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Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914

Dikran Mesrob Kaligian



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In memory of

Mesrob Khaligian of Khoups

Vahan Tamzarian of Aleppo

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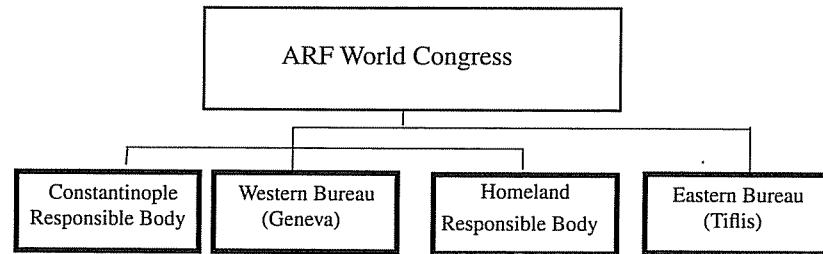
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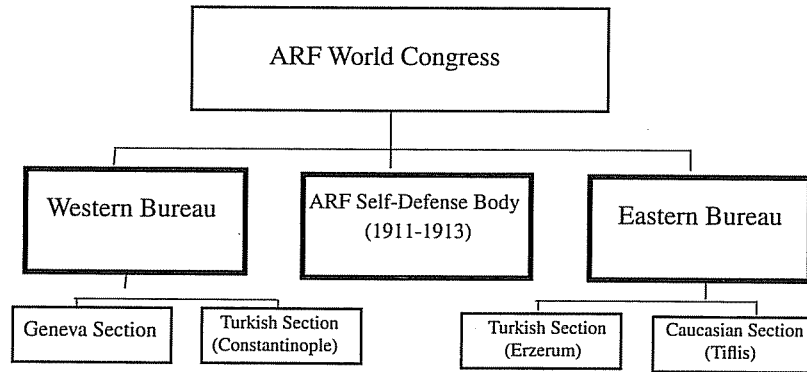
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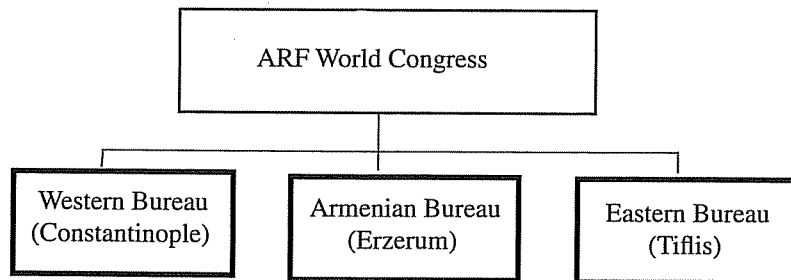
**ARF Structure Between the Fourth and Fifth World Congresses
1908-1909**



**ARF Structure Between the Fifth and Seventh World Congresses
1909-1913**



**ARF Structure Between the Seventh and Eighth World Congresses
1913-1914**



Introduction

At the start of the twentieth century, the territory of historical Armenia was divided between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. The Armenians were allowed a limited measure of autonomy under Ottoman rule. However, in governmental and judicial matters and in relations with Muslims, Armenians were clearly second-class subjects. When Armenian political parties began demanding improved conditions for the Armenian populace, amplifying decades of demands by the community, the government of Sultan Abdul Hamid II responded by initiating or encouraging a series of massacres from 1894-1896 that killed hundreds of thousands across the empire.

The Hnchak and Dashnak Armenian revolutionary parties entered into a dialogue with Ottoman liberals in Paris in 1900. Both parties took part in the First Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties in 1902 along with Turkish, Arab, Greek, Kurdish, Albanian, Circassian and Jewish representatives. The resolutions of the Congress included local self-administration and restoration of the Ottoman constitution of 1876.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was founded in 1890. It is known by the initials ARF as well as the name Dashnak party or Dashnaksutiun (Armenian for federation). Thanks to its critical role in the popular resistance to the Tsarist policy of Russification and the attempted confiscation of church lands in 1903-4 as well as in the Armeno-Tatar War of 1905, the ARF was the leading political force among the Armenians living in the Caucasus.¹

The prestige of, and support for, the ARF among the Armenians living in the Ottoman provinces grew with its work of arming and defending the population during the 1899-1907 period. ARF guerilla bands transported arms from Persia and Russia, often battling Ottoman or Russian troops en route. They trained villagers to defend themselves and conducted reprisal raids against Kurdish tribes that had massacred Armenians. The ARF became best organized in the Van and Muş-Sassoun regions. In 1905, the ARF unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Sultan Abdul Hamid by exploding a bomb in a carriage on his regular travel route.²

The Hnchakian Revolutionary Party was founded in 1887. It initially merged into the newly formed Federation of Armenian Revolutionaries in 1890 but six months later withdrew and the Federation was renamed the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. The Hnchaks or Hnchakians were the leading Armenian

party in the Ottoman Empire until being weakened by internal divisions over the relative importance to be given to the goals of socialism and national liberation. This resulted in the splitting off of the *Verakazmial Hnchakian* (Reformed Hnchakian) party in 1898.

The Hnchaks conducted a number of demonstrative activities, especially in Constantinople, during the 1890s. Their goal was to gain international attention for the condition and demands of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The Hnchakian Revolutionary Party was renamed the Hnchakian Social Democratic Party in 1905 and the Social Democratic Hnchakian Party (SDHP) in 1908. During the period of Constitutional rule, the party had its greatest influence in Cilicia and Constantinople.

The Committee of Union and Progress³, ARF, and Prince Sabaheddin's League of Private Initiative and Decentralization organized the Second Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties in Paris. The ARF hoped to create a tactical alliance to overthrow the Sultan. Prior to the congress an organizing committee of representatives met and agreed to a set of principles that each of their parties had to accept. These included recognizing the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state and maintaining the succession to the throne. Also, "The first goal of the congress should be the destruction of the present absolutist administration. The second goal is to be the convening of the national assembly." There was extensive discussion of the legal and revolutionary means that they would use. The ARF proposed urging the population to resist the government, not pay their taxes, resist the draft, and organize guerilla bands. It also proposed organizing strikes by police, railway employees, and government officials and collective and individual terrorism. While Prince Sabaheddin had agreed to the entire ARF proposal, the CUP representatives objected to three items. They strongly opposed resistance to the draft on patriotic grounds and called for strict regulation of the guerilla bands so that they would not degenerate into brigands. They also insisted that terrorism be limited to individual assassinations and not collective acts.⁴

The Congress met from December 27-29, 1907 and issued a declaration agreeing that the parties would force the Sultan to abdicate, drastically change the existing administration, and establish a system of consultation and constitutional government. The tactics to be used would be armed resistance against the government, strikes, non-payment of taxes, propaganda within the army so they would not move against rebels, and general rebellion. Although a tactical alliance had been created, few joint revolutionary activities were undertaken and it was the CUP, working with its supporters among army officers, that undertook the 1908 revolution.⁵

The successful Constitutional Revolution, initiated by a rebellion of the Turkish army in Macedonia, was greeted by jubilation by all these opposition parties and much of the population of the empire. The CUP was the driving force behind the revolution and, while it did not directly assume rule, its central

committee exercised significant influence over the government. On these points, historians are in general agreement. The course of Turko-Armenian relations in the following years, however, is a source of serious disagreement.

Some historians sympathetic to the Armenian viewpoint, such as Christopher Walker and Hratch Dasnabedian, portray the following years as follows. The ARF associated itself with the concept of Ottomanism by acknowledging the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, including Turkish Armenia, within a structure of administrative decentralization. Even after the massacre of some 20,000 Armenians in Adana *vilayet* (province) in April of 1909, the ARF did not alter its policy of cooperation with the CUP. Rather, the ARF and CUP issued a communiqué which: declared their dedication to work together to prevent another such counter-revolution, countered the claim that the Armenians aimed for independence, and declared their agreement on the need to extend privileges in the provinces.⁶

Historians who agree with the Turkish point of view, such as Esat Uras and Justin McCarthy, blame the Adana massacres on a natural reaction of the Turkish populace to an Armenian uprising in the city. Likewise, according to this view, the ARF and Hnchak parties only made a show of solidarity with the CUP and, after the first few weeks of euphoria after the 1908 coup, resumed their "disruptive activities." Their main aim was to "arm their supporters and prepare fortifications." The ARF is seen as having infiltrated all Armenian churches and organizations as well as having both regular troops and guerilla bands in its service and ready for rebellion. With the outbreak of the First Balkan War, the ARF took advantage of the situation, broke off relations with the CUP, and started again to demand that Europe, and especially Russia, intervene and force the Ottoman government to institute reforms that would benefit the Armenians. The one and only aim of the ARF was to incite a full-scale rebellion against Ottoman rule, the opportunity for which arrived with the Ottoman entry into World War One.⁷

Therefore, the position of the ARF regarding European intervention in the empire is a significant issue with conflicting interpretations in the historiography of the period. This study traces ARF policies and initiatives to answer the important question whether or not the party and Armenian community largely remained loyal to the constitutional regime and only resumed their appeals to Europe after the government's repeated failure to implement promised reforms. This was a critical issue because the nationalists in the CUP and the government considered European intervention to be a significant blow to their pride and honor. Under the Sultan, appeals to Europe were often met by Muslim mobs being instigated to riot and massacre Armenians. By also analyzing European diplomatic and consular archives and studies based on them, a more complete picture of this issue will be drawn.

This study examines the circulars, correspondence, and minutes of the ARF, particularly its branches in Constantinople and Erzerum, which determined

policy towards the Ottoman government and Turkish parties for the Western and Eastern Bureaus of the ARF, respectively. Letters between key leadership figures give vital insight into their thinking and analysis of political events. Correspondence from ARF bodies and fieldworkers in the eastern provinces and Cilicia provide reports of events, like the Adana massacres and attacks on and pillaging of Armenian villages. Reports by the bureaus to the ARF World Congress and their periodic letters to central committees overseas provide the analysis and rationale for the bodies' decisions. A limited number of minutes of the meetings of the responsible bodies exist and they illuminate the internal policy-making process. There are also a few letters addressed to the CUP that are significant.

Much of these documents require little more than a straightforward reading as they are private correspondence between individual party members, in most cases political allies. Additional interpretation is needed for correspondence to or from executive bodies of the party as they may be affected by internal party rivalries or disagreements over tactics or strategy. Some information regarding such intra-party conflicts is available in the ARF histories and memoirs available such as those by Mikael Varantian, Vahan Papazian, and Roupen Der Minassian. Reports and circulars written by executive bodies need more extensive interpretation to take into account attempts to deflect criticism or conceal damaging information from political opponents. Comparing the private correspondence with the slightly wider distributed circulars to local party committees and with published communiqués is instructive in identifying sensitive subjects and perhaps intra-party rifts. It should be noted that many of the dates on the ARF correspondence are in the old style, i.e. thirteen days behind. In some cases, both old style and new style calendar dates are given as can be seen in the endnotes.

Given that the population and lands of historic Armenia were divided between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, the ARF Second World Congress in 1898 decided to elect both an Eastern Bureau and a Western Bureau to oversee the activities of the party. The party operated under the principle of decentralization where elected central committees made all the decisions for their respective regions but coordinated their activities and communicated with other regions through their respective bureaus. The bureaus were responsible for implementing the decisions of the world congress and ensuring that all bodies operated within the guidelines set by it. The Eastern Bureau was headquartered in Tiflis and oversaw central committees in Yerevan, Karabagh, Kantzag, Baku, Tiflis, Batum, Northern Caucasus, Odessa, Alexandropol, Kars and two in Iran. Due to its relative proximity to the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the Eastern Bureau also oversaw the central committees of Van, Muş-Daron, Erzerum, and Trebizond and the Bitlis-Paghesh *gomideh*. The Western Bureau was headquartered in Geneva and oversaw bodies in Constantinople, Smyrna (Izmir), Cilicia, Marsovan (Mersifan), Egypt, the Balkans, Cyprus, France,

Germany, and the United States. The Central Committees for Dikranagert (Diyarbakir), Kharpert (Harput), Sepastia (Sivas), Caesaria (Kayseri), and Samsun also reported to the Western Bureau. This division of responsibility remained essentially unchanged until 1913.⁸

The World Congress was the supreme legislative body of the ARF. It was comprised of delegates elected from each central committee and each organizational region of the party and was convened every two to four years. The ARF Fourth World Congress held in Vienna in 1907, in addition to electing the two bureaus, elected a Daron-Vasbouragan Responsible Body⁹ and a Demonstrative Body. The former was charged with the responsibility of directing all military and revolutionary activities in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The latter was based in Constantinople and Izmir and was charged with carrying out assassinations and demonstrations to draw European attention to the autocratic rule of Abdul Hamid. An ARF *Khorourt* (Council) was established composed of the members of the two bureaus, the two responsible bodies, and members elected from the Eastern and Western *Rayonagan* (Regional) meetings of central committees. The ARF Council was meant to coordinate action and set direction between world congresses, but it would meet infrequently over the coming years. With the restoration of the Constitution, the two bureaus agreed to dissolve the ARF Demonstrative Body and have its members form the ARF Constantinople Responsible Body that would oversee relations with the CUP as well as the self-defense work in the provinces. As military and revolutionary work was no longer necessary, the Daron-Vasbouragan Responsible Body was reformed into the ARF Homeland Responsible Body to oversee ARF activities in those regions.¹⁰

In August of 1909, the ARF Fifth World Congress was convened in Varna, Bulgaria. It decided that the Eastern Bureau would be composed of eight members, three of whom would be based in Erzerum and would comprise the Eastern Bureau-Turkish Section. The Western Bureau would have seven members, a number of whom were already based in Constantinople, therefore establishing a Western Bureau-Turkish Section. This structure would remain in place until 1913. The ARF Sixth World Congress was convened in Constantinople in August of 1911 and decided to add an ARF Self-Defense Body to oversee efforts to arm and prepare the Armenian population for self-defense activities. The August, 1913 Seventh World Congress in Erzerum shook up the existing organizational structure and established three bureaus. The Eastern Bureau had jurisdiction over Russia and Iran and an Armenia Bureau, newly established in Erzerum, had jurisdiction over the six Ottoman Armenian provinces and Trebizond. The Western Bureau was moved from Geneva to Constantinople and had jurisdiction over Western Anatolia and the remaining provinces.¹¹

To understand the role played by the ARF, it must be placed within the context of the Armenian *millet* (community) in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman government followed a policy of indirect rule in governing its non-Muslim

communities. Most scholars consider this indirect rule to have been administered since the fifteenth century through the *millet* system. This assumption has been challenged by those who find that the term *millet* referred to Muslims until the eighteenth century and thus there wasn't an overall administrative system for dealing with non-Muslims.¹² The general view is that: "Each *millet* was a self-contained religious entity, enjoying autonomy in its internal affairs. For its governance, it was allowed to maintain traditional customs, laws, and institutions dealing basically with personal status ... [and] freedom of worship within certain bounds ..." The *millet* system was needed to administer the multi-religious and multi-ethnic empire and especially tax collection. The system worked well as long as the non-Muslims accepted their inferior status, but began to collapse once they refused.¹³ The Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople was created by the Ottoman government with the Patriarch recognized as the civil and spiritual head of the Armenian *millet*. Although Armenian Catholics and Protestants were formed into their own *millets* in the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of the Armenian population was part of the Gregorian *millet*. Although all Armenians were legally *dhimmi* (non-Muslim subjects), they were not all considered equals by the government. The clergy was considered a separate class as were the *amiras*, who enjoyed a privileged status. The honorific *amira* was given to less than 200 individuals in Constantinople and Izmir based on their great wealth and influence within the Ottoman government. Although they included merchants and goldsmiths, the majority were bankers or moneychangers and thus played an important role in the tax-farming system. However, they had little political power outside the Armenian *millet*. Within the *millet*, they had been all-powerful for much of the nineteenth century and were in effective control of the patriarchate and could have patriarchs elected or dismissed at will. Their hegemony was challenged by an alliance of middle-class guild representatives and young intellectuals, eventually leading to the approval of an Armenian National Constitution in 1860. The drafting of such a document was made possible by the promulgation by the Sultan of the 1856 Imperial Rescript (*Hatt-i Humayun*) that categorically declared the equality of all Ottoman subjects. The constitution stipulated the organization and hierarchy of the *millet* administration and curtailed the powers of the patriarch. It also set forth the composition of the Armenian National Assembly, reducing the clergy to one-seventh of its members. While it was a step forward because it codified liberal and democratic principles within the *millet*, the Assembly was set up to be dominated by representatives from Constantinople and gave the vast majority of the Armenian population in the provinces a small minority of the seats.

