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## Depopulation of Vanand (Kars) Province (1920-1921)

Vazgen Hakhoyan

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6355-7290>

PhD student at the “Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute” Foundation  
[van.karno@gmail.com](mailto:van.karno@gmail.com)

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*Vanand Province was one of the vital provinces of the newly independent Republic of Armenia. Kemal invasion in 1920 was tragic for the Armenian population. In the newly resettled state, the Turkish troops massacred tens of thousands of peaceful Armenian residents, including Western Armenians who survived the Genocide. A part of the Armenian population of the province was captured and annihilated. As a result of the anti-Armenian policy conducted by the Kemalians, under the threat of persecution and physical destruction by the Turkish army, the remnants of the Armenian population were forced to leave their native places, some settling in other regions of Armenia, and some in foreign countries. In difficult socio-economic conditions, the population of Kars province was deported again, facing new disasters, being massacred in Shirak province, and dying of starvation far from their homeland. The massacres of the population of Vanand province, and the repression and deportation of the Armenian population were the consistent continuation of the Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Turkish authorities.*

### Վանանդի (Կարսի) նահանգի հայաթափումը 1920-1921 թթ.

Վազգեն Հախոյան

«Հայոց ցեղասպանության թանգարան-ինստիտուտ» հիմնադրամի ասպիրանտ

**Հիմնաբառեր՝** Կարս, Վանանդի նահանգ, Շիրակի նահանգ, Ալեքսանդրապոլի գավառ, Ղարաքիլիսայի գավառ, վերաբնակեցում, կոտորածներ, գաղթականներ, որբեր, քեմալականներ:

*Վանանդի նահանգը Հայաստանի նորանկախ հանրապետության կենսական նշանակության նահանգներից մեկն էր: 1920 թ. քեմալական արշավանքը ողբերգական եղավ*

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նահանգի հայ բնակչության համար: Նոր վերաբնակեցված նահանգում թուրքական զորքերի կողմից կոտորվեցին տասնյակ հազարավոր խաղաղ հայ բնակիչներ, այդ թվում՝ ցեղասպանությունից փրկված արևմտահայեր: Նահանգի հայ բնակչության մի մասը գերեվարվեց և ոչնչացվեց՝ Օսմանյան կայսրության խորքերում: Քեմալականների վարած հայաջինջ քաղաքականության հետևանքով, թուրքական բանակի հալածանքների ու ֆիզիկական ոչնչացման սպառնալիքի տակ հայության բեկորները հարկադրված լքեցին իրենց հայրենի բնակավայրերը, մի մասը հաստատվելով Հայաստանի այլ շրջաններում, մի մասը օտարության մեջ: Սոցիալ-տնտեսական դժվարին պայմաններում՝ Կարսի նահանգում հաստատված բնակչությունը նորից տարագրվեց՝ հանդիպելով նոր աղետների, կոտորվելով Շիրակի նահանգում, սովամահ լինելով հայրենի եզերքից հեռու: Վանանդի նահանգի կոտորածները հայ բնակչության բռնաճնշումներն ու տեղահանությունը Հայոց ցեղասպանության հետևողական շարունակությունն էր, որ իրականացվում էր թուրքական իշխանությունների կողմից:

### Депопуляция Ванандской (Карсской) области 1920-1921 гг.

Вазген Ахоян

Аспирант фонда «Музей-институт Геноцида армян»

**Ключевые слова:** Карс, Ванандская область, Ширакская область, Александропольская провинция, Каракилисская провинция, переселение, резня, переселенцы, сироты, кемалисты.

