

## BOOK REVIEW

Karnig G. Bodourian, *Տարազանի յուշեր 1915-1917* [Memoirs of a Deportee 1915-1917], *Memoirs of Survivors of the Armenian Genocide*, 8. Editor, author of the preface and references Mihran A. Minassian, Yerevan: AGMI Publishing, 2022, 527 pp.

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In 2020, by the initiative and editorship of its Director Dr. Harutyun Marutyan the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation launched a series of books titled *Memoirs of Survivors of the Armenian Genocide*. The aim of the series is to publish handwritten memories kept in the archive of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute. Karnig G. Bodourian's written memoir is a classic example of a survivor's legacy, in which the author, before describing the exile and massacres, provides a wide-ranging description of his birthplace (Bardizag) – geography, cultural-educational life, history, his family's life and the town itself before WWI. Then, he presents his arrest and deportation from Bardizag to Aleppo and the difficulties encountered on the road to exile (massacres, kidnappings, epidemics, hunger, the cruelty of Turkish authorities and population, etc.).

### Karnig G. Bodourian's Biography

Karnig G. Bodourian's memoir is the primary source for his biography. The main events in his life were outlined by adding the few pieces of information available to us from other sources.

Bodourian was born in the small town of Bardizag in the autonomous province of Nicomedia in 1879. After obtaining his initial education in the school in his birthplace, he entered the nearby seminary of Armash in 1895, where he studied for four years under the supervision of bishops Ormanian and Tourian. His classmates were future well-known names who served the Armenian Church, such as the archimandrites (*vartabeds*) Mesrob Naroyian, Sahag Odabashian, Meroujan Kondolian (Dikran Ashkharhouni), Yervant Perdahdjian, Ardavast Kalenderian, Goriun Yesayian, Ghevont Tourian, Karekin Khachadourian (Drabizoni), Krikoris Balakian and Yeghishe Khacherian.<sup>1</sup>

Bodourian was ordained as a chorister (*tbir*). Still, despite his parents' and relatives' earnest desire, he left the seminary in 1899 without being ordained as a celibate priest and became a teacher. He worked as such for two years in Balekeser, a year in Adabazar, three years, from November 1902 until August 1905, in the Armash seminary (where he taught science), then three years in Smyrna. He returned to his birthplace in 1908 and served as a teacher until his arrest and exile on 22 April 1915. He taught in the community school in his place of exile and gave private tuition to various individuals.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Արմաշու դպրեմանքին 25 ամեայ յոթնեանին ստորի 1889-1914* [On the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armash Seminary 1889-1914] (Constantinople: M. Hovagimian Publishing House, 1914), 384, 404-405.

2 According to one source, he apparently was the director of the Bardizag community school, which is incor-

Bodourian mainly taught mathematics and bookkeeping. According to his compatriot Krikor Mkhalian, Bodourian was a “teacher who was appreciated”<sup>3</sup> and, by someone else, as being “honest and conscientious and aware of his position. His students became real Armenians and real men.”<sup>4</sup>

During his years in Bardizag, he founded the economic-tradesmen’s Carpenters Association and actively participated in the work of others of a similar nature, which was very useful for the local Armenian community, easing their difficult economic situations to a certain extent.

When the Bardizag branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, Dashnaksoutiun) decided to found a Consumers’ Co-operative Shop for its members, which looked like a grocery shop and would sell quality items to its members at reasonable prices and there was no one in its ranks who was competent to run it, “the work of organising it, the responsibility for running it and overseeing its financial affairs,” was entirely entrusted by it to Bodourian as the best of all candidates,<sup>5</sup> which was an eloquent testimony to his administrative abilities and the trust he enjoyed.

