

THE MEMOIRS OF A RESISTER

by

ONNIG MELIKIAN

20 — MS — THE MORNING UNION, THURSDAY, JANU

Onnik M. Melikian, 89, owned real estate firm

Onnik M. Melikian, 89, of 410 Parker St., Springfield, president of Melikian Realty Trust and Linden Shopping Center, Indian Orchard, died Tuesday in Ludlow Hospital.

Melikian was a retired core-maker for Chapman Division of Crane Co.

Born in Sepastia, Armenia, he served with the Armenian Resistance Forces from 1915 to 1919. In 1919 he joined the British Army in Istanbul and served with it for a year.

In 1920 he became a bank guard for Bank of Italy in Istanbul and held that position until settling Italy in 1922. He came here the next years and lived in the Springfield area 62 years.

He was a founding member of St.

Geregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Indian Orchard, served on its board of trustees, and chairman of its building committee.

He was a member of Melha Temple Shrine of Springfield, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

His wife, the former Elmas Melikian, died in 1972.

He leaves two sons, Takvor of Wilbraham and Gorken of Somers, Conn.; a daughter, Salpie Cavros of Wilbraham; seven grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

The funeral will be Friday morning at Ratell Funeral Home and in the church with burial in Oak Grove Cemetery. Donations may be made to the church, 135 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard, 01151.

MELKIAN

In Ludlow, Jan. 15, 1985. Mr. Onnik M. Melikian, 89, of 410 Parker St., Springfield, widower of Mrs. Elmas Melikian. Father of Takvor Melikian, Mr. Gorken Melikian and Mrs. Salpie Cavros. Grandfather of 7 and great-grandfather of 1. Funeral Friday morning from the Ratell Funeral Home at 9:30 a.m., followed by services in St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church at 10:30 a.m. Burial will be in Oak Grove Cemetery. Memorial contributions in his memory may be made to St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, 135 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard, Mass., 01151. Visiting hours Thursday 2-4; 7-9 p.m.

ONNIK MELIKIAN

In our village of KRAPERET, SEPASTIA, our ^{c/27}(family group) was the largest and also land owners. From each generation in our family, one or two of the young male members were sent to Constantinople for schooling. My father, MUGGERDICH MELIKIAN, went to Constantinople at an early age. There to be educated in his beautiful native tongue. He emerged an intellectual, man of means and a man of character. He became head chef to a prominent Russian family whose sister was the wife of a high ranking Russian officer attached to the delegation of the Russian Ambassador.

I was the only member of the new generation to have the opportunity for an education but I was not able to go to Constantinople because of the critical times in which we lived. In 1907 when I was 11 years old, my mother bid farewell to this world. My grandfather and uncle took me to the city of Sepastia. Wide-eyed, I gasped at the buildings, standing side-by-side, erect and calm, as if they had been called to attention. There I was admitted into a boarding school which was part of the Province orphanage and hospital. I must mention here my outstanding teachers whom I have never forgotten. Such men as MEHRAN EESPEARIAN, SIMON TUNGERIAN, DANIEL VAREEJAN, KATGHADOUR GORDORIAN, AND NERSES DER KAPERELIAN.

In the early days of World War I, I returned to my village as was my custom to spend some holidays. My father had returned to the village for his vacation too. Two days after he arrived an announcement was made on the Massacre which was the reason I was compelled to remain in the village. My father's circumstances were different.

Unnamed (anonymous, unknown) individuals who had foreknowledge of the secret of the Russo-Turkish war and who did not wish to expose their dear chef to

danger, they insist that the Russian Ambassador save him from the plunder of Sepastia by using all means at his disposal. Special Turk police were assigned to escort my father to Constantinople. When my father reached Constantinople, the _____ daughter, who was married to a Russian officer said, "Alas, why didn't you bring your only child with you? The Russian government is not sympathetic to the Armenian people." * From there he is transported with the diplomatic corps of the Ambassador to Odessa and Petersburg. Shortly after he left the flight of Russians and Turks started from Sepastia across the Black Sea. All roads were closed. The news in my father's last letter from Constantinople filled us with hope that the Russians would by this time have liberated the territory including our province. Days, weeks and months passed and we did not see the Russians.

An order was given to collect all guns in the late Fall and early Winter of 1914-5. The poor people who caught in the middle of the conflict were tortured by methods unknown to civilization, until they died. All communication stopped between villages. The Armenian people had not been so supplicated (humbled, downtrodden) in the past five centuries of their history. Orders to surround the villages of the KOCHEEAER area of Sepastia were given in one night. If I am not mistaken, it was on June 9, 1915. All males with the exception of Islams between the ages of 15-95 were ordered to assemble in a field, ostensibly to register for a work project. The good Armenian, how was he to know the real purpose was not to take a census but to ascertain which Armenians were in the country and which were in the disapora. Of those who were in the country, who was hiding in the hills, villages and on the farms. In this way every Armenian male was taken from his hearth and home. They were separated into groups and put into a building. There wasn't enough room in it for all of them. Those who were not

confined, were tricked into marching to another destination. A great number of them were massacred en route. From that time onward, our worst suspicions were confirmed. Not even a random male was left. They were satisfied that no Armenians had escaped from their claws and were devoured by their enemy who performed his work with enviable efficiency.

The signs for the future of our people were ominous. Various committees were organized within each province whose purpose was to uproot, deport and massacre all gavors (Armenians), absolutely and without mercy. The committee that came to KOCHEESAER numbered between 70-80 men, whose leader was Sevkehast Beenbashes Sade Payeen Bey. The Armenians were forced into a building that was supposed to be a jail but was more like a pigpen. They were huddled on top of each other, numbed with apprehension.

The inquisitor was seated outside the jail, his legs crossed, grim and arrogant, red and bleary-eyed. He was flanked on either side by bayoneted soldiers, erect as ramrods, ready to obey any orders that dropped from his lips. The prisoners were brought before him in pairs for questioning on trumped up charges. The interrogation was brief and to the point.

"Why aren't you a soldier? What is your purpose? Why didn't you join the Revolutionary party?"

Why bother to answer? The prisoner was roughed up and sent out. Preparations were made ~~made~~ for the next step in this nightmare. The prisoners were divided into groups of 100, tied together, heads bowed, speechless and under the watchful eyes of 10 military policemen were led to a place about 2 hours from KOCHEESAER called GAVAR village to the east side to a clearing where the local Turks had been told to prepare mass graves. The prisoners were commanded to kneel before the graves, accept the true religion and pray for the salvation of their souls. There was not an

opportunity for the prisoners to move, tied together as they were under their armpits, side by side. The order was given. Already the bayonets had entered the back of their neck and emerged from their chests. The job is done. One minute ago they breathed and were men, now they are piled ^{one} on top of the other. The earth covers them up. They were; they are no more.

Between two _____ are two villages, PARAPERT in the province of Sepastia which had 180 Armenian families and across very close by, CHIQUID which had 10-15 Armenian homes.

On the night of June 9, 1915 when the order was given to surround all the villages, one committee was assigned to the villages of PARAPERT and CHIQUID because of their proximity to each other. This was a particularly fortuitous arrangement for me.

The work in blood was begun in the village of CHIQUID. By sunrise the next morning the execution committee had moved to the village of PARAPERT. The villagers who were unaware of the nightmare which took place the previous night, welcomed the sunrise and went about their chores in the fields and on the hills. (Some villagers were away on short trips, others were on their farms away from the village.) For this reason the villagers were allowed to go about their chores; the massacre was postponed.

When the men were questioned the previous night, a 95-year old man from our village whose name was SHEGH KACHOOG was brought before the interrogators. He responded to the questioning:

"What kind of a ruthless major are you, registering a 95-year old man as a soldier. In what country have you seen such a crime. If your purpose is to kill me, I have no control over that. But what a farce this is. Remember, there is a hereafter and a God above. He will someday lead you by the hand and will show you your evil deeds. You will be punished accordingly. I am ready. Kill me."

The interrogator was deeply affected by the old man's words:

"Release this man. Let him go free. Do not arrest any more old men."

About 100 old men were allowed to remain free in the village of KOCHHEESAER. We returned to the village after that night of terror. We had to watch our every step.

A Turk army captain, VASFEE, and his Armenian wife had resettled in our village shortly after World War I broke out. We got acquainted. He was a good neighbor. One day he called HAGOP (ZOORNAGIAN) POGHARYAN and told him about the arrest of the Armenian male population in one night. This news acted as an impetus which excited us into action. Our house was not completely devoid of guns. When my father had returned to our village for his vacation, he brought a variety of guns with him. And my cousin, SAHAG (BALLKANYAN) MELIKIAN soldier and officer of the cannon corps during the war had upon his return to the village after the Armistice, brought back several guns, swords and uniforms. When I saw the guns and uniforms and his military manner, my heart would do a flip-flop.

SAHAG had served as the head of a cannon brigade, was decorated and sent to the ERZURUM front where he remained for a while and then _____ he returned to our village where he stayed on the farm. He was careful not to be noticed. He had all the paraphernalia of a soldier; guns, swords, uniforms and ammunition were hidden in the cracks and crevices in the hills. From morning to night he spent the day in military drills and in the evening he would come to the farm.

A month passed and SAHAG came down to the farm. The military committee was in the village and were examining the people. SAHAG said:

"Effendi, I have an honorable discharge from the Army and have served my country well. You do not have the right to handcuff me."

What rights? Especially in these critical times. His outspoken words only further antagonized his interrogators. He tried to impress his interrogators with his

military bearing and salutes. But he was surrounded by soldiers. The bayonet was plunged into his back and glistened from his chest.

They decided to take him to a nearby village, CHAKMAGH for further questioning. His brothers were also handcuffed and taken with him to the other village. They were ONNIK, VARTAN, KEVORK, TAKVOR, KREKOR, BABESS, PIAELL, ZADEEG, all MELIKIANS and PAKAR SHEGEERYAN. On route and in his injured condition, SAHAG shouted to me:

"Onnik, words will not kill me. I've had lots of wounds like this. If I do die, do not leave my eyes open. My bequest to you is to avenge my death."

This bequest, written in blood, left an indelible impression on me. When they reached the village they were taken to the mayor's office, AZEEZ OGLAH. After some preliminaries, they began to examine his wound. He said to the chief in charge:

"Don't worry, I won't die from these wounds. I've seen a lot of soldiers like you on the battlefield. Just read my papers and see what kind of soldier I was."

The chief who was from Caucasia after completing his detailed questioning, expressed with great emotion his surprise that such an outstanding Armenian could be found among the Turks. He said he had executed between 40-50 deserters without regrets but he was sorry for SAHAG. When he saw SAHAG take two government issue bullets from his pocket, the officer's attitude changed. He made a spontaneous speech which the local Turks who had gathered around, could not really understand. They kept asking me for an interpretation. After he finished his speech they picked a few of our men for military duty. Those who did not qualify, youths, etc., like myself and Gregory and Takvor were allowed to return to the village. They gave us Sahag's body.

His untimely death cast a gloom over those Armenians who still remained in the village. He was admired by all from youths on up for his bravery and good works. He was buried in his soldier's uniform as a martyr.

Hagop Zoomajyan who was the Kehyah of the village, because he was a village elder, was obliged to accompany the official who searched the homes for fire arms.

He heard the bad news from Capt. Vasfee and notified me that the officials were unable to find our guns. He advised us to take them and flee together to the Caucasus. I didn't know that I had been some time ago exactly where the guns were hidden. I said:

"If we flee to the Caucasus, who is going to look after the young boys and girls?"

He replied:

"We are all going to be annihilated. Boys, girls, everyone."

His idea was abandoned. Later I heard that after Hagop had searched all the Armenian homes, he dropped in at the home of a Turk, removed his shoes, slipped on a pair of sandals and fled into the hills. Hagop's message stuck in my mind. Even though I was careful to stay out of the village, now I took more precautions to go to the village as little as possible. But I couldn't stop altogether. It was still necessary to go to the village occasionally for important reasons. On such an occasion when I had important business, I decided to go to the village. I had just reached the outskirts of the village when I noticed two youngsters carrying two small axes and saw that they were coming towards me. I waited for them. Before I said a word they said their tools were mere camouflage. The real reason they came was to warn those who had fled the village not to return.

Police had come into the village and had taken away 8 men to KOCHEESAER. Six of the police had remained in the village and on its outskirts in order to arrest all those who entered.

Because one of the men was the paternal uncle of one of the boys, BOGHOS YILYAN, a relative of the other boy and because the wagon that was used to take them away had broken down, the boys seized this opportunity to leave the village with axes and saw in hand and to warn us of the danger in the village.

