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POLITICAL PERSECUTION

ARMENIAN PRISONERS OF THE CAUCASUS

[A PAGE OF THE TZAR'S PERSECUTION]

By

E. AKNOUNI

Author of "The Wounds of the Caucasus," "On to Battle," Etc.



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Translated from the Author's Manuscript
by A. M. and H. W.

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AN APPEAL ^{SELF} _{YPL}

To the Intellectuals of America.

With my weak pen, and unflourished words, I appeal to you, intellectuals and writers of the Great Republic—to your tongue, to your pen, and especially to your heart.

Do not regard as boldness this step of an Armenian writer unknown to you. It is not my modest past, or my weak pen, that entitles me to address you publicly, but the fact that I belong to a persecuted nation, perhaps, alas, the first among the human victims of history,—a nation, small in numbers, but great in suffering; insignificant in its political standing, but worthy of respect for the victims it offered to the altar of civilization and freedom.

It is the grief and the sorrow of the wound-covered and persecuted Armenian people that prompts me, as well as the whole class of Armenian intellectuals of to-day, whose modest soldier I am, to speak,—grief and sorrow that made even the stones cry, and that in the days of unsuppressed rage roused the civilized world from Rome to London, from Paris to New York, and moved even those who have breast, but no heart; head, but no mind.

Raise your voices, you who have hearts and minds, and as citizens of a free fatherland are duty bound to voice your protest in behalf of “innocent convicts,” who, crushed behind prison doors, are anxiously awaiting for signs of sympathy, for a just protest in the name of their ever-tortured people.

I was often told, both in Europe and this country, that it was useless to appeal to America, that the hope of the persecuted was in vain. It was reiterated to me again and again: “America is not the land of succor, but of money. The great American press is not the soldier of justice and ideal, but it serves Mammon, and through Mammon, again to Mammon.”

You know better than I how true this sad accusation is! But I, who traveled this Republic from one end to the other, from city to city, whatever I saw and observed keeps me in my conviction that America is not merely “the land of factories,” but that it is also the land of great ideals.

Yes, a land where the memory of Washington and Lincoln is held so sacred; where monuments of revolution, independence and liberty rear themselves side by side with factory chimneys; where universities and libraries are erected by the side of big stores and pleasant parks; where the democratic spirit demolished the restraining prejudices of the Old World; and where, in the harbor of its Metropolis, burns every night the torch of universal Liberty,—such a land must not and can not desert the Great Ideal.

The nations of the East do not ask you for “intervention.” No, it is not necessary to mix up with the “family quarrels” of other nations. But your Great Citizen, if he was risen from his grave could not pass by a dying sufferer without kneeling by his side; could not witness without just anger the cruelty of an executioner who flogs the bleeding victim.

No intervention, but *protest*, when a whole nation or people is slaughtered; protest in the name of *man*, whose worship is so great with you; protest in the name of liberty for which you gave so much of your blood in the days of the Great Battle; protest in the name of human community, without distinction of race or religion, the pet idea of your Wonderful Fatherland.

I know, I feel, you are very far from the Grief-valley of historic Ararat, from the place of tyrannical rule, where so dominant are the *knot*, the *yataghan*, and the *prison*. But now, with my ineffective lines, I will essay to bring before you the pale image of horrible tragedy, one page only, one small page of the deep horrors, which are perpetrated behind Closed Doors, whence for years ring the screams of prisoners, and with them the wrath and the protest of all the persecuted.

Listen to that voice, hear that wrathful scream; hear and answer what your mind, what your heart, suggests.

Put some of your heart in your voice, in your protest, in your pen, and strike with thunder.

Use your pens, writers of all nations!

Use your mouths, orators of all lands!

E. AKNOUNI.

THE WORLD OF CHAINS.

Searching by night!

Imprisonment by day!

This has been the "political life" in the Caucasus since 1908, where, by the regulation of Tzarism, the Armenian people are pronounced dangerous, and out of the pale of law's protection.

Prison, searching and exile have been of frequent occurrence in the domains, where the knout of slav despotism is dominant, but what has been taking place in the last few years, even after the Octoberian Manifesto of the Tzar, is exceptionally novel.

What a bitter irony!

While in St. Petersburg speeches flow from the worthy and unworthy mouths of the members of the Duma in the name of political liberty and security, in Poland, Finland, and the Caucasus tongues are tied by the orders of the police, pens are crushed in the office of the censor, and all good citizens, physicians, lawyers, teachers, officers, farmers, are led to prisons—political grave-yards, to atone for sins which they have not committed, to suffer tortures which they do not deserve.

And sitting behind closed doors hundreds of prisoners, subjected to many tortures and deprivations, are wondering and asking themselves:

"What is our sin?"

And the unworthy officer of the Russian Court, called Legine, who is actuated more by caprice than justice, and who takes his orders from the Minister of the Interior, answers them brutally:

"Your sin is that you are Armenians. You are responsible for everything that occurs in the Armenian life. It is necessary for us to bury the roaring fire under ashes, to uproot revolutionary movement, to exterminate political parties, and engulf life and energy. Do you want proof? Our caprice is the proof. Do you want documentary evidence? The documentary evidence is the police report.

And Stolypin, the president of the unconstitutional ministry, a policeman, and not a statesman, detective, but not a man of law, is instructing with word or consent:

“Crush, persecute.”

And they are crushing!

And they are persecuting!

It is night.

As soon as the lamps burn in the streets which are filled with soldiers, the terrorized “subjects,” rich and poor, run home like frightened birds from an imminent, threatening tempest.

Since 1906 when the *black terror* was organized in Russia, by the efforts of the police, when the criminal-minded government armed the dark element, the mob, in order to cover the awakening land with the veil of terror, then nobody could feel safe in the night. Every man was hastening home to be locked behind double-bolted doors, and latticed windows.

That is the signal of political insecurity.

The bell rang.

Everybody is shuddering inside the house. The bell at a late hour! That is a sign of misfortune. And so it is. “Open the door,” yell the gendarmes commanding, threatening.

The doors are opened, and in rush officers, fifteen or twenty, the Chief of Police, his assistants, the prosecutor, spies in multifarious uniforms, several “witnesses” gathered from the street, drunken and vulgar, to identify papers that do not exist, and to sign records which they cannot read.

This is the police tactics practiced in the land of prisons.

The order is given, and lo! the doors are closed. The head of the family is put under arrest, and the searching begun and carried on in all the rooms, in corners from the kitchen to the sleeping room.

“My wife is in bed, permit her to dress before you enter,” observes the victim, humbly.

“We have no time!” roar the police ironically.

And the searchers rush into the bedroom of the terrified

woman, and overhaul everything with the curiosity of scoundrels and obscene jestures.

Here is the whole proceeding. Huge axes are produced and the drunken people, dressed in the police uniforms, the poor victims of demoralizing officialdom, are beginning the work of destruction. The axes dart toward the ceilings, toward the wardrobes, toward the floors, wherever a hiding place is imagined to be. They smash the doors, tear up the floors, open the walls and spread upon the floor the dresses of the women with obscene remarks.

The whole night performing that act of "legal" ruin, rest at morn, tired and proud, and collecting all the books beginning from the Bible to the "Cookbook", all the letters, love letters or business letters, even the papers in which not a word is written, the children's exercise book, and new shaped knives, suspicious "machines," even the boiler for sweets, go out of the house taking with them the head of the family, who with tearful eyes murmurs to his children: "Don't be frightened, I will soon be back."

And behind him ruin, tears, mourning.

That is the searching.

They are in the street.

The prisoner, surrounded with the dreadful soldiers, does not know where and why he is taken.

"Where are you taking me?" he inquires.

"To the Chief of Police," answer the officers of law indifferently and calmly.

And they are taking him to the Chief of Police, and then, in a closed carriage to an unknown office. Everything is unknown and obscure. The "citizen" is moving like a shadow without resistance, speechless and struck with terror.

Behold an office. What a sight! Already many prisoners, some known to each other, some strangers, all waiting disposition and instructions. The doors open, and the order is given. Then begins a new search, which is called the "personal search." They search the pockets of the prisoner, the heels of his shoes, his hats and even his beard.

The "personal search," also, is finished. Now he must

be taken away. But where? To which prison? That is known only to the police.

The exodus begins. The exodus is different for different men. Sometimes, for the purpose of terrorizing the people, the prisoners are conducted in groups in the main streets of the city, surrounded by Cossacks and mounted officers. The mob retreats from the right and from the left. Who dares approach or stand by? The omnipotent lance is ready to be thrust into the loins or the legs of such a bold person. Often they are taken by night, secretly, from their parents and friends, in closed wagons, through byways. Nobody knows where they are taken, how they are taken, or with whom they are taken. A week passes, then a second, friends and relatives are exhausted from waiting at the door of the prefect in the hope of getting some intelligence from the victims. Are the prisoners dead or alive? The same answer from all lips: "It is not known."

And quite often the prisoners are led from station to station, from prison to prison, even from city to city, bare-footed, under the rain and snow, subjected to grave dangers. One day two prisoners were led through a muddy street in Tiflis. One a young Armenian writer, the other a gray-haired old man, a rich land owner. It was a rainy day, cold and damp; the way was long and tiresome. The old man, unaccustomed to hardship, was exhausted and tottering, unable to walk.

The young prisoner observed the condition of his aged companion and saw that he was nearly exhausted. So he said to the soldiers:

"Brothers, I can walk because I am strong, but pity this old man and allow him to ride in a carriage. He is exhausted. He, too, is a man. Pity his old age."

"Walk, dog," roared the soldier and raising the butt of his gun, "walk and hold your tongue."

And they walked.

Behold, also, the prison!

With an august calmness is opened the famous castle, by the hand of its unavoidable and eternal guardian, and after a

minute a new one is added to the "living dead!" After that moment he is no more a citizen or a man, but a number who will move when they order him, will stand up when they command, entitled to one right only—the right of silence. From the surrounding iron windows which look on the inner court hundreds of eyes are watching the new comer—the eyes of the political hero who faced death for liberty, the eyes of the criminal who, perhaps, had killed his mother, the eyes of the thief, the incendiary, the drunkard, because in that "world" there is everything, greatness and meanness, martyrs and murderers.

They registered his name and led him inside.

He is already behind the closed doors. He must sit there and wait. Has he bread? Has he clothes? Has he any place to rest his head? Are they considering his case? Is he subjected to tortures or to cross-examination? Is he dead or alive? Nobody knows.

The doors are closed.

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS.

The "political" imprisonment of the Armenians in the Caucasus has a history of fifty years behind it.

The first important political prisoner was the famous Armenian publicist and poet, Michael Nalbandian, in 1863. He had committed the crime of writing some soul-inspiring poems which were dedicated to liberty and national regeneration, and while in London, of cultivating friendship with Gerzen, the illustrious Russian leader. Under the infernal conditions of the prison the Armenian prisoner became consumptive, and when the prison authorities saw that death was inevitable—the desire of the police—set him free, that after having "lived" in prison, he might die in "liberty."

And after a few months Nalbandian died, faithful to his famous words:

"I will be true to thee till death;
Yea, even upon the gallows tree;
With my last gasp, with dying breath,
I'll shout thy name, O Liberty!"

Almost fifteen years elapsed more or less quiet.