Due to their position, the *amiras* were by nature conservative. In order to preserve their wealth and declining power, they opposed the emerging revolutionary movements, both the Hnchaks and the Dashnaks. They were also greatly threatened by both parties' professed commitment to socialism. They therefore used their influence to ensure that the Patriarch hewed to their own positions

and obstructed the revolutionary parties. Christopher Walker has described "a significant new division ... among the Armenians between the old, clerical, Ottomanized leadership and the new revolutionary elite. Both strove to win the allegiance of the mass of the people ..." The ARF and the Patriarch also competed to be recognized as the leader of the Armenian community in the eyes of the government. The ARF used its contacts with the CUP and certain ministers while the Patriarch used his position as leader of the *millet* and the influence of the *amiras*. This competition and their disagreements over tactics most often came to a head during the run-up to parliamentary elections and when reforms for the Armenian provinces were being considered. The *amiras*, since they had had minimal contact with the population of the provinces and often looked down on them, had little influence outside of Constantinople and Izmir. The ARF, on the other hand, had gained credibility with the population of the provinces through its years of addressing the issues of land deprivation and insecurity. Its *fedayi* bands had delivered arms to the Armenian population through most of the first decade of the twentieth century. By undertaking raids and expeditions, they had driven Kurdish tribes off seized lands and carried out reprisals for murders of Armenian villagers. Although most of the peasantry was not yet ready for the idea of socialism, they were willing to follow the lead of a party that had defended their lands and persons. The proof of this lay in the fact that the *fedayis* would not have been able to operate had they not received food and shelter from the villagers.¹⁴

The late Roderic Davison, the well respected historian of the late Ottoman Empire, presented Armenian disillusionment with the CUP as springing only in part from the massacres of 1909, "for which the Young Turks must bear a goodly share of the responsibility." The lasting troubles were due to Kurdish depredations against Armenian villagers in Greater Armenia. The government was held responsible in that it had only succeeded in disarming the Armenians, and not the Kurds, and because many of its local officials took actions to favor the Kurds. Then, when the CUP turned from equality and Ottomanism to Turkification, there was even more evidence that the Armenians were receiving little benefit from the constitutional regime. The ARF limited its actions to pursuing reform within the Ottoman Empire after 1908. It did not favor separatism or Russian occupation but autonomy. It was only at the beginning of 1913 that relations between the ARF and CUP became seriously strained.¹⁵

From the beginning, the Ottoman opposition movement had both liberal and nationalist currents. The struggle between the two took place first within the CUP. Later, as the nationalist wing became dominant, the liberals left the CUP and continued the struggle as an opposition party. The liberals, led by Prince Sabaheddin, believed in the ideology of Ottomanism and in a decentralized form of government. The nationalists believed in a strong central government with ethnic 'Turks' ruling at all levels of the empire. Thus, the CUP faced growing domestic opposition. A number of opposition parties were formed from 1909-

1911, including not just the liberals but also monarchists and reactionaries. After the CUP used violence and intimidation during the 1912 elections to ensure that they won an overwhelming majority in parliament, the CUP was forced out of power by the "Savior Officers" and replaced by a cabinet which included moderates and liberals. The First Balkan War discredited this cabinet, however, and the January 1913 coup d'état brought the CUP back to power.

According to historian Stepan Astourian, it was in 1911 that the ARF broke its alliance with the CUP and adopted a stance of mild opposition due to the Unionists' broken promises and the worsening condition of the Armenian peasantry. But it was two changes within the CUP that would make the break permanent and set the stage for genocide during World War I. The first was the final defeat of the liberal movement of the Ottoman Empire as noted by Davison. The second was the rise of two ideologies that legitimized government policies: Turkism and *Milli İktisat* (National Economy). The implementation of Turkism would exclude ethnic minorities from the definition of the nation. Implementation of *Milli İktisat* would eliminate them from the Ottoman economy. The defeat of Ottoman liberalism ended the only policies, which had support in political circles, which could handle the problems of the multi-national empire by means of reform rather than repression. The development of national awareness by the non-Turkish citizens of the empire meant that ideologies and policies that placed ethnic Turks in a superior position to others in every sphere of life could only be implemented by force. Without political, cultural, and religious rights, as promised by Ottomanism, non-Turks would have no positive reason to wish to continue as Ottoman citizens.¹⁶

The leading historian of modern Armenia, Richard Hovannisian, believes that the ARF remained loyal to the constitutional regime through the many crises from 1908-1912. Although the ARF chastised the CUP leadership in 1911 for retreating from constitutionalism and interethnic cooperation, it called on Armenians to join the army and defend the empire during the First Balkan War. This caused a number of ARF guerrilla veterans to quit the party and organize detachments within the Bulgarian army to fight the Ottomans. But after the January 1913 coup, all central policies of the Ottoman Empire were formulated by a small clique of CUP ultra-nationalists. Any chance of cooperation with the ARF was ended.¹⁷

By analyzing the policy formulations of the ARF, this study hopes to resolve many of the conflicting conclusions in the current historiography. The party's level of commitment to the Constitution and to cooperation with the CUP may be gauged from the debate that took place in the party at the time. The government's inaction on land reform, and especially in recovering lands confiscated by Kurdish tribes, may have been a determining factor in the decision to end cooperation. For this reason, Armeno-Kurdish relations and its impact on security conditions in the provinces must also be examined. Finally, the course of European diplomacy and the sequence of events that led to renewed

Armenian calls for European intervention will complete the picture of the ARF and its course—from being part of an alliance of Turkish and Armenian revolutionaries pursuing constitutional reform to being the primary defender of a vulnerable, ethnically and religiously distinct people facing a radicalized, nationalist regime about to enter a world war.

There has been no in-depth examination of the internal documents of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in the Ottoman Empire for the years following the Constitutional Revolution. It is impossible to obtain a true picture of Armeno-Turkish relations in this period without an accurate analysis of the activities and relations of their two leading political parties. The loss or destruction of the papers of the Committee of Union and Progress will always limit how much we will discover from that side. However, by examining the observations and views of the ARF leadership, fieldworkers, and parliamentary deputies, we can shed light on some dimly viewed areas. While we may not have a record of the deliberations of the CUP on the issues of the day, we do have a description of its actions and an analysis of its motives by individuals who had worked closely with some of its leading lights. The analysis is not limited to the CUP's actions that directly affected the Armenians, but also its internal political struggles and role and influence within the government.

The ARF archives, located at the Hairenik Association in Watertown, Massachusetts, have been accessed by several scholars. This research has resulted in a number of monographs, articles, and dissertations that reference ARF archival material. None of these studies, however, have examined more than a fraction of the thousands of documents that discuss ARF activities under constitutional rule. Hratch Dasnabedian's books provide an overview of ARF activities for its first thirty years and a detailed description of changes in its structure, based largely on the decisions of the world congresses. Gerard Libaridian describes ARF-CUP cooperation to provide necessary background to his article on the Armenian Genocide. Stephan Astourian's dissertation uses documents describing inter-party activities abroad to trace worsening Armeno-Turkish relations in Cilicia. Most studies that have drawn upon the ARF archives have had a different chronological or geographic focus than this one. Richard Hovannisian's four volumes examine the activities of the ARF during the period of the First Armenian Republic. The topic of Hourii Berberian's book is ARF participation in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and Jacques Derogy's, the ARF assassination of the CUP leaders responsible for the Armenian Genocide. Work in the archives by historians from Armenia have resulted in two monographs, one on historical geography by P.H. Haroutunian and another on the Nagorno-Karabagh region by Hamlet Gevorkyan.¹⁸

There is a dearth of publications that examine the activities of the ARF in the years prior to World War One. Those writers who do refer briefly to this topic almost invariably do so in the process of buttressing their position on their

primary topic of interest, the genocide that began in 1915. This study provides an analysis of the policies of the ARF regarding the government, the CUP, the issue of European intervention, and administrative, land, judiciary, and security reforms for the Armenian provinces. It also gives the reader a look at the events, and the interpretation of events, that influenced the policy-making process. These policies must be analyzed, not in the shadow of later events, but within the context of political developments in the period of constitutional rule.

There is also the issue of sources used. The handful of historians of the ARF depends almost entirely on the published documents of the party and published memoirs. Ottoman historians who have touched upon this topic have largely been limited to published materials and the archives of the Ottoman central government in Istanbul. Even Sükrü Hanioglu, who has analyzed the private papers of prominent CUP members, has only published the history of that party up to the year 1908 thus far. Therefore, the internal documents of the ARF are a critical primary resource that has remained untapped. This study integrates this resource with the existing research on the last years of the Ottoman Empire that has been largely based on Ottoman and European sources. The documents include detailed descriptions of the activities of, and interrelationship between, the ARF and CUP in most of the important towns and cities in which the two operated. This Armenian viewpoint is integrated with the large number of reports by European consuls located in the provinces. The consuls' ongoing reportage of security conditions and provincial administration has not been utilized to any great extent for the 1908-1914 period. The British reports are the most informative, due to both their detail and their geographical breadth; there were British consuls and vice-consuls in more locations than any other diplomatic corps. They provide a description, sometimes week-to-week, of unrest, robberies, and assaults, as well as relations between and within the Armenian, Kurdish, and Turkish communities. They are not limited to the provincial capitals, but include information gathered from persons arriving from, or the consuls' inspection tours of, outlying areas. While personal or professional biases must be taken into account while using such reports, they may be considered to be frank for the most part as they were meant to remain confidential and were written during peacetime while the Ottomans were neither an ally nor an enemy.

Together these sources provide a much fuller picture of events and political developments during the period of constitutional rule. By reducing the over-emphasis on the official policies of the Porte and events in the imperial capital, and by utilizing sources that describe unofficial contacts and political relations and which expose events in the country at-large, this work may contribute to the scholarly analysis of this key period in Ottoman and Armenian History.

Notes

1. Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaksutium, 1890-1924* (Milan: Oemme Edizioni, 1989), 81.
2. *Ibid.*, 77-83.
3. The Committee of Union and Progress is referred to as the CUP and also by its Turkish name Ittihad ve Terakki, as the Ittihad, as Unionists, and as the Young Turks.
4. M. Sukru Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191-2, 194-7. Prince Sabaheddin was a member of the imperial family who moved to France in 1899 with his father, the sultan's half brother Damad Mahmud Celâlettin Pasha. Upon his father's death, he became the leader of the liberal faction of the Young Turk movement and split the movement when he formed first, the Society of Ottoman Liberals, and then in 1906, the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization. He was a firm believer in administrative decentralization, minimal government, and the free enterprise system.
5. *Ibid.*, 203-5, 209.
6. Dasnabedian, *History of the ARF*; Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980).
7. Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1983); Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, Second Edition (Istanbul: Domentary Publications, 1988).
8. Hratch Dasnabedian, *H. H. Tashnagtzutian Gazmagerbagan Garooytzi Holovooytuh* [The Evolution of the Organizational Structure of the ARF] (Beirut: Hamazkain Press, 1974), 25-29. The evolving structure of the party is shown graphically in charts in this source, which have been simplified and translated near the introduction to this book. Seven or more Dashnaks in a village or town would form a *khoump* (group). Three or more *khoumps* in a particular region would require that a *gomideh* (committee) be elected to oversee their operations. Each central committee would oversee 5-30 *gomidehs* in their geographical area.
9. Daron and Vashouragan are the Armenian names for the regions surrounding Muş and Van respectively, the two regions with the highest concentration of Armenian population in the Empire.
10. *Ibid.*, 53, 57-8, 60-1.
11. *Ibid.*, 63, 71-74, 82-85.
12. Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. I: *The Central Lands*, eds. Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), 69, 73-4.
13. Hagop Barsoumian, "The Eastern Question and the Tanzimat Era" in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, Vol. II: *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 182-3.
14. *Ibid.*, 182-190, 195-8; Hagop Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750-1850)" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. I: *The Central Lands*, eds. Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 171-3, 176-181; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 116; Walker,

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- 132, 177-8. The word *fedayi* is Arabic for one prepared to die for his faith. It is supposed to have been given to the Armenian guerilla units by Turks and Kurds in recognition of their bravery.
15. Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1990).
 16. Stephan H. Astourian, "The Armenian Genocide: An Interpretation," *The History Teacher* 23:2 (February 1990): 130, 134-5.
 17. Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire 1876 to 1914" in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times. Vol. II: Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 231-2.
 18. Dasnabedian, *History of the ARF*; Dasnabedian, *Garooytzi Holovooyuh*; Gerard J. Libaridian, "The Ultimate Repression: The Genocide of the Armenians, 1915-1917" in *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, eds. Isidor Walliman and Michael N. Dobkowski, 203-235, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Stephan H. Astourian, "Testing World-System Theory, Cilicia (1830s-1890s): Armenian-Turkish Polarization and the Ideology of Modern Ottoman Historiography," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UCLA, 1996); Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, Vols. 1-4, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971-1996); Houri Berberian, *Armenians and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911: "The Love for Freedom has no Fatherland"* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001); Jacques Derogy, *Operation Nemesis* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1986).

I

Triumph to Tragedy: From Constitutional Restoration to the Adana Massacres, July 1908-April 1909

The July 23, 1908 revolution, by restoring the 1876 Constitution, promised many opportunities for the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and for the ARF. Both greeted the revolution with joy because of the promise of equal rights for all Ottoman citizens and because it meant the end of the absolute rule of the man known as the Red Sultan, for all the Armenian blood he had spilt.

At the same time, others would take advantage of the change in government. Within days, Austria-Hungary would announce the annexation of the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Soon Bulgaria would declare itself an independent kingdom and Crete would unite with Greece. The CUP expected that restoration of the Constitution would win it support from the liberal states of Europe; instead the Constitutional regime was struck a blow before it had even begun to rule.¹

The ARF would throw itself into Ottoman political life, pursuing cooperation with the CUP and taking a most active role in the first parliamentary elections. It would no longer have to work underground and so, began publishing newspapers and sending fieldworkers into the provinces to organize ARF bodies and mobilize the Armenian population in support of the Constitution. But ARF and Armenian support for the Constitution would be gravely shaken by the Adana massacres the following April.

