

after WWI? In order to answer to that and many other questions Ihrig rightly proposes to analyze the other side of the coin – the image of National Socialism in 1930s Turkey. He conditions that option with the claim that it would not be possible to have a complete answer to that until “the Turkish Foreign Office archives are opened” (p. 221).

BOOK REVIEWS

Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)* (New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers, 2010), xiv, 238 pages.

Reviewed by Robert Tatoyan, Senior Research Fellow, the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

Questions about the number of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire on the threshold of the Armenian Genocide and the death toll during the Armenian Genocide have special place among falsifications by those scholars, who deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide. Upon visiting the webpage of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one can come across the title “The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: The issue and the facts”, where the following information is provided under Fact 1: “Demographic studies prove that prior to World War I, fewer than 1.5 million Armenians lived in the entire Ottoman Empire. Thus, allegations that more than 1.5 million Armenians from eastern Anatolia died must be false.”¹ There are a number of scholars, like Esat Uras², Stanford Shaw³, Kamuran Gürün⁴, Kemal Karpat⁵, Justin McCarthy⁶ and others engaged in putting this “fact” on scientific grounds. Unconditional and uncritical acceptance of statistical data, provided by the Ottoman government regarding the number of the Ottoman Armenians living in the empire during 1878-1914 and the denial of statistics originating from mainly Armenian sources (according to Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, about two million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in 1914)⁷, which is discrepant to the

1. “The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: The issue and the facts” (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-armenian-allegation-of-genocide-the-issue-and-the-facts.en.mfa>, taken on 07.10.2015).

2. Esat Uras, *Tarihçe Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi* (Ankara: Yeni Matbaa, 1950), English translation: Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (Ankara: Documentary Publications, 1988).

3. Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol.2 (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Stanford J. Shaw, “The Ottoman Census System and Population, 1831-1914”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)*, № 9 (1978): 325-338.

4. Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (Nicosia and London: K. Rustem and Brother and Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985).

5. Karpat Kemal H., *Ottoman population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

6. McCarthy Justin, *Muslims and Minorities. The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983).

7. According to memorandum presented by the Armenian delegation at Paris Peace Conference in 1919, 2.026.000 Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire by 1914, out of which 1.403.000 inhabited in the territory of Ottoman Armenia (including Trebizond province and Cilicia), 440.000 in other regions of Asian Turkey, and 183.000 in Constantinople and European Turkey: See: *The Armenian Question*

Ottoman data, is peculiar to the scholars showing denialist approach.

On the other hand, more recently a number of Turkish scholars are showing more distinctive, impartial and balanced approach to the issue. One of such scholars is Fuat Dündar with his book “*Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)*”, published in 2010 in English⁸.

In the introduction (pp. 1-10) the author states that the main argument of the study is to substantiate the important role statistics played in the emergence of the Armenian question both on the international landscape and in its “definitive solution.”

In the first chapter titled “*Diplomacy and Statistics, Emergence of the Armenian Question (1878-1913)*” (pp. 11-65) the author presents the role of statistics of the Western Armenian population in the framework of diplomacy around the Armenian Question for the above-given period. In this regard the author addresses the issue of credibility of the statistical data provided to the Powers by two bodies, the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, in frames of the Armenian Question. As Dündar fairly mentions, “contrary to what scholars such as Kemal Karpat and Justin McCarthy have argued, Ottoman statistical data concerning the Armenian population was not entirely reliable.” The author argues that the Ottoman authorities conducted census to determine not only the number of recruits and/or the tax sum, as stated by K. Karpat and J. McCarthy, but also for determining the share of Muslim and non-Muslim representatives in local self-governing units. For this reason the Ottoman authorities sought to have control over statistical data in places, where non-Muslim population (Armenians) formed a majority, though they were considered a minority in the empire. The author attaches importance to the fact that, unlike persistence of K. Karpat and J. McCarthy, the Ottoman authorities counted and recorded Muslims, i. e. Turks, Kurds, Circassians and others, according to their ethnic origin features as well. The above-mentioned allows the researcher to conclude that the Ottoman authorities meddled in both data collection and classification system, imposing their political interests (p. 3).