*Ванандская область была одной из жизненно важных провинций новой независимой Республики Армения. Кемалистское вторжение 1920 года стало трагическим для армянского населения провинции. Во вновь заселенной провинции турецкие войска вырезали десятки тысяч мирных армян, в том числе западных армян, переживших геноцид. Часть армянского населения провинции была захвачена и уничтожена в глубинных районах Османской империи. В результате антиармянской политики, проводимой кемалистами, под угрозой преследований и физического уничтожения со стороны турецкой армии, остатки армянского населения были вынуждены покинуть родные места, часть осела в других районах Армении, а некоторые в зарубежных странах. В тяжелых социально-экономических условиях население Карсской области вновь было депортировано, что привело к новым бедствиям, было вырезано в Ширакской области, умирало от голода вдали от родины. Погромы в провинции Вананд, репрессии и депортация армянского населения были последовательным продолжением Геноцида армян, осуществленного турецкими властями.*

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**Intro.** The Turkish-Armenian war in 1920 (Kemal invasion) was disastrous for the Republic of Armenia. In 1918, after the first Turkish-Armenian war (Ottoman invasion), the declared Armenian statehood faced real danger from Turkish side. The Armenian army came out against the Turkish army, which significantly outnumbered it. It started a defensive battle, surrendered in some cases and

retreated, as a result of which the Turkish army captured the province of Vanand (Kars), then a large part of the province of Shirak (Alexandrapol province, a part of the Gharakilisa province). Mass massacres, looting and repression of the Armenian civilian population took place in the occupied territories. Part of the population fled and finally migrated.

In the framework of this article, an attempt is made, first of all, to present the steps taken by the authorities of the Republic of Armenia in the direction of the return of the Armenian population to the Vanand province, and then a reference is made to the depopulation of Vanand province in 1920 as a result of the Kemal invasion. The research was carried out through the study and comparison of the materials available in the press of the time, the National Archives of Armenia, the handwritten memories, available in the department of the funds of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, ethnographic (Folklore studies) fieldwork\*, as well as professional literature. The scientific novelty of the article is that, in particular, the depopulation of Kars province, the new Turkish massacres and the persecution of the Armenian population have not yet become the subject of multi-faceted scientific studies in Armenian historiography. This article fills that gap to some extent. The relevance of the study at the current stage of the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, the resolution of the Armenian Question is conditioned with the fact that it makes a focus on the continuity of the Armenian Genocide in Eastern Armenia.

**The Return of Armenians to Kars in 1919-1920.** In 1919 after the Kars province became a part of Armenia in May, the return of Armenians to Kars began. By June 3, according to some data, around 300,000 migrants had returned to Kars province<sup>1</sup> (Petrosyan, 2004, 34). Displaced and dispossessed residents began to return to their homes. A part of Western Armenian immigrants settled in Kars, who after the Armenian Genocide in 1915, had initially settled there as well, and as a result of the 1918 Turkish invasion and massacres, were forced to leave to other regions of Eastern Armenia. During that time, Turkish troops massacred more than 10000 Armenians (Haykakan harts' hanragitaran, 1996, 180, 181).

In 1918, after the departure of the Armenians from the Kars province, the Turks took over the settlements of the Armenians and burned the written registers containing data on the population. In this way, they caused great difficulties in settling the emigrants in their former places. Not all of the displaced people of Kars province returned there. A part of them remained in the North Caucasus. Thousands of emigrants from Kars in Armenia died from hunger and epidemics (period of November 1918 - spring of 1919) (Haykakan harts' hanragitaran, 1996, 180; National Archives of Armenia (hereafter: NAA) fund 201, inv. 2, file 636, sheets 5, 6).

In 1919, at the beginning of November, 1000 people from the refugee population of Basen and Alashkert regions of Western Armenia and 1000 from the Yazidis of Nakhichevan region were in the barracks near the Kars station. The Western Armenians were placed in the emptied Armenian and Greek villages of the Kars province, and the Yezidis - in Nakhichevan<sup>2</sup> (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, 1<sup>st</sup> part, sheet 57). About 1500 Yezidis from the Van region were also sent from Tiflis to Kars (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 689, sheet 19).

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\* Materials collected from descendants of eyewitness-survivors are in the personal archive of the author of this article.

<sup>1</sup> The mentioned number is clearly exaggerated and needs further clarification. We assume that 300.000 was listed instead of 30.000 due to a typographical error.

<sup>2</sup> The Nakhichevan settlement of Kars province is in focus here.

The resettlement of people in Sarighamish was more intensive. This was the region mostly affected by the Turkish invasion in 1918. When Turkish troops captured Sarighamish, the local Muslim population of Ardahan and Olti districts of Kars province, under the command of Turkish officers, blocked the way for the retreat of the Armenian population and massacred them. Thousand women and children were saved, and after being subjected to repression and rape, they let them go from Ardahan to the neighboring province of Akhalkalak (Nersisyan, Sahakyan, 1991, 643).