This was an opportunity to tie together several heads who were all gathered; ox herders, those who were on the wagon, those who had brought us cheese and oil and workers. From the wagon were Hampar Melikian, Hounan Ahkanyan, Boghos Yiliyan, Manoog Oometzyan and Mugrditch Melikian. ^(Mother's relatives) We had definitely made up our minds to flee and tried to persuade the others to join us:

"To face certain death is stupid. It is more honorable to flee and be free." To really put the pressure on them, I told them the news the captain had given me. He said: "What's our life worth, when all the Armenians are going to be eliminated." After some really strong talk, only Takvor and Calouste Melikian, Manoog Oometzyan and Hampar Panotsyan joined us. We took off immediately and hid in some caverns.

It got dark. We didn't know where to go or what to do. We consulted Manoog Oometzyan who had been jailed for revolting and an experienced revolutionary. With a sick and weary voice he said:

"Our people are afraid of death. Those who are afraid can accomplish nothing. You must do what you can. My time is up. I don't care if I die. But you are young. Swear you will not be afraid of death and you will live."

Then he bid us farewell and started back to the village.

"We couldn't waste any time...we had to make some immediate plans if we were to succeed. We were heading into summer but soon winter would be here. Our clothes were light weight summer things. It was necessary to get hold of some winter clothes. It wasn't too late, especially since we were still relatively near the village and we were in no immediate danger.

People are strange. I looked all around me and before long my comrades had deserted me except for Takvor and Mugrditch. It was necessary to find a way for one of us to go into the village for an important reason. The richest and most important

family in the village was Mugerditch's family whose ^{grand} father was Nazareth Agha. Agha denotes high position and therefore he had quite a lot of influence with government officials. I was engaged to his daughter. In keeping with their high station, they had a large home which had secret doors and passages. So we elected Mugerditch to go into the village and enter his father's house through one of the concealed doors. And to help us to succeed him, if possible.

He is able to enter the courtyard of his home. But before he enters the house, he notices several policemen are staked out there. Unnoticed he slips out and runs into a villager, Gedeeg Aleen, who said:

"Hey, you nut, get out of here. They are going to kill you."

He scampers out. Meanwhile we had partially descended the hill and were waiting for a go ahead signal from Mugerditch. We could see from afar policemen. It was impossible to advance any further. We returned up the mountain fully expecting Mugerditch to join us bringing with him food and clothes. Sometime later, we concluded they might also search the hills for us. We got together the guns and clothes hidden in the hills and decided to go to the neighboring village of Khulkhulbash. There they told us about Mugerditch. He left the the village and fled to the hills where he ran into others who had fled, too, Kalouste, Piell, my uncle Babeeg ^(TOROS MELIKIAN) and Gregory Melikian ^(KIRKOR). In order to fool the policemen they sent into the hills as a decoy a sweet-tongued, double talking Turk, Crippled Mahmud. He pleads, he cries crocodile tears and swears there is no one in the area. The police return to the village. He succeeds in convincing them and they return to the village

Hope and self confidence never left us until we heard eye-witness accounts of mass murders from the local VALLI. He had seen with his own eyes hundreds of corpses, which lined both sides of the road from Sepastia to our village. "These are really mad dogs."

Upon hearing this news TAKVOR became hysterical. The VALI finally calmed him down with soothing words. He assured us of his help in every way as long as he was alive. And he fulfilled his oath (as we will see as the story progresses.) No matter how safe we felt under the VALI's protection, our hearts were heavy and anxious. We never saw an Armenian face. We were very upset. We wanted to find a solution. We knew that my cousin SARKIS TAVITIAN had been adopted by a Turk. He was the shepherd for his flock of sheep. But where or how were we going to find him? Even though we were able to endure this isolation from Armenians, it was imperative that we find SARKIS. We needed him if we were to succeed in our plans.

SARKIS had a younger brother, ANTRANIG, who from an early age displayed signs of a brave and fearless nature. We needed and hoped to locate him through SARKIS. Besides, ANTRANIG, had military discipline. He had fought at ERZINDJAN for some time, defected and returned to our village and lived as a fugitive in the mountains. He remained in the mountains for some time, always hoping to locate us. After a fruitless stay, he gave up hope of finding us and turned himself in to the local Commander. We spent a whole day searching high and low for SARKIS. SARKIS worked with another Turk. It was important that we see Sarkis alone to avoid placing him in danger. We just had to devise a means of locating him.

Finally we had some success as he was returning from a trip with his Turk companion. We knew what road he was going to take. We filled our pockets with pebbles and climbed into the trees beside the road. When he went by we started to pelt him with the pebbles. The Turk was elderly and unaware of what we were doing. But SARKIS got the message and scanned the area with his eyes for a signal. We started throwing the stones even harder, and SARKIS understood someone was hiding in the trees and deliberately lagged behind his companion. When he lifted his eyes he saw us in the trees and was visibly upset. Then he told us the story about his brother.

For weeks we lived an owl-like life. We would wander around the village at night and return to the caves in the day. Sometimes I would go to the farm where KREKOR and TAKVOR would sneak us some food. TAKVOR and I would go for walks in the fields. One day we saw a little boy and girl who were picking berries in the hills. When they saw us, they begged to be allowed to join us. Our hearts were bleeding for them but what could we do? After they gave us bits of news from the village, we persuaded them to go back and try to find work for some Turk until better days.

The noose around the village got tighter from day to day. No one was left in the village with the exception of the family of NAZARETH AGHA.

Some of the villagers were Turkified and others had left abandoning home and farms except for NAZARETH AGHA, the official. And now it was his turn to become a Turk. He and his family were Turkified. They had roughed him up quite a lot with the hope that he would reveal my whereabouts. Even though KREKOR and TAKVOR would bring us food, I went to the village once a week to get provisions.

Of the few farm families that were left was one ZADEEG AGHA ^{MELICIAN} who looked after the land. One day when I went to the farm to get some food he had a talk with me:

"My son, there is no future for us. They have decided to convert us to Islams. At the ripe, old age of 79, I will not change my religion or become a Turk. I will commit suicide and it will be all over for me. But I want you to hang on. You are still young. Don't be afraid. Do not give up. Maybe the Russians will still come here and your luck will change. "

He embraced and kissed me. Actually, he predicted his death accurately. One day when he is going to the pasture to bring in the cows, he encounters a Turk deserter from the Army. He wants his clothes so he kills him.

TAKVOR and I were walking near the pasture. It was late. We noticed that the cows were still out to pasture. But why so late? We started whistling in all directions

hoping to attract some notice. We heard a rustle; a ghostly form appeared before us. We recognized the fellow as KHACHEEG. His mother was dead and his brothers deported. ZADEEG AGHA had adopted him and on that day he had accompanied him to the pasture to bring in the cows. He told me what had happened. We found his body. It was KHACHEEG AGHA, a huge bump on his head. We wrapped the body and carried it on our backs until we reached a pear orchard. We buried it with only a "Lord's Prayer."

*ZADEEG
This body also seen
by Nishan Mevçia*

For a couple of hours we searched for clues that would lead us to his assailant but without success. We heard through the VALI that we were seeking a high official who was from the village of EHMER and decided not to pursue the matter.

NAZARETH AGHA and his family were all baptized into the Mohammedan faith. He arranged for TAKVOR to have new identification papers to insure his freedom and at the same time TAKVOR deserted me.

I was left alone. I wandered aimlessly through the hills. I had to think about the coming winter. Every morning I looked out from my shelter, only to see the sun's rays. There was neither man nor beast for me to feast my eyes on. From time to time I would hear the distant roar of cannons. My heart quickened. Maybe the Russians were coming after all. What Russians? It was only a Turkish official celebrating. The VALI told me so.

I did not give up hope but I was very lonesome. One night I threw caution to the winds and decided to visit my friend the VALI. He was not at home. I wanted to leave immediately so as not to arouse any suspicion in his household about our friendship. But when one of the family members volunteered to take me to the VALI I was obliged to go along with him. We had not taken more than a couple of steps before I was greeted with the sound of gunshot. I jumped for cover. The VALI later explained it was only some Turks who were celebrating.

NAZARETH AGHA had not forsaken me. He was still trying to find a way to secure my freedom. even though he was no longer an official, he still had considerable influence in affairs as a result of his new status as MAHMUD AGHA. In order to help secure my freedom MAHMUD AGHA devised a scheme. He decided to have an outdoor gathering and sent word by his grandchildren that I was invited to attend. "Be prepared to roast a lamb," he said.

The year before some policemen had come to the farm to search for guns and firearms. Those who did not have them were set free. But the examiner discovered two guns on my person. He handcuffed me and planned to put me in jail in Sepastia. I promised him a newborn calf and we became friends. Luckily, one of the guests at the gathering was my friend, the examiner. He joined NAZARETH AGHA and me and he asked the chief clerk to give my freedom. He promised the clerk all of our precious gold possessions including the solid gold cigarette case and cutlery which my father had brought from Constantinople. These talks took place in the safety of NAZARETH AGHA'S home after I became engaged to his daughter. The chief clerk was elated and assumed the responsibility for my escape.

Twenty minutes from KOCHESAER was a large government owned pasture. The hay was cultivated for use by horses who belonged to the local officials. It was time to harvest the hay. Tens of wagons passed each day on the road to Sepastia which passed very close to KOCHEESAER.

The chief clerk commands one of the wagon masters to hide me in the hay. The wagon passed right in front of his house and he personally took care of the matter. First he fixed my identification papers to indicate that I was a worker and thus protect me. He took complete responsibility for my safety. I had my guns and uniform with me but I was wearing ordinary clothes.

Because I was in the official employe of the chief clerk it was not necessary for me to register or eat with the other workers. For this reason it was weeks before the Turks in PARAPERT saw me. Then they would come over shake my hand and congratulate me. I was able to size up my situation in no time. The chief clerk would split his bribes with his superiors.

Through the privileges of my special status, I made the acquaintance of two brothers from SEPASTIA, LEVON and NEESHAN who told me in confidence that 11,000 Armenians had been deported from that area. They were three brothers, well educated young men. Because of their Turkish names they were allowed to remain as Turkish government civil workers. I had met NEESHAN in the village of HAGHT where he had been a teacher.

From one end of Turkey to the other, the Armenians controlled business and the trades. The same was true in ESHOT. The head of the chief clerks was MOORAD DERDERIAN and his helper was MOORAD MELIKIAN. Their workers were composed of ^{sections.} 10 sections of which 6 were composed of our villagers. The chief clerk asked me to tend to his horse. I was more than happy to accept. This was a good opportunity for me because every evening I had to see him and at that time I got all the news of the day.

One day he called me over and said that orders had been given to annihilate even those Armenians who had accepted Mohammedism. I wanted to save NAZARETH AGHA. He said 150 gold pieces would be needed to save him and his family. It was my good fortune to fetch NAZARETH AGHA and 150 gold pieces. For appearances sake, we had to go to the pasture to round up his oxen and bring them with us.

The chief clerk appointed a companion to accompany me to insure my safety. His real concern was not my safety but to keep appearances concerning his activities above suspicion. My body guard and I reached the village. I wondered what would be

be the best course for me to pursue in contacting NAZARETH AGHA. He had converted to Islam and was the object of some scrutiny. I might be seen entering his home which might, in turn, reflect unfavorably on him. Instead I went to the home of MOORAD MELIKIAN and called him there.

I don't know what got into NAZARETH AGHA. If he was just being stubborn or if it was his new Islamism, because no amount of persuasion on my part could convince him to come with me. We had no choice but to return home alone. When we reached the bridge just outside KOCHEESAER I saw the chief clerk strolling with a companion, ostensibly for some fresh air. He deduced from my expression that my mission had failed. He greeted me casually and continued his stroll. I spent the night out EESHOT. When I went out the next morning I noticed that policemen were on duty at every street corner. I acted as though I was an official of EESHOT and as though I didn't have a care in the world. I strolled down the street to go to work. Before I was halfway down the street, I heard a shout, "robbers are in the neighborhood." The police accompanied me until I reach the outskirts of EESHOT.

It was impossible not to be concerned. This was an unexpected turn of events. I told the chief clerk about my concern. He assured me that in the future he would try to warn me of any new developments. Two hours had not passed when we witnessed a heart-rending scene. Twelve Armenian families, which included all their relatives, totalling about 350 people, helplessly and hopelessly walking before us. These were the few remaining Armenian families from PARAPERT, skilled craftsmen.

NAZARETH AGHA and his family were not in the group. He and his family had gone to their farm. Relaxed and unconcerned, secure in the knowledge that his new religion would protect him, he was spending his time looking after his flock. The day after the deportation he returned to the village on an errand and what should he see?

Not a soul was left behind. It is a pity that instead of fleeing from the area himself, NAZARETH AGHA goes to the home of his neighbor, KHARAGEELE OGHLOO, a Turk. Fortunately, they were good people.

