



I come from Bitias, one of the seven villages of Musa Dag. I was about eight years old when, in 1915, the Turkish government started the execution of its criminal plan to exterminate the Armenians. The Turkish government had worked out a careful and detailed plan for the annihilation of the Armenian nation. They started their job of genocide step by step.

When World War I broke out Turkey allied herself with Germany and Austria-Hungary. During general mobilization the Turks found their chance to enlist all Armenian males between the age of 18-50 for military service. This was a good time to act and execute their devilish plan systematically. In the eastern provinces of Turkey almost all of the Armenian males enlisted were taken out of their towns and massacred on isolated roads. In many other places the Armenian soldiers were disarmed and sent to labour camps to build roads and railways. They were under-nourished and almost starving.

A very large number of males from our village had dutifully gone to do their military service and my father was one of them. After drafting the physically fit males, the next step was to search for hidden arms in the village in order to disarm completely the remaining population. There was also confiscation of animals and stored food to supply the army. During these operations the Turkish officers were very cruel and inflicted tortures on the innocent people who did not have the arms, the animals, or the food which they were forced to deliver. These seizures were said to help the government's war effort, but actually only Armenian communities suffered the most as they were the main target for this robbery and persecution.

My uncles, Apraham and his cousin, Movses Agha Renjilian were the leaders of our village. They were educated and had connections with influential Christians and Turks in Antioch. They both had gone to Antioch to settle some business and find out more facts about what was going on in remote places. The news they brought were very shocking. They had learned a lot about the persecutions of Armenians in the far provinces of Turkey. Movses Agha Renjilian decided to go to Aintab to bring her daughter Victoria who was a student in the Girls College in Aintab. He was instructed to bring also Rev. Nokhoudian's fiancée and my sister Sara who also was a student there. This was a risky trip but Uncle Movses had to do it. Due to advanced age he was exempted from military service. Uncle Apraham was younger. He was a graduate of Broussa Silkworm Industry School and had specialised in preparing the silkworm seeds. He had just sold a few hundred boxes of silkworm seeds and paid his ransom to be exempted from military service. My father could not afford this because he had invested his fortune buying a flour mill in Arsus, near Iskenderun. My father had finished a trade school in Smyrnia and was a master carpenter. He had his work-shop in Iskenderun. He came in summer home and stayed 2-3 months with us. Uncle Garabed lived in Iskenderun with his family.

Uncle Movses returned from Aintab his mission accomplished. He brought with him his daughter Victoria and my sister Sara. Rev. Nokhoudian's fiancée stayed in Antioch with friends to prepare for the wedding. The following week Uncle Apraham went to Antioch and brought her. The wedding took place a few days later and Rev. Dieran Koundakjian came from Kessab to perform the ceremony. After the wedding service the newly married couple and the crowd walked to Rev. Nokhoudian's home which was very near to the church. The reception was about to start when a messenger arrived from Kessab and went directly to see Rev. Koundakjian in privacy. All at once the gay atmosphere changed. People started whispering to each other the bad news the messenger had brought. It was an official decree ordering Kessab people to get ready for deportation in a week's time. Rev. Koundakjian left on that same evening for Kessab and the reception did not take place. People were telling mysterious tales to each other in secrecy as to what is happening in remote places. They were gloomy and had the presentiment that very soon their turn ~~taxing~~ for deportation would be coming, with all the miseries involved.



During this uneasy and depressing days my uncle Apraham was obliged to make another trip to Antioch to sell the rest of his silkworm seeds. It made good money because no seeds came from Europe that year due to the War. His cousin, Movses Agha Renjilian was also in Antioch for some business. Both were arrested and were told to send word to their families to come and join them to be deported. The next day our village received the official decree of the Turkish government for our deportation. My mother felt very helpless when many people from our village including relatives decided to ignore the decree of deportation and take refuge on the mountains of Musa Dagh.

We were 3 brothers and a sister. Sister was the oldest, about 14 years old, had just returned from Aintab College. Mother decided to send sister to Antioch with uncle's family which included four daughters. And as father was away somewhere in Aleppo doing his military service and uncle was to be deported with his family-probably to Aleppo-mother thought it is wiser not to retire on Musa Dagh but rather be deported where there is a chance to meet husband or brother. Rev. Nokhoudian too thought it was wiser to obey the decree and be deported instead of retiring on the mountains and have his new bride live a rough life in wilderness pursued by the enemy.

