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## In Search of the “Immortal” Volunteers: The Legacy of Armenian *Fedayis* on the Caucasus Front, 1914–1916

CHRISTOPHER GUNN

### *Abstract*

*Since the establishment of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) in 1890, the practice of honoring the revolutionary acts of its fedayis has been an important means through which to both recruit the next generation of members and to maintain its claim to be the defender of the Armenian nation. It is, therefore, surprising that the decision to form Armenian volunteer units to fight alongside the Russian army between the fall of 1914 and the spring of 1916, is barely mentioned in ARF publications, and given relatively little attention in the historiography of the period. Given the ARF’s tendency to glorify the acts of its fedayis it is puzzling why the organization would not promote and honor its members who took up arms in a more conventional manner against the Ottoman Empire. Three possible reasons can be gleaned from the literature. The first two involve the problems the Legions pose to the historiography on World War I in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. The third reason involves the legacy of the ARF and the decision of the Armenian Volunteer Legions to retreat from Van and not relieve the Armenians trapped in Muş in the summer of 1915.*

**Keywords:** *Armenian Revolutionary Federation; fedayis; World War I; Ottoman Empire; the Caucasus; eastern Anatolia; the Armenian Volunteer Legions; the Committee of Union and Progress*

From all countries, Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian Army, with their blood to serve the victory of Russian arms ... Let the Russian flag wave freely over the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.<sup>1</sup>

*Samsun Harutinian, President of the Armenian National Bureau.*

When the Armenian Revolutionary Federation uttered the call to self-defense and formed the immortal Volunteer Regiment, Tehlirian did not tell his father of his intentions ... he simply left home ...

*Sarkis Atamian, “Soghomon Tehlirian: A Portrait of Immortality, Part I”.*

### Introduction

Since the establishment of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) in 1890, the practice of honoring the revolutionary acts of its *fedayis* [guerrillas] has been an important means through which to both recruit the next generation of members and to main-

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tain its claim to be the defender of the Armenian nation. The anniversaries of the Ottoman Bank takeover in 1896 and the Battle of Khanasor in 1897 are both annually celebrated, the ARF press regularly published the accounts of their *fedayis*, and the names Armen Garo, Andranik, *Dro*, and Soghomon Tehlirian are all well known.<sup>2</sup> In particular, as the key figures in the ARF's *Operation Nemesis* began to die during the 1960s and early 1970s, the frequency of publications glorifying the assassinations of Turkish and Azeri leaders between 1920 and 1921, and praising the men who carried them out, began to increase. Even the morally reprehensible assassinations of Turkish diplomats during the 1970s and 1980s by the ARF's Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Revolutionary Army were well covered in the *Armenian Weekly* and the Armenian American bilingual daily newspaper *Asbarez*.

It is, therefore, surprising that one of the organization's most defensible revolutionary acts in their 120-year history, the decision to form Armenian volunteer units to fight alongside the Russian army between the fall of 1914 and the spring of 1916, is barely mentioned in ARF publications, and given relatively little attention in the historiography of the period. In operation during the most critical and tragic years of modern Armenian history, nearly every prominent ARF politician and *fedayi* of the era participated in the volunteer legions in some capacity.

The ARF represented a majority within the Armenian National Bureau (ANB), the organization that oversaw the creation of the legions, and a number of high profile ARF politicians, intellectuals and former *fedayi* were involved in the creation, staffing, equipping, and maintenance of the legions.<sup>3</sup> These included Stepan Zoryan (*Rostom*), one of the three founders of the ARF; Hovhannes Katchaznoui, an ARF *fedayi*, representative from Van and the first prime minister of the (first) Armenian Republic;<sup>4</sup> Simon Vratzian, a leading ARF intellectual who had recently been elected to the Executive Bureau, the organization's main governing body, and who would become the last prime minister of the Armenian Republic;<sup>5</sup> Garo Sasuni, a high-ranking member of the ARF's Western Bureau (Istanbul), and future Executive Bureau member; and Armen Garo (Garo Pasdermadjian), one of the most famous *fedayi* of his generation and a recent former Ottoman parliamentarian at the time of his participation in the volunteers. The most famous ARF *fedayis* of the period also comprised the volunteers' military leadership: in addition to six of the seven Legion commanders, Andranik, *Dro*, Hamazasp, *Keri*, *Vartan*, and Arghutian; other major figures such as *Sebouh*, *Torcom*, *Khetcho*, and *Murad* were given high-ranking positions in the legions.

Given the ARF's tendency to laud the acts of its *fedayi*, even those which are, at a minimum, morally questionable, it is puzzling why the organization would not promote and exalt the members who took up arms in a more conventional manner against the Ottoman Empire in the fall of 1914. While it is impossible to answer that question definitively, at least three possible reasons can be gleaned from the literature. The first two involve the problems the Armenian Volunteer Legions pose to the historiography on World War I in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. First, in the late summer of 1914, before the start of hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, a handful of ARF leaders in the Ottoman Empire, chose to disregard the policies established by the party's executive leadership and, without the unanimous consent of its own central committee, essentially declared war on the Ottoman Empire. That these Ottoman ARF members *chose* to irrevocably split with the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), its former political ally, as early as late August 1914, and the consequences of their decision, remain largely unexplored in the historiogra-

phy. Second, their defection to the Russian Empire, and the creation of Armenian Volunteer Legions, were carried out in the most provocative and public ways imaginable. Descriptions of the volunteers as “guides” and “scouts”, in much of the recent historiography, downplays the true purpose and intention behind their creation, and the degree to which these acts provoked the Ottoman government’s subsequent actions against its Armenians has yet to be explored.

Any measure of sustained analyses into these topics, might bring unwanted attention and criticism to the ARF *fedayi* involved, and may explain why the Volunteers have never achieved a prominent place in the organization’s historical lore. The third reason seems to be of an internal nature and involves the decision of the Armenian Volunteer Legions to retreat from Van and not relieve the Armenians trapped in Muş in the summer of 1915. Their collective damnation for this act, while puzzling, may also help explain their absence from the literature. Unfortunately, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction in the statements made, and the memoirs written, by the individuals involved, written well after the actual events, and is probable many were trying to deflect blame, cement their own legacies and, perhaps, rewrite the history of the ARF in the aftermath of World War I.

## The Armenian Volunteer Legions in the Caucasus, 1914–1916

### *Organization*

In the fall of 1914, the Armenian National Bureau (ANB) in Tiflis (Tbilisi), in close cooperation with the ARF, whose members dominated its board, established four Armenian volunteer legions to fight alongside the Russian army on the Caucasus front.<sup>6</sup> This was in addition to the 150,000–250,000 Russian Armenians already conscripted into the Russian army.<sup>7</sup> The legions were comprised of approximately 3,100 men fit for service, out of an alleged 20,000 willing volunteers.<sup>8</sup> By the spring of 1915, three more legions were organized, bringing the total number of Armenian volunteers fighting against the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus to approximately 5,000.<sup>9</sup> These volunteers were a combination of Ottoman Armenians, former Armenian emigrants from the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Armenian army defectors, Russian Armenians who were not called up in the general Russian army mobilization, 180 ARF *fedayi* released directly into the volunteer legions from Russian prisons, and Armenians from the wider diaspora, including the United States, France, and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

The First Legion, commanded by Andranik Ozanian was the largest, and contained between 1,200 and 1,500 volunteers; the Second Legion was commanded by Drastamat Kanayan, more commonly known as *Dro*; the Third Legion by Hamazasp Srvandztyan; and the Fourth Legion by Arshak Gafavian, who was also primarily known by his revolutionary alias, *Keri*.<sup>11</sup> The Second, Third and Fourth Legions each contained approximately 500 men each.<sup>12</sup> Of the three volunteer units that were established in early 1915, the Fifth Legion was commanded by Sarghis Mehrabyan, known as *Vartan*; the Sixth Legion, formed by the *Hunchaks*, was led by Grigor Avsharian, operated independent of the six, and may have contained as many as 1,500 men, including a fairly large contingent of Armenian Americans; and the Seventh Legion was led by Hovsep Arghutian.<sup>13</sup> It must be noted, however, that there are some discrepancies regarding the details of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh volunteer Legions in the literature.<sup>14</sup>

*Early Engagements*

Although the dates vary, it appears that shortly before the outbreak of hostilities between the Ottoman and Russian Empires on the Black Sea on 29 October 1914, and prior to the formal declaration of war by the Russian government on 2 November 1914, the Armenian volunteer units set out for the front to engage the Ottomans as the vanguard of the Russian army. The First Legion headed toward the Ottoman-Persian frontier on 19 October to link up with Russian forces; and the Second Legion left for Iğdir on 20 October, the hometown of its commander, *Dro*, and an important Russian military center close to the Ottoman-Russian border. Nearly two weeks later, the Third Legion marched toward Sarıkamış on 1 November 1914; and the Fourth Legion headed in the same general direction, toward Erzurum, the hometown of its commander, *Keri*, on 6 November.<sup>15</sup> In other words, “along the entire front, from Olti to Solmast, the four Armenian regiments were arranged as vanguards” by the Russian army,<sup>16</sup> and “participated in nearly every major campaign on the Caucasus front”.<sup>17</sup>