The Constitutional Revolution

The fear of losing large parts of Macedonia spurred both the CUP and its supporters in the military to more urgent action against the Sultan's regime. There were popular uprisings in support of the Constitution in Monastir, Gribava, Elasma, Kosovo, and other cities in the region and assassinations of officers and government officials who were supportive of the Sultan. Unrest among the Third Army in Macedonia soon turned into open rebellion and when troops

were sent from Constantinople to suppress the rebellion, they refused to fire on their comrades. On July 22, the CUP in Monastir proclaimed the restoration of the Constitution followed by similar proclamations in Üsküp, Köprili, Presova, Serres, and then Salonika. Abdul Hamid had been forced into a corner and on July 23 he announced the restoration of the 1876 Constitution.² According to Mikael Varantian:

The Red Sultan, with a sweet smile, went before the Young Turk leaders and swore his allegiance to the constitution. The doors of the prisons were opened and thousands of Armenian, Turk, and other prisoners ... were released from their cells. Huge processions took place where Moslem and Christian embraced and in some locations celebrations were organized. The Turkish leaders loudly proclaimed their fervent sympathy for the oft-tortured Armenians and their ideological brotherhood. They publicly confessed that the Armenian revolutionaries were their instructors and educators on the road to freedom...³

Varantian was the main theoretician of the ARF and an active political commentator. He was born in Karabagh and educated there and in Germany and Switzerland. He was a member of the editorial board of the party organ *Troshag* and was a member of the ARF Western Bureau from 1904-1915. He was the party's representative to the Second International and wrote a number of books, most notably *The History of the ARF*. Agnoui (Khachadour Maloumian) was born in Karabagh and educated at the Nersesian College in Tiflis. He was part of the editorial staff of the *Mshag* newspaper and later took part in the negotiations leading to the founding of the ARF. He became part of the staff of *Troshag* in 1899 and was a member of the Western Bureau from 1901 until 1914, when he was elected to the Armenia Bureau. He was one of the organizers of both the 1902 and the 1907 Congress of Ottoman Opposition Forces in Paris. He moved to Constantinople when the Constitution was restored where he was a prolific political commentator, publishing many works and giving public addresses.⁴ In a letter to his comrades in Geneva, which he closed with the words "from a free Constantinople," Agnoui described the celebrations:

You can't imagine how happy I am to write to you from this city without fear of being spied on. A city where mouths that had been silenced for 32 years together cry "freedom." The masses are intoxicated with emotion. After 30 years of silence, it is possible to yell and get drunk for 30 days.⁵

The ARF greeted the Ottoman Constitution with joy. It ended all its demands for European intervention and the enforcement of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin. It stopped publishing *Pro Armenia* and other propaganda efforts in Europe because: "We were yoking ourselves with our Muslim neighbors so our combined forces could aid the progress and welfare of a healthy empire."⁶

In the provinces as well, the constitutional events made a very good impression on the Armenian population. While the Armenians were holding public

events to celebrate, the Muslim and Kizilbash (Alevi) population were indifferent to the restoration. The local ARF body in Pingian (near Agn) believed that they were so backward and uneducated that they couldn't understand the effects that the revolution had brought and would bring. It would mean eliminating bribery, the firing of corrupt governmental and municipal officials, less military taxes, and the lightening of the 10 percent Aghnam tax.⁷

With the success of the revolution, members of the CUP Central Committee went from Salonika to Constantinople to take charge. The military element in Salonika had played a decisive role in the revolution, but there was a large civilian element as well. It was these elements that would become most prominent initially, rather than the party ideologues or founders.⁸ But although the CUP seemed to be politically invulnerable, Hasan Kayali has observed that it:

lacked self-confidence and organization. Having operated as a secret body in the capital and the provinces it did not draw on a popular sociopolitical base or avail of a structured and disciplined empire-wide political network. Therefore, it was not prepared to make a bid for exclusive political power, and very soon the general population's rising expectations began to haunt it.⁹

The CUP did not feel able to remove the Sultan, even though they distrusted him. It used its influence on the government but inserted few ministers as its leadership were junior officers and bureaucrats and age and seniority had long been the precondition for authority in the empire.¹⁰ Its confidence could hardly have been helped either, when Austria-Hungary took advantage of the political situation to annex the Ottoman province of Bosnia.

Although it was still a committee and not a political party, it operated on policy issues like a party with its political and social program. However, by failing to create a participatory political organization, it entrenched its existing leadership who were predominantly Turkish-speaking and from the same geographic area. Thus:

It admitted few newcomers to its inner circles despite its ambition to rally all segments of the population behind it. At the end of August the merger of Prince Sabahaddin's Paris-based League for Private Initiative and Administrative Decentralization with the CUP was announced. Since the Committee subscribed to a program of centralization, the merger might have been viewed as a reconciliation of the two principal currents of Young Turk ideology. In fact, it was an unsuccessful maneuver to neutralize the decentralist faction, which reasserted itself within days by forming a rival party. The CUP failed to accommodate even the centralist old guard in exile. Ahmed Riza was one of the few to be recognized.... Like other prominent Young Turks of the pre-1908 period, however, he was gradually distanced from the inner councils of the Committee. The CUP's exclusionism derived from the social insecurities and administrative inexperience of its members and plagued it in its relations with different political and social groups ... in the years to come.... The CUP's admitted lack of political acumen and social standing necessitated that it rely on statesmen outside the Committee to occupy the top government positions. Its insistence on manipulating the

government from outside to conform to its political aims compounded the typical problems associated with legitimacy in revolutionary transfers of power. Not until the spring of 1909 did the Committee create the beginnings of a formal political organ and prepare to take on the responsibility of governing the empire.¹¹

The election law for the 1908 parliamentary elections had first been drafted by the 1877-8 parliament. It called for a two-stage election process. In the primary election, all male Ottoman citizens over twenty-five years old who paid taxes were eligible to vote for secondary electors. These electors then voted for the actual deputies for each *sancak*. The two-stage process favored the election of local notables. The political and economic influence of landowners in the provinces usually resulted in their success in the primary election.¹²

The CUP made deals with Greek and Armenian parties before the elections but also allotted seats to the Jewish community because they knew that their representatives could make a real contribution to the Parliament. In fact, they were depending on the expertise of the better educated non-Muslim groups "to further their own program of reform and progress.... The non-Muslim deputies in the assembly were expected to play a vital role in the introduction and passage of legislation designed to bring about the modernization and economic revival of the empire." They "tended to be better educated and more open to the ideas of change and modernization than Muslim deputies. Many of them were professionally qualified (engineers, agronomists, etc.) and were expected to provide expert opinion when matters related to their professions were discussed in the Chamber."¹³ To quite an extent, this became the case, as in the example of the Armenian deputy Krikor Zohrab. He was a renowned lawyer and law professor and also a leading figure of Armenian literature having published many short stories. He was born in Constantinople and educated at the Shahnazarian School and Galatasaray Lycée. He became one of the leading voices of the Parliament, looked to by both Muslim and non-Muslim deputies, and the key figure on legal matters as he had personally trained most of the other lawyers in the chamber.

In all, ten Armenians were elected to the Parliament. Armen Garo and Vartkes representing Erzerum, Kegham Der Garabedian from Muş and Vahan Papazian from Van were ARF members. Hagop Babikian from Izmir and Bedros Halajian from Constantinople were CUP members and Krikor Zohrab was a liberal voting with the Ahrar (Liberal Union) Party until later moving closer to the positions of the ARF. Murad Boyajian representing Kozan in Cilicia was a Hnchak and Nazareth Daghavartian from Sivas and Stephan Ispartalyan from Izmir were independent.¹⁴ The ARF recognized the critical role it had to play in the Parliament, considering its deputies' abilities and its position as perhaps the most fervent supporter of the Constitutional system. It therefore moved quickly to prepare a platform of reforms for Armenian deputies to introduce in the inaugural sessions of the Ottoman Parliament and released it to the public on September 1, 1908:

Convinced that for every government, and especially a multi-lingual country like the Ottoman Empire, the best form of government is a decentralized federation; when each of the regions with their distinct geographic-economic-ethnographic character will enjoy internal administrative autonomy, which in addition will harmoniously strengthen and confirm the whole governmental structure;

Similarly, knowing that it is possible to reach those goals gradually, through fundamental, liberal reforms and *joint* cooperation with neighboring peoples and the other political parties, moreover hoping to secure the new regime from undesirable shocks;

The ARF presently, and for the first sessions of the Ottoman Parliament, proposes the following demands, which are necessary and suggested by current realities:

- 1) The independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire will be recognized because it has a liberal, constitutional regime.
- 2) Turkish Armenia composes an inseparable part of the Empire and it runs its internal affairs, based on the system of decentralization, from which all peoples living in the country will derive equal benefits.
- 3) The Ottoman central government, founded on the democratic representative system, runs the government's general affairs—foreign affairs, military, currency, customs, railroads, post-telegraph, etc., while conceding the other local functions to the regions.
- 4) All parliamentary, judiciary, and local administrative bodies will be elected on the principle of universal, equal, secret, and proportional voting. This principle is implemented for all peoples and religions equally.

The program also called for ministerial accountability to a parliamentary committee; "complete equality for all nations [i.e., ethnicities] and religious communities" and the elimination of class privileges; freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of conscience, and the right to strike. Further the party called for "universal, free, compulsory elementary education" and the fundamental reorganization of the judiciary. Other planks addressed tax reform and workers' rights including limited work hours and no work on Sundays, improving dangerous and unhealthy working conditions, and the elimination of child and women's labor at night.¹⁵ The fifteen planks of the platform were consistent with liberal democratic or socialist demands of the day in Europe.

ARF-CUP Relations

Rosdom (Stepan Zoryan) was one of the three founders of the ARF and perhaps the most influential figure in the party for the rest of his life. He was born in the Caucasus and educated in Tiflis and Moscow. He edited the party organ *Troshag* until 1895. He engineered ARF-Macedonian cooperation in 1901 and fought in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. He had a leading role in resistance to the Czar's anti-Armenian policies and in the Armeno-Tatar war in the Eastern Caucasus in 1905. He played a key role in reconciling the left and right wings of the party at the 1907 ARF World Congress and would become the most important figure in the Eastern Bureau-Turkish Section from 1909-1914. He lived in Erzerum during the Constitutional period and attended

a number of the congresses of the Second International.¹⁶ He pressed the party not to hesitate to aid and strengthen the Sabaheddin wing of the CUP. He had little hope in the Ahmed Riza wing and felt that it would move to the right: "The 'Riza' faction could not behave any other way." He believed they should maintain good relations "even with the Rizagists even though we should stay away from their separate undertakings for the time being. But we should not forget our own demands. We should have propaganda towards that, encourage the Sabaheddins and prepare the ground for future execution."¹⁷

The ARF Constantinople Responsible Body instructed its local bodies to work in solidarity with non-Armenian political committees to elect ARF members and supporters as deputies. This was consistent with the party's decision at the Paris Congress of opposition forces. But the body stressed that cooperation with the CUP by no means meant that they would merge or compromise the party's positions. The ARF would keep its complete independence and continue to pursue the rights, well-being, and national and economic demands of the Armenian people.¹⁸ Simon Zavarian [aka Anton] was born in Lori in Russian Armenia and graduated from the Moscow Institute of Agronomy. He was one of the three founders of the ARF and was considered the 'conscience of the party.' He was a fervent defender of the principle of a decentralized structure for the party and was a member of the Eastern Bureau in the Caucasus until 1902. Thereafter he was a key player in the Western Bureau and the ARF Cilicia Responsible Body. With the constitutional restoration, he moved to Constantinople and then Muş, where he was director of all the Armenian schools of the provinces. He would return to the capital in 1911 as a member of the Western Bureau-Turkish Section and part of the *Azadamard* editorial board. As he explained the party's position:

The demand of the day is to emphasize cooperation between Armenians and Turks, to organize events and lectures to bring the ARF and the Turks closer together. There should be a joint body to coordinate the general problems. The government people have finally understood what happens when they rule with the methods of the Middle Ages and protect thieves and murderers.¹⁹

The Arab committee in Constantinople was about to start its own newspaper. Among its members were a number of intellectuals and influential people. The body was working with them to at least help each other in Parliament. The Arabs found the ARF party platform to be acceptable except for a few minor points. Gregory Vasilev was negotiating with the body to go to the capital from Macedonia to organize an Armeno-Bulgarian Congress. The Bulgarian committee had openly severed its relations with the CUP.²⁰ The ARF body in Constantinople continued to have friendly relations with the Greek and Kurdish committees in the capital. The Kurds telegraphed orders to their people and some of the *beys* to be friendly with Armenians and return confiscated land.²¹

The Constantinople Responsible Body reported on its relations with the CUP. Some individuals in the CUP had attitudes and had taken actions that were unacceptable to the party and had created the current situation. Because some of the most objectionable people in the CUP were gaining strength, relations had cooled. While the body was dissatisfied, there would be no benefit to sever relations at that time. It also noted that the CUP itself had internal discord and lack of cooperation and that Sabaheddin and his faction would likely soon leave the party. A new political party had been formed that was closer to the ideals of the ARF and Sabaheddin and which included what the body considered were the best parts of the Turkish intelligentsia.²²

The election campaign was in full swing in November. The body had great hopes for the election of the two candidates they were supporting in Constantinople, Krikor Zohrab and Salanian. The Patriarchate received telegrams that Vartkes and Armen Garo were elected as deputies from Erzerum but were still waiting for the results from Van. The Greeks and Turks had severed relations there because of conflicts arising during the campaign. The ARF tried unsuccessfully to bring the two together. The elections had not generally been beneficial to the Armenians in the provinces. Government employees, *beys*, and influential Turks had found their ways to influence the voting and drowned out the already weak voice of the Armenians. The body requested that all its bodies send in evidence of electoral fraud and irregularities.²³ Shahbaz urged Constantinople to include Turks, Greeks, and Bulgarians in any public demonstrations about the electoral irregularities it might organize. He believed it would look bad if the Armenians demonstrated alone.²⁴

The results from the early stages of the elections caused concern on the part of the ARF. It realized that if enough true supporters of parliamentary rule weren't elected, Parliament could conceivably vote itself out of existence. Thus the party vigorously protested to the CUP branch in the capital and sent an urgent telegram to CUP headquarters in Salonika:

The election is not going well. In Kharpert only one Armenian deputy was elected. We told you to send orders to your local bodies to cooperate with our committees or form joint election committees to work together and do propaganda, etc. Our proposals were not implemented. The former government officials should be removed to benefit the people. You have the contacts with the government and could have it done. The situation is reaching crisis proportions. To prevent it we call on you and your democratic spirit and sincerity to pay attention to this situation. You know that dark forces are plotting against the Constitution. In a country where friendship, cooperation, and brotherhood were being praised, now there is doubt, enmity, and threats.²⁵

Shahbaz reported that he had kept in touch with the local CUP wherever he had gone. However, its members were not liberals but hypocrites and liars. He believed it was possible to make them more liberal through their own example. A freethinking young Turk approached him to warn him that in the interior

there were many fanatics who were hiding behind the CUP name. Shahbaz met an executive member of the local CUP who could not be convinced that the Armenians weren't trying to reestablish their kingdom. In Anatolia there were no Turks who would accept liberal principles, let alone understand them. More evidence about the CUP can be seen in the party's attempt to push out the local *kāimakam* who was an Albanian who believed in decentralization.²⁶ The ARF organized a meeting with the CUP in Bitlis to try to improve relations but it produced few results. There were many causes, one was the narrow views of Vehib Bey and the CUP. On the other hand, the body felt there was little attention paid to practical issues. Had there been there could have been some benefits from the meeting, which was otherwise difficult given the two parties' differing principles.²⁷

After one month of parliamentary sessions, the ARF body in Constantinople considered its conduct to be satisfactory. The opposition was growing stronger daily while infighting had started in the CUP. The party met with the Armenian deputies daily to confer on important issues. The ARF was the only organization that carried any weight in the eyes of the people or the government in the capital.²⁸ By January, the situation in Parliament was improving, particularly because many deputies held leftist ideas and a leftist bloc had been formed. Kâmil Pasha's position had strengthened so the dangers had receded. On the other hand, the prestige of the CUP had taken a heavy blow.²⁹ The body saw that Sabaheddin's party had been winning the popularity that the CUP had been losing. They would soon begin publishing their official organ and some ARF members would be working for it. A leftist party would soon be organized in the Parliament and it would include some ARF supporters, the best of the Turkish element, as well as Greeks, Arabs, Bulgarians, and other minority peoples. To that point, the party viewed their actions with approval.³⁰

The body reported that the prestige and positions of the ARF were viewed favorably in both Armenian and non-Armenian circles. As expected, the CUP was on the way to destruction and only ruins remained of the party. Had they not been backed by the prestige of the military, they would have already been eliminated from the political arena. The ARF did not wish for the party's destruction, only for that of its ultra-conservative and reactionary elements. Thus the ARF would not attack them in its press and would maintain relations in a strictly official manner. The party's main aim was to work to strengthen principles of the Constitution and the application of its purposes. As a loyal opposition party, the ARF would defend its principles and criticize the government's shortcomings. On the other hand, it would work to elevate the prestige of the Parliament and the Constitution.³¹

Shahbaz reported that the CUP Constantinople branch had ordered its chapters in the provinces to cool their relationship with the ARF and with the Ahrar party. This may have been why they arrested ARF member Chalal in Trebizond and were pursuing Malkhas (Ardashes Hovsepien) and Suni.³² There

were rumors that the government was going to search the party premises in Constantinople. The body immediately sent warnings to the government via intermediaries that it shouldn't dare search or investigate the party. The danger passed, but the government believed the party was arming the people in order to foment revolution.³³

ARF Organizational Work

With the restoration of the Constitution, the ARF could operate openly for the first time in the Ottoman Empire. It sent fieldworkers into the provinces to organize *khoumps* (groups) in each village and *gomidehs* (committees) and *yentagomidehs* (sub-committees) in the towns. A number of *khoumps* would be accountable to a single *gomideh* that oversaw the particular geographic area.

