chair, 17 September 1926; idem, Cairo AGBU to Haji Habibli AGBU Chair, 17 September 1926.

<sup>22</sup> ARF, File 956/19, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide 1912 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1912), Fr. Vartan Varteresian to *Troshag* Editorship, 1/14 November 1912.

literary and religious tomes, and an unspecified illustrated collection printed in 1910.<sup>23</sup> In 1917, he wrote again to the *Troshag* editorship, asking for the following: other missing issues of that periodical; a number of books dealing with socialism, revolution, and liberation; the historical novels of Raffi (Hagop Melik Hagopian); books printed in the Caucasus and Constantinople; and issues of *Azadamard* (Freedom Fight) paper, likewise published in the Ottoman capital.<sup>24</sup> At the time of his repatriation from the camp on 24 October 1919, he carried along twenty boxes of personal belongings; ten of them contained books.<sup>25</sup> Back in Musa Dagh, his senior colleague, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian, wrote: “...Fr. Vartan is not satisfied even if I give him [the entire village of] Y.[oghun]oluk; he writes a letter to any address that he comes across to ask for a book.”<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Yoghunoluk native Mihran Dmianian took pride in his “rich library” that consisted of many books in Armenian, English, French, and Arabic (or Ottoman Turkish in Arabic script) that rested on wall-mounted shelves. In the impressionable mind of Boghos Lakisian, a native boy, “perhaps the entire village and Musa Dagh [generally] did not have this many books” which people wanted to borrow. Lakisian further wondered: Could it be that those books were donated by American missionaries who may have conducted worship services at the Dmianian household, whose matriarch, at least, belonged to the Protestant denomination?<sup>27</sup> Marta Sherbetjian Shemmassian of Bitias, on the other hand, whose formal education did not surpass second grade, used to place book orders from Aleppo. They included Armenian translations of *La Porteuse de pain*, *Les Misérables*, *Lady Isabel*, *Treasure Island*, etc., in addition to novels depicting the late nineteenth-early twentieth century Armenian revolutionary episode.<sup>28</sup> Others must also have kept books, albeit in modest quantities.

<sup>23</sup> Sandro Behbudyian, compiler, *Vaverakrer Hay Yegeghetsu Badmutyan*, Book IV, *Sahag P Khabayan Gatoghigos Giligio 1891-1940 TT* (Documents for the History of the Armenian Church, Book IV, Pontiff Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia 1891-1940) (Yerevan: “Vosgan Yerevantsi” Publication, 1997), pp. 224-25.

<sup>24</sup> ARF, File 1051/32, *Yekibdosi Gomide 1917 t.* (Egypt Committee, 1917), Fr. Varteresian to *Troshag*, 19 March 1917, 1 June 1917.

<sup>25</sup> M. Salpi (Dr. Aram Sahagian), ed., *Aliagner yev Khliagner. Hay Vranakaghakin Darekirke* (Little Waves and Wrecks: The Yearbook of the Armenian Tent City) (Alexandria, Egypt: A. Kasbarian Press, 1920), p. 268.

<sup>26</sup> Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia Archives, Antlias, Lebanon, (hereafter ACC), File 22/1, *Jebel Musa-Svedia 1920-1940*, Fr. Apraham Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II, 27 June 1925.

<sup>27</sup> Boghos Armenag Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn* (Greeting to Musa Dagh) (Yerevan: “Orenk yev Iraganutyun” Publishing House, 2005), p. 196.

<sup>28</sup> Telephone interview with Rosine Shemmassian Kundakjian, 17 November 2012, Granada Hills, California-Fresno, California.

Some individuals shared their books with small groups of relatives, neighbors, and friends, who gathered at homes late on winter afternoons to listen to stories read to them chapter by chapter in serial form. Such reading sessions offered a rare exposure to Armenian and world literature for many a curious listener, thereby serving as informal schools. In the Maghzanian quarter of Bitias, for instance, two or three homes regularly took turns to welcome listeners around the fire pits in their living rooms, and to offer homemade sweets such as *zilibig* and *khavez*, roasted corn, garbanzo, pumpkin seeds, Aleppo pistachios, and *pivig* (terebinth fruit). The following popular books from French literature were read out loud in Armenian translation: Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and *Ruy Blas*; Alexandre Dumas père's *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*; Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and so on. Hovhannes Tumanian's folktales and the historical novels of Raffi and Dzerents (Dr. Hovsep Shishmanian) numbered among the Armenian books enjoyed.<sup>29</sup>

Alberta Magzanian reminisced about one particular women's "book club":

Late afternoons, especially during the winter months, life in the village slowed down. Mom's 'book club' met during those quiet afternoons. Since we did not have a public library and since most people did not have books with the exception of the Bible, Mom's club was limited to a single copy of the selected book. The books often came from Pop's small collection [that he had brought with him from the United States].

The women passed the single copy around the circle and each person read a paragraph aloud, followed by a discussion. Because of the Great War, Mom's education stopped with the second grade so she hadn't learned to read well, but somehow she was still able to take part. After returning home from school, [my sister] Anna and I would sit in a corner and listen attentively. We spent one winter listening to Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. With the rarity of books, such stories became precious. For us, as the women talked about poor Cosette, Jean Valjean and Javert, the characters took on real personalities.<sup>30</sup>

On occasion the book owners recounted, rather than read, the stories to their entourage. A case in point: Anania Chanchanian, a comb maker in Yoghunoluk, acquired his books from Antioch in autumn and narrated them,

<sup>29</sup> Levon Shemmassian, letter to the author, received 20 January 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Alberta Magzanian, Anna Magzanian, and Louisa Magzanian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in A Dialect of Its Own* (N.p.: Lulu.com, 2008), p. 155.

especially Raffi's voluminous novels, in great detail to his eager male friends in winter. Due to conservatism in Yoghunoluk, females did not participate, at least in this particular case. The listening guests contributed fruit, acorns, finely-shredded tobacco, and homemade spirits. These wonderful evenings often lasted until dawn. "Life was very simple, pleasant and care free, there was no radio or television..." The people drew their entertainment and education directly from each other.<sup>31</sup>

While the bulk of books read in Musa Dagh were written by Armenians from outside Musa Dagh and foreigners, two local individuals were represented. A. Leylani (pen name of Movses Der Kalusdian) published two short oeuvres: *Yerazanki Tashkhuran* (Clay Plate of Dreams, prose) and *Siro Sgih* (Chalice of Love). *Yerazanki Tashkhuran* begins with a prose poem entitled "The Boat of the Ideal" that the author had actually composed on 8 September 1915, that is, during the resistance, while working to draw the attention of an Allied battleship to save them.<sup>32</sup> The rest of the book contains his musings under such general headings as "Fairytale Giants," "New God, New Religion, New World," and "Vanity of Vanities."<sup>33</sup> *Siro Sgih* is his collection of prose poetry, with two Musa Dagh tales, "Holy Friday's Spring" and "The Weeping Rock."<sup>34</sup>

The second native author was the Protestant Pastor Dikran Antreasian, who had served as the Chairman of the Central Administrative Council during the 1915 resistance. In October, shortly after the Musa Daghians landed in Egypt, Rev. Antreasian delivered a public lecture at the American Mission in Cairo about their saga. He subsequently published his talk as a booklet in English, French, and German translations. The original Armenian version is entitled *Zeytuni Antznadvutiune yev Svedio Inknabashdbanutuine* (The Surrender of Zeytun and the Self-Defense of Svedia).<sup>35</sup> In 1935 a revised, expanded edition appeared in Aleppo entitled *Zeytuni Darakrutiune yev Svedio Absdamputiune* (The Deportation of Zeytun and the Uprising of Svedia).<sup>36</sup> It remains one of the most reliable primary sources about the factual events of the Musa Dagh

<sup>31</sup> Mardig Chanchanian, letter to the author, 2 December 2012. Mardig is Anania's son.

<sup>32</sup> The poem was originally published in the 4 October 1915 issue of *Arev* (Sun) (Alexandria), with an editorial commentary.

<sup>33</sup> A. Leylani, *Yerazanki Tashkhuran* (Clay Plate of Dreams) (Beirut: Aztag Press, 1928), 33 pp.

<sup>34</sup> A. Leylani, *Siro Sgih* (Chalice of Love) (Beirut: Hraztan Printing, 1929), 52 pp.

<sup>35</sup> Dikran Antreasian, *Zeytuni Antznadvutiune yev Svedio Inknabashdbanutuine* (The Surrender of Zeytun and the Self-Defense of Svedia) (Cairo: Z. Berberian Printing, 1915). A shorter version was also translated into English (1915), French (1916), and German (1919).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., *Zeytuni Darakrutiune yev Svedio Absdamputiune* (The Deportation of Zeytun and the Uprising of Svedia), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Aleppo: College Printing, 1935).

resistance. Other writers born in Musa Dagh, including Yetvart Boyajian and Boghos Snabian, would publish monographs of various genres in later decades.<sup>37</sup>

Books certainly satisfied and gave further impetus to intellectual and literary curiosity within some segments of society. But storytelling appears to have been more pervasive. Folktales, spiced up by master narrators in each village, carried listeners off into wonderful worlds of the imagination. Even shepherds and charcoal and gunpowder makers, who stayed away from home for long periods at a time, retreated to certain sites in order to carry on this most enchanting pastime. Local storytellers likewise competed with itinerant counterparts. As a rule, the narrators “began their sessions by reciting verses of fallacies and comic inconsistencies to the merriment of the audience. This comic relief was called *takarlama* and was often rendered in Turkish.” The heroes, around which the stories revolved, included “kings, princes, princesses, traders, caravan owners, migrant workers, or peasant men and women,” whose character mattered more than their status or occupation. Morality, integrity, pride, honor, daring, resistance to pressure, wit, wisdom, virtue, ingenuity, etc., all characterized the heroes and heroines. The articulation of these values, virtues, and/or desired attributes often transformed the folktales into a forum of social commentary on real-life situations such as the 1915 resistance to the Genocide and the survivors’ subsequent encampment near Port Said, Egypt.<sup>38</sup>

To summarize, libraries, private book collections, reading, and storytelling provided general knowledge, cultural and artistic feats, nationalistic sentiments, moral and ethical values, cherished personal traits, and so on. By doing so, they simultaneously refined the cognitive skills, enhanced the critical thinking ability, and strengthened the imaginations and resolve of significant numbers of Musa Daghians. The people of the villages were also exposed to the outside world,

<sup>37</sup> For lists, brief biographies, and literary samples of Musa Daghian writers, see Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian, eds, *Hushamadian Musa Leran* (Memorial Book of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970), pp. 717-840; Mousaler online/Anjar, “Prominent Musa Daghians” (formerly “Famous Anjarians”).

<sup>38</sup> Sona Zeitlian, “The Oral Tradition of Musa Dagh/Musaler,” unpublished paper delivered at a conference on “The Armenian Communities of the Northeastern Mediterranean (Musa Dagh—Kessab—Dört-Yol” as part of the UCLA International Conference Series on Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, University of California, Los Angeles, 29 February-1 March 2008. For orally-transmitted Musa Dagh tales, see also Sona Zeitlian, compiler and cultivator, *Musa Leran Zhoghovrtagan Hekiatner* (Folk Tales of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 1973); Verzhine Svazlyan, *Musa Ler* (Musa Dagh), (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1984); Tovmas Habeshian, *Musa-Daghi Babenagan Artzakankner* (Ancestral Echoes of Musa Dagh) (Beirut: Erepuni Press, 1986), pp. 160-62; idem, *Hishadagaran Musa-Leran Parpari* (Colophon of the Musa Dagh Dialect) (N.P.: n.p., 1993).

thereby engaging in a discourse with others beyond their environment.

### Theater

The Armenians of Musa Dagh manifested a particular fondness for the dramatic arts. Plays and skits constituted a part of many school functions, holiday celebrations and/or important anniversaries. They were also staged separately by various groups and organizations. The dramas recommenced in 1922, when some normalcy returned after a period of tribulations. That year, the Haji Habibli *Tbrotsasirats Miutiun* (School-Loving Union) staged a most popular play in the *Surp Asdvadzadzin* (Holy Mother of God) Apostolic Church—the Battle of Avarayr (also known as the “Eagle of Avarayr”), a religious-political clash that pitted Armenian forces, led by Commander-in-Chief Vartan Mamigonian, against the Persians in 451 AD. At the invitation of AGBU school Principal Krikor Aroyan, Movses Der Kalusdian gave a speech on the occasion.<sup>39</sup> Fr. Varteresian objected when the play was repeated in the same venue two years later. He wrote:

Did I err by saying that the “The Eagle of Avarayr” drama to be presented in the consecrated church on the occasion of Vartan’s holiday was improper? They labeled me with cross-stealer, informant and still other adjectives, whose mention is shameful... They presented the drama, but did they enjoy, I wonder, their desecrating of the Holy Cathedral? Is it not that even the foundation of the columns is dedicated...to this or that apostle? What about the [holy] table, the Stage [i.e., altar], where the crowd [is] huddled with various and miscellaneous improprieties [to] watch [the play] and be amused?

... Why would not the throng crowded during the drama, at least on Sundays, huddle together in half, let me say quarter, amount, and instead of watching the play, read to God from the depths of the heart? Would it not be better, I wonder?<sup>40</sup>

The next performance, S[etrag]. Shahen’s *Danchvadznere* (The Tortured), took place on Sunday, 27 July 1924.<sup>41</sup> Because the play required a more suitable facility, the *Tbrotsasirats* cleaned up the interior of the unfinished local school, removed rocks and thorns, flattened the ground, and built the roof with wood

<sup>39</sup> Isgender Mardirian, letter to the author, 12 December 1977.

<sup>40</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Fr. Vartan Varteresian to Catholicos Sahag II, 8 May 1924.

<sup>41</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 5 August 1924.

from the nearby forest. It also sold tickets to vacationers in the neighboring resort of Bitias. The women of the community prepared dinners and sold them for 1 *mejidy*. Scene One opened with the refugees, adults and minors alike, filing by a well to quench their thirst and protesting their fate. The audience followed the plot with deep understanding.<sup>42</sup> A press report covering this particular production stated that Haji Habibli was the only village in Musa Dagh where the female sex participated in such dramatic productions.<sup>43</sup> In fact women also took part in such productions in Bitias, as stated below.

In September 1925, an operetta called *Arshin Mal Alan* (The Cloth Peddler) was introduced to the Haji Habibli public.<sup>44</sup> Composed in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1913 by an Azeri (Tatar) named Uzeyir Hajibeyov, this four-act musical about a bachelor seeking a wife in Shushi, Mountainous Karabagh, had gained immense popularity among various ethnic groups in many countries around the globe.<sup>45</sup> In Armenia alone it was put on 965 times over eight years and in the United States forty-eight times within eight-and-a-half months.<sup>46</sup> Zeytun native Fr. Khachadur Kermanigian, one of the two active priests in Haji Habibli and a consummate musician, directed the *Tbrotsasirats* production. Speaking disapprovingly of the songs' popularity, Fr. Varteresian wrote that they "are so widespread among the populace today that they are sung on every occasion! And that operetta has left a bad influence; I am afraid sad incidents may occur." He added: the "operetta has roles inappropriate for our milieu, and... a clergyman should not have done it." As a result, according to Fr. Varteresian, even Fr. Kermanigian's parishioners admonished him, especially when he included actresses in the production. Actually, Fr. Varteresian's criticism arose from two concerns: the presence of two priests in Haji Habibli who had split the already meager church revenues, thereby diminishing his income, and his zeal to direct the faithful to a "sacred play," that is, "the Holy Mass," instead of temporal acts. Fr. Kermanigian and the *Tbrotsasirats* received invitations to perform the *Arshin Mal Alan* in the other villages of Musa Dagh as well.<sup>47</sup> They also staged Hajibeyov's *Mashadi Ibad*, also entitled *If Not That One, Then This One*,<sup>48</sup> a four-act musical comedy written in 1910 reflecting "social and everyday relations in

<sup>42</sup> Mardirian, letter.

<sup>43</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 5 August 1924.

<sup>44</sup> Mardirian, letter.

<sup>45</sup> "Arshin Mal Alan (operetta)," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, web, retrieved 23 December 2012.

<sup>46</sup> *Arshin Mal Alan* (The Cloth Peddler), (Boston: Baykar Press, 1924), p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Fr. Vartan Varteresian to Catholicos Sahag II, 8 October 1925.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Kevork Kerekian, 15 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

prerevolutionary Azerbaijan."<sup>49</sup> Lastly, the *Tbrotsasirats* in 1929 rehearsed "The Twenty Gallows," a work depicting the 1915 hanging of SDHP revolutionaries in Constantinople.<sup>50</sup>

Plays also constituted an important component of political party activity. By early March 1922 the Haji Habibli SDHP formed a "group of actors," called Aso, the nickname of Dikran Odian, a leading SDHP activist who established party chapters in and around Van and ultimately lost his life in that city's prison in 1915. The group's repertoire included *Jalaleddin* by Raffi and *Gargarun Gamar* (Protruding Arch).<sup>51</sup> Similarly, "theater-loving" SDHP youth on Saturday, 5 July 1924 staged a play called *Hagop-Hapet* (Kalusd Antreasian-Hapet Tevekelian)—both close allies of and arms smugglers to a revolutionary called Taniel Chavush at Shabin Karahisar—in the Yoghunoluk Apostolic Church. Because local conservatism hindered the participation of women, males played the female roles as well. The proceeds from ticket sales were earmarked for the "enrichment" of the Bantukhd library. According to a press report, this was the first theatrical performance ever in Yoghunoluk.<sup>52</sup> The Vakef SDHP Teenagers or Students Association in the fall of 1924 rehearsed for the premiere of *Bako* (a name).<sup>53</sup> Lastly, in order to stimulate party vitality and combat backwardness in the general district, in the early 1930s the SDHP leadership decided to form a central theatrical troupe composed of the most talented persons available and to seek formal recognition from the government in Antioch.<sup>54</sup> Information is lacking as to whether this project materialized.

In early March 1922 the ARF Vakef chapter held a requiem for party members killed in the 1915 resistance. After the religious ceremony, local and Kheder Beg teenagers staged "Nerses the Great," a medieval pontiff and author of some of the best *sharagans* (spiritual chants) sung as part of the Armenian Apostolic Church Liturgy. For his excellent portrayal, Hovhannes Markarian became "an instant revelation" in his leading role. Despite the play's weak construction and the actors' overall inexperience, the audience

<sup>49</sup> "If Not That One, Then This One," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, retrieved 23 December 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Mardirian, letter.