Half of the village population retired on the mountains moving their belongings up day and night. The other half tried to sell what they could at very low prices offered to them by Alaouts and Turkish peasants who came from the plains on the road to Antioch. My grand-mother in her own way decided to go up to the mountains and asked me to accompany her. After one day of climbing up and sleeping there overnight in a goat's shelter with relatives, she decided to return to the village next day as my grand-father did not follow her.

A few days later the Turkish army was seen on the hills of Haji-Habibli, the next Armenian village way down in the valley below us. Everybody in our village was watching and could easily see far on the horizon the human silhouettes moving up slowly. After one hour or so shooting started. From far we could clearly see the enemy movements like shadows moving on a white sheet. The Armenians could not be seen. They were hiding behind the rocks and shooting incessantly not to let the enemy advance.

The arms our people used were mostly old hunting shot-guns and a few obsolescent army guns. They relied more on strategy and their impregnable mountain. After one day of hopeless climbing and fighting the Turkish soldiers came down to our village for rest and reinforcement. They used the Armenian Evangelical Church compound as a camping ground. Our folks who were to leave the village in the next few days brought food and killed their animals to feed the soldiers. This was an unusual treatment from both parties. Because we had heard about the Armenians in the interior of Turkey how they were tortured and massacred in those dark days of terror and turmoil. We were very lucky for some mysterious reasons not to have been massacred or tortured when half the population of our village were on the mountains fighting these same soldiers who had come amongst us to rest and wait for reinforcement.

The day set for our deportation arrived. All the remaining people in the village obeying the order of deportation were asked to group themselves on a hill at the other end of the village where the road to Antioch begins. Hundreds came with their donkies, mules and with bundles on their backs. Even children were given little bundles to carry. The animals were few as they were confiscated earlier. Many were obliged to hire from Turkish peasants of the plain the animals they needed. We hired two mules. My grand-father and grand-mother had still a few things to carry on their back. Rev. Nokhoudian was the leader of the group. We were guarded by mounted Turkish gendarmes. We all walked except the very old and little children.



We reached Antioch late afternoon and spent the night in an enclosed old place under the August stars. The next day we started for Hama. It took us four days to reach Hama. On the way one night during our sleep we were attacked by thieves. After an alert by elderly males, women and children were asked to move to the center of the camping ground. Men moved to the periphery to guard and protect us. The gendarmes also cooperated and after a few shots at the thieves all was quiet. Early next morning we started for Jisr Shugr and spent the night on a hill outside the town overlooking Orontes river. Hama was still far ahead. Many got tired walking. Some could not carry their bundles anymore. The strong tried to help the weak and the weary. Water was becoming scarce. Many lagged behind almost fainting. We spent the third night in a place called Sanjar. I remember the people around the region with their shaved heads going in and coming out from a big khan there. The next day about noon time we arrived at our destination. This was Hama. The August sun was burning the earth and its inhabitants. We saw half-naked Arab boys thrashing and chaffing the wheat. After we passed the railway station we saw a most unusual sight all around us. For miles and miles Armenian refugees from every part of Turkey were brought and dumped here in the open plain outside Hama under the burning sun. You could see thousands and thousands of ramshackle little tents erected from any kind of material available. Some used blankets, some used their bed sheets or bed covers, others used burlap sacs. Some well-to-do people who had come from Aintab, Marash or Ourfa or other towns near Syria were lucky and had their floor carpets or mats which they used now as tent material.

My grand-father was 75 years old and still going strong. He put two little tents from bed covers. One for us and one for them. We spent our first night in this little tent outside Hama. My uncle came soon and found us. They had arrived a week earlier and he had hired a house in the town. He was well-to-do and knew well how to get along with Turkish officers with little presents here and there. He spoke and wrote well the literary Turkish language. Also his cousin Movses Agha Renjilian was well versed in Turkish literature. Both were wise, tactful and had great common sense. One son of Movses Agha was in the U.S.A. studying medicine, and the other, a graduate of St. Paul College in Tarsus, was an officer in the Turkish army in Damascus. The latter studied theology after the war and was the pastor of the Arm. Evangelical Church in Troy, N.Y. The house Uncle Apraham had rented was on the bank of Orontes river in the center of the town. Not very far Uncle Movses had rented his house. The next day Uncle Apraham came to the camp and told mother to pack and move to live with them. He told the same to his younger sister who had ~~an~~ only one daughter two years old. We were very unhappy to leave grand-parents behind. In spite of Uncle's goodwill it was not possible for him to take care of all of us. Already his load was more than enough for him to carry. We promised grand-parents to come and see them soon. Some relatives there promised to take good care of our grand-parents.