In 1919 Armenians, Yezidis, Kurds, Turkmens, Lezgis lived in Sarighamish. There were also emigrants from Western Armenia (17500), among them 10000 from Basen, 1500 from Alashkert, 2000 from Derzene, 1000 from Karin, 1000 from Mush and 2000 from Khnus, Manazkert, Bulankh, Akhlat and other regions. In addition to those mentioned, about 3000 Muslim immigrants settled in Sarighamish, most of who were displaced from various regions of Kars province (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 689, sheet 19). From November 20 of 1919 to the end of December, about 5000 emigrants came to Kars from Tiflis, Shulaver, Alexandropol and various places (NAA 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheet 60).

**According to some sources on the movement of the Armenian population of Kars province, 50 000 Armenians lived there in 1919 (Kars province, map, 2015).** The return of Armenians to Kars province continued in 1920, in winter, in difficult socio-economic conditions, when epidemics and famine were raging in the country. In 1920 according to the data of January 24, the mortality of children due to hunger in the schools of Kars reached enormous proportions (NAA 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheet 35). In January of 1920, with the support of the RA Ministry of Custody and Labor, as well as the American representation, the return of the Armenian emigrant population from Alexandropol to Kars continued: on January 25, 350-400 people, and on January 31 - 500 people. It is clear from the study of the documents of the Kars office of the above-mentioned ministry that there were many problems in settling the emigrants in their native places, because the process was not carried out systematically in the cold winter, snowy Kars. The emigrants demanded that they be settled not in any settlements, but in their native villages. The emigrants sent by Sepuh to Sarighamish preferred to return to their former place of residence in Nakhichevan, Kars. Taking into consideration the cold weather, heavy snowfall and the need to transport the emigrants by sledges, the Sarighamish office asked the Yerevan leadership to stop their transportation from the territories of Armenia for a certain period, stating that they can accept only those sent from Tiflis and Baku (NAA 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheets 37, 38, 43, 44).

The main headquarters of the emigrants was the Selim station, where the poor emigrants from the Western Armenians, the Basen people, were also waiting for resettlement (Ibid, sheets 190, 191). The transportation of the 5000 migrants located in the Alexandropol shooting range to the villages of Kars, Selim station, Sokhanlu region was carried out by trains in groups of 500 people (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 801, part 1, sheet 5).

In January of 1920, in the area of Alexandropol shooting range, the emigrants were in a condition of typhoid and cholera epidemics that were worsening day by day (Ibid, sheet 20). Diseases claimed lives in Kars as well. In Kers village of Kaghzvan, 5-10 people died every day (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 800, sheet 28).

As of January 21, 1920, in Kars and nearby villages, there were no homeless orphans, they were placed in American and state orphanages, there were also orphans living with relatives: 1050 people in the Nakhichevan settlement of Kars and in Kaghzvan (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheet 58). It should be noted that after Alexandropol and Yerevan, the other major destination of the Western

Armenian emigration and orphans was Kars. In this region, 57000 Western Armenian immigrants and 1476 orphans were placed under state guardianship (Harut'yunyan, 2012, 24). As of April 6, 1920, 310833 Western Armenians who survived the Genocide found refuge in the Republic of Armenia (Harut'yunyan, 2012, 24). The emigrants in Alexandropol also resettled in the eponymous villages of the province. On January 19, 1920 300 residents of Khnus were moved from the area of the Alexandropol shooting range to Bash Shoragyal in Shirak (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 801, part 1, sheets 33, 54). From Sepuh's letters to the Minister of Custody of the RA, it becomes clear that there were disagreements between the representatives of the American and local organizations regarding the process of emigration. According to his report, the Americans did not allow the emigrants from the Nakhijevan settlement of Kaghzvan region to disembark in Kars, but at the Selim station, from where the road to Nakhijevan was quite long and difficult. Here is the situation in the Alexandropol shooting range: "The general condition is so unbearable and hellish that the emigration is ready to leave everything and leave the death-horrifying "cemetery" where thousands suffer and are martyred alive" (Ibid, sheet 54). According to the data of the Gharakilisa emigration office, the transfer of 5000 more migrants to the villages of the Kars province was to be carried out from Gharakilisa, while they telegraphed from Kars that there are no free places and they can hardly accommodate the 3000 migrants going from Dilijan (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 801, part 2, sheet 168). Nevertheless, they sent 17 wagons full of emigrants from Tiflis and Gharakilisa to Kars and Sarighamish (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 801, part 2, sheet 171).

