

Report of Committee on Armenian Atrocities, 4 October 1915*

The October 4th 1915 press release of the Committee on Armenian Atrocities (New York) was possibly the single most important document to influence British Parliamentary discussions of the Armenian Genocide, and it led the way to a formal Parliamentary investigation into the reported atrocities against Armenians. Until the October 4th press release, British understanding of these atrocities was hampered by a lack of reliable information due to Ottoman censorship and misinformation campaigns.

Although the British Government severed its relations with Ottoman Turkey when the latter entered WWI alongside the Central Powers, the United States maintained its neutrality and retained its ties with Turkey until April 1917. Consequently, the State Department was well informed of events in the Ottoman Empire by its representatives and tried to ameliorate the condition of Armenians. It was the continuing persecution of Armenians which led to direct American action by the end of the year (while the United States was still a neutral power). In September 1915, the State Department began leaking sensitive information on the plight of Armenians in an effort to publicise the issue, raise funds, and provide relief where possible. The United States became the most important source of information on the Armenian Genocide for British authorities. Over half of all reports in the 1916 British Parliamentary report on the Armenian Genocide came from the United States. These reports included despatches filed by US Consuls in the interior of Turkey, as well as reports from Henry Morgenthau, the US Ambassador to Constantinople. The authority and substance of these reports left little to dispute—“...a campaign of race extermination is in progress” (Henry Morgenthau, 16 July 1915) “...it is nothing less than the extermination of the Armenian race” (J.B. Jackson, US Consul at Aleppo, 3 August 1915) “...the general plan to dispose of the Armenian race” (Leslie Davis, US Consul at Harpoot, 10 August 1915).

The October 4th press release provided the substance of James Bryce's seminal speech at the House of Lords two days later, as well as Aneurin Williams' speech in the House of Commons on 16 November. Bryce declared his hand to Lord Cromer when he wrote on the eve of his seminal speech: “You will be sorry to hear that the accounts which have reached the U.S. Government from its Embassy in Constantinople and the American Mission Board from its missionaries describe the cruelties and deportations practised by the Turks in Armenia as even more horrible than we had gathered from such news as had previously found its way out of the country. Much of these accounts has now been

* This article has been taken from Ara Sarafian and Eric Avebury, *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1918* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2003).

*published in a Report prepared by the American Committee which is now reaching this country and a copy of which I will try to get for you. Of course it cannot disclose the sources of the information, but I have been told privately whence it comes, and there can be no doubt as to its substantial accuracy. One shocking report comes from a German missionary.”**

The October speech at the House of Lords proved to be a turning point in the development of the British government’s understanding of the Armenian Genocide. Until the appearance of this report, British authorities, despite their sympathies for Armenians, remained reticent to pursue the Armenian issue. The matter was rife with political pitfalls, especially as “Muslim opinion” could be inflamed in the British Empire with a weak case against the Ottoman Turks. The October 4th press release presented sufficient evidence to allow a shift in policy, and it led to the 1916 Parliamentary Blue Book on the Armenian Genocide.

Editorial Policy

The Report of the Committee on Armenian Atrocities which follows this introduction appears in its entirety and includes some key annotations, including references to original archival copies of reports wherever they could be traced.† Appearing in brackets is information that was withheld in the October 4 press release to safeguard sources. Such information appears in brackets. All other annotations appear as footnotes. The reports have been numbered I-XXV, skipping numbers XIII and XX, as in the original October 4 press release.

Ara Sarafian

November 2002

** Bryce to Lord Cromer communication dated 5 October 1915, PRO, FO 633/24/204. James Bryce’s October 6th speech was included (with corrections) into a pamphlet published soon afterwards. See Arnold Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915.*

*† This document has been annotated using the following key sources: 1. The State Department archives, Record Group 59 on the Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929, National Archives, Washington D.C. (microfilm collection); 2. Arnold Toynbee and James Bryce, *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce* (London 1916), and, *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld from Publication in the Original Edition of “The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce”* ([London 1916], *Miscellaneous no 31*); 3. Barton to Toynbee communication dated March 6 1915, *Toynbee Papers*, FO. 96, file 205, p. 141-143.*

Release for Publication in Papers of Monday, Oct. 4, 1915

A committee, consisting of Charles R. Crane, Samuel T. Dutton, Cleveland H. Dodge, Arthur C. James, Stephen S. Wise, Frank Mason North, John R. Mott, Stanley White, H. G. Benneyan, James L. Barton, William Sloane, William L. Haven, George A. Plimpton, Karl Davis Robinson, Frederick Lynch, Norman Hopgood, and others representing American interests in the Turkish Empire, have made careful and extensive investigation of the evidence bearing upon the atrocities inflicted upon Armenians in Turkey, and have collected a mass of statements upon the subject from sources that are unquestioned as to the veracity, integrity and authority of the writers. For reasons that will be obvious to all, the names and position of the various writers cannot be given at this time. These are known to the committee, who vouch for them and for their statements. In most cases it will be necessary to conceal the place from which the statements were written, and even the name of the cities and towns referred to, in order that the writer or his interests may not suffer irreparable harm.

We quote here from a few of these documents which are in the possession of the committee:

I*

April 27. "Movement against Armenians forms part of a concerted movement against all non-Turkish and mission [*sic*, union] and progress element, including Zionists." Unfavorable reports received about Armenians in the interior provinces.

II†

April 30. Continued reports of persecution, plunder and massacre of Armenians in the interior parts of the country. Treatment of the Armenians of Zeitoun and Marash with incredible severity. Scattering a large number of the innocent population a part of a campaign.

* Confidential cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated April 27 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/58.

† Confidential cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated April 30 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/59.

III*

July 10. Persecution of Armenians assuming unprecedented proportions. Reports from widely scattered regions indicate systematic attempt to uproot peaceful Armenian populations, and through arbitrary arrests, terrible tortures, wholesale expulsions and deportations from one end of the empire to the other accompanied by frequent instances of rape, pillage and murder, turning into massacre, to bring destitution and destruction upon them. This is not in response to fanatical or popular demand, but is purely arbitrary, and directed from Constantinople.

Untold misery, disease, starvation and loss of life will go on unchecked.

IV†

July 13. "I am informed that the Turkish authorities have, since May 1st, deported over 40,000 Ottoman Greeks from the islands and the coast of Marmora to interior Turkish Moslem villages, and that they are filling the Greek villages with refugees from Macedonia."

V‡

July 16. "Deportation of and excesses against peaceful Armenians is increasing, and from harrowing reports of eye-witnesses it appears that a campaign of race extermination is in progress." Protests and threats are unavailing and probably incite the Ottoman government to more drastic measures, as they are determined to disclaim responsibility for their absolute disregard of capitulations, and I believe nothing short of actual force, which obviously the United States is not in a position to exert, would adequately meet the situation.

VI**

July 31. "Armenians, mostly women and children, deported from the Erzroom district, have been massacred near Kemakh, between Erzroom and Harpoot." Similar reports from other sources, that probably few of these refugees will reach their destination.

* Confidential cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 10 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/74.

† Cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 13 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/75.

‡ Confidential cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 16 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/76.

** Cable despatch, Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 31, 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/83.

VII*

The deportation began some six weeks ago with 180 families from Zeitoun; since which time all the inhabitants of that place and its neighboring villages have been deported; also most of the Christians in Albustan, many from Hadjin, Sis, Kars Pazar, Hassan Beyli and Deort Yol.

The numbers involved are approximately, to date, 26,500. Of these, about 5,000 have been sent to the Konieh region, 5,500 are in Aleppo and surrounding towns and villages, and the remainder are in Der Zor, Racca, and various places in Mesopotamia, even as far as the neighborhood of Bagdad.

The process is still going on, and there is no telling how far it may [be] carried. The orders already issued will bring the number in this region up to 32,000, and there have been as yet none exiled from Aintab, and very few from Marash and Oorfa. The following is the text of the government order covering the case. Art. 2nd.: "The commanders of the army, of independent army corps and of divisions may, in case of military necessity, and in case they suspect espionage or treason, send away, either or in mass, the inhabitants of villages or town, and install them in other places."