Uncle took us in a horse carriage to their house. We were very happy to, sister and cousins again. The house had a little garden overlooking the river. A large walnut tree cast its shadow around. At one end of the garden a few steps would take you down to the river to wash or go swimming. It was cool and quiet here. We children were fascinated to live on the bank of a river. The next day we went to see our grand-parents and brought them with us for a change. They stayed all the afternoon and when it got cool outside they left for their little tent in the camp. We were heart-broken to see them go and live under the burning sun with those thousands and thousands of other refugees in a very unhealthy surrounding. We made two more trips to grand-parents and took with us some fruits, and also some tobacco for grand-father. On the fourth day after arriving in Hama grand-



father got sick with dysentery and passed away after some weeks. Two months later grand-mother passed away. My uncle arranged to have them buried in the Greek Orthodox cemetery.

It was autumn. Many thousands of Armenians in the concentration camps were deported further to the south to Hauran desert. As the means of transportation was slow and poor, some remained in Hama, others went as far as Homs, Damascus or Jebel Druze. Many Armenians who came to Hama from Sivaz, Gurun, Kaiseri or other distant towns of Turkey had travelled 5 or 6 months in wilderness and on rough roads. They were robbed several times, the young and beautiful women and girls were abducted from their families. The many tragic stories we heard in Hama shocked us and we felt very lucky to have walked only four days, relatively in great safety. These Armenians who were once prosperous, happy and healthy, were now impoverished and sick, and were roaming the streets of Hama for food and a shelter. Many lived in the caves on the outskirts of the town, others found shelter in a khan living with the animals there. They were in rags and starving. They were bare-footed and walked the streets of Hama in the cold winter knocking every door and asking for some bread as they went.

It was the first month of our first winter in Hama. The Turkish government issued a strict order asking all Armenians living in the town and on the outskirts to group themselves within 24 hours near the railway station and be ready for deportation to Hauran. Our relatively quiet and comfortable life on the bank of Orontes river was coming to an end. My uncle and some other well-to-do refugees from Aintab and Marash had bought old military tents. They put the tents near the railway station and moved their families in. Uncle's family plus his two sisters and their children numbered fifteen. We all lived and slept under one large tent for several months waiting our turn to be deported. The trains were busy moving Turkish troops to the front in the south. They were slow. But even so nearly ten thousand or more Armenians were put on the train and sent to Hauran. Our turn never came and the authorities became less and less concerned with the rest of the refugees. Gradually people felt free to go on their own and settle wherever they could find food or a job.

Presently my uncle rented a house in the Christian quarter of Hama. The inhabitants here were mostly Greek Orthodox. About 10-15 Arabic speaking protestant families also lived in this district. The protestant church was on the hill from where you had a beautiful view of the town. The pastor, Rev. Abdul Messouh lived on the church compound in the parish house with his family. Later the church was turned into a military hospital. An influential and wealthy Arab protestant family, called El Bawis also lived on the same hill in a beautiful house. Both Rev. Messouh and El Bawi family were very nice and helpful to the Armenian refugees. My uncle made very good friends with them. Later he started a business with the youngest El Bawi brothers. His name was Shafik effendi. They sold cotton thread and the rough cloth made from it by Hama artisans. My brother was their errand boy.

This was the second year of deportation. Life was becoming more and more difficult. Many poor and starving Armenians roamed the streets for food or a job. It was a common sight to see people dying in the streets with typhus and starvation. Food supply was becoming shorter and shorter every passing month. The Turkish government had agents who went to the villages and collected 90% of the grain crop. Everyday you could see hundreds of camels loaded with sacs of grain coming to the railway station. When the grain was weighed and received some refugees would come and linger around for hours to pick up the little grain that spilled out and were kicked and beaten badly. The trains were loaded and we did not know the destination. But here in Hama people had to pay very high prices for their flour and bread. My uncle had bought several sacs of



wheat for flour and "bulghor". Bread was rationed on our table. We were in our growing age and always felt very hungry. Still we were the luckiest family under uncle's protection.