Along with the problems of resettlement, there was also the problem of providing food to the emigrants. Among the reasons, it was mentioned that the Armenian and Yezidi immigrants who had just arrived from Tiflis and settled in the Greek villages of Alisof, Yeolkechmez and Chatakh were starving (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheet 52). According to their social composition, 95 percent of the local and other migrant population settled in Kars and regions were peasants who lived in poor conditions. In the summer, they survived mainly on vegetables (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 1, sheets 57, 58, 59). In May of 1920, they sent a telegram from Kars to Yerevan, to the Ministry of Custody, asking to temporarily stop the transfer of migrants to Kars, noting that poor villagers of the region are starving, and newly arrived migrants do not receive nutrition. The situation was also extremely difficult in Sarighamish region (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheets 209, 211, 238). The entire population here were emigrants, all men volunteered at the front (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheet 273).

From the telegram sent to Yerevan in June of 1920, we know that dozens of people die every day in the Kars province from eating dried greenery, asking to provide flour to the villagers. The cases of starvation are also increasing in the city of Kars. The villagers take the unripe harvest from fields (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheets 293, 295, 296). Under these conditions, the flow of migrants to Kars continues, mostly from Alexandropol, and 2500 new arrivals are in poverty, succumbing to starvation. It is obvious that the flour released by the American Immigration Committee is not enough (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheet 323). From Alexandropol, New Bayazet, Tiflis and Batumi, people from Garahisar, Bayburd, Basen, Mush, Karin, Derzene and other places moved to Kars province. On July 30 1920, 2000 emigrants from Batumi were starved to death at the Selim station, not having a settlement order (NAA fund 205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheets 328, 329, 341). During August, 4718 migrants came to Kars, of which only 242 stayed in the city, the rest moved to the regions (NAA fund

205, inv. 1, file 799, part 2, sheet 402). It should be noted that on May 29 of 1920, the territory of the Republic of Armenia was subjected to a new administrative division into Vanand, Shirak, Ararat and Syunik provinces (Yaraj, 18.6.1920, 2; National Atlas of Armenia, B, 2008, 106, 107). Thus, having more or less overcome the existing difficulties, the native land made an attempt to develop somehow, but all this was disrupted due to the Kemal invasion. All started again: the massacre, migration and deportation. For the Western Armenians settled here after the Great Genocide, this was a double genocide.

**The Situation in Vanand (Kars) Province.** On September 28, 1920, Turkish troops invaded the territory of the Republic of Armenia and the first blow was inflicted on the province of Kars. In the call addressed to the Armenian people, both the RA government and the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin reminded about the heroic battles of May, 1918. Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg E Surenyants appeals to Armenians to show the courage of Zeiva<sup>1</sup> and Sardarapat. The Patriarch notes that the peaceful life of the motherland has been disrupted again, that the Armenian people have been displaced. The enemy wants to deprive Armenians of their home, motherland and freedom, so they must fight bravely and die heroically (NAA fund 200, inv. 1, file 602, sheet 80; Georg tsarray K'ristosi yev anhasaneli kamok'n Astutsoy yepiskoposapet yev kat'voghikos Amenayn Hayots' tsayragoyn patriark' hamazgakan nakhametsar at'vorroy Araratean Arrak'elakan mayr yekeghets'woy Srboy Kat'ughike Ejmiatsni, 04.10. 1920, 177-180).

Due to military operations, population movements were taking place from one settlement to another in Vanand province. Most of the population of the province was concentrated in the city of Kars. Before the capture of Kars by the Turkish army on October 30, residents who fled from the villages of the Kars province, Sarighamish, Kaghzvan, Olti, and Ardahan, took refuge in the city (Alek'sandryan, 1986, 22-23).