The orders of commanders may have been reasonably humane; but the execution of them has been for the most part unnecessarily harsh, and in many cases accompanied by horrible brutality to women and children, to the sick and the aged. Whole villages were deported at an hour's notice, with no opportunity to prepare for the journey, not even, in some cases, to gather together the scattered members of the family, so that little children were left behind. At the mountain village of Geben the women were at the washtub, and were compelled to leave their wet clothes in the water and take the road barefooted and half clad just as they were. In some cases they were able to carry part of their scanty household furniture, or implements of agriculture, but for the most part they were neither to carry anything, nor to sell it, even where there was time to do so.

In Hadjin, well-to-do people, who had prepared food and bedding for the road were obliged to leave it in the street, and afterward suffered greatly from hunger.

In many cases the men were (those of military age were nearly all in the army) bound tightly together with ropes or chains. Women with little children in their arms, or in the last days of pregnancy, were driven along under the whip like cattle. Three different cases came under my knowledge where the woman was delivered on the road, and because her brutal driver hurried her along she died of hemorrhage. I also know of one case where the gendarme in charge was a humane man, and allowed the poor woman several hours rest, and then procured a wagon for her to ride in. Some

* Letter from Dr. Shepard of Aintab, dated June 20, 1915. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 120.

women became so completely worn out and hopeless that they left their infants beside the road. Many women and girls have been outraged. At one place the commander of gendarmerie openly told the men to whom he consigned a large company that they were at liberty to do what they chose with the women and girls.

As to subsistence, there has been a great difference in different places. In some places the government has fed them, in some places it has permitted the inhabitants to feed them. In some places it has neither fed them or permitted others to do so. There has been much hunger, thirst and sickness, and some real starvation and death.

These people are being scattered in small units, three or four families in a place, among a population of different race and religion, and speaking a different language. I speak of them as being composed of families, but four-fifths of them are women and children, and what men there are are for the most part old or incompetent.

If a means is not found to aid them through the next few months, until they get established in their new surroundings, two-thirds or three-fourths of them will die of starvation and disease.

VIII*

I was called to a house one day where I saw a sheet which originated from the prison and which was being sent to the wash. This sheet was covered with blood and running in long streams. I was also shown clothes which were drenched and exceedingly dirty. It was a puzzle to me what they could possibly have done to the prisoners but I got to the bottom of the matter by the help of two very reliable persons who witnessed part of it themselves.

The prisoner is put in a room (similar to the times of the Romans). Gendarmes standing in twos at both sides and two at the end of the room administer each in their turn bastinadoes as long as they have enough force in them. At the times of the Romans, forty strokes were administered at the very most; in this place however 200, 300, 500, even 800 strokes are administered. The foot swells up, then bursts open, due to the numerous blows, and thus the blood spurts out. The prisoner is then carried back into prison and brought to bed by the rest of the prisoners - this explains the bloody sheet. The prisoners who become unconscious after these blows are revived through the means of some cold water which is thrown on their heads and which accounts for the wet and dirty clothes. On the next day, or more exactly, during the night, as all ill-treatments are carried on at night in [Cesarea], as well as in [Everek], the whole bastinadoing is being carried on again in spite of swollen feet and their wounds. I was then in [Zingidere], but in that prison there were also thirty

* Copy of report by Fr. W.H. Hunecke (n/d) forwarded Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 20 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/94.

prisoners in number, and all had their feet in such a state that they began to burn and had to be amputated, or were already taken off. These have been ill-treated to this extent in [Everek], and also by the cruel Mutessarif in [Cesarea]. A young man was beaten to death within the space of five minutes. Apart from the bastonadoing, other methods were employed, too, such as putting hot irons on the chest. A forger, who was suspected to have forged the shells of the bombs, was let free only after his toes were burned off with sulphur (called Kerab). I have seen the wounds. Four weeks ago we received news that the Caimakam of [Everek] had had ten to eighteen people shot in a district between [Everek] and [Indeschesu]. Shortly after this had happened an order was promulgated which concerned the Christians of [Indeschesu], and which demanded that they all leave the place within three-quarters of an hour. Among these were several women who gave birth to children on the way, and which they in their desperation, threw into the water. Many men were recalled, and it is impossible to say how many were secretly murdered and how many will still be butchered. I wish to state that the inhabitants of [Indeschesu] are so terribly ignorant that I really never saw the like, and I therefore feel convinced that not one single person had ever dreamt of opposing the authorities. Neither from the Turks nor from the Christians have I ever heard that one of these people had in the four months described above ever rebelled, and it is the Caimakam alone who says so in order to excuse his deeds. And yet the Caimakam always declares: "No one dares oppose me." When I ventured to protest to the Caimakam in all kindness against the bloody sheets, he replied as follows: "If the law and the Sultan were to forbid it, I would in spite of it all, carry these things out and do as I please." Three weeks ago in [Everek], when I was engaged in getting ready to go off, I noticed two gendarmes riding in the direction of the mountains with an inhabitant of [Indeschesu] who had been expelled and then recalled. They (gendarmes) returned without the man and gave as excuse that the man escaped, which is of course out of the question, the man's feet being completely swollen, and while he rode an ass and the gendarmes were on horseback. The German consul of Aleppo estimates the number of deported to be 30,000. Five thousand people were deported to the unhealthy spot of Sultani, in the district of Konia. The government gave in the first days some bread. When the bread was finished and they received none, the misery was heartrending. According to Mr [Dodd], [Konia], the rich were also deported to Sultani, who shared their bread with the poor as long as their money lasted, which was not very long, of course. Mr [Dodd] begged the Vali for permission to supply the people with bread but he replied that the government attends to this, and the people did not want any.

IX*

The trouble for the Armenians began, as for all other nationalities, with the collection of soldiers. The government swept all men possible for military service. Hundreds of the breadwinners marched away, leaving their wives and children

without means of support. In many cases the last bit of money was given to fit out the departing soldier, leaving the family in a pitifully destitute condition. A number of Armenians were quite well off and paid their military exemption fee. A much larger number escaped in one way and another, so there were more Armenians than Turks left in the city after the soldiers had gone. This made the government suspicious and fearful. The discovery of Armenian plots against the government in other places added to this feeling. The special Armenian troubles began in the beginning of May. In the middle of the night about twenty of the leading men of the national Armenian political parties were gathered up and sent to where they have been imprisoned ever since. In June the government began looking for weapons. Some of the Armenians were seized, and, by torture, the confession was extracted that a large number of arms were in the hands of different Armenians. A second inquisition began. The bastinado was used frequently, as well as fire torture (in some cases eyes are said to have been put out). Many guns were delivered, but not all. The people were afraid that if they gave up their arms, they would be massacred as in 1895. Arms had been brought in after the declaration of the constitution with the permission of the government, and were for self-defense only. The torture continued, and under its influence one fact after another leaked out. Under the nervous strain and physical suffering many things were said which had no foundation in fact. Those inflicting the torture would tell the victim what they expected him to confess, and then beat him until he did it. The college mechanic had constructed an iron shot for the athletic games, and was beaten terribly in all effort to fasten the making of bombs on the college. Some bombs were discovered in the Armenian cemetery, which aroused the fury of the Turks to white heat. It should be said that it is very probable that these bombs had been buried there in the days of Abdul Hamid.

On Saturday, June 26, about 1 p. m., the gendarmes went through the town gathering up all the Armenian men they could find - old and young, rich and poor, sick and well. In some cases houses were broken into, and sick men dragged from their beds. They were imprisoned in the barracks, and during the next few days were sent off toward [Sivas] in groups of from thirty to one hundred and fifty. They were sent on foot, and many were robbed of shoes and other articles of clothing. Some were in chains. The first group reached [Sivas] and sent word from various places. (It is said that this was a scheme of the government in order to encourage the rest. None of the rest have been heard from. Various reports have been circulated, the only one

* Report of American teacher of Marsovan College (n/d), forwarded Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 26 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/106. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 86.

generally accepted being that they were killed. One Greek driver reported seeing the mound under which they were buried. Another man in touch with the government, in answer to a direct question, admitted that the men had been killed.)