<sup>51</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 5 March 1922.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July 1924.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November 1924.

<sup>54</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, minutes of the Sixth Delegates' Meeting of Musa Dagh SDHP, 11 September 1930, Yoghunoluk; minutes of the Seventh Delegates' Meeting of Musa Dagh SDHP, 25 December 1932, Kheder Beg.

was “greatly impressed.”<sup>55</sup> In 1925, during the celebration of May 28 Armenian Independence Day held at the Yoghunoluk Apostolic Church, the local ARF Teenagers Association staged Bedros Turian’s *Sev Hoghere* (The Black Lands). The actors’ “young age and inexperience notwithstanding, they had grasped their roles and had been able to act them out to some measure.” Indeed, they “had spared no effort and money” for the play’s success, as “the costumes were orderly and the décor quite satisfactory.” The reporter covering the event concluded: “Nobody can deny that to date no other staging has been more successful than this one in this district.”<sup>56</sup>

The ARF-affiliated *Harachtimasirats* or *Tbrotsasirats Miutiun* (Progress-Loving or School-Loving Association) of Yoghunoluk on 18 December 1935 organized a cultural program whose second part consisted of a drama (title not mentioned). Director Hovhannes Der Kalusdian described the play’s purpose as threefold. First, “to inspire morality in children... Not to smoke, not to steal, to be friendly, to have the courage to defend justice against evil, to love the downtrodden and help them.” Second, “to acquaint our bashful children, through the stage, with daringness. Is it not that daringness, from the point of view of succeeding in life, especially today, is a necessity?” Third, to prepare the “children as absolutely the best Armenians... These children must pursue tomorrow the ideal of Armenian liberation...,” because “if we were not able to [succeed], these children must, like Noah’s dove, holding the Tricolor instead of the olive branch, herald to the Armenian people—Peace unto you, you are henceforth saved.”<sup>57</sup>

Year-end commencement exercises, called *amaverchi hantes*, and occasional cultural programs, called *hantes*, often included skits. During one such event at the Kabusiye Sisvan School, held on 10 July 1922, second and third graders presented a three-act drama about “national life,” with the overall acting deemed satisfactory. Three students, Minas Ghazekian, Movses Habeshian, and Zakaria Simonian, excelled in their performances.<sup>58</sup> Antranig Urfalian described the general theatrical scene in his native Kabusiye:

Our church also played the role of auditorium on the occasion of scholastic or youth and artistic or theatrical activities, without disturbing the soul of our religiously-fanatical masses. Apparently the commotion about

<sup>55</sup> *Husaper*, 25 March 1922.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 June 1925. See also *Nor Piunig* (New Phoenix) (Beirut), 10 June 1925.

<sup>57</sup> *Husaper*, 17 January 1936.

<sup>58</sup> *Arev*, 28 August 1922.

[the] “open and closed” [church altars to be used for other purposes] in Armenian communities in Constantinople and all of Turkey had not reached the boundaries of our native soil. How the youth’s staging of Vartanants, [Soghomon] Tehlirian’s judgment [for the 1921 assassination of Talat Pasha, the former Ottoman Interior Minister and one of the masterminds of the Armenian genocide], Jelaleddin, the Valley of Tear and other plays became a source of great excitement, under my [teacher] father’s direction! The décor, costumes, the entire staging, done through altogether primitive means, appeared unsurpassable, even superior to Hollywood productions unknown to us.<sup>59</sup>

In the same vein, on 4 May 1929 children at the Protestant School in Bitias put on a segment of satirist Hagop Baronian’s *Shoghokorte* (The Flatterer) under the direction of non-native teacher Arusiag Semerjian to the amusement of the audience.<sup>60</sup> On Armenian Christmas 1937 or 1938, an all-girl cast performed Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* in Armenian.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, on 24 February 1938 students and teenagers at Vakef staged the *Danchvadznere* in the presence of more than 500 viewers—certainly an overblown figure given Vakef’s small population size. The proceeds from ticket sales would be spent on the SDHP library and “for the spread of democratic [i.e., progressive] publications.”<sup>62</sup> There were other instances of artistic productions to fund community education.

The two church-affiliated associations in Bitias, the Apostolic *Yegeghetsasirats Miutiun* (Church-Loving Union) and the Protestant CHANITS, likewise seized every opportunity to go on stage. Raffi’s *Gaydzer* (Sparks) was the earliest performance put up by the *Yegeghetsasirats*.<sup>63</sup> Another, entitled *Miutian Okude* (The Benefit of Unity), took place on 13 April 1924; it depicted Kurdish exploitations of Armenians.<sup>64</sup> Subsequent productions included the following: *Tzayn me Hnchets* (A Voice Sounded); *Antranig* (an Armenian revolutionary hero); *Vartanants* (the Armenian vs. Persian Avarayr battle of 451 AD); *Charshili*

<sup>59</sup> Antranig Urfalian, *Gianki me Hedkerov* (On a Life’s Traces) (Palm Springs, California: Haig’s Printing, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> M. M. Keoroghluian, “Bitiastan Khaberler” (News from Bitias), *Nor Avedaper* (New Herald) (Aleppo) 2:10 (26 May 1929): 366-67.

<sup>61</sup> Telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 16 December 2012, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

<sup>62</sup> *Ararad* (Beirut), 4 March 1938.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Movses Makhulian, 10 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>64</sup> *Piunig* (Phoenix) (Beirut), 7 May 1924.

*Artin Agha* (A Merchant Called Artin Agha); *Arshin Mal Alan*.<sup>65</sup> Both men and women from the Association's Ladies' Auxiliary and its choir participated.<sup>66</sup> They were directed by non-native teacher Hrant Chakrian<sup>67</sup> and Fr. Kermanigian, who had been transferred from Haji Habibli to Bitias in the second half of the 1920s. Speaking of the latter, Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian testified: "He truly was a great artist. He was preparing the [drama about the] battle of Vartan... I was barely 13-14 years of age. He made hats for the actors from gourds [grown] in our village. He could make anything with his hands. He could dismantle and reassemble the whole piano [that he owned and used for mass and cultural activities]."<sup>68</sup>

The performances took place at the local parochial school, converted to a theater for the occasion.<sup>69</sup> As a rule, the "highest authorities," that is, the ARF leadership, occupied the front seats, followed by members of various committees, village notables, and so on. Native instrumentalists Yesayi Stambulian (oud) and Misak Filhannesian (violin) sat by the stage to play the "*Mer Hayrenik*" (Our Fatherland, the national anthem of present-day Armenia) as prelude, other patriotic songs between acts, and the "Pam Porodan" (They Boom Thunderously) as finale, with the audience joining in singing.<sup>70</sup>

The newly-formed CHANITS of Bitias in 1926 staged two dramas in the Protestant Church under the direction of non-native teacher Rahel Giurlekian: *Genghis Khan* (in Armenian) and *Yenova* (in Turkish). Pastor Hagop Giurlekian announced the events from the pulpit, asking worshippers to support them, while the mixed cast of boys and girls also sold handwritten tickets.<sup>71</sup> In the second half of the 1930s, the rejuvenated CHANITS performed William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* and Turian's *Sev Hoghere*. "In this way—wrote Levon Shemmajian, one of the teenaged actors—we were informed that there was a Europe and [that] there were great men like Shakespeare... and many more like him in France, Germany, Italy, etc., we thus came into contact with Europe."<sup>72</sup> Dramas also conveyed moral messages. In 1937 or 1938, the CHANITS put on a play about gambling and its devastating consequences. Reminisced John

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Makhulian.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Azniv Makhulian, 10 August 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Bedros Frankian, 8 July 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>68</sup> Shushanig Chaparian Papakhian, letter to the author, 10 May 1990.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Movses Makhulian.

<sup>70</sup> Sara Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter to the author, postmarked 19 November 1991.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Anna Kendirjian, 19 July 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>72</sup> Shemmajian, letter.

Kerkezian: "I don't know the name of the play. I know the following individuals were in the play: your [author's] father, Levon Shemmajian, Apraham Balabanian, my brother Movses ([nicknamed] Babazin) Kerkezian. I was your father's son in the play. The characters were sitting around a table and playing a card game, gambling. Your father lost everything. In frustration he took his son... and put him on the table as collateral. He put me on the table in a such [sic] force that it shook me up, and I still remember, feel it."<sup>73</sup>

Although there is no record that *Anush* (the heroine's name)—considered to be the Armenian "national" opera based on Hovhannes Tumanian's eponymous poem and composed by Armen Dikranian—was staged in Musa Dagh, its songs had gained widespread popularity. "The shepherds in the mountains, the farmers in the fields, [and]... the girls and young women, on holidays, by hanging ropes and swinging," all sang the arias and other songs sequentially. Even children, although oblivious to the meaning of the lyrics, joined the chorus with truncated utterances.<sup>74</sup>

All these productions demonstrated that the Musa Daghians adored dramas. Political parties, associations, and schools produced their own shows. In the absence of theaters, school halls and places of worship served as the venues. These productions often also became fund raisers especially for libraries and newspapers. While young women performed female roles in Bitias and Haji Habibli, people in Yoghunoluk remained adamantly opposed to women's participation alongside men. Information is lacking about the other three villages' attitudes towards gender. Non-native clergymen and educators seemed to be the main moving force behind the presentations, but the native talents played virtually all the roles and eventually stood on their own feet. When speaking of the outsiders' role in the promotion of the theater in Musa Dagh, one must also underscore the contribution of professional director-actors who visited the Armenian villages, especially Bitias, during the summer and produced shows of their own with the active involvement of local young men and women. (See Chapter 7). In any case, the plays selected in Musa Dagh carried mostly Armenian themes, but Azerbaijani operettas in translation were likewise enjoyed not only in Musa Dagh, but in Armenian communities worldwide. The Protestant community additionally adopted works from French and British literature. This could be explained by that denomination's exposure to Western culture through a century of contacts with American Protestant

<sup>73</sup> John Kerkezian, email to the author, 20 April 2010.

<sup>74</sup> Sarkis Penenyan, *Hushabadgerner Musa-Daghen yev Modig Antsialen* (Memorial Scenes from Musa Dagh and the Recent Past) (Los Angeles: Sarko Printing, 1993), pp. 14-5.

missionaries. Oddly enough, in the numerous sources consulted no mention is made whatsoever of the Catholic community of Musa Dagh with respect to cultural activity, dramas included.

### *The Periodical Press*

The periodical press constituted one of the most important channels through which Musa Daghians interacted with the outside world, both by publishing articles about life in their region and reading articles about events taking place elsewhere. A number of newspapers and journals—published almost exclusively by political parties, organizations, and other institutions—penetrated Musa Dagh. One, possibly two, local periodicals also saw the light of day. These periodicals served as media through which young Musa Daghians expressed themselves and sharpened their writing skills.

The first local paper was *Gogon* (Bud), a title based on publisher Kevork/George Nerses Kazanjian's *nom de guerre* as a member of the ARF.<sup>75</sup> The *Gogon* was scheduled to appear in Yoghunoluk on 1 May 1921,<sup>76</sup> but for some reason its first issue was released four days later, on 5 May.<sup>77</sup> “Although imperfect at its beginning,—wrote a newspaper in Adana—however, we have great hope that in the future it will be able to realize its initiators’ desires, which is to provide opportunity to novices to develop their literary talents.”<sup>78</sup>

The *Gogon* was described as a “manuscript literary monthly” and deemed an “extremely difficult task” which the Musa Dagh ARF undertook to combat “indifference” (perhaps caused by the lack of adequate education) on the part of youths regarding literature. Despite being a party initiative, the *Gogon* was conceived as “an entirely independent paper” that aimed to attract all talents irrespective of their political orientation—something that remained elusive for at least the first few months. A core group of ARF youths from Yoghunoluk and Kheder Beg—including George Kazanjian, Hovhannes Bursalian, Serop Sherbetjian, Nareg Aprahamian, and others—assumed all publication responsibilities. They hoped that they would be able to persevere in this labor-intensive endeavor to which “we have adhered wholeheartedly.”<sup>79</sup> Despite the

<sup>75</sup> ARF File 965/28, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), untitled ARF membership roster of Yoghunoluk, 1921.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, File 967/30, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1921 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1921), Hovhannes Bursalian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Shant Diran to ARF Lernavayr Central Committee in Adana, 25 April 1921.

<sup>77</sup> *Giligia*, 2 June 1921.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Hayrenik*, 13 August 1921.

best of intentions, only eight issues of the *Gogon* appeared, each time twenty copies of eight pages. Kazanjian prepared the master manuscript, while his teammates hand copied the rest. Given the differences in penmanship, which created layout problems, issues five through eight were mimeographed. Each ARF subcommittee in the district received copies for internal circulation, and the balance were sent to party newspaper offices, compatriots and supporters in Egypt and the United States.<sup>80</sup>

Although not a single copy of the *Gogon* has been discovered to date, some information does exist about its contents. The first issue carried an editorial entitled “*Mer Khoske*” (Our Say) that explained the paper’s purpose. The second issue editorial eulogized Légion Arménienne Sergeant Tovmas Aprahamian, who was killed in Cilicia in 1920; his play, “*Ariunod Jampen*” (Along the Bloody Road), was published posthumously in installments. Rev. Dikran Antreasian submitted three articles, one about Kesab, one about mutual assistance, and one about an unspecified subject. Movses Der Kalusdian penned two poems including “*Jpninere Dzaghger en*” (The Camomiles Have Blossomed). Dzaghig Sheridian, wife of poet Arsen Yergat, authored an essay. Hovhannes Bursalian wrote “*Gogonnere*” (The Buds), a prose poem. Each issue also covered local news. In addition, letters of congratulations and encouragement came from author Zaven Nalbandian (Zarevant), educator Hmayiag Amirian, and compatriot Karnig Der Kalusdian, all three residing in Egypt, as well as SDHP activist Hapet Isgenderian, who expressed his readiness to contribute articles in the future.<sup>81</sup>

*Gogon*’s termination, probably around New Year 1922, apparently did not discourage young writers from pursuing their journalistic dreams. In late 1924, the ARF Teenagers Association applied to the Musa Dagh ARF *Garmir Ler* (Red Mountain) Committee for a new journal. Permission was granted, with a caveat: the new publication had to be “placed on neutral ground,” meaning, officially it would not appear as an ARF-sponsored paper, because, as explained below, the Musa Dagh ARF had serious misgivings about a formal ARF newspaper in Syria and Lebanon. The Musa Dagh ARF in January 1925 assigned a special committee—consisting of Movses Der Kalusdian, Sarkis Tosunian, Hovhannes Markarian, George Kazanjian, and Harutiun Boyajian—to assist in the local

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Kevork/George N. Kazanjian, 4 July 1977, Anjar, Lebanon.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* See also Kushakjian and Madurian, *Hushamadian*, p. 574.

project.<sup>82</sup> About two years later, on 21 December 1926, the party loaned the Teenagers Association 75 silver piasters to cover the expenses of the periodical, entitled *Aghpiur* (Water Spring).<sup>83</sup> Was it ever published? Given the lack of copies or other evidence preserved, we do not know.

Besides the local periodicals, the Musa Dagh ARF dealt with party papers published in the Middle East and elsewhere. As early as the summer of 1919, while still at the Port Said refugee camp, a special ARF committee set up a fund for two party papers—*Giligia* (Cilicia) and *Jagadamard* (Battle), published in Adana and Constantinople, respectively. The 5 Egyptian pounds raised by March 1920, however, was to be given entirely to *Giligia* because of its critical financial needs. Each village ARF sub-committee was “also obligated to subscribe to *Giligia*, [and] propagandize for its spread...”<sup>84</sup> Besides moral and material support, the paper requested articles from Musa Dagh for the paper’s enrichment and improvement.<sup>85</sup> Editorials and correspondence to create better awareness in the wider Armenian community were encouraged.<sup>86</sup> Movses Der Kalusdian heeded the call and designated the following comrades as official correspondents: Serop Sherbetjian for the *Giligia*; Dr. Avedis Injeikian for the *Jagadamard*; Hovhannes Bursalian for the *Hayrenik* (Fatherland) of Boston.<sup>87</sup> A 25 April 1921 report from Musa Dagh stated that “our correspondent is continuing his weekly correspondence [to *Giligia*] in which he portrays the local condition accurately,” adding: “We will find [other] subscribers and correspondents... in all the villages.”<sup>88</sup> Der Kalusdian succeeded in increasing

<sup>82</sup> Hagop Boghos Jambazian, private papers, North York, Ontario, Canada, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, *Hashvadedr Svedio Gomideyi 1920* (Accounts Book of Svedia Committee, 1920) (hereafter Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*), minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 10 November 1924, 11<sup>th</sup> session, 27 January 1925. Although the title of this source suggests that it is an accounts book for 1920, in reality it is a notebook containing the minutes of the Musa Dagh ARF for the period 1921-27.

<sup>83</sup> Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*, Income and Expenses for the 1926-27 period, pp. 58-59.

<sup>84</sup> ARF, File 963/26, Second Consultative Meeting of Musa Dagh (Svedia) ARF, 28 February 1920, Kheder Beg; idem, File 962/25, Kevork N. Kazanjian and Sarkis Hakisian to ARF Cilicia Central Committee in Adana, 20 March 1920; idem, File 994/57, *H.H.T. Siurio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide. Badjeni Dedr, 1920 t.* (ARF Syria or Cilicia Central Committee: Notebook of Copies, 1920), Minas Veradzin to ARF Musa Dagh Committee, 25 March 1920.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., File 994/57, Minas Veradzin and V. K (last name illegible) to ARF Musa Dagh Committee, 27 April 1920.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Minas Veradzin and Krikorian (?) to ARF Musa Dagh Committee, 5 May 1920.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, File 962/25, Kevork N. Kazanjian and Sarkis Hakisian to ARF Cilicia Central Committee in Adana, 11 December 1920.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., File 967/30, Hovhannes Bursalian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Shant Diran to ARF Lernavayr (Cilicia) Central Committee in Adana, 25 April 1921.

the existing six subscriptions—five by the ARF sub-committees and one by his father, Fr. Apraham of Yoghunoluk—by another thirteen, at the same time appointing Nareg Aprahamian as agent and reaffirming Sherbetjian as correspondent.<sup>89</sup> However, most likely due to the rapidly deteriorating political-military situation in Cilicia, the *Giligia* stopped reaching Musa Dagh by July 1921. Concerned, Der Kalusdian wrote to his party leadership in Adana: “We are not receiving any paper. It has been two months that *Giligia* has not come, we do not know the reason. We are unaware what is going on in the outside world. I am not receiving the answers to the letters I have written; at least inform me that they have reached [you].”<sup>90</sup>

While the *Giligia* fell silent, the Musa Dagh ARF in December 1921 designated new correspondents to the party press in Egypt and the United States. Now Anushavan (Movses Der Kalusdian’s *nom de guerre*) would write for the *Husaper* (Hope Bringer) of Cairo, Serop/Serge Matosian (aka s.g.m. or Libaro or Keghart Sharayan) for the *Hayrenik*, and George Kazanjian for the *Asbarez* (Arena) of Fresno, California. At the same time, in order “to prevent inaccurate publications about our district,” the Musa Dagh ARF would ask the editors of those papers to print only articles written by the designated correspondents and approved by the party itself.<sup>91</sup> Despite these actions, it was reported in November 1922 that “for a long time correspondence from Svedia [Musa Dagh] has not appeared in the party periodical press,” and hence A. Avo (Dr. Injeikian) was instructed to write articles for the *Hayrenik* and the *Asbarez*.<sup>92</sup>

After the evacuation of Armenians from Cilicia in 1920-21 and their settlement in Syria and Lebanon, the ARF Central Committee of those two countries decided to publish a new newspaper in Beirut, called *Piunig* (Phoenix). The Musa Dagh ARF opposed such a move, citing the following reasons:

- a. whereas the 4<sup>th</sup> [ARF] Reg.[ional] meeting has decided that the ARF has no political aim whatsoever in Syria and, it must have illegal [extralegal or covert] activity,
- b. whereas the Armenians of Syria are far from being ready to devote themselves to cultural activity,

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., File 966/29, Report of Activist M. Der Kalusdian.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, File 967/30, Movses Der Kalusdian to ARF Lernavayr Central Committee in Adana, 8 July 1921.

