



IGNATIUS PETER XVI BATANIAN  
ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH

# THE ARMENIAN TRAGEDY

(50th Anniversary of the Massacres)  
1915 - 1965

**An Appeal to the Conscience of the World**

1875

1875

1875

1875

1875



IGNATIUS PETER XVI BATANIAN  
ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH

# THE ARMENIAN TRAGEDY

(50th Anniversary of the Massacres)  
1915 - 1965

**An Appeal to the Conscience of the World**



VENIANT PETER XVI BATAIANAN  
ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH

# THE ARMENIAN TRAGEDY

(50th Anniversary of the Massacres)  
1915 - 1965

Printed in the Workshops of the Holy See

TIP. « MARIAPOLI » - GROTTAFERRATA DI ROMA

## PREFACE

*RELIGION and COUNTRY are two inseparable elements which have long characterized the life of the Armenian people.*

*The coming together of these two elements goes back to the beginning of the fourth century, when Saint Gregory, the Illuminator of Armenia, and the holy King Trididate made use of the spiritual and temporal power entrusted to them to give a deathblow to paganism and to proclaim Christianity a state religion for the first time in history.*

*The words ARMENIAN and CHRISTIAN have become synonymous for our people.*

*Our history has been marked through the centuries by these two ideals: « FOR RELIGION and FOR COUNTRY ».*

*This motto was adopted by Saint Vartan and his companions, when, in the middle of the fifth century, they had to resist the forceful imposition of Zoroastrianism on them. It has always and everywhere been the rallying cry for Armenians when their lives and religious faith have been threatened and they have had to choose between death and the denial of their religious beliefs and their homeland.*

*The massacres of 1915-1918, the fiftieth anniversary of which we are now commemorating, were primarily intended to annihilate our race. It was also the oppressors' intention to force our people to deny their Christian faith.*

*Once again brute force with its consequent devastation and barbarity could not overcome steadfastness in the faith of Christ and fidelity to one's country. Our fathers preferred to die the most horrible of deaths and lose all their earthly belongings rather than sacrifice the noble ideal of the Armenian people.*

*In recalling those sad years which we ourselves lived through as a young man, we wish to render filial homage to the blessed memory of the million and a half victims who died in order that the religious and national heritage of the Armenian people might remain alive and intact.*

*Above all, we wish to remind the present and future generations of Armenians of:*

- I. THE BLOODY BUT GLORIOUS CHAPTER OF OUR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY;*
- II. THE REASONS FOR THE MASSACRES;*
- III. THE REACTION CAUSED BY THESE EVENTS;*
- IV. THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.*

# PREFACE

THESE are the first of the two indispensable elements which have long since become the life of the American people. The history of the United States is the history of the struggle of the American people against the forces of the East. The American people have always been a people of the West, and it is the history of the West that we are writing here. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation. The West is the land of the future, and it is the West that we must look to for our salvation.

## I. THE BLOODY BUT GLORIOUS CHAPTER OF OUR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

When Pope Saint Pius X, in December, 1911, received our Patriarch and eighteen Armenian Catholic bishops who had come to Rome to hold a synod, he congratulated them upon the good organization of their Church, blessed the fruit of their labors and, in bidding them good-by, made reference, in an almost prophetic spirit, to the martyrdom which awaited them.

Our pastors, strengthened by this blessing, returned to their dioceses and gave themselves up entirely to their work. God did not fail to bless their efforts.

### OUR PATRIMONY

On the eve of World War I the Armenian Catholic hierarchy was composed of nineteen dioceses, an Apostolic Administration in Russia and several Patriarchal Vicariates. There were some two hundred thousand people under its jurisdiction.

In the different provinces of Turkey we had 156 churches and chapels, 110 mission stations, 148 schools for young boys and girls, 32 convents for male and female Religious and 6 seminaries.

The Apostolic Administration in Russia was made up of 50 mission stations with churches and schools.

The clergy, numbering 300 secular priests and 120 religious priests, and 150 Sisters zealously and devotedly served our people.

The situation of our non-Catholic brethren was just as promising. They were led by many bishops and hundreds of priests who dedicated themselves wholly to the service of the Christian faith and Armenian culture. Each center, large or small, had its church, its school and benefited from many educational and social organizations.

By means of their industry, application, tenacity and faithfulness, the Armenians put to good use all the positive qualities and talents of their race and so contributed loyally to the country's progress and to the different facets of its administrative, social, cultural, scientific, economic, commercial, industrial and artistic life.

### MISFORTUNE OF WAR

World War I began in August, 1914.

The Ottoman Empire was subjected to a government which proved to be very harmful by drawing the country into the conflict and leading it, if not to total destruction, at least to dismemberment. The leaders of the regime were badly advised by a European power which had

world-wide ambitions. As a result these leaders took steps and adopted measures which were catastrophic for Turkey and disastrous for a good part of the population — the Armenians.

### PURPOSE OF OUR EXPOSE'

First of all, we wish to state in the clearest, most sincere and most categorical manner, that what we have to say is not meant to be an indictment of modern Turkey, its rulers or its people, for whom we wholeheartedly desire the most perfect peace in the most equitable justice.

Our only reference here is to a regime and to men whose misdeeds and evil actions have been disavowed and condemned on many occasions by the political spokesmen and press of modern Turkey.

Furthermore, we still have hope that Turkey will one day follow the example of other countries and peoples and consider making reparation for these misdeeds and evil actions of the past.

No right-minded and well-intentioned person will find it out of place if, on a fiftieth anniversary such as this, we recall the glorious memory of our fathers and mothers, of our brothers and sisters and of so many of our people, who died heroically for such sublime ideals as GOD and COUNTRY; if we invite the present and future generations of Armenians to take inspiration from the admirable examples of their ancestors and to live a life which is worthy of them.

### THE HORRIBLE FACTS

That said, let us begin by giving a simple idea of what happened. We do not intend to go into all the details of the atrocities which were committed for much has already been written about them by different people and in different languages. We shall limit ourselves to noting, in a succinct way, how much the Armenian Catholic Church and all Armenians in general suffered.

Our Bishops of Mardin, Malatia, Diarbekr, Mouche and Kharput were mercilessly slain together with a great number of their priests and Catholic people.

The Bishops of Sivas, Brousse and Erzerum died as a result of the deportations and terrible treatment to which they were subjected.

111 priests died, many of them having been killed after refusing to give up their faith.

53 Sisters were killed or died during the deportations.

Only a small number of the laity, made up mostly of widows and orphans, survived.

Most of our churches, bishops' and priests' residences, convents,

schools and cemeteries were profaned, sacked, demolished, pillaged and reduced to ruins.

It was a desolation.

When the hostilities ended, both the number of our Catholic people and our temporal holdings were reduced to practically nothing.

In the entire territory of the old Ottoman Empire only 39 churches and chapels, 12 mission stations, 11 schools, 11 convents and 1 seminary remained.

The same fate was reserved for our non-Catholic Armenian brethren and, given their greater number, their loss was much greater than ours.

The once prosperous Armenian provinces were drained of their inhabitants, who, in turn, were condemned to exile, deportation and death in the arid desert near Deir Zor.

Just reading about the atrocities and abominations which were inflicted on our people and which the most serious and impartial writers of that time have verified and recorded for posterity in their classical publications makes one tremble with horror.

## REASON FOR PRIDE

When we recall the great heroism of our ancestors, an immense pride fills our heart. This heroism will, we hope, one day merit for them the honor of being cited together with the Maccabees, Saint Vartan and his martyr companions, Saint Leontius and his companions, Saint Hripsimia and her companions...

While the Armenians are perfectly content to await the Church's judgement, since it is the only authority able to make a declaration about the heroicity of these Confessors of the Faith, they nevertheless fervently hope and pray that one day they may be accorded the honor of being included in the Martyrology.

When, on October 18, 1964, in the majestic setting of Saint Peter's Basilica and amidst the splendor of the Sacred Liturgy, Pope Paul VI solemnly proclaimed the saintliness of the Martyrs of Uganda, the memory of our World War I victims was very vivid in our mind.

At the end of the ceremony, when, together with the Cardinals and Patriarchs, we were presented to His Holiness, we murmured with heartfelt emotion: « Most Holy Father, we hope that there may soon be a day for our Armenian martyrs. » To this the Holy Father answered with a voice full of sweetness and love: « We also wish it with all Our heart and We pray for that intention. »

## HEROIC DEEDS

Many individual deeds are recorded which remind us of the Acts of the Martyrs.

The first to come to mind is that of the Most Reverend Ignatius Maloyan, the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Mardin. For his story we are indebted to several most trustworthy people who lived with him and have passed on to us what they themselves personally saw and knew or learned directly from eyewitnesses.