An old enemy of NAZARETH AGHA who had nursed a grudge against him for many years over a property dispute, heard that he was living with his neighbor the Turk, KHARAGEELE OGHLEE. One night he enters this home, kidnaps NAZARETH AGHA and tortures him to death. I wonder if he found any comfort in the knowledge that his grandsons, KRE KOR, TAKVOR AND MUGGREDITCH were hiding out in the mountains.

I was always alert to everything going on around me in my efforts to escape. But it appeared that only a miracle from God could save me. Finally I was in the four walls of EESHOT. The Armenians in the village and towns were petrified with fear. Every avenue of escape had been blocked by the enemy. The future of the Armenians in KOCHESAER, SEPASTIA had been decided by the Kaimakeh. We would remain alive until the construction projects were completed. After that our souls were in his hands. Of this we had no doubt. At this time I had heard from acquaintances that KREKOR, TAKVOI and MUGERDITCH who were hiding in the mountains were unaware of their grandfather's death. They went down to the farm to get some food when they were arrested and handcuffed by Turkish police. My last hope was in these relatives.

As soon as I heard the news, I ran to the chief clerk and asked him to intervene on behalf of the fellows. He genuinely wanted to help. But he let me know his feelings towards NAZARETH AGHA for his erratic behavior. He reminded me that NAZARETH AGHA died because he refused to part with 150 gold pieces. We had a heated argument over the same subject.

Krekor, Takvor and Mugerditch were turned over to 5 policemen who were really going to take care of the boys. They could spell their doom in any way they pleased. They took them to an outlying area, near a ravine, tied their hands behind them, had them kneel and then raised their rifles, aimed and prepared to shoot. Before the order to shoot, they have a twinge of conscience.

The job of assembling the Armenians of OOLASHEE was given to Ehomer who, having finished his official duties had returned to KOOCHEESAER via GOROOEE hills. He had selected two youths from OOLASHEE, who were mounted on horses. When they saw the rifles aimed to shoot, they/^{be-}came hysterical and started to scream. The Ehomer said: "What's the matter, are you blind. Can't you see that they are not aiming their guns at you?" This accidental meeting was not without its benefits. The prisoners were elated. The Ehomer had no sooner left the scene, when the prisoners told the police that they had hidden large sums of money which they would give him if they were returned to KOOCHEESAER and released. The police had no reason to doubt them as they knew the monetary worth of every Armenian family. They start back to the ~~to the~~ village, the police quite happy. They were unfamiliar with the hills but trusted the boys completely to lead them. But the boys have already concocted a scheme to lead them astray and head towards the village of CHIKESD instead of taking them to the farm. They reach a hamlet near the village called MEADUNAER. The police were tired and decided to stop over in that place. And it was already dark. They thought it best to split up. Who knows what will happen? After a short conversation, they decided that one of them who had a friend in the village should spend the night with him. Two of them would hold TAKVOR and MUGERDITCH as hostages and the remaining two would proceed ahead with KREKOR to go get the hidden catches of money.

Krekor not only leads the way, but he must think up a solution. They made up the fact that they had money just to gain time. But he had to think up something, use some means to cool the expectations of the police. He concludes that his captors do not know where they are supposed to be going anyway so he purposely misleads them

to a hamlet called EHCHEKSTEE. It is a rugged hike which exhausts his captors. They accuse KREKOR of bringing them to this place in order to turn them over to the Fedeyeen. They hesitated to even light a cigarette because it might attract the attention of hostile people. By this time the police are too tired to walk any further. KREKOR gets a bright idea. They were only 100 yards from the farm of a relative, KHARRAH GULEKEZ. He remembers that there is a cache of cheese, well, he figures, let it be cheese rather than money. The cheese was stored in huge pouches made from sheep skins. KREKOR and I had personally gathered and buried 15 heads of cheese in a dell in the mountains. This was the place KREKOR was seeking. I shudder to think what would have happened if TAKVOR or MUGERDITCH had been asked to accompany the police to the buried treasure. They had no knowledge of the cheese. Only KREKOR and I were involved. To reach the hidden treasure, it was necessary to cross a fairly deep and turbulent stream. KREKOR was obliged to hoist the police on his back and carry them across. Naturally he had to remove his leggings. This presented an excellent opportunity for him to remove the knife hidden in its folds and to slip it into his sleeve.

By now they had reached the spot where the cache was hidden. The police were quite tired. Before they started to dig they removed KREKOR's sash and tied one end to his wrist and the other end to their wrist. They started to dig on the spot identified by KREKOR. Their bayonets uncovered the tops of the storage jars. The officers were elated and so distracted by their good fortune that it was several minutes before they realized that KREKOR had cut his end of the sash and fled.

Meanwhile the two captive brothers, KREKOR and MUGERDITCH, bound hand and feet, are waiting with their captors for TAKVOR's return. It was dark, the officers were tired. Their heads were nodding heavy with sleep. The boys recognized their opportunity. They shuffled their weight until they were close enough to untie each other's ropes. Without a spoken word, they quietly fled into the night. These were the hills of their former mountain hideout. But where to go? Back to their old and trusted friend,

the Vali, who offered his usual hospitality.

Word of their escape got around and in a few weeks the KHAIMAKEH heard the news. The KHAIMAKEH was impressed by their ingenuity and instead of meting out the usual punishment, he promised them freedom (amnesty) and permitted them to return to ENNSHOT to work.

A few days after the order was given, I happened to be out on errands when the chief clerk called me, told me the news and advised me to have the boys come out of hiding if I knew of their whereabouts.

I respected his advice. But I didn't give him an immediate reply. First I wanted to discuss this with my ^{future} father-in-law Ohan and get his opinion too. We decided to bring only one of the boys out of hiding just in case this was some sort of a trap. I did admit that I knew KREKOR's whereabouts and one evening we brought him directly to EENSHOT.

My buddies were very upset by KREKOR'S appearance. They were filled with terror.

"What are you doing? You take that fugitive to ENSHOT and he will squeel on all of us."

I didn't want to tell them the unusual circumstances in this case and thought it best to avoid an argument at all costs.

Every morning we had to go to the well to fetch drinking water. This presented a good opportunity for us to go outdoors. I gave KREKOR a jug and together we went directly to the home of chief clerk which happened to be right next door to the well.

When KREKOR entered the house, the chief clerk was stunned, completely flabbergasted. He recovered his poise, embraced KREKOR and congratulated him on his ingenuity. I could not suppress my emotions, my eyes filled with tears. We spent the night as his guests. The next morning the chief clerk personally took us to the KAIMAKEH who assigned a police officer to escort us to EENSHOT. We thought this was a good time for TAKVOR to come out of hiding too. We waited in vain for MUGERDITCH to give himself up too. None of us knew where he was, not even TAKVOR. Years later we learned that he became a servant to a Turk called ABDULLAH.

As you will recall, he had fled from the hills towards home, but he saw some policemen and had to retrace his steps. The next time he attempted to join us he met ADBULLAH ALLAH on route. ABDULLAH invited him into his home and offered him a meal. Then he goes out and returns with a miserable Turk who axes him to death as he is eating. We did not fail to avenge his death many years later. I am sure MUGERDITCH would have been pleased with our work.

With the death of MUGERDITCH there were now the three of us, TAKVOR, KREKOR and me. Night and day were spent in trying to conjure up a way of getting some money. One day the opportunity presented itself to us. On the pretense of wishing to be present at the funeral of NAZ AGHA, we were given permission to go into the village where we were able to fulfill our secret mission. We were ready to start out journey, when an earthquake terrified all of us.

PARAPERT, which had been devastated as a result of the massacre, had now been put to the torch. The billowing smoke from the burning village reached our eyes, even though we were miles from the scene. Houses had collapsed and many Turks were buried under them. Orders were given that all the workers in EENSHOT had to help dig out the bodies. Hundreds of us poured into the village. But who cared about the dead. Let the others dig them out. The three of us plus MOORAD MELIKIAN and DERERYAN had other things on our minds.

When we reached the village, without a word to us, MOORAD slipped away and headed for the deserted home of an Army captain whom he had known quite well. He knew just where the money was hidden. He got 275 pure gold pieces, stuffed them in his pocket and hurried out into the tumultuous throngs. He encountered the Turk captain. He immediately offers the officer his services. He was delighted to enlist MOORAD to help rescue his valuables. They entered the house and the Captain produces 500 gold pieces. MOORAD is beside himself. He didn't know where all the money was kept, after all. But it was too late to cry over that .

The 275 gold pieces came in handy. With the help of our friend, the Vali, we were able to obtain two official Mowzer rifles, food and clothes.

But we were not satisfied. We knew there was 500 gold pieces lying around. We had seen it with our own eyes. What harm was there in having the additional money.

KREKOR and I went to the village on errands. MOORAD and others were already there. The VASPHEEN (Turk) was still living in the same pavilion. He had an Armenian servant girl whose friendship we cultivated. One day she told us where the gold was hidden. We couldn't waste any time; we had to get the gold quickly. We made our plans. I distracted the servant by engaging her in a lengthy conversation on the east side of the house and KREKOR entered on the opposite side and took care of the remaining 500 pieces of gold. We were overjoyed. There was one final job and that was to get rid of the Turk.

It was dark, KREKOR, MOORAD and I quietly studied the house. We were convinced the Turk was sleeping. We could hear him snoring. We knew he had hidden his gun under his bed. But how to get at it? After all, to be asleep is not to be dead. While we were mulling over this problem, MOORAD decided to act. Like a cat he got down on his belly and slithered across the floor of the pavilion, into the bedroom, grabbed the gun and stood up. Away we fled to KHARAJAH-BOORON where we hid the gun. This damn gun was of no use to us for over two weeks. We didn't know how to use it. Finally some Turks taught us how it worked.

We were always pre-occupied by the necessity for guns. If we were to flee or to stay and fight, we had to have guns. We couldn't even dream of fleeing if we didn't have guns. Daily 5,000 soldiers passed through KOOCHESAER because it was the main route to the Caucasus and the Caucasian front. Wherever we looked there were soldiers, so thick, they reached the horizon. There wasn't room to drop a pin. These were days of fear and terror. All the workers in EENSHOT were gripped with apprehension and fear. The telegram from TALAAT killed all of our hopes. This telegram was repeated each day, like a death sentence. Who was left of the Armenians, anyway? Just our group and for us the end was near. They had already started to reduce our group, one by one.

From central headquarters five officials were appointed to secretly wipe us out. These same officials were given the authority to confiscate all goods and lock the doors.

Of these five, two of them, the chief clerk and the telegraph operator were _____ . The chief clerk helped the telegraph operator and in turn helped us by giving us the messages. Our chances for escape were slight. MOORAD and I would argue about this. MOORAD would say anyone who thinks they can escape must be a little weak in the head.

We had tested the honesty and loyalty of the chief clerk and now we had confidence in him. He and we agreed, for a sum of money, that as soon as he heard bad news, he would notify us within 24 hours.

TALAAAT's last cryptic order foreshadowed _____ events. New Russian orders had put the fear and terror into military headquarters. They had announced that Russian troops would be withdrawn in the next 10 days. The Armenian would be premanently removed from the annals of history. The orders to annihilate had reached us.

The chief clerk, as promised, immediately gave us this news. The stroke of bad luck for the Turk soldiers was a bit of good luck for us. The day we got the news, KREKOR was in the village to prepare clothes and guns. I spread the bad news among my remaining 84 comrades and ordered them to flee and every man for himself without losing a minute, taking into consideration all risks. They followed my instructions too well. I was left alone. I fled.

It was daylight. I was working and all the time I was thinking, scheming and wondering how am I going to get away from my comrades without arousing their suspicions. Pretending to be angry, I put my hands on my abdomen and ran, really flew without realizing what I was doing until I reached a meadow.

I no sooner reached the house of TARPEEN MERDEELEK and barely catching my breath, when I heard the news that two mounted police had entered the village. They were after us. I was changing my clothes when I heard the news. Without bothering

to finish my dress, I fled. Later I heard that the police were on another mission.

KREKOR was waiting on another route, ready. We had barely had time to go to our ammunition pit and get some bombs, bullets and we spent the night in the village. Because the mountain was across from the village, our escape had been witnessed. In fact, within 2 hours our hiding place was surrounded by 25 people and 2 mounted police. We were compelled to fight. The group was on top of the cave and were shooting off their guns for nothing because we were deep inside of the cave. They couldn't even see us and neither could we see them. We could hear the vibrations caused by the guns which only strengthened our will to resist. After 3 hours of fighting, it became dark. We decided this was the time to show them the real worth of our guns which were German made Mowzers (No. 5). The noise and echos from our guns astonished the group. We could hear them exclaiming. Of course, all they had were old odds and ends. The enemy (Turks) started to run.

Later we were told that CRIPPLED MAHMUD admonished the group to go back. "Those are only poor orphans." Having had a taste of our ammunition they nominated him to go back up the hill.