<sup>91</sup> Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*, minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 28 December 1921. Explaining “inaccurate publications” would be pure speculation.

<sup>92</sup> Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*, minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 16 November 1922, Kheder Beg.

- c. whereas the Syrian region cannot sustain a political paper,
- d. whereas heavy surprises can endanger the existence of the Armenians of Syria to whose defense should be devoted all of our energies, the ARF Svedia Committee for the time being does not see a necessity whatsoever to publish a political paper. Comrade Tosunian expressed his regret to his comrades for the overturning of the previous decision [?].<sup>93</sup>

The Musa Dagh ARF further cautioned its regional leadership that, since Syria “consists of a few states and represents a strange mosaic of miscellaneous races and communities, whose moods, aspirations, interests and feelings, in their essence, are far from proceeding harmoniously,” it was imperative to adopt different approaches to cultivate friendly relations with each group. A single medium such as a formal newspaper, therefore, could not serve that purpose. Besides, “there are such elements in Syria as can be antagonized by the public and unreserved expressions of the sentiments of gratitude that we have vis-à-vis the benevolent French authorities.” By the same token, any provocations by Kemalist (i.e., Turkish)-leaning Arab newspapers and publications needed to be answered by the Armenian national authorities. But the ARF “must avoid having any problem and dispute with any element.” If there was a need for a newspaper dealing with internal Armenian community life in Syria, it could be met by party organs published abroad.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the serious objections of the Musa Dagh ARF, *Piunig* was published on 19 March 1924 by editors Arshag Hovhannisian (A. Arshaguni) and Khosrov Tiutiunjian.<sup>95</sup> However, as a disciplined party unit, the Musa Dagh ARF affiliate cooperated fully by finding subscribers for the twenty copies of the paper’s first issue sent for local consumption. It also promised “to make every effort” to enlist additional subscribers, although collecting fees, let alone seeking “shareholders for Piunig publishing company” as requested, was deemed impossible “given the very dire economic situation” that prevailed.<sup>96</sup> The Musa Dagh ARF focused

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Session, 23 September 1923, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., copy of a letter by the ARF Garmir Ler Committee Chair and Secretary to the ARF Lernavayr Central Committee, 24 December 1923. This letter was copied as an attachment to a letter sent by the Musa Dagh Garmir Ler Committee to its Delegate Comrade V. K. in Beirut, 17 November 1926, in the context of a discussion about the *Nor Piunig* newspaper.

<sup>95</sup> Jirair Tanielian, “Agnarg Lipananahay Mamuli Badmutian” (A Glance at the History of the Lebanese Armenian Press), *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Yervant H. Kassouny, ed., 4 (1973): 256-57.

<sup>96</sup> ARF File 972/35, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1924 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1924), Krisdapor and Anushavan to ARF Lernavayr Central Committee, 30 March 1924.

more on its central library, “where one can find a significant amount of party literature,” made the subscription of twenty-five copies of *Piunig* mandatory for members,<sup>97</sup> and designated Sarkis Tosunian (SETO) as its correspondent-agent, while Movses Der Kalusdian and George Kazanjian would write articles for the *Husaper* and the *Hayrenik*, respectively.<sup>98</sup> Given the “inaccurate” news being printed in *Piunig* about Musa Dagh, the latter cautioned the paper’s editorship not to consider any articles unless signed by Tosunian.<sup>99</sup>

The *Piunig* from the outset faced serious financial hardships. Solvency could be achieved through the following means applied in Musa Dagh and elsewhere. First, collection of money from those who owned shares which they had not yet paid for; Hovhannisian succeeded in obtaining “a certain amount” of money when he visited Musa Dagh in October 1924. Second, selling raffle tickets; Hovhannisian allocated 50 tickets for distribution among the ARF village subcommittees.<sup>100</sup> Third, increasing existing subscriptions by soliciting 200 new ones, for which purpose Musa Dagh was asked to find fifteen additional subscribers plus five in Antioch, for a total of twenty subscribers. Fourth, designation of a “Piunig Day” for fund-raising; the various regions could assign special committees from among sympathizers, organize social and cultural programs, and so on. In this regard, Hovhannisian placed “great hopes” on Musa Dagh.<sup>101</sup> These measures notwithstanding, the paper by early March 1925 was “in danger of closing,” reported Hovhannisian, who nevertheless still wanted “Tosunian to write frequently. We are satisfied with what he has sent us so far. Write about social life.”<sup>102</sup>

As feared, the *Piunig* ceased to exist two months later, on 11 May, but for a different reason: Dr. Baghdasar Melkonian, who held the paper’s license, filed

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., File 971/34, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1924 t.* (ARF Cilicia or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1924), ARF Garmir Ler Committee Report Based on the Records of the Fifth Regional Conference of ARF Garapnad Central Committee, 10 June 1924.

<sup>98</sup> Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*, minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 5 September 1924.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session, 27 December 1924; ARF File 974/37, Krisdapor and Armen to ARF Lernavayr Central Committee, 12 January 1925. To try to explain “inaccurate” news would be pure speculation.

<sup>100</sup> ARF File 972/35, Krisdapor and Gogon to ARF Garapnad Central Committee, 12 November 1924.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., File 997/A/1/59, *H.H.T. Lernavayri G. Gom-i Kradz Namagneri Badjennere 1923 Okosd. 29-its 1926 Abril* (The Copies of Letters Written by the ARF Lernavayr Central Committee from 29 August 1923 to April 1926), A. (Arshagouni/Hovhannesian) to Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 29 January 1925.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 6 March 1925.

a lawsuit against the ARF due to a dispute. Without delay, however, the party applied for and obtained permission to publish a new organ, *Nor Piunig* (New Phoenix). It saw the light of day on 13 May 1925, that is, only two days after its predecessor's demise.<sup>103</sup> As before, Tosunian remained Musa Dagh's designated correspondent-agent and, as such, inherited the arduous task of collecting fees from the twenty-six new subscribers.<sup>104</sup> When some of the latter failed to meet their obligations due to poverty and dispersal in search of employment, Musa Dagh-*Nor Piunig* relations soured. The paper's management elected not to differentiate "between those who have paid their dues and those who have been delinquent." It refused to publish articles and a cable imparting "very important news" sent from Musa Dagh. And as collective punishment, it abruptly stopped delivering the paper itself to that district. Such treatment "turned off... loyal friends and subscribers," so that the Musa Dagh ARF reserved "itself the right not to accept any responsibility in the affairs of *Nor Piunig*."<sup>105</sup> When the party's Fourth General Regional Congress determined a subscription quota of fifteen copies for Musa Dagh, no one there showed any interest "because former subscribers are hurt, and *Nor Piunig* continues to disregard us and refuses to publish anything about us."<sup>106</sup> A frustrated Musa Dagh ultimately decided to close its books with paper manager Hayg Balian during his planned visit to the district sometime after the first week of November 1926.<sup>107</sup> For the last time, the Musa Dagh ARF stated its position on that paper in particular and the concept of an official party organ in Syria (including Lebanon) in general:

A) Whereas the Syrian region is unable to sustain the "Nor Piunig"; B) Whereas the "Nor Piunig" consumes all of the Syrian region's organizational means (materially and morally) and turns the party into only a publishing company, sidetracking other more important and vital party obligations; C) Whereas the Syrian Armenian community has not yet attained such an intellectual level as would lead its public life along the path drawn by the press; D) Whereas "Nor Piunig"'s life of two three years has not been able to yield positive results in terms of winning the adoration of the constituent elements and authorities of Syria; E) Whereas the "Nor Piunig" with its

<sup>103</sup> Tanielian, "Agnarg," pp. 257-58.

<sup>104</sup> ARF, File 973/36, *H.H.T. Siurio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide, 1925 t.* (ARF Syria or Lernavayr Central Committee, 1925), Avo and Gogon, Report of the ARF Garmir Ler Committee, 27 June 1925.

<sup>105</sup> Jambazian, ARF, *Hashvadedr*, minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Musa Dagh ARF Committee, 7 June 1926, Kheder Beg.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session, 19 September 1926, Kheder Beg.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session, 6 November 1926, Kheder Beg.

content does not attract its readership, and the Tashnag [ARF] comrades, with very few exceptions, have subscribed to it only to perform a party duty, whereby the paper becomes a burden on the party ranks in Syria; F) Whereas we are already against public [i.e., overt] party activity and consequently the existence of a party organ; G) Whereas with the amounts spent for "Nor Piunig" (also counting the mandatory subscriptions) it is possible to keep two activists and place the organization in a very strong and enviable condition, we propose to immediately stop "N. P."s [Nor Piunig's] publication.<sup>108</sup>

At any rate, the cash-strapped *Nor Piunig* did not last much longer, closing down in early February 1927.<sup>109</sup>

The limited circulation of ARF newspapers—and all other papers—in Musa Dagh demonstrated a wider apathy towards the periodical press across Syria and Lebanon, not to mention the economic constraints that prevented the generally poor native as well as refugee Armenian populations from making purchases beyond those necessary for subsistence. For a political party that in 1932-33 boasted 1,594 members (and many more sympathizers) in those two countries, their distribution of only 110 copies of the *Husaper*—50 in Aleppo; 35 in Beirut; 15 in Damascus; 10 in other localities—demonstrated these economic constraints and the general apathy. The *Troshag*, the official organ of the Bureau, ARF's supreme executive, fared only somewhat better: 125 copies in Beirut; 51 in Aleppo; 27 in Damascus; 5 in Latakia; 22 in various places, for a total of 230 copies. Be that as it may, when comrade Haig Balian on 5 March 1927 launched the *Aztag* (Factor) newspaper in Beirut in a private capacity, numerous articles on Musa Dagh appeared in it. "This paper will have its benefits, of course, when it is kept under [ARF] party control,"<sup>110</sup> which, for all practical purposes, it was, until 1965, when it became the official voice of the ARF Central Committee in Lebanon.<sup>111</sup>

The Musa Dagh SDHP did not have a periodical of its own, but it certainly received party papers published elsewhere. Because "letters and newspapers [sent to Musa Dagh] are getting lost in Antioch due to distribution irregularities,"

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, Musa Dagh ARF to Musa Dagh Delegate Comrade V. K. in Beirut, 17 November 1926.

<sup>109</sup> Tanielian, "Agnarg," p. 259.

<sup>110</sup> ARF, File 997/d/1, ARF Lernavayr Central Committee Report (1932 September-1933 July) to the Delegate Comrades of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference.

<sup>111</sup> Ardashes Der Khachadourian, "Lipananahay Mamuli Hisun Darin 1921-1971 T. T." (The Fifty Years of the Lebanese Armenian Press, 1921-1971), *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Yervant H. Kassouny, ed., II (1971): 265-66.

the party in November 1920 decided to rent a mailbox in that city.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, since “profiteers” appropriated *Yeridasart Hayasdan* (Young Armenia) copies dispatched from the United States to the Musa Dagh SDHP chapters via the Levshiye post office, the party redirected their delivery to the Antioch mailbox.<sup>113</sup>

It appears that the *Suriagan Mamul* (Syrian Press) of Aleppo occupied most of Musa Dagh SDHP’s attention from 1922 to 1927. In October 1922, the local subscription fees totaled 6 Syrian liras.<sup>114</sup> When *Suriagan Mamul*’s agent Barsam Mosigian visited Musa Dagh in November to recruit new readership, the villagers decided to pay him half of the 15 Ottoman gold liras that the SDHP leadership in Aleppo had budgeted for Musa Dagh’s general party needs.<sup>115</sup> About two years later, in June 1924, the four chapters divided their financial obligations to the paper as follows: Yoghunoluk, 80 *mejidiyes*; Kheder Beg, 40 *mejidiyes*; Vakef, 40 *mejidiyes*; Haji Habibli, 40 *mejidiyes*. The total of 200 *mejidiyes* included the travel expenses of the delegates attending a general SDHP meeting in Aleppo. At the same time, the Musa Dagh comrades recommended that the paper’s articles be “enriched” and decided to “multiply” the number of subscriptions in a bid to “extend” the paper’s life.<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, the Musa Dagh SDHP also placed a comrade named Setrag Haygazyan in the *Suriagan Mamul* print shop to gain experience in journalism and publishing. But the experiment got off to a rocky start because “how can someone live in a city like Aleppo on one-half *mejidiye*?” The Musa Dagh SDHP accordingly reminded the paper’s editorship that the apprentice “must not be forgotten, you must decide a monthly salary enough to secure the livelihood of the young comrade.”<sup>117</sup> Despite this pronouncement, Haygazyan returned to his native Yoghunoluk in less than a year physically weakened and co-founded an underground communist cell. (See Chapter 5).

Like all Armenian newspapers in Syria and Lebanon, the *Suriagan Mamul* constantly walked a financial tightrope. In March 1925 the Musa Dagh SDHP pledged its full support to rescue the paper from bankruptcy: “Given the *Suriagan Mamul* is our only organ in the Syrian region; given it is today found in a very dire financial situation; given it can only survive by the sacrifice and assistance of comrades and sympathizers, it was decided to support it by various

<sup>112</sup> AMCC, *Hnchagian Gusagtsutiun, Dedrag*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 21 November 1920, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 14 November 1922, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., minutes of the Second Delegates’ Meeting of Svedia SDHP, 29 October 1922, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 14 November 1922, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., First Consultative Meeting, 29 June 1924, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Svedia SDHP Representative Body to SDHP Syria Executive Committee in Aleppo, 2 November 1924.

means, as much as we can, to facilitate its publication and continuity.”<sup>118</sup> To this end, a representative would go to Kesab and nearby Karaduran to raise funds to send to Aleppo together with the amount collected in Musa Dagh.<sup>119</sup> H.H. Kartunian, M. Khayoyan, and S. Azabian would oversee this effort.<sup>120</sup> Two activities were planned for May and June 1927 for the “republication” of the *Suriagan Mamul*: the sale of 400 raffle tickets for 10 piasters each, and the staging of “The Twenty Gallows” in both Haji Habibli and Kheder Beg with the participation of comrades from the four SDHP chapters in the district.<sup>121</sup> These efforts proved too little, too late.

The Musa Dagh SDHP did not remain without newspapers after *Suriagan Mamul*’s disappearance. *Khorhrtayin Hayasdan*, published in Yerevan, Soviet Armenia, reported events in that Communist homeland.<sup>122</sup> Other Marxist papers received included the *Proledar* (Proletariat), *Mardagoch* (Call to Battle), and *Panvor* (Laborer),<sup>123</sup> as well as the *Zhoghovurti Tzayn* (People’s Voice), the Lebanese Communist Party’s Armenian chapter paper. Copies of *Ararad*, the official SDHP newspaper in Beirut, likewise reached Musa Dagh after its inception in November 1937. Other individuals obtained the *Zartonk* (Awakening), published by the Democratic Liberal Party in Beirut beginning in September 1937.<sup>124</sup> Occasional articles about Musa Dagh appeared in the latter three newspapers, usually penned by native correspondents.<sup>125</sup>

Papers linked to political groups were not the only periodicals that interested the Musa Dagh readership; religious and other journals also circulated. For instance, in May 1933 Fr. Harutiun Sherbetjian of Kheder Beg sent 10 French francs as his annual subscription fee for *Hasg* (Ear of Corn), the official monthly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia at Antlias, Lebanon.<sup>126</sup> Two magazines belonging to the Armenian Protestant Church in Syria and Lebanon likewise

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Fourth Regional Delegates’ Meeting of Svedia SDHP chapters, 1 March 1925, Vakef.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Fifth Delegates’ Meeting of Svedia SDHP chapters, 21 November 1926, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 28 November 1926, Vakef.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 3 April 1927, Yoghunoluk.

<sup>122</sup> Lakisian, *Musa Leran Voghchuyn*, p. 331.

<sup>123</sup> Setrag Haygazyan, “Setrag Haygazyani Husherits” (From Setrag Haygazyan’s Memoirs), unpublished manuscript, Musa Ler Monument-Museum, Musa Ler Town, Armenia, Notebook I, n.p.

<sup>124</sup> For the *Zhoghovurti Tzayn*, *Ararad*, and *Zartonk*, consult Der Khachadourian, “Lipananahay,” pp. 271-73.

<sup>125</sup> See the various issues of *Zhoghovurti Tzayn*, *Ararad*, and *Zartonk* from 1937-39.