First of all, we have Archbishop Maloyan's colleague and intimate friend, His Eminence Gabriel Ignatius Cardinal Tappouni, who then governed the Syrian Catholic Diocese of Mardin. We have three Dominican Fathers of the Mesopotamian Mission who were in Mardin from December 26, 1914, to November 18, 1916: Father Dominic Berré, who later became the Apostolic Delegate in Iraq, Father James Rhétoré and Father Hyacinth Simon. There is also Father Isaac Armaté, an eyewitness, who, in 1921, published a work entitled: « Récit des massacres et crimes commis en Mésopotamie et spécialement à Mardin. »

The first few months of 1915 proved to be disastrous for those Armenian provinces where the massacres, the exiles and the deportations had begun.

ARCHBISHOP IGNATIUS MALOYAN sensed the danger which was threatening his people when he heard the tragic news of what was happening elsewhere. During the night of May 1st, he gathered his priests together in the local church, informed them of the situation and spent a long time with them in prayer to invoke divine assistance.

The following morning he composed his spiritual testament and addressed it to his people. The following are some excerpts:

" First of all, we wish to exhort you to renew your faith and strengthen your hope in the Holy Cross, which is rooted in the rock of Peter upon which Our Lord built His eternal Church and whose foundation was bathed in the blood of martyrs.

" May we, poor sinners that we are, have the great honor of rendering ourselves worthy to mix our blood with that of the innocent heroes of Christianity.

" ... As for myself, I must tell you that I have been, to the best of my ability, most obedient to the head of God's Church, to the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, and my one desire is to see my clergy and my dear children, the faithful, follow me in this same complete submission to the Holy See.

" ... Good-by, my dear children! I entreat you to pray to Our Lord for us, that He may grant us the strength and courage necessary to walk the paths of this perishable life with His grace and in His love unto the shedding of our blood."

These quotations remind us of certain passages from the magnificent letter sent to the Romans by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the great martyr whom the courageous archbishop had chosen as his patron.

Exactly one month later Archbishop Maloyan saw his intimate friend, Bishop Tappouni, for the last time in the presence of the

above-mentioned three Dominican Fathers. He gave Bishop Tappouni his will and added these words:

"I know that I am condemned to death along with my whole community. Watch over my children as well as you can. I entrust them to your care until such time as our Superiors will make other provisions. From one moment to the next I expect to be imprisoned. I bid you good-by. Pray for me. We shall not see each other again in this world. Good-by, my dear friends."

Two days later, in the afternoon of June 3rd, he was arrested along with twelve of his priests.

"He hid arms in the church and organized a revolt against the state." This was the key accusation thought up and set forth as a proven crime and definitive judgement against Archbishop Maloyan, whom the Government had decorated but a few months previously.

Two or three days after this some 420 prominent Armenians were to be found in prison along with the archbishop and his priests. Mr. Andrews, the pastor of the American Protestant Mission of Mardin, managed to visit these unfortunate people and was able to obtain some idea of the atrocious sufferings which they endured for eight days.

On June 10th the order was given to the Christians not to leave their homes under the pain of death.

The first group of deportees — to be followed by so many others — was escorted by the police and some soldiers and had to pass along Mardin's main street on its way out of the city. Archbishop Maloyan was bound like all the others and with his twelve priests brought up the rear of the sorrowful procession.

Those were days of terrible anguish for the city's Christians. Many contradictory rumors circulated about the fate reserved for the group which had departed. The truth was finally known when a Turkish military doctor, who had accompanied the group, told Bishop Tappouni that all the deportees had been executed midway between Mardin and Diarbekr and that Archbishop Maloyan had been shot in the head.

So it was that this brave shepherd died with his flock, inspiring in all strong courage and resolute fortitude. When asked to renounce their faith in order to save their lives, the archbishop's companions all replied after him: "We will die, but we will die for Jesus Christ!"

He urged them to be brave and to think of the glory which would be theirs. He gave them absolution for the last time, took bread, consecrated it and had his priests distribute it to them as Viaticum.

They were all put to death along the road in the presence of their pastor, who was left to the last so that he might drink to the very dregs the cup of bitterness which was his.

For the last time the leader of the group, Mahmoud Bey, asked his victim to renounce his faith. With stalwart pride Archbishop Maloyan

answered: " I have told you several times that I wish to live and die in my true faith! "

This good shepherd, after having made sure that his sheep had found the right path, was struck down by a bullet in the head. He died with these words on his lips: " Lord, I commit my soul into your hands. Have mercy on me! "

The story of Archbishop Maloyan is not an isolated one.

The Most Reverend MICHAEL KHATCHADOURIAN, Bishop of Malatia, suffered tortures which remind us of the martyrdom of Saint Lawrence.

This venerable old man of seventy-nine years was arrested, physically abused, insulted and thrown into prison. When invited to apostatize in order to save his life, he answered with an act of faith in Christ to Whom he offered his life. He was knocked to the ground and his clothes were torn off. His tormentors lit a small fire on his chest for the preparation of their coffee.

After unsuccessful attempts to strangle him with the chain of his pectoral cross, a rope was used to bring his excruciating sufferings to an end.

The Most Reverend JAMES TOPOUZIAN, Bishop of Mouche, had hurriedly gone to Norchen, an important village of his diocese, to give encouragement to the Catholic inhabitants there.

He was arrested and, with his Catholic people, led to the banks of the Meghraked River. He was enclosed in a hayloft together with many of the faithful, whose lot he wished to share, and was burned alive. The date was June 11, 1915, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Whom the courageous bishop begged pardon for his oppressors.

The Most Reverend ANDREW TCHELEBIAN, Bishop of Diarbekr, was, on September 18, 1915, taken from his residence along with the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and some of the faithful. All were deported under a police escort the same day.

Upon their arrival at the edge of the Tigris River, the bishop was buried in the sand up to his armpits and his head was brutally battered with stones.

To add to the barbarity of this torture which lasted for several hours, the assassins invited him to bless his people for the last time with his right arm, which they left free of the mass of sand and stones. As a final touch of cynicism, they forced the Sisters and some of the faithful, who were to undergo a similar fate, to come and kiss his ring.

On June 28, 1915, the following government order was proclaimed in the streets of Kharput: " Christians — men, women and children — must leave immediately. "

They were divided into groups and one after another led off to unknown destinations.

The Most Reverend STEPHEN ISRAELIAN, Bishop of Kharput,

had received special assurances from the Wali that he would not have to leave the city.

On July 12th, however, at seven o'clock in the evening, a police officer came and ordered him to evacuate the house as the door was to be sealed. He was led to the police station.

That same night a group made up of the bishop, two priests, four Sisters, a French lady by the name of Miss Ganot and twenty-five families set out for Diarbekr.

On July 14th the group received the order to retrace their steps under the pretext of returning to Kharput. They were told to stay away from the main roads.

After an hour's walk along difficult paths they arrived at a valley called "Seuyuklu Dere" (Valley of Willows). Here the head of the police informed the bishop and his companions of the order he had received to put them to death. He left to them the choice of the manner of death.

Bishop Israelian begged his executioners to grant him two favors: to allow him, first of all, to prepare his flock for this solemn moment, and, secondly, to execute him last. His requests were granted amidst mocking laughter.

He made his people kneel down and gave them absolution, which he in turn received from a priest at his side. After this he declared himself ready to die with his companions, to whom he shouted out a last word of encouragement. All these brave people were lined up and fell one after the other under the repeated volleys of rifle fire. In this way they made the supreme offering of their lives to God.

## BROTHERS UNDER FIRE

The same horrible destiny was reserved for our brothers, the members of the Armenian Orthodox clergy.

Long is the list of those valiant pastors, who, marching at the head of their people, gave up their lives for their religion and their country.

May we mention, among others, the following:

The most Reverend YEZNIG KALPAKDJIAN, Bishop of Palu where he was killed in 1915.

The Most Reverend SIMBAD SAADATIAN, Bishop of Erzerum, who was slain near Erzingan;

The Most Reverend KHOSROF PEHRIKIAN, Bishop of Cesarea, who was knocked to the ground, his hands tied and his throat cut;

The Most Reverend NERSES TANELIAN.

The Archpriests Ardavast Kalendarian, Sahag Odabachian, Vartan Hagopian and the priest Kegham Tevekelian.

The pastors of the Armenian Protestant community suffered the same horrible fate. The name of Pastor Khatchig Vartanian deserves special mention.

### THE HEROIC FLOCK

They struck down the shepherds in the hope that the sheep would be dispersed, that they would not have the courage to oppose them, that they would dishonor their race and that they would deny their faith.

None of these things happened. We have already seen the heroism of those who remained at the side of their bishops to share in the glory of dying with them.

Innumerable are the priests, Religious, men, women and children who gave proof of superhuman courage, exceptional perseverance, unwavering boldness, unshakeable faith and a love for Christ stronger than death.