According to some data, during the Turkish-Armenian war, the number of Armenian military units operating on the Kars front was 12000, and the number of reserve soldiers was 4,000 (National Atlas of Armenia, B, 2008, 109). The Armenian army did not resist the Turkish army approaching the city of Kars, most of them fled, and this action decided the fate of the city. Along with the army, the population also fled in panic. Until late in the evening, just one Turkish battalion with Kurdish horsemen occupied the city. After the fall of the city, a significant part of the Armenian civilian population was brutally massacred and looted. Many soldiers were captured, including three generals and one minister. Many of the citizens were shot in the valley. Children lost their mothers. Karsaget, the gorge on the way to Melik-kyu station, houses of the city, basements, warehouses and pantries were full of thousands of corpses of women, children and young people (Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Museum Funds (Henceforth: AGMI), section 8, funds 173, 275; Yesayean, Komunist, 4.2.1921, 2; Artashes Babalyan, Hayrenik' amsagir, 10.1923, 62, 63; Nersisyan, 2005, 132, 145, 146, 147, 148; Yovsep'ean, 1982, 35, 36, 40) After the Kars massacre, main arrests of Armenian men began. Armenians were subjected to repression. The enemy did not spare even the 80-85 year olds. According to some sources, around 30000 men between the ages of 15 and 60 who survived the massacre from Kars and its surroundings were sent to Sarighamish. They were taken to hard labor, few of them survived. Armenian women were raped (Nersisyan, 2005, 132, 148, 149). The situation in the city of Kars was terrible. On November 11, Ernest

<sup>1</sup> At present, Aratashen village of Armavir province.

Yaro, the general director of the Caucasian branch of the American Aid Committee in the Middle East (later Amercom), who was a missionary in Van before that (Nersesyan, 2018, 515), telegraphed Constantinople, reporting that eight Americans are protecting 40000 orphans and reservists in Kars, that 25000 refugees have reached Alexandropol in terror (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 6-19.12.1920, 3). After the migration, the settlements of Armenians were populated quickly. Many Turkish families move from Chldr, Zarishat, Big Gyola settle in the Armenian villages near Kars. The local Turks looted the property of the Armenian population of Kars and Alexandropol and moved it to Aghbaba, Chldr, Gyola and Zaryshat (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 30.12.1920-12.1.1921, 3).

As a result of the Turkish attacks, the reconstructed and resettled Armenian villages of the province were being emptied. We read in the diary of the "Unknown writer" who witnessed the events: "November 2, Pirvali. Yesterday in the evening we reached Pirvali, which is located on the bank of Gharsacha. This village was destroyed in 1918 by the Turks. However, within two years, the Armenians rebuilt it. Only a quarter of the village is inhabited, and it was destroyed this time. The population fled a long time ago: only stray cats live in houses, curled up on cold tandoor (large urn-shaped oven). In general, we did not meet any Armenian village whose people still remained. Although we thought that this year our people might remain hungry again, but it appears that every house had its supply for the year. Barley and wheat had been stored by people in the villages. The people had not even taken the things they needed. Poor Armenian people, until when will you be trampled..." (Unknown writer, edited by Harutyunyan, 1993). The main destinations of the population of Kars province were Akhalkalak, Alexandropol, Gharakilisa, Batumi, Tiflis, etc. («Karsi marz» k'artez, 2015).

The Ardahan-Artanuj road was filled with Armenian women and children who were fleeing from Kars and Alexandropol to Batumi, in order to avoid the attack of the Turkish army. Starving refugees also moved to Tiflis. Hoping to find secure life, they also settled in Yerevan and the surrounding villages. There were many Western Armenian emigrants among them (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 3-16.12.1920, 2; Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 6-19.12.1920, 3; Yaraj, 13.11.1920, 2). The flight, and then the migration caused by repression, continued even after the end of the war. During those winter days, people in Ardahan lived cut off from the outside world. It was relatively quiet here (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 30.12.1920-12.1.1921, 3).