One day we heard the government is distributing bread to the poor. Many hundreds came and waited before the bakery. I went too. All of a sudden there was confusion and panic amongst the crowd. They started running in all directions. Later were told that some Turkish agents were after the children. They were collecting all the Armenian children in the streets and sending them to Antoura orphanage in Lebanon to proselytize and make good Turks of them.

In 1916 my mother received a letter telling her that my father had died in a military hospital in Jerusalem. She was very sad for many weeks and would not let any of us leave her and go out. She asked us to sit beside her and she read her Bible everyday and prayed for hours.

During that year a new decree by the Turkish government ordered all Armenians that they accept Islam as their religion if they wanted to stay where they were, otherwise they would be deported further to the south. My uncle filled the form and later paid a subordinate officer and had the paper removed from the file. Rev. Nokhoudian refused the order and was exiled to Hauran and further to the south. Later he ran away and wandering the desert made his way back to Hama. Actually this order was rather a formality and was not carried out in its strict sense. At this time many Armenians who survived and felt strong enough left the town and found refuge in villages where they could find food or work in the fields or in the gardens on the bank of Orontes river.

I must here also say that relief work for the sick and the very old and poor was started in the early months of the deportations by Rev. Dieran Koundakjian. This help was given periodically and was scant. He was assisted by Rev. Nokhoudian and both came in contact oftenly with the sick and poor to help them spiritually and financially. One day Rev. Koundakjian came home very ill. Before the ^{week} ended he passed away. It was typhus that killed him.

Rev. Nokhoudian continued the relief work for the old and the poor. He also started a small orphanage bringing in orphan boys and girls from the streets. Relief money came secretly care of Aisa El Bawi sent by Miss Roner, an American missionary who headed the N.E.R. in Aleppo. Both my uncle and Rev. Nokhoudian had made friends with the Turkish authorities in Hama. These Turkish officers allowed the opening of an orphanage for one reason or another. But when Turkish agents later took by surprise the orphanage and sent all the orphans to Antoura, in Lebanon, the good-will and the real intentions of these authorities were only then well-understood. All the same the orphanage continued to exist and new children were brought in from the streets. My uncle was a member on the board of the orphanage. I think he acted as an adviser. He has recorded the names of all the orphans in Hama in a large book which still exists and is carefully kept by her daughters. The names of Ohannes and Boghos Shahinian are found in this book. They were taken away from Hama orphanage with the rest of the orphans and brought to Antoura. Here they were given Turkish names. Ohannes was called Fakhreddin Bey and Boghos was called Nazi Bey. They come from Sivaz. I met them in Aleppo orphanage in 1919 and ever since we are friends. Ohannes is an A.U.B. pharmacy graduate of 1929 and his pharmacy is in Rue Foch, Beirut. Two months ago he was decorated by the Lebanese government for his active service promoting sports and athletics in Lebanon during the past 40 years. He knows you well. His brother Boghos is in Troy, N.Y. and owns a dry cleaning plant. Both brothers have a more depressing life history. As they come from Sivaz they have walked 6 months to reach Hama.

In 1917 a new order from the Turkish government demanded urgently all capable males to report to the local military commander to enlist and

Beatrice Rohner
Serman

Small

orphanage



be ready to go to the south to reinforce the fighting army. This order applied even to those who earlier had paid their ransom. My uncle and Rev. Nokhoudian went hiding in an old house that belonged to El Bawis. It was not very far from the new house the El Bawi family lived.

This was a time of tension and despair. You could see in the eyes you met the horrors of war, fear, suspicion and scepticism. Despair was hanging in the air and infecting everybody. One day I took uncle's meal to his hiding place and when I knocked the street door they did not open it for me. I tried to knock harder and soon heard a voice asking who is there. When I answered my uncle opened the door. I saw him very pale from fear and he gave me a good scolding for having knocked the door so hard.

Food prices went higher and higher every passing day. It was becoming more and more difficult to find wheat or flour on the market whatever price was offered for them. Our little ration in uncle's house was further cut down. Hundreds died everyday from starvation. Many refugees started eating grass or grains they found in animal excrements. An epidemic of typhus spread in the town and it was a common sight to see dead bodies in the streets with swollen abdomen. The municipal service collected hundreds of them every morning and dumped them in big ditches outside the town, excavated many years ago by quarry men. Typhus took away uncle's mother first and months later his wife.