The following examples are but a few of the many acts of heroism known to us.

### VALIANT PRIESTS

Not one of the nineteen priests of the Archdiocese of Mardin survived the massacre. Even though they were subjected to all kinds of torture and given a chance to save their lives in return for their denial of the faith, they all fell heroically under the blows of their executioners.

Father Gabriel Katmargi, a young priest of twenty-seven years, courageously went to his death finding strength in the Holy Cross, a true relic of which he carried on his person and which he swallowed before being executed in order to save it from profanation. After having his toenails torn off, he was forced to follow a group of deportees on foot and he slain with them.

It is especially pleasing for us to cite here the name of the venerable priest who baptized us, Father Stephen Holoziian, who was born in 1845. He was arrested in his parish Church of Saint Joseph. In an attempt to make him admit that he had hidden some arms — a thing that he had never done — he was stretched out on the ground and beaten most ferociously. Finally he was deported and horribly massacred, considering himself privileged to die for Christ.

Father Baitouni, the pastor of Amassia, had been authorized to remain in the city, but he preferred to accompany his people into exile. He was slain on a mountain path between Tokat and Amassia.

Father Michael Azvazadourian was stationed at Husnimansur, in the Diocese of Malatia, where he was put to death in 1915, after undergoing excruciating torments. It began for him with frequent beatings extending over several consecutive days. At each blow he was invited to renounce

his Christian faith. He was not given any food and was treated in the most abject manner. His skin was ripped off while he was still alive and thrown with the garbage to serve as food for dogs.

These priests and all their intrepid companions had often sung the following verse from the Morning Office: "Jesus, gateway of life, lead us to the Father and the Spirit, to sing eternal glory."

Can it be doubted that their prayer was heard?

## THE GLORIOUS BRIDES OF CHRIST

The virgins hold a special place in the following of the Lamb.

After the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Diarbekr had witnessed the martyrdom of Bishop Tchelebian, they were taken further down the sandy bank of the Tigris to prepare for their own deaths.

The Superior, Mother Emilia Balian, solicitous for the salvation of her younger companions' souls, asked the executioners to grant her three favors: a brief delay so that they might prepare themselves for death by prayer; that she herself be the last one to be killed so that the others would not be frightened by her death and be tempted to avoid martyrdom; and, finally, that their bodies be covered with sand after their deaths.

This admirable Religious might well be compared to the mother of the Maccabees in her anxiety for the eternal destiny of those dear to her and for their bodily purity even after death. Well may we say with Virgil: "You deserve to be covered with lilies: *manibus date lilia plenis.*"

It was Jesus Himself Who addressed to these Sisters and to all those who suffered with them the beautiful words which they had sung so often on the occasion of religious professions: "Come, Spouse of Christ, receive the imperishable crown of glory."

## THE DESCENDANTS OF SAINT VARTAN

The first step in the diabolical plan for the annihilation of the Armenian race was the suppression of the adult males.

There were many Armenians in the Turkish army. As they could have foiled and prevented the success of this plan, they were broken up into small groups and were executed.

The month of April has remained sadly memorable. All the professional people, two hundred and seventy of them, were arrested in Constantinople. Among them were physicians, lawyers, jurists, writers, poets, professors, artists, actors, editors and even the parliamentary deputies Vartkes and Zohrab. Hundreds of others from various parts of the country joined them in their journey into exile. The executioners

dragged them from city to city and made them wander in the desert where they were slain.

This was but one of a countless number of groups of men. They all either perished during the forced marches or were massacred on the steppes of Deir Zor, Chaddade, Maskane, Maara, Mumbege, etc.

Volumes would be required to recount the valorous deeds of so many courageous men.

At Mezre a noted pharmacist and dean of his family, Meguerditch Der Stepanian, sensed the terrible danger which threatened everyone. He called all the women and children of the area to his house and made this little speech to them: "We must not deceive ourselves. We men have been condemned to death. You, women and children, will be exposed to the danger of apostasy, denial and even the forgetting of your Armenian family name. Wives, swear that you will remain faithful to your marriage vows. My children, whatever be the names which they will impose on you, always remember those given to you at Baptism."

In this way he had a tearful farewell to the crowd. The separation of families was merciless and inexorable. Neither men, women nor children were spared.

Our men of Erzerum and the nearby villages anxiously awaited the deportations and the massacres. They well knew that they were condemned to death.

Before the departure of the group and the beginning of the massacres it was proposed that the men apostatize in order to save their lives. It is to their honor and glory that not one defection took place.

## THE BRAVE WOMEN

The women were not spared any suffering nor were they less admirable than the men in their bearing of it. Divine help strengthened them in their weakness and, at times, in a most visible and striking manner.

A group of deported women had arrived under police escort at a place where some Kurds were camped. It was August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. These poor ladies, already deprived of much of their clothing, were ordered to disrobe entirely and to go to the tents of the head Kurds. All knelt down and with tears in their eyes begged the Immaculate Mother of God on this day of her triumph over death to spare them this shame worse than death itself.

At that very moment several violent earth tremors wrecked the encampment and caused all the men to flee.

The women were able to continue their march and meet under other circumstances the death for which they had prayed.

Another group of deported women arrived at Kemakh Boghazi, a place located at the top of a gorge overlooking the Euphrates River. They were given their choice of death by a plunge from the precipice or life by apostasy. They all jumped together into the river after making the sign of the cross.

Mrs. Elizabeth Stepanian, after the murder of her husband, Minas, left Kharput with her four daughters on an interminable deportation journey (Malatia-Urfa-Aleppo-Deir Zor). This courageous lady's first care was to disfigure her children's beautiful faces with a razor so as to avoid any possibility of an attempt at sexual violence or rape.

### THE MAGNIFICENT YOUTH

The young people and the children also have their glorious page in this epic story.

The Most Reverend Joseph Doumani, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Tripoli (Lebanon), and his Vicar General, Father John Chiniara, were exiled to Sivar in 1915. On September 24, 1916, they were transferred to Tokat, where they spent the last two years of their exile.

At that time the Turkish Government issued an order giving Armenian Catholics permission to practice their religion.

There were about twenty Armenian Catholic families hidden in Tokat. Their church was not suitable for worship, so a room in the modest dwelling of the bishop and his Vicar General was set aside for this purpose.

Archbishop Dolci, the Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul, took an interest in Bishop Doumani and charged him, in the name of the Armenian Catholic Patriarch, to care for the Diocese of Tokat-Sivas during his stay in that area, since the diocese had neither an Armenian bishop or priest.

Father Chiniara was put in charge of the parish of Tokat.

The following is the edifying story which he told:

"I want to make known the striking heroism of Miss Aznif Calepdjian, an Armenian Catholic of Tokat. She was twenty years old and, because of the training received from Catholic Sisters, spoke French very well. This young lady came to Mass one Sunday and since I did not know her, I asked who she was. She told me her story.

"She was an orphan and had only one brother two years younger than herself. As a member of a well-to-do family, she had a city house and two others in the country, with a vineyard, garden and orchard. When the massacres of the summer of 1915 took place, she was living with her brother in one of the country houses. One of her neighbors was a Turkish colonel who knew the girl very well from having often observed her at a distance. He made up his mind to take advantage of the circumstances of the times. The Armenians were soon put in prison

and her brother was among them. The officer arranged for her to remain free and informed her of what he had done while asking her hand in marriage. If she would marry him, he guaranteed her life and that of her brother. If not, both would die.

"Aznif, even though she had already decided to reject the offer, mentioned the matter to her brother, who, in answer, sent her a short note which she still had in her possession and which she allowed me to read 'My sister, it is not for me to tell you what your duty is. You know that better than I do. Our holy Church forbids us to contract marriage with those not of our religion. If, in order to save me, you are thinking of accepting this proposal, know that you will live very unhappily and will die miserably and that I will no longer acknowledge you as my sister. Therefore, do what is expected of you without thinking of me. I want to be a martyr. Pray for me and so long until we meet in heaven.'

"The young girl then courageously told the Turkish officer that her religion did not allow her to marry him. Two days later her brother was hanged from a tree. Stricken with grief and wishing to flee in order to safeguard her virtue, she took a cart and, accompanied by an equally brave cousin, left behind all her belongings and joined the group of Armenians who had left the night before. More than once the guards threatened to shoot her. She laughed at death. This heroine, the sister of a martyr, arrived safely at Malatia. She spent two years there assisting the sick in a hospital run by German nurses. From there she was able to go secretly to Samsun and then return to the city of her birth. This episode is worthy of the Christians of the early Church!"

## THE CHILDREN OF HOLY CHURCH

Those who survived the terrible deportations and massacres were mostly widows and orphans.