In particular, the legions were involved in what some Armenian observers argue were the two most significant engagements in the region during the war. The first was the battle of Sarıkamış (22 December 1914–18 January 1915), where Hamazasp’s Third Legion and *Keri*’s Fourth Legion saw action, and which ended in a devastating defeat for the Ottoman army.<sup>18</sup> As early as 1918, ARF Armenian leaders pointed out the “invaluable service” Armenian legions provided to the Russian army in this battle, and claimed they were instrumental in the defeat of the Ottoman army in January 1916.<sup>19</sup> More recent scholarship, however, has argued that Armenian legions were not in a position to make a significant contribution to the overall course of the campaign, and did not participate in the decisive battle.<sup>20</sup> The second was the battle of Salmas (Dilman) on 1 May 1915, in which Andranik’s First Legion turned back the forces of Khalil Pasha. At least one author has argued that the Armenian victory at Salmas was “one of the highlights in the history of the Armenian Volunteer Movement, as well as the larger struggle for Armenian liberation”, and which saved both the Russian Armenians and the Ottoman Armenians in Van from “extermination” and “utter annihilation”, respectively.<sup>21</sup>

The contributions of the Armenian Legions did not end there, however. The “Araration Legion”, which was formed by combining the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Legions under the command of *Vartan*, along with the First Legion, entered the city of Van on 18 May 1915, relieving the Armenian citizens who had waged an uprising against the Ottoman government and its forces since 13 April 1915.<sup>22</sup> Between the Russian occupation of Van, and the Russian retreat from the area on 26 July 1915, the Armenian Legions participated in a number of engagements with the Ottomans as they attempted to remove the Turks and Kurds from the southern and western regions of Lake Van through either intimidation or force.<sup>23</sup> After the Russian retreat, the Legions acted as rearguard, protecting both the Russian army and the Armenian refugees who were forced to evacuate Van.<sup>24</sup>

After the occupation of Van and during the retreat, however, it appears that a large number of individual Ottoman Armenian volunteers deserted the legions to return home, including *Sebouh*, one of Andranik’s top commanders.<sup>25</sup> The Third and Fourth Legions participated in retaking the southern Van region in the late summer and fall of 1915,<sup>26</sup> and in late October the First, Third and Seventh Legions reoccupied the city of Van.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, a prominent former ARF *fedayi* leader Torcom (Torkom) was on a recruiting to London to raise more Armenian volunteers from the diaspora.<sup>28</sup> From that point on, the First, Second, Third, Fifth and Seventh legions were involved

in the capture of the entire Van region and the eventual occupation of Muş (15 February), Erzurum (16 February), Bitlis (3 March), Trabzon (18 April), and Erzincan (25 July) in the first half of 1916.<sup>29</sup> During this time, the Fourth and Sixth Armenian Legions fought with the Russian army on the Persian front.<sup>30</sup>

### *Dissolution*

In the spring and summer of 1916, the Armenian volunteer legions were disbanded, and its members were offered the opportunity to be incorporated into the Russian regular army command structure as six Armenian rifle battalions.<sup>31</sup> While the allegations of “lawlessness” on the part of the Armenian volunteers by Russian officers are dismissed by many scholars and authors, who attribute the decision to a much broader policy of the Russian government to suppress Armenian nationalism when its usefulness had run its course after the military victories in northwestern Anatolia in early 1916, there is disagreement on precisely who made the decision, and when, to demobilize the Armenians.<sup>32</sup> While the details are unclear, we know that at least in terms of the seven legion commanders, Andranik, whose entire unit was dissolved, *Dro*, *Keri*, who was killed in Rawunduz in May 1916, and Grivor Avsharian, who was also killed in action, did not accept offers to be commissioned in the regular Russian army.<sup>33</sup> Regarding the rank and file, however, we only know that several thousand of the Armenian volunteers chose not to be reorganized into the Russian army and were discharged from service, while several thousand more did join with the Russian troops.<sup>34</sup>

The Armenian Volunteer Legions, despite being poorly equipped, supplied, and usually outnumbered, more than proved their worth on the battlefields of the Caucasus, and, at least prior to the spring of 1916, were the recipients of a number of accolades from the Russian government.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, in addition to protecting the refugee column of Armenians from Van that retreated toward Russian Armenia with the Russian Army in the summer of 1915, and the Armenians saved by Andranik’s victory at Salmas, the volunteer legions are credited with rescuing thousands of Armenian civilians during their nearly two years of existence.<sup>36</sup> These achievements, however, came at the great cost of losing over a third of the volunteers to casualties, including at least two of their commanders.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Armenian Volunteers in the Literature**

Interestingly, very little can be found in the existing English literature on the Armenian volunteers who fought on the Caucasus front. There are no articles, theses, dissertations, or monographs dedicated to a study of the Armenian volunteers and their activities. At most, one can find only a few pages or paragraphs spread across the historiography.<sup>38</sup> Even more surprising, however, given both the heroics and valiant efforts of the Armenian volunteer legions, and the ARF’s dominant role within them, is the fact that these *fedayi* who fought alongside the Russian army in the Caucasus are conspicuously absent in the ARF press and the hagiographical literature.

A short history of the ARF published in 1949 provides only an inaccurate paragraph that claims “when the frenzied Turk undertook to annihilate the Armenian race by deportations and wholesale massacres, it [ARF] organized volunteer forces ...”<sup>39</sup> In 1963, another brief history of the ARF provides an even shorter, but more accurate paragraph.<sup>40</sup> By 1968, the coverage of the volunteers is reduced to two sentences.<sup>41</sup> A special issue of the *Armenian Weekly* to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the ARF, in

which the opening editorial claims that in order to “recount the ninety year record of the ... Armenian Revolutionary Federation” it is not necessary to “tell the stories of Khanasor, or Bank Ottoman, or the countless heroics of the legendary fedayees” because “it is all there in the annals of history, repeated time-after-time in our press, glorified in volume-after-volume”, but does not even acknowledge the Armenian volunteers.<sup>42</sup> Neither does a recent historiographical essay on the 120-year history of the organization, nor, curiously, a two-part biographical article about *Dro* published in the *Armenian Review* by Simon Vratzian.<sup>43</sup> The journal, evidently, preferred to translate and publish only what Vratzian knew about *Dro*’s earlier career as an ARF *fedayi*, in the years before he took over command of one of the units.

The only complete article that appears to exist on the volunteers is the first part of Gabriel Gorganian’s analysis of Armenians on the Caucasus front throughout World War I, published in the *Armenian Review* in 1967.<sup>44</sup> And while Andranig Chalabian covers Andranik and *Dro*’s participation in the legions in his biographies of these two Armenian heroes, these two years only comprise a small part of their respective stories.<sup>45</sup> The lack of attention to the volunteers is even more surprising when one considers that at least six of the handful of immediate post-war *fedayi* heroes, the *Nemesis* agents, participated in the volunteer legions: Armen Garo, based in Boston at that time, was one of primary leaders and organizers of the assassination campaign;<sup>46</sup> Missak Torlakian, who assassinated the Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, Behbud Khan Cavanşir, in Istanbul on 18 July 1921, and who had actually been a non-commissioned officer in an Ottoman artillery unit in Erzurum when he deserted in 1914 to join a local Armenian irregular unit, before making his way to Yerevan to join the volunteers in early 1915;<sup>47</sup> Harutiun Harutinian and Yervant Fundukian, who both assisted in the assassination of Cavanşir, were also members of the volunteers, respectively joining in 1914 and 1915;<sup>48</sup> Stepan Dzaghigian, the leader of the three-man team which assassinated Cemal on 25 July 1922, was a volunteer in the First Legion under Andranik;<sup>49</sup> and, arguably the most famous Armenian hero, Soghomon Tehlirian, who assassinated Talaat Pasha, the former Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, in Berlin on 15 March 1921, left his comfortable settings in Belgrade to join the volunteers as soon as the war broke out.<sup>50</sup> Even Gourgen Yanikian, the 78-year-old Armenian who murdered Mehmet Baydar and Bahadır Demir, the two highest ranking Turkish diplomats in Los Angeles in 1973, claimed to have served in the Volunteer Legion under the command of General *Dro*.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the fact that Operation *Nemesis*, and the Armenian national heroes who participated, have been fairly well covered in ARF publications,<sup>52</sup> only Tehlirian’s decision to join the volunteers “when the Armenian Revolutionary Federation uttered the call to self-defense and formed the immortal Volunteer Regiment”, is acknowledged.<sup>53</sup> Even in the same hagiographical article, when the author lists the impressive *fedayi* credentials of the operation’s leader, Armen Garo as:

... participant in the famed expedition to Khanasor, organizer and hero of the Bank Ottoman capture, Regional Commander of the Armeno-Tatar Wars, member of the Ottoman Parliament, and, now, the Armenian Republic’s Ambassador to the United States ... one of the giant dynamos of Armenian history ...<sup>54</sup>

However, his command of the Second Legion from November 1914 until March 1915, while *Dro* was recovering from wounds sustained in the early fighting, was omitted.