A positive affirmation was provided by his compatriot and historian Minas Veradzin (Kasabian), in whose words, “...one of Bardizag’s real economic organisers was Mr. Karnig Bodourian, an able, competent and trained teacher who, after the armistice, unfortunately died in Cairo, the victim of an epidemic. He was a notable organising force later equalled by Krikor Mkhalian, an industrious and talented teacher.”<sup>6</sup>

After the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution and his return to Bardizag, Bodourian was engaged to be married in August 1908 to Denchali H. Manougian. They were married in December of the same year and subsequently had four children: Anahid (1910-1910), Sarko (b. 1911 and still living in 1938), Adrine (1914-1914), and Vshdadzin Makrig or Makrouhi (b. 1915 in exile and still living in 1938).

## **Karnig Bodourian’s Exile**

Before the general deportation of Bardizag’s population took place, Karnig Bodourian, with 21 other compatriots, was arrested in Bardizag on 22 April 1915 and sent, with the others, to the provincial centre, Nicomedia (Izmit) by carriage the very next day. Then,

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rect. See Asatour Magarian, *Անկողի համայնապատկեր Բիթունիոյ հայրության մեծ ողբերգության* [A resumé of the panorama of the great tragedy of the Armenians of Bithynia] in *Յուշամատենան մեծ եղեռնի. 1915-1965* [Memorial Book of Medz Yeghern 1915-1965] edited by Kersam Aharonian, 3rd edition (Beirut: Zartonq, 1987), 309. He was only a teacher there. The director of the Bardizag community school in 1915 was Antranig Garabedian (Krikor Mkhalian, *Պարտիզակն ու պարտիզակցին* [Bardizag and Its People] (Cairo: Onnik Mkhalian, 1938), 566-567).

3 Krikor Mkhalian, *Bardizag and Its People*, 572.

4 Martiros Voskian, *Եգիպտոսից տարեցոյր 1919* [The Egyptian Armenian Yearbook] (Aleksandria: Aram Stepanian publ., 1919), 36-37.

5 Mkhalian, *Bardizag and Its People*, 594.

6 Minas Veradzin, *Բնքնանաչառում եւ դաշնակցական ղեկավարներ* [Self-Awareness and ARF Leaders], *Hairerik* Monthly (Boston), 9th year, no. 4 (100), February 1931, 172.

after crossing the Sakaria River, they were taken by train to Biledjik (Ertoghroul), then to Eski-Shehir, Afion Karahisar, Konya, Karaman and, on April 25, to the town of Sultanie (Karapounar), where they remained until July 31. It was there that they witnessed the wretched state of the exiled Armenians from Zeitoun and Frnouz. They then went from Sultanie to another town in the province of Konya, Ereyli, where they stayed for more than a month, from 1 August until 3 September 1915. They were sent, after that, to Oulou Kshla, Bozanti and Guleg station near Darson (Tarsus). Their time there was relatively longer, from September 7 until November 12.

While in Darson, he received a telegram on 5 October 1915, sent via Afion Karahisar, telling him that his wife Denchali had given birth to a girl. The Bodourians had previously decided that if they were blessed with a girl, they would name her Voskedzin<sup>7</sup> Anahid. Still, taking into account the circumstances of the baby's birth and her parents being in exile, they decided not to give her those names, calling her, instead, Vshdadzin<sup>8</sup> Makrouhi.

In the meantime, Bodourian's Golgotha-like journey continued, taking him further south, towards Cilicia, passing through the towns of Osmanie, Mamoure, Hasan Beyli, and Islahie, and finally reaching Aleppo. He tried to get to Jerusalem via Damascus from there, even getting into the train going there with a few friends, but, at the eleventh hour, due to a mistake made by their companion, Yervant Odian, their departure was prevented. All of them returned to the city and rejoined the group included their erstwhile companion for their departure to Mounboudj; Archimandrite Karekin Khachadourian. Because of this, two carriages were prepared for Archimandrite Karekin, his mother, Odian, Bodourian, and the group's other members to transfer them to Mounboudj. They begged the chief of police many times to delay their departure until the heavy rain stopped, but their requests remained unanswered. By sheer providence, however, "just at the moment of departure, the military authorities came and took the horses pulling the carriages" for use by the army. Thus, the group's departure was automatically stopped. Odian heard, the next day, from well-known community people and Hovhannes-Onnig Mazlounian, who was in permanent contact with government circles, that it was only Rev. Karekin's mother and sister that were to be left in Mounboudj, everyone else was to be taken to Der Zor.<sup>9</sup>