The streets were not safe anymore. Anybody carrying food was attacked by hungry street boys. I was attacked once when bringing the bread from the bakery. Several loaves of bread were snatched from my tray and carried away by starving street boys. From that day on an elderly member of the family would go to the bakery accompanied by a second person, and usually myself was that second person.

Nobody knew how long this war was going to drag. My uncle was now moody and in great despair after losing mother, wife and so enclosed in his hiding place for many months. The provisions he had stored in the house before he went hiding were gradually diminishing. After days of thinking and conferring with mother it was decided that we start a new life on our own with some help from uncle. He gave us some money to rent a house and with what remains to start our new life. Mother was ready to do anything to keep us alive. My sister was hired by a wealthy Arab family as a maid without pay. She would only eat with the family she worked for. My youngest brother Garabed was sent to the orphanage with Rev. Nokhoudian's recommendation. The orphanage was managed now by Mrs. Salihé Birejiklian. Rev. Nokhoudian assigned her for the job before he went on hiding. My eldest brother about 14 years old decided to try making hair combs. Some people from our home town were engaged in the business and supported their families adequately. He bought an adze, a saw and some files with the little money left and started making hair combs from camel bones. I took the combs to the bazar to sell. They sold like hot cakes. Town people as well as Bedouins who came from the deserts to sell sheep, yoghurt or cheese, bought every comb brother could make. These combs were very useful to remove lice in the hair. And because of scarcity of soap and lack of bathing facilities everybody had the parasites. Now we had enough to keep us alive. In summer when the wheat crop was being moved away from the plains we all went to the villages for gleaning and collected enough grains to make flour and "bulghor" to last us for a few months.

Typhus continued to do its ravages. Mother got it and died in a week's time. A month later sister got the disease and passed away peacefully. When we brought her yoghurt she did not touch it but gave us the gentle smile of an angel. The world was coming to an end. We two brothers were left alone in the house grief-stricken. Uncle was still hiding. His eldest daughter Vartouhi about 17 years old was in charge of the house. She had 3 other sisters and a young brother called Movses who was only 4 years old. (Movses is a graduate of the School of Dentistry from Beirut



French Faculty and is the I.P.C. dentist now in Homs.) Vartouhi and sisters came oftenly to see us and always brought with them something nice to eat. They were very nice during this period of trial and anguish.

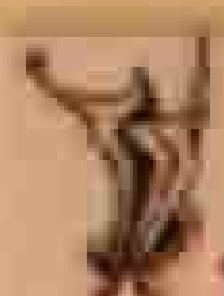
A few months later we saw the Turkish army retreating. Our house was not very far from the railway station. We could hear the whistling of the train day and night. We used to go to the station and watch the soldiers herded like animals in cargo wagons, and German officers enjoying their drinks in wagon-lits. The Turkish authorities left Hama. My uncle and Rev. Nokhoudian came out from their hiding place. Some weeks later the British army led by General Allenby, and the Arab army of Hidjaz led by Sherif of Mecca entered Hama. They passed through the main street and went northward leaving behind only a small unit to keep order in the town. The next day we saw the British soldiers shooting every dog wandering in the streets. There were hundreds of them. Ignorance and religious superstition left the street dogs alone to breed and spread disease.

Day after day Armenians from villages in the plain were returning to Hama. Many had lost half of their families. Some were the only survivor of a large family. Kadians, our next-door neighbours in Musa Dag, were five in the family and all five perished in Hama. Father Kadian was in U.S.A. and when the war was over he returned to Musa Dag. He married a widow who too had lost all her family in Hama.

Repatriation started in early summer of 1919. The railway station was always crowded with refugees from every part of Turkey. They wanted to return home, but could go only as far as Cilicia which the allies had just occupied. Trains coming from Damascus were full with jubilant Armenians returning home. A band of young Armenians from Hama with several pieces of musical instruments had come to the railway station to cheer the crowd. When our turn came to leave Hama uncle decided to take his family to Aintab where children would have a chance to attend school after years of interruption. He advised my elder brother that we accompany them till Aleppo and there join Garabed, our youngest brother in the orphanage where we can get some education. (Garabed got his B.A. from A.U.B. and later studied theology and was the pastor of the First Arm. Evangelical Church in Beirut for 21 years. He was decorated by the Lebanese government about 10 years ago for his many services, including the construction of that beautiful church in Rue Mexique, next to Arm. Evangelical College. Last year he moved to Chicago and is the pastor of the Arm. Evang. Church there. His two sons are doctors and are in Chicago.)