The lot of these poor women was that of Rachel after massacre of the children of Bethlehem.

The diabolical plan for the annihilation of the Armenian race made necessary the slaying of innocent beings. Not even the orphans were spared.

In Aleppo an attempt was made to set up an orphanage. The Government, when it heard of this, telegraphed that it was useless to give way to sentiment and that the orphans were to be sent into the desert.

Talaat Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, on June 15, 1916, repeated the order in even harsher terms: To care for these children in orphanages was to act against the wishes of the Government, since it meant prolonging the lives of undesirable creatures.

Some 3,000 orphans had been admitted to an orphanage in Aleppo.

When the English occupied the city in 1918, however, there were only fifty left. All the others had succumbed to bad treatment and to torture. The survivors had been spared only to justify the existence of the orphanage.

These innocent creatures cannot be forgotten when we sing that verse of our hymn addressed to the Children of Bethlehem: " Voluntary victims, children of a tender age but of perfect wisdom, who, instead of milk, drank delightful wine, intercede with the Lord for the children of the Church."

## II. THE REASONS FOR THE MASSACRES

If we look for the reasons for the horrors which we have briefly referred to, we find that they were political in origin, namely, to free Turkey of the Armenian race by means of annihilation. But religious motivation also became quite evident in the carrying out of this plan. The assassin's hatred for the Christian religion prompted them to guarantee safety in return for apostasy.

Bishop John Naslian, in his very important work, "Mémoires sur les événements politico-religieux en Proche-Orient de 1914 à 1918", from which we have taken much of our material, begins his general appraisal of the massacres in the following way: "The annihilation of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire was conceived and planned by the 'Young Turk' Committee with the approval of the Turkish Government and was carried out by the Moslem population with the support and encouragement of the civil and military authorities of the time under the direction of the police assigned to the deportations. To bring about the total suppression of such a strong Christian race, the Turks, given their particular mentality, followed political ends in the planning and religious designs in the execution of the plan."

### THE POLITICAL MOTIVATION

The Armenians were, numerically, ethnically, socially and financially, the most important racial group in Turkey. The "Young Turk" Committee wanted the country to be under absolute Turkish domination. To accomplish this all the other groups had to be absorbed or done away with.

Making full use of their energy and positive racial qualities, the Armenians had made remarkable progress in all sectors of the national life. They had attained this position thanks to a situation which assured them rights and privileges recognized by the Turkish Government in virtue of official agreements contained in international acts.

They remained very much attached to their own national and religious traditions. But they did not fail to dedicate themselves to the good of the country in which they were living, to serve her faithfully and to put their talents to work for her progress.

On January 26, 1915, Enver Pasha, one of the Turkish leaders, congratulated the Armenian Prelate Gregorian upon the loyalty of his people and charged him to convey to them the expression "of his satisfaction and his gratitude."

A little more than a month later the same Enver Pasha gave the following answer to the American Ambassador when the latter made reference to the responsibility which the Turkish leaders were assuming

before the civilized world because of the steps taken to suppress an entire race: "If we are the victors, no one will dare to ask us to account for what we have done. If, on the other hand, we are the losers, even if we disappear, the Armenian problem will be solved by the fact that the Armenians will no longer exist."

## GENOCIDE

Talaat Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, used the same language in his coded orders regarding the massacres.

Mr. Aram Andonian has managed to get his hands on more than fifty documents containing orders given by the men in command. He was able to obtain photographic reproductions of the original texts. They consist in telegrams, official orders and notes sent by the Central Government, the Provincial Governors and the "Union and Progress" Committee.

One order, dated September 9, 1915, from the Minister of the Interior to the Prefecture in Aleppo, reads as follows: "The right to live and work on Turkish territory is entirely abolished for the Armenians. The Government, assuming all responsibility in this matter, has ordered that not even infants in cradles be left."

This coded dispatch was followed by another, dated September 15th: "To the Prefecture of Aleppo:

"It was previously communicated to you that the Government, in compliance with the orders of the 'Union and Progress' Committee, has decided to do away with all the Armenians living in Turkey. Those who are opposed to this order and decision cannot remain in government service. It is necessary to put an end to their existence without regard for women, children and the sick, using any means of extermination and without giving heed to the feelings of conscience.

*The Minister of the Interior Talaat "*

All these orders were carried out!

## CONFESSION OF THE TURKS

It is worthwhile to cite here the confession which the Turks themselves made.

It was Tewfic Pasha, an influential member of the "Union and Progress" Party, who declared, on June 11, 1919, before the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference: "During the war almost the whole world was moved by the accounts of the crimes that the Turks had committed. Far be it from me to cover up these crimes, which were such as to make the human conscience shudder with horror. I shall try even less to minimize the culpability of the actors in this great drama..."

This admission is enough to undermine all the futile attempts

to justify the horrors committed or to place the blame on the Armenians themselves.

Who can believe that two million Armenians scattered about an immense territory like that of the Ottoman Empire presented a threat to the whole country?

Who can justify the abominations perpetrated by charging to an entire people the supposed insurrection of this or that clandestine organization?

The verdict had been pronounced by the Young Turks: the Armenian race had to disappear!

The reason: hatred for the Armenians, who are an undesirable race!

The times were very propitious for the carrying out of this decision. Europe had a world war on its hands. Turkey itself had been drawn into it. The countries at war with her could no longer intervene in favor of the Armenians. Those countries allied with Turkey had made an agreement which forbade them to mingle in her internal affairs.

The plan was drawn up and carried out. Prison, deportations, torture, firing squads, massacres, nothing was spared to ensure success.

Recourse was had to a very efficacious means — the fanaticism of the Kurds and the general population. The holy war "Djihad" was proclaimed. There was merit to be had for doing away with these unwanted elements both because of their race and their religion.

## THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVATION

Innumerable are the instances in which this fanaticism played its evil role.

Equally numerous are the indications which prove that the plan for the suppression of the Armenians was, in its execution, very often anti-Christian.

Father Hyacinth Simon in his book, "Mardin, Ville Heroïque", records the following story:

"On June 10th (1915), at midnight, an hour before the departure of the first group, the prisoners, already bound up, were quite surprised to see a Moslem sheik with twenty-five mullahs coming towards them, all brandishing swords. Archbishop Maloyan and his companions never thought that they would have to die in Mardin itself.

"Choose," the sheik told them, "between Islam and death..." "Our choice is made," the prisoners answered with one voice, "death..."

They were murdered some hours later in the mountains.

We have already seen that right up until the last moment attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to get them to apostatize in order to save their lives.

Many other groups had been subjected to these same cruel conditions. Strengthened by the shepherd who marched at their head, by

the clergy who accompanied them, by the faith which they professed, by the grace which aided them, by Mary, the Queen of Martyrs, whom they loved dearly, by Jesus, Whom they invoked while carrying their cross, all these Christians had the heroic courage to reject any suggestion of apostasy and to give up their lives as a witness to their unflinching attachment to Him Who gave His life for them.

Father Isaac Armalé, in the book which we have already cited, tells of the sad and sorrowful wanderings of several groups, coming from Erzerum, Sivas, Malatia, Kharput, Diarbéuir, and headed for Deir Zor and the deserts of Mesopotamia and Syria. Men, women, young boys and girls, even children, were often made to choose between death and the denial of their faith. In their choice they gave proof of more than superhuman heroism.

One thought alone strengthened them, a thought stronger than death, a thought which sustained their weakness: they knew that amidst all these persecutions and tribulations which they were enduring there was the assurance of God's just judgement.

Each of them gained strength by saying with Saint Paul: "The sufferings of the present time are not to be compared to the glory to come that will be revealed in us." (Romans, 8, 18)

### III. THE REACTION CAUSED BY THESE EVENTS

#### PREMEDITATED PLAN

To give some idea of the reaction to these sad events both in Turkey and abroad, it is well to begin by making reference to the letter which Dr. Beha Eddine Chaker Bey addressed to Djemal Bey, Delegate of the " Union and Progress " Committee in Adana, on February 18, 1915.

The writer was the president of the Executive Committee for the Armenian massacres and head of the " Special Organization " (Techkilati Mahsousse), an army composed of some 10.000 criminals released from all the prisons of the Ottoman Empire — " butchers of men ", as Wahib Pasha, the commander of the Third Turkish Army, called them.

" Our Committee ", wrote Beha Eddine Chaker Bey, " being unable to forget the humiliations and bitternesses of the past, being determined to gain revenge and certain of its future, has decided to suppress all the Armenians living in Turkey and has accordingly given broad powers to the Government in this matter. The Government will give the necessary instructions to the Governors and Army Commanders for the organization of the massacres. All the ' Union and Progress ' delegates, wherever they may be, will see to the carrying out of this plan. Not even one Armenian is to be given help or protection."