Odian was able, after receiving this news, to hide and later escape to Hama. At the same time, Rev. Karekin, his mother (Iskouhi) and sister (Vartouhi), Karnig Bodourian as well as Garabed Seropian (Bishop Moushegh's brother) who was part of the group and later exiled to the desert with his wife and daughter, took the road to Mounboudj a day later, on the morning of 13 December 1915.

This part of Bodourian's memoirs, which we have at our disposal and are publishing, ends when the group leaves Aleppo. We know, however, that Bodourian later reached the banks of the Euphrates in the Syrian desert, staying for some time in the town

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7 Voskedzin is translated from Armenian as "born of gold".

8 Vshdadzin is translated from Armenian as "born of grief".

9 Yervant Odian, *Անիծեալ տարիներ 1914-1919 (Անձնական յիշատակներ)* [Accursed Years 1914-1919 (Personal Memories)] worked on by Krikor Hagopian and edited by Kourken Kasbarian (Yerevan: Nairi, 2004), 214-217.

of Mounboudj near the river, then in Rakka, also on the river. After that, he continued his journey southwards to Basra, then made his way to Jordan, Jerusalem, and his final destination, Cairo.

Bodourian's journey of exile from Bardizag on 22 April 1915 until he reached Jerusalem in October 1916 lasted about twenty months. According to his testimony, he walked about 2,500 km during that time...

Unfortunately, the second notebook of his memoirs is unavailable to us, something that we will refer to later. In it, he perhaps describes his leaving Aleppo and his journey into the depths of the Syrian desert, to the places mentioned above.

From the explanatory map he prepared showing his journey into exile, we know that Bodourian, after staying in Rakka, went to Der Zor and, after going through the desert, reached Basra on the Persian Gulf. By routes unknown to us, he then appeared in Damascus, from where he went to Jerusalem. There, through arrangements made by his former principal of the Armash seminary, Archbishop Ormanian, he began to teach in the senior classes of the Jerusalem seminary. He then acted as secretary to the local body that aided the refugees after the British entered Jerusalem. The reports and accounts he so carefully prepared during the period he held this position were so appreciated by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) central executive that it invited him to Cairo to be the overseer of its newly established workshop in Port Said.<sup>10</sup> Implementation of this AGBU decision was, however, delayed several times for various reasons. Meanwhile, the executive of the Boghosian school in Cairo decided to offer him a position within the school if the AGBU withdrew the undertaking it had made to him.<sup>11</sup>

Reaching Cairo, he enjoyed the care and patronage of his sister's son, Bishop Torkom Koushagian, the diocesan leader of the Egyptian Armenian community, but his life in Cairo didn't last long. He contracted typhoid fever a short time after his arrival<sup>12</sup> and was transferred to the French hospital, where he died a few days later, at 5 am on the morning of 24 August/6 September, aged 39. His funeral took place the following day with "fitting grace," presided over by his Armash classmate and old friend Archpriest Yervant Perdahdjian, who had specially rushed to Cairo from Alexandria only a day or two before his death to see him. As Bishop Torkom Koushagian was unwell in Alexandria, he couldn't preside over the burial ceremony.<sup>13</sup>

Bodourian was buried in the Armenian cemetery in Cairo, near the grave of his prematurely deceased talented cousin, the poet Kegham Koushagian.

In any event, Bodourian wasn't able to rejoin his exiled family in Afion Karahisar, and

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10 «Ազգային քրոնիկ» [National chronicle], *Արև* [Sun] (Alexandria), 4th year, no. 50 (516), 6 September 1918, 2.