One fieldworker, Shahbaz, reported that he had to remain in Trebizond because there was no organization and no local leaders he could give orders to and then move on to Samsun as planned. Malkhas and Krikor Mirzoyan had come and attended a local *gomideh* meeting and agreed that he needed to stay on until a better organizational foundation had been created because Trebizond was such an important geographical location. He planned to stay another week and call a consultative general meeting inviting the *khmpabeds* (group leaders) from the villages.³⁴ The general meeting was convened and went well. There had never been such a meeting bringing together the leadership from all the ARF bodies in the region. Afterwards, Shahbaz went as far as to say that the ARF had become the leader of the Armenian community in the region, although there was still much more work to do. The meeting decided to continue operating covertly for the time being. Shahbaz believed that a mistake had been made in Constantinople when they elected large bodies and took the party public and that they shouldn't make the same mistake in the provinces. Outside of Constantinople it was clear that despite the success of the revolution, dangers still existed. The Constitution may have been restored but that hardly meant that it had been accepted by the powers in the provinces. Therefore, he had decided in his fieldwork that he would ensure that the different *khoumps* in a *gomideh* would not know each other. While this would make propaganda more difficult, it was needed for security reasons. He stressed that rather than opening the doors too wide to new party members, they should concentrate on developing large numbers of *hamagirs* (supporters) by doing propaganda within the community.³⁵

Dro's work was going well in Diyarbekir. The mayor and members of the Kurdish club made a lot of noise that he had come to town with 500 *fedayis*. They even had a petition to have him expelled from the town. The Armenians closed their stores and there was fear of massacres. The mayor called him in and told him to leave town. Dro challenged him to send his soldiers to try to expel him but after some arguing he agreed to leave.³⁶ Ashod Yergat (Armenag Levonian) and Antranig thanked Constantinople for the brochures they sent

and their advice to uphold the Constitution. But what they really wanted was not paper but a fieldworker to assist them. They had 220 members in their village but needed a fieldworker to help organize a *gomideh* in the Shabin Karahisar area.³⁷ In Samsun, the party had formed political, defense, fighting, and women's committees in addition to a regular *gomideh*. It had the same in Marsovan (Mersifan). Shahbaz had also started a youth *khoump* at Anatolia College. Every public speech he had given in the area had had 1800-2000 people in attendance.³⁸

Dr. Nazlian had organized three ARF *khoumps* in his birthplace of Evereg. He had done propaganda and would soon have a *yentagomideh* formed. The Hnchak representative had left the village and some other Hnchaks had shown interest in joining the ARF. But, despite the fear caused by events in Caesaria (Kayseri), there no one was working on the self-defense plan. The 4,000 Armenian households were in danger.³⁹ Despite their poverty, the Armenian community was able to open a hall in Sis in Cilicia where lectures were given periodically.⁴⁰

Dr. Haigaz Bairuyr lectured in a number of towns and villages about the party and the constitution. In Samsun the local Dashnaks insisted that he deliver three lectures. He found them to be "a good bunch" although they didn't have much education or political maturity and awareness. He found good ARF *khoumps* in Amasya and Tokat but the people were very poor financially and intellectually. The greatest excitement generated by his visit was in Sivas but the Hnchaks tried to disrupt the meeting. Shavarsh Vartabed was a Hnchak so he didn't allow the church to be opened for the doctor's speech. They had to have it in a smaller hall that was packed to the rafters. After complaining about being shut out, the church trustees promised to have the church opened the next day for another lecture. Then the Vartabed tried to preempt it with a funeral.⁴¹ Shavarsh Vartabed invited Dr. Bairuyr and some Hnchaks to a meeting where they said they wanted to unite with the ARF. The doctor agreed to cooperation but not to unifying in line with his directives from the party. He suggested that the Hnchaks eliminate their internal divisions and cooperate with the ARF for the time being.⁴²

With the restoration of the Constitution, it was also possible for ARF bodies in the provinces to start fundraising locally. The body urged them to do so rather than continuing to ask for funds from Constantinople.⁴³ In December of 1908 Shahbaz was sent to Sivas, which he found to be in pretty good shape organizationally. There were sixty *khoumps* in the region including the villages but there was also a dire need for propaganda among the party ranks and the people. In Tokat, three new *khoumps* had been organized to add to the five already formed there. The self-defense preparations were going slowly because of the extreme poverty of the people and the lack of experienced fighters to train the villagers.⁴⁴ Since the *fedayi* bands had been dissolved, the party concentrated its efforts on arming and training Armenian villagers so that they could defend themselves,

should the need arise. Notwithstanding the other problems, one major obstacle had been removed as it was no longer illegal for Armenians to own arms.

At the beginning of 1909, the ARF Constantinople Responsible Body evaluated the progress of the party under constitutional rule. It found that in the provinces the organizational and propaganda work was being carried out with enthusiasm. The party continued to publish books and their newspaper *Harach* (Forward) in Erzerum and libraries were being established in many locations. Hnchakian and Reformed Hnchakian members had joined the ARF ranks in Shabin Karahisar, Girason, Trebizond, Samsun, Tokat, Amasya, Marsovan, and Sivas. Its analysis was that in both the provinces and Constantinople, the ARF was the only strong and serious Armenian party in the eyes of the people and the government. This was because it had remained clean from its inception and has been without personal profiteering.⁴⁵

The body sent Mourad to Kharpert (Harput) to give his advice and leadership to efforts to organize the party's work there. His speech calling for cooperation left a very positive impression on the local Turks according to local ARF members. He was urged to continue to speak of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. He was then sent to Arabkir to report on his impressions of that region and then to Sivas to help organize the party there. Rosdom was working in Iran, Antranig and Dro in Bulgaria, and Karfayan was in Adana and would be going to Aleppo.⁴⁶ Keri traveled to a number of locations and had public meetings in which Turks also participated. The ARF members spoke of cooperation and at the next meeting CUP members would speak. The external cooperation was looking good.⁴⁷

Zavarian requested that the fieldworkers in the provinces send in reports about conditions. They were Shahbaz in Sivas, Ferid Jemil in Aleppo, Ishkhan in Bitlis, Dikran in Diyarbekir, as well as Erzerum, Van, and Muş. Reports about conditions were needed to impress the diplomats. He was considering publishing their lengthy report and translating pertinent portions into French.⁴⁸

British officials were almost universally hostile to the activities of the ARF, regularly exaggerating its aims in their reports and then denouncing them as "preposterously ambitious." Ambassador Lowther alleged that the ARF program embodied "in a crude form the most extreme of the socialistic tendencies of Western Europe." Vice-Consul Dickson in Van claimed that:

they hope for the formation of an Armenian Republic, formed out of portions of Turkish, Russian, and Persian provinces, from which the non-Armenian elements will gradually be excluded ... the clergy are exhorting their flocks to marry young and to beget large families so as to swamp these other elements ... they are endeavouring to get all disputes referred to themselves for arbitration and not to the Turkish Courts ... they are still levying money contributions on their fellow-Nationalists...⁴⁹

The Constantinople Responsible Body agreed with the Western Bureau on the date to hold the next World Congress. It proposed five items that needed to

be included in the agenda: A. Legalizing the ARF in countries that had a constitutional government. B. The party's stance towards the people's demand that they arm themselves. C. The reexamination of the plan for secondary demands in the party platform. D. To define workers' activities concerning class issues in current conditions. E. The relocation of the bureaus.⁵⁰ Zavarian felt it was indispensable to continue to have an active ARF bureau abroad, in Europe, in order to face down their opponents. He had been opposing the idea proposed by some that the bureau be immediately moved to Constantinople and felt it should continue to work until the world congress.⁵¹

Newspapers

Because the party was convinced of the need for the organization in the empire to be self-governing, it decided to establish new newspapers in Van, Erzerum, and Kharpert (Harput). The papers were needed to educate and enhance intellectual youth so they could realize their potential. The cost was estimated at 30,000 francs which would be divided between the bodies in Constantinople, the Caucasus, and America.⁵² The newspapers would not be official organs of the ARF but would be affiliated with the party and thus semi-official. The newspapers in Van and Erzerum began publishing in the fall of 1908 while the Kharpert paper still needed additional funds before starting publication.⁵³

The ARF body in Constantinople was considering inviting the editor, Pierre Quillard, and manager of the party's French-language newspaper in Paris, *Pro Armenia*. The latter would be paid to look into publishing a French-language newspaper in Constantinople. It would be edited by Quillard and serve as an outlet for the leftist parties in Parliament, Greeks, Armenians, and opposition Turks. If it succeeded, it would explain the party's stance and "the dreams and the demands of the minority peoples to European public opinion." However, the party's Greek and Turkish allies did not come up with their share of the funds needed so the idea remained a dream.⁵⁴

The Armenian-language press in Constantinople was amenable to the party and its aims. A new paper named *Nor-Or* (New Day) would start publication soon and a number of ARF members would be working there.⁵⁵ Therefore the party postponed establishing its own newspaper. But by March, the body was fundraising to publish its own paper. The Western Bureau urged it not to establish an ARF organ, as it was a very expensive proposition. There wasn't much urgency, as the existing Armenian press would publish anything the party wrote so there was no need for the expense of a separate newspaper. The ARF newspaper in the Caucasus was an example as it hurt the party more than it benefited it.⁵⁶ The bureau was disappointed that the body disregarded their objections and was moving ahead and establishing a new newspaper. The bureau believed their resources could be better used in supporting friendly Turkish

newspapers and thus be able to influence non-Armenian public opinion by contributing articles in Turkish.⁵⁷

Relations with the Hnchakian Party

One delicate issue that arose in the party's organizational work was in dealing with the Hnchakian Party and its members in each locality. The party had split in 1896 when many of its fieldworkers demanded that the party abandon socialism and concentrate on national liberation and conflicts arose between the Russian- and Turkish-Armenians in the ranks. The differences could not be bridged and the dissenters formed the *Verakazmial Hnchakian* (Reformed Hnchakian) party.⁵⁸ Due to the split, the Hnchaks had lost its leading role in the Armenian community to the ARF. This was cause for a number of Hnchakian and Reformed Hnchakian members to join the ARF and these two developments created animus towards the ARF by the remaining Hnchak ranks.

Rosdom advised his comrades not to fear the Reformed Hnchaks: "If they represent any power, it is the power of the past. The present and future is ours." He was confident that they would join the ARF or at least cooperate.⁵⁹ The Hnchaks and Reformed Hnchaks had made a very bad impression in Samsun. Shahbaz believed that both feared fieldworkers like him. They wanted rich and influential people to join their local committee.⁶⁰ In Shabin Karahisar the Hnchaks had joined the ARF ranks through the efforts of Hrachia.⁶¹

Both the male and female teachers and the students in the Armenian and American schools in Sivas were supportive of the party. Most of the uneducated masses, however, had been convinced that socialism equaled immorality and thus kept their distance from the ARF. The local ARF body met with one of the prominent Hnchaks, Shavarsh, who raised questions about the party's work. He wondered if the ARF had been organized by the Russian government to serve their purposes. The local body enlightened him and other party leaders, but realized that it would take time as they had been Hnchaks for nineteen years and to join the ARF would be "like changing religions."⁶² The Hnchaks sent a petition to the Prelacy in Sivas to have Shahbaz expelled from the town as an "agitator." In spite of that, the party work was going well. Shahbaz complained that the Hnchaks had used ugly tactics and that it was difficult to have sincere cooperation with them as Zavarian had urged.⁶³ The Constantinople Responsible Body had criticized its body in Sivas for its altercation with the local Hnchakians and urged them to avoid future conflicts.⁶⁴ But Shahbaz protested that there was no way to seriously negotiate with them as they had even denounced the ARF to the church as an undesirable element.⁶⁵ There were similar tensions in Van:

At one of the numerous public meetings that Armenians delight to hold, some Tashnakists [Dashnaks] spoke, advocating Atheism. The population was furious, and a small riot ensued, while the Armenist and Hnchakist sections, jealous of the prestige

of their Tashnakist rivals, fanned the excitement of the people, and there was for a time real danger of a serious faction fight in the Armenian quarter. This was averted, mainly by the efforts of Vramian, the Tashnak leader, who is now more or less looked on here as the "King" of Armenia.⁶⁶

The Hnchakians had a regional convention for the region of Lesser Armenia that was attended by representatives from Tokat, Amasya, Hajikiugh, and Sivas. The convention sent three representatives to meet Shahbaz and announced that they had severed ties with the Hnchakian party's different factions. They wanted to work to arm the people for self-defense and asked for advice on the best means of doing so. Shahbaz suggested that the best means was for them to join the ARF, but they believed it was premature. For the time being they would cooperate with the ARF and, if all went well, may consider joining at a later date. Shahbaz also suggested they organize joint ceremonies, speeches, and lectures.⁶⁷

Economic Issues

The Constantinople Responsible Body sent 100 liras to its body in Muş asking that they form a special committee to distribute the funds to the poor and starving. It promised to send more later and suggested that the funds be used to give people work and to train them in crafts so that they could later support themselves. It asked that the funds be well accounted for so that a report could be published in the press. The body had already applied to the government for assistance, especially in the form of seeds, and were still pursuing that. They urged Muş to try to get opponents of the *ancien régime* into the government if there was to be any hope of positive change.⁶⁸

The ARF body in the Bitlis area was complaining about the difficulty in alleviating the famine and the suffering of the people because of the years of neglect and the existing system. Constantinople told the ARF body in Daron to keep precise reports of charitable funds it was distributing to the needy and to work through a committee. It urged that people work for their assistance, even the orphans if they were at least twelve. That way they would avoid making begging and laziness a habit. The government promised a small contribution to these efforts, maybe 1,000 pounds or so if Hilmi Pasha and his associates kept their promise. The hope was that fraternity and justice would not just be words and the Turks had not duped them and therefore conditions would improve if they showed patience.⁶⁹ The next month the Agricultural Bank ordered its local branches in the interior to allocate 200,000 pounds to buy seed for the famine region.⁷⁰

The local ARF complained that the municipal government in Hajin and Vahga had not changed at all since the revolution. Armenian views were still ignored and their rights were not respected. Families were being forced to sell their donkeys and homes to pay their taxes although the donkey was likely

their only means of income. During such a famine, it was impossible to pay the taxes they were assessed.⁷¹

Shahbaz reported that there was famine in the Ashod area where the Turks were also looting and oppressing the people and taking flour and wheat from people if they could not pay back taxes. He wanted to have the people arm themselves but did not dare pursue it considering they did not have money for bread.⁷² There was no money in Sivas and the people were so poor it was almost famine conditions. Therefore the party could do no fundraising there. The local gomidehs were funded through member dues paid in pennies (*paras*).⁷³ Concerning the famine, Shahbaz urged the body to ask the Armenian National Assembly to pay attention to the issue. He believed it was a mistake to send money to the poor villages. The villagers were receiving money and flour and were immediately handing the money over to their lenders who were standing at the door of the Prelacy where the distribution was being done. The villagers had enough wheat, but needed seed for the next planting season or else the famine would last several years.⁷⁴

Local women sympathetic to the ARF informed Shahbaz about conditions for female workers in rug manufacturing. He researched the issue and found gross exploitation. A rug made for 20 francs would be sold in Paris for 100 francs. The workers were poorly paid and in poor health with tuberculosis on the rise. Since pay was by piecework, the women were killing themselves for "a piece of stale bread." Shahbaz was working to form a mutual assistance 'union' or cooperative for the future for these two to three thousand workers. On the other hand, the female workers in Adar Paza were happy as they had formed a sort of a cooperative and had bought silk-making cocoons on their own.⁷⁵ There were complaints about the excessive and unfair taxes in Sivas. The central government responded to complaints by blaming local officials and promising to send orders to stop the exploitative practices, but nothing was done. Shahbaz was able to obtain a copy of a signed and sealed order sent from Constantinople to the *kaimakam* of Shabin Karahisar to confiscate the lands and belongings of Armenians and jailing them for failure to pay the outrageous taxes.⁷⁶