At the same time Dündar makes an attempt to question the credibility of statistical data provided by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople stating that “the data provided by the Armenians was also at times inconsistent” (p. 2) and “exaggerated.” Precisely, the author finds the statistics by Grigor Zohrap (published in 1913) and data provided by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople to be contradictory⁹. Dündar mentions that though Zohrap insisted the data was provided by the Armenian Patriarchate, it is exaggerated. The author substantiates his opinion by failing to find any other document proving the trustworthiness of Zohrap’s data (p. 3). As a matter of fact, Grigor Zohrap only featured the table

with statistical data collected in 1912 by the Security Committee authorized by the Armenian Patriarchate, in his 1913 book. In early 1913 Ottoman Armenians presented this table attached to the Armenian reform proposal to ambassadors of the European powers as at that time the Armenian Question returned to the active agenda of international diplomacy.

Generally, Dündar has a vague idea about censuses conducted during 1878-1914 by the Armenian Patriarchate and statistical data collected as a result. He falsely considers that data appearing in Zohrap’s book and the statistics provided by the Armenian researcher Raymond Kevorkian in 1992 are both the two variants of the statistical data collected by the Armenian Patriarchate in 1912, and finds this to be contradictory (p. 145). While statistics provided by Raymond Kevorkian is based on the summarized tables of census conducted during 1913-1914 by the Armenian Patriarchate¹⁰.

The Armenian deportations and massacres are presented in the second chapter “*War, Massacre and Statistics (1914-1918); Final Outcome of the Armenian Question*” (pp. 67-140). Dündar does not deny the events (1911-1917) that took place were systematic, but he views them as “demographic operations”, which was part of the Young Turks’ ethnic engineering. According to the researcher, the goal of the CUP party was to decrease the number of the Armenian population in the entire population of the empire and not the extermination of the Ottoman Armenians as an entity. The author evades using the term “genocide”¹¹ and calls what was happened “the massacres of 1915-1917.”

Dündar thinks that the goal of the Young Turks was to completely displace the Armenian population from the territory (six Vilayets of Western Armenia and Vilayet of Trebizond) under the concern of 1914 Russo-Turkish reform agreement, to decrease the Armenian population in Anatolian (the Asia Minor) provinces by 5%, in Aleppo Vilayet by 2% and down to 10% in other territories (p. 2). According to the author, “the CUP policy of the definitive solution of the Armenian Question evolved through three phases: 1) destruction of both “causes” and the “spirit” of rebellion of the Armenian revolutionaries; 2) Elimination of Armenian people’s all possible means of representation both personal and institutional, and finally, 3) deportation of the Armenian population to semi-desert area and there, reducing it to a level where not be a threat from a statistical point of view” (p. 68).

The fact that the organizers of the Armenian Genocide had to be guided by another, i. e. more serious considerations, rather than by the decrease of the number of the Armenian population down to 10%, 5% or even to 2.5%, can be obviously seen from the Ottoman statistical data of 1914. According to that official data, which were to form that basis of statistic estimates of the Young Turks, the number of the Armenian population in some Asia

10. Our research, the results of which can be found in the work “*The Question of Western Armenian Population Number in 1878-1914*” (Yerevan: AGMI, 2015) showed that five censuses were conducted and records made in the entire territory of Western Armenia by Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople during 1878-1914: 1-2) During 1878-1880 and 1880-1881, by Patriarch Nersses Varzhapetyan, 3) in 1902, under the patriarchate of Maghazia Ormanyan, 4) in 1912 on the occasion of re-emergence of the Armenian Question, and 5) during 1913-1914, parallel to developments on Armenian Reforms Draft. Special importance is paid to statistical table compiled by Stepan Papasyan, a member of Armenian delegation, and attached to Western Armenian Reforms Draft, presented at Berlin Congress in 1878. This table with his own calculations was based on different Ottoman statistical sources.

11. This term is used only once, in a footnote (Dündar, *Crime of Numbers*, 7).

Before the Peace Conference. A memorandum presented officially by the representatives of Armenia to the Peace Conference at Versailles, on February 26th, 1919 (New York: Press Bureau, The Armenian National Union of America, 1919), 34.

8. See Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers. The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question* (New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transactions Publishers, 2010), xiv + 238 pp.

9. The data can be found in book “The Armenian Question in the light of documents” which Zohrap published under pseudonym Marcel Leart in French in 1913. See Marcel Leart, *La Question Arménienne à la lumière des documents* (Paris: Challamel, 1913).