11 Vosgian, *The Egyptian Armenian Yearbook*, 37.

12 According to prelacy burial records, Bodourian died from brain fever (see the Cairo Prelacy Burial Records, p. 90, record No. 2630).

13 «Տխրունի» [Sadness] *Յուսուբեր* [Harbinger of Hope] newspaper (Cairo), 8 September 1918, no. 68, 3, «Ազգային քրոնիկ», [National Chronicle] *Արև* [Sun], 4th year, no. 50, (216), 6 September 1918, 2, Mkhalian, *Bardizag and Its People*, 594.

he finally closed his eyes without seeing his newest daughter, Vshdadzin Makrouhi. Thus, his wish remained unfulfilled: “I have many, many things to tell my children, many sad, eyewitness stories.”<sup>14</sup> Those stories weren’t told to his children, who perhaps didn’t hear of the fate that awaited their exiled father and the death he suffered after his tragic life.

## The Small Armenian Town of Bardizag

Bodourian’s birthplace, the small town (or large village) of Bardizag (Bahçecik), was located in the independent district of Nicomedia in Nicomedia province, on the (southern) side of Nicomedia Bay, opposite the town of Nicomedia (Izmit, now Kocaeli) itself. It was built at the foot of Mount St. Minas and was the administrative centre of the group of villages (nahie) of the same name, comprising five Armenian, one Greek, and two Muslim villages. One of the last was inhabited by Muslim Georgians (Gurdjis), the other by the Laz people.<sup>15</sup> Although the actual date of Bardizag’s foundation is unknown, it is thought that it already existed from the beginning of the 17th century.

Bardizag was an entirely Armenian town. The number of its inhabitants varies according to different sources, which sometimes disagree with each other. According to the diocesan authorities’ census carried out in 1902, it had 4,850 male and 4,760 female Armenian Apostolic Church adherents totaling 9,610 people (the historian Minas K. Kasabian [Minas Veradzin] has expressed doubts concerning the accuracy of these figures, writing “This accuracy of these figures is suspect.”<sup>16</sup>) There also were, according to the same census, 518 Armenian Protestants, of whom 19 were 7th Day Adventists. There were 182 Catholics, of whom 120 were actually Catholics, the remaining 62-72 probably being sympathizers. The town had approximately 100 households made up of 500 individuals who were Armenian Protestants in 1906.<sup>17</sup>

According to the census prepared between 1909 and 1910 by the historian Minas K. Kasabian, who studied the history of the Armenians living in the province of Nicomedia, Bardizag had 1,460 Armenian Apostolic households comprising 1,500 families, made up of 4,156 males and 4,100 females, totaling 8,256 individuals. There were 116 households containing 135 Protestant families comprising 274 males and 269 females, totaling 543 individuals and 30 7th Day Adventists or Pentecostal individuals. There were also 41

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14 Karnig G. Bodourian, “Memoirs of a Deportee 1915-1917,” The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute’s Archives, Section 8, Collection 306, File 188.

15 Hagop Der-Hagopian, *Պարտիզակը խառնուրդի, յանդուածաբար Մանուշակ եւ իր հէքեայթները*, [Dap-pled Bardizag with, in Addition, Manoushag and Its Tales] (Paris: Ter-Yakobian Publishing House, 1960), 32. Teotig states: “the following villages were part of the village group (nahie): the Armenian villges of Zakar, Manoushag, Deongel, Deongeli Sourpe, Ovadjek, Jamavair, Arslanbeg and Dagħ.” (Teotig, *Գողգոթա հայ եղեղնախառնութեան եւ իր հօտին աղէտայի 1915 տարիին* [The Golgotha of the Armenian Clergy and its Flock in Devastating 1915], edited by Ara Kalaydjian (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1985), 253-258, 554.