The government was pestering the prelacies to collect the military taxes from Armenian men in lieu of military service. The prelacies were stalling them, basing their objections on the fact that a decision had been made that Armenians would serve in the army, therefore there was no reason for Armenian men to pay the exemption tax. It was a problem that the Patriarchate and Constantinople body needed to work out with the government and inform the locals whether to pay the tax or serve in the army.⁷⁷ Zavarian worried about a number of telegrams that had been sent to the Interior Ministry claiming that the Armenians had strayed from the law. There were promises that the weak *mutessarrif* in Muş would be removed. There would also be an inquiry. Concerning the idea of paying people in the famine area, the body agreed that they had to be saved from hunger. But it was important that they do some work for

their money, even if it was only sweeping the streets. Getting the people used to getting something for free would kill their character.⁷⁸

The British Consul in Erzerum reported that the province's economic condition had been poor during the prior winter. Although the fall's harvest was not a failure, it was 20 to 25 percent below the average, and, since the harvest of the year before was also deficient, the outlook for the winter was not good:

Owing, however, to the measures taken by the Governor-General, in conjunction with a Committee of the leading Notables, to insure a supply of flour from Kars and to the prohibition placed upon the export of grain from the provinces, there has at no time been a danger of a state of famine. But though this is so, there has been none the less a large amount of distress among the poorer classes ... due not so much to the price of bread ... as to the lack of employment, and to the fact that where employment has been obtainable, the wage given can hardly, even for this country, be called a living one.... The conditions, however, I am told, are not unfavourable for sowing operations, while the Government has done its share by coming to the assistance of the villagers in advancing some 30,000 Turkish liras for purchases of seed in addition to the usual supplies furnished by the Agricultural Bank.⁷⁹

Security Issues

The kidnapping of Armenian girls by Turks increased in the Sivas region after the Constitution. A girl was kidnapped in Divrig in January and despite the protests of church officials, they married her to a Turk in a Muslim service.⁸⁰ For more than a month in Divrig, people came to Dr. Bairuyr's house to welcome him. He bemoaned the backwardness of the village and the fact that although the people complained, they wouldn't stand up for their rights. The Turks were treating them worse than they had before the Constitution. The *kaimakam* and police chief, both CUP members, completely ignored complaints made by Armenians or poor Turks.⁸¹

The Constantinople Responsible Body raised questions in Parliament about conditions in the Armenian provinces. The deputies gathered documents and statements in order to have evidence to answer questions about their descriptions of the persecutions and thievery. Soon an inspection committee would be going to the provinces. It believed that it was because of its strong demands and protests that an inspection committee had been formed to go and examine the situation. It was able to place Hovhannes Shamnazar into the committee, but protested the inclusion of a few untrustworthy, unsavory characters. A special circular was sent to its bodies to tell them how to behave when the committee came to their area.⁸²

ARF members in Muş and Bitlis were very unhappy and were complaining about local conditions. While Constantinople agreed that they had the right to complain, they needed to be patient and not make too much trouble. It was working every day with the Interior Ministry to defend Armenian rights and improve conditions. It was unreasonable to expect people who had been rob-

bing and looting all their lives to turn into lambs overnight. The Armenians had to show in words and deeds that they were the friends of the Turkish people and would remain friends.⁸³ In Adana *vilayet* a few murders of Armenians were reported as having taken place after the *Bairam* Muslim holiday, but on the whole things were quiet. A *hodja* in the town of Hajin preached a sermon recommending the massacre of Armenians, but the authorities took prompt action and jailed him.⁸⁴

The British Ambassador informed his foreign minister about conditions in the provinces:

The situation in the Vilayet of Diyarbekir is somewhat uncertain, though it is satisfactory to note that Mr. Rawlins does not consider that there is any danger of an attack on the Christian population. The turbulent Eshreffs of the town seem to be hesitating between a continuation of their old attitude of opposition to any efforts made by the Vali to improve the general situation, and the opinion that such a policy is now played out, and that their best chance of maintaining their influence is to throw in their lot with the reformed regime.⁸⁵

I learn from the Acting Consul at Aleppo that disturbances are rumoured to have begun at Birejik, and it is to be feared that they may be extended over other Armenian districts. He reports that Armenians were plundered and massacred in Antioch yesterday.⁸⁶

Erzerum *vilayet* was almost entirely without disorders for the first months of 1909. This pleasantly surprised British Consul Shipley as police powers had been curtailed. Therefore he concluded that, "the maintenance of public order has been largely due to the good sense and self-control of the people themselves." Shipley also noted that:

On their part, the Armenians have contributed their fair share towards the maintenance of order and, as a population, have shown a commendable desire to avoid offending the susceptibilities and prejudices of their Mussulman fellow-subjects, with the result that the good relations between the two inaugurated by the celebrations of August and September of last year have been satisfactorily maintained.⁸⁷

Similarly, the British Consul in Van remarked that, "Since the election, the Armenians in general and the Tashnakists [Dashnaks] in particular, have been more subdued than previously, though their relations with the native Turks have never been really warm..." Despite their attempts to avoid provocations, the Muslims resented the Armenians for exercising the liberties they were enjoying for the first time:

This animosity is directed principally against the Tashnakists and their Russian leaders, Vramian, Aram, and Ishkhan, as it is they who are striving to procure the punishment of Kurdish and other Moslem malefactors, for past offences....⁸⁸

Conditions in Van were further inflamed when an Armenian assassinated a Kurdish chief who had murdered his brother and kidnapped his sister-in-law and niece. This caused great agitation in the Muslim community and rumors were rampant. Because the assassin had once been an ARF *fedayi*, it was said that the party had ordered the "execution" and that other Muslim agitators had been condemned for a similar fate. Thus, this act:

served as pretext to increase the hate of the local Moslems for the Armenians, and above all, for the Tashnakists, and they have been invited by their leaders, such as our Oghli Omâr, Kiamil Effendi, Haji Husni Effendi, to acts of violence.⁸⁹

There was progress in other areas such as in the disarming the *Hamidiye* regiments. It was being accomplished successfully and without difficulty with some 2,000 rifles collected out of a total of 2,200 issued by the government in the Van region.⁹⁰

Arms

With very few exceptions the youth was organized in the Pingian area, but they needed guns and ammunition. They only had some old rifles that were almost useless and asked Constantinople for guns as they were sure that it would increase the party's prestige there. The Kurds in neighboring Dersim were very well armed and that was very dangerous. The soldiers that were defending Dersim were leaving having done nothing to reduce the danger posed by the Kurdish bands so arms were needed for the people to defend themselves.⁹¹

The special committee working on self-defense was buying armaments and transporting them to the interior. The work was neither safe nor easy. Their preference was for Mauser pistols rather than rifles. When some expatriates from America wanted to buy rifles for Chemizgazag, the body offered to use the money for Mausers that they would send there.⁹² Zavarian wrote Varantian asking him to inform those members working on obtaining arms about where they were cheaper. They had ordered 100 from a catalog, but the price had increased by 30 percent. They could be bought cheaper even in Samsun.⁹³ The body in Constantinople told Sivas that they had not yet found out from Samsun if it would be possible to establish direct contact between them to acquire pistols. Instead it suggested that it receive the funds and coordinate the purchases with Samsun.⁹⁴

It was the assessment of the British consul in Erzerum that importation of arms could be justified in only some areas:

The only explanation which, as far as I can discover, has been put forward for this importation of arms seems to be that, in case a reaction should take place, the outlying Armenian villages ought not to be left entirely defenceless in the disorder which, it is presumed, would ensue. But although an argument of this kind may not be without

a certain force in vilayets such as Van and Bitlis, where the Armenians have good reasons for not placing too much confidence in their Kurdish neighbours, it has no application to the major part of this province, where the attitude of the Mussulmans towards the Christians has been consistently friendly, and certainly not such as to give any present reason to suppose that, even if troubles were to break out, it is the Armenians who would be made the special sufferers.⁹⁵

The Adana Massacres

The Adana region had seen a number of provocative acts against the Armenian population starting as soon as the constitutional restoration had been proclaimed. The failure of the local government to take action against the perpetrators or otherwise prevent future attacks encouraged the later atrocities. Prominent Muslim notables, *muftis*, and tribal chiefs fomented others and in some cases made overt threats themselves once the Armenians began to celebrate the new form of government. The American head of a local college reported that many of his students had been hearing that the Armenians were going to be killed. One tribal chief in the region complained that the changes would diminish his authority and the prestige and freedom of his tribe and therefore it was necessary to attack the Armenians, who were viewed as the main beneficiary of the changes.⁹⁶

Vahakn Dadrian has noted that this anti-Armenian agitation was also fueled by a local CUP newspaper, *Itidal*. One of the newspaper's editors, Ihsan Fikri, ignored his political differences with Cevad, the *vali* and an ardent supporter of Abdul Hamid, in order to join together in a campaign to demean and demonize the Armenians. They were joined by the both the provincial military governor and the commander of the gendarmerie. There was also agitation by religious elements that called for the restoration of Islamic law, the *Şeriat*, and blamed the Armenians for its elimination and replacement by the Constitution.⁹⁷ Feroz Ahmad has described the religious movement:

While the Committee was consolidating its position, the reactionary forces were getting organized too. On April 5, 1909, the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, the Society of Muhammed was officially established ... Its doctrines and programme of action were clerical and strongly opposed to the idea of union based on the Ottoman ideal. It stood for the rule of the Seriat, and if there were to be any union, it must be based on the ideal of Islam. The Society was therefore against the westernizing reformism of both the CUP and the Liberal Union.⁹⁸

In reaction to the threats and provocations, the Armenians continued to make efforts to arm themselves should self-defense be necessary. But even this precautionary measure was exploited to inspire fear and hatred among the Muslim masses. It was "deliberately misportrayed as an Armenian conspiracy to overwhelm the Muslim population of Adana and take over the region."

The anti-Armenian agitators also planted rumors about commando raids that had been launched against Muslims by Armenian *fedayis*. The rumors often had hundreds of Armenian fighters massacring Muslim villagers and gained enough currency that one *kaimakam* urgently requested a battalion of troops "to withstand a purely imaginary attack of 1500 Armenians." Other rumors had the Armenians of Hajin revolting and marching on Adana or an Armenian man raping a Turkish woman and killing her husband. Yet another blamed the Armenians for the desecration of the great Ulu Cami mosque of Adana. This enraged many Muslims against the Armenians, as it was likely intended to do, and it was some time later that the culprits were identified as Turkish.⁹⁹

The rumors, propaganda, and agitation succeeded in increasing Muslim resentment against the Armenians, a resentment that was further heightened by their freer public behavior under the Constitution. Stephan Astourian has analyzed that:

The freer public behavior which the Turks considered a provocation consisted of religious processions, of communal meetings, and of theater plays during which references were made to the history of the medieval Armenian kingdoms of Cilicia. As a result of such remembrances of times past rumors circulated to the effect that Armenians wanted to recreate such a kingdom. Under the Constitution, the behavior of the Armenians was legal and certainly not subversive. What counts, however, in this case as in previous ones, is the Turkish perception of it. From their perspective, Armenians had lost the sense of modesty and discretion that befitted a *dhimmi*, especially in religious matters. Turkish outrage stemmed from the fact that the regulation and ritualization of interaction between the Turks and the Armenians, which had lasted for centuries, were undergoing radical change under the new constitutional regime.¹⁰⁰

In addition, Vahakn Dadrian has observed that all resentments against the CUP and the changes wrought by the Constitution could be directed at the Armenian population of Adana who:

were recognized as the manifest and at times demonstrative champions of the Ittihadist principles of constitutional liberties. Intoxicated with their new found freedoms they flaunted it, to the point of provoking many Turks, some of whom were Abdul Hamit loyalists who resented the new leadership of the Young Turks, some others were residual bureaucrats apprehensive about losing their jobs, and most of them were aroused and angry at the idea of considering their former *rayas*, the "infidel" subjects, their equals. Moreover, Adana and its environs were those rare spots which had escaped the massacres and devastations of the 1894-1896 Abdul Hamit era. This fact, plus the relative affluence of the indigenous Armenian population, served to render them a suitable target for annihilation at a propitious moment.¹⁰¹

Soon the tactics shifted to armed assaults and murders of Armenians, first in the outlying villages and towns, and gradually towards the center of the province. "The idea was to force some Armenians to kill some Turks in acts of

self-defense or retaliation, i.e., provoking them to commit the supreme offence, the murder of a Muslim by ... [an] infidel.... Mullahs would thus be provided a precious opportunity for inflammatory speeches in the guise of funeral orations, making the victim a rallying point for anti-Armenianism."¹⁰²

The opportunity for a full-scale assault on the Armenians came after the troops of the First Army Corps from Macedonia mutinied on the night of April 12, 1909. The men overpowered their officers and marched on Parliament together with a large number of religious students, *softas*. During the morning, more troops and members of the *ulema* joined the mob as they demanded the resignation of the grand vizier, the Ministers of War and of the Navy, and Ahmet Riza, the President of the Chamber of Deputies. They also demanded that a number of CUP members serving in the officer corps be replaced and that some CUP deputies be banished from Constantinople. Although the government had realized that the situation in the capital was volatile, they were completely taken by surprise by the insurrection. There was chaos in the Parliament and the grand vizier tendered his resignation. CUP deputies and prominent members fled the city or went underground and their newspaper offices were sacked; "The CUP seemed to have been completely routed."¹⁰³

On the morning of April 13th, the activities in the capital looked like an anti-CUP movement and a struggle between the Ahrar Party and the CUP. But within a day it became clear to the ARF body that it was a reactionary, military movement organized by the Palace, which was taking advantage of the fighting between the parties and the general anti-CUP mood. There were planned murders during which the mob chanted for the reinstatement of *Şeriat* rule. The persecution and murder of the educated officers left no doubt that the Palace was behind it all. There was clearly a plot, and not coincidence, that the coup against the government occurred at the same time as the massacres in Adana.¹⁰⁴ Conditions in the capital were conducive to a coup as Feroz Ahmad has explained:

The strength of the Committee was always exaggerated, and it never amounted to very much in Istanbul. The Committee had enjoyed considerable support when it was struggling against the despotism of the Palace. But once the despotism was destroyed, only the expectations of a very few were satisfied, and the dissatisfied elements went into opposition ... the Committee was split into factions once it had achieved its basic aim; those members dedicated to the ideal of reform and the creation of a modern state were always in a minority. The Committee had also created a number of dissatisfied elements.