The orphanage in Hama had been transferred to Aleppo months earlier and was now being taken care of by the Near East Relief. My elder brother did not like the idea of being confined in an orphanage. He already felt himself an adult, could take care of himself and live in freedom. He missed the opportunity to get an education. (His son will graduate from School of Agriculture of A.U.B. next year, and sister Sara will have her B.S. in nursing next June.) When I joined my younger brother in Aleppo orphanage we both felt very happy to be together again at last. All the Antoura boys were also brought here.

From Aleppo some of the orphans were sent to Marash, the rest of us were brought to Aintab in small groups of 15 or 16 in covered REO motor cars. (I think the cars were called REO) This was my first experience to ride a car. The sensation was wonderful. We reached Kilis before it got dark. We continued our journey at night and many of us were sleeping when I felt I could not breathe and was about to suffocate. It seems the driver was sleepy too and the car was in a ditch two meters below the road



turned upside down. As the car was loaded with boxes of books and other furniture and we all sitting on the top, everything fell on us who sat on the left. Our teacher who was in charge of our group was an energetic and brave youngman called Kourken Hovigian. (He later became famous in California as an artist in photography.) He immediately evacuated everything in the car and lining the boys counted them. Five of us had minor wounds and bleeding. As soon as the next motor car reached us all the wounded were picked and brought to the American Hospital in Aintab. I was one of them and had a minor wound on my scalp.

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The orphanage in Aintab was situated in the Turkish quarter near the castle. It was called Millet Khan and belonged to the Armenian community. We spent the winter here. The snow was about to melt when rumours started circulating that the situation was getting worse and worse in Marash, and that the roads were not anymore safe. We could notice our teachers talking to each other depressed and in secrecy. Mr. Travis ordered the gateman to hang an American flag at the gate. Before the week was over we heard two American missionaries coming to Aintab were killed after they had left Kilis. Then the news of massacres of Armenians in Marash spread like the lightening and gave the alert to Armenians in Aintab to prepare for their self defense. Weeks earlier all Armenians had moved to the Armenian quarter. Millet Khan was the only Armenian community left in the Turkish quarter. Our teachers dared not going out. Some stayed with their families in the Armenian quarter and never returned. Mr. Travis saw that it was time to move the orphans as well to the Armenian quarter. Mr. Adour Levonian, a native youngman of Aintab, an ex-officer of the British army of World War I, was appointed as the military and political leader for the defense operations. A month later the Kemalist irregulars arrived in Aintab. When the clash started between the Turks and the Armenians they moved us to the American Hospital grounds.

The self defense of the Armenians in Aintab is another story. The fighting lasted for almost a year. The Armenians fought bravely against great odds in number and armaments. This time they were not ready to bow their heads to be slaughtered like sheep. After an honorable truce with the Turks about 20,000 Armenians left their homes again and came to settle in Syria and Lebanon. The orphans had left Aintab in the midst of the fighting accompanied and protected by a unit of French soldiers. We came walking to Kilis, slept overnight here, and next morning continued our journey walking again and reached Aleppo railway station late in the afternoon. Here the train was ready waiting to bring us to Beirut. After spending the summer in Beirut Quarantine under the tents we were brought to Jebeil.

At last we had come to a safe harbour. This was an ideal environment to live and devote ourselves to our studies. In the peaceful atmosphere of Jebeil we started a new life growing mentally and physically. We worked hard in the class and outside doing manual work to improve our surroundings. Our teachers were devoted and very mindful for our education. (Very soon a volume will be published in Armenian about the Jebeil orphanage life of that period. It is edited by former orphans. Shahinian and myself are on the publishing committee.) After two years of study in Jebeil 15 of the orphans with good standing were sent to A.U.B. for higher education. My brother Garabed and I were lucky to be included in the group.

This is my story of those turbulent war years told here as briefly as possible. I thank God for keeping me alive. I thank all my benefactors known and unknown who came to my help, who fed and clothed me, and also the hundred thousand other Armenian orphans, all innocent victims of Turkish barbarism and jealousy of the Armenians, because as a race we had a superior culture and were a progressive and industrious people.

Ohannes Tilkian