16 Minas K. Kasabian (Farhat) *Հայերը Նիկոմիդիոյ գաւառին մէջ* [The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia] (Bardizag-Constantinople: Azatamart, 1913), 242.

17 Rev. Garabed B. Adanalian, *Յուշարձան հայ աւետարանական եւ Աւետարանական եկեղեցւոյ* [Memorial to the Evangelical Movement and the Evangelical Church] (Fresno: Crown Printing Co., 1952), 240.

Catholic households comprising 41 families of approximately 120 males and 105 females, totaling 225 individuals.<sup>18</sup>

The census carried out by the diocesan authorities in 1913 is also available to us, according to which Bardizag had 1,378 Armenian Apostolic households comprising 3,559 males and 3,534 females, totaling 7,093 individuals.<sup>19</sup> This, naturally, did not include Armenian Catholics or Protestants, whose numbers were, nonetheless, significant. Minas K. Kasabian provides us, for 1913, with the figure of 1,460 households, a number very close to the one quoted above.<sup>20</sup>

Bardizag had, in 1915, according to this census, 1,617 households comprising 9,024 individuals,<sup>21</sup> while according to Hagop Der-Hagopian, the former mayor (*mudir*) of the town, it had, at that same period, 2,000 houses or 2,500 families, made up of 10,050 individuals, including those who were absent from the city.<sup>22</sup> Another source increased its population figure to 17,000.<sup>23</sup>

Bardizag had two Armenian Apostolic churches, St. James (*Sourp Hagop*) and Holy King (*Sourp Takavor*), as well as the pilgrimage site of St. Minas.<sup>24</sup> The local Armenian Catholics and Protestants also had their churches. The Armenian Catholics also had a nunnery.

The town has six named wards, as follows: Church (*Yegeghetsi*), Valley (*Tsor*), Sandy (*Avazoud*), New Upper Fields (*Nor Veri Galer*), Protestant (*Protestan*) and Catholic (*Gatolig*), each of which had its ward chairman (*mukhtar*).<sup>25</sup>

Bardizag's Nerses-Shoushanian co-educational community school had 330 male and 290 female pupils in the school year 1909-1910. The community kindergarten had 305 boys and girls, while the local Protestant kindergarten had 119 boys and 51 girls, with the Mekhitarian school having 110 boys and 60 girls pupils.<sup>26</sup> The American High School in Bardizag was renowned and, during that 1909-1910 school year, had 421 students, with the Favre Boys' Home having 120. These two schools had a significant number of local boys as students.<sup>27</sup>

Bardizag also had about 30 cultural-humanitarian and cooperative associations such as the "Torkomian Company," "Aramian Company," "Armenian Youth Company," "Steamship Company," "Carpenters' Company" etc. Several theatrical groups performed in the town, and lectures were also held there. The ARF (*Dashnaktsoutiun*) and the

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18 Kasabian, *The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia*, 243-244.

19 Armenian National Archives, fond 1388, list 1, dossier 111, p. 1.

20 Kasabian, *The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia*, 31.

21 Raymond H. Kevorkian, Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens Dans L'empire Ottoman a la Veille du Génocide* (Paris: ARHIS, 1992), 128.

22 Der-Hagopian, *Dappled Bardizag*, 32.

23 Sargis Tsots'ikian, *Արևմտահայ աշխարհ* [The Western Armenian World] (New York: A. Y. Leilekian, 1947), 478.

24 Der-Hagopian, *Dappled Bardizag*, 32.

25 Ibid.

26 Kasabian, *The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia*, 259-260, 262-263.

27 Ibid., 263.



Social Democrat (Hnchak) party branches opened their clubhouses in the city after the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution. Bardizag had two printing houses and more than 20 calotype and manuscript Armenian newspapers, such as *Bardizag*, *Geran*, *Paros*, *Meghou*, *Baïkar*, etc. The trades carried on in the town were sericulture, horseshoe manufacture, charcoal production, basket weaving and, tobacco production etc.