Through the intervention of a Turk the college was able to free those of its teachers already taken, and obtain a stay of proceedings against all of its teachers and employees, by the payment of the sum of 275 Turkish liras. Later this same Turk said that he believed that he could obtain the permanent exemption of the entire college group by the payment of a further sum of 300 liras. The money was promised, but after some negotiations, which showed that no definite assurance of exemption would be forthcoming, the matter was dropped.

Following the sending of the groups of Armenians in the direction of [Sivas], criers went through the streets of the town announcing that all male Armenians between the ages of fifteen and seventy were to report at the barracks. The announcement further stated that their refusal to obey would result in their being killed and their houses being burned. The Armenian priests went from house to house, advising the people to obey this announcement. Those reporting at the barracks were sent away in groups, the result being that within a few days practically all of the Armenian men were removed from the city.

On the third or fourth of July the order was issued that the women and children should be ready to leave on the following Wednesday. The people were informed that one ox cart was to be provided by the government for each house, and that they could carry only one day's food supply, a few piastres, and a small bundle of clothing. The people made preparation for carrying out these orders by selling whatever household possessions they could in the street. Articles were sold at less than 10 per cent of their usual value, and Turks from the neighboring villages filled the streets, hunting for bargains. In some places these Turks took articles by force, but the government punished all such cases when detected.

On July 5, before the order for the expulsion of the women was carried out, [Dr Marden] went to the government to protest against the execution of this order in the name of humanity. He was told that this order did not originate with the local officials, but that the orders had come from those higher up not to leave a single Armenian in the city. The commandant, however, promised to leave the college to the last, and gave permission for all people connected with the American institutions to move into the college compound. This they did, and at one time over 300 Armenians were living on the college premises.

The population had been ordered to be ready to depart Wednesday. But on Tuesday, about 3:30 a.m., the ox carts appeared at the doors of the first district to be removed, and the people were ordered to depart at once. Some were dragged from their beds without even sufficient clothing. All the morning the ox carts creaked out of the

town, laden with women and children, and here and there a man who had escaped the previous deportations. The women and girls all wore the Turkish costume, that their faces might not be exposed to the gaze of drivers and gendarmes - a brutal lot of men brought in from other regions. In many cases the husbands and brothers of these same women were away in the army, fighting for the Turkish government.

The panic in the city was terrible. The people felt that the government was determined to exterminate the Armenian race, and they were powerless to resist. The people were sure that the men were being killed and the women kidnapped. Many of the convicts in the prison had been released, and the mountains around [Marsovan] were full of bands of outlaws. It was feared that the women and children were taken some distance from the city and left to the mercy of these men. However that may be, there are provable cases of the kidnapping of attractive young girls by the Turkish officials of [Marsovan]. One Moslem reported that a gendarme had offered to sell him two girls for a mejidieh. The women believed that they were going to worse than death and many carried poison in their pockets to use if necessary. Some carried picks and shovels to bury those they knew would die by the wayside. During this reign of terror notice was given that escape was easy; that any one who accepted Islam would be allowed to remain safely at home. The offices of the lawyers who recorded applications were crowded with people petitioning to become Mohammedans. Many did it for the sake of their women and children, feeling that it would be a matter of only a few weeks before relief could come.

This deportation continued at intervals for about two weeks. It is estimated that out of about 12,000 Armenians in [Marsovan] only a few hundred were left. Even those who offered to accept Islam were sent away. At the time of writing, no definite word has been heard from any of these groups. (One Greek driver reported that at a little village a few hours from Marsovan, the few men were separated from the women, were beaten and chained, and sent on in a separate group. A Turkish driver reported seeing the caravan two days' journey from [Marsovan]. The people were so covered with dust that features were scarcely distinguishable.) Even if the lives of these exiles are being protected, it is a question how many will be able to endure the hardships of the journey over the hot, dusty hills, with no protection from the sun, with poor food and little water, and the ever-present fear of death, or some worse fate.

Most of the Armenians in the [Marsovan] district were absolutely hopeless. Many said that it was worse than a massacre. No one knew what was coming, but all felt that it was the end. Even the pastors and leaders could offer no word of encouragement or hope. Many began to doubt even the existence of God. Under the severe strain many individuals became demented, some of them permanently. There were also some examples of the greatest heroism and faith, and some started out on the journey courageously and calmly, saying in farewell.. "Pray for us. We will not see you again in this world, but sometime we will meet again."

X*

I have the honor to inform you that two days ago an order was received here for the immediate deportation of the entire Armenian population of [Mersina], consisting of about 1,800 souls. Yesterday nearly 300 persons were sent to [Adana] and to-day many more have been ordered to be ready to leave. In anticipation of their deportation, the Armenians are selling all their non-portable goods for a song. Sewing machines sold for 1.5 medjidies, iron bedsteads for a few piastres, etc. The government is allowing each person only a few metallics per day for food, and transports only a little baggage. The present destination of the deported persons is [Adana]. Apart from their actual distress and misery, the terror of these people is indescribable. Stories of the massacre of thousands of Armenians in the interior now reach here. Some of these appear to be well founded, but I presume the [Embassy] has been fully informed of what has transpired in the regions of [Cesarea, Sivas and Diarbekir, not to mention Van].

XI†

The children attending the American school conducted by [Dr and Mrs Crawford], also those children left with them by persons being deported, have all been taken and placed in a school organized by a local committee, of which the [Vali] is president, and the Greek metropolitan vice-president. Into this school all the Armenian children, females up to fifteen years and males to ten years of age, are being placed as soon as the parents are sent off. Children above these ages go with their parents.

XII‡

On Saturday, June 26, the proclamation regarding the deportation of all Armenians was posted in the streets. On Thursday, July 1, all the streets were guarded by gendarmes with fixed bayonets, and the work of driving the Armenians from their homes began. Groups of men, women and children with loads and bundles on their backs, were collected in a short cross street near the consulate, and when a hundred or so had been gathered, they were driven past the consulate on the road toward

* Copy of consular report from Mersine, Edward I. Nathan to Ambassador Morgenthau, dated August 7 1915, forwarded Ambassador Morgenthau to the Secretary of State on Aug. 15, 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/124. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 115.

† Consular report from Trebizond, Oscar S. Heizer to Ambassador Morgenthau, dated July 3 1915, forwarded Ambassador Morgenthau to the Secretary of State on July 15 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/94.

‡ Consular report from Trebizond, Oscar S. Heizer to Secretary of State, dated July 29 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/128. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Toynebee/Bryce, Report No 72.

[Gumushhané and Erzingan] in the heat and dust by gendarmes with fixed bayonets. They were held outside the city until a group of about 2,000 were collected, then sent on. Three such groups, making about 6,000, were sent from here during the first three days, and smaller groups from [Trebizond] and the vicinity sent later amounted to about 4,000 more. The weeping and wailing of the women and children was most heartrending. Some of these people were from wealthy and refined circles. Some were accustomed to luxury and ease. There were clergymen, merchants, bankers, lawyers, mechanics, tailors and men from every walk of life. The governor-general told me they were allowed to make arrangements for carriages, but nobody seemed to be making any arrangements. I know of one wealthy merchant, however, who paid Lt. 15 (\$66.00) for a carriage to take himself and wife to [Djevizlik], and when he arrived at the station where they were being collected, at [Deyermendéré], about ten minutes from the city, they were commanded by the gendarmes to leave the carriage which was sent back to the city. The whole Mohammedan population knew these people were to be their prey from the beginning, and they were treated as criminals. In the first place, from the date of the proclamation, June 25, no Armenian was allowed to sell anything, and everybody was forbidden, under penalty, to buy anything from them. How then, were they to provide funds for the journey? For six or eight months there has been no business whatever in [Trebizond], and people have been eating up their capital. Why should they have been prohibited from selling rugs or anything they had to sell to secure needed money for the journey? Many persons who had goods which they could have sold if they had been allowed to do so were obliged to start off on foot without funds and with what they could gather up from their homes and carry on their backs. Such persons naturally soon became so weak that they fell behind and were bayoneted and thrown into the river, and their bodies floated down past [Trebizond] to the sea, or lodged in the shallow river on rocks, where they remained for ten or twelve days and putrefied to the disgust of travelers who were obliged to pass that way. I have talked with eye-witnesses, who state there were many naked bodies to be seen on snags in the river fifteen days after the affair occurred, and that the smell was something terrible.