This is how this incident took place. Immediately after we fled to the mountains, MOHMEND ordered all remaining Armenians in KOCHESAER should be locked in the church in the village of GAMEESE. The Turks who fought us in the cave returned and spread the word of our military prowess. They were completely speechless and confused because we were wearing German uniforms which KREKOR had lifted when he had been a supervisor in a German orphanage. (We got this story from TARPEEN MUGER who was the person who brought us news and we gave him our news.)

The night of the skirmish, KREKOR and I removed the remaining ammunition from the cave so that we could take it and ammunition that we had hidden elsewhere to a better hiding place.

Imagine our surprise when we entered the cave and found nothing. Without wasting a minute we went to TARPEEN MUGER to find out what happened. Before we said a word, TARPEEN saw us and ran towards us, joyfully embraced us and proudly announced

that our actions had made us famous. He encouraged us to continue in our honorable work. In response to our inquiries he gave us the following news.

Following the VEHEB's instructions, the Armenians who had been locked up in the church were released. Twenty Armenians immediately left KOCHESAER in the direction of TOZANLOOI to look for us. In the group were TAKVOR MELIKIAN, DERDERIAN and the two MOORADS and SAHAG. They were familiar with our hiding places and went their immediately to confiscate all of our ammunition and provisions. This good news changed our plans. We bid a fond farewell and returned to the hills. We spent a few nights here and there, always being very careful. One night we went in secret to the chief clerk. He encouraged us to flee from ENSHOT and not to surrender or give up hope because he was confident the Russians would soon be here. We had been given quite a lot of bullets for Russian made Mowzers, only half of which we were able to take with us. The rest was buried in the cellar in ENSHOT. Later TARPEEN MUGGER was ^{given} giving some Russian guns. As soon as the VEHEB released the Armenians, he instructed them to search and find us. It was too late and they couldn't locate us.

A few words about the Chief Clerk. Past 60 years of age, stern looking, tall, he didn't have the appearance or temperament of a Turk. This is the impression I got from my association with him. We bid the Chief Clerk a fond and sorrowful farewell because we knew we would never see him again.

From the first battle, we encountered 20 refugees. They had to give us uniforms, food and all kinds of ammunition and firearms. We still had hopes the Russians would come. On the other hand, winter was near and we had to stock up on provisions.

We decided to find a good cave where we could spend the winter. We spent some time in the rocks and boulders which were opposite the village of CHIQUID. This is where we started our plans for the winter. There were quite a number in our group. We had to have an adequate supply of food each day to keep us alive. Our future was still very uncertain and we had to have ample supplies in order to survive for any length of time. We had to lay aside all thoughts of loyalties, religion, laws and

find a means for survival. Our alternative was to kill, rob and destroy in order to stay alive. Our places among the boulders was not safe or permanent. After a long search we found a suitable place to hide out. Near PARAPERT there was a forte called HAIGH which was built under Roman rule under a hill. It was still in excellent condition and had all the necessities of a forte. We were attracted to the waterfalls that came down on the East end of the forte and reached down to one side and disappeared. Among us we had skilled stone masons who were from ENSHOHAT. Even though they didn't have all their tools, they worked day and night to bring the old forte into shape. Then they stumbled on a large man-made cave. We kept on working and made still another cave. We decided to live in the first cave and store our provisions in the second one.

Through some unusual circumstances our hiding place was discovered and we were forced to move to AINACHAZEH, a forte near BARDEZAG where we continued our work. Before winter, we had made ample provisions of food but still had to get guns. We were not able to go any further from the forte than a circumference of 10-15 miles. We were quite restricted in our movements. We had difficulty fulfilling our needs. We had bribed a few Turks into helping us gather provisions. There were our buddies. They helped us and we helped them materially and with money. In order to succeed we insisted upon absolute secrecy. But we had to be very careful to keep their identities from each other if we were to succeed in gathering provisions. Our provisions ammunition and food were kept in the HAIGH forte and our number increased to 26 people.

OHAN MELIKIAN

TAKVOR MELIKIAN

KERKOR MELIKIAN

MOORAD MELIKIAN

ONNIK MELIKIAN

SAHAG KERTIKIAN

MANOOG TAVITIAN and his 2 sons

HAIREGH KARNIG

BOGHAS TAVITIAN

HAROUTUN TAVITIAN

GARABED PANOSIAN

STEPAN PANOSIAN

HAMPARTZOOM PANOSIAN

AHARON MARGOSIAN

EPEREM IAKHANYIAN (AYKANID)

KACHEEG IAKHANYIAN

GARO) They were from DEVEEREG and had their
own guns. They were brave and spoke
BAGHDASAR) Kurdish fluently and were very helpful

NOONIG YALIYAN

KARRON MELIKIAN

SARKIS KAHVEGYAN

MUGGERDITCH MICHALEHIAN

HAROUTUN was the brother-in-law of BOGHOS TAVITYAN. He had come to visit his father and stayed with us. Garabed, Stepan and Hampartzoom WORKED for AGHA MEJEET who was an old CHERKETZ. The CHEKETZ who heard that we were outlaws in these parts, sent these men to us with guns for our use. A CHERKETZ was married to GARABED's daughter. We were surprised that he encouraged the boys to join us. They were in our area but didn't know exactly where our hideout was. To find out they asked TARPEEN MUGGER. He directed them to us.

We couldn't decide whether or not to accept them as one of us. They were from our village but had by now stayed among the CHERKETZ for some time. We didn't know if we could really trust them. Were they sincere and honest? Because of their age and familiarity with the area, in case of misfortune, they could become our enemies. Finally, we decided to accept them but first we wanted to test their loyalty.

SARKIS KAVEJYAN didn't stay long with our band. He had a wife and 5 children and wanted to be nearer his village. We packed him off to DEPELEE. We had the following guns:

14 very good rifles, German Mowzers and Russian Moseen

8 Greek and Turkish MARTIN, 9-bullet Mowzers

It was time to make our plans. We heard that 33 men had escaped from the massacre of

GHAGADEBEE and had settled in the mountains facing us called DEPELEE. GHAGADEBEE was located on the Southern end of Sepastia and it was the grave yard where all the Armenians who were from AMELEEH TABOUR had been gathered and slaughtered.

The government from Sepastia to KOOCHEAER knew nothing of the outlaw bands of Armenians except us. We were called the outlaws of ENSHOHAT and we were the ones who started the battle for the boulders. Those 20 people who had escaped from the church were from our village. For this reason the government was always hunting for us. They had promised huge rewards to anyone giving information about our location. We got word of other outlaws and we started communicating with each other through our representatives. We sent SARKIS KAVEJYAN because he wished to see his wife and children to DEPELEE to confer with the other outlaws. Every crime that was committed in the village, burglary, rape, murder was automatically pinned on us. We were baptized by the community as the PEREPOERTIVE CHETTEHS. The town criers were bursting their throats crying out our crimes and our names.

The group in DEPELEE could not go far from their hideout and so except for food, we were able to help them very much. One day we went to DEPELEE for a visit. On the way back we had an unexpected escape. When we were in ENCHOHAT a Cherketz by the name of EMER who was an Army officer and married to the former wife of an Armenian from BAGDESAER, GARRA SARKIS, was in ENCHOHAT to get some workers from ENCHOHAT to build himself a palace.

With the protection of the police we were going to BARDEZAG to work on the palace. The police would tease and insult us, stretching our patience to the breaking point. But, of course, we could not retort in kind. KREKOR was agitated and upset. He ground his teeth and said: "Dear God please deliver us from this bondage so we can give these Turks a taste of their actions."

It almost appeared that God had heard his request. On our way back from DEPELEE in the middle of the road we ran into some Turk outlaws with whom we were compelled to join forces and run because it was night. Half of us went towards the village of HARASAR and KREKOR and MOORAD went with the other half towards our cave in KOOCHEAER.

As the group approached KOOCHESEAER they noticed sentries walking on the outskirts of the village. Suddenly they heard gunshots and started to run in the direction of the shots and started shooting. KREKOR and his buddies answered the shots with their own guns. Before we knew it, we found ourselves face to face in combat.

KREKOR noticed as the two groups opposed each other, that an individual was airing his wrath at him in the dark, unaware of his identity. KREKOR, sword in hand, terrorized, becomes transfixed like a statue. He realizes he is face to face with his tormentor, the Turk police sergeant, HAGEEN. The policeman, started to move, but KREKOR knocks him to the ground with one punch. Filled with glee, he cuts his gun from his waste and stabs him and starts to beat him with the butt of his gun. MOORAD comes upon the scene and seeing KREKOR's actions, pulls him away, saying, "We are in a great deal of danger." We learned that the sergeant's buddies found his body, took 150 gold pieces from him and divided it amongst themselves.

Because of this incident the Turks had 150 mounted soldiers searching for us. By the time they reached PARAPERT we had already reached TOZANLOO. We were no longer safe in our hideout. Our future was pregnant with danger. Surrender, traitors, spies, battles, death, flight, relocation were all in our future.

We were no longer inexperienced youths. We had to give up the outside world and concentrate all our efforts to our world...the world of our hideout in the cave. We had to decide how we were going to establish our own life in our permanent mountain home.

Some of our buddies were dejected and sick at heart and others physically incapacitated. In the event of another emergency or battle, would we be able to save them?

We had no political commitments or goals. We were united in one way, to defend ourselves and to avenge the death of our countrymen. We had a long and serious talk about our future course and decided that we must separate the sick from the able-bodied.

One of the sick was MUGGERDITCH MELIKIAN who had an incurable illness. We

cared for him for 6 months. We even did everything in our power to get yougurt and honey for him. He was a sweet-tongued intellectual who did like money. We all liked him. But he was aware of his vulnerability and requested that he be permitted to go and stay with KHOROKHON KEVORK. He had a gun, binoculars and political papers (letter of introduction) which were given to him by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in Sepastia, or so he hold us. We kept the binoculars and papers; the former because of its usefulness in our work and the latter because it might endanger his life.

MUGGERDITCH'S wish was our wish too. We were happy to see him go. We put him on the road with 2 companions. KEVORK, who was a good Revolutionary, offers them hospitality for 2 days because of the critical times. So they are compelled to return. On route, they reach the GHORROOEEEN River when MUGGERDITCH'S health is so depleted he could not take another step. His companions don't know what to do. They contemplate murder. MUGGERDITCH reads their minds and makes an eloquent plea for his soul. They decide to take him back to the home of KREKOR. KREKOR said he could keep him for only one week. Then he puts MUGGERDITCH on the road again. After only a few steps, he is very weak. It is snowing and he loses his way and takes the wrong road. He runs into some Turk youths who were hunting. They approached MUGGERDITCH and started questioning him. He sized up his predicament immediately. With his long hair, long beard, tattered clothes and smooth tongue, he convinces them he is a Turk. They continue to interrogate him to see if he is really sincere. Everything went smoothly until they asked him to reveal the sign for Islam's. This trips him up and establishes the fact that he is a fake. They know he is an Armenian and start to torture him by pulling out his beard, one by one. Suddenly, he has a chance and disappears into the night. He stumbles across a small hill and hides in back of it.

Half dead, hungry, exhausted, he contemplates his hapless situation. Where to go? He could not call on KEVORK again. In desperation he decides to approach his relative ERVANT who lived in KOOCHEAER and was married to the former wife of a well-known traitor. And she was not above carrying on the work of her deceased husband. MUGGERDITCH knew that she was a traitor and knowingly falls into the trap.

Because we had killed the policeman, 150 mounted soldiers were searching for us. A reward of 300 gold pieces was offered to anyone who could give a clue as to our hideout. When MUGGERDITCH came to their home, he was welcomed with open arms. They took pity on him, nursed him and sympathized with his situation. ERVANT's wife shed tears and asked, "Oh, my dear, how did you fall into this situation? Who was with you? What are the rest of your buddies doing? Where are they sleeping?"

MUGGERDITCH should not have answered their queries even though he trusted them because they were, after all, his relatives. They never revealed the source of their information. MUGGERDITCH was never implicated.

Overjoyed at this information, ERVANT and his wife go to the home of an Army Captain, a Cherketz, RIZZA BEY to tell him the exciting news. At this time IRZZA BEY, who had been promoted to a Major, was preparing to leave for ENTILAS. When he is given the news he says, "I'll take this into consideration." and leaves for his new post.

A couple of days pass. The traitor is waiting in vain for the reward of 300 gold pieces. Even though she didn't get the money immediately, they go to the home of Captain EZET BEY and reveal the information again and this time collect their reward. ERVANT and his wife had been Turkified a long time ago.

The government, even though it had rewarded the traitors, were still in doubt as to its veracity. Weeks after we had been exposed, EZET BEY sends some Turk shepherds from PARAPERT to act as spies. The shepherds couldn't locate us. This time they sent the MUGHTAR of the village who reports that he saw smoke in the hills. There was a third visit by the officials of the government. The latter gave them details and specifics. The government was confident that they had the layout of our hideout. The last group was surprised at our organization and discipline. We even had our own entertainment with song and dance. Because we were leading such peaceful and even a joyful existence it was hard to believe that we could be responsible for all the crimes attributed to us.