Bardizag, too, was subjected to the Turkish government's Armenian extermination policy. We will not go into details, because the book's pages often refer to it; let us just say that, after the armistice, people who survived returned and re-opened the church and schools and attempted to rebuild their ruined homes and re-establish the shattered economy. That effort, however, did not last very long as, very soon, the Turkish nationalist movement, growing more and more powerful, combined with the increasing ferocity of the Greco-Turkish war, meant that many people were massacred and others found refuge in Constantinople. From there, they went to different countries, resulting in the centuries-old town of Bardizag passing into history.

### **“Memoirs of a Deportee 1915-1917”**

This volume is only the first notebook of Bodourian's memoirs, the photocopy of which is in the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute's Archives, Section 8, Collection 306, File 188. The manuscript comprises 420 pages. It was brought to the museum “after a journey in foreign places” from the United States of America in February 2014, as is noted in the museum's register. Still, unfortunately there is nothing recorded or pointed out concerning the donor, so it is impossible to determine who they were. We are confident, however, that the work did have a second volume that, despite many searches, has been impossible to locate in Armenian book repositories or archival centres in Armenia or abroad.

The existence of a second volume is confirmed firstly because, immediately after his death, the Cairo newspaper *Arev*, thanks to permission granted by Bodourian's sister's son Bishop Torkom Koushagian, a significant excerpt from it was published over five editions, titled *The Widow*.<sup>28</sup> This chapter isn't in the volume at our disposal and concerns the days Bodourian spent in Mounboudj. Similarly, we understand from his preface that he reached the Euphrates during his exile, while the map that he prepared in the volume, showing his route into exile, tells us that he reached Baghdad on the Persian Gulf. This volume tells us that the last place he halted at was Aleppo, after which he appeared in Jerusalem, where he began to write his memoirs.

Bodourian in his preface, writes, “My journey of more than 2,500 km from Bithynia to Cilicia, from the Euphrates to Jordan taking twenty months does not compare to the painful journey of the cross...”<sup>29</sup>

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28 Karnig G. Bodourian, *Memoirs of a Deportee 1915-1917, Memoirs of Survivors of the Armenian Genocide*, 8, editor, author of the preface and references Mihran A. Minassian (Yerevan: AGMI Publishing, 2022), 434-461.

29 Ibid., 37.

He has deliberately explained that he had reached the Euphrates and Jordan, regions about which there is not a single mention in this published volume. In one place in his memoirs, he speaks about the Syrian town of Rakka with a citation concerning a statement by the town's lieutenant governor about bribery.

The manuscript of the work *A deportee's memoirs 1915-1917* was found immediately after his death with his sister's son Bishop Torkom Koushagian. We also know that when the bishop was elected as Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1931, he took his archive to Jerusalem with him. It was accidentally burnt much later due to a fire in the monastery, which was caused by negligence and indifferent attitudes.<sup>30</sup>

It might be more correct to suppose that volume was saved from probable destruction as Patriarch Koushagian would have handed it to the author's wife Denchali or one or other of his children who, until 1938, lived in Constantinople and/or to any of his relatives. We should also add, however, that the list of Bodourian family names listed in the memoir (in which the birth and death dates of family members are noted) was completed, after the author's death by an unknown person who added the death dates of other family members, the last being added for 1935, something that makes us think that the manuscript was being kept until that date by a family member or someone who knew them and who would have added the dates mentioned above.