On the 17th of July, while out horseback riding with the German [Consul], we came across three Turks digging a grave in the sand for a naked body which we saw in the river nearby. The corpse looked as though it had been in the water for ten days or more. The Turks said they had just buried four more further up the river. Another Turk told us that a body had floated down the river and out into the sea a few moments before we arrived.

By July 6 (Tuesday), all the Armenian houses in [Trebizond], about 1,000, had been emptied of inhabitants and the people sent off. There was no inquiry as to who were guilty or who were innocent of any movement against the government. If a person was an Armenian that was sufficient reason for being treated as a criminal and

deported. At first all were to go except the sick who were taken to the municipal hospital until they were well enough to go. Later an exception was made for old men and women, pregnant women, children, those in government employ and Catholic Armenians. Finally it was decided that the old men and women and the Catholics must go and they were sent along towards the last. A number of lighters have been loaded with people at different times and sent off towards [Samsoun]. It is generally believed that such persons were drowned. During the early days before the deportation commenced, a large caique or lighter was loaded with men supposed to be members of the Armenian committee, and sent off towards [Samsoun]. Two days later a certain Russian subject, and one of those who left in the boat, returned overland to [Trebizond], badly wounded about the head and so crazy he could not make himself understood. All he could say was "Boom, boom." He was arrested by the authorities and taken to the municipal hospital, where he died the following day. A Turk said this boat was met not far from [Trebizond] by another boat containing gendarmes, who proceeded to kill all the men and throw them overboard. They thought they had killed them all, but this Russian, who was big and powerful, was only wounded and swam ashore unnoticed. A number of such caiques have left loaded with men and usually they return empty after a few hours.

[Tots], a village about two hours from [Trebizond], is inhabited by Gregorian and Catholic Armenians and Turks. A wealthy and influential Armenian, together with his two sons, according to a reliable witness, were placed one behind the other and shot through. Forty-five men and women were taken a short distance from the village into a valley. The women were first outraged by the officers of the gendarmerie, and then turned over to the gendarmes to dispose of. According to this witness a child was killed by beating its brains out on a rock. The men were all killed, and not a single person survived from this group of forty-five.

The plan to save the children by placing them in schools or orphanages in [Trebizond], under the care of a committee organized and supported by the Greek Archbishop, of which the Vali was president and the Archbishop vice-president, with three Mohammedan and three Christian members, has been abandoned, and the girls are now being given exclusively to Mohammedan families and thus scattered. The suppression of the orphanages and the scattering of the children was a great disappointment to this [Consulate] and to the Greek Archbishop who had worked hard for the plan and secured the support of the Vali, but the head of the Committee of Union and Progress, who was opposed to the plan, succeeded in thwarting it very quickly. Many of the boys appear to have been sent to [Platana] to be distributed among the farmers. The best looking of the older girls, who were retained as caretakers in these orphanages, are kept in houses for the pleasure of members of the gang which seems to rule affairs here. I hear on good authority that a member of the Committee of Union and Progress here has ten of the handsomest girls in a house in

the central part of the city for the use of himself and friends. Some of the small girls have been taken into respectable Mohammedan houses. Several of the former pupils of the American Mission are now in Mohammedan homes near the Mission, and have not been visited by [Mrs. Crawford], but of course the majority of them are not so fortunate.

The 1,000 Armenian houses are being emptied of furniture by the police one after the other. The furniture, bedding and everything of value is being stored in large buildings about the city. There is no attempt at classification, and the idea of keeping the property in “bales under the protection of the government to be returned to the owners on their return” is simply ridiculous. The goods are piled in without any attempt at labeling or systematic storage. A crowd of Turkish women and children follow the police about like a lot of vultures, and seize anything they can lay their hands on, and when the more valuable things are carried out of a house by the police they rush in and take the balance. I see this performance every day with my own eyes. I suppose it will take several weeks to empty all the houses, and then the Armenian shops and stores will be cleared out. The commission which has this matter in hand is now talking of selling this great collection of household goods and properties in order to pay the debts of the Armenians. The German Consul told me that he did not believe the Armenians would be permitted to return to [Trebizond], even after the end of the war.

I have just been talking with a young man who has been performing his military service on the “inshaat tabouri” (construction regiment), working on the roads out toward Gumushhane. He told me that 15 days ago all the Armenians, about 180, were separated from the other workmen and marched off some distance from the camp and shot. He heard the report of the rifles and later was one of the number sent to bury the bodies, which he stated were all naked, having been stripped of clothing.

A number of bodies of women and children have lately been thrown up by the sea upon the sandy beach below the walls of the Italian Monastery here in [Trebizond], and were buried by Greek women in the sand where they were found.

XIV*

June 28, 1915. I wish to inform you of conditions here. They are very bad and daily getting worse. I suppose [the Maynards] told you of the horrible things taking place in [Diarbekir]. Just such a reign of terror has begun in this city also. Daily the police are searching the houses of the Armenians for weapons, and not finding any, they are

* Copy of Consular report from Aleppo (quoting letter from Mr. Leslie in Ourfa), J.B. Jackson to Ambassador Morgenthau, dated June 28 1915, forwarded Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 13 1915. National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/92. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Toynebee/Bryce, Report No. 133.

taking the best and most honorable men and imprisoning them; some of them they are exiling, and others they are torturing with red hot irons to make them reveal the supposedly concealed weapons. Four weeks ago they exiled fifteen men and their families, sending them to the desert city of [Rakka], three days journey south of here.

The Gendarmery Department seems to have full control of affairs and the Mutessarif upholds them. They are now holding about a hundred of the best citizens of the city in prison, and today the gendarmerie chief called the Armenian Bishop and told him that unless the Armenians deliver their arms and the revolutionists among them, that he has orders to exile the entire Armenian population of [Ourfa], as they did the people of [Zeitoun]. We know how the latter were treated, for hundreds of them have been dragged through [Ourfa] on their way to the desert whither they have been exiled. These poor exiles were mostly women, children and old men, and they were clubbed and beaten and lashed along as though they had been wild animals, and their women and girls were daily criminally outraged, both by their guards and the ruffians of every village, through which they passed, as the former allowed the latter to enter the camp of the exiles at night, and even distributed the girls among the villagers for the night. These poor victims of their oppressors' lust and hate might better have died by the bullet in their mountain home than be dragged about the country in this way. About two thousand of them have passed through [Ourfa] all more dead than alive; many hundreds have died from starvation and abuse along the roadside and nearly all are dying of starvation, thirst, of being kidnapped by the Anaza Arabs in the desert where they have been taken. We know how they are being treated because our exiles are in the same place, and one young Armenian doctor, who was there making medical examinations of soldiers for the government, has returned and told us.

XV

July 17, 1915. The refugees are "housed" principally in great camel stables and such like. It is a great camel region, the government having requisitioned 4,000 of these animals from there. The cattle and animals of the _____ were mostly requisitioned by the government en route. What they managed to conceal and bring with them has been put under requisition, but not taken. Meanwhile the owners are forbidden to sell, are unable to use, and are compelled to feed these animals, because the government holds them responsible to deliver them when called for. I have before heard of refinements of devilry, but I have seen instances this year that have burned my soul. The manifest purpose to destroy these people by starvation cannot be denied.