This is particularly interesting in that, by publishing the details of Tehlirian’s involvement in the legions, the ARF exposed both the fabricated elements within Tehlirian’s successful defense strategy in the Berlin court which acquitted him in the murder of Talaat Pasha, and one of the key components of his legend: that he was driven to vengeance because he had personally witnessed the destruction of Erzincan and the murder of his family.<sup>55</sup> Curiously, the Armenian volunteers who fought for France in the Legion d’ Orient, which was not dominated by the ARF, has received considerably more attention than the ARF *fedayi* who fought with the Russians in the Caucasus, and even have an online exhibit commemorating their participation in World War I.<sup>56</sup>

## The Formation of the Armenian Volunteer Legions in the Caucasus

### *The Meeting with the CUP*

It is clear that as the ARF’s 8th World Congress in Erzurum in August 1914 adjourned, a meeting took place between representatives of the Ottoman Government’s ruling party, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and representatives of the ARF. Representing the Ottoman government were Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and Ömer Naci and representing the ARF were Arshag Vramian, Stepan Zoryan (*Rostom*) and Agnoui (Khachadour Maloumian). What, precisely, was discussed, however, remains controversial. Some scholars claim that the CUP simply offered to grant the ARF autonomy in exchange for assistance in inciting Russian Armenians to revolt against their government. The ARF declined, or rejected, the CUP’s offer, and while it cautioned the Ottoman government against entering the war, it made it clear to the CUP that if war did come, Ottoman Armenians would remain loyal to the Empire and perform all duties expected of them. This was also the decision of the 8th World Congress regarding the position of Ottoman and Russian Armenians in the likely event of war.

Despite their protestation of loyalty, however, these scholars argue that the rejection of the CUP offer increased anti-Armenian sentiments within the Ottoman government.<sup>57</sup> This argument can be found in some of Armen Garo’s writings immediately after the war when he, without mentioning ARF calls for Ottoman Armenians to remain loyal to the Ottoman Empire, states that “the bold retort of the Armenians to the Turkish proposal ... intensely angered the Turks, and from that very day the extermination of the Armenians was determined upon by the Turkish government”.<sup>58</sup> Some go so further, and call the meeting a ruse by the Ottoman government to hide their true intentions for being in Erzurum at that time, since the Ottomans had already decided to massacre the Armenians.<sup>59</sup>

More recent scholarship, however, including that which utilized material from the ARF archive in Boston, has described a slightly more nuanced meeting between the CUP and the ARF in August 1914. There, the CUP approached the ARF leaders in Erzurum in order to ascertain their stance on two very probable scenarios: first, what would the Armenians do if Russia invaded the Ottoman Empire; and, second, how would the Armenians react to either an Ottoman invasion of Russia or Ottoman support for a rebellion inside the Russian Caucasus.<sup>60</sup> To the first scenario, the ARF responded that it would participate in the defense of the Ottoman Empire, “including all of its lands and its constitutional laws”. In response to the second scenario, the ARF declined to give an answer, arguing that it “could not answer without more information”.<sup>61</sup>

After offering autonomy for the Russian Caucasus, which was envisioned as a buffer zone between the Ottoman and Russian Empires, the ARF leaders present were still non-

committal, stating only that “they did not have the authority to make a commitment at that time” ... and that “only the responsible bodies for the Caucasus could make such a commitment”.<sup>62</sup> They did, however, also warn the CUP representatives that Russian Armenian support for the Ottoman Empire had eroded since 1910, and that “Armenian support for the Russian government was gaining in strength”, and suggested that the Ottoman Empire implement reforms in the Armenian areas of the Empire in order to regain the confidence of the Russian Armenians.<sup>63</sup> Much less than a rejection of the CUP offer, the participants believed that discussions or, more precisely, negotiations were ongoing.<sup>64</sup> Still, it appears that while Vramian and others believed that the CUP was content with the ARF’s answer to the first scenario, he also felt the representatives left Erzurum with the impression that the ARF sympathized with the Russians, and the Interior Minister of the Ottoman Empire, Talaat Pasha, expressed his disappointment to Armen Garo over the ambiguous position taken by the ARF.<sup>65</sup>

It is possible that this is the same meeting that Garo would write about later, although the dates and the purpose of the meeting do not coincide, in which he claimed to have, for all intents and purposes, declared war on the Ottoman Empire:

Our Armenian national consciousness has so grown that we will first of all opt to pull down that building which bears the name of the Ottoman Empire, rather than give you the opportunity to see an Armenia without Armenians. I know that we will remain under the consequent rubble and that we will suffer a good deal. But in the final accounting, we will emerge from this debris more profitable than you—for you will lose a great empire, and we will come out of that rubble; we will be bloodied—but we will be freed of you people once and for all.<sup>66</sup>

And Garo does not appear to have been the only one who believed that the ARF’s attempt to stall equated to an outright rejection of the Ottoman offer.<sup>67</sup>

Shortly thereafter, a hastily called meeting by ARF bureau members, presumably in Istanbul, to develop a firmer position ended in two rather different proposals. The minority believed that Russia would win a quick war against the Ottomans, and therefore it was critical that the ARF have volunteer units ready “to act as an advance guard to protect Armenian population centers from Turkish or Kurdish retaliation” and begin negotiations with Russia as soon as possible. The majority, however, believed that a rapid, successful Russian advance was not guaranteed, and the Armenians trapped in the middle would be in grave danger. Therefore, this group proposed to organize large *fedayi* groups that would wait along the Russian border until it was either necessary to intervene to protect Ottoman Armenians from massacre, or a “complete defeat of Ottoman forces”. They believed it would be too dangerous to hand over volunteer units to the Russia army, which would undoubtedly provoke the Ottoman government, and it was wiser to instead use their presence to keep potential Ottoman violence against the Armenian populations in check. Unable to come to a decision, the Bureau forwarded their positions to the various central committees and the Armenian Bureau in Erzurum for further review.<sup>68</sup>

### *The ARF Chooses the Entente*

Very quickly, however, events on the ground began to outpace political deliberations within the ARF’s governing bodies. In mid-August, the ARF’s Western Bureau in Istanbul received a message from the ARF committee in Paris which claimed that the French were willing to give Ottoman Armenians autonomy in eastern Anatolia if they supported

the Entente in the coming war.<sup>69</sup> After receiving this message, the Western Bureau, without consulting any of the other ARF committees in Europe or the Balkans, or their colleagues who had not yet returned from Erzerum, sent word to Tbilisi on 22 August 1914 that it was ready to lend its full support to the organization of Armenian volunteer legions. Garo, who sent the message, suggested that the legions contain "thirty thousand" volunteers, and that the legions should enter the Ottoman Empire as "vanguard units of the Russian army".<sup>70</sup> While this French promise appears to have only recently been discovered, Garo does allude to it in one of his articles immediately written after the war:

But this time the Armenians knew that Russia was not alone; the two great liberal nations of the West, France and Great Britain, were her Allies. After long and weighty consultation, with their hopes pinned on France and England, the Armenians resolved to aid the Russian armies in every way possible.<sup>71</sup>

What remains unexplained, however, is the fact that two weeks before the message from France, the Western Bureau had already sent word to Andranik in Varna to go to Tbilisi immediately, where he arrived on 2 August 1914, to begin consultations with the ANB for the coming war.<sup>72</sup>

Before the decision by the Western Bureau, however, the Eastern Bureau in Tiflis had begun negotiations and preparations. The head of the ANB, Harutiunian, and the head of ARF's foreign relations, Dr. Zavriev, had begun tentative conversations with the Russian Viceroy for the Caucasus in late July and early August 1914. It appears, then, that even before the meeting in Erzerum between the CUP and the ARF, some in the Western Bureau were aware of the Russian negotiations, explaining why Andranik was sent to Tiflis. In exchange for the creation of Armenian volunteer units, the Viceroy offered to grant amnesty to ARF *fedayi* that the Russian government had either exiled or imprisoned.<sup>73</sup> The Viceroy also spoke with Bishop Mesrop and Alexander Khatisian, the Armenian mayor of Tbilisi on the subject of raising Armenian volunteers.<sup>74</sup> On 5 August 1914 the head of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos Gevorg V in Echmiadzin, appealed to the Russian government to assist in the realization of Armenian autonomy in eastern Anatolia, and announced the Church's support for the Russian war effort.<sup>75</sup> The 2 September 1914 response from the Russian government urged temporary caution, while at the same time requesting the Catholicos to use his influence "to ensure that Armenians on both sides of the border would be prepared, in case of war, to undertake the missions that he (the Viceroy) would propose ..."<sup>76</sup>

By late September 1914, both the ARF's Armenian Bureau (Erzerum), and the Eastern Bureau (Tbilisi), supported the Western Bureau's decision to create a volunteer legion of Armenians to fight alongside the Russian army in the Caucasus.<sup>77</sup> Although there were a number of holdouts among the ARF's Ottoman Armenians, and who are on record for dissenting in the decision to create the volunteers, including the ARF Committee in Van,<sup>78</sup> Stepan Zoryan (Rostom),<sup>79</sup> Simon Vratzian,<sup>80</sup> and Hovhannes Kachaznoui,<sup>81</sup> most were eventually won over.<sup>82</sup> Ironically, Zoryan, Vratzian and Kachaznoui went on to play prominent roles in the recruitment and organization of the volunteer legions.<sup>83</sup> At least one prominent dissenter, Agnoui, was killed during the roundup of Armenian politicians and intellectuals in April of 1915.<sup>84</sup> Despite the decision of the ARF's 8th World Congress to remain loyal to their respective governments, Ottoman or Russian, the promise of the ARF to the CUP that Ottoman Armenians would fulfill their duties as Ottoman subjects, and the reservations of a number of key figures in the

ARF leadership hierarchy, within four weeks preparations and recruitment for the Armenian volunteer legions were well underway.<sup>85</sup> And, contrary to the narrative told later, there were other options still open to the ARF in the late summer and fall of 1914.<sup>86</sup> Rather than being forced by the Ottomans, elements within the ARF chose to defect and join the Russian cause.