Minor vilayets was already insignificant and did not outnumber 5% before deportations (see table 1). This fact, however, did not hamper the Young Turks from deporting and massacring the Armenian population of the territories under concern.

Table 1¹²

Administrative Unit	Armenians ¹³	Overall Population	Share of Armenian Population, %
Edirne (Adrianople)	19,773	631,094	3,1
Ankara	51,576	953,817	5,4
Kastamonu	8,959	767,227	1,1
Konya	12,971	789,308	1,6
Eskişehir	8,592	152,726	5,6
Nigde	4,935	291,117	1,7
Biğa (Kale-i Sultanye)	2,474	165,815	1,5

Of course, it cannot be denied that the Young Turks were attaching much importance to statistical data in organizing extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population. But statistics was just a medium, namely a tool to handle the process of genocide and not a goal, as presented by Fuat Dündar. Besides, it is not possible to explain and justify neither the extermination of the Western Armenian socio-political and cultural elite, nor the annihilation of the Armenian servicemen, proceeding only from “a statistical point of view” and the logics of “demographic engineering” policy. Those two are part of the genocidal process.

The third chapter (“*Crime in Numbers, Counting Armenian Death Toll*”, pp. 141-157) of Dündar’s research focuses on the number of the Ottoman Armenian population on the threshold of WWI and counting victim population of the Armenian Genocide. The researcher does not make any calculations of his own to determine the number of the Armenian population before deportation, but adopts a number, found in a recently published report, prepared for Talaat Pasha in 1917 and kept in his archives. The so called “Talaat Pasha’s Record Book” includes information about the number of the Armenian population according to administrative units of the Ottoman Empire, before (in 1914) and after (1917) the Armenian Genocide. Commenting on the data of the Ottoman statistics (according to it the number of the Western Armenian population in 1914 was 1.251.785 including both Apostolic and Catholic Armenians), the Turkish official mentions this number to be lower than the actual figures because not all Armenians were registered, and the actual number should be around 1.500.000. This data is considered by Dündar as a number that “puts an end to arguments about the Armenian population” (p. 149). As a ground to this statement the researcher brings two reasons: 1. data was provided by a political organization that wanted to

find a final solution for the Armenian Question and for that reason it made every effort to determine the exact number of the Armenian population, and 2) data was not prepared with the intention of publication, but rather for internal circulation (ibid).

Even if we consider the deemed link between the final outcome of the Armenian Question and the exact number of the Armenian population, which is not logical, it is still unclear how the figure 1.5 million is supposed to be “exact”. Conversely, the logic suggests that if the author of the 1917 report set a goal to find out the precise number of the Armenian population, he would not have to limit his study to presenting round numbers in footnotes, but would try to present more reasonable and accurate calculations, particularly, as it was already mentioned, when the number of the Ottoman Armenians, according to the Ottoman statistical data of 1914, was very specific: 1.251.785.

Therefore, there were no grounds for the researcher to suppose that the calculations appearing in Talaat Pasha’s Record Book put an end to the allegations by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople that about 2 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire on the threshold of the Armenian Genocide. Actually the data in Talaat’s report proves another thing: Ottoman officials themselves didn’t believe in trustworthiness of the Ottoman official statistics on the number of the Western Armenian population, and thought these data should be corrected. At the same time approximately 20% addition to the report aimed at the correction of the Ottoman data should be considered as insufficient; counting the Gregorian and Catholic Armenian population to 1.500.000 before deportation and massacres is also incomplete, and this number is lower than the actual figure¹⁴.

After “finding out” that the number of the Ottoman Armenians was 1.5 million on the threshold of WWI, the researcher passes on to his next goal: to determine the number of victims of the Armenian Genocide. Dündar mentions that this can be achieved by applying the following method: subtract the number of survivors by 1918 from that of the Ottoman Armenian population on the threshold of WWI. In order to find out the number of survivors he classifies them into three groups: the Armenians “allowed to stay in Anatolia”, the deported Armenians and the Armenian refugees, who found shelter in other countries. According to the author, there are 281.000 Armenians in the first group, including Armenians from Constantinople, Smyrna (Aydin), Adrianople (Edirne) and Konya, as well as families of Catholic and Protestant Armenians, craftsman and servicemen (about 75.000), and about 50.000 Islamized Armenians, mainly women and children. The second group consists of about 300.000 Armenians, who survived the Genocide in Syria and Mesopotamia refugee camps. The third group consists of the Armenian refugees counting to 255.000. After subtracting the number of survivors (836.000 by 1918) from the above-stated 1.5 million, the author concludes that 664.000 Armenians fell victim of the Armenian Genocide (p. 151).