XVI*

April 6, 1915. Every day 2,300 inhabitants from [Zeitoun] are transferred to [Marache] under severe guard, and after a short halt at night are deported toward unknown destinations. The hotels and the two Armenian schools are full of these deported families of [Zeitoun], [Alabache], and [Fernouz]. The government has decided to evacuate by force all the other Armenian regions. It is impossible to describe the misery which is resulting. Old men, invalids, children four or five years old go in masses barefooted.

April 27, 1915. Cruel perquisitions go on in all towns and villages of our province. All the higher class Armenians have been arrested and imprisoned at [Sivas]. The total number of these prisoners will soon reach 500 persons. They are taken as hostages without doubt. The situation is growing worse all the time, it threatens the very existence of the Armenian people.

May 27, 1915. Since the first days of April, caravans came from [Zeitoun] and environments going towards the south in the steppes of Mesopotamia. Talking only of those that crossed our city, the number of the deported rises to 6,700 persons. [Fernouz], [Kaban], [Alabache], and the whole region of [Zeitoun] have been evacuated. Bochnak mouhadjirs replace the Armenians thus exiled. The Turks are in a perfect delirium. It is impossible to describe the horrors suffered by the deported Armenians. Violation, conversion or rape of women and girls are ordinary and daily facts. The Armenian population of [Zeitoun] has been annihilated, one or two villages excepted. We are informed that 150 Armenians of [Hassan Beili] and 1,350 of [Deurtyol] have been deported to [Aleppo].

May 25, [1915]. The district of [Erzinghan], [Keghi], and [Baibourt] have been devastated by forced emigrations. The Armenian population of the city of [Erzeroum] has also received categoric orders to leave the city. They will be deported in mass; 160 merchants are already en route with their families. The government has confiscated their goods. We have no information about the deported people. They say they will be sent to [Mossoul].

The Young-Turk Government pursues unceasingly, and every day with added violence, the war to the finish that it has declared against its Armenian subjects. The provinces inhabited by Armenians, which were already under the reign of indescribable terror, have been evacuated by force. Thus the Armenian communities,

* Series of Reports from A.R.F. ("Dashnakzoutioun") of Sofia and statements by Miss Hunecke and Mr. Briquet communicated by Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated July 20 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016195. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 138. Latter includes passages dated April 6 and May 27 1915 (above) as letters from an Armenian inhabitant (name withheld) describing the deportation of Armenians from Cilicia; Report No 61 includes passage dated May 25 1915.

[at Samsoun, Trebizond, Sivas, Harpout, Amassia], and [Tokat, etc.], have been brutally deported, deprived of all their possessions, to the deserts of Mesopotamia. A great number of families have embraced Mohammedanism to escape a certain death.

June 18, 1915. (Extract from an official report.) The number of people from [Zeitoun] exiled to [Konia] is more than 6,000; they have been put in the Sandjak of [Soultanie] or [Karapounar]. More than 20,000 Armenians that have been forced to emigrate are thrown into the deserts amidst nomadic tribes, leaving their houses, gardens and tilled lands to the Turkish mouhajirs. Deprived of all that they possessed, the unfortunate people have not even any graves for their dead.

At [Aleppo] all the churches and schools are full of exiled Armenians. Rich and poor, teachers and pupils, all are brothers there, victims of the same blow. The inhabitants of the city do their utmost to alleviate the suffering. Those that are deported - women, old men, children - are obliged to cross the deserts on foot, under the burning sun, often deprived of food and water. The most modest complaint is stifled by the most barbarous threats. Overpowered by fatigue, exhausted by hunger, mothers in despair leave on the way their newborn children, often one-half year old, and continue their journey... Even in this deplorable state rapes and violent acts are everyday occurrences... The Armenians deported from [Hadjin] could not be recognized as a result of their trip of twelve days.

XVII*

FIRST EXODUS

The first group was not in a very bad state, because it was composed of the first families of the city, and they could in large part provide for their immediate needs (carriages and food). But a few days later, new bands appeared in most deplorable conditions; their number was nearly two thousand people.

Many, most of them went on foot, getting food every two or three days, and in general lacking the most necessary clothes. The Christian population of [Tarsous] tried to help them, but whatever their efforts, what they could do was like a drop of water in the ocean. Also they were not all allowed to enter the city; they had to sleep outdoors in no matter what weather, and the soldiers that kept them made all sorts of difficulties to the population of [Tarsous], which wanted to help the refugees. We saw some of them on the road. They went slowly, most of them fainting from want of food. We saw a father walking with a one-day-old baby in his arms, and behind him the mother walking as well as possible, pushed by the stick of the Turkish guardian. It was not uncommon to see a woman fall down and then rise again under

* *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 124, statement by Pierre Briquet (staff of St. Paul's Institute, Tarsus).

the stick. Some of them had a goat, a donkey, a mare. When they reached [Tarsous] they were obliged to sell them for five, ten, or fifteen piasters, because the Turkish soldiers took them away from them. I saw one who sold his goat to a Turk for six piasters. I saw an Armenian pushing two goats; a policeman (zabit) came, carried away the animals and, because the poor man protested, beat him mercilessly, until he fell in the dust senseless. Many Turks were present, no one stirred.

A young woman, whose husband had been imprisoned, was carried away with her fifteen-days-old baby, with a donkey for all luggage. After one day and a half of travel a soldier stole her donkey and she had to go on foot, her baby in her arms, from [Zeitoun] to [Aleppo].

A reporter, Mr [Schreiner], told us that while the refugees were going to [Bozanti], his carriage was stopped all the time by refugees asking for bread.

THIRD EXODUS

The third and last band counted 200 people. It reached [Tarsous] on May 13th, about seven o'clock. They were put in a Han, where I went to visit them. They had all come on foot from [Zeitoun] to [Tarsous], and had had nothing to eat for two days, days when it rained abundantly. Accompanied by one of my pupils, I made one or two translations from the Armenian, because we were under the surveillance of a policeman.

As soon as the Armenian refugees left their houses, mouhadjirs from Thrace (refugees) took possession of them. The former had been forbidden to take anything with them, and they themselves saw all their goods pass in other hands. There must be about 20,000 to 25,000 Turks in [Zeitoun] now, and the name of the town seems to have been changed into that of [Yeni Chehir (New City)].

I saw a girl three and a half years old, wearing only a shirt in rags. She had come on foot from [Zeitoun] to [Tarsous]. She was terribly spare and was shivering from cold, as were also all the innumerable children I saw on that day (Monday, May 14).

An Armenian told me that he had abandoned two children on the way because they could not walk, and that he did not know whether they had died of cold and hunger, whether a charitable soul had taken care of them, or whether they had become the prey of wild beasts. I learned later that this was far from being a unique case. Many children seem to have been thus abandoned. One seems to have been thrown in a well.

WHERE THE EXILES ARE

As I passed through [Konia], I went to see Dr. [Dodd], and this is what he told me: When the first refugees from [Zeitoun] came to [Konia], the Christian population bought food and clothes for them; but the Vali refused to allow them any

communication with the refugees, pretending that they had all that they wanted. A few days later, however, they could get the help they needed. The fact is that the government gave them only very bad bread every two or three days. Dr. [Dodd] told me that a woman threw her dying baby from the window of the train.

The refugees of [Zeitoun] have been directed to [Kara-Pounar], one of the most unhealthy places of the vilayet of [Konia], situated between [Konia] and [Eregli], but nearer the latter. Many of them died and the mortality is increasing every day. The malaria makes ravages among them, because of the complete lack of food and shelter. How cruelly ironic to think that the government pretends to be sending them there to found a colony; and they have no ploughs, no seeds to sow, no bread, no abode; in fact, they are sent with empty hands.

One part only seems to be at [Kara-Pounar]; the other inhabitants from [Zeitoun] seem to have been sent to [Deir-el-Zor], on the Euphrates; their condition is still worse and they ask as a favor to be sent to [Kara-Pounar].

In [Tarsous]. A great panic reigns among the Armenian population in _____ because it was said that they were also to be exiled. But nothing has happened yet.