These included opportunists who had joined CUP so they could be appointed to high positions who were frustrated when CUP didn't enter the government. There were also large numbers of people put out of work when the Sultan's espionage network was abolished and the ministries reorganized.¹⁰⁵

The ARF body in Constantinople, putting aside its differences with the CUP, wanted to bring all parties together to save the Constitution. It felt it had to stand firmly on the side of the persecuted CUP in order to defend the Constitution. It called the leaders of all the parties and important newspapers together in three meetings whose aims were to stop all inter-party fighting and resist the Sultan together and to convince the CUP not to undertake reprisals and repeat its past mistakes. While the meetings showed some good results, events were moving very quickly.¹⁰⁶

Abdul Hamid's agents had already been working with the other agitators in Adana, and they now led the first wave of massacres of the Armenian population. The massacres started with the public assassination of two prominent Armenian leaders. David Urfalian, a member of the appellate court who was respected by both Muslims and non-Muslims, was shot in the back in the *bazaar* on the orders of the Adana notable, Bagdadizade Abdul Kader. Artin Shadrigan, a member of the Adana city council, was killed in the council chambers in the presence of the *Vali*, Cevad. On the 18th, the British Consul in Aleppo reported a disturbance in Marash that had resulted in fourteen Armenians and five Turks being killed. At the same time the press was reporting: "that pillage and massacre were the order of the day at Sis, Hajin, Osmanieh, Deurtyol, and other districts in the region anciently known as Lesser Armenia." Armenian farms and villages had been pillaged and burnt in the area surrounding Alexandretta and similar violence seemed imminent in Payas and Chokmerziman according to other consular reports.¹⁰⁷ However, this first wave of massacres:

proved more or less abortive for the assaulting forces. Anticipating the eventuality of the onslaught, several hundred young Armenians had secured arms and devised strategy for self-defense. As a result, they not only warded off the attacks and protected the larger populations residing in the Armenian wards of the city of Adana, but in the process exacted heavy tolls from the assaulting forces.¹⁰⁸

In Izmir, the government invited the Armenians to join them in defending the constitution. In one night, 130 men volunteered and the government armed them as they had the Muslims. They were sent to defend the railroad line from Constantinople. Others were assigned to protect the city. Zavarian believed that if the CUP would play it smart, they would have a ready-made militia that would be beneficial if the Kurds and the Hamidiye were to take sides with the reactionaries.¹⁰⁹ The body organized village guards in the provinces to defend the populace. In Izmir and Bahehejek the party provided 270 volunteers who were armed by the army and who helped keep the peace and guard the railway. In Rodosto, 55 Armenians volunteered and were being trained by a Turkish officer to serve in the army. Many deserters and *softas* escaped to the interior and would probably become hooligans and thieves. The government was trying to follow them and find them.¹¹⁰ In Erzerum there were big attacks by hooligans

and they demolished the local CUP club. ARF members were cooperating with their CUP counterparts in Diyarbekir, Trebizond, and Samsun and together sent telegrams asking for peace and security.¹¹¹

Although the CUP had been driven out of Constantinople, it regrouped in the provinces and began countermeasures. It organized demonstrations in the towns and the mass wiring of telegrams of protest to the capital. An "Action Army" was formed in Salonika, made up of regular army units reinforced by volunteers, mostly Albanians. It was led by Mahmud Şevket Pasha, commander of the Third Army. The ARF body in the capital made a special appeal to Mahmud Şevket, asking that he telegraph the provinces, and especially Cilicia, to protect the lives and properties of the Armenians. Both the CUP and the army commanders showed amity and trust as well as respect towards the ARF. When the army entered Constantinople, recommendation papers issued by the ARF were accepted as a *carte blanche*. The army did what it was charged to do, it surrounded the palace, and the city became a battleground for a few days while deserters were surrendering. On the night of April 23 the city was occupied after some skirmishing. Four days later Parliament proclaimed that Abdul Hamid was deposed and replaced by his brother Mehmed Reşad. Abdul Hamid was taken to Salonika while his son Bahmanedin, the leader of the insurrection, escaped to Corfu. Two courts martial were established under martial law and they convicted and executed a large number of the rebels. A number of the members of the Ahrar party were also arrested, but later freed due to British pressure.¹¹² Simon Zavarian wrote:

Cannons were firing in Constantinople announcing the ascension of the new Sultan to the throne. Soldiers and the people were crowded on Galata Avenue and clapping with each shot. Abdul Hamid had been dethroned and some of his people had been jailed, some innocents among the guilty.... The occupation of the city was very successful. If there were some fears, "our boys had good positions" and the Kurds had stationed themselves as well.¹¹³

In Adana, on the other hand, the largely successful defense only provided a temporary reprieve. As Vahakn Dadrian has described:

However, there are also limits to the possibilities of success for such undertakings. Having experienced a depletion of their resources of armed resistance, and in a condition of utmost exhaustion, the Armenians wearily consented to disarm for a truce arranged by the British Consul at nearby Mersin. In the meantime, new contingents of the Turkish army had arrived ostensibly to restore "peace and order." What followed was one of the most gruesome and savage bloodbaths ever recorded in human history. Enraged by the magnitude of the losses they sustained during the first round of the conflagration, the Turks, directly supported by the newly arrived army contingents, descended upon the totally disarmed and defenseless Armenians, butchering and burning them alive by the thousands. Schools, hospitals, and churches were especially selected for this purpose. The overwhelming majority of the twenty-five thousand Armenian victims of the Adana Holocaust in fact died at this second stage of the perpetration of mass murder.¹¹⁴

The stoking of the resentments of the Muslim population resulted in their massive participation in the massacres. They were also motivated by the opportunity for valuable looting as most of the tradesmen and artisans in the region were Armenian.¹¹⁵ Thus the British Embassy received reports of continuing massacres in Killis and its surrounding villages as well as Antioch, Kirikhan, and Zeitun:

there were in Adana 15,000 Christians in a state of destitution; that upwards of 200l. would be needed daily for bread alone; that nineteen Protestant pastors had been murdered; and that it would be necessary to start two large orphanages. At Alexandretta there were on the 23rd April over 3,000 refugees from the surrounding district, where massacre was general. Beylan was being besieged, and a force sent to Chokmerziman only obtained an ineffectual truce of a few hours duration.... On the 25th April news reached the Embassies that Deurtyol, a town some 7 kilometres from the coast in the vicinity of Payas, where 10,000 Christians had taken refuge, was surrounded, and that a massacre had commenced at Cassaba, a place southwest of Antioch....¹¹⁶

At the beginning of the attacks, the Armenians in Adana showed some resistance and defended themselves. But once the army arrived, they were massacred. There were between 10,000 and 20,000 dead and some villages were completely annihilated. The *Vali* of Adana announced that the massacres occurred by the orders of the CUP. The ARF did not know how true that was but it was clear that the massacres were well planned and systematically carried out. There was an inquiry going on. The Armenian deputies were going to propose funds for the injured and demand a military tribunal to punish the guilty. The body then got telegrams from its members in Izmir and Alexandria as well as Prelate Mushegh of Adana announcing that the massacres had been repeated. A church and a school that the victims had fled to had been burned.¹¹⁷

British Vice-Consul, Major Doughty Wylie, was the only foreign consul in Adana and was a first hand witness to a great deal of the carnage. He personally intervened to stop the fighting and prevent massacres in a number of locations in the city. To him, the attacks throughout the province had to have been planned and coordinated:

The massacre began in very distant places, on the same day and at nearly the same hour. The local provocation at Adana could not have effected this. I am inclined to think that some, at any rate, of the authorities knew of the intended massacre beforehand.... I do not understand why the Ferik, a Turkish General, has from the first displayed such pitiable cowardice. He refuses to leave his konak even now.... One of the very few officials of this province who has kept massacre from his town is the Mutessarif of Mersina.¹¹⁸

The military tribunal was arresting reactionaries and others suspected of participating in the insurrection in the capital. The CUP ignored the advice of the ARF and arrested a number of members of the Ahrar party including Prince

Sabaheddin. The party saw these as grave errors, especially as Sabaheddin could not have been involved. Upon their intervention, he was released. The new cabinet would probably be mostly CUP members, but there were few other capable leaders available.¹¹⁹ But in a number of cases, authorities in Adana refused to execute certain murderers, even though they had been caught "red-handed," because they were fellow Muslims. In fact, the new *Vali* for the region tried to put the blame for the massacres on the Armenians and only arrested a few secondary Muslim culprits. He then appointed Abdullah Kadri Effendi Baghdadli as President of the relief committee, despite the fact that he had been one of the organizers of the massacres.¹²⁰

Thus the first nine months of constitutional rule, which had begun with such promise, ended with yet more blood. Official equality as Ottoman citizens had not prevented the murder of Armenians and the second round of massacres after suppression of the counterrevolutionaries would force the ARF to reevaluate its cooperation with the CUP.

Notes

1. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 108-9.
2. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 9-12; M. Naim Turfan, *Rise of the Young Turks: Politics, the Military and Ottoman Collapse*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2000), 66-7.
3. Mikael Varantian, *H.H. Tashnagtzutian Badmutium* [History of the A.R.F.] Vol. II. (Paris: Imp. de Navarre, 1932), 7-8.
4. Dasnabedian, *History of the ARF*, 198, 211.
5. C/191-6/Agnouni to Troshag Editorial Board, (Constantinople, Aug. 8, 1908); Varantian, 8.
6. Varantian, 9.
7. C/191-62/Pingian Youth Committee to Constantinople Responsible Body, Oct. 6, 1908.
8. Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), 53.
9. Kayali, 53.
10. Zürcher, *Turkey*, 98-9.
11. Kayali, 53-56. Ahmet Rıza Bey was Director of Education in Bursa but fled to France in 1889. He started a campaign there to restore the Constitution and published the main opposition newspaper, *Meşveret*. He led one wing of the CUP, but his positivism and cosmopolitanism estranged him from the key figures in the party. After the revolution, he was elected to the CUP Central Committee and later as the President of the Chamber of Deputies, but he did not wield any real power.
12. Kayali, 64-5. Under the *Tanzimat* reforms the Ottoman provincial government was reorganized. A governor-general (*vali*) governed each province (*vilayet*). Each *vilayet* was divided into a number of *sancaks*, each with its own governor (*mutasarrif*). Each *sancak*, in turn, was divided into a number of districts (*kazas*) governed by a *kaimakan*. The area of Historical Armenia was divided into all or part of six *vilayets*: Sivas (Sepastia), Erzerum (Garin), Mamuret El-Aziz (Kharpert), Diyarbekir (Dikranagert), Bitlis (Paghesh), and Van.

13. Feroz Ahmad, "The Special Relationship: The Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Jewish Political Elite, 1908-1914," in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2002), 215-6.
14. Anahide Ter Minassian, "The Role of the Armenian Community in the Foundation and Development of the Socialist Movement in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey: 1876-1923," in *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1923*, eds. Mete Tuncay and Erik Jan Zürcher (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1994), 140; Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1997), 245-301. Kegham Der Garabedian [aka Dadrag, aka Asoghig] was born in a village on the plains of Muş. He was educated at St. Garabed Monastery in Muş and the Kevorkian Seminary in Etchmiadzin. He moved to Constantinople and then lived in Dikranagert (Diyarbakir) from 1894-6. He became a key figure in the Daron Central Committee and, in 1906, the ARF Daron-Vasbouragan Responsible Body, and worked to improve the economic and educational conditions in the Muş region. He was elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908 and 1912.
15. Varantian, 10-13.
16. Dasnabedian, *History*, 214.
17. C/191-16/Rosdom to Ungerner [comrades], Aug. 15, 1908.
18. C/191-29/Constantinople Responsible Body to Ungerner, Aug. 29, 1908. The ARF Constantinople Responsible Body oversaw ARF activities throughout the Ottoman Empire in the initial period after the Constitutional Restoration, as the Western Bureau had not yet established a structure to adapt to the new political situation. Its role would later be taken over by the Western Bureau-Turkish Section which was comprised of bureau members based in Constantinople.
19. C/191-37/Simon Zavarian to Karmen, (Constantinople, Sep. 8, 1908); Dasnabedian, *History*, 213.
20. C/191-90/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Nov. 8/21, 1908.
21. C/191-89/Constantinople Responsible Body to Trebizond ARF Body, Nov. 7, 1908.
22. *Ibid.*; C/191-90/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Nov. 8/21, 1908.
23. C/191-90/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Nov. 8/21, 1908. Vartkes Serengiulian [aka Kissag, aka Hovhannes] was born in Erzerum and graduated from that city's Sanasarian College. He moved to Constantinople in 1891 and was active in ARF activities there until he was arrested in 1896. After his release he moved first to Bulgaria and then in 1901 to the Van region where he helped reorganize the ARF ranks that had lost its key leadership. He was arrested in 1903 and kept imprisoned until the Constitutional Restoration. He was elected to the Ottoman Parliament representing Erzerum in 1908 and 1912. He would become a member of the ARF-CUP Joint Body that met in Constantinople from 1910 to 1911. Karekin Pastermajian [aka Armen Garo, aka Garo] was also born in Erzerum and graduated from Sanasarian College. He attended the Nancy Agricultural School and played a leading role in the occupation of the Ottoman Bank in 1896. He earned a Ph. D. in Chemistry in Switzerland and was elected to the Western Bureau in 1898. He led the defense of Tiflis during the Armeno-Tatar War and was elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908 and 1912 representing Erzerum. He would be part of the ARF-CUP Joint Body and in 1913 would be elected to the Western Bureau.
24. C/191-124A/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Marsovan, Dec. 8, 1908). Dasnabedian, *History*, 207. Vartan Shahbaz [aka Shahen] was born in the

- village of Odur in Sivas province and took part in the occupation of the Ottoman Bank in 1896. Starting in 1902, he was a *fedayi* commander in the Van region and was a delegate to the 1904 ARF World Congress. He became a key fieldworker in his home region once the party was able to operate openly.
25. C/191-73/Telegram by the ARF to CUP headquarters in Salonika; C/191-102/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Nov. 19, 1908.
 26. C/191-124A/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Marsovan, Dec. 8, 1908).
 27. C/193-17/Constantinople Responsible Body to United States Central Committee, Jan. 22/ Feb. 4, 1909.
 28. C/191-141A/Constantinople Responsible Body to US Central Committee, Dec. 31, 1908.
 29. C/193-10/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Jan. 13/26, 1909.
 30. C/193-17/Constantinople Responsible Body to United States Central Committee, Jan. 22/ Feb. 4, 1909.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. C/193-26/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Feb. 3, 1909).
 33. C/193-10/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Jan. 13/26, 1909.
 34. C/191-77/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Trebizond, Oct. 24, 1908).
 35. C/191-88/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, Nov. 6, 1908.
 36. C/193-14/Souren to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Kharpert, Jan. 17, 1909). Dro was Drasdamad Ganayan [aka Souren] one of the foremost *fedayi* commanders. He was born in Igdır and educated in Yerevan and played an important role in supervising arms shipments.
 37. C/194-13/Ashod Yergat & Antranig to Constantinople Responsible Body, Jan. 13/26, 1909. Antranig Ozanian [aka Bairuyr] was born in Shabin Karahisar and was one of the most prominent and audacious *fedayi* commanders. He joined the ARF in 1892 and his units defended Armenian villages in Muş and Sassoun regions during the 1894-6 massacres. He led his *fedayis* in many clashes against Ottoman forces from 1899-1904 including the Sassoun uprising. He moved to Iran and then Bulgaria, where he established the ARF Military Academy. He was a delegate to the ARF Fourth World Congress in 1907 where he was elected to the ARF Demonstrative Body. He would later resign from the party due to its cooperation with the CUP.
 38. C/191-123/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Marsovan, Dec. 5, 1908).
 39. C/194-29/Dr. T. Nazlian to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Evereg, Feb. 4, 1909).
 40. C/194-31/Bedros Atmajian to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sis, Feb. 5/18, 1909).
 41. A Vartabed was an unmarried priest in the Armenian Apostolic church.
 42. C/194-35/Dr. Haigaz Bairuyr to Agnoui, (Divrig, Feb. 12/26, 1909).
 43. C/191-52/Constantinople Responsible Body to ARF Sivas Body, Sep. 19, 1908.
 44. C/193-3/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 6/19, 1909); C/193-9/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 15, 1909); C/193-23/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 20, 1909).
 45. C/193-17/Constantinople Responsible Body to United States Central Committee, Jan. 22/ Feb. 4, 1909.