From beyond the Turkish frontier reached the ears of the Armenians in the Caucasus the shocking news of the crime. The cry of agony of the Armenian people, languishing under the shameful yoke of Hamid, and the smell of blood reached the plains of Ararat notwithstanding the unsurmountable obstacles. It was during that time, 1877, that Alexander II declared war against Turkey in the name of Eastern Christianity. But that war did not justify the hopes of the Christians in Asia Minor; and when the Russian soldiers, after the Congress of Berlin, evacuated the Turkish soil, Hamid decided, and intrigued, to avenge his defeat on the Christian Armenians. The yataghan shone. Armenia was transformed into a sea of sorrow and blood.

That bloody political catastrophe shocked and moved the Armenians in the Caucasus. Prompted by the sentiment of fraternal assistance, they began to send money to the victims, arms to the defenseless, and men for help. But the government of the Tzar, which had declared war in the name of

Christianity, suddenly changed its attitude toward the Christian Armenians in Turkey, and opposed every effort to help them. It not only failed to help the persecuted Armenians in the dark days of massacre and terror, but began to punish the Caucasus Armenians, who desired to stretch a helping hand to their suffering compatriots.

The blow was dealt in 1884.

In Erivan, to the great surprise of the whole city, houses were searched in groups. That slumberous city of the Orient was upset entirely. For several weeks, especially the nights, many residences of the citizens became a scene of terror. All classes of the Armenian population were affected, and lawyers, physicians, merchants were arrested, men and women. After "expiating their sins in the prisons" they were banished to remote parts of Russia, where they died without seeing their country.¹

That was the first arrest in groups.

The next scene is removed to Tiflis. Imagining a "political bond" between the Armenians of Erivan and Tiflis in undertaking to help the Armenians in Turkey, the police and the gendarmerie searched minutely the residence of Grigor Arzrouni, the famous Armenian publicist, and the founder of *Mschak*, the Armenian daily paper in Russia. The police search lasted three days. All his papers were sealed and taken to court. The same fate fell to Raffi, the illustrious Armenian novelist, and one of the editors of *Mschak*. The insensate police force seized the manuscripts of his novels as "documents to prove" his political dangerousness.

That was a menacing sign.

After searching the effects of these two popular and highly respected journalists, the police force began, unchecked, to do the same thing in the towns, and from that date on the officers of safety adopted another office, the *office of searching*, which became the cause of an ever increasing terror among the patriarchal population.

¹ Among those were Vartanian, a notary; Egiazarian, a lawyer; Mrs. Matakian, principal of the Girls' School; Matakian, an officer; Ter-Zakarian, an officer; Mherian, an agent; Chalalian, an attorney; Tigranian, a physician.

The severity was increased tenfold in 1890.

When the news from Turkish Armenia became extremely horrible and unendurable, a band of young Armenians, students, teachers, artisans and peasants, prompted by the desire of an immediate assistance, organized and armed themselves in order to go to Turkey and protect peaceful people against the Kurd and Hamidian murderers. But before crossing the frontier they were surrounded by the Russian soldiers, and fifty of them arrested. They were chained and thrown into a dungeon under the most rigorous regulations. Then they were tried as "political agitators and as demanding freedom for the Armenians." That band is known as the band of Gougounian, by the name of the leader, Mr. Gougounian, a student at the University of St. Petersburg. Some of the prisoners died before the conclusion of their trial, and the rest were sentenced to hard labor for twenty years in Siberia. Some of the young men died before they arrived in Siberia, and the rest were driven to that bleak land to condone their sin in chains and in caves—the sin of desiring to sacrifice their lives for their brothers.

Gradually the severity of the police force increased, not only against those who desired to help their "living brothers," but against those, also, who wished to bury their "dead brothers" with due honor. Even burial became a political crime.

We had the proof of it in 1892.

Grigor Arzrouni died. The Armenians of the Caucasus, sad-hearted and affected, desired to show their appreciation of the work of this most popular Armenian publicist. There was a great commotion and preparation for funeral services. From all over the world Armenians sent delegates and delegations, four hundred and eighty floral tributes and thousands of cables and telegrams. There was requiem and mourning everywhere.

It was December 27th. A human ocean was heaving in the Kolovinski street of Tiflis. Sixty thousand people were following the coffin, sad and with low heads. The popular mourning expressed itself in a manifestation of popular respect. The people were silent and respectful. . . . Then suddenly the mounted police force and the infantry appeared and ordered:

“Turn back, and go through the other street, you cannot use this street.” The mourners explained to the police that they desired to pass by the family house of the deceased, and as a last respect offer prayers for his soul. They asked and explained, but in vain, the police stood unmoved. Then the patient people pushed forward, the soldiers drew their swords. The officiating Armenian bishop fainted from that unexpected demonstration. . . . But the mourners penetrated the chain of the police and soldiers, and advanced to the cemetery, and the body of the great publicist was laid to rest. . . .

But the despotic government did not respect this fresh grave, and the same night arrests and searching started from one end of the city to the other. Terror was added to sadness. The delegates departed immediately to avoid imprisonment. And the same night dozens of writers, professors, officers, editors, painters, specialists, were driven to prison as the authors of demonstration against the government, and as dangerous agitators.

It is incredible, but it is a fact.

Let us also consider the year 1895, which was the carnival of prisons and cruelties.

Again the news from Armenia assumed a gloomy aspect.

Under the blows of revolution, and under the European pressure the Nero of Yildiz agreed to the reforms called “the Scheme of May,” but just then, when the agents of the assassin autocrat went, under the command of Shakir Pasha, to Armenia to execute the orders of “reform,” when the Bishop of Erzroom, encouraged by the promises of the English Ministry, was announcing the birth of “liberty in Armenia, under the bond of slavery,” then rang the alarm of wholesale massacre. Sultan Hamid became reckless more than ever. His bloody hands were indirectly strengthened by the Tzar’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lobanoff, who wished “Armenia without Armenians.” The yataghan was drawn with an unprecedented ferocity. . . . And when these massacres shocked the whole civilized world, the government of the Tzar hastened to close the frontiers against the Armenian refugees, and censored the whole Russian press to prevent the Russian Armenians from hearing the death agony of slaughtered people, and from attempts of help or protest.

The severity was boundless. After a while the Armenian press not only had no right to protest against the monstrous crime, but even to print the words "Armenia," or "Turkish Armenia." A huge wall was erected between the Armenian compatriots of the two empires. Not a relief fund. Not a weapon. Not a sympathetic action. But wholesale imprisonments in Tiflis, Baku, Erivan, Shoushi, Ganzak. The imprisonments spread to the villages to silence the protests of the revolutionaries. All the Armenian leaders of importance and influence were put under arrest, numbering more than a hundred. Many of them were banished to the remote districts of Russia. The rest fled the country. That was a black period of persecution and tyranny in the political annals of the Caucasus.²

This lasted until 1896, when the despotism of St. Petersburg realized with pleasure and triumph that the Armenian nation was wounded so seriously that it could not survive.

An American missionary, who had lived in Van for a long time, told once: "When we saw the heaped corpses, the sea of blood, the unutterable horror, the mad flight, we thought the Armenian people was no more!"

1895-96 was the grave of Armenia. And the "spade of the Tzar" stood foremost.

What a black honor!

² Among the arrested were 22 pedagogists, 7 authors, 10 students, 8 government officials, 20 commissioners, 4 clergymen, 21 artisans, 8 merchants, 12 professionals.

THE PRISONERS OF 1908.

The new days made us forget the old.

The former imprisonments dwindle into insignificance as compared with the policy initiated in 1908. The wholesale, perpetual and universal arrests, which were inaugurated in 1907-1908 were unparalleled in the annals of Caucasus Armenians, and, perhaps, of the Russians. There has been forcible arrests among the Russians, Poles, Jews, Finns, astonishing arrests, but it was never seen, even under Tzarism, that a whole nation, an entire people, with warring classes should be accused as *revolutionary, dangerous*, and should be tried as such on the bench of criminals.

But it was so. The arrests of 1908 did not respect any class. People were searched indiscriminately, the office of the Armenian Catholicos the head of the whole Armenian Church; the author who preached new life and new thought; the most ignorant peasant who cannot even read; the millionaire who enjoys life; the laborer who toils; the merchant who does not recognize any world outside his store; the professor whose activities are confined only to the classroom; the clergymen who heartily pray for the permanence of thrones; the student who is the ensign bearer of revolution; the physician and the lawyer who have free professions; the mayor and the official who are the servants of the government; men and women, the rich and the poor; the countryman and the immigrant, the civilian and the farmer; in short, the whole Trans-Caucasus from one end to the other, and the Armenian people living there, every man, every class.

That is the characteristic *line* in this "adventure."

The first sign was given in December, 1908, in Tiflis, and in the beginning of 1909 reached its highest point. The number of people searched was nearly a thousand. Five hundred were arrested and imprisoned in the Caucasus and in other prisons.

Among the prisoners were included eight authors, twenty-two Armenian physicians, lawyers and specialists, twenty-four professors and teachers, thirty-four officials and attendants,

forty-five merchants, seventy artisans, and peasants, laborers, clergymen, women and even students.

More than three thousand people were under suspicion. Those under suspicion—thanks to the fact that Russian officials sell their secrets—take refuge not only in Europe but, imagine, even in Turkey and Persia, the despotic countries of yesterday. Doubtless, the numerous prisons of the Caucasus, with their hundreds of cells, would not be able to contain those thousands of “guests.”

The distressing part of the arrests was not their quantity but their quality. From the viewpoint of right and law the whole business is corrupted and even based on false data.

Why? For the simple reason that those arrests are not the result of legal searches and visible proofs, but that both the searchings and the arrests are formerly decided and suggested by the central government for political purposes.

When in St. Petersburg the central government decided for definite political purposes to persecute the Armenians of the Caucasus, it simultaneously sent orders to the Caucasus to *unearth an Armenian plot*, and to begin the attack. In the Caucasus, as well as everywhere, there still exists proudly the type of Napoleon’s Police Minister, “who always carries in his pocket a scheme of any conspiracy.” And those ever ready agents, police, soldiers, prosecuting judges, who understand well the signals of the central government, as well as each other, came together and planned and began. The people, two months and two years ago recognized as peaceful, loyal and law-abiding, were declared anti-royalists, revolutionists, and fomentors for Armenian independence. And the blows were showered right and left.

We have already described the terrifying picture of searchings. It was not sufficient, however, to search and intimidate; it was necessary, also, to save the honor of the government by “manipulating some proof,” and the officer of the court himself manipulates those proofs and gives them to spy agents for realization.

Some examples :

Searching had started in Erivan. On an ill-omened night the soldiers were surrounding one of the houses. The owner of the house, innocent and ignorant, asked: "But what is my crime?" And behold, the police found in the basement a very dangerous leaflet as an accusing proof. After many, many bitter days only, a very "dangerous leaflet" was thrown into the basement by the police chief.

Another night the police entered into the modest house of a man named Kalousdian. They pulled him out of his bed and punished him with a knout, and demanded: "Where is the box, show it. Where did you hide it?" "What box?" murmured the innocent victim; "spare me, I have not seen any box." Only after several weeks it was found that the whole proceeding was the result of a criminal misunderstanding. The spy informed the detectives that there was a dynamite box at Kalousdian's house. The police rushed and arrested Kalousdian, and then it was discovered that he was not the one they were looking for.

Another event, again in Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasus. A sudden order was given to search the house of the poet Isahakian. And what! They find in the court great quantities of cartidges, then his guilt is certain. But this time the author of the crime had performed his work very poorly. The plot was uncovered. The whole of Tiflis heard it, but was not astonished. Is that not usual?