What was ordered here had been planned long before by the Young Turks, who, during their congress in Salonica in 1911, had emphasized the necessity of maintaining at all costs the superiority of the Turkish population as an important part of their domestic policy. This superiority implied the suppression of the Armenians.

#### THE REACTION IN TURKEY

The field was completely free for the carrying out of this diabolical plan. Because of the war, the European countries had to remain aloof and this permitted the spread of desolation in all the Armenian provinces of Turkey.

The Young Turks were able to check any internal reaction which opposed the execution of their plan for the annihilation of the Armenians, for they knew that there would be no foreign intervention.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY

The question of where to place the responsibility for the massacres is very complex.

We must admit that the greater number of and more sensible citizens of modern Turkey have acknowledged and deplored the crime against humanity which was committed by the Young Turks.

These men knew how to make use of the entire Turkish population for the execution of their plan.

There can be no doubt that the only party responsible for the elaboration of the plan for the extermination of the Armenian race was the "Union and Progress" Young Turk Committee, which, being at the head of the Government, was also the party which supervised its execution.

The people also had their share in the responsibility, even though they acted in a spirit of blind subjection to constituted authority. Moreover, they were the victims of the religious fanaticism which the Young Turks aroused and exploited against the Armenians. They had also been deceived by the local agents of the "Union and Progress" Committee, who led them to believe that an Armenian revolt was imminent and threatening the very life of the country.

### STIFFLED REACTIONS

Certain authorities and others raised their voices in protest, but they were quickly stifled and some times in a very tragic way.

Talaat Pasha, in a telegram dated September 9, 1915, to his brother-in-law, Mustafa Abdel Halek Bey, categorically stated: "The right of the Armenians to live and work in Turkey is entirely abolished."

In a previous order he had insisted upon the need of extinguishing in the Turkish people all feeling of pity for the Armenians: "Now, all the obstacles having been surmounted and the time having arrived for the ridding of the country of this dangerous segment of its population, it is expressly recommended that you do not allow yourselves to be moved by sentiments of pity when confronted with their miserable condition and, while putting an end to their existence, that you make every effort to suppress the Armenian name in Turkey."

It is especially pleasing for us to cite, to the honor of Djelal Bey, the Prefect of Aleppo at this time, the answer that he gave to this order from the Minister of the Interior: "I am the Prefect of this province. I cannot be its hangman." During the month of July, 1915, he was invited to resign from his office.

What a contrast with what Zia Gueuk Alp, a member of the "Union and Progress" Central Committee of the Young Turks and the theoretician of the party, had written before the beginning of the massacres: "I shall fix justice on the point of my sword, civilization to the shoes of my horse. I shall destroy everything. I shall not leave a stone upon a stone, nor a tree standing, nor a leaf green. I shall spread such ruin that the onlookers will say: 'The Turks have passed by here.'"

## UNJUSTIFIABLE HORRORS

These savage measures were meant to be justified by the fear of a supposed uprising of the Armenians.

To show the futility of this fear it suffices to cite here the answer which Tahsin Bey, the Wali of Erzerum, gave to Talaat Bey, the Minister of the Interior, with a telegram dated May 11, 1915:

" Instead of dealing with the Armenians while the war is going on, and for the good of our army and our country, I believe, for my part, that it is better to leave them alone and not force them to rebel... We have before us the example of Van... At the time when the assurance was given that the 33rd Division could be safely withdrawn from Van, I did not see the slightest possibility of an uprising of the Armenians and I took upon myself the responsibility for this decision. That decision has merited for me your most violent criticism. But I now swear that there was not and that there could not have been an uprising at Van. We have forcibly created the inextricable situation in which we find ourselves and we have put the army in a difficult situation on the east coast... All these reflections are dictated by the voice of my conscience. It is not with words that 60,000 people are deported from the border of the Caucasus to Baghdad and Mossul... "

Such reasonable and moderate men, who had compassion on those who were unjustly made to suffer, not only were not heard, but they were often cast aside and at times molested.

Djelal Bey, the Wali of Aleppo, and his successor, Bakir Sami Bey, did not approve of the measures taken against a defenseless people. They even tried to show kindness by permitting the Armenian refugees to enter and take up residence in Aleppo. They did not wish to carry out all the orders which the Central Government gave to send these unfortunate people away from Aleppo and expose them to the dangers of the desert.

Their moderation towards the Armenians forced them to retire from public life.

No hope of salvation could come from within the country. Everything needed to successfully carry out the diabolical plan for the annihilation of the Armenian race had already been foreseen, decided upon and organized.

## REACTION FROM ABROAD

Was there any chance of an intervention from abroad to stop this crime against humanity which had been ordered by the " Union and Progress " Party of the Young Turks?

The Ottoman Empire had entered the war after making an agreement with two other great European Empires, Germany and Austria-

Hungary. These two powers were certainly in a position to effectively oppose the iniquitous and inhuman plan concocted by their ally.

The Turks had been careful to demand the exclusion of any intervention of their partners in their internal affairs.

It can hardly be believed that her allies were able to promise abstention from all intervention in order to leave Turkey free to take its revenge on an innocent and defenseless race. It is beyond the imagination of the civilized world that such an immoral agreement could have been made.

Alas, the facts have clearly and unmistakeably revealed that the purpose of the partnership of the two European Empires in this agreement was to ensure freedom for the perpetration of the most horrible of crimes.

## GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

What obligation did the Germans and Austrians have when the frightful drama of the exiles, deportations, tortures and massacres of the Armenians began to unfold before their eyes?

Their consciences as men and Christians should have been horrified and obliged them to take effective steps to prevent such a crime.

Unfortunately, their intervention was almost always platonic. It failed to accomplish anything. More often than not it only made reference to a supposed superior force to minimize the responsibility for the horrors committed.

The judgement of Mr. René Pinon, in the preface which he wrote on October, 1, 1918, for the publication of Dr. Johannes Lepsius' report, is very indicative:

"The report of Dr. Lepsius concerning the situation of the Armenian people in Turkey during the world war was 'one of the isolated voices' in Germany, very rare and timid, which, we will not say were raised, for the world did not hear them, but which were murmured in the shadows."

On May 6, 1915, when the orders of exile, deportation and massacres had begun to be felt by a good number of Armenians, Baron Wangenheim, the German Ambassador in Turkey, communicated the number of deportations to his government and added that these were only vast precautionary measures adopted to prevent the development of an Armenian revolt."

It is easy to judge the seriousness of this assertion after reading what Mr. Scheubner, the German Consul at Erzerum, wrote to the same Ambassador on May 18, 1915: "There is no fear of an Armenian uprising in this area. Consequently, the exile of the Armenian people cannot be justified."

Dr. Lepsius and the German Committees for Armenia, which

followed very closely what was happening to the Armenians, had alerted the Foreign Ministry, which in turn asked for an explanation from its Ambassador, Baron Wangenheim.

This latter, in a dispatch dated May 31, 1915, replied to his Minister in the following way: "With a view to breaking up the Armenian espionage system and to prevent new uprisings of the Armenian masses, Enver Pasha intends to make use of the existing state of war to settle all the Armenian families not entirely above suspicion in Mesopotamia. He insistently requests that we do not stop his hand.

"These Turkish measures will naturally provoke great agitation in the enemy world and will be exploited against us. It is also certain that these measures will entail great suffering for the Armenian population. . . I beg you to inform Dr. Lepsius and the German Committees for Armenia that because of Turkey's political and military situation, the above-mentioned steps cannot, unfortunately, be avoided."

Ambassador Wangenheim's position had already been well thought out. On April 18, 1915, he had given the following instructions to his Consul in Erzerum: "Avoid all appearance of wishing to protect the Armenians and of making any intervention whatsoever in their favor. It is necessary to speak plainly and to make this point clear to the Turkish authorities each time that the occasion presents itself."

Whenever his colleagues, the Ambassadors of the neutral nations, made observations or asked for explanations about the cruel lot reserved for the Armenians, he was accustomed to say: "The Armenians are Turkish subjects and our Government will not be able officially to do anything for them."

To this Wangenheim would add that the German Government had already done everything possible to help the Armenians.

## THE AMERICAN RESPONSE

Mr. Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador, refuted this assertion in no uncertain terms: "Germany", he wrote, "is morally responsible for the crimes committed by her ally, the Turkish Government. The Germans had been able, from the very beginning, to stop these events. Wangenheim refused to make the slightest effort to prevent the suppression of an entire race".

In view of these statements which reveal just how matters stood, it is very easy to understand why the "very energetic protests" addressed to the Turkish Government by Baron Wangenheim and by his successors, Prince Hohenlohe-Longenburg, Count Wolff-Metternich and Mr. Von Kuhlman, remained without effect.