46. C/193-22/Constantinople Responsible Body to Mourad, Jan. 26, 1909; C/193-59/Constantinople Responsible Body to Mourad, Mar. 9/22, 1909; Dasnabedian, *History*, 206. Mourad of Sepastia was born in the village of Govdoun in Sivas province and was one of the foremost *fedayi* commanders. He was one of the leaders of the 1904 Sassoun uprising and the Armeno-Tatar War of 1905. In 1907 he was elected as a member of the ARF Daron-Vasbouragan Responsible Body and with the Constitution became a fieldworker and organizer in Sivas.
47. C/193-64/Keri to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Bandrma, Mar. 26, 1909); Dasnabedian, *History*, 195. Keri (Arshag Kafavian) was born in Erzerum where he joined the ARF. He was one of the oldest of the *fedayi* commanders as was clear from his nom de guerre which means "uncle." He was a key figure in the 1904 Sassoun rebellion, the Armeno-Tatar War, and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution from 1908-1912.
48. C/191-124B/Simon Zavarian to Mikael Varantian, (Constantinople, Nov. 27/Dec. 9, 1908). Ferid Jemil was the *nom de guerre* of Dikran Amseyan. He was educated at Sanasarian College and worked as a teacher in different regions. Ishkhan of Van (Nigol Odabashian) was born in Karabagh and educated in Shushi. He fought with Nevrouz's *fedayi* band and in 1903 moved to Van and became the ARF fieldworker for the region south of Lake Van. He was a delegate to the ARF Fourth World Congress and would be killed by order of Cevdet Bey in 1915.
49. FO424/218/15, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Jan. 18, 1909).
50. C/193-51/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Mar. 3/16, 1909.
51. C/191-64/Simon Zavarian to Western Bureau, (Constantinople, Oct. 4, 1908).
52. C/191-56/Constantinople Responsible Body to U.S. Central Committee, Sep. 28, 1908.
53. C/191-141A/Constantinople Responsible Body to U.S. Central Committee, Dec. 31, 1908.
54. *Ibid.*; C/193-17/Constantinople Responsible Body to United States Central Committee, Jan. 22/ Feb. 4, 1909.
55. C/191-51/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Sep. 19, 1908.
56. C/191-45/Agnouni to Western Bureau, (Constantinople, Sep. 16, 1908); C/57-74/Western Bureau to Constantinople Responsible Body, Mar. 25, 1909.
57. C/57-91/Western Bureau to Constantinople Responsible Body, Apr. 13, 1909.
58. Hratch Dasnabedian, "The Hnchakian Party," *Armenian Review* 41:4 (Winter 1988): 31-2.
59. C/191-16/Rosdom to Ungerner, Aug. 15, 1908.
60. C/191-99/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Samsun, Nov. 16, 1908).
61. C/191-113/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas ARF Body, Nov. 27, 1908.
62. C/193-23/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 20, 1909).
63. C/193-16/Shahbaz to Simon Zavarian, (Sivas, Jan. 22, 1909).
64. C/193-6/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas Gomideh, Jan. 10/23, 1909.
65. C/193-23/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 20, 1909).
66. FO424/219/62, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr. 20, 1909), enclosure 1, Vice-Consul Dickson Quarterly Report to Sir G. Lowther (Van, Mar. 31, 1909). Arshag Vramian [aka Vahap] was born in Constantinople and graduated from the Kevorkian College of Echmiadzin. He was a central figure in the ARF in Constantinople until the Ottoman Bank occupation made him a wanted man. He was elected to the Western Bureau but from 1899-1907 he worked in the United States as an editor and ARF fieldworker. He was elected to the Eastern Bureau in 1907, but went to Van after the Constitution was restored and then to

- Constantinople as a member of the Western Bureau and the *Azadamard* editorial board. He and Shahrigian would be assigned to represent the party in meetings with the CUP Central Committee in Salonika and he would become a member of the ARF-CUP Joint Body. He would be elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1913, representing Van.
67. C/191-124A/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Marsovan, Dec. 8, 1908).
68. C/191-71/Simon Zavarian to ARF Muş Body, (Constantinople, Aug. 17/30, 1908).
69. C/191-109/Constantinople Responsible Body to Daron ARF Body, Nov. 26, 1908. Hilmi Pasha would become grand vizier in February of 1909. The Daron region included the city of Muş and the Sassoun highlands and was part of the same *sancak* as the city of Bitlis at that time.
70. C/191-124B/Simon Zavarian to Mikael Varantian, (Constantinople, Nov. 27/Dec. 9, 1908); C/191-141A/Constantinople Responsible Body to U.S. Central Committee, Dec. 31, 1908.
71. C/194-31/Bedros Atmajian to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sis, Feb. 5/18, 1909).
72. C/191-140B/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, Dec. 30, 1908.
73. C/193-9/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 15, 1909).
74. C/193-23/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 20, 1909).
75. C/193-16/Shahbaz to Simon Zavarian, (Sivas, Jan. 22, 1909).
76. C/193-26/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Feb. 3, 1909).
77. *Ibid.*
78. C/193-53/Simon Zavarian to Daron Central Committee, (Constantinople, Mar. 5/18, 1909).
79. FO424/219/57, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr.18, 1909), enclosure 1, Consul Shipley to Sir G. Lowther (Erzerum, Apr. 5, 1909).
80. C/193-9/Shahbaz to Constantinople Responsible Body, (Sivas, Jan. 15, 1909).
81. C/194-35/Dr. Haigaz Bairuyr to Agnouni, (Divrig, Feb. 12/26, 1909).
82. C/191-81/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas ARF Body, Oct. 29, 1908; C/191-90/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Nov. 8/21, 1908; C/193-22/Constantinople Responsible Body to Mourad, Jan. 26, 1909.
83. C/193-59/Constantinople Responsible Body to Mourad, Mar. 9/22, 1909.
84. FO424/218/15, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Jan. 18, 1909).
85. FO424/218/69, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Mar.23, 1909).
86. FO424/219/42, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr.21, 1909).
87. FO424/219/57, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr.18, 1909), enclosure 1, Consul Shipley to Sir G. Lowther (Erzerum, Apr. 5, 1909).
88. FO424/219/62, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr. 20, 1909), enclosure 1, Vice-Consul Dickson Quarterly Report to Sir G. Lowther (Van, Mar. 31, 1909). Aram Manougian (Sergei Hovhannesian) was born in the Ghapan region of Russian Armenia. He was an ARF organizer in Baku, Kantzag, and then Kars. From 1904-1908 he was the key ARF personage and organizer in Van. After the Constitution was restored he taught in Ordu, then spent a year in Geneva before returning to Van.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. C/191-62/Pingian Youth Committee to Constantinople Responsible Body, Oct. 6, 1908.

92. C/193-52/Constantinople Responsible Body to U.S. Central Committee, Mar. 4/17, 1909.
93. C/193-7/Simon Zavarian to Mikael Varantian, (Constantinople, Jan. 10/23, 1909).
94. C/191-81/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas ARF Body, Oct. 29, 1908.
95. FO424/219/57, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, Apr. 18, 1909), enclosure 1, Consul Shipley to Sir G. Lowther (Erzerum, Apr. 5, 1909).
96. Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Circumstances Surrounding the 1909 Adana Holocaust," *Armenian Review* 41:4 (Winter 1988): 5-6.
97. *Ibid.*, 6.
98. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 40.
99. FO/424/219, Doc. No. 23055/442, Jun. 15, 1909; Dadrian, "Adana Holocaust," 7-8.
100. Stephan H. Astourian, "Genocidal Process: Reflections on the Armeno-Turkish Polarization" in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 64.
101. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 182.
102. Dadrian, "Adana Holocaust," 9.
103. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 41; Zurcher, *Turkey*, 100-1.
104. C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909; C/193-82/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas Central Committee, Apr. 17/30, 1909.
105. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 42-5.
106. C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909; C/193-82/Constantinople Responsible Body to Sivas Central Committee, Apr. 17/30, 1909.
107. Dadrian, *Adana Holocaust*, 12; FO424/219/75, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Apr. 28, 1909).
108. Dadrian, *History*, 182.
109. C/193-53/Simon Zavarian to Sirelik [dears], (Constantinople, Apr. 14/27, 1909).
110. C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909.
111. C/193-53/Simon Zavarian to Sirelik, (Constantinople, Apr. 14/27, 1909).
112. Zurcher, *Turkey*, 101-2; C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909; Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 42-5.
113. C/193-53/Simon Zavarian to Sirelik, (Constantinople, Apr. 14/27, 1909).
114. Dadrian, *History*, 183.
115. Astourian, "Polarization," 64.
116. FO424/219/75, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Apr. 28, 1909).
117. C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909.
118. FO424/219/83, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, May 4, 1909), enclosure 1, Vice-Consul Wylie to Sir G. Lowther (Adana, Apr. 21, 1909).
119. C/193-80/Constantinople Responsible Body to Western Bureau, Apr. 16/29, 1909.
120. FO424/219/75, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Pera, Apr. 28, 1909); Astourian, "Polarization," 63-4.

II

Aftermath of the Hamidian Counterrevolution and Adana Massacres, May 1909-December 1910

The Adana massacres created the first major test for ARF-CUP relations. The ARF had to decide, in the face of Armenian public opinion, whether to continue its cooperation with the CUP. The potential benefits to the Armenian population of continued cooperation would in the end outweigh the revulsion at the murderous events.

The most important issue the ARF would pursue with the CUP was land restitution and reform. Restoring land to dispossessed peasants was critical to the ARF's goal of maintaining an Armenian population in the Armenian provinces. The CUP showed an initial determination to redistribute land, but its failure to follow through would be the decisive factor in the eventual end of cooperation.

There was also true progress in improving security in many parts of the provinces. The stated principle that Armenian peasants had equal rights as citizens as did Muslims, helped curtail attacks by Kurdish tribes that could no longer act with impunity. There were also some prosecutions and the replacement of a number of reactionary officials in the provinces. This benefited both the Armenians and the CUP as these officials were both anti-Armenian and opponents of constitutional rule.

Weighing the Options

The ARF had to decide whether to continue its cooperation with the CUP in light of the thousands of dead in the Adana massacres. The decision would be dependent, on the one hand, on an evaluation of the degree of culpability of the CUP. On the other hand, the ARF had to weigh the substantial potential benefits to the Armenian community and all Ottoman citizens if the CUP instituted a true constitutional regime. It would be critical to analyze whether Adana was a matter of a regime, which had yet to consolidate its power, losing control of

Conclusion

When examining the strategies and activities of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation under Ottoman Constitutional rule, the most central issue is clearly the party's relations with the Committee of Union and Progress. Initially cooperation with the CUP was logical as it had been the party's principal ally in the struggle to overthrow the absolutism of Abdul Hamid. The success of the revolution had also brought with it the restoration of the 1876 Constitution, the single greatest hope for the future of the Ottoman Armenians in the eyes of the ARF leadership. The ARF became the foremost champion of the Constitution as it could conceive of no other viable system of government for the empire that could guarantee reasonable security and deliverance from discrimination and persecution for the Armenian population.

Thus the ARF staked its reputation and its resources on the success of constitutional government. While its views were much closer to those of Prince Sabaheddin and his followers, the prospects of his governing seemed quite slim. The army was the key player in determining whether a government could stay in power and it was the CUP that had developed a broad network among the junior officers. So, in the ARF view, it had few alternatives and the success of constitutional government was inextricably tied to the success of the CUP. It was primarily for this reason that it defended the CUP and maintained cooperation even after the outrages of the Adana massacres.

Armenian critics of the ARF have often made the accusation that the party's strategy was driven by a lust for power and the desire to gain influence and parliamentary seats through cooperation with the CUP. While there may be a kernel of truth in the claims, the disagreement between the Eastern and Western Bureaus over whether to continue cooperation in 1911 and 1912 would seem to discredit them. It was the members of the Eastern Bureau, who in Erzerum were furthest from enjoying the fruits of power, who urged their counterparts in Constantinople not to break off relations prematurely.

In fact, the two main strands of criticism of the ARF's conduct come from almost diametrically opposed directions and are mutually exclusive. On the one hand, Armenian critics for decades have accused the party of leaving the Armenian people defenseless in 1915 by having cooperated with the CUP. This current faults the party for disarming, for having any trust in a racist, anti-Armenian CUP, and for having too much faith in rescue by the West. The official

Turkish view and Turkish historiography, on the other hand, have long held that any show of cooperation with the CUP or support for the Constitution by the ARF was a ploy to disguise plans to foment armed rebellion. The party's work within the Parliament and defense of the CUP against the counterrevolution are portrayed as the clever tactics of a perfidious saboteur. The dissolution of the *fedayi* bands is dismissed and emphasis placed on the arms gathering activities, ignoring the inability or unwillingness of the provincial governments to protect the Armenian population from depredations.

The reality, as shown by the analysis of the ARF's internal communication, is a party torn between two unattractive options and struggling to determine the best path. Breaking off relations with the CUP likely meant the end of any realistic chance for the constitutional system to succeed. Going into opposition may have eased consciences uncomfortable with working with a party that had a significant Turkish exclusivist element. But such a move would have also strengthened the reactionary and Islamist movements that opposed both the CUP and the Constitution and which were far more hostile to the Armenians. The party was torn between its solidarity with the progressive elements of the CUP and its revulsion at the murderous acts of the chauvinist elements. It wanted to help the progressive elements consolidate power within the party and the government, but if they failed or if their promises turned out to be empty gestures, the consequences for the Armenians would be deadly.

It is also important to note that the Turkist and chauvinist elements within the CUP only gradually gained power and were not dominant until the party took over the government in the 1913 coup. By then the ARF had long given up hope on any pluralist policies from the CUP. From 1909-1912, however, a great deal of the intra-party correspondence was concerned with the power struggles within the CUP and in attempts to divine their impact on party and government policy. In this there was always the constraint that the CUP Central Committee remained based in Salonika and therefore its internal workings were difficult to assess. There was no blind faith in the good intentions of the CUP, but the ARF leadership may have held out hope too long for the triumph of the progressive current.

Much of such hope was based on the ARF's relationship with Talât Pasha. Even knowing in hindsight that he would become a primary architect of the attempted annihilation of the Armenian population, one cannot determine if his warm relations and professed desire to meet the party's demands were insincere. While it is possible he was merely disguising his animosity, he was a leading voice for pluralistic policies in the first years of constitutional rule. During the struggle for land reform and restitution he was the advocate for Armenian demands and, while he described the obstacles and counseled patience, the CUP undertook some demonstrable efforts. A more plausible explanation may be that, having been unable to deliver on the ARF's primary demand for land restitution, Talât realized that the party would be unable to be a full-fledged ally

of the CUP. Then, as the empire continued to lose territories in the Italo-Turkish and Balkan wars, he turned towards the position of Gökalp, Nâzim, and Şakir of relying only on ethnic Turks and stressing Turkish nationalism.

The lands issue truly was the make or break issue for the ARF because the overwhelming majority of the Armenian population were peasants. Official acquiescence in years of land deprivation had played a major role in the depopulation of Armenian villages in the eastern provinces. The party realized that the dispersal of the Armenian population from its historical lands weakened all its political demands. Only by enforcing the return of lands confiscated from Armenians would it be possible to secure the return of the former landowners and thus foil Abdul Hamid's program to decrease the Armenian proportion of the population of the provinces to weaken demands for reform and autonomy. The demographic balance had also been altered by the government resettlement in the region of Muslim refugees from recently lost Ottoman lands. This resettlement continued under the constitutional regime with the many refugees from the territories in the Balkans lost in the wars. Land reform and restitution was the linchpin to hopes to rebuild the population of historically Armenian lands by creating the means for peasants to survive economically.

The status of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as second-class subjects was the critical factor in allowing forced dispossession. That is why the promise of equal status as Ottoman citizens under the Constitution was greeted with such joy by Armenians and caused many émigrés to return to their villages in hopes of recovering their lands. The change in the power structure in the provinces also created hope for Kurdish peasants who had also been dispossessed by the nomadic Kurds.

Initially, the CUP showed a determination to redistribute land and improve conditions for all the peasants and agreed on the formation of a joint Armenian-Turkish commission. The commission was formed and ready to start its work just before the 1909 counterrevolution. Although the defeat of the counterrevolution strengthened its position politically, the CUP dissolved the joint commission and dropped the idea. Talât explained to the ARF the political difficulties facing the CUP; the reactionaries in the political opposition were sure to exploit any concessions to the Armenians. Kurdish and Turkish deputies from the provinces, and the *aghas* and large landowners whose interests they represented, were also serious obstacles. While the ARF continued to pursue the lands issue as the most immediate need of the Armenian population, they realized that they could not make too many demands all at once. They therefore concentrated on land restitution as the most urgent demand with land reform demands to be renewed later.

By the summer of 1910, however, the party became frustrated by the repeated postponement of the resolution of the lands issue and especially the failure to allow administrative redress for Armenians dispossessed under the *ancien régime*. Since it was certain it would take years to reform the Ottoman

judiciary sufficiently for it to act fairly in land matters, administrative action was imperative. By year's end, it was clear that there would be no substantial progress. Despite the ARF's commitment to cooperation and the sacrifices they made to continue it after Adana, the CUP appears to have been unwilling, in the end, to resolve the lands issue. This, and the eventual realization that the CUP was not acting in good faith in the matter, would prove to be a crippling blow to ARF-CUP cooperation. Given its investment in the issue and the fundamental role it played in any determination of the extent of justice and equal status for Armenians under the Constitution, it would be a decisive factor in the decision, in 1912, to break off relations and go into political opposition.