Proofs of that sort are numerous.

On account of this wicked and criminal "policy" there was confusion, which was and which will remain the eternal condemnation of the Russian Courts. It is unprecedented in the annals of trials. Innocent ones are arrested instead of the accused. One suffers for the other. The chief of the detectives plans to arrest certain Armenians. They cannot find them, then Legine causes the arrest of altogether innocent men who accidentally have the name or the patronym of the suspect.

Let the proofs speak.

1. The police were looking for a revolutionist whose pseudonym was "Prince," and then one day Prince Arghoutian was arrested and imprisoned in Erivan because, as can be seen, he bore the title of Prince. The man protested, but in vain. Several months later it became known that the "Prince" who was sought was out of the Caucasus, and was known in Van as a political leader. The "Prince," who was in Van, regards it a moral duty to inform the investigating judge, through the Russian Consul, that he is in Turkey and that it is unjust to arrest someone else, but Legine persists in his error and Prince Arghoutian has been suffering in prison for two years—and who knows how long yet!

2. Another day they arrested Malkasian, a teacher of the Nersessian School. Not only was he not a revolutionist, but an opponent of revolutionary methods. But he was kept in prison for several months because his Christian name bore resemblance to that of a suspected man who was sought by the police. What is the difference, if it be this man or that man?

3. A man named Kevork Ordoyan was sought in Tiflis. Not being able to find him, the police arrested another Kevork, Kevork Arakelian. The relatives of the former testified that Kevork Ordoyan had been killed in Persia, and that they held his death certificate, signed by the Persian legation. But in vain. The authorities desired to imprison an Armenian, whose name was Kevork. "If Kevork Ordoyan is dead, let Kevork Arakelian serve the former's term," decided the officer of justice. And for three years Kevork Arakelian with an excusable confidence is waiting in the prison . . . for justice.

4. In Batoum the police were looking for an Armenian, Hrants Sarafian, a shoemaker, from Trebizonde, Turkey. He could not be found, as he had departed from that city long ago. But was there not another Armenian named Hrants, in Batoum, thought the investigator? With an unfortunate coincidence the son of the Priest Melian was called Hrants. They arrested and imprisoned him. And why not? Student,

named Hrant, and the son of an Armenian priest! The justice of Liegen did not care that this man is Hrant Melian, and not Sarafian; student, and not shoemaker; from Batoum, and not from Trebizonde. It sufficed that his name was Hrant. Let him languish in prison. The world will not be the poorer for it.

5. The wretched cemetery of Erivan had a guard, old, weak, as harmless as the cemetery. He was named Hagop Avedissian, and born in Caesarea, Turkey. One day that poor old man was dragged to the police court, and then to prison. He could not understand what was happening. He was crying and knocking his head against the wall, and trying to wrench the iron bars off the window with his boney hands. He was repeating all day long: "What is my crime, what have I done." And the innocent guard, of course, could not imagine that he was arrested for another Hagop; Hagop Gotoyan. The latter was from Moush, and not from Caesarea, young and not old, a soldier, and not a cemetery guard. But why these "unimportant" details! He was a Hagop, that sufficed. The poor guard lost his senses, but he is in jail yet.

6. With the same justice and manner Vram Vahanian of Terbizonde was arrested and imprisoned for Vahan Papazian, of Van, now a member of the Turkish Parliament. Karekin Kevorkian was cast into prison for Karekin Mirakian; Levont Melconian, of Ganzak, was imprisoned instead of Ardashes Melconian, of Tiflis; four men whose first names are Nicola were imprisoned in Baku for Nicola Der Hovannessian who was sought by the Government. They had different patronyms, different trades, came from different quarters; but as their first names were Nicola, that proved their guilt!

And these cases are innumerable and endless. It is only necessary to have heart to record the sad incidents which have plunged many families in unfathomable suffering and lamentation. But enough is mentioned to give a just idea of what mad proportion these ridiculous persecutions have assumed and which persecutions are disguised under the vizard of court examination.

IN THE CELLS.

Injustice characterized the search—irregularity the method of arrest. But that was not the end.

The cells themselves were remote from prying inquiry, removed from investigation, dark and hidden as their secrets, an inaccessible world, where no eye can penetrate and no voice reach. And in that "autocratic kingdom" where police tyranny is not only countenanced but encouraged, the torture to which the Russian prisoner has been the slave for so many years, continues.

"Every means is permissible" was the order of the magistrate and the intention of that official, though criminal, was to encourage the unhappy prisoners to hatch plots to their undoing and thus magnify "the political affair."

"The Armenian prisoners in Novotcherkask and Rostove," writes one of the prisoners, "are teeming with unspeakable conditions. It is a lie to say that there is no torture in Russia. Yes! It exists. Twenty-five to thirty men are placed in one cell that hardly holds six or seven. There are no bedsteads, not even bedding; and the miserable inmates sleep on the bare ground, huddled under a single blanket, dirty as the filth in which they are compelled to lie. Nor do they give enough food even to the unfortunate, who are able and willing to pay. One slice of bread and some water daily. Reading and writing is forbidden and communication with the outside world prohibited. Should a prisoner, by doctor's prescription, be permitted to have an extra piece of bread, some boiled eggs or a box of cigarettes, the loaf is cut open and the eggs broken to prevent the chance of smuggling even a scrap of paper. . . . In the cold cells a loathsome smell prevails and despairing barrenness. The guards are as immovable as the rocks, stern and forbidding, menacing as the lightning. We cannot cry—we are ashamed. We cannot rage and roar. They permit no sound—what shall we do? The walls are thick, the bars strong, and the world remote. What can we do? We are but waiting——"

No sanitary precautions are taken, no care offered. Even the sick beseeching for warmth or clothing are refused.

In 1910 Restove was wholly infected with cholera, and throughout the district the "subjects" were dying like flies. Soon the news of this plague reached the prison and deep horror prevailed within its walls. It is not difficult to picture the situation of those who realized themselves helpless and shackled in the midst of this pestilence, devoid of air and light, with virtually no medical attendance or proper disinfection. Desperate and impotent they could but protest unavailingly against their tragic plight. "What will happen," they cry with one accord, "should the pestilence invade the prison as well?" The authorities were silent and the prisoners as well as their loved ones at home at last became convinced that Legine, the inspector, connected with the *gendarmerie*, with diabolical cunning, was deliberately inviting this method of suppressing "the political evil," the life of the prisoners, by means of "the irresponsible evil"—pestilence.

What a horrible conviction!

I wonder if it requires great power of imagination to picture the horror of those days and nights spent by the unhappy prisoners behind those iron barred windows when cholera was reigning outside as the sword of the jailer within the *locked* portals.

The following year another misfortune befell.

In the first part of January, 1911, typhoid fever made its appearance in the prison of Novotcherkask, and soon assumed threatening proportions. That vile dungeon, mis-called a prison, was built to accommodate two hundred and seventy inmates, yet the number crowded in it at this time exceeds eight hundred and fifty people. This condition, coupled with the total lack of sanitary precaution, would naturally hasten the spread of a disease, such as typhoid fever, and, indeed, in March, 1911, the number of the infected exceeded one hundred and the dead twenty.

Early in March the Medical Director visited the prison. Let us now listen to the words of his report.

"The cells of the prison are overcrowded beyond their capacity; the air vitiated and loathsome. In the cells, wooden

boxes, called *parashes*, are placed for natural necessities of the prisoners; and these are making the atmosphere more unbearable, which already was unbreathable enough. Besides these boxes are placed the wooden vessels containing the drinking water for the unfortunates. The prisoners' underwear is dirty, seldom changed oftener than once in three weeks.

"Before this, in January, the prison physician wrote to the Governor of the prison, telling him that typhoid fever has appeared in the prison. The Governor, however, faithful to the instruction of Taube, the head of the district, forbade the doctor to communicate anything concerning the disease to the Medical Director, and for this reason, in the accounts of the prison, nothing was said of typhoid fever and, in fact, it was said that the prisoners had been ill with malaria.

"In spite of repeated demands from the doctor to impart to the Board of Health the necessary information regarding the typhoid fever the director of the prison, *obstinately* and *deliberately* concealed the existence of the malady."

This criminal official "secrecy" horrified the relatives of the unfortunates shut in this jail at Novotcherkask, and they prepared the following telegram and sent it to the Minister of Justice:

"In the Prison at Novo Tscheegask, there is now raging a terrible pestilence. More than a hundred prisoners as well as the prison director, three assistants, ten supervisors, six clerks, the prison physician and three assistants are sick. Mortality is assuming alarming proportions and among the dead are two of the overseers; the sanitary conditions are unbearable. The prison built to house only two hundred and fifty inmates now contains in excess of eight hundred inmates. The building is located on the lowest ground in the city where fever prevails. The floors of the cells are asphalt. Those held as accused of the 'Affair of Dashnaktoutun' are already rounding out their third and fourth years of confinement and all are of impaired health. Most of them seriously affected by consumption, others with diseases of bones, nervous disorders and eye trouble. Some are affected with palsy and two have lost their hearing and all are now exposed to the dreadful typhoid fever. It is easy to understand how their

impaired constitutions are unable to withstand the ravages of that terrible disease."

"Taking all this into consideration, we request your Excellency to release them on personal recognizance or light bail; for they being economically as well as physically ruined, are unable to provide large sums of money. The preliminary investigation of this 'Affair of Dashnakt-soutun' is already completed and the families of the prisoners are almost beside themselves with terror at the peril to which their dear ones are now subjected."³

Silence alone from the minister!

This was but the *natural* horror due to natural conditions alone, and yet the agents of tyranny are not satisfied and add to it the *artificial*, the scourges, the straps and other varied instruments of torture!

Let the facts alone speak!

It was in the prison of Baku, that the agents of investigation determined to hear secrets, to have G—M—utter words of things not existing. The youth resisted with constancy and continued mildness—the order was given and his head compressed between clamps until he fainted. This was resumed again and again, while the torturers repeated the fateful words: "You cannot be rid of us, until you confess your guilt."

In another prison in Tiflis, the poor prisoner G—D—M—was subjected to continuous flagellation with straps for two weeks, while his poor body was covered with the swollen welts, and yet his cruel tormentors would not cease. They were exacting "Confessions!"

³ In consequence of this telegram, so ominous in its portent of disaster, one of the St. Petersburg papers, "Rech," published the following: "The condition of the prisoners is indeed appalling and wholly desperate, one cannot imagine how they incarcerate for years, poor wretches wasting with disease in an overcrowded and wholly unsuitable place, casting fifty into a cell and making them sleep on the bare, icy floor. In one corner where Armenians from Hashdaekhan are, the place is called "*Blacktown*" on account of the darkness so great that even during day time the inmates cannot see each others' faces without striking matches. Many in this cell where Armenians from Hashdarkhan are, the place is called "*Blacktown*" entered the prison healthy and strong and now many have their constitutions ruined forever, and this is not the punishment of a sentence, but merely preliminary imprisonment before the actual trial which frequently proves them innocent. This is nothing less than the execution of those not yet convicted. It is not a preliminary incarceration, but a frightful ordeal and a slow and gradual execution and, therefore, far worse."

The prison of Rostove was the scene of more serious cruelties. There was one victim, Mednikian, a lawyer who protested his innocence, demanded investigation, asked for trial. For trial, they gave him the whip, and for investigation, revilings of the foulest language. The unfortunate man, horrified and discouraged, went mad—and is now a helpless imbecile wailing his grief. No one cares—“He is mad,” they say, and pass him by.