After long deliberations and studies our stone masons uncovered a secret passage in the forte where we hid all of our provisions. We never wasted a minute. We always tried to anticipate every eventuality and to prepare ourselves for it. We had uncovered a stream which flowed from the forte. We wondered where its ultimate destination was. It had to go someplace. So we started working again.

By the sweat and blood of our brow we managed to form crude tools from just about anything we could lay our hands on. We succeeded in forcing an opening which was large enough for one man to crawl through it and discovered still another cave. We continued our work, much encouraged and happy and discovered another stream flowing in the opposite direction. This became our second exit which faced the towns of PARAPERT, OGHNOVOODEE and BARDEZAG.

We found a third exit which went through the GHOROUEE River. Whenever we ran across large, sharp boulders, we broke them up with our tools and flattened them out. The roof of our lodging was completely formed from earth. While we were working, away at the boulders, crushing and levelling them, we discovered that we were under the pasture of a Turk. The village peasants heard our banging from time to time and assumed it was the sound of cannons. The spot where we were working caved into the ground. When the Turk surveyed his pasture and saw this new gulley, he, too believed that it was the result of cannon fire. The exits which we had made were several miles from the entrance of our cave. So whenever we decided to go out into the village, our enemy was never aware of our presence.

Unfortunately, the traitor had given very complete details about our hideout and even the most remote exit was surrounded by soldiers.

EZET BEY came to Sepastia to persuade ALLAH BEY for days with grandiose promises because he was confident about our purpose. ALLAH BEY discounted all his promises. The stake out was lengthened and we remained in our place. Subsequently the KHAIMAKANS from KOOCHEAER, ZAREHE and NEWARET got together and were subjected to the same flattery from EZET BEY.

Even though we were in bad circumstances, because of our traitor and because we were having difficulty breathing in the cave, nevertheless, we refused to surrender because we didn't trust our would-be captors. We knew we couldn't continue in this way but we didn't want to let on that we were reaching the point of desperation. We decided to seek an alternative plan.

There was one person we could trust and he was RIZZA BEY. Our final request was that we be allowed to speak with him privately. They accepted our terms. RIZZA BEY came from ENTILLA and after speaking to us we mutually accepted the following terms.

1. He promised to set us free and not to attack us or hurt us in any way.
2. Give us a written statement identifying the person who acted as a traitor.
3. Guarantee our freedom.

Both sides honored the agreement. We were free.

A government official, BEYSIM, who was well-to-do and married to an Armenian woman from CHIQUID had under his roof 3 Armenian youths who farmed the land and were shepherds. One of these boys was from our village, APET IAGHANYAN. We were careful not to injure any Turks who had Armenians in their homes, even though they were slaves. BEYSIM seemed to know this because he was exempted from our burglaries. One day he told APET that he knew where we were hiding out and APET brought this news to us. This information was confused by VASFEE, the captain in PARAPERT. This means that they defended us in an oblique manner. We had a meeting to decide our future course. We had two alternatives. One half wanted to move to another location, the other half said where can we go in the middle of winter? Are we going to find a better place? We were well protected here and could defend ourselves in the event of a skirmish. The second suggestion was followed. We decided to relocate our cache of flour and wheat so that in the event we had to make a quick escape, we would not be without provisions, at least until the end of the winter. TAKVOR MELIKIAN and MOORAD DERDERIAN volunteered to be responsible for the chore. They immediately set on their way. We had long *wait* before decided to venture out on errands only on stormy and snowy days so that our foot-prints would be covered.

TAKVOR and MOORAD had left that night and by the next evening had not returned. I had a fitful sleep and awoke in the middle of the night. Got up, went outside and saw our sentry, MOORAD MELIKIAN, standing and staring at the entrance of the outhouse. Walking in his direction, I could hear rumbling sounds. I was petrified. I fell to the ground, put an ear to the earth. I could hear deep rumblings which seemed to be getting closer and closer. I got up and ran in the outhouse. I looked all around me. As I raised my eyes, about 200 yards away, the valley was surrounded by soldiers. From the other side of the forte we were being observed with the help of binoculars. MOORAD was no where around. He had gone in the cave to warm up. I went into the cave after him, acting as nonchalant as I could. I told our group that we were surrounded. Fourteen of our members took their firing positions. The enemy, approached, dug a trench in the snow and prepared to defend themselves in battle.

They did not want to tangle with us in battle. Instead they agreed to send two Armenians, AGHA BOB and MUGGER, saying, "You are Armenians, you won't be hurt. Go look their installations over, their weapons, etc."

We raised our guns and shot at them, not to kill, but as a warning that we would kill anyone who came near us including spies. The enemy was shouting to us across the ravine, "Don't come out. The fighters are coming." But no one came. We could only see the butts of their guns from the side of the cave because the cave was about 8 feet deep.

They had to do something. They had not come just to see us. The Armenian intermediaries did not succeed in their mission and in order to uncover our plans the sentries were ordered to fire.

We could not stand still. We were obliged to return fire. The noise echoed in the night from mountain to mountain. We could not get rid of them until evening. Firing continued on both sides. We were protected by sandbags.

After that enormous effort no one had a victory. They decided to communicate with us because they were consumed with the desire to find out who our leader was.

Was MOORAD still with us? If not, then they knew we were without a leader and there were villagers with whom they could dally as they wished. We didn't have a true leader; we were all equal. Our group was made up of men of all ages and temperments. We did not feel the need of a special leader. For our needs we were all equal. We were obliged under the circumstances to elect a leader. But we had a more important decision first. We appointed three groups to defend each of the three exits. Then we elected a leader to act as our representative in dealing with the Turks. No one wanted to be our representative because that person had to speak fluent Turkish. Finally KREKOR volunteered to represent us with the condition that he be given an assistant who spoke fluent Turkish. I was the interpreter.

KREKOR was hot blooded and easily aroused. I had hardly opened my mouth to reply (the Turks), when he started to say, "I am the leader. The youngest one amongst you. Here's to you and your Mohammed. If you want to fight you are welcome to fight us. Don't play around. Because my plans were to use a different approach, I was very upset with KREKOR'S remarks. I was unable to present our views as I would have liked to. But instead of being offended by KREKOR'S remarks, they whispered amongst themselves and then said, "Our government has changed hands. You are free to come out. Everything has changed."

We were well-acquainted with the cunning Turk. We could not take their word in anything. We had been around the village and were well acquainted with the government in power. The commander also tried to persuade us that the situation had changed. We could return to the village. We would be given amnesty.

After our meeting was over, we returned to our hideout to make immediate plans. We sent a group of 5 towards PARAPERT and BAGDEZAG to dig an underground route for us from the caves to that location. While working a boulder was unlodged which caused an avalanche of stones to fall out with such a thunderous noise that the sentries thought it was the sound of distant cannons and they fled. At the same time the rocks that had become loose fell and blocked the entrance to the cave.

Once it had been established that our entrance was blocked, the villagers from HAGHT brought 400 lbs. of gunpowder which they blasted at the entrance of the cave, hoping the rocks would seal us permanently in the cave.

Except for the first entrance from which we communicated with the enemy, the second entrance was also sealed as a result of the gunpowder blast leaving us open on exit which was the one that led us to the GHOROOEE River. We weren't too upset by the fact that two entrances were closed, confident that our third exist route could save us. No matter how much they blasted away at our entrance/exist located in the valley, we were perfectly safe because in order to get into one, you had to go down several steps. We were embedded so deeply in the earth that ammunition directed toward us was wasted on the ground. The square shaped room where we lived was so dark we couldn't even see each other. We exchanged only words with the enemy. They from above the cave and we from below. We were restricted from firing by our agreement. They were very interested in seeing the face of the person who swore at Mohammed.

It was time for food; we put MOORAD in charge as our guard, until we returned from our meal. The conversation continued between MOORAD and the outsiders. At one point, he was so interested, he tried to stick his head out to see them. In order to do this, he first had to raise his arms and then hoist himself up. He had just succeeded in raising his arms, when a hundred bullets shot in his direction, injuring his arm. This incident really upset us. After dinner, we returned to our places and really swore at the outsiders.

The attackers apologized for the shooting incident. They said it was an error unpremeditated.

They tried to learn our secrets a second time by using the services of Armenians. This time they had heard that BOGOS TAVITIAN was in our group. They found out that his two children, 5 and 6 years of age, were free. They persuaded them to come to the cave. When SEESAG saw his father, he clung to his neck and said, "Father what are you doing in this dark place. Why don't you come out?" Half of us wanted to keep the children with us. But thinking of the dangers, we returned them to the ALLAY BEGEE and NEWARETEEN.

After the children, an Armenian woman, PERTEEK, was sent to us. Her brother and another relative were with our group. PERTEEK informed us that the forte was surrounded by thousands of soldiers. We sent her to AGHAJAN, in the village of HAGHT so that she could communicate to our group in DEPELEE that our plans were to attack. We were waiting for the snow to melt. They must be ready to aid us as soon as they received the word.

The next day PERTTEK came again through the help of AGHAJAN and said our comrades at DEPELEE told her that they saw with their binoculars that our forte was surrounded by soldiers. Therefore, there was no way for them to move from their hideout.

We missed our two comrades and looked for a way to commicate with them. But this was impossible. We couldn't escape through the valley because the enemy had flooded it with rocks. We put all our energy and hopes on the other exist but we had lost track of night and day. We never knew one from the other. When we were clearing up the second exit, we were able to see some light. When we saw that two men were up their. We realized that our forte was heavily surrounded. Our last hope was the third exist which led to the river.

You would almost think that mother nature had prepared this exist. It was impossible for anyone to see inside and for anyone to see outside. The spring was just below the exit. About 15-20 feet down the length^{of} the stream was a huge round boulder. From that vantage point, one could observe that this was an entrance but he had to figure out a way to navigate the waters. With KREKOR and GARO we went to the exit of the water. This was not an easy chore. It took us about 2 hours. We had to crawl, climb and stoop on our haunchés to reach our destination. We no sooner reached the exit when we noticed heavy smog enveloping the area. We returned to our headquarters. A few of our members were having trouble breathing and were looking for a way to get some air.

We had no alternative but to try to escape through guile and manipulation. We started to negotiate with the outsiders in loud voices. And in order to get some

air, talked them into opening a small hole. But we couldn't stay there. We had to find a way to escape.

What was that smog at the third exit? We decided to investigate again. MOORAD joined us with his injured arm. We needed light. We solved this problem by soaking some old rags in oil and burying it. But it was important that the damp, cold air not extinguish our torch. GARO carried the torch and we started on our way. Crawling and stooping we reached the exit. It was light. We saw that a sentry was on the other side of the boulder. We waited. Every hour the sentry changed. We waited for night, so that we could put the sentry to sleep with one bullet and escape. We thought at the most there were 40-45 soldiers. How were we to know what way the wind would blow, what cold water was going to spoil our hot soup.

Our older comrades, aware that from time to time we would disappear from the group, thought that this time we were not going to return. This wasn't ^{our} are only problem. Who knows from what hole the Turks heard about the exit via the stream. In three or four places, the Turks had increased the number of sentries. KREKOR and I started to study our situation. We were completely surrounded, no exit whatsoever. We started to disagree with each other. KREKOR insisted we must shoot our way out. He reasoned that the sentries would flee from fright and break the ring around us - giving us an opportunity to flee after them.

But I argued that the sentries would fight and die at their posts before they would flee from duty. MOORAD had gone ahead during our argument. MOORAD had gone so close to the exit that the soldiers felt a movement and aimed their guns at us. MOORAD suddenly started to shout. We were prepared guns in hand. We no sooner heard him, when we started shooting. How well our escape would have gone if I had agreed to KREKOR'S plan. Just as he said, the soldiers left their posts and fled pell mell into the night. KREKOR was really mad at me. He shouted, "What has tied you to this hole, you could have done something. At least give your gun to GARO." He angered quickly and recovered quickly.

Back at our headquarters in the cave were our comrades who were relying on us. We needed them as much as they needed us. Finally, I talked to KREKOR and he simmered down - and we returned to our headquarters. We decided not to tell them about the incident. Next time we would break the ring around us with a surprise attack. This hope was for nothing. As a result of our little skirmish, the Turks increased the troops around our escape hole. As a last resort, we had to decide whether we should surrender or fight our way out.

The hole that had been opened to let in air was enlarged. The next day we were told of the arrival of RIZZA BEY. This indicated to us the false impression the Turks had of our supposed strength. He talked with us as a representative of VAHEEB PASHA.