The fact that the majority of Ottoman Armenians heeded the call from both the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul and the ARF to loyally serve the Ottoman Empire as either a civilian or soldier is indisputable. The historiography is replete with, if not concrete examples of this loyalty, then at least generalizations.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, however, that loyalty appears to have been relatively shallow, and draft resistance and desertion of Armenian soldiers was significant.<sup>88</sup> When one considers the example being set by the ARF, the most powerful Armenian institution in the world at that time, and considerably more influential than the Patriarch in Istanbul, this is not surprising.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, the ARF did not merely reject or show an initial lack of interest in the Ottoman Empire's proposal to foment rebellion inside the Russian Caucasus, it sought out and accepted a similar offer from the Russians.<sup>90</sup>

Between 1908, when the CUP came to power, and 1912, the ARF had been one of the CUP's closest political allies, and its power among the Armenian community steadily increased during those four years. Although relations were somewhat ruptured in 1912, the approach made to the ARF by the Ottoman government in Erzerum in August 1914 suggests that the CUP did not believe the relationship between the two parties was beyond repair.<sup>91</sup> The defection of Ottoman ARF politicians to the Russians, and their participation in the volunteer legions, however, irrevocably destroyed relations with the two parties.

### **The Ramifications of the Armenian Volunteers**

Particularly damaging to ARF-CUP relations was the high profile, and very public, defection of Armen Garo.<sup>92</sup> A veteran *fedayi*, Garo returned the Ottoman Empire under the amnesty extended to political exiles after the CUP took power in 1908. In 1910, Garo was elected to the Ottoman parliament and was a member of the CUP-ARF joint body in Istanbul.<sup>93</sup> He was one of the ARF's highest profile politicians, had recently been elected to the ARF's Western Bureau, and enjoyed extremely close relations with the CUP.<sup>94</sup> In early 1914, however, Garo experienced a series of professional setbacks. First, he lost his reelection bid to represent Erzerum in Parliament; a failure he directly attributed to the CUP, who, "despite the will of the Armenian electorate in Erzurum", had "contrived to abort my bid for reelection to the Chamber".<sup>95</sup> Then, attempting to maintain some presence in Ottoman politics, Garo accepted an offer from the two European observers sent to the Empire to oversee reforms in the Armenian areas of eastern Anatolia to serve as one of their assistants.

According to Garo, however, because Talaat spent several weeks blocking his appointment, he finally withdrew his name from consideration.<sup>96</sup> Shortly thereafter, Garo and Talaat held their last meeting together in which Garo erupted in the manner described above. Curiously, Garo claims that this meeting was entirely about the status of the European inspectors and their assistants in eastern Anatolia, while others argue this meeting was about the equivocal stance adopted by the ARF in regards to rebellion in the Russian Caucasus.<sup>97</sup> Regardless, however, of whether this final meeting took place in late June 1914 or in early August 1914, or what precisely it was about, Garo was clearly enraged over what he believed to be a personal attack from the CUP. This

helps to understand why he quickly became one of the volunteer movement’s most aggressive and vocal proponents within the ARF, and why he sent word of the Western Bureau’s support for the creation of the legions without the unanimous consent of its members in early August 1914.

It also telling, that while Garo believed that the war would last longer than many of the other ARF leaders, he also believed that another round of massacres of Armenians within the empire was not possible.<sup>98</sup> On 16 September 1914, Garo left for Tbilisi to take part in the organization and recruitment of the volunteers.<sup>99</sup> His decision to defect not only angered Talaat and the Ottoman government, but also drew heavy criticism from other Armenian leaders.<sup>100</sup> Armen Garo, however, was not the only widely recognizable name to be associated with the volunteers in the fall of 1914. In fact, all four of the ARF commanders of the first volunteer legions established, Andranik, *Dro*, Hamazasp and *Keri*, were also well known by both the Ottomans and Armenians.

### *The Military Commanders*

Andranik (Ozanian) was by far the most infamous. By the time he joined the ARF *fedayis* operating in the Sason region in 1892 at the age of 27, Andranik had already killed one Turkish civilian and a Turkish police chief.<sup>101</sup> After his very public and brutal assassination of local Kurdish leader, Bishara Khalil, Andranik became a “celebrity” within the Armenian community and one of the primary leaders of the *fedayis*.<sup>102</sup> His successful stand against Ottoman forces at a monastery near the city of Muş, and his subsequent escape, even made the international newspapers.<sup>103</sup> After playing a prominent role in the Sason Rebellion of 1904, Andranik quit the Ottoman Empire, and eventually landed in Bulgaria, where he established an ARF military academy. In 1912, he led a group of approximately 300 Armenian volunteers against the Ottoman army during the Balkan War.<sup>104</sup> At the Battle of Merhamle, it is alleged that Andranik single-handedly captured the Turkish general Yaver Pasha and 11,000 of his soldiers.<sup>105</sup> For his services, the Bulgarians showered him with accolades, citizenship and financial compensation.<sup>106</sup>

Afterwards, at an ARF meeting in Constantinople, sometime between 1912 and 1914, Andranik was described as having been “born an enemy of the Turk, and that’s how he is going to die”, and admonished the others present for cooperating with the CUP during the first four years of the Constitutional period.<sup>107</sup> Nearly a decade later, Garo concurred: “Andranik was the only man who was not fooled by the Young Turks, and not carried away with false promises”.<sup>108</sup> Ironically, Andranik appears to have been the only one of the four legion commanders who was initially against the formation of the volunteers and who recognized of the potential consequences of openly engaging war against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>109</sup> By the start of hostilities in late October 1914, however, Andranik was openly declaring that the volunteers and did not need gear for the winter because “in five days we will be in Van”.<sup>110</sup>

*Dro* (Drastamat Kanayan) also enjoyed an illustrious career as an ARF *fedayi* before he took command of the First Legion. Born into a wealthy Armenian family in Iğdir and educated in Yerevan, *Dro* joined the *fedayis* as soon as he finished school.<sup>111</sup> At the age of nineteen, he assassinated a local Armenian mayor who had been classified a traitor by the ARF because of his collaboration with the Russian authorities.<sup>112</sup> *Dro*’s next act of service was the assassination of General Nakashidze, the Russian Military Prefect of Baku, in 1905 in retaliation for his alleged complicity in the attacks carried out by “Turkish rabble” against Armenians. In addition to killing Nakashidze, the bomb blast triggered by *Dro* killed the General’s “Turk” driver, his valet, and a local “Turkish”

grocer.<sup>113</sup> After serving under *Keri* in Nakhchivan and Zangezour as a *fedayi* commander, *Dro* embarked on his third high profile assassination. Along with another ARF agent, *Dro* assassinated General Alikhanov Avarski, an ethnic Azeri in the Russian Army who had been deemed an accomplice in the attacks on Armenians in Nakhchivan.<sup>114</sup> *Dro* also assassinated a Russian police chief named Ter Sahakov.<sup>115</sup> In just over two years, then, *Dro* was responsible for the assassination and murder of at least seven individuals.

In 1908, after the CUP came to power in the Ottoman Empire, *Dro* left the Russian Empire and settled in Doğubeyazıt in eastern Anatolia. Once settled, he quickly became a prosperous oil, sugar, and cattle merchant, and, at the same time, created an extensive arms smuggling operation that earned him praise from Zoryan (*Rostom*) himself.<sup>116</sup> In August 1914, after he was warned that he was under surveillance, *Dro* made his way back inside the Russian Empire and on to Tbilisi.<sup>117</sup> Once in Tbilisi, when he was told that Vratzian, Zoryan and Andranik were all against the creation of the volunteer legions, *Dro* is said to have angrily retorted: “You don’t understand anything. It is already decided that by New Year we will be in Erzurum”.<sup>118</sup>

In regards to Hamazasp Srvandztzyan, we know only that prior to his command of the Third Legion he was arrested by the Russian authorities in 1908, escaped to Istanbul in 1913, and was one of the most vocal advocates for war against the Ottoman Empire at the ARF’s 8th World Congress, where he represented the province of Sivas.<sup>119</sup> *Keri* (Arshak Gafavian), originally from Erzerum, was one of the oldest *fedayi* in the ARF, played a key role in the Sason rebellion, and participated in the Armenian-Azeri conflict in 1905.<sup>120</sup> Most of the other *fedayi* who were placed in positions of leadership in the volunteer legions: *Vartan*, *Arghutian*, *Sebouh*, *Torcom*, *Khetcho*, and *Murad*, were also all well-known ARF revolutionaries.<sup>121</sup>

### *Propaganda Value*

It is clear, therefore, that given the defection of prominent Ottoman ARF politicians, particularly the well-publicized and flamboyant actions of Armen Garo, and the choice of well-known, anti-Ottoman ARF *fedayi* to lead the volunteer legions, whose names and photographs were openly published, that the 4,000 Armenian soldiers gathered in Tbilisi were designed to be much more than simply “guides and scouts” for the Russian Army.<sup>122</sup> The volunteers were also well covered in the international press, and Ottoman intelligence services were aware of Russian calls for Armenian solidarity and the possibility of autonomy for Ottoman Armenians in the event of a Russian victory.<sup>123</sup> While they certainly did provide important information and intelligence to their Russian commanders, the volunteers were primarily designed, and staffed, in order to maximize their potential to encourage Ottoman Armenians to rebel and “join their brethren on the other side”.<sup>124</sup> The Russians also hoped the volunteers would have the psychological effect of causing the Ottomans to worry about the loyalty of their own soldiers.<sup>125</sup> What Ottoman Armenians would turn their weapon on such legendary figures as Andranik, *Dro* and the others? The legions also provided the Armenians in the Ottoman army both motive and a destination, in the event they decided to desert, as did Missak Torlakian. On at least one occasion, the Ottoman government asked Andranik to return the Ottoman deserters in legion under his command.<sup>126</sup>

The Ottoman government was suddenly faced with the very same plan for rebellion and insurrection that it had voiced to the ARF in Erzerum, only it was directed at the Ottoman Empire and not the Russian Empire. And whether intentional or not, the manner in which the creation of the volunteers was carried out undoubtedly provoked

a response from the Ottoman government, emotional or otherwise, particularly among those who had had close relations with ARF party members.<sup>127</sup> That the Ottoman Empire took measures to protect itself against this perceived threat is, therefore, not surprising. The degree to which the formation, composition, publicity and propaganda surrounding the volunteers provoked the response is ignored in much of the literature. In the cases where it is discussed, the role of the volunteers is minimalized.<sup>128</sup> But this raises another question. Why, if the volunteers provided the excuse or justification, did the Ottomans wait until the following spring to remove the Armenians from eastern Anatolia?