Insane is his neighbor, too, an exhausted old man, lean as a skeleton, guardian of a cemetery, with no thoughts of this world save the grave. They have arrested him also. He does not know his guilt; they have thrust him into a cell, he knows not why, and they lashed and tormented him day after day. Why? God only knows—he scratched the walls with his nails and roaring, raging and screaming, at last lost his mind. Now when with tearful smile he demands his liberty, the jailer points the whip to him. Is he not insane?

Here is another victim: The Reverend Nicholas Solomonian, a priest, from the village of Ganzak. They arrested, stripped and tormented him, so that the grief-stricken Father died without even knowing of what he was guilty. The poor priest in his death agony, moaning and sobbing, told his fellow prisoners who were the unwilling witnesses of his torture, that he would soon pass away in death; wept, begged for fresh air, and uttering his wife’s name, wished to kiss his children for the last farewell—these young, inexperienced children who received their father’s dead body could not and never will realize why he was arrested and tortured to death away from them in a prison cell.

There were two deaths in the prison of Erivan. The victims being young men from Igtire, who died with their glazing eyes fixed on space, and their mute lips questioning “why?”

In the prison at Vladicaucus, a prisoner in his agony roused his failing strength and said, “I know that I am soon to die, but before I do I wish to know of what I am guilty.”

He died, as did many others, with the question unanswered, and such will be the sad fate of many more.

And the survivors! Unfortunate witnesses of these unearthly tragedies, viewing with fearful hearts the removal of

the dead bodies from the prison and vowing vengeance, are murmuring dejectedly:

“Perhaps tomorrow they may carry out our dead bodies, and why?”

And one day the corpse was carried out. It was in front of the door of the prison. A great multitude had swarmed around since early morning and were now impatiently waiting, people of every class and condition having hastened there. The old village priest, who had come to see his son, the country woman coming on foot from a distant village to enjoy at least a few minutes with the son she had not seen for eight months, the student, who with difficulty had obtained a license to see his brother; all of them pale, exhausted and weak with the scorching sun. Their hearts and minds all centered on the discolored stones of the prison walls, and all with the same vain hope in their breasts to see the beloved prisoners at least once, and to hear from their lips one hope-inspiring word.

And now the doors are opened.

The crowd with throbbing hearts moved like a rolling wave and presently fell back as if struck by a bolt of lightning, absolutely petrified as there appeared a funeral casket, which was placed in position by order of the priest who recited the prayers, and all eyes were turned to him.

Who was lying there dead in the casket?

“My son! My son!” screamed a woman from out of the multitude, and the old woman threw herself on the bier like a flash of lightning, with her bony arms embracing the casket and kissing the cold face of her beloved dead son, now raising her head and turning to the people around her and then with yearning eyes turned heavenward, only to repeat her caresses on the dead face before her, the climax of a mother’s immense and infinite grief—her cry “my son!”

That son whom she had come to see and enjoy, and now only his dead body!

..

THE REASONS.

I.—Internal.

Why so great severity, and why this gnashing of teeth against a people who, although crushed in the talons of Oriental despotism for untold years, has always been the pioneer of Russian advancement, and the firm rampart on the two frontiers against Mohammedan tyranny?

Seek for the explanation in the Metropolis of the North, where the jewels of State impudence are found guarded by the agents of the central tyranny.

When the Russian throne came out unscathed of the devouring flames of the Pan-Russian Revolution, the government of the Tzar, instead of hearkening to the cries and needs of the people, resorted, on the contrary, to a policy of *deceit* and *persecution*.

The deceit is the Duma.

The persecution is the period of unlimited oppressions under the pretence of the Duma, the like of which were unknown even in the days of Pobiedonostzef under the reign of Alexander III.

Persecution against individuals under the accusation of being "Revolutionists."

Persecution against nations, under suspicion of being "Separatists."

Prison! Exile! Gallows! These were the only means of smothering the liberty-inspiring breath in the North, where so many hopes died unrevealed, and on the shores of the Volga, which became the silent witness of the greatest crimes, at the foot of the Caucasian Mountains where once inspiring songs were written devoted to the White King Gaisson, and in the cities of Poland, the overwhelming grief of which has furnished material for long ages of history.

Finland, that knightly and quiet region, was one of the first to suffer persecution, and in spite of the royal promises the Finnish Constitution was abrogated and trampled upon.⁴

⁴We regret that the scope and plan of this booklet does not permit our giving at least a brief sketch of these crimes and horrors of which Finland, Poland and Central Russia were the stage.

The Tzar had taken oath to be faithful to the Constitution, and "he now retracts his promise," said the Prime Minister of the Tzar, after which he was obliged to use a handkerchief to wipe off the moisture from his brow, spat upon.

Then came *Poland's* turn! Who does not remember the unchronicled terror for three years which scorched and seared this doomed land, and buried in oblivion the date 1863 chronicled in history—crimes of which no gendarmerie was cognizant.

After silencing these two *distant parts*, the present agent of autocracy, Stolypin, extended his bloody hand over all *Central Russia*—the heartstone of revolution.

What crimes unheard of! The sight of the Russian idealistic youth, fresh and revolting, hushed the storm and the earth was reddened with their blood.

Once it was only St. Petersburg that had Petro-Povlovsk. What an honor! Now every city shares that honor by the Imperial sacred edict.

There was a time when execution, by bullet, was reserved for exceptional "sins against the State." Now it is the usual method for the execution of the *lacos*.

Once women were exempt from the tortures of imprisonment, but now the women also are surrendered to the Cossacks' knout, kotard and spor.

The center was silenced and the Jews learned their "lesson"; then St. Petersburg turned its leopard-eyes towards the South, the foot of Ararat and Kasbik, whence came the ringing sounds of the song of freedom, the brotherly echo of the great song of the Pan-Russian Revolution.

Caucasus, that beautiful cradle of political love and hatred, the scene of long ages of great Mohammedan and Christian encounters, where Ararat, the historic domain of the Biblical Ark, long waited but as yet was denied to enjoy its dream of the emancipation of nations.

In that country of many languages and races,⁵ the gov-

⁵ In the Caucasus live these nations and races: Georgians, Armenians, Russians, Tartars, Greeks, Kurds, Tats, Assyrians, Utis, Lesgies, Oses, Abaz, Nogeï, Avar, Lak, Potlich, Metz, Chechen, Aghaz, Lezgy, Circasians, Germans, Moldavians, &c., aggregating ten millions of inhabitants, of which six and one-half millions live in Trans-Caucasus, of whom the principal elements are Georgians, Armenians and Tartars.

ernment endeavored to follow a special programme, mean and really criminal.

At first it endeavored to alienate the Georgians from the Armenians. To that effect, promises were made to the Georgian aristocracy, which unfortunately exerts considerable influence on the people, and they received all sorts of political privileges. As soon as the Georgian community, encouraged by these "special favors," started a small movement in Kauria in the name of liberty, the "friendly" and "co-religious" government immediately flooded the unfortunate district with regiments of soldiers and Cossacks, commanding them "to suppress this movement by every means, sparing neither life nor property," which command was effectually carried out with fire and ruin, gun and sword, which killed the small movement in this little unfortunate country completely. After the ruin there came exile, and all throughout Georgia arose the wail of horror.

Then came the turn to the Armenians!

The Armenian inhabitants of Caucasus were the object of the special enmity of St. Petersburg for a long time previously. The Governor-in-Chief, Golitzen, a *peculiar* type of the unbridled *Tchinovink*, haughty, "causak" and tyrannical (this was from 1897 to 1904), carried out the scheme; he armed all the Caucasus against each other and disseminated the seeds of enmity among the different nationalities, and, with the willing aid of Von Pleve and Stolypin, succeeded in convincing the central government that the chief controllers of the Armenian movement and revolution were the Armenian clergymen, and that the furnace which furnished the fuel was the *Church*—a very foolish and unwise idea worthy of its author. The conclusion reached was that it "was necessary to confiscate the property of the Church and thus weaken it."

On June 12th, 1903, came the supreme order "to confiscate the riches and property of the Churches and turn them over to the government."

No petition, no protest, on the part of the Catholicos and the people was of any avail—the tyrant was immovable! An extra military force was ordered to carry out this base edict and well they did it, breaking in the doors of many churches

and robbing them of their treasures. Even in the religious centre of Etchmeadzin, they broke open the safe of the monastery. Many clergymen were imprisoned.

This vandalism, however, was ere long confronted with indignation and bad revolts. The church yards with their moss-covered walls were transformed into battlefields. Blood flowed and corpses piled up around the monasteries, and the spirit of resistance soared above the Armenians.

The tyrant was forced to yield!

Before the end of the year, the property of the churches was returned. The autocrat, however, did not forget his defeat, but kept it fast in his mind. "Who are these people who dare to resist the soldiers of the Tzar? They must get their 'lesson' and they will."

They were waiting for the opportune moment.

Two years passed by.

The fire of revolution had surrounded the Russian domain and the government of the Tzar had hastened to crush the Armenians as an important factor, so as to render them helpless towards the general revolution now anticipated. In effect, they put into execution a disastrous plan and conspiracy to bring about an Armeno-Tartaric collision, by arming the Tartar hordes and instigating them against the Armenians, thus gaining the favor of the Mohammedan people and on the other hand forcing the Armenian element to *self-defense*, so that they could not, if they would, join the movement, even with the smallest share.

This fiendish plot was prepared through the suggestions of Von Pleve, and was entrusted to the agents of the criminal Minister of the Caucasus to be fully carried out.

On a quiet day in Baku the Tartars, inflamed with the Mohammedan spirit, attacked the Armenian quarters without cause or reason.

This was on February 6th, 1905.

General astonishment prevailed. Notwithstanding the supplications and applications for help made by the Armenians, the police remained both indifferent and inactive. Instead of preventing the bloodshed the police, on the contrary,

encouraged the Mohammedan Beys and the mob, and the clash of battle extended from one end of the Trans-Caucasus to the other. After Baku, came Erivan, Nakhitchevan, Shou-shi, Ganzak, to be the said scenes of unimaginable misfortune and calamity.

Once more the blood flowed.

The cities were reduced to ashes. The roaring of guns filled the villages. The conflagration consumed whole quarters. The scythes of the quiet villagers were discarded for swords. On every side ruin and desolation reigned supreme.*

Once more, however, the bullets failed; again with self devotion defensive ranks were formed. Side by side stood the brave people. More than fifteen thousand men sallied out from their generous bosom and enlisted under the flag of resistance to teach their lesson to the Tartaric invasion. Force, united, with the great idea, carried forward its great role of warning. The conspiring government "held its tongue in leash," while all their sombre forces tried their utmost to drench the quiet fields of labor with the blood and tears of their foes, but when vanquished they became as humble as infants and as soft as a summer breeze,—this was their lesson of the revolution.

After this sad, fratricidal conflict was over the sealed lips were free and even from among the Tartars themselves, there came out fearless men and good citizens who had the courage to speak out the truth boldly.

On June 10th, 1906, the governor of Goutsak Alftan went out to visit the ruined places and when in the city of Khozah,

* In the years 1905 and 1906 at the sad conflicts of the Armenians and the Tartars 286 villages were sacked and ruined of which number 128 were inhabited by Armenians, 158 by Turks. The number of injured families was 14760. Of these 7265 were Armenians, while 7495 Tartars.