The roadway was open only over Akhalkalak, where it took 6-7 days to reach, refugees from Kars were often seen there, and who told that Turkish soldiers organized a massacre of the Armenian population during the first days of occupying Kars, slaughtering most of the population (Ibid, 3). According to some sources, 12000 Armenians, mostly men, were killed by the Kemal army (Haykakan harts' hanragitaran 1996, 181). The violence against the Armenian population by Turks and Kurds continued until the complete depopulation of Kars province. According to some sources, in Kars province in 1921 3000 Armenians remained («Karsi marz» k'artez, 2015). In the city of Kars (from winter to spring of 1920-1921), the Turks carried out the mass deportation of the last remnants of the Armenian population. In the cold winter, they were sent to Alexandropol by trains, harassing and robbing them (Hakhoyan, 2022, 120). The Turkish command continued the previous policy of physical destruction of Armenians. About 500 Armenian refugees from Kaghzvan were deported to Erzurum. The Armenians of Sarighamish also suffered the same fate (Nersisyan, 2005, 165).

Foreigners were also not left out of the Turkish massacres. In 1921 after the retreat of the Georgian army from the Ardahan region on February 23, a number of villages, including five Greek ones, were

captured by the Turks. They killed 120 families of the remaining Greek population in Beberек and Toroskhev (Nersisyan, 2005, 164).

Thus, as a result of military operations, persecutions and massacres carried out by the Turkish army, the Armenian civilian population was forced to leave their native place, to migrate, settling in neighboring Georgia, more or less safe places in Armenia and Russia. Meanwhile, for example, the population of Kars province did not find safe life in Shirak province.

**The Situation in Shirak Province.** Coming to the province of Shirak, the Turkish army continued to spread destruction and massacre. The Armenian army tried to resist, but retreated in some places. After the fall of Kars, the next tragedy was the fall of Alexandropol on November 7. In many villages of Alexandropol and Gharakilisa provinces, the Turks carried out massive massacres of the civilian population, bloody slaughter. The inhabitants of the villages - men, women, children and old people - were gathered in churches and cattle yards, shot at from windows and doors, then filled with incendiary materials and burned. Those who survived were massacred in ravines, drowned in wells (NAA fund 114, inv. 1, file 134; fund 114, inv. 2, file 27, sheet 85; fund 131, inv. 1, file 18, sheet 2; AGMI, fund, section 1, fund v. 1375; section 8, fund v. 38; fund v. 42; fund v. 103).

The largest region of Western Armenian emigration and placement of orphans was Alexandropol, with 94856 emigrants. 10 of the 90 orphanages handed over to Amercom in May of 1919 were also located here (Harutyunyan, 2012, 24; Nersesyan, 2018, 60). After the fall of Kars and the capture of Alexandropol by the Kemalians, a part of the population of Kars who took refuge here fled with the locals. About 60000 migrants flee from Kars and Alexandropol regions to Gharakilisa province, reach Gharakilisa, Dilijan, and Sanahin (the latter was in the neutral zone of Lori). About 7000 emigrants arrived here from Aleksandropol. The Georgian government does not allow them to come, taking advantage of the opportunity, considering this place as a border (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 3-16.12.1920, 2; Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 6-19.12.1920, 3). Refugees do not find safe life in Gharakilisa province either. The Turkish troops reached them here as well. The Turkish vanguard army passes from Jajur to the Pambak area in the direction of Alexandropol-Gharakilisa, massacres the Armenian population, destroys and loots the settlements (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 10-23.1.1921, 3). The Turks begin to devastate Pambak. 7500 refugees from the regions of Kars and Alexandropol, who sought refuge here in the hope of salvation, were massacred along with local residents in the western part of Pambak (NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, file 27, sheet 86). In 1918 the Turks carried out a similar massacre in the eastern part of Pambak. Most of the Armenians from Kars and Kaghzvan districts of Kars province had managed to escape to Kars, and after the surrender of Kars, in panic - to Alexandropol, and then to Great Gharakilisa. As a result of the advance of the Turkish army, most of these people were massacred on the road and in the village of Mets Gharakilisa (Nersisyan, Sahakyan, 1991, 643).