In the writings of some of the Armenian leaders involved, some immediately after the war and others much later, an attempt was made to both simplify and justify the rationale behind the ARF's decision to openly revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Some of which is reflected in the historiography. In order to press their case in the international arena, the Armenians had to pick a side in the war and contribute to the military effort, regardless of the potential danger to Armenians left on either side of the border.<sup>129</sup> Having much more in common, culturally and politically, with the Entente, their support for France, Great Britain, and Russia was never in question.<sup>130</sup> As a Russian-Armenian newspaper put it in mid-October 1914: “... [the Armenian people] have deployed organized volunteer troops in the battlefield as well; they are operating alongside Russian armies and assisting, with their humble force, in the victory of the Triple Entente”.<sup>131</sup>

The Armenian leaders clearly expected, and accepted, that there would be some reprisals against civilian Armenians, particularly against the Armenian intellectuals and politicians still in Istanbul, and they were seemingly willing to make that sacrifice for the nation.<sup>132</sup> This continued even after it became clear that the war would last longer than expected, although none of the ARF leaders ever fathomed the possibility that nearly the Armenian population of eastern Anatolia would either be killed or relocated en masse.<sup>133</sup> Once the war was over, and the near total destruction of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire assessed, the two leading proponents of the use of Armenian volunteers during World War I, Armen Garo and Boghos Nubar, attributed those losses to the ARF's decision to enter the war on behalf of the “the champions of right and justice”, the Entente, and “their active resistance to the Turco-German plans”.<sup>134</sup> Neither suggested a preexisting CUP plan to exterminate the Ottoman Armenians.

Considering that both Garo's pamphlet and Nubar's editorial were meant to sway the politicians involved in the Paris Peace negotiations and western public opinion, it is not surprising that these two politicians emphasized Armenian loyalty to the Allies and the sacrifices they made toward its victory. However, given the remorse and regret expressed over the creation of the volunteers by Armenian leaders elsewhere, there does appear to exist some element of guilt, remorse, or regret among those who participated. Nubar claimed:

I had predicted from the beginning of that the volunteers were a danger in pushing the Turks to revenge ... If later, in the light of events, I rallied to the unanimous opinion of our compatriots of all parties, I much regret today not having resisted to the end. The Turks have cruelly made us repent of this mistake ... This opinion is not mine alone; it is a general belief today.<sup>135</sup>

Likewise, Simon Vratzian, in the mid-1960s, reminisced that

Today, half a century later, it is easy to condemn as romantic the position that we took on the volunteer question, but at that time, during the first days of the Great World War, it seemed the only logical path to follow were the Armenian

Question finally to be solved. Were we wrong? Yes, we were wrong. Did we suffer for it? Yes, we suffered. But we were wrong and suffered as an entire nation ... It is especially bitter for those who personally participated in the events, men full of energy, faith and dedication.<sup>136</sup>

However, it is curious that Vratzian lays the mistake of creating the volunteers at the feet of the Armenian people, and not specifically the ARF, or the others that were involved. In one of the deepest reflections on the decision to create the volunteers, Hovhannes Katchaznoui, while being careful not to attribute any individual blame, and disinterested in playing with historical counterfactuals, clearly regrets his involvement:

Contrary to the decision taken during the general meeting at Erzurum only a few weeks before, the A.R.F. had active participation in the formation of the units and their future military action against Turkey. In an undertaking of such gravity, fraught with most serious consequences, individual agents of the Transcaucasian A.R.F. acted against the will of our superior authority, against the General Meeting of the Party ... The winter of 1914 and the spring of 1915 were periods of greatest enthusiasm and hope for all Armenians in the Caucasus, including of course, the Dashangtzoutiun. We had no doubt that the war would end with the complete victory of the Allies; Turkey would be defeated and dismembered, and its Armenian population would at last be liberated ... No one can claim that the savage persecutions would not have taken place if our behavior on this side of the frontiers had been different, as no one can claim to the contrary that the persecutions would have been the same even if we had not shown hostility to the Turks.<sup>137</sup>

### *Implications*

There is more, however, than just self-criticism. The Armenian *Ramgavar* party directly accused the ARF of provoking the “Turkish wrath” which “led to the deportations”.<sup>138</sup> Rather interestingly, non-ARF Armenians also indirectly criticized the ARF and the volunteers by refusing to glorify and honor Soghomon Tehlirian for his assassination of Talaat Pasha. As far as they were concerned, the assassination was not an act of vengeance or redemption for the Armenian people, but rather a “political vendetta” carried out by the ARF.<sup>139</sup>

Curiously, what remains unexplored in this period is the ARF’s eventual abandonment of its rank and file members and Ottoman Armenian constituents. Surely, the calls to remain loyal to the Ottoman state and to perform all civic and military duties sounded just as hollow to the Ottoman Armenians as it did to the CUP, when many of the Empire’s top ARF leaders were already in Tbilisi preparing to march on against it. In order to determine whether or not the creation of the legions was a mistake, Katchaznoui argued, “the root of that error must be sought much further and more deeply” than simply who was responsible.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of attention paid to the Armenian Volunteer Legions in the ARF press and publications, and in the wider historiography as well, is that no one has dared to search for that root.

### **The Retreat at Van and the Abandonment of Muş**

The final controversial aspect of the Armenian Volunteer Legions concerns the legions retreat from the Van region, along with the Russian army, in late July 1915 and the aban-

donment of Muş. As described above, the volunteers acted as the rearguard during the retreat, protecting both the Russian army and the column of 100,000–150,000 Armenian refugees who were forced to flee from Van.<sup>141</sup> Despite their efforts, approximately one-third of the refugees died during the exodus.<sup>142</sup> In addition to this rather heroic account provided by Armen Garo, there is another story.

It is alleged that the decision for the Russian retreat was caused by false intelligence from an Armenian spy named Tigran Devoyants, who grossly exaggerated the size of the approaching Ottoman army.<sup>143</sup> Upon reading the order to retreat, Andranik confronted a Russian general and demanded that the Russian army stay and fight. Only when threatened with a court-martial, did Andranik back down, and the volunteers were given only 48 h to evacuate the Armenians living in Van and prepare them for the retreat to Yerevan.<sup>144</sup> The volunteers’ decision to follow their orders and retreat with the Russian army, however, was not without controversy. Armenak Yegarian, the *Ram-gavar* party leader in Van, the military leader of the Van rebellion, and the Police Inspector at the time of the retreat, was adamantly against the withdrawal, and accused the ARF leadership and Legion Commanders of a “lack of will, courage and self-reliance”.<sup>145</sup>

Around the same time, Reuben Der Minasian and Vahan Papazian had successfully defended Muş and Sason since the beginning of July. Desperately seeking assistance from the Russian army in Van, Der Minasian and Papazian sent repeated requests. Despite being only 30 miles away, the Russians declined to send help.<sup>146</sup> In the absence of Russian assistance, Vratzian and Nikol Aghbalian were sent by the ANB in Tbilisi to meet with the Legion commanders and implore them to go to the assistance of Der Minasian and Papazian. While Andranik and most of the other commanders refused, *Dro* wanted to unify the legions under one command, ask the Russians for 200 Cossacks, an artillery battery and some machine guns to rush to their aid.<sup>147</sup> While Pasdermadjian claimed the Russians refused the request, Chalabian argues that it was Andranik who, again, objected to the plan.<sup>148</sup> Regardless, however, of what really happened, it seems that the commanders’ decisions to both retreat from Van and/or not march to Muş, sealed the fate of the Armenian Volunteer Legions’ legacy in ARF lore. For Nubar, while “the illusion had been maintained that the volunteers had at least fought courageously and saved lives”, in wake of the retreat from Van “the illusion vanished”.<sup>149</sup> Even more damning was the commentary given by Garo Sasuni, who not only supported the volunteer movement, but also advocated for open rebellion against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>150</sup> Writing in 1957, Sasuni felt that

from that moment on, unfortunately, neither Andranik, nor Dro, nor Keri, nor the volunteers hailing from Taro, mutinied against this order of retreat nor did they invade the plain of Mush. This fact, however it may be rationalized or explained, remains condemnable, because the Armenian volunteer regiments’ creation was solely based on the mission of rescuing the people of the Armenian provinces (of the Ottoman Empire). At that time, it could have been possible to rescue around 60,000 Armenians from Taron. Alas ... but the volunteer regiments failed to carry out this sacred duty. This is, we think, history’s verdict.<sup>151</sup>

Sasuni’s commentary is noteworthy for two reasons. First, he had apparently forgotten that in the 1920s he wrote the volunteers had two objectives, one of which was to “create a national administration [in the occupied territories of Ottoman Anatolia] and transform the *country* into *homeland* through ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ methods”.<sup>152</sup> This was a rather ambitious project for approximately 5,000 volunteers, and much different from simply rescuing the Armenians in eastern Anatolia. Second, in 1957, Sasuni had

already been on the ARF's Central Bureau for decades, so one can assume that when he wrote, "this is, we think, history's verdict", he was citing official party doctrine.<sup>153</sup> It is unclear, however, why, after their numerous military victories, and after the legions had already saved thousands of Armenians, that the decision to retreat at Van and their failure to heed the ANB's command to relieve Muş would subsequently ban them from the ARF's honor roll.