The destroyed cities were Baku, Shushy, Ganzak, Erivan, Hin Nakhitchevan, Khazak and Tiflis. The number of injured is again immense.

The number of Armenians killed are the following: Baku, 176; Shushy, 126; Ganzak, 132; Hin Nakhitchevan, 55. The villages around Shushy, 160; Minken, 198. The villages of Ganzak, 212. The villages of Nakhitchevan, 114.

The number of Tartars killed was still greater, but we have no statistics because the Mohammedans, according to some strange custom, conceal everything pertaining to the number killed and other such informations.

among the crowd gathered on a public square, a Turkish Bey came forth and addressed the Governor in the following words :

“Your Excellency is viewing the city of Khazah, which was orderly and populous, seven or eight months ago, but now it is destroyed and ruined, for which we are not responsible ; but the arbitrary Judge Orlov, now standing by you ; was the one who induced, nay, forced us, to massacre the Armenians, unsparingly, without distinction of age or sex, telling us that it was the wish of the government.”

In a more severe and scathing language spoke another Tartar, Representative Ziatkhanov, in one of the sessions of the Duma ; June 12th, 1906.

He said :

“The officers of the government ruined Georgia, that beautiful country ; through their soldiers they provoked the Mussulmans and the Armenians, inciting them to massacre each other.

“I declare from this pulpit that there never had been any enmity between Tartars and Armenians on economical grounds alone, we had been living together as good neighbors and liked each other, there had not been any armed collisions, and if cases of murder happened they were single exceptions, and never assumed any great proportions.

“Our officials and generals have proved their incompetency, for two entire years we have been literally swimming in a sea of blood up to our knees, and walking over carcasses.

“Make them retire, and quit their posts immediately ; we have seen enough of the flames and conflagrations, and we have seen enough of the sad picture of falling bodies and listened to the mourning wails, and sobs, of unfortunate mothers. More than enough !”

What an awful sentence of condemnation !

Did the government chief blush ? Did his criminal hands tremble,—those hands which signed the decrees of death ? No ! No ! Furious in his defeat, the tyrant roared :

“It is necessary to beat down that force. to bridle that arrogant people.”

II.—External.

Beginning with 1907, to the *internal* reasons were now added the *external*. Political and important changes beyond the frontier in Persia and in Turkey.

The wave of liberty and a constitution at last reached the doors of the palace of Shahinshah! The slumbering people for ages were now awakening, rebels appeared against the monarch of Teheran. The government of St. Petersburg, disturbed by the unexpected awakening on the soil of Persia, sent troops to Salmast, Tauriz and Racht, and agents to Teheran to keep the road of his invasion open to Azerbaijan, on which its eyes had been fixed for a century. Meanwhile it endeavored vainly to check the liberal movement, the echo of which was heard with great joy in the mountain chains of the Caucasus.

In Persia also where the melody of liberty was ringing from the cleft citadel of tyranny, now strong, then sad, there stood against the triumphant soldiers of the Tzar, side by side with the sons of Iran, the Armenian, flag in hand, and with his breast bared to the bullet.

The Armenians of Azerbaijan, although small in numbers and in strength, considered it unworthy of them not to participate in the movement of freedom, and they sent what aid they could to the army of the constitution. The Armenian revolutionists, with the Mohammedan and Georgian soldiers of liberty from Caucasus, gave not only their money and property, but their very life and blood, and their body to the pedestal of this great monument of Freedom. And even in Teheran, the leader of the Constitutionalist soldiers is a modest Armenian, named Eprem, who with the aid of Armenian warriors is resisting the reactionary army and the foreign invaders.

“Armenians again!”

The tyranny of St. Petersburg exclaims in a wild fury, and full of venomous hatred: “They *must be* destroyed until not a trace of them remains!”

“The Armenians here also!”

Reports the Russian ambassador of Constantinople, shame-stricken and envious of the fact, that, while on the shores of

the Neva the Duma is but a shadow, in the hands of Cossacks, on the shores of the Bosphorus, yesterday's fortress of the Ottoman Nero, the song of liberty is resounding since the month of July, 1908, and Yeldiz has fallen a captive in the hands of the awakened people.

Yeldiz has surrendered! The Parliament is open! There is liberty of speech and of the press. The criminal is in prison and beside all this, new hopes and labor thrive in the name of the new tomorrow and regeneration. These are facts that are unendurable for the rotten bureaucracy, monarchical, and despotic, to their very marrow.

The agents of this bureaucracy, some in Constantinople as ambassadors, others as consuls in Asia Minor are insisting obstinately that it is the Armenians who are directing the new regime. It was the Armenian revolution that harmonized all of the various elements and deposed the monarch, and especially it is the Armenians who are propagating and disseminating an anti-Russian spirit in the Ottoman Empire. Imbued with this detestable conviction the agents of the Tzar, since 1909, have spared neither money nor medals, to carry out their plots, to rouse the ignorant Turks and Kurds against the Armenians, thus hoping to strike a blow at the infant constitution.

In Caucasus it is the Armenian! In Persia the Armenian! In Turkey the Armenian! It is the diplomatic nightmare of the deplorable government of the North, which exists by "non-existent facts," and which desires to be *revenged* by destroying and crushing the Armenian heart and mind—the Armenian who has no sin on his head nor responsibility for the past.

What a change of role!

In Constantinople, the cradle of the Hamidian Crime, the stammering voice of freedom is ringing out, while the fatherland of Bushkin, Gertsin, Tolstoi and Karaev, the scene of heroic struggles, is reduced to the place of torture where the prisons are as full as the temples are on festal days.

In Turkey, yesterday's land of dungeons, there are no political prisoners, while in Russia there is not a single prison that has a vacant cell or corner. Once it was in Caucasus that the Armenians of Turkey sought refuge! Now it is in

Turkey and Constantinople that the Caucasus Armenian seeks shelter to be free from prison and torture; from exile and Siberia.

There was a time when from St. Petersburg and Caucasus went forth protest and contempt against the Ottoman Neroism, and now it is from Byzantium that protest is heard against that crime which means torture and persecution for the Armenian and shame and insult for the Russian mind and name.

Unfortunate Russia!

Turkey, that had no credit and benighted Iran, are both constitutional countries and have their own parliament! The Sultan and the Shah are exiled, while great Russia is but the realm of tyranny.

What an insult! and it is the "different elements of various races" that are to expiate that insult.

That is the explanation and also the reason in its brief outline.

THE INVESTIGATION.

The premeditated "political" system made one predict that this great affair will not be based on serious judicial investigation within the limits of law and conscience, but, on the contrary, it will be managed from political viewpoints according to the instructions given by the supreme secret police.

This happened!

The "affair" was committed to Legine.

Who is Legine? He is the representative type of the *Chinovnik*, having but one purpose, to be exalted; one ambition, to be exalted; and one way, to be exalted! An officer of police, but not a judge; a searcher, but not an investigator! He was an insignificant searcher, and was notorious in the affair known as "the Republic of Novorosl," where he forged all the papers, created new writings with capricious additions to existing accusations against the defendants, and for all that, instead of being subjected to condemnation, which was demanded even from the nostrum of the Duma, he was praised and his work approved by the Minister of Justice, Schteglovitov, and he was promoted to one of the pillars of the government police. Afterwards, when many innocent victims were condemned to the gallows, and others were exiled through his criminal investigation, he was rewarded by being put in charge of the new "political" affair, to prove his zeal. And he hopes through the services rendered to the revolutionary oligarchy of St. Petersburg to rise by the bloody steps to the post of Attorney General, and thence, perhaps, to the Minister's chair, which is star-studded, and so lucrative a post in Russia.

Many protests were made by the community and the prisoners, against the guilty actions of the police judge, but he remained in his position defended by bands of hired detectives and with singular levity and bold manner he is safe in his citadel, surrounded by the police, from where he issues criminal orders, each even worse than the other.

Here, in the investigation, is it always the same old "comedy," or is it a sad tragedy, performed in the name, but under the *mask* of justice?

Seated in his great chair, the investigator with inhuman severity presumes that he is the little Tzar of Great Russia and acts the part. Opposite sits an officer of gendarmerie, an expert in plots and arrests. In the corners stand the interpreters, with keen scenting noses, and bowing heads, ever ready machines to materialize on paper all sorts of lies, and to complete the picture there is the representative of justice, the Attorney General, silent and mysterious as the Sphinx.

"If I were the minister," roared the investigator, jumping from his chair like a madman, "I would destroy and annihilate the Armenian language; its literature, its church, its theatre. I would scatter the Armenians all over Russia and that would end the Armenian movement, this great danger to the State."

"It is not *you*, but *we*, Mr. Investigator! We the guiltless sinners that are hounded as political plotters and subject to imprisonment and exile, for the mere sympathy we entertain for the just cause of an oft-tormented people."

The Attorney General interfered and the storm passed by.

"You are guilty on the following counts" began the investigator resuming his harangue, "You have bought arms in illegal ways; you have armed the people, and have sent part to Armenia, in Turkey; you have organized armed bands; founded a secret printing house and are publishing prohibited papers in the name of your secret society, of which you are a member, and finally you are guilty of a number of terrors aimed at the officials of the State."

This is a well-known phrase prepared in the offices of the gendarmerie and proposed to every arrested person. Years and years ago, when they pushed to the foreground the awkward suspicion that the Armenians were demanding an "independent kingdom," the government of Caucasus reported to the central government that, Trans-Caucasus was the "heart" of the movement, and that the residence of every young man was a store for arms and headquarters for warriors.

Orders came from St. Petersburg, and the investigation was started. They were convinced that they would find thousands of guns, hundreds of thousands of cartridges and would open up safes of dynamite, secret printing houses, and a strong, organized conspiracy against the State, with a separatistic program.

The hopes of the gendarmerie were not justified, and hence the source of their entanglement and anger.

"If you have called us to be tried, Mr. Investigator, simply to pile accusation upon accusation upon us, without listening to our explanations, then all this is of no avail. Shut us up in the prison or send us to exile, as already"—

"Return to prison," the investigator interrupted wildly. "I know that you wish to create an independent Armenia and rule over others as we Russians do. But you seriously mistake. The friendship of England will not avail you, and we do not wish to give Armenia to *you*. We are going to possess it and annex it to Caucasus. See! the railway is ready on the frontier, and we are waiting for an occasion to send troops to Turkey."

After a short pause, he continued:

"If you do not confess within three days, I am going to shut you up in the prison for a year, two years, I will deprive you of food and bed. I will not allow any communication or petition or protest to come to me, nor allow any communication with your relatives and friends. I will do whatever I wish to do with you to help realize my purpose."

He attained his desire, and "he magnified the flea to the size of a camel." He manufactured the impossible. He at last wrote a history, each page sadder than the other, and he made up his lines from what did not exist.

To complete the picture, some more features will be given, taken, as always, from the facts.

The well-known Armenian writer, Aharonian, was arrested and was kept for two years in prison for the reason that as a member of a delegation sent by the Catholics of the Armenians, he presented himself to the conference at The Hague, the chairman of which was Count Nelidoff himself, the ambassador of the Tzar.

An Armenian millionaire, Melik Azarian, an old man of sixty, was cast into prison simply for the reason that he had transferred money several times through his business office.

Dr. Atabekian remained in prison two years under the accusation of committing certain crimes in Shoushi although he presented irrefutable proofs that he was in Baku and not in Shoushi at the time.