<sup>126</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Fr. Harutiun Sherbetjian to Coadjutor Catholicos Papken Giuleserian, 1 May 1933.

found their way to Bitias and Yoghunoluk, where such congregations existed: the *Nor Avedaper* (New Herald) of Aleppo and the *Chanaser* (Endeavor Love) of Beirut included articles and news items sent from or about Musa Dagh.<sup>127</sup> Some copies of the Catholic *Avedik* (News/Announcement) of Beirut must also have been available in Kheder Beg, where there was a Catholic community. It too printed an occasional news item on Musa Dagh.<sup>128</sup> Last but not least, the AGBU *Amsoria Deghegaker Hayg.[agan] Parek.[ordzagan] Enth.[anur] Miutian Yekibdosi Shrchanagin* (Monthly Report of the AGBU Egypt District) kept its chapters posted about membership lists and monetary allocations concerning Musa Dagh and other communities.<sup>129</sup>

As hinted, the assigned or occasional reporters from Musa Dagh used their actual names, initials, or pen names. Included in the latter category were Vahe Aradzani, Aram-Sebuh, Vishab, V. Vahakn, S.B. Urhayetsi and others.<sup>130</sup> But whatever their preferred bylines, these amateur journalists developed and refined their literary talents, however modest they may have been. It is true that the articles they and outsiders submitted may have often reflected narrow parochial interests or objectives. In this context, Fr. Der Kalusdian complained to Catholicos Sahag II: “Subjects of animosities oftentimes come here from outside, that is, through adversarial papers; I wish we never received any paper and/or received useful papers... Where do the nation’s opposing forces, each on one side, lead the nation to? Is it possible that other nations have conducted themselves in this manner and have become great?”<sup>131</sup> Notwithstanding this concern, the journalists provided a wealth of factual reporting and commentary. Equally important, their editorials and correspondence constitute a treasure trove of primary source material for scholars trying to reconstruct Musa Dagh society as it was during the interwar years.

### *Lectures and Other Programs*

Another means utilized to inform, educate and enlighten the public was the *lsaran*, a lecture series scheduled at regular intervals. In the 1930s Bitias

<sup>127</sup> See, respectively, *Nor Avedaper*, 1927-33 issues and *Chanaser* (Endeavor love) (Beirut), 1937-39 issues.

<sup>128</sup> See, for instance, *Avedik* (News/Announcement) (Beirut) 9 (31) (1931): 150.

<sup>129</sup> *Amsoria Deghegaker Hayg.[agan] Parek.[ordzagan] Enth.[anur] Miutian Yekibdosi Shrchanagin* (Monthly Report of the AGBU Egypt District), (Cairo), 1938-40 issues.

<sup>130</sup> See, respectively, *Balkanian Mamul* (Balkan Press) (Rusjuk/Ruse, Bulgaria), 30 July 1921; *Husaper*, 1 March 1920; *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 27 July 1933; *Asbarez* (Arena) (Fresno), 27 December 1922; *Arev*, 28 August 1922.

<sup>131</sup> ACC, File 22/1, Fr. Der Kalusdian to Catholicos Sahag II, 27 June 1925.

Protestants congregated at their school hall every Saturday to listen to non-native teacher Levon Babigian pass on current news and commentary from his newspaper and periodical reading. They also discussed Greek mythology, Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and the great artistic and literary achievements of the age of Pericles in Athens (461-429 BC). Youths returning from seasonal employment in the larger cities of Syria and Lebanon likewise shared their experiences.<sup>132</sup> Non-native teacher Kegham Misisian, Babigian’s successor at the Protestant School for the last academic year before the 1939 exodus, continued to conduct *lsarans*. Wrote Alberta Magzarian: “During the months of September through May, Bitias, like all other Musa Dagh villages, was isolated with hardly any access to news about the outside world. Once Baron [Misisian] realized the situation, he scheduled monthly information gatherings open to the entire community which became very popular with the younger generation,”<sup>133</sup> including the Apostolic youth.<sup>134</sup>

The political parties and their youth affiliates paid special attention to *lsarans* for their own narrow interests and general education. The Bitias ARF chapter held a lecture series on Sunday afternoons, usually at Hotel Aharon. The master of ceremonies would signal the start of the event by asking the audience to stand up and sing the “Mer Hayrenik.” A cultural segment, led by teenaged boys and girls and consisting of individual and group singing, poetry recitations and short plays, would follow. The speakers—mainly Hrach Papazian, Suren Papakhian, Hagop Dasnabedian (Simoni), Dr. Toros Basmajian, and Movses Der Kalusdian, who was the only Musa Dagh native in the group—would alternate on different Sundays in delivering fiery nationalistic speeches and inspiring those present. At the end, people would sing the “Harach Nahadag” (Forward, Immortals of Our Martyred Race, used to be sung as the party anthem) and depart with uplifted spirits.<sup>135</sup>

In Yoghunoluk, the ARF formed a *lsaran* committee as early as 1920. After one or two lectures, however, “the current situation” hindered their continuation.<sup>136</sup> But the program resumed two years later with a regular “evening class” consisting of lectures on “miscellaneous topics,” informal discussions, causeries and singing

<sup>132</sup> Shemmassian, letter.

<sup>133</sup> Alberta Magzarian, “Baron Kegham Misisian,” unpublished report written upon my request.

<sup>134</sup> Telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 16 December 2012, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.

<sup>135</sup> Kendirjian Kerkezian, letter.

<sup>136</sup> ARF, File 963/26, S. Sherbetjian, The A.R. Federation and the Opposition Parties in Svedia.

by teenagers. Village notables also attended.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, the Musa Dagh ARF in March 1924 reported to its highest regional executive body: “Every two weeks we are holding public lectures to provide our comrades and sympathizers with party education and to elucidate various national issues to the people about.”<sup>138</sup> ARF activist Arshag Hovhannisian recommended that humor be added to such activities when he toured Musa Dagh on official business later that year.<sup>139</sup>

On 18 December 1935, the *Harachtimasirats Miutiun* of Yoghunoluk presented a *hantes*. Tovmas Habeshian, a young and active Musa Daghian, stated in his opening remarks that such functions “are civilizing factors; they greatly contribute to the development of public, national, social and moral understanding.” He added: “The children of nations are their future; teenagers must be more respected [i.e., paid attention to] than the elderly, because in them is hidden that unknown potential, whose degree and extent no one can find, identify. Who can say for sure, that there are not ones who carry the seed of genius, which if placed under favorable conditions, can open up and blossom and in the future provide us with instances of boasting and pride?” ARF comrade Hovhannes Der Kalusdian followed suit by explaining the purpose of the *hantes*. After instrumental music and songs, keynote speaker Suren Papakhian lectured about “The Armenian Soul” for one-and-a-half hour. His presentation amounted to a survey of Armenian history and civilization since pagan times. He testified that creativity and “the yearning for freedom, love for beautiful things, the worship of light, hard work and building,” all characterized this ancient nation. What should be done to fight “white massacre,” meaning, assimilation? The answer, according to Papakhian, rested in the following actions: “1. To raise the new generation as Armenians; 2. To preserve the mother tongue; 3. To enlarge the [Syrian Armenian] Relief Cross; 4. *To re-elevate the Armenian woman to her previous height*; 5. To get organized as a nation as a whole and with unity of will.” Dwelling on the past was not enough; there was an imperative to act now as well. In this, the new generation “must give its verdict,” for “there is still our cause; we need land to *live [on] and bury our dead [in]*. For this reason it is worth to be revolutionary and die.”<sup>140</sup>

Such activities lasted for hours at a time. The attendees, living before modern mass media, made full use of these educational and cultural presentations.

<sup>137</sup> *Asbarez*, 27 December 1922.

<sup>138</sup> ARE, File 972/35, Krisdapor and Anushavan to ARF Lernavayr Central Committee, 30 March 1924.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, Krisdapor and Gogon to ARF Garapnad Central Committee, 12 November 1924.

<sup>140</sup> *Husaper*, 17 January 1936.

Another illustration: The Haji Habibli AGBU Executive Committee together with the Women’s Auxiliary on 12 March 1939 organized a tea party. Fr. Hagop Kelemian announced the event from the altar—after three weeks of advertisement, anticipation and postponement due to rain—, and rang the church bell at 1:00 pm signaling the program’s start. An enthusiastic audience attended what turned out to be a very rich and lengthy program. The following details, listed in sequence, give an idea about its components, participants and themes:

- Fr. Kelemian presided and gave the invocation.
- Students from the local parochial school sang the AGBU anthem, “*Hamayn Hayutian*” (For All Armenians).
- Fr. Kelemian explained the purpose of the event in the Musa Dagh dialect.
- Student Paul Kelemian, the priest’s son, sang “*Partzr Sarer*” (High Mountains) from Armen Dikranian’s *Anush* opera.
- Student Kevork Kh. Juhurian recited a poem dedicated to Boghos Pasha Nubar, the founder of the AGBU.
- Rupen Zobian delivered a speech on “Columbus’s Discovery of America and the Founding of the AGBU.”
- The choir sang “*Guzhn Ara*” (I Took the Jug).
- Student Misak Taslakian sang “*Yeg Im Srink*” (Come My Flute).
- Student Vartuhi Taslakian recited a poem, titled “Boghos Pasha Nubar,” in French.
- Mayreni Kelemian recited a poem, titled “*Mayrig Im*” (Mother of Mine).
- Boghos Siupkikian delivered a speech on “Man and His Duty.”
- The choir sang “*Ashkhuzh Navasdi*” (Energetic Sailor).
- Kristine Boyajian recited a poem, “*Hayrenik*” (Fatherland).
- Senior teacher Tavit Avedisian delivered a speech on “AGBU’s Material and Moral Support in All Places.”
- 30 minute intermission
- The choir sang “*Huntzk Yenk Arel*” (We Have Harvested.)
- Arshaluys Prtutian recited a poem, titled “*Yes Dzarav Yem*” (I Am Thirsty).
- Mari Basambakian sang “*Akh Im Manishag*” (Oh My Violet).
- Marta Zakarian sang “*Keghetsig Hodaved*” (Beautiful Aromatic).
- Student Kevork Boyajian delivered a speech on “*Miutiune Zorutiun E*” (Unity Is Strength).

- The choir sang “What Shall We Do” in English.
- Mardiros Isgenderian recited a poem, “*Igheir*” (It Has Been Said or It Has Been Done).
- Mrs. Victoria Zobjian delivered a speech on “The AGBU as a Bouquet.”
- Antreas Kh. Juhurian recited a poem, titled “To the Pasha” (dedicated to Boghos Nubar).
- Avedis Mardirian delivered a speech on “The Formation of an Armenian Family or How Bride and Groom Cooperate.”
- The audience sang “*Avedis Hayer*” (Good News, Armenians, the AGBU anthem).
- Fr. Kelemian said “*Bahbanich*” (Benediction).
- Donations were collected totaling 300 Syrian piasters.
- At least ten new members were admitted into the AGBU.<sup>141</sup>

The program comprised seven recitations of poetry, six speeches, five choir performances, four solo renditions, and one group song by the audience, in addition to opening and closing remarks and prayers, a break during which tea and biscuits were offered, solicitations of donations, and a membership drive. The priest, students from both sexes, other men and women, and a teacher, all participated. The songs and poems were rendered mostly in Armenian, but some also in English and French. They included patriotic themes, topics from nature and family life, and praise for the AGBU and its founder and first President Boghos Nubar. The AGBU also marked an annual “Culture Sunday” in the five villages of Musa Dagh where it had chapters. This occasion, however, actually aimed to raise funds rather than cultural awareness.<sup>142</sup>

Educational seminars and *lsarans* also took place. The Teachers Association—which had been formed in the fall of 1925 to draft new bylaws and a curriculum including children’s games for “national” primary schools<sup>143</sup>—organized such functions under the leadership of Movses Der Kalusdian. At least five lectures were delivered to broaden the instructors’ knowledge of a variety of topics, as follows: by Der Kalusdian on “What Is the Teacher’s Responsibility?”; Der Kalusdian on “What Is Pedagogy?”; Fr. Khoren Geokjian of Vakef on “The

<sup>141</sup> AGBU/Cairo, Binder 134, report by Antreas Kh. Juhurian, 12 March 1939.

<sup>142</sup> See, for instance, *ibid.*, Cairo AGBU to Vakef AGBU Chair, 12 November 1937; Binder 167, Cairo AGBU to Yoghunoluk AGBU Chair, 13 November 1937; Binder 195, Cairo AGBU to Kabusiye AGBU Chair, 26 November 1937.

<sup>143</sup> *Nor Piumig*, 13 January 1926.

Folk Music of Musa Dagh”; Tovmas Habeshian on “Memory”; Sarkis Kalusdian on “Logic,” all native sons except for the priest. Der Kalusdian also assisted one of the young speakers in preparing his talk by recommending pertinent books and periodicals. While these seminars contributed to professional development, other talks were aimed at educating the public. The topics covered dealt with “Education or Riches?”; “Education or Character Building?”; “The Pen or the Sword?” Substantial audiences followed the arguments “with alert interest.”<sup>144</sup> The *Suriagan Mamul* also reported in late 1924 that the SDHP Students Association of Vakef was forming a *lsaran* group that would include representatives from all parties.<sup>145</sup> Information is lacking about the outcome of this development.

Like reading, storytelling, theatrical performances, and the utilization of periodicals the *lsarans*, lectures, and related programs targeting specific groups as well as wider circles of all ages served to compensate for the modest formal education that local kindergartens and primary schools offered. Political activists, teachers, clergymen, formally educated or self-taught Musa Daghians and visitors gave talks on national issues, world events and civilizations, morality, learning, and so on. The speakers were all male, but the listeners included both men and women. Voluntary associations, political parties, and schools constituted the main movers of this spread of knowledge, culture and political awareness.

### Conclusion

When the people of Musa Dagh relocated to Anjar, Lebanon in the summer of 1939, they found nothing promising in their new, inhospitable home. Rocks, swamps, wild and thorny bushes, snakes, lizards, insects, malarial conditions, and an open sky greeted them. A harsh, deadly winter added even more challenges to that “welcome.” Yet nature failed to break the people’s resolve to survive once again against all odds. Equally important, the newcomers’ true essence and character stood out in direct contrast to that same hostile environment. In Anjar, the Musa Daghian villagers applied their hard-won cultural and community advancement and lessons of survival to create a better future.

<sup>144</sup> Tovmas Habeshian, “Movses Der Kalusdian,” in Boghos Snabian, ed., *Movses Der Kalusdian (A. Leylani)* (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2004), pp. 130-33.

<sup>145</sup> *Suriagan Mamul*, 26 November 1924.

## *Epilogue*

### THE EXODUS FROM MUSA DAGH TO ANJAR

The Sanjak of Alexandretta/Iskenderun was an autonomous province within Syria during the interwar years. Its inhabitants included a significant number of Armenian refugees and natives, among them the indigenous population of Musa Dagh. A political crisis beginning in 1936 shook Sanjak society to its core, as winds of change from the French mandate to Turkish suzerainty increasingly caused panic. The turmoil grew to alarming proportions for the Arabs, Alawites, and Christians when a farcical election in 1938 installed a Turkish majority in the Sanjak's legislature. A year later Turkey annexed the area.<sup>1</sup> This was the final straw that compelled the overwhelming majority of Armenians, among other groups, apprehensive of Turkish rule, to seek refuge in other parts of Syria as well as in Lebanon.

#### *The Last Year*

During the period between summer 1938 and summer 1939, socioeconomic life in Musa Dagh deteriorated rapidly. Exports-imports from and into the Sanjak were drastically reduced. Merchants conducting business with Aleppo were obliged to deposit with the Hatay Government a sum equal to the value of their merchandise as collateral. After selling the goods the merchants had to convert the Syrian lira to the Turkish lira in order to be able to carry their money back into the Sanjak. Besides, the merchants were able to recoup only 70 percent of the collateral they had deposited at the time of export; the government kept 30 percent as tax on profits, in addition to customs fees.<sup>2</sup> As a result, unemployment among Musa Dagh toilers and artisans rose to 90 percent and 98 percent, respectively.<sup>3</sup> The few artisans still in business sold their merchandise for 25 percent less and bought other necessities for 25 percent more. Construction was halted. Poverty and misery became rampant.<sup>4</sup>

What was more, beginning in late spring 1939 Turkish police-military posts were set up in and near the Armenian villages of Musa Dagh.<sup>5</sup> There was also an attempt to establish Turkish *halkevleri* (nationalistic people's houses, i.e., clubs) with the help

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<sup>1</sup> For the Sanjak of Alexandretta crisis, consult Sarah D. Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity, Politics, and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2011); Avedis K. Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): A Study in Franco-Turco-Syrian Relations," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> *Zhoghovurti Tzayn* (People's Voice) (Beirut), 2 April 1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 November 1938, 20 April 1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 December 1938, 6 January 1939.

<sup>5</sup> *Harach* (Forward) (Paris), 24 June 1939; *Aztag* (Factor) (Beirut), 16 July 1939.

of Armenian collaborators described as “paid enthusiastic Kemalist propagandist agents.”<sup>6</sup> They reported regularly on compatriots who remained opposed to the emerging Turkish regime. They also sent representatives to propagandize about the Sanjak (then called Hatay Republic) among Musa Dagh expatriates in Aleppo, Damascus, and Beirut.<sup>7</sup>

When two French senators visited Musa Dagh on a fact-finding mission about the Sanjak in April 1939, they received an immense popular reception. After their departure, a number of Armenians were arrested.<sup>8</sup> Serop Sherbetjian was sacked as Musa Dagh sub-district Governor.<sup>9</sup> Vakef native Tateos Babigian replaced him as the appointee of the Turkish regime in Antioch.<sup>10</sup>

On 30 June 1939 the Armenian National Union (ANU) in Beirut sent the French High Commissioner of Syria and Lebanon, Gabriel Puaux, a letter signed by the political and religious leaders including the Prelate of Aleppo, Ardavazt Surmeian. They expressed with sadness the fact that efforts in Paris had failed to save the Sanjak; that the Armenians and especially those of Musa Dagh would be the biggest losers; that they wanted to leave under French protection given Turkey’s record of persecutions and massacres; that the Musa Daghians must be settled as a group in a mountainous area in Lebanon reminiscent of Musa Dagh and affording agricultural opportunities; and that France should assume the transportation expenses.<sup>11</sup> Four days later, on 4 July, Bishop Surmeian sent Puaux a letter to the effect that, since “the question of selling their [the Musa Daghians’] houses is dead,” they should at least be allowed to carry their movable belongings. He similarly asked that the goods be inspected when packed in the villages rather than at the border crossings to avoid long lines and hence undue delays; that *laissez-passeurs* be issued free of charge, and so on.<sup>12</sup>

When rumors reached Col. Philibert Collet, the French officer in charge of the Armenians’ exodus, that the Musa Daghians were contemplating burning their houses before departure, he issued a call for them to leave their doors open and

<sup>6</sup> *Zhoghovurti Tzayn*, 2 April 1939.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 April 1939, 28 May 1939.