On the other hand, there had been some areas of real progress in the first years of constitutional rule due to the policies of the CUP. Some of the most reactionary and egregiously anti-Armenian officials were replaced in the *vilayet*, *sancak*, and *kaza* administrations. In one important case the ARF had vigorously appealed to the CUP for the removal of the *Mutassarif* of Bitlis, Tahir Bey. Tahir had long mistreated the Armenians in his region and was interfering in the Armenian schools. Although it took some months, Tahir was replaced as was the region's military commander, who had failed to take action after a massacre in the village of Khuyt.

By the end of 1910, *valis* had been replaced in Van, Bitlis, Erzerum, Sivas, and Kharpert (Harput). This was one of the most tangible benefits of the new government for the people of the provinces. However, there were other officials who, despite protests, were not replaced. The ARF often warned the CUP of officials who abused their office or were secret supporters of the Sultan, but who had joined the CUP just to advance their careers. These warnings were not always heeded. Overall it must be stated that, in contrast to the lands issue, the CUP devoted the political capital needed to make substantive changes in administrative personnel. There was, of course, an element of self-interest in removing officials who could also be a threat to the CUP. The end result, however, was the ascension of some truly enlightened officials who were supporters of constitutional government and under whom Armenians and other non-Muslims had the possibility of even-handed treatment.

In 1908, the ARF worked with the CUP and other political committees to elect supporters of the Constitution to the Parliament. Ten Armenians, including four ARF members, were elected as deputies and the ARF was pleased with the conduct of parliamentary sessions. The party was well regarded in parliament and a leftist bloc of deputies had been formed. The party could also operate openly in the provinces for the first time and it sent fieldworkers to organize ARF organizational bodies in each of the towns and villages. The work progressed well with bodies being organized and significant numbers of Hnchak and Reformed Hnchak members joining the party. Propaganda work was conducted, public lectures held, books published, and libraries established.

Besides organizational work, many of these fieldworkers also worked as teachers, principals, doctors, agronomists, and in other professions. Yet many were hampered in their work, and sometimes even barred from practicing their professions, by the CUP because they were Russian Armenian and therefore considered potential fifth columnists. This was despite the fact that these Russian Armenians were often the most adamant in their distrust of Russia. Because of the sensitivities, the ARF ensured that its negotiators, deputies, and bureau members that the CUP leadership interacted with in Constantinople and Salonika were almost all born and educated in the Ottoman Empire. The Russian Armenians operated almost exclusively in the eastern provinces. Although the CUP was quite aware of the central role played by Russian Armenians in the party and this was clearly a concern, the issue seems to have rarely arisen during interparty interactions.

Relations with the CUP were irregular during 1909 due its internal problems and the counterrevolution. The relationship and communication improved with the formation of a "Joint Body" in Constantinople in early 1910. In their discussions, the CUP admitted that they did not have many reliable people in the provinces. Dissident members and some deputies had resigned and were cooperating with the reactionaries. The ARF attempted to find constitutional supporters in the provinces who could be inducted into the CUP. The parties also worked to send joint delegations of fieldworkers to the provinces to extol the virtues of a constitutional regime and to counsel patience until improvements could be realized. Another critical component of the relations was quickly rebutting the many false reports and rumors that were circulating since many claimed Armenian unrest or excesses.

The Adana massacres created the first major test for ARF-CUP relations. The ARF had to decide, in the face of Armenian public opinion, whether to continue its cooperation with the CUP. This was dependent, on the one hand, on an evaluation of the degree of culpability of the CUP. On the other hand, the ARF had to weigh the substantial potential benefits to the Armenian community and all Ottoman citizens if the CUP instituted a true constitutional regime. The party had to analyze whether Adana was a matter of a regime, which had yet to consolidate its power, losing control of the situation or else the exposure of the CUP's intolerant tendencies.

The most important considerations that had to be weighed were the direction of the CUP, its political position vis-à-vis the opposition, and the impact on these if the ARF ended cooperation. The CUP took great pains to reassure the ARF of their sincerity and support of reforms. They had to demonstrate that Adana had been an aberration and that they could ensure the security of the Armenian community. In the end, the ARF decided to make a final attempt at continued cooperation with the CUP. It signed an accord, published jointly under the name of the ARF Constantinople Responsible Body and the CUP General Headquarters, whose terms committed the two parties to preserve the empire,

increase devolution of power to the provinces, and to defend the Constitution against reactionary movements.

By March of 1910, though, a lack of progress on the accord and almost all of its other demands compelled the ARF Western Bureau to send two of its members to Salonika to meet with the CUP Central Committee. The meeting was productive as the CUP emphasized that its policies towards the ARF had not changed and that it had no policy to assimilate the Armenians, who had stood by the Constitution and loyally supported it. The meeting drew up an accord to be implemented by the Joint Body, the main points of which were the administrative resolution of the lands issue, reform of the judiciary, security issues, political issues, and the replacement of government officials. Unfortunately, the many crises within the CUP and in their ministries meant that the Joint Body did not convene regularly thereafter and progress was limited. This may have also been a factor in the delay in having the ARF officially recognized as a political party. Despite repeated requests, the party was not "legalized" by the government until August of 1910.

A critical factor throughout was the precariousness of the CUP's hold on power. Almost immediately after its success in the Constitutional Revolution, it was confronted by Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite it hardly being the fault of the CUP, its opponents could immediately exploit the territorial loss. The Ottoman Empire had had a weakening hold on its territories for many years, but it would be the "Young Turks" who would pay the political price. They faced monarchist, reactionary, Islamist, and leftist opposition and didn't even have direct control of the levers of government power until 1913. As a result, its ability to deliver on its promises to the ARF and other allies was seriously limited.

The first direct challenge to its political power was the April 1909 counter-revolution. Then in 1911, opposition reemerged calling itself the "New Clique." These CUP dissidents believed they had an opportune moment to overthrow the government thanks to the cabinet's mishandling of several internal and external problems and rumors of discontent with the CUP in the Army, its key power base. The ARF publicly announced its opposition to the dissidents as they were fundamentally undemocratic and could prevent the government from addressing the concerns of the Armenian community. The CUP was finally able to outmaneuver the dissidents and end the discord at a party conference but the ARF believed the continued challenges to its power would prevent the CUP from taking any bold steps towards reform. Its political position was further weakened when Italy declared war and invaded the Ottoman province of Libya. Then a new opposition party, the *Itilâf*, was formed, comprised of many different currents united by their opposition to the CUP.

The ARF Sixth World Congress convened in Constantinople in the summer of 1911 with its most important agenda item being analyzing the state of ARF-CUP cooperation and determining a course of action. Despite ratifying

the past actions concerning cooperation, the meeting was extremely critical of the CUP's duplicity and failure to live up to its promises. It passed a resolution that stated that the government's policies hadn't helped reconcile people of different religions and ethnicities, but had created more mistrust. It stated that the CUP had gradually withdrawn from constitutional and democratic principles and had failed to eliminate the right-wing elements in its ranks, which had become much more powerful. Few results had been realized in improving the deplorable conditions for the Armenian community and if "the CUP and the cabinets drawn from it do not show through their deeds that the realization of their repeated promises are imminent, the Western Bureau is authorized to cease its relations with the CUP."¹ While the ARF recognized that the CUP's political position was becoming increasingly precarious, a lack of progress on so many different fronts would no longer be tolerated.

The parliamentary elections in 1912 would be an immediate test of the CUP's willingness to fulfill its promises. Before agreeing to an electoral accord, the ARF insisted that the CUP sign an agreement to address the security, lands, and other ARF concerns. There were then lengthy negotiations on the number of Armenian deputies that would be elected. ARF disappointment in the resistance to wider Armenian representation only grew when it became clear that the CUP Central Committee had not ordered its branches to implement the electoral accord. The CUP was focused on increasing its own numbers and was cutting deals that boxed out Armenians and elected others if it meant an additional CUP deputy. The Western Bureau reported that the deception shown by the CUP regarding both the election and the ARF-CUP accord conditions was "beyond belief." The bureau presented an ultimatum to the CUP that provided a final chance to implement the accord conditions including the creation of Armenian and Kurdish village guards, Armenian gendarmes for each of the Armenian *vilayets*, and ensuring a right of return for Armenian refugees.

The Eastern Bureau disagreed with its counterpart's condemnations and believed much of it was due to unrealistically raised expectations. Much of the disappointment in the CUP came in reaction to the Armenian community's disappointment in the campaign promises of the ARF, which were based on winning a major electoral victory. Nevertheless, the Western Bureau froze relations with the CUP while awaiting a response to its ultimatum. After the elections the *Itilâf* tried to overthrow the government by provoking a rebellion among the Albanians to destabilize the regime. Then in July, military men formed into the "League of Savior Officers" were able to force the resignation of the cabinet. The *Itilâf* and other opposition to the CUP formed the new cabinet. The CUP's reaction was to try to regroup its strength within the army. With this, and the non-response to its ultimatum, in August the ARF announced that it had broken off relations with the CUP and would remain neutral in its conflict with the *Itilâf*. Thus a cooperation that had begun with high hopes and much fanfare, ended almost anti-climactically.

Throughout the constitutional period, a critical issue for the ARF was security for the Armenian rural population. Improving security had been one of the five objectives in the 1910 Salonika Accord between the ARF and CUP. In many parts of the provinces, there was true progress in 1909 and 1910. The foremost security issue was curbing attacks by Kurdish tribes on peasants. Many such assaults were curtailed merely by the ascension to power of the CUP and its public commitment to equal status for all citizens. This forced the tribal chiefs to face the unpleasant possibility that being Muslim would not allow them to act with impunity against Christians as it had under the Sultan. The CUP took proactive action against the Kurds when they received reports of the Russian government fomenting rebellion among them. There were also some prosecutions of the perpetrators of assaults and robberies that would have a deterrent effect, but they were dependent on the local or regional officials. The result of all these steps was a significant decrease in violence in almost all the provinces. However, the proactive action tapered off and that, together with the weakening political position of the CUP, likely contributed to the increase in the incidence of attacks starting in 1911. The government also took serious steps to reform the *gendarmarie*, improving their training and pay to prevent corruption and employing a British army officer to reorganize the units. While there was a marked improvement in the force, the deterioration of relations between the CUP and ARF and the increasingly extremist tendencies of the former was reflected in an increasingly negative attitude of officials towards preventing and punishing disorders and assaults. The security situation continued to deteriorate throughout 1913 and 1914 and compelled the ARF to renew its efforts to arm the Armenian population.

Although the party had disbanded its *fedayi* bands, it continued to stress the need for arms for self-defense until the government would or could defend the Armenian population. It did create a dilemma in the suspicions it raised among Muslims while the ARF was vigorously defending the constitutional regime. But despite the rhetoric, the arms work lagged until late 1912 when the party leadership realized that the end of cooperation with the CUP and the outbreak of the First Balkan War had increased the danger to the Armenian population. It took urgent action to reestablish the self-defense structure. Thereafter most of the party work concerned raising funds and creating networks for the purchase and distribution of arms and ammunition. The party had reconstituted the ARF Self-Defense Body to oversee these efforts and it ordered the bodies in the provinces to drop other projects and concentrate on self-defense. While the work progressed well in some areas, others had so much poverty that it was impossible to raise sufficient funds. ARF bodies overseas, especially in the United States, sent funds for the arms effort and the Western Bureau maintained its own arms cache.

The effort was also hampered by a series of searches and seizures by some local governments, which disarmed only the Armenians. The party had difficulty in raising funds from merchants and wealthy Armenians in the cities as they

tended to be more conservative and distrustful of a revolutionary, socialist party. Similarly, when Vramian was sent to the Caucasus to raise funds, students and workers contributed while the bourgeoisie refused. They disputed the need for self-defense activities and invoked the name of Boghos Nubar Pasha to support their position. This greatly upset Nubar who was supportive of the activities while unable to publicly endorse them for diplomatic reasons, so he wrote private letters to his supporters to counter the distortions of his position. After an internal debate, the ARF decided against resuming its Abdul Hamid era project of extorting funds from wealthy Armenians who refused to support the self-defense work. Despite substantial efforts, the financial and logistical restraints limited the amount of arms and ammunition that reached the provinces.

Contrary to Turkish historiography, the ARF decision to end cooperation with the CUP only came after a prolonged internal debate, and it clearly predated the First Balkan War. The renewal of appeals for European intervention was connected to the CUP's failure to provide redress for Armenian grievances and did not arise with the war. In fact, the ARF had shut down its propaganda operations in Europe with the restoration of the Constitution. This included the shuttering of its most important vehicle to reach European public opinion, *Pro Armenia*, its French-language paper based in Paris. In 1911, sympathizers in France were urged not to make public demands on behalf of Ottoman Armenians for fear of showing bad faith in the government. It was only after exhausting all avenues of approach to the CUP and the government and after seeing security conditions dramatically worsen in the provinces that the ARF decided to once again appeal for European intervention. And even then it was only after the end of hostilities, when the peace negotiations were going to consider reforms in the Ottoman Empire in December of 1912, that the ARF acted. The examination of the internal deliberations of the ARF supports the conclusions of those, like Richard Hovannisian, who have contended that the ARF remained loyal to the Constitution, even after it had ended its cooperation with the CUP.

British Foreign Office officials realized that the Armenians would no longer be satisfied with Ottoman promises and would be seeking more drastic solutions including, they feared, Russian rule. This was not what the ARF was advocating, except perhaps as an implied threat to force action. Its goal was autonomy within the Ottoman Empire guaranteed by the European powers and by European governors. When the CUP returned to power in a coup, the war resumed. The ARF, even while lobbying for reforms, feared that Ottoman defeats in the hostilities would create political and financial crises and would threaten Constantinople. Most of the powers supported the idea of European governors in control of the Armenian provinces, but the CUP fought it vociferously, delaying a resolution for months even after the Second Balkan War ended. In this it had the support of Germany, which feared Russian influence and was trying to gain the Ottomans as an ally. It unsuccessfully appealed to both the ARF and Prince Sabaheddin to cooperate or join the cabinet to head off the reform plan.

The foreign control issue was finally resolved in December of 1913 but further stalling and maneuvering over the nationality of the two inspectors-general delayed their appointment. The following April the Dutchman Westenenk and Norwegian Hoff were named and the ARF immediately sent representatives who briefed them. It also succeeded in having ARF members and other sympathizers appointed to their staffs. The single best opportunity for real reforms for the Armenian provinces became possible when the two inspectors arrived in Constantinople on May 3, 1914. But before they could start to implement reforms, and before one of them had even reached his post, the mobilization of European armies for war cancelled their commissions. We will never know what the inspectors might have been able to accomplish had the war not intervened. But the Armenian support for reforms that included foreign control through the inspectors was the cause of a great resentment that would have catastrophic consequences when the Europeans left the region.

The ARF World Congress was held in August in Erzerum, but was cut short by the outbreak of the world war. A committee was left behind to complete essential tasks when two representatives of the CUP and the government arrived with a proposition. Dr. Şakir and Naci Bey disclosed their plans to join the Germans in the war to regain lost territories in Greece, Macedonia, and even an advance into the Caucasus. If the ARF had Russian Armenians pretend support of the Russian government and then act as a fifth column at the critical juncture, the government would give the Armenians autonomy in proportion to the "service" shown to the Ottoman Empire. The ARF representatives replied that Armenians were citizens of both empires and would remain loyal and serve in the armed forces of their respective empire. The errors the government and CUP had made in regards to Ottoman Armenians would give Russian Armenians no confidence that support for the Ottoman government would improve conditions for their compatriots across the border. Before promising autonomy to the Armenians in the Caucasus, the government should help Ottoman Armenians as they had failed to do for far too long.

Thus the meeting in Erzerum was the final act of ARF-CUP relations. When the two parties met again, it would be with one leading a government policy of genocide against the Armenian people that the other had sworn to defend. The result was a crime that would break through the fog of war to reach the front pages of the world's press.

Note

1. Papazian, *Im Hoosheruh*, 158.

Historic Armenia and Eastern Anatolia