A youth, B. M., eighteen years old, is now imprisoned for the "terrors" he is charged with having committed in 1905, when this formidable terrorist was but *thirteen years old*.

Ohanjanian, an able physician, has been pining away in prison for three years under the accusation of participating in a meeting held in *Vlatikavkas*, notwithstanding the fact that he has never been in that city and therefore could not possibly have had any share in it.

Tateosian, an officer, was imprisoned two years, for the sole reason that the name Tateosian was mentioned in some suspicious telegram.

Etgarvian, an old man of seventy, was arrested, confined and tortured in prison, simply because one of his employes was a revolutionist. He was released, under heavy bail, but died soon after.

We could mention many more instances as sad as those but there is no end to them.

No *alibi*! No official, or even conclusive proof, demonstrating that the accused person could not possibly have been in a said place at the said time received any attention from the police investigator who ordered them imprisoned, surrounded by an awesome silence, while his lowering glances looked for some utterance which might be racked from them.

Indirect prosecutions also were inaugurated.

In some of the villages of Ganzak they threatened to arrest women if their husbands refused to present themselves to the police. In many places they arrested the *innocent* brother in order to compel the *accused* brother to come forward and surrender. A letter, or some incidental writing was a sufficient reason to issue an order for imprisonment. In one of the villages of Erivan a poor man was arrested and pronounced guilty for having convoyed a traveller on his horse, because the traveller was suspected to be a "revolutionist."

Here is a characteristic instance.

One day a young investigator, as yet uncorrupted by the police atmosphere, was conversing with the Governor-in-Chief of Ganzak, regarding the arrest of an Armenian bishop.

"In the absence of any *positive* proof," he said, "I am hesitating about ordering him under arrest."

"Is the bishop young?" asked the Governor-in-Chief.

"Yes, he is hardly twenty-nine years of age."

"If he is *young*, he must be guilty, arrest him!"

Such is the policy of Legine.

Another example: One night the police rushed into the house of a lady, by the orders of Legine, and for a time the house was in a state of confusion, and children were crying.

"What do you wish?" asked the lady of these dreadful visitors.

"Where is your husband, Davtian, we are looking for him."

Confused, and with tears in her eyes, she answered:

"Oh, how happy I would be if I could send *you where he is!* He is in his grave!"

Davtian had died eight years ago, in 1903.

But neither this shameful rebuff nor hundreds of similar defeats could halt the investigator in his devilish cunning. On the contrary, he became more haughty and aggressive. He ordered the arrest of the *living* instead of the *dead*. The relatives instead of the missing ones; this without proof and without proper inquiry.

Real investigation there was none, but the so-called investigation of Legine lasted over two years and a half, and as a result one hundred volumes were written, with more than one thousand pages to each volume, an eternal monument of lies and deceit.

THE AFFAIR OF DASHNAKTSOUTUN.

Thus an entire nation composed of various classes is put on the bench of accusation by an unwise government. A singular phase in the annals of political trials, singular in the utter groundlessness of the accusations and even more singular in its external form.

Be it even the Tsar as the *head* of injustice, or Stolypin as the *inspirer*, or Legine as the *executor*. Bear in mind that to accuse a whole nation is a most *unwise* and *disturbing* thing, which puts its author in an untenable position. It is utterly impossible that a revolutionary movement against the State and government should join such elements and classes which in their social position represent diverse opinions and views.

It is on account of this fact that the group of police judges were obliged to disguise under a *party name* the *persecution* they had inaugurated against a whole nation; so they called it the "Dashnaktsoutun Affair."

What is Dashnaktsoutun?

It is an Armenian revolutionary party, organized in 1890, twenty years ago, having as its *aim* the political liberty of the Armenians in Turkey, and as *means to that end* the revolutionary struggle, and as *applied method* the solidarity of all the nationalities in Turkey. It was *founded* in the Caucasus, but it was working for the Armenians in Turkey. Most of its money, arms, and forces were furnished from the Caucasus, but were used in Turkey which was chained by Hamid's hands.

The Russian monarchical bureaucracy, beginning from 1890, often dealt blows to the Armenians of the Caucasus, but the Dashnaktsoutun never deviated from its aim, and did not enter into any conflict with the Russian authorities until 1903, when the news of the confiscation of the property of the churches excited and so disturbed the Armenians and compelled the Dashnaktsoutun, as a *servant* of their people, and, as a body born of the people, to stand by them and defend their violated rights.

Two years later, in 1905, at the period of the breaking out of the Pan-Russian Revolution, when the agents of the Tsar created the Tartar-Armenian collisions, the Armenian party

participated in that conflict, inevitably, and thus began its activity in the Caucasus, also, as a revolutionary and socialistic organization. At the convention of the party which convened in Vienna in 1907, their tactics were approved and adopted as a direct result of the severe persecutions to which the Armenians in the Caucasus were subjected.

The October constitution, drawing a veil over the past, officially recognized this situation. The government not only failed to persecute the Dashnaksoutun and other political organizations, but permitted them to come forward and be recognized politically in the country.

Thus, in 1905, during the conflicts between the Armenians and the Tartars, the supreme authority itself distributed arms through the police-commissioner, Tsis, to the Dashnaksoutun and to social democrats to defend *Tiflis*, where the viceroy sits, against the invasions of Tartars.

In 1906, when the representatives of Tartars and Armenians convened at the palace of the viceroy, Vorontsov-Dashkov, under the chairmanship of General Malhama, the representatives of the Dashnaksoutun were invited to the official convention.

Beginning from 1905, in the election of the Duma in the Caucasus, the Dashnaksoutun came forward as a *separate body*, the government recognized officially their electioneering campaign, and those elected were recognized in the Duma as the representatives of the Dashnaksoutun and now they form a special faction in the Ottoman Parliament.

From the same year, 1905, onwards all over the Caucasus, in almost all its districts, the governors, governors-in-chief, as well as the police officials have often entered into official relations with members and the governing bodies of the organization, and have requested its assistance and advice.

Thus it remained from 1905 to 1908, after which the attitude of the government changed. They began to persecute the Armenian organization not only from 1908 onward, but went back to years past, beginning with 1903, and even further back than that, having forgotten that in the past the same government had itself, on many occasions both *officially* and *unofficially* in the life of the State, recognized the activity of the Dashnaksoutun and its right of existence.

There is, however, a more important point.

There is a *secret* which the government of the Tsar wishes to conceal forever in its chambers, but which must be brought out for the sake of those innocent people who suffer in the prisons.

It was in March, 1908, that a rumor was circulated of a probable war between Russia and Turkey with Bulgaria's participation. Bulgaria would attack Turkey from Macedonia, while the Russian soldiers would capture the village of Erzroum in Asia Minor. The government at St. Petersburg began sending ammunition to the frontier, and centralized forces near Kars.

In this important moment it was the desire of St. Petersburg to ascertain what would be the attitude of the Armenians of the Caucasus. For this purpose special military officers were sent from St. Petersburg to the Caucasus, by the military authorities, at the suggestion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The mission of these emissaries was to enter into relation with the governing bodies, and the representatives of the Dashnaktsoutun, in order to ascertain the attitude of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in case of war.

To fulfil this important mission the military and civil representatives of St. Petersburg made overtures in a very courteous manner and did not forget to be very lavish in their sympathy and appreciation and respect for the Armenian people and for their organizations. The Dashnaktsoutun replied that its attitude would largely depend as to how the political question of the Armenians should end in Turkey. Fortunately, war was avoided by outside pressure, and the negotiations came to an end.

Now, the question arises: By what logic does the government which in the beginning of 1908 was in amicable negotiation with Dashnaktsoutun suddenly turns towards the end of the same year and begins an unutterable and unnatural persecution, not only for deeds committed during 1908, but also for deeds supposed to have been committed from eight to ten years prior to the negotiations.

It is a curious and rapid change even for monarchical tactics. It is a mean political conspiracy, the bitter fruits of

which are enjoyed today by the deluded Armenian people. And how serious is the contrast of facts.

The government which in 1904 returned the confiscated property of the churches, actually confessed the justice of the demands of the Armenians. But in 1908 it imprisoned innocent men with the accusation that they had supported the cause of the Church.

In 1906 the government, itself, distributed arms to the Armenian organization to defend Tiflis. In 1908 the same men, and many others, who belong to the Dashnaktsoutun, were arrested as authors of illegal and guilty actions.

In 1906 was held the Central Convention of the Armenians, with the permission of the Catholicos of the Armenians, and with the knowledge of the police. But those who participated in that convention are pursued as dangerous socialists and revolutionists in 1908.

In the beginning of 1908 the government had entered into secret negotiations with the party for very important and secret affairs of the State, while toward the end of the same year those who belonged and even many who did not belong to the same party are put in chains as dangerous terrorists and political agitators, deserving the gallows and exile.

The government which negotiated with the socialist organization and the representatives who sat face to face with the delegates of the same party in the Duma in the beginning of 1908, toward the end of 1908 undertook an unprecedented persecution against the Dashnaktsoutun, for the reason that it was preaching socialism and that in the days of affliction it stood by the people, in their defense, resorting even to "terrorism," which was necessitated by the bloody and stern *realities*.

So it was that in the wild outburst in 1910, youths barely eighteen and nineteen years old *today*, were accused of committing terrors in 1903-1904, when they were mere lads of thirteen and fourteen, playing and catching ball, like school-boys.

This criminal deceit, practiced for years, and the present persecution, following the policy of deceit, is an indelible stain on the record of even a monarchical government, a black stain

which should be washed out, not by the blood of the persecuted and innocent victims, but by the blood of those who are the authors of the criminal policy.

The great task of rehabilitation is left to the Russian court, which, defective and police-bound as it is, is called upon to uphold the torch of justice and become the shelter of the innocent.

The court!

This is what in three years of protest, in tears, in silence, and in vain appeal, has been the constant demand of the Armenians behind the locked doors, and the Armenians in the Caucasus and throughout the world.

There is no court, because the heroes of the sad tragedy know by sad experience that in the court proofs are required—proofs which can stand the inquisition of the *law*.

For this reason they are postponing the trial in order that in the prison cells they may smother the consciences of the revolters, and terrify the whole Armenian people, hoping thus to quench the last breath, which has incurred the hatred of Russian despotism, from Finland to the land of Ararat.

For this same reason the government police is endeavoring to conduct the trial behind *closed doors*, through which the watchful eyes of the people and especially those of foreign nations, cannot penetrate and disclose the terrible proofs of disturbing justice.

Will they succeed?

THE MONARCHICAL RUSSIAN BUREAUCRACY.

There was a time when the Trans-Caucasus was the center of the Russophile winds. All the races, and all Christian nations turned their eyes towards the Eagle of the North.

With an inexplicable historic foolishness, the Caucasus—"The Wild Land"—was a place of exile for the Russians in the beginning of the nineteenth century. To the Caucasus were exiled all the undesirable military and civil officials, also those restless poets—Poushkin, Lermondov, to atone for their "sins." And again to the Caucasus, in 1863, were exiled all the political agitators of Poland to bewail their fond dreams of liberty.

The exile, however, loved the Caucasus instead of hating it. They say the beautiful country, with its charming mountains, the stupendous Mount Massis with its white-crowned peak, the proud Kasbek, the penitentiary of invincible Prometheus, who stole from Heaven the fire of freedom. They saw the ever-smiling Gour, they saw Araxes, with its sad memories! and they saw the land of the nightingale and the rose and they liked it.