In [Konia]. More than 200 Armenians have been sent to [Kara-Pounar]. Among them is Mr [Haigazian], president of the College of [Konia]. On Thursday 90 people were notified to be ready to leave on Saturday, May 26. The Armenians dare not leave their houses.

XVIII*

TESTIMONY OF WIDOW [VICTORIA KHATCHADOUR BARUTJIBASHIAN] OF [BAIBOURT].

A week before anything was done to [Baibourt], the villages all around had been emptied and their inhabitants had become victims of the gendarmes and marauding bands. Three days before the starting of the Armenians from after a week's imprisonment, Bishop [(Dzairakouin Vartabed) Der Anania Hazarabedian] has been hanged, with seven other notables. After these hangings, seven or eight other notables were killed in their own houses for refusing to go out of the city. Seventy or eighty other Armenians, after being beaten in prison, were taken to the woods and killed. The Armenian population of [Baibourt] was sent off in three batches; I was among the third batch. My husband died eight years ago, leaving me and my eight-year-old daughter and my mother extensive possessions, so that we were living in comfort. Since mobilization began, the Commandant has been living in my house

* Testimony-report (n/d) forwarded by Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State, dated August 10 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/122. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, No 59.

free of rent. He told me not to go, but I felt I must share the fate of my people. I took three horses with me, loaded with provisions. My daughter had some five-lira pieces around her neck, and I carried some twenty liras and four diamond rings on my person. All else that we had was left behind. Our party left June 1 (old style), fifteen gendarmes going with us. The party numbered four or five hundred persons. We had got only two hours away from home when bands of villagers and brigands in large numbers, with rifles, guns, axes, etc., surrounded us on the road, and robbed us of all we had. The gendarmes took my three horses and sold them to Turkish mouhadjirs, pocketing the money. They took my money and that from my daughter's neck, also all our food. After this they separated the men, one by one, and shot them all within six or seven days — every male above 15 years old. By my side were killed two priests, one of them over 90 years of age. These bandsmen took all the good-looking women and carried them off on their horses. Very many women and girls were thus carried off to the mountains, among them my sister, whose one-year-old baby they threw away; a Turk picked it up and carried it off, I know not where. My mother walked till she could walk no farther, and dropped by the roadside on a mountain-top. We found on the road many of those who had been in the previous sections carried from [Baibourt]; some women were among the killed, with their husbands and sons. We also came across some old people and little infants still alive but in a pitiful condition, having shouted their voices away. We were not allowed to sleep at night in the villages, but lay down outside. Under cover of the night indescribable deeds were committed by the gendarmes, bandsmen and villagers. Many of us died from hunger and strokes of apoplexy. Others were left by the roadside, too feeble to go on.

One morning we saw fifty to sixty wagons with about thirty Turkish widows, whose husbands had been killed in the war: and these were going to Constantinople. One of these women made a sign to one of the gendarmes to kill a certain Armenian whom she pointed out. The gendarmes asked her if she did not wish to kill him herself, at which she said "Why not?" and, drawing a revolver from her pocket, shot and killed him. Each one of these Turkish hanums had five or six Armenian girls of ten or under with her. Boys the Turks never wished to take: they killed all, of whatever age. These women wanted to take my daughter, too, but she would not be separated from me. Finally we were both taken into their wagons on our promising to become Moslem. As soon as we entered the araba, they began to teach us how to be Moslems, and changed our names, calling me [Nadjie] and her [Nourie].

The worst and most unimaginable horrors were reserved for us at the banks of the Euphrates and in the Erzingian plain. The mutilated bodies of women, girls and little children made everybody shudder. The bandsmen were doing all sorts of awful deeds to the women and girls that were with us, whose cries went up to heaven. At

the Euphrates, the bandsmen and gendarmes threw into the river all the remaining children under fifteen years old. Those that could swim were shot down as they struggled in the water.

After seven days we reached [Ezingian]. Not an Armenian was left alive there. The Turkish women took my daughter and me to the bath, and there showed us many other women and girls that had accepted Islam. Between there and [Enderes], the fields and hillsides were dotted with swollen and blackened corpses that filled and fouled the air with their stench. On this road we met six women wearing the feradje and with children in their arms. But when the gendarmes lifted their veils, they found that they were men in disguise, so they shot them. After thirty-two days' journey we reached [Constantinople].

XIX

THE HORRORS OF _____

The forced exodus from _____ of the last part of the population took place on June 1, 1914. All the villages, as well as three-quarters of the town, had already been evacuated. An escort of fifteen gendarmes followed the third convoy, which included 4,000 to 5,000 persons. The prefect of the city had wished them a pleasant journey. But at a few hours' distance from the town, the caravan was surrounded by bands of the _____ and by a mob of Turkish peasants armed with guns, axes and clubs. They first began plundering the deported, searching carefully even the very young children. The gendarmes sold to the Turkish peasants what they could not carry away with them. After having taken even the food of those unhappy people, the massacre of the males began, including two priests, one of whom was ninety. In six or seven days all men below 15 had been murdered. It was the beginning of the end. People on horseback raised the veils of the women, and carried off the pretty ones.

On the way we constantly met murdered men and youths, all covered with blood. There were also women and girls killed near their husbands or sons. On the heights of the mountains and in the depths of the valleys numbers of old men and babies were lying on the ground. During the night the caravan was not allowed to stop in the villages; they all had to sleep on the ground, exposed to the unwarrantable barbarism of the Turkish bands and peasants. The poor people found themselves in the necessity of eating grass. Sometimes the gendarmes distributed among them a small piece of hard bread. Many hungry people died of all that suffering.

_____, June 25 (old style). (From a private letter):

The Armenian population has been converted to Islamism; it was a means of escaping from the forced migration. Orthodox Turks are given the wives of absent husbands or their daughters. We have been told that according to an order from the Padishah, everybody must embrace Islamism.

At Cesarea, Sivas, Trebizond, Ordo, and many other towns and cities, thousands have been persuaded by threats and by abominable tortures to embrace the Mohammedan faith. In many cases the wives and daughters of Christians have been immediately compelled to marry Turks.

All over the country leading Armenians have been shot or hanged. Leading merchants have been beggared and exiled. Thirty thousand Mohammedan criminals have been released from jail and formed into bands under strict military discipline. One of the duties of these bands is to pillage villages and to rob and assassinate exiles.

The Greek and Armenian Patriarchs have been refused audiences with the ministers of the Turkish Government. Foreign Ambassadors, among them the United States Ambassador, have been rebuffed and told that what the Imperial Government wishes to do with its subjects is none of their business.

Turkish ministers and other officials have repeatedly avowed the intention to smash the Christian nationalities and thus forever put an end to the Armenian question.

XXI*

July 13. After we had seen thousands of people start out, and especially after ours had actually gone, we came to the conclusion that if anything could be done to stop this terrible crime, which impresses us as ten times worse than any massacre, it would be done in Constantinople. In Constantinople we found that the whole plan of deportation is one of the central government and that no pressure from the embassies had been able to do anything.

We believe there is imminent danger of many of these people, whom we estimate for the Sivas, Erzroom and Harpoot vilayets, to be 600,000 starving to death on the road. They took food a few days, but did not dare take much money with them, for, if they did so, it is doubtful whether they would be allowed to keep it.

We met on the road near _____ people of two villages of which the people were going on foot with less than a donkey to a family, no food, nor bedding, hardly any men, and many of the women barefooted and carrying children. A case in _____ worthy of notice was that of F's sister. Her husband had worked in our hospital as a soldier-nurse for many months. She contracted typhus and was brought to our hospital. Her mother, a woman of 60 to 70, got up from a sick bed to go out and care for their seven children, the oldest of which was about 12. A few days before the deportation, the husband was imprisoned and exiled without examination or fault. When the quarter in which they lived went, the mother got out of bed in the hospital, and was put on an ox-cart to go with her children.

* Letter dated 13th July 1915, from the Rev. Ernest C. Partridge. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 77.