<sup>8</sup> Paul du Veou, *Chrétiens en peril au Moussadagh! (Enquête au sandjak d’Alexandrette)* (Paris: Editions Baudiniere, [1939]), pp. 90-118, 150-55; Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutium Svedahayeru* (History of the Armenians of Svedia), Yesayi Havatian, editor (Beirut: Hamazkayin “Wahe Sethian” Press, 2010), pp. 181-85.

<sup>9</sup> Sherbetjian, *Badmutium Svedahayeru*, pp. 185-87; *Zhoghovurti Tzayn*, 30 April 1939.

<sup>10</sup> Tateos Babigian, “Husher: Tebker u Temker” (Memoirs: Events and Profiles), Istanbul, 1982, unpublished manuscript, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Dzidzernagapert, Armenia, pp. 270-82.

<sup>11</sup> France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Nantes, E-Levant, Syrie-Liban, Beyrouth: Cabinet Politique, Carton no. 530, ANU (with many signatures) to Gabriel Puaux, 30 June 1939.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Aleppo Prelate Artavazt Surméyan (Ardavazt Surmeian) to Puaux, 4 July 1939.

their homes and orchards intact.<sup>13</sup> Those rumors proved unfounded. Col. Collet similarly instructed Prelate Khat Achabahian of the Sanjak Armenians to form special committees to determine the number of persons and livestock, as well as the weight of movable belongings that would be transported.<sup>14</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian of Yoghunoluk oversaw those activities and acted as liaison between Musa Dagh and Col. Collet.<sup>15</sup> A survey conducted on 14 July in that regard yielded the following results: 1,272 families or 7,888 persons, 3,232 animals, and 781 tons of goods.<sup>16</sup> These figures on 22 August were adjusted as follows: 1,174 families at Basit and 30 families at Kesab, for a total of 1,204 families (68 families less), or 5,025 persons at Basit and 100 persons at Kesab, for a total 5,125 persons (2,763 persons less), and approximately 1,800 tons of goods at Basit and 50 tons at Kesab, for a total of 1,850 tons (nearly 2.5 times more than the initial estimate).<sup>17</sup>

### *Those Who Stayed Behind*

Not all Armenians elected to leave Musa Dagh. Such cases numbered 68 families or 384 persons, constituting about 6 percent of Musa Dagh’s total population. The breakdown was as follows: 4 families/12 persons in Bitias; 1 family/8 persons in Haji Habibli; 4 families/28 persons in Yoghunoluk; 4 families/27 persons in Kheder Beg; 3 families/15 persons in Kabusiye; 11 families/64 persons in Zeituniye on the adjacent plain of Svedia; and 41 families/232 persons in Vakef. Most of these lived together as a group in Vakef.<sup>18</sup> Presently Vakef is showcased as the sole Armenian village left in Turkey.

Those Armenians who stayed behind believed that they could live peacefully and harmoniously in republican Turkey; intense Turkish propaganda aided in shaping this favorable opinion. Second, it was emotionally and psychologically difficult for

<sup>13</sup> *Aztag*, 18 July 1939.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July 1939.

<sup>15</sup> Fr. Movses Shrikian, “Hushakrutium Movses A. Khn. Shrikiani (Avazani Anun, Yesayi)” (Memoirs of Archpriest Movses Shrikian [Baptismal Name, Yesayi]), unpublished memoirs, Montebello, California, pp. 77-8.

<sup>16</sup> France, AMAE, E-Levant, Syrie-Liban, 1930-1940, Sandjak d’Alexandrette, Carton no. 471, ff. 199-203, Collet, Note de service, 14 July 1939.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Beyrouth: Cabinet Politique, Carton no. 530, telephone message from Bart (DELELATTA, i.e., Delegate at Latakia) to High Commissioner in Beirut, 22 August 1939. The reasons for these discrepancies are stated in Chapter 2.

<sup>18</sup> Babigian, “Husher,” pp. 370-420, 443-45. For life in Vakef after 1939, see idem, pp. 457-508; Niğan Doğru (Bayazit), et al., *Vakıflı Köyü. Bir Köy Monografisi* (İstanbul: Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi Matbaası, 1966); Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Sole Armenian Village Left in Turkey: Vakef of Musa Dagh (Samandagh) since 1939,” in Richard G. Hovannisian and Vahram L. Shemmassian, eds., *Armenian Musa Dagh, Kessab and Dört-Yol* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2015), forthcoming.

them to abandon their ancestral lands, which torment certainly applied equally to those who elected to depart. Third, the stayers also entertained the false hope that they would be able to acquire the fixed properties abandoned by the emigrants. Fourth, those who stayed behind belonged to that political faction—mainly members and sympathizers of the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party—which had failed to break the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's (ARF) hold on the governance of Musa Dagh during the interwar years. Therefore, by staying they would be able to rid themselves of the ARF's dominance.<sup>19</sup> That being said, most others with similar anti-ARF sentiments still decided to leave the area.

### *The Exodus*

The exodus from Musa Dagh took place before the 23 July deadline. The goods were shipped by boat to Ras al-Basit (Alaja), between Kesab and Latakia, the women, children, and elderly rode trucks and buses, and the men walked, some of them accompanying the animals.<sup>20</sup> Turkish soldiers manning border checkpoints inspected the goods strictly in search of weapons especially.<sup>21</sup> Some Turkish civilians attacked the caravans, stole about 340 animals, and killed 4 pigs. They also took 330 Syrian liras. Turkish gendarmes succeeded in retrieving just 63 animals, and only a fraction of the money.<sup>22</sup> When the refugees arrived at the Armenian enclave of Kesab, the locals welcomed them with open arms by offering bread, yogurt, *tan* (yogurt juice), and grapes.<sup>23</sup> Then, at Qastal Muaf, en route to Ras al-Basit, they were vaccinated against typhoid.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Camp at Ras al-Basit*

The first batch of refugees arrived at Ras al-Basit on 18 July and camped in the open, no shelter whatsoever being available.<sup>25</sup> As the rest joined them, they congregated as groups according to their villages.<sup>26</sup> Families built sheds with branches and whatever they could muster, hoisting the French flag on them. They similarly made water sources in the immediate vicinity operational with pumps, and opened ditches just 50 meters away from the camp to be used as toilets. This unsanitary

<sup>19</sup> Shemmassian, "The Sole Armenian Village."

<sup>20</sup> *Aztag*, 18 July 1939.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 July 1939, 18 July 1939, 19 July 1939.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1939; *Zartonk* (Awakening) (Beirut), 25 July 1939.

<sup>23</sup> Hagop Manjikian, letter to the author, 17 June 2011; *Aztag*, 2 August 1939.

<sup>24</sup> *Aztag*, 19 July 1939.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; *Zartonk*, 19 July 1939.

<sup>26</sup> *Aztag*, 20 July 1939.

arrangement attracted "millions" of flies, which caused serious health problems.<sup>27</sup> The women cooked food outdoors, while the men herded the animals and opened makeshift stores.<sup>28</sup> People commuted to Latakia to purchase necessities.<sup>29</sup> The French government paid 25 Syrian liras per adult and 10 liras per child under twelve.<sup>30</sup>

Social life resumed to some degree. The various denominations from each village grouping worshipped in their respective "churches."<sup>31</sup> The political parties held their own meetings. Some voluntary associations likewise tried to keep a semblance of normalcy. For example, the annual meeting of the Union of Former Légion Arménienne Combatants took place on 24 August in the presence of 173 members. An executive committee was elected unanimously. A report of activities that was read revealed the type and amount of donations that the Union had received beginning in the second half of 1938 from the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross in Aleppo (one box of medicines) and Union affiliates in France (1,600 French francs) and the United States (\$240).<sup>32</sup>

A Central Relief Committee approved by the French and Vicar General Bedros Sarajian of the Catholicosate (Pontificate) of Cilicia at Antlias, Lebanon, managed all refugee affairs.<sup>33</sup> The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Central Executive in Paris collaborated by forming an Extraordinary Central Fundraising Committee on 21 July.<sup>34</sup> In turn, the *Harach* (Forward) newspaper in Paris issued calls for donations and published the lists of contributors from Europe and North Africa.<sup>35</sup>

Due to exposure and unsanitary living conditions, diseases increased to an alarming degree, afflicting children especially.<sup>36</sup> Torrential rains from 22 to 24 August soaked the campers, thereby exacerbating the situation and causing untold misery.<sup>37</sup> Col. Collet sent twelve tents to shelter the children.<sup>38</sup> A French military doctor established a six-bed infirmary. An Armenian pharmacist from Aleppo donated

<sup>27</sup> *Zartonk*, 12 August 1939.

<sup>28</sup> *Aztag*, 15 August 1939.

<sup>29</sup> *Zartonk*, 5 August 1939.

<sup>30</sup> *Aztag*, 15 August 1939.

<sup>31</sup> *Zartonk*, 12 August 1939.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 September 1939.

<sup>33</sup> *Aztag*, 26 July 1939.

<sup>34</sup> *Zartonk*, 4 August 1939.

<sup>35</sup> *Harach*, issues starting from 19 July 1939.

<sup>36</sup> *Zartonk*, 12 August 1939.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 August 1939.

<sup>38</sup> *Aztag*, 9 August 1939.

100 Syrian liras worth of medicines. A maternity ward with twenty beds was opened in Latakia under the supervision of the Syrian Armenian Relief Cross.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, arrangements were made for the transfer of some sixty sick children together with their mothers to Beirut to be placed under the care of the ANU. The government-run trade school building was placed at the ANU's disposal, to be managed by its Chair and Lebanese Armenian Relief Cross Representative, Dr. Onnig Gergerian.<sup>40</sup>

### *In Search of a Final Settlement Site*

The Turkish Government asked the French not to install the Armenians near the Syrian-Turkish border. The French obliged and, after various considerations, tentatively focused on four possible settlement sites in Lebanon: 1) in the mountains overlooking Tripoli, especially around the villages of Sir and Bakhune; 2) in the district of Hermel, along the Orontes River; 3) to the west of Baalbek, around the villages of Shemestar, Hadith, and Budaye; 4) in south Lebanon, in the foothills of Hermon, between the cities of Marjaayun and Rashayya. Among those places Hermel was regarded as the most suitable one not only because of the available land, but also because the Armenians “would constitute a moderating element and a factor of appeasement, in a corner which troubles, permanently, the dissensions between Christians and non-Christians.” For various reasons, none of these places was selected.<sup>41</sup>

The High Commission ultimately negotiated with a retired Turkish military officer named Rushdi Hoja Tuma, who owned a 1,540 hectare domain at a place called Anjar in the Bekaa Valley. Although Rushdi Bey demanded a prohibitively high price, he was willing to accept, out of “patriotic sentiments,” an “important reduction” if the Turkish government asked him to. The land was purchased at a reduced price.<sup>42</sup>

### *To Anjar*

The relocation from Ras al-Basit to Anjar took place during the first half of September. The refugees were shipped to Tripoli and thence entrained to Rayaq, where a local Armenian reception team offered food, fruit, and refreshments. From Rayaq they were transported aboard trucks to their final destination of Anjar. This was a rocky and thorny terrain with no dwellings whatsoever. Because the refugees

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 28 July 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 24 August 1939. See also *Zartouk*, 6 September 1939.

<sup>41</sup> See Michel Paboudjian, “Du Musa Dagħ à Anjar. Le ‘recasement’ des Arméniens,” in Raymond Kévorkian, Lévon Norduigian, Vahé Tachjian, editors, *Les Arméniens 1917-1939. La quête d'un refuge*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut: Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph, 2007), pp. 268-70, 274-78.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 278-80.

received an inadequate number of tents (that could accommodate up to twelve persons each), ordinary linen was additionally distributed for cover. As in Ras al-Basit, here too the population stuck together in compact groups according to their villages of origin. Given the inhospitable geographical milieu, scores of refugees fell ill and/or died. With winter fast approaching, about half of the population, especially the women, children, and elderly, was dispersed to several villages and towns in the general vicinity. The men stayed at Anjar to construct stone dwellings that the French had planned. The original project would give each family a house consisting of two rooms, a kitchen, and a restroom on a 400 sq. meter lot. But as France entered World War II with its finances earmarked for that effort, the original plan was reduced to a single room with an outdoor privy. By spring 1941 the Armenians had moved into their new homes. The three religious communities (Apostolic, Protestant, and Catholic) received plots inside the village to build their churches and schools. A new life in a new country thus began to take shape for the Armenians from Musa Dagħ.<sup>43</sup> Presently Anjar is a 75-year-old, vibrant rural town with its distinct municipality, community centers, voluntary associations, and businesses.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 281-97; Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Settlement of Musa Dagħ Armenians in Anjar, Lebanon, 1939-1941,” in *The Armenians of Lebanon II* (Beirut: Haigazian University Press, 2015), forthcoming.

<sup>44</sup> See Mousaleranjar.com Facebook.

APPENDIX 1  
*Bitias*  
Fixed Property Ownership, 1939

№ Name	Family Members	Houses	Lands	Gardens	Value (in Syrian liras)
1 Garabed Hadji Panoyan	10	1		2	3,000
2 Kevork V. Keledjian	5	1	1	1	3,000
3 Taminos Kadeyan	3	1		2	2,700
4 Movses K. Kenderdjian	5	1	2	5	3,500
5 Kevork Taminosian	2	1	1	2	4,000
6 Solomon Balabanian	5	1	2	2	4,000
7 Kirkor Seklemian		1	2	2	3,750
8 Apraham Kodjayan	3	2	3	3	3,000
9 Nektar Tchaparian	1			1	3,000
10 Apraham G. Balabanian	2	1	4	2	4,500
11 Yeremia Balabanian	4		1	1	1,000
12 Hagob Balabanian	4	1	1	3	3,000
13 Apraham Balabanian	5	1		3	2,500
14 Movses Balabanian	9	1		2	2,500
15 Aliksan Djelkian	3	1	2	1	1,500
16 Armenag Djelkian	5	3	4	3	4,000
17 Movses B. Djelkian	3	1	2	4	3,000
18 Boghos Sersemian	3	1	4	4	3,000
19 Yeremia Keledjian	5	2	2	1	6,000
20 Aliksan B. Djelkian	4		1	2	1,500
21 Tavid Boudourian	2	1	2	3	2,500
22 Hagob Ayntablian	5	1	1	1	2,400
23 Hagob. M. Keocheyan	4	1	2	2	2,300
24 Ohannes Bodourian	7	2	2	2	3,600
25 Hagob Sulikian	9	1		1	2,500
26 Yenovk Nersesian	8	1	2	2	2,500

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
27 Azniv Djembedian	1	1		1	1,500
28 Sarkis Belghachian	3	1	1	3	4,000
29 Garabed Karaoghlanian	5	1		4	2,000
30 Hagop Dédouchian	7	1	3	4	3,100
31 Garabed Dédouchian	4	1	2	2	3,000
32 Sarkis Dédouchian	8		2	3	2,700
33 Movses Sersemian	7	1	1	2	2,100
34 Hagop Sersemian	4	1	2	2	2,100
35 Setrag Sersemian	6	1	2	2	1,500
36 Mardir Kenderdjian	8	1	3	3	3,600
37 Garabed (1) Istanboulian	6	1	1	2	2,700
38 Sarkis Konsolian		2	1	4	3,500
39 Apraham Tumberian	7	1	3	3	3,200
40 Vanes Tumberian	4	1	3	3	4,200
41 Iskander Tchembedian	6	1	3	2	2,700
42 Kirkor Djensian			1	2	300
43 Ohannes Aintablian	4	2		1	1,500
44 Sarkis Aintablian	5	1	2	4	3,600
45 Khatcher Aintablian	4	1	1		900
46 Movses. A. Tchapanian		1		1	1,500
47 Movses V. Tumberian	2			3	750
48 Sarkis Yegharian		1		3	2,100
49 Yeghiar Yegharian	4	2	1	3	2,100
50 Hagob Komroyan		1			1,500
51 Hagob Yegharian	3	1		1	1,800
52 Vanes Yegharian		1		2	1,800
53 Ishag Andekian		1		3	6,000
54 Arakel Yegharian	6	1	7	3	5,500
55 Hagop Vanayan		1		2	1,500
56 Vanes Tenekedjian	4	1		2	1,800

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
57 Kevork Tenekedjian	2	2		1	2,100
58 Hagop Tenekedjian	2	2		2	1,800
59 Samouel Tenekedjian	1	1		2	1,800
60 Movses Andekian	5	1	1	1	3,000
61 Hagop K. Tchapanian	4	1		2	4,500
62 Movses K. Tchapanian	7	1	2	5	7,000
63 Hovaguim H. Maghzanian	2	3		5	6,000
64 Arakel S. Tchapanian	5	1	1	3	2,500
65 Movses A. Makhouljian		1	1	4	3,500
66 Der Vahan Kenderdjian	7	2	6	3	7,500
67 Mariam V. Djambazian		1	2	2	1,800
68 Movses H. Djambazian	7	2	6	7	6,000
69 Sarkis Keosseyan	7	1	4	4	3,000
70 Hagob Keosseyan	5	1	4	4	3,000
71 Khatcher M. Keosseyan		1	1	3	4,500
72 Krikor Arouchian	4	4	2	3	4,800
73 Sarkis B. Tilkian	7	1	3	3	4,500
74 Sarkis G. Tilkian	2		3	4	2,400
75 Hagop S. Djambazian	6	1	2	3	4,000
76 Vanes M. K. Djambazian	2	1	3	3	2,100
77 Kevork M. K. Djambazian	8	1	3	3	3,600
78 Sarkis M. K. Djambazian	6	2	3	4	3,600
79 Kevork V. Djambazian	3	2	5	2	4,500
80 Vanes G. Djambazian	5	2	6	2	4,500
81 Garabed M. Djambazian	5	1	2	1	4,500
82 Boghos M. Djambazian	5	1	2	1	4,500
83 Guiragos M. Djambazian	2	1	2	1	4,500
84 Vanes M. Djambazian	5	1	4	1	9,000
85 Movses G. Djambazian	4	2	2	2	3,000
86 Kevork M. Cherbetchian	3	1		2	3,000

