

FACTS IN REGARD TO ARMENIAN ATROCITIES IN THE
CESAREA DISTRICT, ASIA MINOR.*

[STELLA H. LONGBRIDGE, CESAREA]

1. During the early part of the year 1915 from 600 to 1,000 men were imprisoned in the city of Cesarea and subjected to torture in order to force them to confess that they had arms concealed. Some who were released showed me where they had been beaten. For weeks some of those whom I saw were unable to put on their shoes or walk without a cane because of their swollen feet. I visited the prison often, and saw six men confined for many days in a space not more than six feet square with nothing to eat except what their friends were able to send in. One old man in Talas died from a broken rib and other injuries received from the police in the Talas police station. This man was visited and cared for by our nurse Miss Phelps. This man was accused of no crime, but beaten to force him to tell about others.

2. In the course of a long conversation with the Governor of Cesarea in the spring of 1915, he stated to me emphatically that not an Armenian was to be left in the Cesarea Sanjak. About the same time, Ali Sabri Bey, the tahrirat mudir of Cesarea intimated to me very clearly that something terrible was to happen to our school girls and boys. Later on, another prominent Turk, Ali Ghalib Bey, formerly a member of Parliament for Cesarea, and an old friend of mine, told me privately that there was no hope for the Armenians, and said that the only way to save our Armenian friends was to advise them to become Moslems. The direct testimony of Turkish officials and of their wives could be multiplied. Without exception officials with whom I have been in contact assumed without question the fact of the most extreme atrocities. For example, the wife of the Mudir of the village of Moonjoosoon told our ladies how she had wept over the fearful things she had seen and how she had tried to keep her husband from having anything to do with them.

3. At first the prisoners in Cesarea were condemned after court martial, but tiring of this, they were sent out in batches over the Sivas road, and according to the testimony of drivers, villagers, and even Turkish officials were killed between Gemerek and Sivas. Specific cases could be multiplied. For illustration, one night in July, 1915, police came to the house of Boghos Haroutounian, our steward, and his brother Haig, our druggist; also to the house of Khoren Muggeditshian, our Armenian teacher, and took them to the police station in Talas. At midnight I visited them, but was unable to secure their release. Early in the morning they were taken to the city to the common prison, but not told on what charge. I saw the Governor at once and begged that these men be given a fair trial if charged with any crime, and asked him to see that they were not killed. He assured me that he would look into the matter personally and that nothing would happen to them. Two days later Boghos and Khoren, with some twenty others, were sent out without warning to Gemerek. After being held there for two or three days, they were sent to a valley behind lhmal Oghlu Han on the Sivas road, stripped and murdered. (Testimony of Mrs. Misag Donabedian and other Gemerek villagers who saw them taken out and who saw their clothes brought back.) Mariam Hanum, a former maid in my house, testified that she herself identified the clothes worn by Boghos.

4. In the early fall of 1915, the whole Armenian population excepting Catholics and Armenians [*sic*, Protestants], were herded together and deported.

Our school girls, taken out of our hands, and imprisoned in Cesarea, were threatened for five months with deportation, death and shame, told that they would be dragged from village to village if they did not become Moslem. Letters written by them during this time tell of the threats and the treatment

*. SOURCE: NA/RG256/Special Reports and Studies/ Inquiry Document 803.

received. At last those who became Moslems were allowed to go to their homes. Those who refused were sent to work in the Red Crescent Hospital at Zingidery.

Women who were taken from our compound were deported because they did not become Moslems. Their children and little babies were taken from them. Those who accepted Islam were allowed to stay, but were sent out to villages, their children taken away from them, and in those cases I know of, were forced to marry Turks. The child of one of these women was taken by the civil governor of Cesarea, another of her children was taken by a prominent Turkish doctor of Cesarea.

Things I Have Heard From Trustworthy Sources

Men and boys of the Bozook villages, near Cesarea, were driven out by soldiers sent by the governor of the district and shot down. Women and girls were shot in places where resistance was shown.

Women and girls were carried off by Turks and are now in their homes.

One of the girls from our school was carried off from her home in Yozgat, and was seen by our school boys thrown over the back of a horse and being driven away into slavery.

[Signed] Stella H. Loughridge