Even though we had decided to surrender, we didn't think it wise for all of us to appear at one time. There were several older men in our group who had been injured as a result of their work in the caves and five other comrades who wanted to leave...they had had enough. Slowly these men were helped out of the cave. It took all day...until night fell. Only KREKOR, GARO, STEPAN and I remained in the cave. MOORAD had gone out only because he knew RIZZA BEY quite well. (He had been his servant for some time.) When RIZZA BEY sees MOORAD, he says, the only son of one of his closest friends, MUGGERDITCH MELIKIAN, is in the cave. He tells MOORAD, "If you persuade MELIKIAN to come out, the others will follow him."

After resting, RIZZA BEY came a second time to persuade us to come out of the cave. He swore on his wife's name, "Little Hanum" that no harm would come to us. Because we trusted him, we presented him with the following conditions of our surrender which he accepted.

1. Remove all soldiers surrounding our hideout
2. Allow us to remain in ENCHOHAT.
3. Allow us to spend our first night in PARAPERT

When we emerged we were taken to headquarters where we were received hospitably by serving us tea. On our way to headquarters we were ordered to hold our guns down as a sign of surrender. KREKOR who was near me got very upset and started to grind his teeth. It was beneath his dignity to be treated like this, a common prisoner.

The next day we were taken to KOOCHEEESAER from PARAPERT where we were jailed for two days. They were very kind and gracious to us. We were given lots of food and drink. Two days later we were given cigars, cigarettes, lots of food, etc. We were being used as a bait to encourage other resisters to give themselves up. A few days later we were told we would be transferred to SEPASTIA where we could live in comfort and freedom.

RIZZA BEY having fulfilled his function, returned to ANTELLAS.

Five horse drawn carts were brought in front of the jail and all of our possessions, guns, etc. ^{and} we were transported in them. We started towards SEPASTIA.

Before RIZZA BEY left he appointed his son-in-law as commander of the 300 soldiers who were in charge so that our safety would be assured. When we reached the center of town, a band was waiting for us. They started to play military tunes and accompanied us through the main streets. We were returned back to the jail where we were given physical examinations. Then we were lined up against the wall, all of our possessions stacked around us and we were photographed.

The Vali from KHAZAH (village) ELEEMETSHEE, volunteered to help us because we were old friends and he has always remained a faithful friend.

MASSADEDEH who was from ELEEM also was occupied in the smuggling of tobacco. One night we caught up with him in the hills. He begged to be spared. He was a KURD and promised to help us. In order to test his loyalty, we asked him to steal 4 oxen which we used to transport our provisions. We turned the oxen over to him when we no longer needed them. He remained faithful to his word.

KEL ABDULLAH from the village of ALLAGH who was an old friend and faithful one helped us also. He was a professional crook. His talent was to acquaint himself with the personal wealth of the inhabitants of all the neighboring villages. First, he was a spy. He would tell whom to approach to help us. Really con them into helping us.

TARPEEN MUGGER from PARAPERT was our long and faithful benefactor and helper. Sincere and patriotic.

AGHJAN, TAVITYAN, STEPHAN MKELLYAN (PARPERET), KACHADOUR from GHAZMCHAR. The head of the arsenal knew and trusted AGHAJAN as a faithful and good worker. He put him in charge of the warehouse where food was stored and appointed STEPAN as his assistant. AGHJAN was acquainted with the villagers and an intimate friend of ours. He made great sacrifices for our group. Secretly he gave us sacks of wheat. Therefore, STEPAN AND AGHJAN played a vital role in our plans and eventual freedom.

In the village they had established a Turkish orphanage where Turk and Armenian orphans were cared for. KACHADOUR was the baker for the orphanage which gave him an opportunity to help us. No less than 25 individuals of varying temperments, background and skills, made every sacrifice to help our plot succeed. They did not flinch in their efforts to help us. When all other efforts failed, they did not hesitate to steal, mug, kill, etc., to accomplish their goals.

It was impossible for us to try to relocate. Every road, route and passage was fraught with danger. It was not possible for us to move around unrestrained in our native villages. Therefore, it was necessary to plan far in advance. One false step could destroy our plans and could indite all of us.

Another Vignette

GARABED, STEPAN AND BOGOS PANOSIAN from AGHJA MEJEDEN had told us about the CHERKETZ with whom they had stayed. They took us to meet the CHERKETZ to acquaint us with him and to test him. After observing his actions and conversation, we did not have a bad impression of him. He appeared to be a chief clerk. He went so far as to encourage and inspire us. The CHERKETZ love horses. We promised him some horses in exchange for his promise to give us all the bullets we wanted. Why did the CHERKETZ want horses? He introduced us to two people with whom we went to a large grazing area where we pointed out to them a herd of horses. Our helpers rounded up the horses and from the herd we selected 8 of the best ones and turned them over to the Gherketz. He was overjoyed and reiterated his promise to us and gave us a large supply of bullets. Horses were not important to us because we felt no need for them. Besides, we didn't have any place to keep them. When we needed them, we tamed some wild ones and then gave them their freedom.

We had studied everyone and every home in the village. We knew where to go

and what to do to obtain help. We not only needed flour, oil and guns but we needed sandals as well, so we could rest our weary feet after climbing in the mountains.

AGHA whom we can identify only as X had some buffalo which we wanted. We casually went there, as if it were our own home and helped ourselves to 43 heads of buffalo. We knew that the GAMYSTEEES who lived in DEPELEE were up against very hard times themselves. We butchered two of the buffaloes and gave the meat to them. And the skins we took and put them on the remaining buffalo so that we could use the leather for shoes.

Animals are so unpredictable. We no sooner put the leather on his back when he took off and headed in the direction of his owner's corral. I couldn't follow him because I knew his owner well. Fortunately, we had some outsiders in our group. They entered the village and succeeded in roping the buffalo, skins and all.

AGHAJAN TAVITYAN not only voluntarily helped us, but through his friendship with KREKOR gave us large supplies of wheat and grains for use by our group in DEPELEE. One day when AGHAJAN was giving them wheat, because he was careless, he got himself into a tight spot. Only his quick-thinking turned the incident into his favor. After that he refused to give the boys food, because his life was in danger.

So the people in DEPELEE appealed to us to solve their food problem. KREKOR and I were obliged to travel to DEPELEE. We couldn't cross the bridge leading into the village because it was heavily guarded. Our only alternative was to cross the river. When we emerged on the other side, we were frozen stiff, clothes and all. When the people of DEPLEE saw us in this condition, they said, "How are they going to help us. They are only youngsters. "

After we explained our situation, 14 of them joined us and we went to talk to AGHAJAN who agreed to continue to help us as before. He was as good as his word. He gave them great quantities of supplies.

The VALI wished to honor KREKOR and me with a dinner in the mountains. We accepted. We reached the mountaintop. The VALI was lounging, the fire and food was ready and his helper had already left for the village to fetch fresh-baked bread. The purpose was to get rid of his helper so he could meet with us in private. We couldn't trust anyone but each other.

KREKOR seeing a fold of sheep, got homesick, put down his gun, and rushed in their direction. I could not relax even though I had accepted the invitation in good faith. I kept my gun in my hand. The VALI read my thoughts and assured me that I could trust him. I didn't know what to say. All of a sudden we heard a voice order, "Shepherd, come here." We opened up our rifles and started in KREKOR's direction. KREKOR's voice responded, "I'm coming." But he didn't know who was calling him.

The VALI proceeded me. Before KREKOR reached me, the VALI went to the men and asked what they wanted. All of sudden they fired in our direction. There was a full moon. But we couldn't see the enemy or their position. But they saw us in the light created by the gunshots. So the VALI started backing up in our direction. When he was within shouting distance, he indicated to us that we should fire on the enemy. KREKOR and I separated and started to fire on the enemy until they fled.

The noise from the shots aroused the villagers who banded together and started up the hill. But we had escaped to higher ground. The VALI was very pleased with our performance. We had dispersed 12 bandits who had come to steal the sheep. Only after the villagers^{all} were we able to enjoy our dinner. We really had a feast. The VALI was overjoyed because we had saved his life. This cemented our friendship and mutual trust.

A couple of days later the VALI visited us. The 12 supposed bandits had been sent to investigate our presence. This only increased our desire to resist the enemy. We sent the boys into town to hunt, and to rob. They would bring back 4 sheep, one cow, etc. But how long would this satisfy us? We couldn't have a lot of animals around either. We were waiting for cold weather to preserve the meat.

One day KREKOR and I went to the village of P _____ to rustle all the cattle in the carrol. We worked all day but did not succeed in our mission. The cows wouldn't budge. We were very frustrated by our clumsy failure. The VALI, ADBALLAH advised us to rustle sheep instead of cattle who are very stubborn. Two people could never rustle such a large flock. ABDALLAH pointed out to us the home of the richest villager. We studied the place through our binoculars, especially the entrance and exit. It was dark. We could hear the tinkling of bells. We could see the shepherd returning with his flock. We watched to see where he was going. He put the sheep in the pen, locked the gate and left. We knew this was the hour for his meal. We rushed down the slope to the gate of the pen. We always kept our tools with us. We jimmied open the gate and entered. We picked over the better animals and rustled them out, locked the door and walked away. We met an old lady, torch in hand. I aimed my rifle, but the woman passed without noticing us. Of course, in the quiet of night all sounds are magnified. The villagers all emerged from their homes, disturbed by the hoofbeats of the fold of sheep. They started to open fire, but in the wrong direction. We fired back. On the way to our hideout we dropped off 2 sheep to the VALI and 2 to MOZZEE. We reached our home in the cave. When my father-in-law saw the fold, he bawled us out. "Don't you fellows have a God. Take the sheep back where you got them."

Without regard for his age or respect I answered: "What God. There is no God, no religion and no rules nor pity. Those who destroyed our ancestral homes, didn't they have a God too. Are we 25 people to starve on this mountain top..or are we to eat stones?" The fellows stepped and put an end to the fight and told the old man to shut up. They started to slaughter and dress the beasts. Anyway, who had the courage to return them? I can't tell here everything we did. But I will say that we stole and butchered 40 heads of cattle.

After spending 4 days in the jail in SEPASTIA, they took us out and lined us up against the wall. We saw a long rope in front of us and immediately interpreted this as a bad omen. But we couldn't do anything. Best we remain quiet and follow orders. Except for our guns, all of our provisions were brought out; cutlery, pots and pans, etc., and sold at auction by the town crier. Our jailers had us elect a leader, and they turned the proceeds from the sale of our possessions over to him. Then ALLAH BEY gave us a speech. "You see, we are giving you the money from the sale of your possessions which were all stolen, so you could use the money on your journey. This is ample proof that the local government is being fair and square with you."

He continued: "The local villagers are acquainted with all your deeds and it will not be safe for you to remain here. VEHEEB PASHA has given orders to transport you to GEYSARIA where you are strangers and will have an opportunity to live unmolested."

To insure a safe trip, 8 mounted police and 16 foot police were appointed to accompany us. "These are professional police officers so don't try anything funny on the road." We listened quietly. Why do you need the rope? If the government has faith in us, we will obey, we have no guns." After our retort, ALLAH BEY came forth and volunteered his faith in our integrity. Then the ropes were removed. They tried so hard to give a false impression of sincerity and friendship, that they invited our friends and relatives in SEPASTIA to visit us before our departure. Quite a few Armenians did come to see us off. Who knows what went through their minds. Did they envy us or did they pity us? One of them was the mother of DERTAD TAVITYAN, Annah, who was my maternal uncle's wife. She had brought ample provisions with her. Some other people had also brought food.

I interpreted these acts as a bad omen. I whispered to KREKOR, "Let's get rid of our heavy military uniforms, just in case we want to escape." We removed our uniforms and coats and gave them to the women who had brought provisions. With the sound of fond farewells ringing in our ears, we started on the road to GEYSARI.

The mounted police followed us from a short distance in the rear. KREKOR and I made a secret pact to take the guns away from a couple of the mounted police, when the time was ripe, and make a getaway. We reached SAR KESLAH. This was the crematorium for the deportees who were brought to SAR KESLAH. This name is recalled with fear and terror by every Armenian. We waited in front of the government buildings for some time. The local police took us to the jailhouse. As we went down the street, the residents were lined all around us, cursing and yelling: "No Armenian leaves this place alive."

Before we even got out of the courtyard of the jail, they were trying to rob us. Twice they grabbed at KREKOR's hat. We were a short way out of town, when we were approached by a KIAMAKA and a couple of officers. They started whispering. It was obvious they were talking about us. Their purpose became clear. They took us off the main road and through the woods. They said it was a short cut.