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
87 Garabed Keosseyan	4	2	2	2	6,000
88 Serop Keosseyan		2	2	2	6,000
89 Hagop Rendjelian		1		1	1,500
90 Aharon Izmirilian				1	600
91 Mardir Tchapanian	4	3	2	2	9,000
92 Kevork M. Tchapanian	8	3	4	8	10,000
93 Gulenia Tchapanian		1		1	3,000
94 Movses S. Keocheyan	2	3	4	5	6,000
95 Serop M. Keocheyan	5	2	2	3	3,000
96 Ohannes M. Keocheyan	4	2	2	1	2,700
97 Boghos Tchapanian				2	600
98 Movses V. Tchapanian	8	1		3	2,500
99 Hovhannes M. Cherbetchian	5	1	1	3	2,100
100 Sarkis M. Cherbetchian	2	1		1	1,800
101 Sarkis G. Cherbetchian	6	3	3	5	6,000
102 Movses Y. Cherbetchian	6	2	3	5	6,000
103 Biblioetique		1			3,000
104 Ecole (Ortodox)		1			25,000
105 Ecole (Protestan)		1			20,000
106 Abraham Rendjelian	4	3	3	3	9,000
107 Movses Rendjelian		1	2	5	4,500
108 Mateos Rendjelian		1	2	2	4,500
109 Samouel Maghzanian	5	1	2	2	15,000
110 Stepan Maghzanian		1	3	2	2,500
111 Manaseh Maghzanian		1		2	3,000
112 Bedros Istanboulian	5	1	3	3	3,500
113 Bogos Istanboulian	5	1	3	5	4,500
114 Guiragos B. Kadeyan	4	3	2	3	15,000
115 Movses Maghzanian		2	1	1	4,500
116 Sarkis Tilkian	1	1	1	4	3,000

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
117 Sarkis M. Kenderdjian	7	1	2	3	3,700
118 Sauro Fandanian	2	2	1	2	2,500
119 Hovaguim V. Maghzanian	5	2	1	5	5,000
120 Sarkis H. Kenderdjian	6	2	2	4	3,600
121 Arakel S. Kenderdjian	6		2	2	1,500
122 Mardir H. Kenderdjian	4	1	4	5	3,800
123 Hagop V. Maghzarian	5	1	1	2	3,700
124 Boghos Nersesian	5	1	1	2	4,200
125 Mikayel G. Keledjian	2				
126 Khatcher Beguian	5	1		2	2,200
127 Hitoum -Arousyak - Filian	4	4	6	2	12,950
128 Boghos Beguian	6	1		2	2,200
129 Hagop H. Filian	2	1		2	3,000
130 Hacher P. Filian		1	1		1,000
131 Agyar V. Filian	3	3	3	6	4,500
132 Garabed A. Istanbolian	2	2	3	6	6,500
133 Kevork G. Filian		1		2	3,000
134 Barseg G. Filian		1		2	3,000
135 Hovsep Filian		1		2	3,000
136 Movses A. Istanbolian	2	1	4	2	3,000
137 Avedis M. Istanbolian		1	2	2	3,000
138 Bedros M. Istanbolian	5	1	2	2	3,000
139 Yesayi M. Istanbolian		1	2	2	3,000
140 Movses S. Andekian	3	1	1	1	600
141 Kevork M. Andekian	4	1		2	1,600
142 Hagop M. Andekian	7	2	1	2	3,600
143 Movses H. Andekian	1	1	2	3	3,600
144 Iskuhi M. Andekian	6	1	1	1	1,400
145 Movses B. Andekian	8	1	3	3	3,000
146 Movses S. B. Andekian		1	1		1,800

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
147 Movses Gerigian	4			1	500
148 Movses Bo. H. Andekian	3	1	1	4	3,000
149 Bogos Hemzin Andekian	3	2	2	2	3,000
150 Sarkis B. Parilusian	6	1	1	1	2,000
151 Movses Bedir Andekian	8	1	1	2	2,500
152 Movses Parilusian	2	1	1	1	1,800
153 Mihran Andekian	6	2	3		2,000
154 Kevork Andekian	3	2	2	1	2,000
155 Ohannes Andekian	4	1	3	1	2,000
156 Mikael Andekian	2	1	3		2,000
157 Sahag Andekian	5	2	3	2	2,500
158 Nubar Mahkulian	1	1	3	2	10,000
159 Movses H. Mahkulian	5	1	2	4	10,000
160 Hagop M. Mahkulian	1	1	1	2	5,000
161 Garabed G. Kadian		1	1	2	2,400
162 Giragos G. Kadian		1	2	1	1,500
163 Garabed B. Kadian	2	1	1	3	3,000
164 Sarkis Kesaplian	3	1	3	2	4,500
165 Arisdages Kesaplian	4	1	2	4	2,100
166 Sarkis B. Kadian	3	1	1	3	4,500
167 Bedros K. Jinsian	4	1	2	2	1,000
168 Movses K. Jinsian	4	1	2	2	1,000
169 Movses V. Jinsian			2	1	1,000
170 Ziron Kilijian	6	1	2	4	3,000
171 Levon Kilijian		1	3	5	2,100
172 Iskender S. Jinsian				2	1,000
173 Vanes M. Kilijian		1			1,000
174 Kevork V. Kilijian	6	1	5	3	3,000
175 Hagop G. Kilijian	5	1	1	1	2,400
176 Movses Barseg Kilijian	4	1	2	1	4,500

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
177 Vanes K. Kilijian	8	1	4	3	10,000
178 Kevork B. Kilijian		1	1	1	3,000
179 Garabed V. Kilijian	2	1	2	1	1,500
180 Ohannes G Kilijian		1	2	3	1,500
181 Movses V. Kilijian	5	1	3	2	4,500
182 Ohannes S. Kilijian		1	3	2	4,500
183 Stepan V. Kilijian		1	1		1,500
184 Krikor Filyan	4	1	2	5	3,600
185 Movses Filyan		1	2	1	1,500
186 Hacher Filyan		1	2	1	2,400
187 Vanes Filyan		1	2	1	1,500
188 Bogos Firenkian		2	2	2	10,000
189 Yeprem Firenkian		1			2,000
190 Kevork Meledonian		1	1	2	4,500
191 Ohannes Firenkian	7	1	2		4,500
192 Jabra H. Chaparian	5	2	2	2	6,000
193 Mardir H. Chaparian	5	2	5	3	9,000
194 Isgender Hamisian		1	2	2	3,600
195 Vanes M. Tumberian	4	2	6	7	3,600
196 Kevork M. Tumberian	4	1	2	5	3,000
197 Hagop S. Karaoglanian	7	1	1	2	2,400
198 Mardir M. Tumberian		1	1	1	1,500
199 Vanes S. Karaoglanian	4	1	3	3	2,800
200 Vanes M. Kuusheian	6	1	2	2	3,000
201 Sarkis B. Kuosheian	6	1	2	5	4,500
202 Movses Nersesian	7	1	1	1	2,100
203 Bogos M. Kuosheian	6	2	3	3	3,000
204 Sarkis M. Kuosheian	3	1	2	6	3,000
205 Vanes M. Kuosheian		1	3	3	3,000
206 Iskender M. Taslakian		1		1	1,500

<i>№ Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
207 Garabed Kadian	7	2	3	3	3,000
208 Giragos H. Kadian		1	2	3	2,000
209 Sima Halajian	1	1	1	2	1,500
210 Manase Seklemian	3	1	3	3	1,500
211 Gazarios Halajian	5	1	1	1	2,100
212 Sarkis Begdoian		1	2	2	2,400
213 Yesayi K. Kadian	6	1	2	2	4,200
214 Sarkis K. Kadian	6	1	2	2	3,600
215 Movses K. Kadian	6	1	2	1	3,600
216 Samuel Kendiryian	6	1	1	2	3,000
217 Bogos Jinsian	4	1	2	4	2,400
218 Ayse Kadian	1	1	4	4	2,400
219 Garabed M. Kilijian			1	1	500
220 Garabed B. Cilkian	3	1	1	1	3,300
221 Kirkor Jinsian	4	1	1	3	2,400
222 Movses G. Jilkian	7	1	1		1,800
223 Movses V. Jinsian	7	1	2	5	1,500
224 Movses G. Kilijian	5			1	200
225 Asadur B. Mahkulian	3	1	2	4	4,500
226 Garabed A. Mahkulian	5	1	2	2	3,000
227 Movses A. Istanbulian	7	1	1	4	3,000
228 Kirkor A. Istanbulian	2	1	1	2	2,000
229 Kirkor B. Keshishian	6	2	1	2	9,000
230 Bogos K. Istanbulian	1		3	2	2,000
231 Movses B. Istanbulian	2	1	2	2	3,000
232 Ohannes S. Istanbulian	8	2	6	4	4,000
233 Yesayi S. Istanbulian	7	1	3	5	3,600
234 Sarkis A Istanbulian	3	1	3	5	3,000
235 Sima S. Istanbulian	1	1		1	600
236 Garabed H. Istanbulian	6	1	1	2	3,000

<i>№ Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Lands</i>	<i>Gardens</i>	<i>Value (in Syrian liras)</i>
237 Kirkor H. Istanbulian	4	2	1	3	4,500
238 Yeromya H. Istanbulian	3	1	2	2	2,500
239 Movses Kelush Mahulyan	6	1	1	1	3,000
240 Mairam M. Mahulyan		1		1	1,000
241 Bogos H. Mahulyan	2	1	1	1	3,000
242 Bedros Mardarian	3	1	2	3	1,500
243 Mardir Mardarian	2	1	2	3	1,500
244 Hagop O. Istanbulian		1	1	2	1,500
245 Mardir O. Istanbulian		1		1	200
246 Margos Sinapian	7	2	5	1	3,500
247 Hagop Sinapian	4	1	7	1	3,000
248 Asadur S. Andekian	5	1	1	6	1,500
249 Movses S. Andekian	2	1	2	5	1,200
250 Sahag Kurdian	10	1	4	3	3,600
251 Dikran Tchapanian	7	1	6	6	3,600
252 Hagop Zobaian	2		1	1	600
253 Yegisapet Kousheian	1	1	2	1	1,000
254 Sarkis Kuburian		1		1	500
255 Iskender Hacher Kirkorian	2		1	1	1,500
256 Artin Onbashi		1			1,000
257 Hagop Hacher Kojaian		1	1	2	1,000
258 Viktoria Taminosian		1		1	1,000
259 Sarkis K. Jinsian	2	1		1	1,000
260 Mariam Sherbetjian	1	1		1	200
261 Zagik Chembedian	2	1		1	500
262 Zagik Tenekejian	1	1			600
263 Egliss Ortodoks		1			45,000
264 Egliss Protestan		1			30,000
265 Simon Antablian	4			1	200
266 Hatun Pertudian	1	1		1	600

N <sup>o</sup> Name	Family Members	Houses	Lands	Gardens	Value (in Syrian liras)
267 Bogos M. Kojaian	7	1	4	3	3,000
268 Yeprem Seklemian	2	1		1	500
269 Mariam Hacher Andekian	1	1	1	1	200
270 Ohanes Fil. Hanisian	6	3	3	5	10,500
271 Souren O. Fil.Hanisian	1	1		2	5,500
272 Movses Fil. Hanisian	1	1	2	5	3,000
273 Madatia Taminosian		1	1	2	4,500
274 Boghos Guiragosian		1	1	3	3,000
275 Movses Hadji. Tchembidian	2	2	2	1	6,000
276 Hagop V. Tchaparian	6	2	1	3	3,000
277 Sarkis M. Cherbetchian	7	1	1	3	3,600
278 Boghos A. Tchaparian	4	1	1	1	1,500
279 Hagob A. Tchaparian	8	1	1	1	1,500
280 Movses A. Tchaparian	2	1	1	1	1,500
281 Co. (Vosdayn Fabrique)		3			12,000
282 Rahel Yazedjian			1	1	600
283 Auedis Goeukdjian	1				
284 Dikran Abdalian	5				
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>1,010,650</b>

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Djebel Moussa, village Bitias.

APPENDIX 2  
*Bitias*  
Animals and Weight of Other Movable Properties, 1939

N <sup>o</sup> Name	Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs	Bee-hives	Movable Properties (kgs)
1 Gevork Tehaparian			17							2,500
2 Sarkis Djambazian		2	4					2		1,000
3 Ohannes M. Djambazian		1	1				1			1,800
4 Sarkis H. Djambazian	2	1	4							1,600
5 Kevork M. Djambazian			11				2			1,600
6 Sarkis Keosheyen	3		9				1			1,300
7 Georges Arouchian		1	11							2,200
8 Movses H. Djambazian			12						12	3,200
9 Ohanes G. Djambazian			13							1,000
10 Sarkis D Kendarjian			3							800
11 Der Vahan Kendarjian	1	4	20				1			5,000
12 Sarkis Fils Khatcher			2							800
13 Agop Maghzanian							1			1,000
14 Boghos Bekian			6			1				1,000
15 Khatchik Bekian			4							1,000
16 Boghos Nersesian			20						2	3,000
17 Hovaguim. V. Maghzanian	2						1			1,500

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-							Pigs	hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys			
18	Arakel S. Kenderdjian			3				1		1,000	
19	Agop Kenderdjian			2		1				1,000	
20	Sarkis H. Kenderdjian	2						1		1,500	
21	Mardin Kenderdjian							1		1,000	
22	Movses G. Tchaparian	3		6				1		3,000	
23	Sarkis G. Cherbetchian	4	3	1				1		3,000	
24	Movses V. Tchaparian									1,000	
25	Arakel Tchaparian							1		1000	
26	Kevork Tanekedjian			60				2	1	1,000	
27	Hovaguim H. Maghzanian			2				1	1	3,000	
28	Hagop Tenekedjian			3				2		1,500	
29	Kevork V. Djambazian	2	4					2		2,000	
30	Chamouel Tenekedjian							1		1,500	
31	Ohannes Tenekedjian							1		1,500	
32	Movses S. Andikian			2						1,000	
33	Sarkis Dedouchian							2		2,000	
34	Sarkis M. Kenderdjian	2	4					1	4	3,000	
35	Kerop Stanboulian			29						2,000	
36	Guiragos Kadeyan			14					1	2,500	
37	Chamouel Maghzanian			18					5	3,000	

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-							Pigs	hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys			
38	Movses Keocheyan			4					1		3,000
39	Ohanes M. Keocheyan									16	3,000
40	Kevork V. Keledjian	5							3		600
41	Garabed Panosian	1			1						2,000
42	Movses K. Kenderdjian	1		3						1	3,000
43	Taminos Kadeyan			2							1,000
44	Agop Kadjayan									9	1,000
45	Garabed Keosseyan		1	65						3	3,000
46	Kevork Taminossian										3,000
47	Solomon Balabanian		2	2					1	5	4,500
48	Yeramia Balabanian									3	2,000
49	Abraham H. Balabanian										1,000
50	Movses G. Balabanian	1		15					1		200
51	Sara Balabanian	1		15					1		1,500
52	Abraham G. Balabanian	2		5							1,500
53	Armenag Kelian			8							2,000
54	Boghos Kelian								1		1,000
55	Kabriel Kelian								1		1,000
56	Hagob Sersemian			1							2,000
57	Sarkis G. Rendjilian										1,000

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
58	Manoug Keladjian			13							3,000
59	Hagop Serekian			10			1	2	10		2,000
60	Sara Boudourian			7							1,000
61	Boghos Kenderdjian			4			1				1,500
62	Sima Beloutian			6							800
63	Maretze Kelian										1,000
64	Movses G. Keledjian	2		1							1,000
65	Garabed Kadeyan						1				1,000
66	Hagob Keocheyan			2							1,000
67	Hagob Sulekian			25			1				2,000
68	Ohannes Boudourian			6			1				2,000
69	Yenouk Nersesian										1,500
70	Vartir Tchembadian										500
71	Garabed Dedouchian						1		2		2,000
72	Hagop Dedouchian						2				2,000
73	Garabed Belresian										1000
74	Setrak Amoughlian			2			1				1,500
75	Mariam Spinoliyan			7							1,000
76	Khataun Amoughlian										1,000
77	Serop Andekian										1,000

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)	
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs			
78	Marta Kenderdjian										800	
79	Garabed Stanboulian								1		2,000	
80	Abraham Tumberian	2		10					1		2,000	
81	Vanes S. Tumberian	4	1						3	1	5,000	
82	Sarkis Kenderdjian			6							1,500	
83	Ohanes Ayntablian			2					1		1,000	
84	Sarkis Ayntablian								2	4	2,000	
85	Katcher Ayntablian			11							1,000	
86	Iskander Tchembedian		4	4					1		5,000	
87	Yeghia Yeghiarian			7							1,000	
88	Hagob Amoughlian			1							2,000	
89	Dikran J. Tchabarian									5	2,000	
90	Krikor B. Kechichian	1		8						1	1	3,000
91	Mardiros M. Mardirian	2									1,000	
92	Movses B. Kechichian	1		6							2,000	
93	Mihran M. Andekian	1		1							3,000	
94	Yessai S. Kechichian	1	2					1	1		3,000	
95	Ohanes S. Kechichian	3	1						1		4,000	
96	Avedis V. Kechichian	1									1,000	
97	Sahag M. Andikian	3							1		2,200	

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
98	Yessai G. Kechichian	1		10							3,000
99	Sahag H. Khurdian	2	2	60				2			2,000
100	Movses Istambulian			1				1			1,000
101	Hagop Senalian	1		3							1,500
102	Mikayel M. Andikian			3							1,500
103	Keradj Kevork M. Andikian										1,000
104	Kevork M. Andikian			1							1,000
105	Ohannes M. Andikian	1	1								1,500
106	Krikor Gariguiyan			5							1,000
107	Movses Gariguiyan			1				1			1,000
108	Hagop M. Andekian			1							1,500
109	Techkhoun M. Andekian										1,000
110	Movses Kechichian			31					3		2,000
111	Movses B Andekian			6		1			1		1,500
112	Hitoum Filian			6							2,000
113	Boghos Andekian	1		2				1			1,000
114	Garabed Kechichian	2	1					1			1,000
115	Movses S. Andekian			2				1			800
116	Asadour B. Makhouljian	2	1	10				2			2,000
117	Margos Senabian	2		3							1,000

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
118	Movses Khatchikian			2					1		1,500
119	Bedros M. Kechichian									2	2,000
120	Krikor H. Kechichian			1							1,500
121	Yeremia H. Kechichian										1,000
122	Movses H. Makholian			4							1,000
123	Boghos H. Makhlian			4							1,000
124	Movses K. Kenderdjian	1	1	3						5	1,500
125	Movses B. Andekian			1							1,000
126	Hagop Makhouljian			30							2,000
127	Movses H. Makholian								7		1,000
128	Serop M. Keocheyan			4						1	1,000
129	Asadour Andekian			2					2	5	2,000
130	Misak Filian			5						2	1,000
131	Ohanes Ferenkian								1		1,000
132	Ohanes G. Keledjian			9							700
133	Bedros Merderian			4							1,000
134	Garabed Keledjian	3		7							1,500
135	Movses Keledjian	1		37							2,000
136	Sarkis A. Kechichian										1,500
137	Krikor Filian										1,000