XXII*

August 3. The idea of direct attack and massacre that was carried out in former times has been altered somewhat, in that the men and boys have been deported from their homes in great numbers and disappeared en route, and later on the women and children have been made to follow. For some time stories have been prevalent from travelers arriving from the interior of the killing of the males, of great numbers of bodies along the road-sides, and floating in the Euphrates river; of the delivery to the Kurds by the gendarmes accompanying the convoys of women and children of all the younger members of the parties; of unthinkable outrages committed by gendarmes and Kurds, and even the killing of many of the victims. At first these stories were not given much credence, but as many of the refugees are now arriving in [Aleppo], no doubt longer remains of the truth of the matter. August 2nd about 800 middle-aged and old women, and children under the age of 10 years, arrived afoot from Diarbekir after 45 days en route, and in the most pitiable condition imaginable. They report the taking of all the young women and girls by the Kurds, the pillaging even of the last bit of money and other belongings, of starvation, of privation, and hardship of every description. Their deplorable condition bears out their statements in every detail.

I am informed that 4,500 persons were sent from Sughurt to Ras-el-Ain, over 2,000 from Mezireh to Diarbekir, and that all the cities of Bitlis, Mardin, Mossoul, Severek, Malatia, Besne, etc., have been depopulated of Armenians, the men and boys and many of the women killed, and the balance scattered throughout the country. If this is true, of which there is little doubt, even the latter must naturally die of fatigue, hunger and disease. The Governor of Deir-el-Zor on the Euphrates river, and who is now in _____, says there are 15,000 Armenian refugees in that city. Children are frequently sold to prevent starvation, as the government furnishes practically no subsistence. The following statistics show the number of families and persons arriving in places from whence deported, and number sent further on, up to and including July 30:

* Consular report from Aleppo, J.B. Jackson to Secretary of State, dated August 3 1915. National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/129. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 139 (b), from series of reports from Mr. Jackson, U.S. Consul at Aleppo.

WHERE, FROM	FAMILIES	PERSONS	SENT AWAY
Cheuk-Merzemen (Dortyol)	400	2,109	734
Ojakli	115	537	137
Euzerli	116	593	173
Hasanbayli	187	1,118	514
Harni	84	528	34
Karspazar	51	340	
Hadjin	592	3,988	1,025
Roumlou	51	388	296
Shar	150	1,112	357
Sis	231	1,317	
Bagche	13	68	
Dengala	126	804	
Drtadli	12	104	
Zeytoun	5	8	
Tarpouz	22	97	
Albustan	10	44	
Total	2,165	13,255	3,270

2,100 persons more arrived since the above figures were compiled.

Now all Armenians have been ordered deported from the cities of Aintab, Mardin, Bitlis, Antioch, Alexandretta, Kessab, and all the smaller towns in Aleppo province, estimated at 60,000 persons. It is natural to suppose that they will suffer the fate of those that have gone before, and which is appalling to contemplate. The results are that as 90 per cent of the commerce of the interior is in the hands of the Armenians, the country is facing ruin. The great bulk of business being done on credit, hundreds of prominent business men other than Armenians face bankruptcy. There will not be left in the places evacuated a single tanner, moulder, blacksmith, tailor, carpenter, clay worker, weaver, shoemaker, jeweler, pharmacist, doctor, lawyer, or any of the professional or tradesmen, with very few exceptions, and the country will be left in a practically helpless state.

The important American religious and educational institutions in this region are losing their professors, teachers, helpers, and students, and even the orphanages are to be emptied of the hundreds of children therein, which ruins the fruits of 50 years of untiring effort in this field. The government officials in a mocking way ask what the Americans are going to do with these establishments now that the Armenians are being done away with.

The situation is becoming more critical daily, as there is no telling where this thing will end. The Germans are being blamed on every hand, for if they have not directly ordered this wholesale slaughter (for it is nothing less than the extermination of the Armenian race) they at least condone it.

XXIII*

July 12. In Der-el-Zor, a great city in the wilderness, six day's journey from Aleppo, we found a large Khan overflowing. Every available space, even roofs and porches, were occupied by the Armenians. Mostly women and children, as well as a number of men, had spread something over their heads, in order to keep themselves in the shade.

As soon as I heard that they were Armenians, I went to them to talk with them. They were the people of Furnus, from the region of Zeitoun and Marash, who had been huddled together in this narrow place, and had an extremely sorrowful look on their faces. After an inquiry, I found out that one of Miss Rhoner's pupils, Martha Karabashian, from the orphanage of Marash, was among the crowd. She related to me the following: The Turkish Zaptiehs came to Furnus one day and took a great number of men by force and carried them away to become soldiers. Where they were to be used was not made known, neither to them nor to their families. Then they told those that were left behind that they had to desert their houses within four hours. They allowed them to carry as much of their possessions as they could carry with themselves, also their horses. At the expiration of the appointed time the poor people were taken out of their village, under the guidance of the soldiers, not knowing whither they were going, or whether they would see it again. At first, so long as they were in their own mountains, and had something to eat, everything went all right. They had promised to give them money and bread, and at first they gave daily 30 paras (3 cents) per head. But very soon the promised ration was withheld, and they gave us only 30 dramma of bulghur every day per head. In this way the people of Furnus arrived at Der-el-Zor, after four weeks of exhausting journey, through Marash and Aleppo. They had been in the inn three weeks, and knew not what would come to them next. They had no money, and the food given by the Turks had become very sparing. For many days they had not had any bread. In cities the soldiers had shut them up at nights, and had not allowed them to talk with the residents. So, Martha had not been permitted to go to the orphanage in Marash. She told to me very sadly: "We had two houses and we had to leave everything; now muhadjirs occupy our houses." There had been no massacre in Furnus, and they had been favored with bread and water during their march through the scorching wilderness.

The Armenians themselves did not know the reason of their expulsion.

* Letter dated 12 July 1915, from Schwester L. Möhring, a German missionary, describing her journey from Baghdad to the passes of Amanus, published in the German journal *Sonnenaufgang*, September 1915. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 145.

The next day, about the time of noon-rest, we met a large group of Armenians. The poor people had built protections of goats' hair, according to the primitive Kurdish ways, and were resting under them. But the greater part of the people were without a shelter, sitting on the burning sand, under the scorching sun. On account of many sick ones, the Turks allowed them a day of rest. One can never imagine such a comfortless group of people in the wilderness, under such unbearable circumstances. From the clothes they gave the appearance of belonging to the wealthy class. Some had been sent to the province of Konia, and a large number to the various villages of Zor beyond Aleppo, and to the surrounding districts of Aleppo—Munbej, Bab, Maara, Idlib, etc. The deportation is still going on. Adana, Mersin, Hadjin, Sis and other places will no doubt undergo the same fate, according to news received by us.

All these people are being removed without any of their goods and chattels, and to such places where the climate is totally unsuited to them. They are left without shelter, without food, and without clothing, depending only upon the morsels of bread which the government will throw before them, a government which is unable even to feed its own troops. It is impossible to read or to hear, without shedding tears, even the meager details of these deportations. There are only 50 males among the thousand families exiled to Soultanieh. Most of the families have traveled on foot, old men and children have died on the way, young women in childbirth have been left on mountain passes, and at least 10 deaths a day are recorded among them, even in their place of exile - victims of hunger and sickness.

XXIV*

If it were simply a matter of being obliged to leave here to go somewhere else, it would not be so bad, but everybody knows it is a case of going to one's death. If there was any doubt about it, it has been removed by the arrival of a number of parties, aggregating several thousand people, from Erzroom and Erzinggan. I have visited their encampment a number of times and talked with some of the people. A more pitiable sight cannot be imagined. They are, almost without exception, ragged, filthy, hungry and sick. That is not surprising, in view of the fact that they have been on the road for nearly two months, with no change of clothing, no chance to wash, no shelter, and little to eat. The government has been giving them some scanty rations here. I watched them one time when their food was brought. Wild animals could not be worse. They rushed upon the guards who carried the food and the guards beat them back with clubs, hitting hard enough to kill them sometimes. To watch them one could hardly believe that these people were human beings.