Karnig Bodourian begins his memoirs with a short preface titled "Aim," in which he explains why he wrote his recollections down and confessed: "...I don't aim to write the history of the calamity that befell the Armenians who lived in Turkey. That is well beyond my capabilities and is not something that one person can write..."<sup>31</sup>

By the word of the author, his work is merely

...an undertaking to write a long, sorrow-filled letter which is my only legacy for my surviving children... I hope that one day my dear Sarko, whom I left when he was a sweet four-year-old, and my little Vshdadzin Makrig [Makrouhi] who, six months after her father's deportation, opened her little eyes near Afion Karahisar castle under an angry sun and in a tent, have the good fortune to decipher their father's handwriting. They should know that, during their childhood, the planet swallowed millions of human corpses on the war's front lines.<sup>32</sup>

This is the author's simple and modest aim. He never had the pretention that he would let his biography see the light of day. We cannot see, at least in the portion of his memoirs available to us, any allusion to such an aim.

30 Kegham Koushagian (*Տպարք մը՝ ոսկեհամուկ Պարոնիզակէն*), *Փունջ մը իր ստեղծագործութիւններէն. Վկայութիւններ իր մասին*, [(A Golden Splash of Bardizag) A Bouquet of His Poetry, Testimonies About Him] collected by Sarkis Sarouni (Los Angeles-Beirut: Shirak, 1969), 11-12, 107-108. Although it is said here that the "whole archive" belonging to Koushagian had been destroyed, we saw, above, that several files of his personal papers still exist. It would appear that the archive was only partially destroyed.

31 Bodourian, "Memoirs of a Deportee 1915-1917," 37.

32 Ibid., 37-38.



The first 150 pages of the work are dedicated to his birthplace, Bardizag, with written descriptions of it, its history, churches, associations, places of pilgrimage, and schools. The author's notes on the trades carried on in Bardizag are critical; with some of them being described in great detail as he was a person who knew and saw the work himself. His recording of local songs is similarly valuable. The first chapter ends with a brief history of the Bodourian family and the declaration of WWI.

The second part, which is somewhat more significant, is titled "Exile and deportation". This is the author's life story, beginning with his arrest in Bardizag and exile until his arrival in Aleppo. Among the exciting chapters in this part is, for example, the description of the arrival in Soultanie of thousands of people from Zeitoun who were in a wretched condition and the author's meetings and conversations with them.

His description of the dreadful road to exile, its dominant wretchedness, famine, violence, beatings, killings, and the deaths of thousands of people from hunger and epidemics, the inhumane attitude of the officials and the Turkish population generally, as well as profiteering and abductions, etc. are all of the interest.

If we accept that the Armenian Genocide was carried out in three stages, the first being in home settlements and their surrounding areas, the second, taking place on the road to exile as far as Aleppo and the Syrian deserts, and the third being the mass killings that took place in the Syrian deserts, then Bodourian is, without doubt, the person whose work best describes the second stage.

He lived, for a time during the deportations, with his classmates from the Armash seminary, namely Archpriest Karekin Khachadourian (Karekin Drabizoni, the future Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople) and the satirist Yervant Odian under the same roof. Because of fears for their safety, they presented themselves as being of one family. Thus, many points in Bodourian memoirs complement the information given by Odian in his precious work, proving its veracity.<sup>33</sup> The two of them independently describe various events, each using his style and seeing them from his perspective. Bodourian often writes about events that Odian may have ignored or forgotten. Therefore, the comparison of these two works provides exciting data.

When Bodourian arrived anywhere, he would not forget to refer, in the form of an introduction, to the history of the town and its topography, often devoting many pages to it, recalling statistics, dates, and details before writing about the days he spent there. It is possible that, when he wrote his memoirs in Jerusalem, he might have utilized the monastery's rich library for those pages. However, he only mentions one source, Father Ghevont Alishan's book *Sisouan*.<sup>34</sup>

The presented volume in the series of *Memoirs of Survivors of the Armenian Genocide* is a valuable addition to the already published memoirs of the eyewitnesses of the Armenian Genocide.

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<sup>33</sup> Odian, *Accursed years*, 174, 203-205, 213 etc.

<sup>34</sup> Ghevont Alishan, *Ujumuul* [Sisouan] (Venice: St. Lazaro, 1885).