We had decided to escape. Without a word we were able to communicate our thoughts to each other. We approached a stream. We asked to be able to get a drink. We split up in 2's and started towards the stream. Whoever succeeded in getting a gun, was going to get to work and help us escape. All of a sudden, one of the mounted police broke away from the group and galloped in our direction. The others followed. We were surprised that it was RIZZA BEY who in 1914 was responsible for drafting soldiers. Now he had a change in office and was stationed in SAR KESLAH. He had been sent to give the orders from headquarters to our captors that we were to be taken to ADANA without harm. His presence was encouraging. Now we had a good chance for a safe journey. We were returned to the main road. Our suspicions melted away.

That evening we reached a valley near GEMEREG. In the morning we were greeted by a horrendous panorama. The entire valley was covered with corpses in varying stages of decomposition. The policemen looked around them and said laughingly: "We know you killed a lot of Muslims, but look what we did to you."

Finally we reached GEYSARI, where we were supposedly to be freed. We remained in jail for four days. The fifth day, they lined us up in the town square. We were surrounded by a 100 soldiers and policemen. Here the curtain parted. With a loud voice _____ read the orders: "...to take immediately to ADANA to face a military tribunal." Their real purpose in treating us so well, was that word got around that they were fair and square in the hopes in trapping other resistors into giving themselves up.

We were on the road again. Our guards were reduced to 4 horsemen and 8 foot police. We felt better. When we reached ERGEASE, the mounted police went on ahead to find lodgings for us. GARABED PANOSIAN had managed to get on the good side of the police. During the entire journey our guards were good to him. When the mounted police went on ahead, he made an excuse and stayed behind, kiddingly bidding them farewell. Even though GARABED was large and strong, his actions were above suspicion. But the two of us were small, slight and would remember the saying, "The fly recognizes the sweet."

After Garabed the ring around us tightened. A couple of the police followed him and tried to persuade him to return. Both mounted and foot police closed in on us. We reached a stream. We decided to use the same plan. We would pair off in 2's to get a drink and try to get our hands on a gun and alert the others to flee. We failed again.

We reached VORLOO KESHLA (army post) and were put on a train, each of us in a separate car so we could not plan another escape. Our next stop was BOZANTI where we were put in a wooden building. This was an important railroad center. The Turks and Germans had established an enormous arsenal here. We saw 600 Blacks who were being exiled towards SEPASTIA. The doors of the building were nothing more than screen doors. We managed to cut holes in them which were large enough to allow us to put our arms and heads through them. We had no sooner started working when NNONEEG KHATOUM woke up, heard what we were doing and let everyone know. We had decided to keep this a secret from those in our group who were old, unfit or

incapable. Now we had to work even harder to patch up the holes we had made. When the police arrived, we explained that the screens made us uncomfortable.

NONOOG TAVITYAN whose 2 sons were with us, insisted that the Revolutionaries who were in Syria would soon attack ADANA. Be prepared to cooperate with them. His young son said to him: "Father, why are you trying to stop them? Let them escape. We are going to our death."

KARNIG TAVITYAN replied, "They kept us for years, fed us. Without them where would we be now?"

The majority advised me to try to escape alone, if I had the courage to do so. You would think that I was bad luck. How could I escape without a gun and a companion. On the other side stood my father-in-law; old-fashioned, naive and always preaching peace and order.

From BOZANTIN we were taken to DEUVLEG BOGAZ. This was well-known as the place where all the Armenians were annihilated. The walls were filled with their handwriting...prayers, pleadings, a few thoughts of revenge. It was enough to explode your mind and shake your soul.

Next, we were taken through the narrow passes of the TARAS mountains. But how were we to walk? The roads were impassable. Eighty thousand soldiers were crossing through the mountains to the Syrian front to join JemalPasha. There wasn't room to drop a pin. After one day of marching we were jailed in JEMEL KHAN. It was a dark and narrow place. We didn't know where we were. Under our feet we discovered two bodies. We thought they were Turks and had been placed there so we could be blamed for committing the crime. We started to make a ruckus, so they would remove the corpses. But who cared? We were fed once a day at dawn. When the doors opened, the guards pulled the bodies out and began to exam them. One was not dead. They looked like Persians. Later we learned that they had not been fed for 15 days. We never learned their crime, if indeed, they had committed one.

We were removed from the jail in groups of 8. I communicated silently with KREKOR. I started to case our situation, looking for a means of escape. On our return I noticed the police were still examining the bodies. They were not paying any attention to us. I changed my clothes and managed to go out again with the second group of 8. There was more than one door. While the police were pre-occupied with the bodies, I opened the door next to ours. I thought it would be a horse stable because I saw two horses tied near the door. I reached another door, pushed it open and smelled fresh air. All the time I had been followed by STEPHAN PANOSIAN and his father.

Without a word I showed them an escape route without using any main routes but confining themselves to the mountains. When KREKOR came I gave him different advice so that in the event of danger, or if the first departures should run into trouble, we should not perish with them. I returned to give the rest their orders too, when I ran straight into a policeman who shouted, "Don't go." I got out of there as fast as I could. I only heard the noise of the rifle, the bullet didn't reach me. I fled in the direction of KREKOR when I saw SAHAG and KATCHEEG who had followed KREKOR when he escaped. They put bloodhounds on our trail but were not able to track us down. We had fled into the mountains. Three policemen climbed onto rooftops and were shooting at us. But we were hiding in the bushes and under trees.

We had not gotten our bearings yet and were wandering around, intent only on concealing ourselves, when we stumbled across our fellow prisoners who had escaped ahead of us. They had not gotten very far. They were huddled against a steep, rocky slope which they were not able to climb. They were afraid to move. It was impossible to conquer the steep slope. I managed to scale the rock by shimmying up its smooth surface. I extended my arms and helped each of them up. While this was going on some of the police were shooting at us and a group was fast approaching us on foot.

Once on top of the rock, the fellows wanted to rest. But I said no. Our goal was to reach the top of the slope where we would be somewhat safe. The police had not stopped firing, but we were now out of their range. We reached some woods, but continued to run for about 3 hours until we reached another boulder which we climbed to the top. We lay under the mountain crevices (?) where we were safe from view.

Four of our comrades went into another direction because they had not only lost their sense of direction but had lost their brains as well. There was nothing more we could do. It was dark. We were unfamiliar with the terrain. We didn't know where to go. We walked 60 paces. We saw movement. It appeared to be two bodies. One seemed to come and go and the other moved. We thought they were spies and approached them very cautiously. We bumped into our comrade YEPRAM IKHANYAN. He hid in the bushes. Then continued his escape in the dark. SAHAG who was petrified with fear raised a rock to bash the intruder's head. We restrained him from killing YEPRAM just in the nick of time.

Our pursuers returned to the Khan and boasted that we had been captured and killed. The police chained our comrades together and they started to walk on the road to ADANA. They really didn't know whether to believe the police or not. They wished they had tried to escape with us. They made a new decision to try to escape.

OHAN MELIKIAN came from a family who had a reputation for great strength, especially in their hands and fingers. He succeeded in breaking himself loose from his chains, attacks the police and wrenches rifles away from two of them. The police ran off. Our comrades saw them go and together with OHAN they ran into the hills. They roamed around for two days. Later STEPHAN, GARO and BAGHDON wrapped their heads in white turbans, put on long robes, separated from the rest of the gang and succeeded in finding their way back to SEPASTIA. The police surrounded the remaining captives and killed AHARON MARKOSIAN, BOGHAS TAVITYAN, MANOOG TAVITYAN and one of his sons. The other boy saved himself by hiding in the bushes. When

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the police left, he came out and saw the dead including his father who was still breathing. He brings some water and gives it to him. But it is too late. He closed his eyes and died.

Without losing his self-control, the son (Name) followed the advice of his comrades, dons a turban and robe and after walking for some 14 days, he too reaches SEPASTIA.

We walked along the railroad tracks. Every mile was guarded by a sentry. We reached the hamlet of CHOOKOOER after walking in the hills for 5 days. We met neither man nor beast. Our food was gone. We suffered mightily from hunger. YEPRAM never complained. He said he was not hungry. We became suspicious and after searching him, discovered that he had on his person Food which he was eating.

The sixth day we reached a village called POSTLOO where a flock of sheep were grazing. Pretending we were Turks, we asked for food from the shepherd. He pointed to the village saying, "I have no food."

All the homes were close to the ground. We went inside one. An old lady was sitting, all alone. We passed ourselves off as Turkish soldiers. She said, "My husband and I have one ox and seven gold pieces. We have nothing else." But since we were supposed to be Turk soldiers she offered us hospitality by feeding us bread and yogurt. Even though we had advised our comrades not to follow us, they suddenly appeared at the door of the house from out of nowhere. To keep the woman busy, we asked for more bread and yogurt. This gave me an opportunity to step outside to see if anything was going on. The villagers had noticed the entrance of our comrades. Some women in the street were whispering, "Girls, refugees have come here. Quick let the others know at once that refugees are here."

I (He) was very upset. I returned to the house immediately to notify the boys of the danger. I arrived just in time to avoid a serious problem. SAHAG was helping himself to all the bread in the house, completely oblivious to the cries and entreaties of the housewife. I grabbed his arm and threw him out of the house. The actions of my comrades had aroused a lot of speculation among the

villagers. They had even roughed up the housewife....taking the bread away from her. What a stupid thing to do.

We didn't walk but ran to the outskirts of the village. We headed straight towards the mountain as fast as our feet would take us, scrambled up the slope and ran and ran, panting all the way. We had gone some 200-300 feet when we heard gunshots. The villagers were following us. We could see them shooting in our direction. It was obvious that they were excellent marksmen. Luckily, they were guns that used gun powder. They did not injure us, only shot off KREKOR's hat a couple of times. We noticed the appearance of the villagers. They were short and slight of build. We speculated that they might have been midgets. After it got dark, KREKOR rested in a nest of trees. He didn't want to go on. I was obliged to stay with him. The others scattered here and there, hiding in the bushes. KREKOR hollered out to the villagers in the dark. "Don't come near us. We have a revolver. Anyone who moves will be shot."

The enemy slowed down. We didn't notice that they were refilling their guns and preparing to surround us. Two of the enemy reached us. We turned around and immediately attacked them. One fell to the ground, we grabbed his gun. The other mashed KREKOR's head with a rock. KREKOR was dazed. Nevertheless we succeeded in grabbing his gun too, before the other villagers reached us. Two others gained ground. We announced that we were Turkish soldiers and not to spill Islam blood for nothing. We called out to the villagers, /if you come any closer we will kill your two comrades. But, in fact, we didn't even have any bullets which to fill our guns. Our attackers became dissatisfied with the flight and volunteered to declare peace. The villagers returned the knapsacks we had dropped in our escape and we returned their guns and two comrades. They hoisted the wounded men on their shoulders and left. We drew a huge sigh of relief, built a small fire and fell asleep. KREKOR was in great pain from the wound on his head and needed rest.

Our comrades hiding in the bushes saw the retreating villagers with the two wounded men draped upon their shoulders. They assumed that we were the victims

and hollered in our direction, "Hey whose that out there?" The Turks heard them and started a search. They fled but EPHRAM was caught. There was no question but that he was an Armenian. He was taken to the village. Preparations were made to hang him. Just as the noose was about to slip around his neck, a rich villager passed by. "Don't kill him. Give him to me for a slave. He can work for me until he dies." God saved his life. When armistice was declared and that area was conquered, EPHRAM was set free and he went back to SEPASTIA.

We walked for 13 days without stopping or resting. Finally we reached the hamlet of GEEHANEE. We should have gone Northeast but had headed straight East. We asked here and there for directions to put us on the road North. But they had no knowledge of geography, maps, or even the location of their capital city, GESAERYA.

Finally we reached the edge of the Armenian village, TOMARZAH. We were exhausted, fell among the rocks and went to sleep. We opened our eyes to be greeted by two boys standing over us. We saw the hoof prints of four horses. The boys said 40 horsemen were searching the area for Armenian refugees. No Armenians were left in the village to whom we could appeal for help. We hit the road again this time until we reached the village of EVEREGE.

A 16 year old boy was caring for his sheep. We told him we were Turk soldiers. He replied that his father was a GENDARME. He volunteered to go into the village and bring us some food. He continued, "You resemble my paternal uncle." Apparently, he, too, was a soldier. Because it was still daylight we didn't let the boy leave. At dusk when he started for his home, we followed him slowly, until we were quite near his home. We waited outside. The boy told his mother about us. Mother and son came over to us. When she saw me, she agreed with her son that I resembled their relative. She invited us into her home and offered us hospitality. With good wishes, she bid us farewell. "On route you will pass the farm of a very rich Turk. He has an Armenian slave who is his shepherd. But be careful, the dogs are very ferocious. They'll tear you apart. When you approach holler out that you are the people of MARDONLEE MUSTAPHA. When the householders hear this, they will chain the dogs."