## A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE?

Everyone knew that the Germans never did more than make futile protests. Count Metternich could well write on December 7, 1915: "Protests are of no value and the assurances given by the Turks that new deportations of Armenians will not take place are not to be believed. Other more serious measures are needed to counteract those taken by the Turks: . . . and if military reasons do not permit us to take more effective steps, there is nothing to do but to continue along with the useless protests and these will only make the situation worse. We must remain passive spectators and see how far our ally goes with the massacres."

On September 19, 1916, Mr. Jagow, the Secretary of State, made the same admission. It is not difficult to detect a note of remorse in his statement. "We did all that was possible. The only thing left to do was to break our alliance and that was not possible. What would have been more reasonable would have been to state at the right moment in the German press, as Prince Hohenlohe suggested, that we did not have any part in the steps taken by the Turkish Government against the Armenians. Moreover, we should have given much more space in our press to the complaints made against these steps and not have permitted the publication of the Turkish lies."

After all these statements is it not correct for us to say that the German authorities were involved in a conspiracy with the Turks in regard to the horrible crimes which were committed against the Armenians — a conspiracy of silence?

Notwithstanding the fact that there were Germans who very zealously promoted Turkish interests in their country, it is certain that the Catholics and even the Protestants would have reacted against these crimes, if censorship and existing war conditions had not prevented them.

Mr. Erzberger, President of the German Catholic Centre and former German Minister of Finance, in his book entitled: "Life during the World War", sets forth all that the German people and, especially, the Catholic Centre did and had wished to do to assist the Armenians. He sadly notes that nearly all of Turkey's quarrels with great powers caused trouble for the Armenians. "On February 10, 1916," he writes, "at my meeting with Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha, I did not fail to begin immediately with the Armenian question. Enver Pasha formally promised me that no other measures would be taken against the Armenians."

Alas, by this time the Turkish persecution of the Armenians had been just about completed. Those sad events which were still to come, however, proved the insincerity of Enver Pasha's promise.

## STATE POLICY: GENOCIDE

Count Wolff-Metternich, Ambassador of Germany, in a report dated June 10, 1916, wrote to the Chancellor of the Empire: "The 'Young Turk' Committee demands the annihilation of the surviving Armenians and the Government must give in."

What we have been saying permits us to affirm that the German diplomats and consuls were not able nor did they know how to prevent the Armenian massacres. Still, as spectators, they could have at least made a detailed record of their allies' misdeeds.

The collection of official German diplomatic reports made by Mr. Lepsius, a Protestant missionary, supports our contention and stands as the definitive refutation of all the lies and falsehoods spread by the Young Turks to deny and lessen their responsibility. Furthermore, it demolishes the official Turkish story concerning the Armenian insurrections.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Ataturk himself, the Father of the modern Turkish Republic, on June 20, 1919, before the International Armistice Tribunal in Istanbul, solemnly acknowledged the injustice which Turkey committed against the unarmed and inoffensive Armenians.

Everything will be done to cover up the real motive for the brutal measures taken against the Armenians and for the decision to annihilate the race.

We have seen above that Enver Pasha, on February 10, 1916, made a formal promise not to take any more steps against the Armenians. The following is his reply to an attempt made by Mr. Henry Wood to help the innocent Armenians, as published in Mr. Wood's report of August 4, 1916: "It is difficult for us to tell the innocent from the guilty among two million Armenians. By suppressing all of them we are sure of taking care of the guilty ones."

## LIQUIDATION OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

The man who had the audacity to give this insolent and outrageous answer was sure of himself, for he had already learned that what was being done only provoked meaningless protests.

In fact, on July 10, 1916, Count Wolff-Metternich, the German Ambassador, telegraphed to Chancellor Bettmann-Hollweg: "In the execution of its plan to solve the Armenian question by destroying the Armenian race, the Turkish Government has not allowed itself to be stopped either by our representations or by those of the American Ambassador and the Papal Delegate, nor by threats to break the pact, nor, least of all, by concern for western public opinion."

## THE INEFFICACY OF THE INTERVENTIONS

And why should Turkey allow herself to be stopped when Germany, which could exercise a great influence, deemed it well to keep hands off?

This is why all the interventions and protests of other countries, which could not be backed up with immediate sanctions — a thing which only Germany could seriously and effectively do — had very little effect on Turkey.

In May, 1916, Jacques de Morgan alerted French public opinion to the Armenian massacres: "The Armenian nation," he said, "is agonizing under the blows of barbarians. This will be the greatest of all the crimes which have stained the early years of the twentieth century. This will be the great shame of Turkish history, a history already filled with many cruel deeds."

This S.O.S. was received, among others, by France, Great Britain and Russia, who, on May 23, 1915, issued the following joint statement in London:

"For almost a month now the Kurdish and Turkish populations of Armenia are engaged, with the connivance and often with the support of the Ottoman authorities, in massacring the Armenians... In view of these new Turkish crimes against humanity and civilization, the allied Governments give public notice to the Sublime Porte that they hold personally responsible for said crimes all the members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of its agents found implicated in similar massacres."

## THE BOLD LIE

While Armenian blood was flowing in torrents, Turkey, in its "Red Book" of 1916, cast aside all shame and simply denied the contents of the Allies' note with the following official lie: "The Imperial Government denies all the allegations and accusations contained in the Allies' note. No massacre has taken place within the borders of the Ottoman Empire... The accusations of the Allied Powers are nothing but gratuitous accusations."

Who is not revolted by this shameless and official denial of the sad reality which was the general and methodical annihilation of the Armenian people?

Ali Kemal Bey, editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Sabah", wrote on January 28, 1919: "Four or five years ago a crime unique in history was committed, a crime which made the world shudder. Given its vastness and immensity, the authors were not five or ten persons, but hundreds of thousands. After the plan of the crime had been drawn up and approved by special groups, by some ministries and ministers, it was duly carried out by the Prefects and the Prefectures, by the police, the people..."

And the Imperial Government knew nothing of all this... it had not seen anything...: Those were gratuitous calumnies!

### GRATUITOUS CALUMNIES?

The following are some of the gratuitous calumnies: the irrefutable testimony gathered by Mr. René Pinon in his book, "La suppression des Arméniens"; the report of the American Committee of New York on the atrocities committed in Armenia (October, 1915); the brochure "The Murder of a Nation", by Arnold J. Toynbee, preceded by the superb address given by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords; "L'Arménie, les massacres et la question d'Orient", by Mr. Emile Doumergue; "The Blackest Page of Modern History, the Recent Massacres of Armenia, the Responsibility", by Herbert Adams Gibbons; the secret report of Dr. Johannes Lepsius. To these could be added a long list of other books, extracts from journals, from official and semi-official reports.

Some other gratuitous calumnies: the cities empty of Armenians, the convoys moving over the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia, the hundreds of thousands of victims exterminated like flies! . . .

All this taken together with what political spokesmen have revealed by publishing irrefutable documents on the nature and methods of the massacres... they were, they could only be lying accusations... gratuitous calumnies.

Here are some further samples of these gratuitous calumnies:

Mr. Henry Morgenthau, the United States Ambassador in Constantinople, wrote: "The facts which are related in the reports received by the Embassy and which were furnished by absolutely trustworthy witnesses surpass the most bestial and diabolical cruelties perpetrated or even imagined in the history of the world."

On January 16, 1916, in a conference on Armenia, Mr. Emile Doumergue used the following words to denounce the massacres: "An abomination which, although true, remains improbable, impossible even, for the most unbalanced imagination."

Listen to what Mr. Paul Painlevé, in a lecture at the Sorbonne, on April 9, 1916, had to say: "There are horrors which our imagination refuses to conceive. When it is remembered that these crimes were committed with impunity a year ago, when it is remembered that they were inflicted not on a savage tribe... but on one of the most highly civilized of races, admirably gifted for peaceful works...; when one averts to the fact that it is not ended, that at this very hour of our meeting the same slaughter is taking place in Armenia, and that they who organize these things are human beings, what is to be said, if not to feel dismayed at being a man!"

Mr. Gorrini, the Italian Consul in Trebizond, stated on August 25, 1916: "Ah, if what I know were publicly known, all that I have seen

with my eyes and heard with my ears, all Christendom would ask whether all the cannibals and all the wild beasts of this world had not taken refuge in Istanbul."

## THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SEE

There was one voice which preceded, accompanied and followed all the other voices which were raised to stigmatize the horrible crimes: that of the Prisoner of the Vatican of that time.

Pope Benedict XV, the Common Father of the faithful, was greatly distressed by the news of the sad and terrible fate reserved for the Armenians. He used every possible means to keep himself informed, to come to their aid and to take up their defense.

He did not, of course, have an army, navy or air force. What did they do who had these things?