They saw, also, the people of various tribes and languages, who were full of love toward the "White Tzar," and trusting in the northerners, even in the Christian Cossacks. The exiles enjoyed everywhere, in the cities and villages, love, respect, and unreserved friendship. No wedding in the distant village, no ceremony of baptism in the city, no gathering whatsoever, without a blessing and cheering for the Tzar. The aged priest raising the first cup would pronounce the following words in fervent faith: "May God keep firm the throne of the Russian King!"

But now?

All is hatred, scorn and vengeance. Hatred toward the Russian Chinovnik, enmity toward the Russian officers, military or civil, regrets for the past, and revenge for the coming days.

The chief reason for this state of affairs is the destructive spirit of the bureaucracy of the Tzar. Its unrestrained persecution of what is not *Russian* but *local*, a spirit which is as narrow as the mind of a Cossack, rude as a soldier and irritating as a master itself—a spirit of incarnate prejudice and partiality, of contempt for local languages, enmity toward their letters, hatred of other nationalities and insult to other religions.

In addition to this the Chinovnig, great or small, is bribed and is lazy, wanton and wicked; unacquainted with the country, he is to govern and therefore he cannot but inspire hatred toward what is Russian, and everything concerned with its government.

The past history of the Russian dominion revealed a bitter truth. The Russian was strong and charming *as a military force*.

Situated on the border of two Mohammedan countries, enslaved and oppressed under the tyranny of the Shahs and the Sultans, the Armenians and the Georgians were both aspiring to come under the domain of Christian Russia, under whose sovereignty they thought they would enjoy political peace and rest. And it is not a secret that it was the Georgians of the Caucasus who, with the aid and encouragement of the Armenians, paved the road of the Russian domination toward the valleys of Gour and Araxes. In Tiflis, on the "Temple of Glory," which stands in the center of the city, and which is the museum of the Russian Military Victory, the following words are inscribed from the edict of Alexander I, addressed to Georgia in 1801:

"It is neither for our own interest, nor for the extension of the limits of our domain, that we undertake the hard task of controlling the Georgian Kingdom. It is humanity and kindness that obliges us to listen to the supplication of the suffering people, and establish in Georgia a just government."

And in the first period, which was the military period, the Russian government was attractive, the Russian soldier was liked. Military authorities, either to gain a firm foothold in the newly subjugated country, or, perhaps, sincerely respect-

ing the native people of the country, its life and its customs, were trusted implicitly. The central government also, did not miss any opportunity to bring in close relation the remote regions and the center of its domain.

Alexander I went personally to Etchmiadsin, the religious center of the Armenians, to pay an official visit. There existed a close intimacy in Tiflis between the Georgian aristocracy and the royal family. The Armenian Catholicos and the Viceroy of the Caucasus were often most friendly, for instance: Nerses and Voronstovo. The Catholicos Nerses himself at the head of the Armenian volunteers, fought against Persia in 1827 to extend the Russian dominion as far as old Nakhitchevan and Araxes.

The Georgians gave to the Russian army brilliant generals, whose efforts helped greatly in the capture of the Oriental Caucasus. And from the Armenians sprang forth famous military men: Lois-Melikoff, Lazarian, Der-Ghoukasian and Shekovnikoff who fought against Turkey in the war of 1878 and caused her defeat.

But when the second period arrived, the period of so-called peaceful advancement, the period of the Chinoving was ushered in, when everything was undone. The bureaucracy subverted what the military authorities had built up. The Chinovnig is incapable of creation, and government; he can only command, Russianize, and open an impassable chasm between the various elements. Not only the sword but even the law became a cause of estrangement. The court, the capitol, the police-station, were reduced to places of deceit, bribery, and horror. The people were looked down upon and began to fear, to detest, and hate, and finally to retire.

Add to this the anti-national, and anti-democratic spirit which is the core and marrow of the Russian bureaucracy. In Poland they hate the Poles; in Finland they are enemies of the Finns, in the Caucasus they cannot endure the sight of Armenians, and it is this policy, systematically pursued, which has created what we witness now,—enmity instead of friendship, hatred instead of sympathy.

A brief comparison.

In the old period Voronstov was intrusted with the duty of attracting the local elements, while in the new period

Golitzin was commissioned to suppress the local nationalities. Voronstov opened schools. Golitzin closed 260 Armenian schools in one year.

In the past the government was the connecting link between native races. Now it is a disrupting poison.

Once officials came from St. Petersburg and Moscow to establish rule and order, now come thousands of spies to fill the dungeons with prisoners.

Once Armenian and Georgian volunteers were the flower of the army and were assigned the chief place during official receptions, now the police push the people aside, using whips, during the receptions of the Governors-in-Chief. There was a time when all Tiflis rose to receive the Exarch, the head, of the Orthodox Church, while in 1808 the Exarch was assassinated and none but the officials and the police were present at his funeral procession.

In the olden times men used to run to the police and to the gendarmerie, while in danger, but now they flee away from them, as from a pestilence.

Up to 1870 Russia was a land of learning and advancement but now it is a barrier against advancement.

Once the government was a welcome guest. But now?

An aged Armenian officer, whose grandfather was formerly in the Russian army and present at the capture of Garabag, said on his death-bed:

“I do not wish to die before I see the Russians exit from the Caucasus. Then only can I rest.”

The forefathers invited and welcomed the Russians!

Their grandsons would rejoice at their absence.

This is the fruit of the despotic and destructive regime. It made the Russians miserable in their own land—that ocean of grief and oppression; and it spreads poison and hatred among foreign peoples, everywhere wherever reaches the breath of the tyrannical regime.

A VOICE OF PROTEST.

What tears around the prisons! What sobs and sighs along the roads of exile! What bitter supplications near the walls of police stations! and endless hours of waiting at the doors of the investigator.

The police and the investigator!

Each are Tzars, in their circles of influence, silent when they should answer, roaring and raging when they should be silent.

The same scene everywhere. Wives, sisters, brothers, sons, who have come from who knows from what state nor in how many days and with what bereavement and suffering. One desires to see a prisoner who is sick, wishes to give him some money, clothing, or some food,—he is refused! He wants to exchange a few words of comfort with the prisoner in regard to his condition, even in the presence of the police,—he is refused!

Each and all of them are beseeching to see the investigator, to ask him a few questions, to get some information about their friends. His answer is: "Impossible! apply in writing."

They apply in writing and wait for days, weeks, nay months, but get no answer. The little Tzar, surrounded by his group of spies, is cruel, proud, and arrogant. He is proud of the fact that instead of his going where the prisoners are he orders several hundred prisoners brought on a four or five days' journey to the "foot of his throne;" from the Caucasus to Rostove, and Novotcherkask, with their relatives and friends who, perhaps, have no money for travel, no means of living, and have left their children in poverty.

Let them wait and suffer! Are they not mere "subjects?"

Finally, patience and human endurance was at an end. Complaints, dissatisfaction and righteous indignation broke out. The complaints reached the Duma, which though handicapped, attempts occasionally to raise its voice. There in the "supreme legislative council," several representatives echoed the general dissatisfaction. "It is a misunderstanding," they said, "to imagine a whole body as revolutionists and to persecute them so severely."

The Armenian Catholicos also interfered. In July, 1909, when Izmirlian went from Constantinople to St. Petersburg to present himself to the Tzar, he said in his official address:

“If Your Excellency wishes me to influence and pacify the minds of the Armenian people and bind them to the throne, when I arrive at the Caucasus, then please be so kind as to fulfil my request—give orders to release the Armenian prisoners, and in this way you will have strengthened me to serve the State more efficiently.”

Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, by the mercy of God, interrupted and said:

“They will be released before your Holiness arrives at the Caucasus.”

The Catholicos went to the Caucasus, moving from city to city, proud of the imperial promise given him, but found not only that the prisoners were not released but, on the contrary, their number increased.

Supplications and protest are not even heard in the domain of the Tzar. It is therefore natural and the time has arrived that protest and complaints should find an echo *outside* and beyond the boundaries of Russia, in order to show to the world at least a glimpse of the tragic scenes enacted in the prison of the Autocrat, in whose dominion there is a Duma but no constitution, books of statute laws but no justice.

Protest.

Protest, and Sympathy!

That is the demand of the suffering Orient. The just demand of the warriors of liberty: Russian, Polish, Armenian, Finn, Jew and Georgian, who under chains or on the gallows have but one comfort,—the encouraging word from every tongue which hates tyranny; from every land where the torch of liberty is shining.

And that protest should be as great as the suffering, as immense as the oppression, and as *international* as the persecution. The sufferers do not belong to *one* nation, nor should the protests be confined to *one* nation either.

The protest should not be *partial* but *general*, from the land of oppression to the remotest regions of Europe, and

across the great ocean to America, to the very borders of the Great Republic, everywhere, in every country where on the ruins of slavery the flag of civilization now flies.

Every man who has a mind, every citizen who has a conscience, every being who has a heart, should open his mouth in protest, move his tongue in sympathy, stretch his hand to help,—this is the duty of humanity!

The suffering men and races in our times belong not only to their race and community but to the whole mankind; and the bodies of men, trampled down by tyranny, are not only a disgrace to that country, but to the entire world.

“The time has arrived”—says the California Legislature, in its resolution of March 21, “in the affairs of this world for every civilized nation to protest against such conduct on the part of any nation, and we do hereby express our abhorrence of the treatment accorded these men of Armenia because of their political convictions.” . . . “The time has arrived when there should be a concerted action between all nations that lay claim to civilization and enlightenment to compel the observance on the part of any nation of the laws of humanity and common justice towards its citizens.* . . .”

The protest broke out, despite the endeavors and the obstacles of the agents of the Tzar. It was in Vienna that the socialist party gave the first signal of indignation. Another day in Constantinople—yesterday’s fortress of tyranny—Armenians, Turks, Bulgarians, joined hands to brand the brow of tyranny. Another day, in Paris, the adorable cradle of international revolution, the best minds united to defend the persecuted justice, and, lately, on this side of the Atlantic, in fifteen cities of the great Republic of America, where from San Francisco to New York, large mass-meetings were held where resolutions were passed expressing sympathy for the sufferers and contempt for the ghouls who under the name of law and religion are spreading crime over that unfortunate part of the globe which forms the property of the Tzar.

Let us unite *all* the voices of protest as the drops of water which form the mighty ocean; and in that union let us

*See the Appendix.

create a strong and vigorous wave of sympathy and protest to surge over and cool the innocent victims of all nations, giving them new strength and heart, to endure, and to hope, and to love the great ideals of liberty even in the prison where though there is no sun yet there is dream, where the cell is small but the heart large, the body weak but the soul strong.

In the expression of international sympathy the warriors of all lands find encouragement.

In the expression of international contempt the tyrants of all lands find the death-poison.

.....

This is merely a page, a little portion of the terrible political sufferings, just as widespread as the Russian domain itself, endless as the surging billows of mournful Volga.

“We die with satisfied conscience and without regret,” uttered that Russian volunteer for liberty from the scaffold, “with this firm belief that after us will come others, braver than we, greater than their predecessors, until the wave of freedom, fierce and ruthless, uproots and overthrows that bloody tyranny which is the curse of entire Russia and the shame of all humanity.”

They came by the hundred.

Will come by the thousand.

This awful suffering is the agony of the unbridled tyranny, the portender of the coming Great Day.

Take courage warriors,—that day is at hand.

And you, friends of liberty, strengthen the protest,—the victory is certain!

APPENDIX.

RESOLUTIONS.