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
138	Yeprem Filian										500
139	Hagop Filian			13							1,000
140	Hagop Zalian			26							1,000
141	Hagop Demerian	2		1				1			1,000
142	Kevorg Keledjian	2		16				1			1,000
143	Tzeroun Keledjian			3				1			1,000
144	Bedros Kenderdjian	1		6							1,000
145	Movses Kenderdjian	2						1			1,000
146	Ohannes Kenderdjian					1					800
147	Mikayel Keledjian										750
148	Movses Keledjian										500
149	Sarkis Kadeyan			6			1				1,000
150	Arisdakes Kesablian							1			1,000
151	Movses Kilian										1,000
152	Krikor Kenderdjian								1		700
153	Tatev Kenderdjian							1			800
154	Garabed Kelian			6				1	1		1,000
155	Mocses Kadeyan			2				1			1,000
156	Samuel Kenderdjian							2			1,000
157	Sarkis Kadeyan	2						1			1,000

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)	
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs			
158	Yessai Kadeyan	2								1		1,000
159	Manaseh Kedjayan			3						1	1	1,000
160	Garabed Kedjayan			2						1	7	800
161	Boghos Kedjayan			8						1	6	700
162	Sarkis G. Keocheyan					2	1					2,000
163	Boghos Keocheyan	3	2	13						2		1,500
164	Sarkis Keocheyan		2							1		1,000
165	Sarkis Garikian			9								500
166	Movses Keocheyan	4		59								1,000
167	Hagop Garikian											500
168	Ohanes Tumberian		2	2							5	800
169	Kevorg Tumberian			3								1,000
170	Arakel H. Tahaparian											2,000
171	Arakel Tehaparian							2	1			1,000
172	Movses Nersesian											700
173	Vartuhi Cherbetchian										2	1,500
174	Rouben Cherbetchian									1		1,000
175	Hagop Tchaparian											1,500
176	Bedros Tchaparian											800
177	Mari Tchaparian											1,500

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
178	Ohannes V. Filian			22					2	6,000	
179	Yeprem Seklemian									1,000	
180	Khatoun Kesablian			5						2,000	
181	Sarkis Tilkian	1	2	107				1		1,800	
182	Movses A. Tchapanian	16	9	8				1		1,500	
183	Sarkis K. Karagozian			35						800	
184	Minas Markarian	1	1	9				1		800	
185	Krikor Karagozian	1	3	80				1	2	2,500	
186	Kevork Panosian			100						800	
187	Panos Beloutian			100						600	
188	Sarkis Feruejlian	1		55		1	1			900	
189	Manoug Ohanian	5		30		2				700	
190	Agop Ohanian			35						600	
191	Setrag Kholmonian			40						700	
192	Kirkor Karagozian									500	
193	Boghos Istanbulian	2	4	3						1,100	
194	Boghos M. Djambajian	15	5	68	4			1	4	5,600	
195	Garabed M Djambajian		2	15				1		5,600	
196	Ohannes M. Djambajian	26	5	70	2			1		6,500	
197	Movses K. Kenderdjian			70							

№	Name	Bee- Movable Pro-								hives	perties (kgs)
		Cows	Oxen	Goats	Sheep	Horses	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs		
198	Mardin H. Kibranian	2	4	60						2,000	
199	Arakel Kibranian							2	1	2,000	
200	Ohannes Keledjian			8						4,000	
201	Movses K. Tchapanian									2,000	
202	Agop K. Tchapanian									1,000	
203	Agop S. Tilkian									500	
204	Khatoun M. Hanisian									2,000	
205	Mari H. Yegarian									2,000	
206	Eglise Protestan									2,000	
207	Badveli Aram Hadidian									4,000	
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>158</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>1892</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>332,250</b>

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, untitled statistics on Bitias animals and weight of movable properties, 1939.

## APPENDIX 3

*Haji Habibli*

## Inhabitants, Animals, and Value of Fixed Properties, 1939

№ Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
	Members	Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep Goats	
1 Hagop Supkukian	6		1		2	6	13,500
2 Vartan Supkukian	9			1	3		3,900
3 Movses Supkukian	6					2	2,500
4 Sarkis Supkukian	2			1	1	2	2,500
5 Bagos Venedikian	4						2,500
6 Vanes Supkukian	2						2,700
7 Bagos Supkukian	5					1	1,600
8 Hagop S. Supkukian	5			1			1,500
9 Bedros Mendizian	3					1	800
10 Panos Feslian	3					1	2,600
11 Aram Feslian	2					2	500
12 Markos Markossian	8		1	1	2	3	4,000
13 Hagop Deleyakoup	5					2	700
14 Hagop Fis Deleyakoup	7					28	300
15 Vartouhi Zederian	4			1		4	1,200
16 Danik Alichanian	4						800
17 Movses S. Halouljian	5			2			2,500
18 Sarkis M. Halouljian	4						200
19 Garabed M. Halouljian	3						100
20 Hagop Chehnian	4						200
21 Garabed Pertoudian	7						1200
22 Hovsep Kerekian	6					2	1,000
23 Bedros Zakarian	8						700
24 Ohannes Kerekian	5						500
25 Bogos Kerekian	2						1,000
26 Anna Tchertchian	1						2,000
27 Yenovk Kaladjian	3						1,500

№ Name	Family Members	Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats	Value of
								Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
28 Vartouhi Markarian	1							4,000
29 Garabed Halouljian	6							1,500
30 Garabed S. Halouljian	5						1	1,000
31 Sofia Djouhourian	5						1	4,000
32 Nazar Zakarian	5							1,500
33 Hadji Khatcher	2						3	7,000
34 Aphraham Dermichian	5						1	2,000
35 Hagop Partamian	2						1	200
36 Yeksapet Armenian	1						1	400
37 Panos Kessaplian	2							200
38 Mardiros Iskenderian	3			1	2			22,600
39 Assadour Mardirian	4							2,000
40 Marta Mardirian	2							900
41 Assadour M. Iskenderian	2			2				1,200
42 Hovnan Iskenderian	4			3				16,000
43 Hagop Markossian	5						2	1,000
44 Bedros Chehnan	2						5	800
45 Avedis Mardirian	5			1			2	4,000
46 Garabed Vartabedian	5		1	2	2		6	11,000
47 Krikor Aristakessian	3						2	2,000
48 Yessayi Karadjian	2			1				1,500
49 Apraham Aysayan	4							400
50 Garabed Zobayan	2							300
51 Taniel Kourouchian	2							300
52 Arakel Kourouchian	3						2	2,000
53 Garabed Salmanian	3			1	1			3,500
54 Hagop Salmanian	8							1,500
55 Bogos Chamelian	5							1,000
56 Peproun Foudjourian	1							1,000
57 Ghazar Kurdian	7		1	4				2,600
58 Mihran Kurdian	9			2			2	14,600
59 Hagop Guendjian	5			1				1,500

№ Name	Family Members	Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats	Value of
								Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
60 Krikor Zobayan	2				3	1	2	3,400
61 Roupen Zobayan	4						2	1,500
62 Mikael Markossian	2			1			5	2,000
63 Mariam Guendjian	1						1	3,000
64 Vanes Bassambakian	3			1			2	1,500
65 Movses Bassambakian	5							1,500
66 Movses Salmanian	4					3	35	1,800
67 Khatcher Pertoudjian	4			1				2,000
68 Panos Boyadjian	6						2	2,600
69 Hovsep Vartabedian	3		1				3	1,500
70 Kevork Vardabedian	4							300
71 Sarkis Hovsepian	6						1	1,600
72 Per Hagop Kelamian	6							7,600
73 Aleksan Kelamian	6			1				3,000
74 Sarkis Kulahian	3						6	2,300
75 Iskouhi Kaladjian	5							1,700
76 Iskender Kantouzian	6						2	7,000
77 Selim Demirdjian	7			1				8,500
78 Elbize Djaradjian	4							600
79 Agop Vartabedian	5	1					3	3,300
80 Bedros Doudaklian	4		1		2		35	16,000
81 Sarkis B. Doudaklian	6			2				5,000
82 Mardiros B. Doudaklian	2			1				4,000
83 Movses Doudaklian	2						2	3,000
84 Kerdji Doudaklian	3			1	1			4,500
85 Istipan H. Doudaklian	7						1	2,500
86 Arakel Zobayan	6						3	3,000
87 Maritza Taslakian	3							6,000
88 Nadjar Iskender Taslakian	8						13	5,600
89 Iskender Taslakian	7			1	1		6	7,500
90 Hovsanna Papazian	1						1	800

№ Name	Family Members	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats	
91 Yessayi Tchoulfaian	3							700
92 Vartouhi Vartanesian	1							1,600
93 Mariam Vartanesian	1							900
94 Maritza Kadjian	3							700
95 Feriloutza Ayaryan	2						2	1,000
96 Mariam Abassian	1							300
97 Leon Abassian	5							200
98 Mardir Abassian	6					1	3	3,000
99 Mariam Kutchukian	1							400
100 Movses Baghtichian	8		2	2	1		20	2,500
101 Garabed Baghtichian	5		2	2	1	1		3,500
102 Iskender Baghtichian	5						3	3,000
103 Khatcher Baghtichian	4						1	5,000
104 Khatcher Melidonian	3		1	3	3			3,000
105 Kerop Melidonian	5							2500
106 Sarkis Kazian	8						1	2,600
107 Khatcher Kazian	7						1	2,000
108 Hovhannes Bakhtichian	6			1			4	3,000
109 Hovhannes Houstakian	8		1	1			2	2,500
110 Hovsep Ayarian	2							4,000
111 Meren Ayarian	2							1,600
112 Sahak Kurdian	1							2,500
113 Mariam Sulukian	1							300
114 Sima Kelechian	3							1,200
115 Panos Boyadjian	7						4	4,500
116 Khatcher Armenian	5						2	3,000
117 Hagop Andonian	3		1	1	2		2	4,000
118 Kevork Andonian	3			3				3,000
119 Garabed Andonian	3		1	1	3			8,000
120 Yessayi Andonian	6						1	5400
121 Vartan Andonian	5							5,400

№ Name	Family Members	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats	
122 Garabed Andonian	6						2	5,600
123 Kevork Fichian	4			1			7	2,000
124 Bogos Fichian	4		1		2	1		6,000
125 Khatcher Dhjouhourian	5			1			3	3,000
126 Iskender Kirakosian	6			1			5	3,500
127 Kirakos Kirakosian	2							10,000
128 Kevork Halvadjian	4							2,000
129 Mariam Abassian	1							700
130 Movses Chirinian	5						10	3,000
131 Kevork Chirinian	5							2,500
132 Kevork Sakarian	6						18	3,000
133 Movses Sakarian	5		3		2	1	25	15,000
134 Khatcher Halvadjian	6			1			27	3,000
135 Sarkis Dermichian	5						1	3,500
136 Yeghisapet Dermichian	1							3,000
137 Hagop Dermichian	4				1		1	2,500
138 Bakhos Yaramaghian	5						1	1,000
139 Loussavoritche Doudakian	4							300
140 Bokhos Fichian	3							3,000
141 Sarkis Kendjian	2							1,500
142 Mardir Mardirian	6							4,000
143 Bokhos Kendjian	2						2	1,000
144 Arminak Mayalian	6							600
145 Bedros Kebechian	5			2				2,500
146 Garabed Djouhourian	3						2	8,000
147 Movses Djouhourian	6							4,600
148 Taniel Abassian	4							2,000
149 Hovhannes Kendjian	5			1	1		8	12,000
150 Mariam Hachinian	3			1	1			3,000
151 Khatcher Bulbulian	6							2,000
152 Iskender Bulbulian	3						3	4,000

№ Name	Family Members	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)						
		Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats	
153 Hagop Bulbulian	4						2,000	
154 Hagop Kumbelian	6		1		2		10,000	
155 Movses Kumbelian	5		1	1	1	2	8,000	
156 Mariam Dellikian	1					2	4,000	
157 Hagop Dellikian	3					2	1,500	
158 Sarkis Doudaklian	7						1,500	
159 Sarkis Dermichian	5					2	2,500	
160 Bedros Beddourian	6			2			1,000	
161 Khatchik Bedrossian	5						1,500	
162 Apraham Aysayan	4						1,800	
163 Kevork Hamissian	2						2,000	
164 Khatcher Kelechian	4						1,500	
165 Movses Tchembedian	5					3	3,500	
166 Garabed Beloundjian	4			1			5,000	
167 Hagop Beloundjian	5	2		1	3	5	26,000	
168 Avedis Marouchian	8			2		35	9,000	
169 Hovsep Doudaklian	3			2		2	21,000	
170 Movses Panossian	9		1	4		1	40	12,000
171 Panos Panossian	5		1	3			1	13,000
172 Tatios Sutlian	8						13	4,000
173 Khatcher Delemoussian	8		1	1				6,000
174 Hagop Kelleche	3							8,000
175 Panos Kulahian	5					4		3,000
176 Hagop Kelian	7			2		2	7	10,000
177 Hagop S. Kelian	3		2	2				11,000
178 Seron Kaladjian	6			4			2	15,000
179 Krikor Kelechian	5		1	6			6	6,000
180 Moussa Alachanian	6							2,000
181 Sara Kendjian	1							12,000
182 Sarkis Panossian	7			2			4	3,000
183 Levon Halouljian	7						7	6,000
184 Bedros Adjana	6			1			32	7,000

№ Name	Family Members	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)								
		Horses	Donkeys	cows	oxen	Sheep	Goats			
185 Hovsep Balyouzian	6			2	6			10,000		
186 Sarkis Baylouzian	5			2	4			10,000		
187 Tavit Baylouzian	5			2	3		1	12,000		
188 Garabed Kabandjian	11			2	11		25	15,000		
189 Bokhos Dermichian	9				2		13	7,000		
190 Hagop Arpadjian	7							500		
191 Mekerdjitch Andonian	6				2	4	7	19	15,000	
192 Movses Khatchikian	5				4				5,000	
193 Iskender Tchembedian	5				2	1			1,000	
194 Avedis Tchembedian	4					2			1,600	
195 Markar Tchembedian	2								2,000	
196 Movses Tchenbedian	5					3		4	12,000	
197 Mihran Chirinian	9					1	2	5	60	16,000
198 Khatcher Zakarian	5								1	3,000
199 Sarkis Harikian	7				2	3	2	2	9	9,000
200 Hagop Kudechian	6					3			6	8,000
201 Yerousaim Kudechian	3						2		30	15,000
202 Mekerditch Kertekian	7				1	5		2	2	14,000
203 Khatcher Kertekian	3					5			6	12,000
204 Sarkis Hamissian	8				2	4	3		57	8,000
205 Hovhannes Bassamhakian	3									6,000
206 Hagop Doudaklian	2								2	4,000
207 Zaghira Fichian	2								4	3,000
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>888,600</b>		

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Liste nominative des habitants de Djebel Moussa ainsi que des animaux et de biens immobiliers leur appartenant: Hadji-Habibli, 1939