On November 18, 1920 the neutral zone from Nalband station to Hamzachiman<sup>1</sup> was also established in the framework of the signed cease-fire. Refugees from Kars stayed in Gharakilisa and in the neutral zone. The inhabitants of the surrounding villages of Alexandropol were settled in the city of Alexandropol (Sardaryan, 1990, 4; Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 11-24.11.1920, 2). There was no mass massacre here, compared to the villages, the Turks showed restraint, but the people were oppressed and in despair (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 10-23.1.1921, 3). Later, corpses are also found in different neighborhoods, cellars

<sup>1</sup> Currently, the village of Margahovit in Lori province.



and wells of Alexandropol. The victims were killed after many tortures, they did not have eyes, ears, lips, nose, etc. (NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, file 33, sheet 49). People were starving to death in the streets of Alexandropol, from where bodies of people who died of starvation were collected every day in carts, 15-30 per day (Zh'oghovrdi dzajn, 10-23.1.1921, 3). Among them there were also many refugees from Kars. A carriage was passing through the streets of the city shouting, "Dead...Dead!" The bodies of children were scattered in the streets (Hripsime Harutyunyan, 15:11:2009)<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the refugees of Vanand province did not have security in Shirak province and in some places, due to the advance of the Turkish army, they were slaughtered together with the local population.

**Armenian Refugees in Russia.** The starving Armenian refugees who survived the Kars and Alexandropol massacres, deprived of everything, also settled in the regions of North Caucasus, which were populated by Armenians: Vladikavkaz, Pyatigorsk, Kizlyar, Mozdok, Armavir, Yekaterinodar (Krasnodar), Novorossiysk, etc. (NAA, fund 57, inv. 3, file 312, sheet 12). There were also emigrants from Karabakh and Nakhichevan (Ibid, sheet 12). From the statements and reports (1921-1922) sent to Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg E by the leader of the Diocese of North Caucasus and Astrakhan, Archimandrite Ruben, we learn about the fate of hundreds of hungry, homeless Armenian orphans there (Ibid, sheet 4). He says that the situation is very difficult, every day groups of women and children ask him for help. Women leave their children and go away. The support of the immigration committees formed in Armavir and elsewhere is not enough (Ibid, sheet 10). Orphans were dying of hunger in the streets of Armavir. Archimandrite witnesses the unburied corpses of those who died of hunger in Krasnodar (NAA, fund 57, inv. 3, file 312, sheet 11). He writes that one of the state orphanages in Armavir is "in the most deplorable condition, hungry, naked, sick, only living corpses are collected" (Ibid, sheet 11). Archimandrite Ruben spares no effort to save the Armenian orphans, requesting intercession from the Catholicos of All Armenians, addressing the president of the Yerevan branch of Amercom, meeting Lange, the representative of Amercom in Novorossiysk, appealing to the Russian president of the same structure, William Haskell, hoping for help (NAA, fund 57, inv. 3, file 312, sheets 3, 4, 11, 12).

So if there are certain data about the return of emigrants to Kars and the number for the period of May 1919 to 1920 after the Turkish attack, then we cannot say the same about the number of displaced Armenians after the war. The reason is the scarcity of sources, so it is not possible to fully confirm the picture with numbers. In the "Dictionary of Place Names of Armenia and Adjacent Regions", which presents information about the settlements of Vanand province, it is mainly said about the population that in 1920 some of them died, migrated or were displaced and settled in Soviet Armenia. In many cases, data about the population has not been preserved (Hakobyan, Melik'-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, 1986-2001). With the agreements of Moscow and Kars, which were fatal for the Armenian people, Armenia lost its territorial integrity, and Armenians never returned to Kars.

**Conclusion.** Thus, as a result of the genocidal policy conducted by the Turkish military-political leadership, Vanand province was finally depopulated. This was another manifestation of the continuation of not only genocidal criminal policy, but also depatriation of Armenians by the Turkish government.

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<sup>1</sup> Storyteller-memoirist: Hripsime Harutyunyan (b. 1926, Aghbulagh), eyewitness: daughter of Zardar H. Harutyunyan (b. 1880, Bvik, Kars province).

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B) Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Museum Funds (Henceforth: AGMI)

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