In thirty-five cities of the United States and Canada there took place mass-meetings for the benefit of the prisoners of Caucasus. In fourteen cities, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Providence, Worcester, Troy, West Hoboken, New Haven, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Fresno; and Brendford and Hamilton, Canada; resolutions of protestation were drawn up by votes and sent to Washington, to the President of the Republic, to the Secretary of State, to members of Congress, and to some of the foreign ambassadors there, especially to that of Russia.* Copies of the resolutions were published in the papers.

The following are some of the resolutions:

New York:

At a mass meeting held by the Armenian residents at Carnegie Lyceum, in the City of New York, on February 5, 1911, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

1. WHEREAS, for two years, more than five hundred Armenians,— professors, authors, physicians, lawyers, merchants, artisans and peasants—are subjected to unspeakable incarceration in Russia;

2. WHEREAS, ten or fifteen are imprisoned in damp and cold cells without bread or food;

3. WHEREAS, this indescribable condition still continues, and their trial is postponed arbitrarily;

4. WHEREAS, the Russian Government tries to punish innocent people for crimes that have never been committed by the accused;

1. RESOLVED, that we, the Armenian citizens of this Great Republic, protest against the inhuman attitude of the Russian Government, and demand an immediate and just trial of the innocent victims;

2. RESOLVED, that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the Government at Washington and request it to please interfere in behalf of these innocent victims as it sees proper;

3. RESOLVED, that copies of these same resolutions be sent to the foreign representatives at Washington, and to the American press, requesting all of them to raise their voices in behalf of justice and in behalf of the political rights of the unjustly prosecuted Armenians in the Caucasus, Russia.

*The Russian embassy, with strange apprehensions, twice replied that it was not able to receive these resolutions or do anything with them. This is the way they do things in Russia.

Philadelphia:

In a meeting of Armenians, held on February 12, in Philadelphia, Pa., where speeches were given in behalf of the political prisoners in Caucasus, the following preambles and resolutions were passed.

WHEREAS, the 500 prisoners are merely the victims of the premeditated and unjust policy of the Russian Government;

WHEREAS, the prisoners are subjected to unbearable conditions, destitute of food, clothing and external relation;

BE IT RESOLVED,

1. To protest against the anti-Armenian and unjust persecution of the Russian government,

2. To demand immediate trial of the prisoners, free from gendarme oppression.

3. To send copies of this protest to the government at Washington as well as to the ambassadors of other governments.

On the same occasion the meeting also appeals to the American public opinion and press, asking them to raise their voice in defense of this just cause.

Boston:

A public mass meeting was held on the evening of January 8, 1911, at Paine Memorial Hall, Boston, Massachusetts, where a thousand or more Armenians passed resolutions protesting against the unjust imprisonment of five hundred or more of their leading countrymen in the Russian prisons.

The meeting was presided over by Dr. V. H. Kazanjian, and speeches were made by several distinguished gentlemen, including Honorable E. Aknouni, of Constantinople.

A large collection was made for the benefit of said prisoners, and the following resolutions were adopted, viz.:

WHEREAS: The present Russian government has deliberately commenced a general prosecution against the Armenian people of the Caucasus, and

WHEREAS: Five hundred Armenian men, men of letters, scientists, merchants and others are the victims of the above mentioned prosecution, without any legal or moral justification, be it

RESOLVED: To protest against this policy of the Russian government, which is contrary to the letter and spirit of the constitution, as well as to the dictates of civilization, and be it further

RESOLVED: To demand an immediate trial before a just tribunal and to establish their rights as loyal citizens, and it is further

RESOLVED: To send copies of these resolutions to the Secretary of State of the United States, at Washington, and to the Russian Ambassador at Washington, as well as to all other representatives of foreign powers, and be it further

RESOLVED: To appeal to public opinion in the United States and to arouse a sympathetic movement in behalf of these Armenian prisoners, whose sole demand in the Caucasus is the right to enjoy the privileges of the constitution and those other rights which belong to every civilized community.

San Francisco:

WHEREAS, it has been made to appear to the undersigned organizations, citizens and inhabitants of the city and county of San Francisco, State of California, by representation of Hon. E. Aknouni, the Armenian writer from Constantinople and other evidence to us submitted by Armenian citizens of the United States, residing in said city and county of San Francisco, that about 260 Armenians of education, rank and standing, are imprisoned in Novo Cherkask, in the monarchy of Russia, for political causes, and have so remained in prison for long periods without any preliminary hearing or other opportunity to present their cases to any court of justice, which imprisonment is revolting to the sense of justice in any country;

AND WHEREAS, said Armenian citizens have by resolution duly protested against such imprisonment;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the undersigned, hereby protest against such imprisonment and ask our representatives in Congress to use all lawful and honorable means within their power to bring this condition of affairs to the attention of the government of Russia in such a manner as to lead to immediate hearing and disposition of all these cases in accordance with justice.

RESOLVED further that a copy of this resolution be sent to each of the Senators and Congressmen for the State of California, to the President of the United States, and to such other persons as may tend to bring about this desired end.

San Francisco, California.,
January 17, 1911.

Providence:

At a public mass meeting held on the evening of December 25, 1910, in Fay's Hall, Providence, Rhode Island, more than a thousand Armenians gathered to protest against the inhuman treatment of five hundred or more of their countrymen in the hands of the Russian government.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. T. Gelalian and speeches were made by a number of leading Armenians, including the Honorable E. Aknouni of Constantinople. The following resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS: The present Russian government, with deliberate and premeditated policy has begun a general prosecution against the Armenian people of the Caucasus, and

WHEREAS: Five hundred Armenian prisoners belonging to almost every class, teachers, physicians, scientists, men of letters, merchants and others, are the victims of the above mentioned prosecutions without any legal basis and without trial, be it

RESOLVED:

1st. To protest against this policy of the Russian government, which policy is an insult to the constitution, as well as to the idea of civilization;

2nd. To demand immediate trial and the discharge of these prisoners, and the recognition of all of their rights as loyal citizens;

3rd. To send copies of these resolutions to the United States government, at Washington and to the Russian Ambassador, at Washington, D. C.

4th. To appeal to public opinion of this country and to arouse a sympathetic movement in behalf of these Armenian prisoners, who have no other demands or desires in the Caucasus, except to enjoy the privileges of the constitution and those rights which belong to every civilized community.

Worcester:

On the fifteenth day of January, 1911, the Armenians of Worcester, Massachusetts, having gathered in Eagle's Hall for the purpose of signifying their sympathy and aiding financially the five hundred or more Armenian political prisoners in Russia, passed the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, the five hundred Armenians who are imprisoned in Russia represent politically as well as intellectually the best among the Armenians of this generation;

WHEREAS, these men have been subjected for the last two years to untold sufferings in the hideous prisons of Russia without a trial and without a legal cause;

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. To protest against the Russian government for its premeditated policy of prosecuting our intellectual leaders.

2. To demand an immediate trial for these men and the recognition of their legal rights as citizens.

3. To send a copy of these resolutions to the United States Secretary for Foreign Affairs and to the Russian Ambassador at Washington, and to arouse public sentiment and sympathy in behalf of these unfortunate prisoners.

Troy:

A public meeting was held on January 22, 1911, in Proctor's Theatre by the Armenians of Troy, N. Y. The purpose of the meeting was to arouse public sentiment and sympathy in behalf of the five hundred or more Armenian political prisoners in Russia who are considered as the foremost exponents of Armenian art, literature and science.

The following resolutions were passed:

WHEREAS, the Russian government has commenced a policy of prosecution against the Armenians in the Caucasus;

WHEREAS, this prosecution of the Armenians in the Caucasus is not only contrary to the spirit and letter of the constitution but also an insult to the whole Armenian race;

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. To protest against the Russian government for this unjust imprisonment and demand through proper channels an immediate and fair trial before a tribunal which is not only competent, but free from military despotism.

2. To send a copy of these resolutions to the United States government at Washington, asking its aid and influence in co-operating with us in this work.

3. To call on the American public and to arouse public opinion and sympathy against the unjust imprisonment of these men.

West Hoboken:

At a great mass meeting held on February 5, 1911, by the Armenians at the Liberty Hall of West Hoboken, N. J., the following preamble and resolutions were adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, our compatriots in Russia are subjected to cruel persecutions, and five hundred of them, for two years, are tortured in the prisons of Rostov, Novochirgasoff, and other cities;

WHEREAS, the innocent are arrested without any cause; and, notwithstanding their demands, are not still tried;

WHEREAS, these arrests by groups are the result of the policy of the Russian government, which ignores all the elemental rights of the Armenians in Russia; it is therefore

RESOLVED, that we, the Armenian citizens of New Jersey, protest against the injustice of the Russian government, and demand that the trial should be free of police interference and pressure;

RESOLVED, that a copy of this preamble and resolutions be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior, and to all embassies at Washington, requesting them to use their good offices in behalf of the prisoners, and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy be also sent to the American press, and an appeal be made to the political writers of this country to exert their good influence in behalf of the five hundred unfortunate Armenian political prisoners in Russia.

California:

WHEREAS, it has been made known to us, the executive officers of the *California State Federation of Labor*, that five hundred Armenians of education, rank and standing are imprisoned in Rostov and Novocherkaska, in the monarchy of Russia, for political causes, and have so remained for long periods of time without any preliminary hearing or

opportunity to present their cases to any court of justice, which imprisonment, without trial, is revolting to the sense of justice of all mankind.

Therefore, RESOLVED, that we, in the name of California State Federation of Labor hereby protest against such imprisonment and request the Hon. Hiram W. Johnson, Governor of the State of California, and the legislature of this State, to take such measures by way of legislation or resolution as will bring this condition of affairs most effectively before the government of the United States with a view of having the United States make representations to the Russian government for the purpose of remedying this apparent injustice; and further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to each of the following named persons; the President of the United States, the Senators and Congressmen representing California, the Secretary of State, the Governor of the State of California, and the senators and assemblymen.*

California State Federation of Labor.

San Francisco,

March 10, 1911.

Resolutions of the Legislature of California.

(Voted in Senate and Assembly, March 21-22, and sent to Washington on March 27th.)

WHEREAS, the Russian government has imprisoned hundreds of prominent Armenians who are teachers, lawyers and editors, and all of whom are in the forefront of progressive thought and action, in the prisons of Rostove, and other towns in the monarchy of Russia, and has kept these men confined for a long period of time without giving them any preliminary hearing or opportunity to present their cases to any court, which is revolting to the sense of justice of all mankind; and

WHEREAS, the said "Russian government has frequently tolerated riot, pillage, outrage and murder of men, women and children by reason of their religious belief;" and

WHEREAS, such acts are a disgrace to civilization and repugnant to all people who love justice and fear God; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate and Assembly jointly, of the Thirty-ninth Legislature of the State of California, that we believe the time has arrived in the affairs of this world when it becomes necessary for every civilized nation to protest against such conduct on the part of any other nation, and we do hereby express our abhorrence of the treatment accorded these men of Armenia because of their political convictions and to other men, women and children because of their religious belief; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the opinion of the Legislature of the State of California, the time has arrived when there should be a concert of action

*Same resolution has been drawn up by the *Labor Council* of San Francisco.

between all nations that lay claim to civilization and enlightenment, to compel the observance on the part of any other nation of the laws of humanity and common justice towards its citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, earnestly urging them to use their good offices to secure to the Armenians herein referred to a just and public trial without further delay.

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