## Conclusion

The 4,000 Armenian volunteers in the legions were more than guides and scouts. They were a fighting force organized by prominent Ottoman and Russian ARF politicians, staffed by the most famous and experienced ARF *fedayis* of their first twenty-years, and designed to promote instability both in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and within its army. The legions were, therefore, exactly what the CUP had proposed to the ARF in Erzerum, only the idea had been turned around against them. The ARF had made a choice. Weighing their options, a handful of the ARF's political leadership in the Ottoman Empire self-assuredly staked the future of the Armenian nation on an alliance with the Russian Empire, France and Great Britain. For all intents and purposes, the ARF declared war on the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, they circumvented and defied the party's top leadership council, and knowingly placed the lives of their friends, colleagues, fellow Armenians and former political constituents who remained behind in the Ottoman Empire in jeopardy. The very public and provocative manner in which they did so, only recklessly increased the likelihood of an Ottoman retaliation. Although they appear to have been willing to accept some degree of civilian casualties, the ARF leaders responsible for the volunteer legions could not possibly have been prepared for what unfolded in the spring of 1915.

It is clear that by the end of the First World War, many of the ARF leaders involved in the creation of the volunteers regretted their decisions. And while Armen Garo never expressed any regrets, his apparent nervous breakdown, and the passionate hunt to track down and assassinate CUP leaders after the war, likely had as much to do with his own personal quest for revenge and redemption, as it did with bringing any form of justice to the Armenian nation. It is noteworthy that Soghomon Tehlirian also suffered from a nervous breakdown after the war. Whether the post-war ARF leadership buried the issue out of guilt, regret, or remorse; possible culpability in the reprisals taken out on Ottoman Armenians or in the murder of Muslim civilians; or if they were truly tagged as traitors after the retreat from Van; we do not know the reason for the lack of attention paid to the Armenian Volunteers. The ARF's decision to defect and create the volunteer legion, however, remains problematic for a historiography that tends to simplify an extremely complex issue in eastern Anatolia at the beginning of the First World War.

## NOTES

1. Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, p. 45.
2. Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2006, p. 227.
3. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Jacques Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge: The Armenian Assassination of the Turkish Leaders Responsible for the 1915 Massacres and Deportations*, New

- Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990, p. 57; Antranig Chalabian, *General Andranik and the Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, Southfield, MI: Antranig Chalabian, 1988, p. 229.
4. Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
  5. Yektan Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1915”, PhD diss., Duke University, 2011, p. 213, note 70; Richard Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian and Armenian Nationalism”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, October, 1969, p. 202.
  6. The units are alternatively referred to as “battalions”, “regiments”, and “legions” in the literature. In labeling them “legions”, I am following the terminology decided upon by Edward J. Erickson. See Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 145.
  7. Estimates on the number of Russian Armenians conscripted into the Russian army varies between 150,000 to 250,000, although 150,000 appears to be the more widely accepted number. See G. Pasdermadjian (Armen Garo), *Why Armenia Should be Free: Armenia’s Role in the Present War*, Boston, MA: Hairenik Publishing Company, 1918, p. 19; Boghos Nubar, “The Rights of Armenia”, *The Times*, 30 January 1919; “Maintenance of Peace in Armenia”, *Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, United States Senate, Sixty-Sixth Congress, First Session on S.J.R. 106, 27 September 1919, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919, pp. 30, 112; *Armenia and Her Claims to Freedom and National Independence*, Presented by Mr. Lodge, 15 December 1918, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919, p. 12; Garo Pasdermadjian, “Armenia, A Leading Factor in the Winning of World War I”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring, 1964, p. 27 [This a reprint of article written to the U.S. government in 1920]; “In Behalf of Armenians”, *Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, House of Representatives, Sixty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on H. Res. 244, 7 March 1922, pp. 23, 31–32; *A Memorandum Relating to the Armenian Question*, Armenian National Committee, April 1945, p. 6; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–223; A. Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians on the Caucasian Front After the Defection of the Russian Army”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Autumn, 1976, pp. 230–231.
  8. General Gabriel Gorganian, “Armenian Participation in World War I on the Caucasian Front (Materials for the Historian)”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Autumn, 1967, p. 6; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 145. At least one scholar, Yves Ternon, claims that the Armenian volunteers only amounted to “a few hundred men”. See Yves Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, trans. by Anahid Apelian Mangouni, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1985, p. 30. In a different publication that same year, however, Ternon claims that there were approximately 4,000 men in these units. See Yves Ternon, “Report on the Genocide of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916”, in *A Crime of Silence: The Armenian Genocide*, The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, Cambridge, MA: The Zoryan Institute, 1985, p. 98. The number of 20,000 “applicants” is given in the immediate post-war writings of Armen Garo, which most likely aimed to influence the post-war settlements. See Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 19; and Pasdermadjian, “Armenian, A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
  9. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 235. Some put the number of the initial volunteers accepted higher, claiming between 5,000–6,000 in the fall of 1914 and up to 8,000 by early 1915. For a primary source claim see Isabel Somersset and Lucy C.F. Cavendish, “The Armenian Red Cross. To the Editor of the Times”, *The Times*, 12 January 1915; Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should*, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Pasdermadjian, “Armenia, A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 27; and “Maintenance of Peace in Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 112. See also Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; and Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Armenian Question and the Wartime Fate of the Armenians as Documented by the Officials of the Ottoman Empire’s World War I Allies: Germany and Austria-Hungary”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, February, 2002, pp. 59–85.
  10. As there is no precise information on the individual soldiers who made up the volunteers’ units, the exact breakdown of these categories are unknown. See “From America to Fight. Detachment of Armenians Welcomed Enthusiastically at Tiflis”, *New York Times*, 8 January 1915; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II, Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975*, 2nd edition, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 323; Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980, p. 199; Gerard Chaliand and Yves Ternon, *The Armenians: From Genocide to Resistance*, trans. Tony Berret, London: Zed Press, 1983, p. 48; Ternon, “Report on the Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Donald

- Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*, Kindle edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, location 1054, 1085; Erickson, *Ottoman and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145. At least one early report, from a U.S. missionary, claimed the volunteers were “Turkish Armenians”. See “In Behalf of Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Sean McMeekin claims that thousands of Ottoman Armenian army deserters made their way across the border to enlist in the volunteer units, while Vahakn Dadrian offers only that there were “a number of Ottoman Armenians with knowledge about the geography and topography of the combat zone”. See Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany’s Bid for World Power*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 245–246; and Dadrian, “The Armenian Question”, *op. cit.*, p. 67. For information on the ARF *fedayi* released from Russian prisons, see Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–208. The *New York Times* claimed at least three hundred Armenian Americans answered the call to join the volunteers in the Caucasus. See “James Chankalian, Won Honors in War”, *New York Times*, 13 May 1947.
11. “General Antranik, Noted Fighter, Dies. Commanded Armenian and Russian Forces Against Those of the Turks. Was in 59 Engagements. Several Horses Shot Under Him—Kept Fighting After the Czar’s Army Collapsed”, *New York Times*, 2 September 1927; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 231; Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Antranig Chalabian, *Dro: Armenia’s First Defense Minister of the Modern Era*, trans. by Jack Chelebian, Los Angeles, CA: Indo-European Publishing, 2009, p. 45.
  12. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
  13. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; and Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229. For (minor) details on the *Hunchak* unit, see Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 145; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 238. Turkyilmaz claims it was created in Romania, with an initial contingent of 600 men.
  14. Gorganian claims that four units were initially established, along with a reserve unit in the fall of 1914, with an additional two units, the Fifth and Sixth established in early 1915. At this point, he claims, there were 1,000 men in each of the six units. He contradicts himself later, however, when he describes the creation of the Sixth and Seventh units in the summer of 1915 after the Russian retreat from Van. See Gorganian, “Armenian Participation in World War I”, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 10, 15. Chalabian and Bloxham write that five were initially formed, with an additional two later. See Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1041–1054. Poidebard only mentions six units, and dates the formation of the last two to 1916. See Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 231. Hovannisian claims that the original leader of the *Hunchak* unit was (Hamo) Djanpolitian but was replaced with Avsharian later. See Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 273, note 40.
  15. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, *op. cit.*, p. 1091; Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Chalabian, who is also the source for the dates cited by Erickson, changed the departure dates for the First and Second Legions in his most recent book to 3 November and 24 October, respectively. See Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
  16. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
  17. Richard G. Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.
  18. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
  19. Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 10. See also Pasdermadjian, “Armenia: A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
  20. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
  21. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 244–245. See also Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Pasdermadjian, “Armenia: A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 11; and Walker, *Armenia*, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
  22. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 11–12; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–56; and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
  23. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–14; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 316; and Walker, *Armenia*, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
  24. Pasdermadjian, “Armenia: A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 35; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 14–15; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.

25. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Chalabian claims the deserters were all natives of Van. See Chalabian, *Dro, op. cit.*, p. 51. For details on Sebouh, see Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 249.
26. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
28. “Plans Armenian Corps to Fight for the Allies. Russian Officer Proposes to Obtain Recruits in Many Countries, Including America”, *New York Times*, 19 October 1915; “Proposed Armenian Legion”, *The Times*, 19 October 1915. For a short biography on Torcom [listed as Torkom] see Walker, *Armenia, op. cit.*, p. 420.
29. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–21; General Gabriel Gorganian, “Armenian Participation in World War I on the Caucasian Front, Part II (Materials for the Historian)”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Winter, 1967, p. 72; Chalabian, *Dro, op. cit.*, p. 272; and Walker, *Armenia, op. cit.*, p. 243.
30. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation, Part II”, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–77.
31. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, pp. 62–63; and Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
32. Pasdermadjian, a high-ranking ARF and volunteer legion member, claimed the decision was made by Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevich shortly after the fall of Erzurum in February 1916. See Pasdermadjian, “Armenia: A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Hovannisian dates the decision to the “end of 1915”, and states it was made by the “Supreme Commander of the Caucasus Army”, which would have been Nikolai Yudenich. See Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, pp. 57, 62–63; Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Allies and Armenia, 1915–1918”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1968, p. 163; Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 205. Chalabian first claimed the decision was made in September 1916 by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevich, but later claims Dro knew about the impending order in April 1916. See Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 282; and Chalabian, *Dro, op. cit.*, p. 63. See also Walker, *Armenia, op. cit.*, p. 243.
33. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, p. 63; Chalabian, *Dro, op. cit.*, p. 64; and Walker, *Armenia, op. cit.*, p. 381. For details on Avsharian death see Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 229. Chalabian also claims that Hovsep Arghutian, the commander of the Seventh Legion was killed in action somewhere along the Persian front. Other accounts, however, claim he died in Paris in 1925. See Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 271; and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hovsep\\_Arghutian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hovsep_Arghutian).
34. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, p. 63.
35. General Gabriel Gorganian, “Armenian Participation, Part II”, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–69. For accolades, see Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9, 13–14; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation, Part II”, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, pp. 47, 56; Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 231; and Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, pp. 232, 255. Pasdermadjian lamented the fact that the heroic exploits of the volunteers’ legions were apparently never officially recognized by the Russian government, while a memorandum of the United States Government claimed otherwise. See Pasdermadjian, “Armenia, A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 33; and *Armenia and Her Claims, op. cit.*, p. 12.
36. Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13; Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 282.
37. Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should be Free, op. cit.*, p. 21; Pasdermadjian, “Armenia, A Leading Factor”, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 9, 11, 14–16, 21; Gorganian, “Armenian Participation, Part II”, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–72, 74–76; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road, op. cit.*, pp. 47, 62; and Chalabian, *General Andranik, op. cit.*, p. 243.
38. The exception being Yektan Turkyilmaz’s 2011 dissertation which deals quite extensively with the formation of the Armenian volunteers in the context of much larger study on the events of eastern Anatolia in 1914 and 1915.
39. Vahan Cardashian, “The Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Winter, 1949, pp. 56–69.
40. Peter Faradian, “The Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Summer, 1963, pp. 64–68.
41. James H. Tashjian, “The Armenian ‘Dashnag’ Party”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, Winter, 1968, p. 54.
42. A. Poidebard, “Military Role of the Armenians”, *op. cit.*, p. 231; and “Armenian Revolutionary Federation, 1890–1980”, *Armenian Weekly*, 1 November 1980.

43. Sanjian, Ara. "The ARF's First 120 Years: A Brief Review of Available Sources and Historiography", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 42, Nos. 3–4, Fall-Winter, 2011, pp. 1–16; Simon Vratzian, "'Dro' Born of the Hurricane", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Autumn, 1968, pp. 30–49; and Simon Vratzian, "'Dro' Born of the Hurricane, Part II", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Summer, 1969, pp. 68–74.
44. Gorganian, "Armenian Participation in World War I", *op. cit.*, pp. 3–21. The coverage of the volunteers actually extends through the first few pages of part two of his series. See Gorganian, "Armenian Participation in World War I, Part II", *op. cit.*, pp. 66–70. For the rest of the series see the *Armenian Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Summer, 1968; Vol. 21, No. 4, Winter, 1968; and Vol. 23, No. 2, Summer, 1970.
45. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–282; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–65.
46. Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv, xxvii, 59–60.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv–xxvi, 114–115, 118.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
51. Gourgen Yanikian, "An Unforgettable Night", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Autumn, 1949, p. 73; See also *Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Barbara*, No. 98612, *The People of the State of California, Plaintiff, vs. Gourgen Mkrtich Yanikian, Defendant*, pp. 540–543, 548–556, 643–654, 688.
52. Sarkis Atamian, "Soghomon Tehlirian, Part I", *op. cit.*, pp. 40–51; Sarkis Atamian, "Soghomon Tehlirian: A Portrait of Immortality, Part II", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1961, pp. 15–20; Sarkis Atamian, "Soghomon Tehlirian: A Portrait of Immortality, Part III", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1961, pp. 44–49; Setrak Pakhitikian, "I Knew Soghomon Tehlirian", *Armenian Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1962, pp. 24–29; "Avenger's Day Set for this Saturday", *Armenian Observer*, 20 March 1974; "Reenact Trial of Tehlirian in Syracuse", *Armenian Weekly*, 23 May 1974; "Acts of Justice: Bringing the Turk Massacrists to Bay", *Armenian Weekly*, 17 April 1975; "How Arshavir Shiragian and Aram Yerganian Disposed of Behaeddin Shakir, Djemal Azmi", *Armenian Weekly*, 17 April, 24 April, 1 May, 8 May, and 15 May 1975; "Acts of Justice: Bringing Turk Massacrists to Bay", *Armenian Weekly*, 22 May. 1975; "Nemesis Series: Shiragian Smites Said Halim", *Armenian Weekly*, 29 May 1975; "The 'Forgotten Assassination' of Djemal Pasha; Who Did it, How, Where it Happened", *Armenian Weekly*, 6 June 1975; "How Tehlirian Tracked Down and Disposed of the Beast, Part I", *Armenian Weekly*, 19 June 1975; "Berlin Court Tries Tehlirian for the Talaat Assassination: the Verdict ...", *Armenian Weekly*, 26 June 1975; "Tehlirian Counsel Says Talaat, not Soghomon, on Trial, Court Acquits ...", *Armenian Weekly*, 3 July 1975; "Was Enver Pasha Killed by an Armenian? The Suggestion is There", *Armenian Weekly*, 10 July 1975; Greg Bedian, "A Student Named Soghomon Tehlirian", *Armenian Weekly*, 15 April 1976; "The Avenging Fists", *Armenian Weekly*, 26 April 1980; "Massacrists Beware", *Armenian Weekly*, 14 March 1981; "Soghomon Tehlirian: A Biographical Note", *Armenian Weekly*, 14 March 1981; and "Justice to the People of Ararat", *Armenian Reporter*, 8 April 1982.
53. Atamian, "Soghomon Tehlirian, Part I", *op. cit.*, p. 40; "How Tehlirian Tracked Down and Disposed of the Beast, Part I", *Armenian Weekly*, 19 June 1975; "Soghomon Tehlirian: A Biographical Note", *Armenian Weekly*, 14 March 1981. His participation in the volunteers, however, is not mentioned in Greg Bedian, "A Student Named Soghomon Tehlirian", *Armenian Weekly*, 15 April 1976; "The Avenging Fists", *Armenian Weekly*, 26 April 1980; or in Vartkes Yeghiayan, *The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian*, Glendale, CA: Center for Armenian Remembrance, 2006.
54. Pasermadjian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Atamian, "Soghomon Tehlirian, Part I", *op. cit.*, p. 50; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
55. Michael Bobelian, *The Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009, p. 63; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 87; "The Avenger of Blood. Why Talaat Pasha was Shot", *The Times*, 3 June 1921; "Says Mother's Ghost Ordered Him to Kill", *New York Times*, 3 June 1921; Edward Alexander, *A Crime of Vengeance: An Armenian Struggle for Justice*, New York: The Free Press, 1991, pp. 69–70; Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, New York: HarperCollins, 2003. Kindle Edition. loc. 5963; Samantha Power, "Race Murder", in *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, pp. 3–4. See also the court transcripts of Tehlirian's trial, which are still erroneously regarded as a legitimate primary source document in Yeghiayan, *The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian*.
56. Stanford Shaw, "The Armenian Legion and Its Destruction of the Armenian Community of Cilicia", TBMM, Ankara, Turkey, undated; "Armenian Library & Museum of America to Honor the