It was night. We reached a field. We could see lights from afar. I had to be the farm of the rich Turk. And as we had been instructed by the Turkish woman, we shouted that we were the people of MARDONLEE MUSTAPHA. ~~The Armenian came over to us.~~ The Armenian came over to us, examined our faces closely and was impressed. He was convinced that we were Armenians, too. He made an excuse to get rid of his Turkish companion. Then he was overcome with emotion. He had not expected to ever see another Armenian face. He thought that every Armenian had been exterminated from the face of the earth. He graciously offered us food. He also gave us a knife, he had no gun, matches and quite a lot of provisions. Before daylight and the return of the Turk, he directed us on our way so that no one would recognize us. He said that we would reach ERGEEASE in two days.

In a few days our food was gone. We ran into road-building slave soldiers, EMELEHEH. They could not be Armenians. Getting a little closer we listened carefully. Their talk was a mixture of Greek and Turkish. We didn't dare to go near them and were obliged to look for another road. We noticed that under the roads was the entrance to the sewer system. We decided to hide in one of them. We looked around and waited for a passerby whom we could rob. Ordinary people would not travel on this road at night. They would have to be like us, refugees or people with guns. We were determined to capture one and we succeeded.

Luckily for us it started to rain and really poured. We could hear "splash" "splash" and thought a horseman was approaching. When the sound of the footsteps grew closer, we saw it was a traveler on foot. We immediately attacked him. He was strong and brave. We ^{had} difficulty getting him off the road. He was numb with fear. As it turned out he was a military man a corporal in the Turkish Army. He begged us to take anything, but only leave him his shoes. We were deeply moved by his pleas for mercy. How we wished we could be in his shoes. And he wished he could be in ours! We had to do that which was necessary for us. We took his clothes, his rifle and a round of ammunition. After we examined his shoes, we uncovered his secret. All his money was in them.

Thanks to his money and uniform we reached the village of KEELEEDICK safely, near SEPASTIA. We were again out of provisions. A few steps further we noticed a well-dressed person. He was obviously a person of means. We told him that we were soldiers and asked for food. He replied that his father was plowing his fields and that he was taking him some provisions. Feeling sorry for us, he gave us some of it. "May it be sweet. I can tell by your accent that you are from these parts. You appear to be from GEEHREENT or TAUSHANLOOT." He advised us to go into the village. He said there were no police around. On the way into the village we met still another traveler and asked the name of the young man. He replied ALLEE PEYLIVAN and also told us that the young man had just returned from military service. They are a prominent family and he directed us to his home. We found it and knocked on the door.

ALLEE PEYLIVAN's father and mother were favorably impressed by my new and shiny uniform and invited us in. We said we were buddies of her son in the field of battle and that we saw him on route and he sent us there for provisions. They were delighted to hear this. They fed us royally, gave us ample provisions and sent us on our way. We had only gone a few steps when KREKOR said, "Come on, let's go into this house, too." I instinctively felt we were courting danger. But I followed KREKOR and we entered the house. No one was home. The floor was covered with fresh-baked bread. We started to pack them in our knapsacks. Momentarily, two brides entered, locked the door and started to cry and scream. I pointed my gun at them to scare them into unlocking the door. KREKOR was still concentrating all his efforts on stealing the bread. The villagers gathered, surrounded the house and called the mayor to come and open the door and cross examine us. We kept our cool and said, "Can't you see our clothes? We are commandos who have walked for days, weeks and months. We entered an Islam home for food and provisions so we could continue our journey. Is this the way to treat loyal, Islam soldiers." The MUGHTAR was deeply moved by our words. He scolded the villagers and bid them

leave. He gave us permission to take all the bread we wanted and graciously put us on our way. We got away easy this time and were happy that now at last we were on the final leg of our journey. We were on our native soil. We arrived at the village of KHTEV YNEEJEH which was in complete shambles. Not a building was left standing that we could use. We climbed the surrounding hill. Suddenly we had severe stomach aches. In the distance we could see the village of KHAVERAZ but we were unable to start on the road. Our stomach cramps completely incapacitated us. We wondered what happened? It was that fresh bread. We had stuffed ourselves. We put our fingers in our throat to induce vomiting with which we got some relief.

We went to the village of KHORSANNA which in the past, before the Massacre, was densely populated with Armenians. It was quite a large village where a government official who was married to an Armenian resided. Our purpose was to get acquainted with the Armenian wife. But this was impossible. The village was overflowing with refugees. We cased the village for quite some time. But it was hopeless. We did not feel confident enough to enter it. We didn't want to return to KOCHESAER either because it too, was filled with refugees, many of whom knew us personally. We decided to go to the village of HKAT to see our friend AGHA JAN. We had prepared our story ^{for} the second phase of our escape. We approached the threshing barns which surrounded the village and spent our first night there where we were well hidden from view. AGHA JAN's home was directly across from the threshing house where we were hiding. We hunched down under the rock-formed wall. Night and day, every minute sentries walked back and forth to keep refugees out of the village.

We heard the sound of a military whistle signaling ^{ing} the approach of fresh guards. Before they appeared, I ran towards the bakery. And as is my usual custom, I knocked on the door. An unfamiliar face appeared, I immediately changed my language. "Father, I am a soldier on my ^{way} to JEEHRENEH. For the love of ALLAH, please tell me what to take there. But in fact, we were coming from JEEHRENEH. The man pointed out the road and added, "My sons, if you are soldiers, there ^{are} a lot of barracks along the way."

I thanked him and dashed towards the building where Armenians were living. Instead of knocking at the door, I motioned to the occupants from the window. It was SAHAG EMEEN, 80 years old. He didn't recognize me and refused to open the door. I entreated him to tell AGHA JAN of my presence. At the same time the guards were getting closer. My heart was pounding in my ears. I flattened myself on the opposite wall, praying they would not notice me. They passed...without incident. AGHA JAN came, recognized me and opened the door. We embraced. He sent for KREKOR and STEPAN. We began to breathe freely.

Our most important need was a good rest to overcome our long and arduous adventures. Also, we had to have a place where we could rest in seclusion. We were taken to an underground storeroom. He provided us with bedding and covered the entrance with CHAFF. It was opened only to provide us with food and fresh air.

After a 10 day rest, we felt well-recovered. Our first thought was to contact TAKVOR and the boys from DEPELEE so that we could reorganize ourselves. But how to start? Our best men were gone, our provisions were depleted, we didn't even have a gun. Who could we depend on for help? Our only ray of hope was the Chief Clerk who still lived in KOCHEASER. We decided to appeal to him...should we surrender or should we continue to resist? We knew that VEHEB PASHA had ended the massacre.

One night we went to KOCHEASER and found the Chief Clerk. He told us he could not advise us before he had a chance to discuss our situation with RIZZA BEY. The next day he called us and said we would have to meet with RIZZA BEY. He coached us on how and what to do and say when we met with RIZZA BEY. Little did we know that our goose had been cooked. The home of RIZZA BEY was enclosed by a high fence. At dawn we jumped over the fence into the courtyard. We hid in the wood shack. At sunrise the door was opened and RIZZA BEY appeared. We came out immediately, gave him a military salute and stood at attention. He acknowledged our greeting and told us to be at ease. "Boys, in these critical times it is difficult for VEHEB PASHA to save you. But do not worry. I have a plan. I have just two stipulations which you must keep in strict confidence.

1. You must not flee into the mountains
2. You must separate...each man travel alone"

After giving us this advice he took us to a government agency where we were assigned to work with some fishermen. This was to last a few days. Just long enough so that our presence would be taken for granted. After that he sent me to HKAT to a NKTAH MEVDEEKHEREE. KREKOR was put to work on a government farm as a laborer. Corporal KHATCHADOUR from KOCHASER was transferred to another job.

As you may recall, before we left our hideout in the forte, TAKVOR had been sent to transfer our provisions in another forte. He was unable to rejoin us because, quite unexpectedly, he and the forte were surrounded.

After our surrender, our comrades at DEPELEE were stranded and had no choice but to flee into the mountains. While wandering in the woods, TAKVOR reunites with his buddies and they went to the area of TOZONLOUEE where they continued their work. Even though KREKOR and I wanted to join them we restrained ourselves so that we could carry on our work? During the day we obtained food and provisions for them since we had the opportunity to do so while at night we continued to rob and steal as it fitted our needs. One day KREKOR sent word that he wanted to see me immediately. We all got together that night and discussed the possibility of fleeing to RUSSIA. I preferred to stay behind because our situation was relatively safe and we could be of help to our comrades. TAKVOR alternately visited me and then KREKOR. We could fill his needs and keep him with us for days. Finally, they dropped the idea of going to RUSSIA.

From this point forward KREKOR was our leader in exile. We came to a parting of the ways. After all the suffering I had witnessed and endured I could no longer take the life of a refugee.

I was in HAGHT at this time where I was staying near the MUDIRE of that military base. One day the MUDIRE called me and said. "The order has been given to kill all of you while you are sleeping, no matter where you happen to be." My advice to you is to notify your buddies and tell them not to stay in the area. Go, you are in danger." Just pray that my friend ARNAWOOD KERSERADAREH can help you escape.

From that day, I had a clear understanding of our situation. Especially since KREKOR left KOCHESAER and had never returned. I knew we were in real danger and could depend on no one to help us. Burdened with these worries, one night I had a bad dream. I believed that dreams communicated a message. After that I wrote a long letter and gave it to STEPAN to personally deliver to TARPEEN MUGGER advising him to send the boys to HAGHT. TARPEEN MUGGER returned my message with reassurances for our safety. After that TARPEEN MUGGER relayed my message to KREKOR and had so advised me. TARPEEN's message was. "Don't worry about the military. Just take care of yourself." This note did not reassure me. I was in a constant state of fear and apprehension. The next morning the MUDIR was starting out for SEPASTIA. I asked to accompany him and he did not refuse. The next morning I found STEPAN right in front of our KHAN. "Where have you been? We have been searching all over for you." A group of Turk boys have surrounded the _____ in HAGHT to arrest you and some others. STEPAN couldn't get out of KOCHESAER fast enough to give me the news so that I would not return to HAGHT.

My purpose in coming to SEPASTIA with the MUDIR was to stay there. When I stepped out of the hotel I knew where I was headed. Like the other boys, my temporary home was with the missionaries. They had their own cars in ADANA and KONYA which they used to smuggle groups of boys into CONSTANTINOPLE. I appealed to MR. PATRIDGE to smuggle me out of SEPASTIA as soon as possible. He advised against it. We were fugitives. Our names were posted in all public places. He persuaded us to wait until the intense search for us was over. Then he would be more assured of our safety. I didn't contradict him but neither did I wait for better days.

My cousin, MRS. MARGARET TAVITYAN, who had graduated from the American school there, was now teaching in the school. She was a close relative. I decided to appeal to her for help to get me out of there immediately. I persuaded her to arrange with the driver to smuggle me out without the knowledge of MR. PARTRIDGE. Margaret bribed the driver with 5 gold pieces. The next morning, with MR. PARTRIDGE's

knowledge, I got in the car and we were off.

Even the driver was a Turk. The 5 gold pieces would provide him with a good income in addition to his salary. He didn't care who you were as long as you paid him. He was well acquainted with the road and villages, hamlets along the way. He also knew the right people to contact to arrange for fixing identification papers for refugees. The procurers were very clever. They would buy identification papers of the same sex, age and general appearance and sell it to the refugee wishing to make an escape. The first thing I did when I arrived in Constantinople was to go directly to BRITISH military headquarters and volunteer. I was accepted and served for six months.

My second success was to get a job in a commercial bank through my father's contacts. I had little peace in Constantinople. The villagers of GOLAN-GEGELBASH, had poured into Constantinople and were slinking around all over the city. Somehow they heard that I was in Constantinople and had tracked me down. They spread the word amongst the villagers. And group by group they formally protested to the government, demanding the life of the one who had robbed and killed in their villages. Even people I had never seen testified against us.

The police accompanied by the villagers would appear daily on the sidewalk in front of the bank. I could see them from inside. They were putting the finger on me. They tried to enter the bank but were not successful. This didn't happen just once or twice. It was a daily occurrence. It became an ordeal for me. I had to make some plans. Even if they did not succeed in arresting me, it became a great care for me.

The Italian Consular and the bank director were close associates. He called on the bank director as usual. They decided to smuggle me into Italy. The bank director explained my situation completely to the Italian Consular and they agreed to help me. In a few days I had my Italian passport. It was a Sunday morning. Under the protection of two guards who were sent from the Consulate, I entered the automobile and we headed to the seaport where the ship was waiting with its Italian flag. Everyone was staring at the car as we sped along.

We heard the whistle of the ship. My heart started pounding. As I got aboard, the memories of my comrades, home, family and friends choked my throat. But still glad to be leaving the hell and fire of Turkey. I entered the western world. I arrived in Italy. After several months as a guest on Italy's friendly shores, I left this friendly country for the United States. July 1, 1923, I am in the United States.