They could have done much, if they had had respect for the true hierarchy of values and if political and military reasons had not stifled their obligation to prevent a state from committing a horrible crime against humanity.

The Holy See has a force, just as strong, which should have pierced the consciences of those who had them. The Holy See's moral authority, the highest that there is in the world, is what Benedict XV was able to offer as help to our sorely tried people.

The Turks were well aware of their crime and sought to shroud in silence the tragic reality of an entire people being annihilated.

To the Supreme Pontiff, Benedict XV, goes the honor of having been the first to make the voice of justice heard and this in the most solemn way and on the highest level.

After the horrors of almost a year of war and alerted by the first reports of the Armenian tragedy, the Pope, on July 28, 1915, made a very dignified and touching appeal to the belligerent peoples and to their leaders to condemn every act of oppression and abuse of power.

He went even further. He tried to awaken the conscience of the head of the Ottoman Empire. In a letter dated September 10, 1915, to the Sultan of Turkey, Mohammed V, the Supreme Pontiff complained bitterly about the very sorrowful lot of the Armenians "subjected, in the vast Ottoman domains, to indescribable sufferings": prison, exile, execution for a great number which included ecclesiastics and even bishops, deportation of entire populations condemned to privations, misery, hunger and death.

The Young Turks, for whom this letter was a condemnation, presented it to the Sultan a long time after its arrival. They complained very bitterly to Archbishop Dolci, the Apostolic Delegate, about the message, which, they declared, as was their custom, was based on false or at least greatly exaggerated information. For the future they made

some vague promises to help the survivors. It was only on November 10, 1915, that the Sultan replied to the Pope in this sense.

The noble heart of Benedict XV could hardly be satisfied by these vague promises. He believed it his duty to denounce these crimes before the whole world. He did it in the most solemn way in his allocution in the Concistory of December 6, 1915. We recall very well having read his address that same day with indescribable emotion.

"After sixteen months", he said, "in spite of the pitiful accumulation of so many ruins, the growing desire for peace in souls, the prayers of so many families in tears, although We have not neglected doing everything in Our power to hasten the peace and to settle the differences, this disastrous war still continues on land and on sea, while, at the same time, *the unfortunate Armenian people are being almost entirely destroyed* (dum miserrima Armeniorum gens prope ad interitum adducitur)."

The Pope later made a new attempt by sending a special envoy to ask the Sultan to put an end to the horrors being committed against the Armenians. Mohammed V, assisted by a Young Turk interpreter during the meeting, evaded the question without giving the least sign of even having understood it. The emissary, an Austrian, had to note in his report his sad impressions about his country's allies.

Finally, it is in the most official and solemn document issued by the Holy See to set forth the conditions for a just and lasting peace that the Supreme Pontiff made a special mention of Armenia.

The diplomatic note of August 15, 1917, addressed to the warring powers, stipulated in the fifth condition for peace: "The same spirit of equity and justice will have to direct the examination of other territorial and political questions and **NOTABLY THAT CONCERNING THE REESTABLISHMENT OF ARMENIA.**"

At the beginning of 1918, a peace treaty was imposed on Russia by the German, Austrian and Turkish armies. The Pope notes that in virtue of this treaty "several territories come under the domination of Turkey and these areas are in great part inhabited by Armenians."

On March 12, 1918, he wrote to the Turkish sovereign to express the fears that he has "at seeing the unimaginable sufferings endured in the past renewed for these unfortunate people."

"For mercy's sake," he begged, "spare and protect this unarmed and innocent people... May the poor Armenians see mercy and clemency descend upon them in abundance!"

After all these clear proofs of the Supreme Pontiff's solicitude, it must be admitted that there was no State closer to the Armenians in their distress than the Holy See. It took up their defense and comforted them in their suffering, tried to obtain justice for them and see that their rights were acknowledged and respected. It even requested autonomy for them.

## CONFIDENCE

It is to the Armenians' credit not only to have recognized this admirable solicitude of the Holy See, but also to have understood that their cause at the peace conference would find true protection in the Supreme Pontiff's mission of justice.

What deep emotion is felt when reading the letter addressed from Paris on June 6, 1920, by His Excellency Boghos Noubar Pasha, President of the Armenian Delegation to the Peace Conference:

"Most Holy Father,

"The uncertain fate of the Armenian cause which has been and certainly continues to be the object of Your Holiness' particular solicitude affords me the opportunity and the honor of humbly submitting to Your Holiness' August Throne the expression of the homage of the whole Armenian nation, all the more worthy of the Apostolic See's benevolent attention because it has been severely tried.

"No other cause could be more fittingly referred to the high mission of justice which gives to Your Holiness' sovereign power a moral influence superior to every interest and to all material views than that of Armenia, martyred because Christian, oppressed because faithful to its traditions, threatened with extermination because capable of constituting a strong barrier against anti-Christian and barbarous invasions.

"The unqualifiable persecution of Armenia by the Turkish Government and people is a veritable crime against humanity for which world justice demands an equitable satisfaction. Unfortunately, the political world, too much taken up with particular interests, does not want to resolve this question by an act which would be in conformity with the so highly proclaimed principles of the rights of peoples.

"Your Holiness' voice, Most Holy Father, who as the Common Father of the human family embraces all nations with the same love, is the only authoritative one which can bring the powerful to the aid of the weak, threatened with oppression and death. Consequently, I appeal to Your Holiness, in the name of the nation which I represent, to use your authority efficaciously to banish the threat of annihilation which confronts the Armenian survivors and to solicit moral and material aid from the civilized world to rescue them once and for all and deliver them forever from danger by assuring them territorial, civil and financial rights.

"The Most Reverend John Nasilian, Bishop of Trebizond, who has collaborated with our Delegation, will have the opportunity of setting forth in detail what is required for the settlement of the Armenian question. This is why I have limited myself to generalities.

"Confident that the present entreaty will be well received, I bow

to kiss Your Holiness' hands and I have the honor of declaring myself, with sentiments of the deepest veneration,

Your Holiness' most humble servant  
BOGHOS NOUBAR  
President of the Armenian Delegation to  
the Peace Conference "

Alas, international politics, the misunderstanding of the victorious nations and many other unfortunate elements rendered the Holy See's solicitude for the Armenians ineffective.

### GRATITUDE

The Armenians have deep respect and true veneration for their illustrious protector Benedict XV.

When this great Pope died, the following message was sent to the Vatican on January 22, 1922:

" The Armenian Delegation to the Peace Conference, deeply grieved by the death of Benedict XV, the benefactor and protector of the Armenians, takes the liberty of extending to Your Eminence its most sincere and heartfelt condolences."

A beautiful, large bronze statue was placed in the courtyard of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul with this inscription:

BENEDICT XV, BENEFACITOR OF PEOPLES  
WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF NATIONALITY AND RELIGION  
AS A SIGN OF GRATITUDE

This statue has perpetuated the remembrance of the Armenians' gratitude towards the great Pope. They were the chief animators of the project and contributed the most towards its realization.

#### IV. THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

These sad and terrible events, the mere reading of which fills our hearts as sons and brothers with sorrow, but also with legitimate pride, are for us the source of useful and wonderful lessons, especially because they are given from the pulpit of death.

##### ABSOLUTE VALUES

In man's life there are absolute values which take precedence over all others: God, first; then, Country.

The victims of the 1915 massacres, by dying for love of God and Country, have eloquently proclaimed that love of these absolute values is stronger than death and invite us to live "for religion and country".

##### THE SOURCE OF LOVE OF COUNTRY

The earthly country, the love of which impels its children to make every effort and to accept any sacrifice in order to ensure its progress, its welfare and its existence, is, in some way, the image of the heavenly country, where an eternally happy life in God awaits us.

Our victims knew how to manifest true love of country by their life and death, for they had their eyes fixed on the original, the heavenly country.

Our love of country flows from our love of God. He who does not have a love for God is far removed from the authentic source of love of country.

Love of country prompted our heroic brothers to accept death so that the Armenian name might live. The source which inspired this love in them was the love of God, Who does not die.

##### PATRIOTISM LIVED

Love for the nation is a sacred duty. It is necessary to understand concretely what the term "nation" means and know the elements which enter into it so that it does not remain an abstract concept.

Consideration of the different sociological and juridical conclusions permits us to define the nation in the following way: "It is a natural social collectivity which, in the consciousness of the unity of its origin and culture, seeks the preservation and development of its distinctive qualities with a view to making possible the complete formation of the human person."

A nation lives by passing on its heritage to its children in a calm, continuous and even unnoticed way; by communicating to them the

richness of its ideas, its sentiments, its traditions, its language, its religion and by instilling all these things in their spirit.

If we really wish to profit by the lesson of patriotism which was given to us by our victims of the 1915 tragedy, it is necessary that we faithfully preserve and develop in our lives all the values which constitute our nation's heritage.