- Forgotten Heroes of the Armenian Legion”, *Armenian Reporter*, 7 July 2001; “Recalling the Troops: The Story of the Armenian Legion”, *Armenian Reporter*, 19 January 2002; Mark Mathosian, “Grandfather’s Story ... The Armenian Legion and the 1918 Battle of Arara”, *Armenian Reporter*, 13 September 2003; “ALMA’s traveling exhibit will honor the WWI-era ‘Armenian Legion’”, *Armenian Reporter*, 3 November 2007. For the online exhibit see <http://www.armenianmuseum.org/veWebsite2/exhibit1/vexmain1.htm>.
57. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–42; Hovannisian, “The Allies and Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 149; Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, pp. 202–203; Poidebard, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–230; Walker, *Armenia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–198; Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34; Hovannisian, “The Armenian Question”, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Ternon, “Report on the Genocide of Armenians”, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–97; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–217; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York: Picador, 2007, p. 136; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–161.
  58. Garo, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.* p. 17. See also Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.* p. 223.
  59. Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 220; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11, Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
  60. Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, “The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Under Ottoman Constitutional Rule, 1908–1914”, PhD Diss., Boston College, 2003, p. 344; Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–162.
  61. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–162.
  62. Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 346.
  63. *Ibid.*, pp. 346–347.
  64. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
  65. Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 347; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–165.
  66. Dr. Karekin Pasdermajian, “My Last Interview with Talaat Pasha”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Summer, 1982, p. 125.
  67. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
  68. Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–349; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 171–172.
  69. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–174.
  70. *Ibid.*, pp. 174–175.
  71. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
  72. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
  73. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–215. See also Ternon, “Report on the Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–98.
  74. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 43. For a slightly different version see Ternon, “Report on the Genocide”, *op. cit.* p. 98.
  75. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–43; Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, *op. cit.*, p. 1041; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 218.
  76. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 219. See also Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, p. 1041.
  77. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–217.
  78. Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; and Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
  79. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 159, note 104.
  80. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 57; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
  81. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 240–241.
  82. Edward Erickson argues that Rostom and Vratzian were in favor of the volunteers from the beginning. See Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
  83. Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 411–412; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 45; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 52; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 213, note 70, 216–217, and note 81, pp. 216, 241–242.
  84. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 159, note 106, 174–175, note 151.
  85. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 227; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 43; McMeekin, *Berlin-*

- Baghdad Express*, *op. cit.*, p. 244; Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 172.
86. Hovhannes Katchaznoui, *Dashmagtzoutiun Has Nothing to Do Anymore*, trans. By Lale Akalin, Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2006, pp. 36–39; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
  87. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 203; Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 217, 264; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 109; Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Ternon, “Report”, *op. cit.*, p. 99; and Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1061–1068.
  88. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 42; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 198; Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Ternon, “Report”, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 264; Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, p. 1085; and McMeekin, *Berlin-Baghdad Express*, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
  89. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 133–137, 155–157.
  90. Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16; Pasdermadjian, “Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–43; Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Ternon, “Report on the Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 98; and Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Armenian expectations for autonomy in eastern Anatolia, however, were based on rather equivocal statements from the Tsar. See Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, p. 1041.
  91. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–150.
  92. Foreign Policy Institute Ankara, “The Turkish Argument: The Armenian Issue in Nine Questions and Answers”, in *A Crime of Silence: The Armenian Genocide, The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal*, Cambridge, MA: The Zoryan Institute, 1985, p. 153; Stanford A. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II, Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975*, 2nd edition, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 315; Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985, pp. 191–193; Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, p. 1054.
  93. Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, p. 117. Kaligian claims Garo was in parliament between 1908 and 1912. See Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 375.
  94. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 154; and Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
  95. Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Kaligian supports Garo’s contention of the Erzerum elections. See Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
  96. Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–122.
  97. See Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–127; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
  98. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 213.
  99. Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 57; and Pasdermadjian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
  100. Pasdermadjian, “My Last Interview”, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–199; and Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, *op. cit.*, loc. 3521–3531.
  101. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 381; and Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 374. Chalabian writes that Andranik joined three years later, in 1895.
  102. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 115–116; and Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
  103. “Turkey”, *The Times*, 29 January 1902; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–131; and Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
  104. Simon Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Autumn 1950, pp. 29–30; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 199–200; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 381; Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 374; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 213, note 71.
  105. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 202; and Aram Bakshian, “Andranik of Armenia”, *History Today*, Vol. 43, Issue 4, April, 1993, p. 48.
  106. Bakshian, “Andranik of Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
  107. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–208.

108. Bakshian, “Andranik of Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
109. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
110. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
111. Vratzian, “Dro’ Born of the Hurricane”, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–36; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 388; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7; and Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 373.
112. Vratzian, “Dro’ Born of the Hurricane”, *op. cit.*, p. 36; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
113. Vratzian, “Dro’ Born of the Hurricane”, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–43. It is noteworthy that two of the three innocent bystanders killed in the blast are labeled “Turks”, who, by definition then, were not innocent. See also Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 388; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
114. Vratzian, “Dro’ Born of the Hurricane, Part II”, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–74; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 388; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–30.
115. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–36; and Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 388.
117. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
119. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 (note 32), 159.
120. Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 397; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 25; and Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 373.
121. For Vartan, see Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 422; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 50. For Arghutian, see Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, p. 158; Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 422; Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 217. For Sebouh, see “Gen. Sebooh Dead; Armenian Patriot. Arshak Nersesian, Who Fought Against the Turks in 1920, Stricken Here at 66”, *New York Times*, 4 August 1940; Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 414; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Kaligian, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation”, *op. cit.*, p. 376. For Torcom, see Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 30. For Khetcho, see Vratzian, “Dro’ Born”, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44, 47; Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 25. For Murad, see Vratzian, “The Armenian Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 30; and Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
122. The publication of volunteer photographs and other propaganda began in mid-November 1915. See Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 250–252. For the “scout” argument see Dadrian, “The Armenian Question”, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 220; Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Ternon, “Report”, *op. cit.*, p. 98; and Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
123. “Eager to Fight the Turks: Armenians and Caucasians Enrolled in a Volunteer Force”, *New York Times*, 31 October 1914; “Armenians Fighting Turks. Besieging Van—Others Operating in Turkish Army’s Rear”, *New York Times*, 7 November 1914; “Russians Report Land Victory”, *New York Times*, 8 November 1914; “Russians Take Turks’ Fort Near Erzerum. In Pursuit of Kurdish Cavalry—Armenian Students Enthusiastic Volunteers in Petrograd”, *New York Times*, 10 November 1914; “Turkish Armenians in Armed Revolt. Were Ready to Join Russian Invaders, Having Drilled and Collected Arms. See Day of Deliverance. Native Paper Says They are Prepared for Any Sacrifice—Refuse to Join Turkish Army”, *New York Times*, 13 November 1914; “Armenians Join Russians and 20,000 Scatter Turks Near Feitun”, *Washington Post*, 13 November 1914; “From America to Fight. Detachment of Armenians Welcomed Enthusiastically at Tiflis”, *New York Times*, 8 January 1915; Isabel Somerset and Lucy C.F. Cavendish, “The Armenian Red Cross. To the Editor of the Times”, *The Times*, 12 January 1915. See also Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, *op. cit.*, loc. 3521–3531; Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1078, 1341; Chaliand and Ternon, *The Armenians*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; and Dadrian, “The Armenian Question”, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
124. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 235–236; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1054; and Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 145.
125. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 236.
126. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1112.

127. “Blames Armenians for All Their Woes”, *New York Times*, 28 October 1916. See also Zia Muftyzade Bey, “The Kind of Armenians a Turk Knows: They Betray Their Rulers, Take Refuge in Christian Missions, and Have to be Dealt with as Dangerous Rebels”, *New York Times*, 18 October 1915.
128. Chalabian, in particular, goes to great lengths to prove that the volunteers did not provoke Ottoman hostilities toward Ottoman Armenians, rather it was an excuse to carry out a pre-existing plan to exterminate the Armenians. See Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 219, 223–226, 264; Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31; Dadrian, “The Armenian Question”, *op. cit.*, p. 70; Hovannisian takes a rather different approach and argues that the Armenians volunteers were no more provocative than the Poles who fought against the Russians. See Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–54. Ternon, while acknowledging that the volunteers complicated matters for the Armenians, tends to downplay their significance. See Ternon, “Report”, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Donald Bloxham is the exception.
129. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1327–1341.
130. Pasdermadjian, “Why Armenia Should Be Free”, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; and Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 218–219.
131. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
132. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1341–1348; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–250, 262–264.
133. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1348; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 240–241, 262–264.
134. Pasdermadjian, “Why Armenia Should Be Free”, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–18, 28; Boghos Nubar, “The Rights of Armenia”, *The Times*, 30 January 1919. While Nubar was not a member of the ARF, he did work closely with ANB and other efforts to form Armenian volunteer units.
135. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1348.
136. Hovannisian, “Simon Vratzian”, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
137. Katchaznouni, *Dashmagtzoutiun*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–39.
138. Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
139. Greg Bedian, “A Student Named ‘Soghomon Tehlirian’”, *Armenian Weekly*, 15 April 1976.
140. Katchaznouni, *Dashmagtzoutiun*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
141. Pasdermadjian, “Armenia”, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 35; and Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.
142. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.
143. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 258.
144. Pasdermadjian, “Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 35; and Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
145. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
146. Pasdermadjian, “Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 32; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.
148. Pasdermadjian, “Armenia”, *op. cit.*, p. 32; and Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.
149. Bloxham, *Great Game*, *op. cit.*, loc. 1348.
150. Chalabian, *General Andranik*, *op. cit.*, p. 216; Walker, *Survival of a Nation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 413–414.
151. Chalabian, *Dro*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
152. Turkyilmaz, “Rethinking Genocide”, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
153. Ternon, *The Armenian Cause*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.