* Consular report from Harput, Leslie A. Davis to Secretary of State, dated August 10 1915, National Archives (Washington DC), RG 59, 867.4016/122. See *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 65.

As one walks through the camp, mothers offer their children and beg one to take them. In fact, the Turks have been taking their choice of these children and girls for slaves, or worse. In fact, they have even had their doctors there to examine the more likely girls and thus secure the best ones.

There are very few men among them, as most of them have been killed on the road. All tell the same story of having been attacked and robbed by the Kurds. Most of them were attacked over and over again, and a great many of them, especially the men, were killed. Women and children were also killed. Many died, of course, from sickness and exhaustion on the way, and there have been deaths each day that they have been here. Several different parties have arrived and, after remaining a day or two, have been pushed on with no apparent destination. Those who have reached here are only a small portion, however, of those who started. By continuing to drive these people on in this way it will be possible to dispose of all of them in a comparatively short time. Among those with whom I have talked were three sisters. They had been educated at [Constantinople] and spoke excellent English. They said their family was the richest in [Erzeroum] and numbered twenty-five when they left, but there were now only fourteen survivors. The other eleven, including the husband of one of them and their old grandmother, had been butchered before their eyes by the Kurds. The oldest male survivor of the family was eight years of age. When they left [Erzeroum] they had money, horses and personal effects, but they had been robbed of everything, including even their clothing. They said some of them had been left absolutely naked and others with only a single garment. When they reached a village their gendarmes obtained clothes for them from some of the native women. Another girl with whom I talked is the daughter of the Protestant pastor of [Erzeroum]. She said every member of her family with her had been killed and she was left entirely alone. These and some others are a few survivors of the better class of people who have been exiled. They are being detained in an abandoned schoolhouse just outside of the town, and no one is allowed to enter it. They said they practically were in prison, although they were allowed to visit a spring just outside the building. It was there I happened to see them. All the others are camped in a large open field with no protection at all from the sun.

The condition of these people indicates clearly the fate of those who have left and are about to leave from here. I believe nothing has been heard from any of them as yet, and probably very little will be heard. The system that is being followed seems to be to have bands of Kurds awaiting them on the road to kill the men especially and incidentally some of the others. The entire movement seems to be the most thoroughly organized and effective massacre this country has ever seen.

Not many men have been spared, however, to accompany those who are being sent into exile, for a more prompt and sure method has been used to dispose of them. Several thousand Armenian men have been arrested during the past few weeks. These

have been put in prison, and each time that several hundred had been gathered up in that way they were sent away during the night. The first lot were sent away during the night of June 23rd. Among them were some of the professors in the American College and other prominent Armenians, including the Prelate of the Armenian Gregorian Church. There have been frequent rumors that all of these were killed, and there is little doubt that they were. All Armenian soldiers have likewise been sent away in the same manner. They have been arrested and confined in a building at one end of the town. No distinction has been made between those who had paid their military exemption tax and those who had not. Their money was accepted and then they were arrested and sent off with the others. It was said that they were to go somewhere to work on the roads but no one had heard from them, and that is undoubtedly false.

The fate of all the others has been pretty well established by reliable reports of a similar occurrence on Wednesday, July 7th. On Monday many men were arrested, both at [Harpout] and [Mezreh] and put in prison. At daybreak Tuesday morning they were taken out and made to march towards an almost uninhabited mountain. There were about eight hundred in all, and they were tied together in groups of fourteen each. That afternoon they arrived in a small Kurdish village, where they were kept overnight in the mosque and other buildings. During all this time they were without food or water. All their money and much of their clothing had been taken from them. On Wednesday morning they were taken to a valley a few hours distant, where they were all made to sit down. Then the gendarmes began shooting them, until they had killed nearly all of them. Some who had not been killed by bullets were then disposed of with knives and bayonets. A few succeeded in breaking the rope with which they were tied to their companions and running away, but most of these were pursued and killed. A few succeeded in getting away, probably not more than two or three. Among those who were killed was the treasurer of the American College. Many other estimable men were among the number. No charge of any kind had ever been made against any of these men. They were simply arrested and killed as part of the general plan to dispose of the Armenian race.

Last night several hundred more men, including both men arrested by the civil authorities and those enrolled as soldiers, were taken in a different direction and murdered in a similar manner. It is said this happened at a place not two hours distant from here. I shall ride out that way some day when things become a little quieter and try to verify it for myself.

The same thing has been done systematically in the villages. A few weeks ago about three hundred men were gathered together at Itchma and Haboosi, two villages four and five hours distant from here, and then taken up into the mountains and

massacred. This seems to be fully established. Many women from those villages have been here since and told about it. There have been rumors of similar occurrences in other places.

There seems to be a definite plan to dispose of all the Armenian men, but after the departure of the families during the first few days of the enforcement of the order it was announced that the women and children with no men in the family might remain here for the present, and many hoped the worst was over. The American missionaries began considering plans to aid the women and children who would be left here with no means of support. It was thought that perhaps an orphanage could be opened to care for some of the children, and especially those who had been born in America and then brought here by their parents, and also those who belonged to parents who had been connected in some way with the American mission and schools. There would be plenty of opportunity, although there might not be sufficient means, to care for children who reached here with the exiles from other vilayets and whose parents had died on the way. I went to see the Vali about this matter yesterday and was met with a flat refusal. He said we could aid these people if we wished to do so, but the government was establishing orphanages for the children and we could not undertake any work of that nature. An hour after I left the Vali the announcement was made that all the Armenians remaining here, including women and children, must leave on July 13.

XXV*

The first of August the beating began in the church. The object of this was to force the people to bring any ammunition and firearms they might have. Most of the people accepted their fate in silence. A mother threw herself in front of her consumptive son and herself received the stripes. A German woman tried to save her Armenian husband. "Get out of the way or I will beat you" cried the official.

"I don't care for the emperor himself; my orders come from Talat Bey."

Some Armenian ladies came to intercede with the official, and for a day or two the beatings were less vigorous.

Then came the awful Saturday, the day of darkness and horror. Women came to our house saying, "They are beating the Armenian men to death and they are going to beat the women next!" I ran to a neighbor's house and there found men and women crying. The men had gotten out of the church and were telling their story. "They are

* Statement dated September 24 1915 by Miss Holt, of the American Mission Station at Ada-Pazar. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Report No 102.

beating the men frightfully," they cried. "They say they will throw us into the river; they will send us into exile; they will make Mohammedans of us; they will beat our women next; they are coming to the house."

There was one Turkish soldier outside of the church in tears. He said he had been crying three days and nights because of the awful treatment of the Armenian people. Some of the people were shut up ten days in the church.

Three days after the beating ceased, and we were beginning to take courage again; a few Armenian shops were opened; but the next morning early, which was Sunday, news came that all the Armenians in [Adapazar], numbering about 25,000, were to be sent into exile. They were to go to Konia by freight train, if they could pay their passage, and then to Mosul by carriage - on foot a journey of weeks and months. Such awful stories came to us about things that had happened to those who went by foot that people sold their last possessions to get enough to pay their train passage. They were afraid to take money with them. The poor had none to take. The rich must leave all their property behind. If they took money they feared violence. By Wednesday there was no freight trains to send them by, as so many had gone, but all the people were turned out in the streets to await their turn—many for several days.

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In response to the urgent appeal of Ambassador Morgenthau the Committee on Armenian Atrocities, in co-operation with the Committee of Mercy, has decided to make a wide appeal for funds. Several gentlemen have already pledged large contributions, but the need is very great, and it is expected that a good number of smaller gifts will be received.

The crimes now being perpetrated upon the Armenian people surpass in their horror and cruelty anything that history has recorded during the past thousand years. The educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are all being subjected to every form of barbarity and outrage.

It is understood, however, that very many Turks are opposed to this policy of persecution. It is hoped that prompt action will make it possible to save a great many lives, and repatriate some at least of those who have been driven from their homes.

Funds will be forwarded to the Ambassador as fast as received. Donations should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr Charles R. Crane, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, N.Y.