## APPENDIX 4

*Kheder Beg*

## Inhabitants, Animals, and Value of Fixed Properties, 1939

№	Name	Family Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	Goats	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
1	Vanis Kejderian	9					4	4	5,000
2	Setrac Béghelian	4			2		2		2,000
3	Khosroph H. Kurdian	10						2	4,000
4	Bedros K. Kejderian	6					6	10	9,000
5	Boghos Thasian	2					2	2	4,200
6	Adam Thasian	6					2		2,000
7	Khatcher B. Thasian	7							1,000
8	Bedros H. Kejderian	6							4,000
9	Sisac Kejderian	3					2		6,000
10	Boghos Kejderian	4							6,000
11	Joseph Kejderian	2			2	2			3,000
12	Ohannes Kejderian	6		1			2	2	4,000
13	Agop Hargalian	2				2	3		6,000
14	Misac H. Hargalian	3		1					3,000
15	Sarkis H. Hargalian	5							3,000
16	Sarkis Hargalian	5		1				2	4,000
17	Vahan Habéchian	3							2,000
18	Garabed Thossounian	4						2	2,000
19	Iskinder Kuspikian	7							5,000
20	Antranig Kuspikian	3							1,000
21	Bedros Khochian	8						8	1,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
22	Thomas Thossounian	7		1			5	6,000
23	Agop Thossounian	5		2			3	3,000
24	Bogos Keyoumian	6					2	3,000
25	Vanis Pamboukian	8			2			6,000
26	Bogos Andonian	7		1				3,000
27	Andon G. Andonian	5			2		2	7,000
28	Garabed Andonian	6			2		1	illegible
29	Bedros Andonian	5					2	7,000
30	Vanis Aproumian	6		1	2			7,000
31	Isai Achcarian	7			2		4	7,500
32	Iskindar Achcarian	3			2		2	7,000
33	Sarkis Achcarian	7					4	7,000
34	Vanis Achcarian	2			2		4	7,000
35	Agop Tchatalian	3						4,000
36	Djabra Atamian	3						8,000
37	Aristagués Hébéchian	7		1		2	6	7,000
38	Ohannes Béghelian	3		2	2		3	7,500
39	Nichan Béghelian	7						7,000
40	Armén Béghelian	2			2	2		3,000
41	Sarkis Demlakian	9					2	7,000
42	Hovnan Bayramian	6						8,000
43	Thomas Chanakian	7					2	10,000
44	Djouhar Andonian	1						700
45	Ohannes Hanissian	4				2	3	10,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
46	Nahabed Chanakian	2						4,000
47	Ohannés Cherbéthjian	9			2			5,000
48	Ohannés Dukindjian	6						4,500
49	Garabed Garabadjian	1						5,000
50	Loris Garabadjian	5					4	4,000
51	Arakel Djabrian	2			2		2	5,000
52	Vanis Djabrian	5						6,000
53	Boghos Djabrian	6						3,000
54	Ohannes Azabian	7		1		1		4,500
55	Meguerditch Azabian	6					1	4,000
56	Khatcher Azabian	2					1	5,000
57	Reskallah Kouyoumdjian	11	1				3	125,000
58	Sarkis Azabian	4					2	4,100
59	Agop Tchatalian	7					2	3,000
60	Avédis Kodjanian	2						1,500
61	Khacher S. Tasian	7					2	3,000
62	Hagop Khétchoian	2					2	1,000
63	Dicran Béghelian	2						3,000
64	Bos Néné	1					1	2,500
65	Setrac Adadjian	6					2	8,000
66	Ohannes Madjarian	3		1				6,000
67	Mariam Mikaelian	1						600
68	Sétrac Kertéchian	8					2	5,000
69	Bedros Kéhulian	4					4	5,000
70	George Madjarian	5					1	3,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
71	Sarkis Andonian	3		1		1		8,000
72	Misak Andonian	3						5,000
73	Movsés Nadjarian	2					2	5,000
74	Tatios Bosian	6		1			1	2,300
75	Sima Dukindjian	1						3,000
76	Marie Dukindjian	1					2	8,000
77	Anna Kertéchan	2						1,000
78	Mardiros Boyadjian	6						7,000
79	Nichan Boyadjian	5					4	8,000
80	Mikael Bedrossian	2						8,000
81	Serafin Bedrossian	6						6,000
82	Bedros Bedrossian	7						7,000
83	Ohannes Yeprem Dukindjian	4					2	12,000
84	Sarkis Achkarian	9			4	1		4,000
85	Isai Kabaghian	7				1	2	3,000
86	Mihran Achkarian	9			3		3	5,000
87	Bedros Kurdian	2			2			6,000
88	Herand Kurdian	4			2			5,000
89	Agop Kurdian	5						5,000
90	Bedros Beghelian	8		1		2		4,500
91	Isai Tchaktchakian	6		1		2	2	5,000
92	Sarkis Yarialian	7					2	3,000
93	Sarkis Adadjian	3					4	8,000
94	Antranig Douzmanian	4					2	2,000
95	Djabra Tchaghtchaghian	5		2		2	2	5,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
96	Agop Havadian	7		1		3	2	6,000
97	Setrac Tchaktchakian	7				2	3	5,000
98	Misak Tchaktchakian	4					2	8,000
99	Sarkis Tchaktchakian	3		1				5,000
100	Salomon Adadjian	8		1		2	1	7,000
101	Minas Douzmanian	5		1			2	5,000
102	Misac Douzmanian	3					2	3,000
103	Boghas Havadian	8		2		2	3	9,000
104	Isai K. Havadian	3		1			2	5,000
105	Ohannes Douzmanian	2						3,000
106	Guadouche Havadian	1					1	2,000
107	Kévork Guokdjian	5					28	1,500
108	Khatcher Havadian	7						3,000
109	Isai V. Havadian	9				3		8,000
110	Panos Kurdian	4					1	7,000
111	Boghos Kurdian	5						8,000
112	Ohannes Chanakian	2			2			8,000
113	Hairabed Chanakian	3			2			4,000
114	Bedros Chanakian	7			3	1		4,000
115	Setrac Ourfalian	6		1				4,000
116	Vanis Khochian	7			2			6,000
117	Boghos Canakian	6					2	6,000
118	Sarkis Taslakian	7			2			3,000
119	Agop Achkarian	2						2,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
120	Sarkis Chanakian	4		1	3			5,000
121	Movses Kertéchan	4			1		3	3,000
122	Sima Kertéchan	2						1,500
123	M. Canakian	1						1,000
124	Boghos Zahtarian	6						500
125	Panos Chanakian	8					5	5,000
126	Khatcher Hargalian	5			1	2		2,000
127	Andon Andonian	6			2	3	2	12,000
128	Chahé Panassian	2						5,000
129	Mihran Manougian	5						3,000
130	Bogos Ohanian	2		1			2	11,500
131	Ohannes Der. Ohannessian	5					4	10,000
132	Sarkis Thorossian	4						500
133	Bedros Mardirian	4					7	6,000
134	Alexan Alexanian	7					2	8,000
135	Levon Aprahamian	4					3	4,000
136	Bogos Paltadjian	5		1	3	2		6,000
137	Ohannes Nakouljian	8					4	15,000
138	Misak Orfalian	4					2	2,000
139	Mois Orfalian	5					2	2,500
140	Vahan Panassian	8					2	12,000
141	Nichan Ipradjian	4					4	5,000
142	Vanis Ipradjian	6		1	1		1	5,000
143	Mariam Yacoubian	1						800
144	Panos Yacoubian	6					3	1,500
145	Moussa Yacoubian	3					2	2,000
146	Vanis Chichmanian	7					2	4,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)	
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep		Goats
147	Boghos Ipradjian	3					2	2	3,000
148	Vanis Pamboukian	7							500
149	Sarkis Indjian	8					2	3	3,000
150	Bedros Indjian	3						3	3,500
151	Manouel Kodjanian	9						2	2,500
152	Sarkis Domanian	4						2	1,500
153	Movses M. Kodjanian	5						1	1,500
154	Setrac R. Kodjanian	4						4	2,500
155	Apet Henneian	6						4	3,000
156	Garabed Henneian	3						2	2,500
157	George Henneian	5						8	3,000
158	Apraham Henneian	6						2	1,500
159	Henné Henneian	1							1,500
160	Pinyamin Taslakian	4		1		2			2,500
161	Djabra Taslakian	6		1		2		1	6,000
162	Agop Taslakian	8				2			5,000
163	Zakar Domanian	2							2,500
164	Manouk Domanian	4						2	2,000
165	Vanis Domanian	4							1,500
166	Yeva Cadeian	1						3	400
167	Thomas Achkarian	3							3,000
168	Krikor Tovmassian	1							4,000
169	Tavmas Tovmassian	4							4,000
170	Yéghishé Belian	1						1	1,000
171	Ohannes Belian	7		1				2	1,500

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	
172	Sérop Madjarian	5		1				2,000
173	Boghos Kermenian	3						2,000
174	Boghos Cherbétdjian	1						2,000
175	Misak Cherbétdjian	3						500
176	Agop Cherbétdjian	5					1	1,000
177	Joseph Taslakian	4					5	2,000
178	Agop Nekrourian	4					2	1,500
179	Bedros Taslakian	3						2,500
180	Movses Markarian	3					2	3,000
181	Der Harouthioun [Cherbetdjian]	2						3,000
182	Apraham Nekrourian	5					2	3,000
183	Boghos Tachdjian	6						3,000
184	Lévon Tachdjian	4					2	4,000
185	Yervant Nekrourian	2					2	2,500
186	Nichan Ohanian	6						300
187	Henné Ohanian	7		1				300
188	Isai Aprahamian	7						15,000
189	Sahrad Aprahamian	5						15,000
190	Armenag Cabaghian	8					1	6,000
191	Sérop Cabaghian	3					2	6,500
192	Sarkis Cabaghian	7						7,000
193	Boghos Kalouchian	5					2	6,800
194	Ohannes Iskédjian	2			2			8,000
195	Sarkis Iskédjian	8					3	4,000
196	Boghos Iskédjian	10					5	4,000

№	Name	Family						Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)	
		Members	Horses	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep		Goats
197	Setrac Iskédjian	4		1				4,000	
198	Misak Iskédjian	7					1	4,000	
199	Isai Achcarian	7			3	1	1	2	4,000
200	Mihran Achcarian	2							2,000
201	Dicran Achcarian	6							4,000
202	Ohannes Achcarian	5							3,400
203	Bedros Achcarian	3		1	3	2		100	10,000
204	Isai Achcarian	9				1			5,000
205	Boghos Coubouchian	7							3,000
206	Misak Kabaghian	6		1				25	3,000
207	Sérop Zethlian	2							4,000
208	Hagop Gourian	5					3		7,000
209	George Gourian	4							4,000
210	Misak Zetlian	3						1	3,000
211	Vanis Vanassian	7						1	4,000
212	Tomas Zethlian	5		2					6,000
213	Misak Zethlian	5			1			4	10,000
214	Vanis Zethlian	9		1		2		2	6,000
215	Ohannes Zethlian	6		2	1	2	3	2	6,000
216	Tatios Bakkalian	2							1,000
217	Djurchoum Achkarian	6							1,000
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>1,039</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>1,094,900</b>

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Liste nominative des habitants de Djebel Moussa ainsi que des animaux et de biens immobiliers leur appartenant: Kheder Bey, 1939.

## APPENDIX 5

*Kabusiye*

## Inhabitants, Animals, and Value of Fixed Properties, 1939

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Donkeys</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)</i>
1 Guiragosse Késseblian	4		2			95	2,999
2 Bidros Késseblian	6	2				5	8,000
3 Markosse Késseblian	5						5,000
4 Zadique Késseblian	4					3	3,500
5 Sitrak Késseblian	7	1	1	1		12	3,900
6 Hisrof Késseblian	3				1		2,500
7 Garabet H. Késseblian	7					2	3,900
8 Garabet G. Késseblian	7					2	3,600
9 Armen Késseblian	2					1	3,900
10 Kevork A. Chevdjian	8		2			4	4,000
11 Hagop H. Baldjian	6				1	7	8,000
12 Movsés Habéchian	6					2	1,550
13 Bidros Tossounian	2					2	2,000
14 Hovsep Feslian	7	2	2			8	1,600
15 Movsés Achkarian	4	1				1	2,000
16 Garabét Tousounian	4	1	2			2	1,000
17 Hovsep V. Kéchichian	2	2				2	2,900
18 Arakel Bislemian	7	1	4			4	3,900
19 Hagop Kéchéian	7	1	2	1		3	2,600
20 Manouk Dimyenian	6						1,800
21 SarkisThivdjian	6	2				2	2,200
22 Sarkis Sirabian	3						1,500
23 Haik Cornouzjian	2	1			3	1	4,000
24 Hagop Havatian	4						1,500
25 Dimitry Kéchichian	2	2				3	4,000

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Donkeys</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)</i>
26 Movsés Kéchichian	1						2,500
27 Hagop Kéchichian	4	1				2	4,000
28 Abraham P. Malkedjian	7	1		2	2	2	2,500
29 Giragos Palayan	4	1	2			1	1,500
30 Hagop Markarian	5	1	2			2	2,000
31 Hagop Hanechian	5	1				5	2,000
32 Kerop Y. Sahaguian	7	1	2			2	1,700
33 Hathir Feslian	5	1	1			3	1,700
34 Antranik Arabian	3	1	1			5	1,500
35 Ohanes Kibrislian	7	1	1	2		4	2,000
36 Hovsep Kéchichian	6	1				2	3,000
37 Bidros Kassamanian	2						2,300
38 Aristagues Frankian	4		2	1		3	3,000
39 Hagop Feslian	3					1	1,500
40 S. G. Sahakian	5	1	3			4	1,500
41 Hagop Andomian	3			2			1,750
42 Bidros Havatian	7	3	2	1			1,800
43 Mardiros Vartanissian	7	1			3	1	2,000
44 Lion Tousounian	8	1	1	1		3	2,000
45 Hagop Arabian	3	1				2	1,300
46 Kévork S. Thivdjian	4						2,000
47 Alexen S. Toudjerian	2	1			2	3	2,500
48 Hathér Kéchichian	7	1	1			1	2,000
49 Sabri Sahaguian	5	1				30	2,800
50 Bidros Vanissian	4	1	2	1		1	2,800
51 Movses Tousounian	5	1	1			40	3,000
52 Ohanes Havatian	8					4	1,600
53 Abraham Havatian	5	1	3	2			1,500
54 Panos Bachaian	3				2	3	1,500
55 Hagop M. Kassamanian	4	1				4	3,500

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Donkeys</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)</i>
56 Ohanes Kassamanian	4		1	1	2	3	2,500
57 G. H. Sahaguian	6	1	1		3	4	1,000
58 Abraham Frianossian	7	1	1	1		1	3,200
59 Asadour Dimyenian	5	1				2	2,500
60 Isai Zadirian	4	1				2	3,000
61 Hagop Malkedjian	5	1	2			4	3,200
62 Mariam Tavokdjian	1					2	1,000
63 Bogos Kassamanian	5	1	1	1		2	4,300
64 Garabet Sahaguian	3	1				3	1,700
65 Kévork Kérimian	8	1				7	2,200
66 Vahan Kéchichian	3	1	2	1		16	3,800
67 Kaloust Palazian	8	1	1		2		4,500
68 Abraham Aherian	6	1	2	1	4	7	3,000
69 George Arabian	2					4	2,500
70 Ohanés Palazian	5	2		2	1	1	2,500
71 Ocnadios Cordourian	4					6	2,000
72 George Istamboulian	3	1				3	2,500
73 Hovsep Aherian	6	2	1	1	2	2	2,700
74 Kévork Guzelian	4	1				4	3,000
75 Abraham Nersessian	7	2	2	1		4	2,700
76 Hagop Sarkissian	6		1				6,000
77 Abraham Habachian	8					4	2,200
78 Hovsep Kumédijian	3		2		1	3	2,200
79 Vanis Vartanissian	5		3				2,300
80 Hagop A. Kassamanian	5	1					8,500
81 Abraham M. Malkedjian	4	2				3	6,500
82 Mardir Mardaian	5	1					11,000
83 Kévork Bogossian	4						2,000
84 Losia Tousounian	4					2	1,700

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Donkeys</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)</i>
85 Abraham Kassamanian	4						2,000
86 Hatcher Dimyenian	5					2	2,100
87 Guiragos Ahoian	9	1	3	1		7	3,500
88 Maroka Malkedjian	2	1				1	1,500
89 Ohanes Malkedjian	7	1	2	1		3	2,500
90 Manouk Sarkissian	7	1	1			4	5,500
91 Avedis Thontian	2						1,000
92 Assadour Toussonian	9	1	3	1		5	3,050
93 Angeolina Kassamenian	1						1,000
94 Misak Moussaian	10					2	16,000
95 Sahaque G. Sahaguian	2					2	1,200
96 Sarkis Bairamian	5	1		2	1	70	7,000
97 Martha Ohanian	2					1	2,200
98 Armin Guazélian	7	1	2	1		2	2,500
99 Artin Kassamanian	7	2				2	8,000
100 Sitrak Baldjian	5	1	1			4	2,900
101 Zakar Simonian	7						33,000
102 Abraham Boghoguian	7					1	2,000
103 Kevork M. Malkidjian	5	1	2			1	3,500
104 Manouk Gazurian	6	1				4	10,200
105 Kevork Bislemian	7	1		2		11	4,200
106 Nichan Kéchichian	6	1	1	2	3	5	2,500
107 Mourat Bairamian	3					1	2,600
108 Léon Bachaian	8	2				2	7,000
109 Asadour Malkedjian	5	1	4			8	3,300
110 Hovsep Baldjian	8					3	13,000
111 Misrop Koyoumdjian	3	1					2,300
112 Sarkis Sarkissian	4	1				3	6,000
113 Samsoun Bairamian	2				1	4	33,000
114 Hather Tavokdjian	3						1,200

<i>Nº Name</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Donkeys</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)</i>
115 Sarkis Papissian	7	1					3,700
116 Hather Ghazurian	8	1		2		35	6,000
117 Sarkis M. Kassamanian	7					2	4,000
118 Sarkis H. Kassamanian	7	1				4	9,000
119 Tomas Moghdousian	5						1,550
120 Simon Markarian	3	1				3	6,000
121 Hather Tovmassian	8					2	6,500
122 Père M. Kechichian	2	1				3	6,500
123 Kévork Kechichian	5						1,000
124 Soltan Kéchichian	1						1,500
125 Vanis Selumian	5						3,200
126 Kévork Habechian	2	1				2	4,000
127 Alexandre Toudjerian	7	1					5,400
128 Dabra Bairamian	4	1				2	3,000
129 Hagop Bairamian	7	1	3			4	16,000
130 Misak Bislemian	3	1	2	1			3,000
131 Hagop N. Manavdjian	3					2	2,000
132 Sarkis Guzelian	3						6,000
133 Ohanes Ikizian	3						2,000
134 David Kassamanian	5	1	2	2			2,700
135 Hagop H. Manavdjian	6	1		2		4	2,000
136 Hatcher Palazian	2	1				2	2,225
137 Ynovk Bairamian	7					1	1,000
138 Natan Kassabian	4	1				4	11,000
139 Manouk Ikizian	5	2				1	2,600
140 Yghia Thaparian	6		2			2	3,400
141 Ohanes Manavdjian	6		2	1		5	3,300
142 Hather Bislemian	4	1					2,250
143 Donik Bairamian	8	1	2			4	10,000
144 Moussa Hanechian	3						2,700

Nº Name	Family Members	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	Goats	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)
145	Margueride Kavlakian	2					1,100
146	Antrias Ohanessian	5	1	1	3	3	8,000
147	Sitrak Papissian	5	1			2	3,500
148	Hagop Papissian	5	1			2	7,250
149	Hagop Sasounian	2					3,325
150	Vanis Feslian	5			2	1	2,200
151	Bidros Ohanessian	6	1	1	3	5	4,000
152	Dikran Palazian	3	2	3		3	3,000
153	Ropen Varouzian	4		2	3		2,500
154	Aram Varouzian	8		4			2,400
155	Artin Baldjian	5	1	2	2	3	3,500
156	Movses Baldjian	5	1	1		22	3,500
157	Kerop Baldjian	8	1			1	12,000
158	Movses Sersemian	8		1			2,000
159	Aram Sersemian	6			2	2	2,600
160	Hagop Batouzian	8	1			2	6,000
161	Ohanes Zekerian	7					1,500
162	Armen Zekerian	7					1,500
163	Mothios Thaparian	4		2		20	2,000
164	Atam Thaparian	5		2		3	2,000
165	Hather Vartanisian	8	1	1	1		4,500
166	Zakar Istamboulian	6		2		11	3,000
167	Hagop N. Baldjian	5			2	1	2,300
168	Minas Ghazekian	4	1		3	3	7,000
169	Ysrael Konyoumdjian	5	1		2	1	4,050
170	Karabet Seferian	1					2,000
171	Zekéria Kechichian	5	1			3	6,000
172	Père M. Guzelian	2				2	15,000
173	Antranik Batouzian	5	1			5	5,000
174	David Davidian	4	1			8	7,000

Nº Name	Family Members	Donkeys	Cows	Oxen	Sheep	Goats	Value of Fixed Properties (Syrian liras)	
175	Sarkis Orfalian	3	1			4	7,000	
176	Ovssana Toudjérian	2		1		4	1,500	
177	Ohanes Ghazorian	6	1		1	2	8,950	
178	Hovnan K. Kechichian	2					2,000	
179	Hagop Varouzian	5	1			6	7,900	
180	Assadour Kassamanian	4	1			3	7,900	
181	Mariam Maltetjian	1	1			2	1,000	
182	Serop Guzelian	3				5	10,000	
183	Mardiros Bayramian	1					1,000	
184	Assadour Davidian	2				30	13,500	
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>890</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>752,549</b>

Source: Fr. Nareg Shrikian, private papers, Montebello, California, Liste nominative des habitants de Djebel Moussa ainsi que des animaux et de biens immobiliers leur appartenant: Village de Kaboussie, 1939.

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