We must illuminate our intelligence with the faith of our ancestors by assimilating ideas worthy of a Christian and giving honor to the Armenian name.

It is necessary to remain faithful to the Armenian traditions by making oneself a model of family life, of good morals, of nobleness of character, of fraternal love and of peaceful coexistence.

It is necessary to cultivate the Armenian language, this river which has brought us the fruits of the spirit and the writings of our ancestors; history, that teacher of life, which places before us the fruitful work and admirable example of Armenians down through the centuries, as well as their contribution to the world's civilization.

Particular care should be given to impressing on our lives as Armenians the stamp of Christian principles by recalling that our people have always considered the words "Armenian" and "Christian" to be synonymous.

## THE SOUL IS OF MORE VALUE THAN THE BODY

The example of our victims of the 1915 massacres is an eloquent proof of the victory of the spirit over matter. It is the putting into practice in our lives of the saying of the Divine Master: "He who loses his life for my sake will find it. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?" (Matthew 16, 25-26).

This is a very clear directive given to the idealistic Armenian people.

## THE BENEFIT OF UNION

Our heroic fathers and brothers, after passing through fire and water and attaining — it is our firm hope — eternal rest, proclaim to us the need for unity among the children of the Armenian nation. "We have lived," they say to our present and future generations, "for a single ideal. We have sacrificed ourselves for a single purpose. Hear the voice of our blood which has flowed for religion and for country". They repeat in unison the cry of four immortal Yeghiché: "Union is the mother of good things. Division is the mother of evil things."

## THE MONITOR OF THESE LESSONS

Let us fix our eyes on the monument to the victims of the 1915 tragedy which was erected twenty-five years ago at the entrance to our Patriarchate so that we may have these lessons present to our minds as we prepare to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the massacres. Let us remember that our nation was condemned to shed its blood in the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia because of its firm attachment to Christ's Cross, to its holy faith and to its legitimate desire for independence.

This monument is a broken column, surmounted with a cross and bears the following inscription:

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary  
of the martyrdom of the Armenian nation  
this commemorative monument has been erected  
which watches over the broken Armenian people  
in the shadow of the Holy Cross.

This inscription suffices to explain the meaning of the monument.

The interpretation given by His Eminence Cardinal Agagianian, the then Armenian Catholic Patriarch, in the address which he delivered on the occasion of the monument's dedication, is as true today as it was then:

"The column symbolizes our nation, the Armenian land, whose very thorns are roses for us and the nostalgia for which grips our souls. This broken column seems to us to be in ruins. This is precisely our situation, scattered as we are in all the corners of the earth, banished and exiled... But it remains standing, for we have certainly not given up the fight for life, the struggle for the pursuit of the high ideals of our race."

## A WORD OF FILIAL GRATITUDE

At the end of this simple exposition we deem it a pleasant and honored duty to express, in the name of the Armenian people, our filial and deep gratitude to Our Holy Father Pope Paul VI, who has been so good as to wish to join us in the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of our victims.

The message which His Holiness addressed to us on that occasion will remain in our annals as an everlasting proof of the love, affection, esteem and consideration of Christ's Vicar "for the Armenian people, guardians of such noble and ancient Christian traditions", as the Supreme Pontiff was pleased to say.

Taking note of the intention of all the Armenian communities to celebrate their ancestors' sacrifice and to pray for the peace and

eternal repose of their beloved deceased, "We will not fail," the Pope said, "to join our prayers to those which your faithful people will be offering to God on this occasion.

"As you know, We have invited you to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on November 18th next, at the beginning of the General Congregation. And We have asked all the bishops of the world present that day in Saint Peter's Basilica to join in the Holy Sacrifice, in which We also desire to participate, in order to implore God's mercy for the deceased and the abundance of His favors for Our Armenian children."

A more powerful and efficacious voice could not be wished for to inform the world of the fiftieth anniversary of the Armenian tragedy of 1915, and to place these horrible events before the conscience of all nations and peoples.

The fervent request, united to our prayers, which we place before God's Throne on the occasion of this fiftieth anniversary, is that our people may remain faithful to the sublime ideal of our victims by making a reality what, in the name of all our brothers, we promised to His Holiness Pope Paul VI in our humble letter of October 24, 1964. "Most Holy Father," we wrote "the commemoration of our victims on this fiftieth anniversary will undoubtedly incite the Armenian people to imitate their fathers and ancestors in their unshakeable attachment to Christ and in their legitimate love for the country".

## Conclusion

Armenians throughout the world are commemorating this year the fiftieth anniversary of the massacres of which their people in the Armenian provinces and other cities of the Ottoman Empire were the victims.

One million five hundred thousand laborious and peaceful Armenians were condemned to exile, deportation, most horrible tortures and were slain. Their cities were emptied, their homes destroyed and their goods confiscated.

The survivors were for the most part widows and orphans.

They were able to survive thanks to the good countries which opened their doors to them and received them in a brotherly fashion. These countries have become fatherlands which they cherish and faithfully serve.

While fully acknowledging their status in these countries, whose model citizens they wish to be, the Armenians cannot forget that in the 1915 massacres each one of them lost grandparents, parents or close relatives, for whom they will always mourn.

They would like to bring their heroism to the point of pardon.

But pardon does not do away with the obligation of reparation and restitution. Furthermore, pardon can be enjoyed only on this condition.

This is why the memory of their victims remains ever linked to this obligation of reparation and restitution, which they now await and which they will wait for in the future.

For the last fifty years there has existed an evil to be atoned for, injured rights to be satisfied, innocent blood which cries out for justice and a crime to be obliterated.

The years can never abolish these rights nor do away with these obligations.

From whom should they be claimed?

In what do they consist?

For whose benefit must they be fulfilled?

How should this be done?

These are some questions which our conscience obliges us to give voice to, but which we refrain from answering for fear of allowing ourselves to be overcome by the memory of those massacres, which, fifty years ago, plunged all our people into the horrors of an infernal drama, the consequences of which we suffer to this very day.

We propose these questions:

To the conscience of MODERN, TURKEY, which has everything to gain by removing a very black page from its history;

To the conscience of GERMANY, which, having been quick to repair the damage caused to the Jewish people during World War II,

should give thought to its share in the responsibility for the crimes which were perpetrated against our people during World War I and which demand reparation;

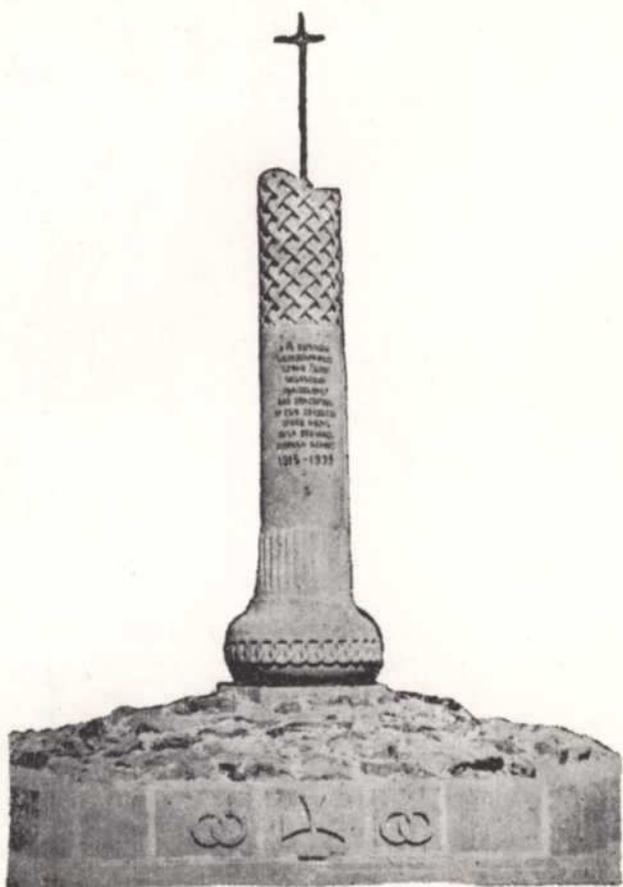
To the conscience of the ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, whose existence is justified only by the efforts it makes to coordinate relations between nations and peoples for the purpose of preserving peace in justice and equity;

To the conscience of the INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, which by its very nature is called to establish rights and to make them respected by demanding the fulfillment of the obligations which flow from them.

**A MILLION AND A HALF ARMENIAN VICTIMS HORRIBLY  
MASSACRED**

**ALL THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE, SHAKEN BUT NOT  
DISCOURAGED,  
AWAIT AN ANSWER.**





MONUMENT OF THE ARMENIAN VICTIMS  
Armenian Catholic Patriarchate  
Beyrouth