14. It should be mentioned that Taner Akçam also referred to Talaat Pasha’s data on Western Armenian population. Prominent Turkish historian states that he has no end to argue on the question of number of Armenian population and victims of the Genocide, but instead says he uses these Ottoman data to cover the link between Young Turk demographic policy and the Genocide (Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in The Ottoman Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 255).

12. Ottoman statistical data of 1914 are taken from Kemal Karpat’s book “Ottoman Population During 1830-1914; Demographic and Social Characteristics” (Karpat, *Ottoman Population During 1830-1914*, 188-189).

13. Both Gregorian and Catholic Armenians.

It is clear by itself that this number has nothing to do with actual figures, because the number of the Armenian population on the threshold of WWI (1.5 million) is significant underestimate. Besides, author's approach reveals serious fallacy of his methodology based on taking out different sets of data out of their context and trying to artificially combine and reconcile them. For example he assumes Ottoman data as a basis for determining the number of the Armenian population on the threshold of WWI, but makes a wide use of the Armenian and Western sources to calculate the number of survivors of the Genocide. The number of the Armenian refugees sheltered in the Caucasus is close to the actual one, but perhaps Dündar is unaware of the wide-acknowledged fact that the Armenians, who had migrated from Van province, were more than half of that number (about 150.000)¹⁵. This documental number proves once again that the official Ottoman statistics had nothing to do with reality, because, according to the Ottoman data, the Armenian population of Van province in 1914 was 67.792¹⁶.

The summarizing chapter titled "*A Few Observations*" (pp. 157-172) actually serves as an afterword. Dündar finishes his studies with the following lines: "*Even today statistics inevitably occupy a central position within every discussion of the Armenian Genocide, and in all aspects of the Armenian Question*" (p. 171). Author's persistence that data from Talaat Pasha's Record Book put an end to disputes about the number of the Western Armenian population is undoubtedly groundless, and there are other disputable issues as well. However, this is perhaps the value of Dündar's book "*Crime of Numbers*", as a work that gathers readers at the discussion table, can promote the research of the difficult and entangled issues of accurately determining the number of the Western Armenian population on the threshold

of WWI and the number of victims of the Genocide, as well as the publication of new works directed at covering the anti-Armenian policy (with its statistical and administrative-demographic expressions) of the Ottoman state, adopted after Berlin Congress.

15. See J. S. Kirakossyan, *The First World War and the Western Armenians* (in Armenian) (Yerevan: Hayastan publishing, 1967), 43. According to data provided by Alexander Sharafyan, the authorized agent of Armenian Benevolent Association of the Caucasus, by January 1916 the number of Western Armenians refugees sheltered in the Russian Empire was 229.293, including inhabitants of Bassen (18.910), Bitlis, Mush, Bayazet provinces and Van Vilayet (about 170.000), inhabitants of eastern region of Van Vilayet and Western region of Persia (18.055), as well as refugees from Van Vilayet sheltered in Persia (about 10.000) and 3500 orphans. The same source mentions that in July 1915 about 20.000 Armenians died during the migration of Van and Vaspurakan population (see article "Armenian Refugees, January 1916" in *Hambavaber weekly* (*Hambavaber social and literary weekly, official gazette of Armenian Benevolent Association of the Caucasus* (issue 2, January 3, 1916) (in Armenian)).

In the memorandum presented by Armenian delegation at Paris Peace Conference in 1919 it is mentioned that the number of Armenians, who migrated from Van Vilayet and found shelter in Russia, was over 220.000 (see *The Armenian Question before the Peace Conference*, 21).

Armenian researcher G. Badalyan, assuming the data retrieved from refugee registration during July-September, 1917 as a basis (according to that register the number of Armenian families leaving Van Vilayet was equal to 24.127, while the average rate showing the largeness of Van Armenian family was 8.8), considers that 210.000-212.000 Armenians lived in Van Vilayet in 1914 (see G. M. Badalyan, "Some Demographic Principles to Determine Western Armenian Population (on the example of Erzeroum and Van Vilayets)" in *Modern Status of Armenology and Development Perspectives, report provisions of International Armenological Conference* (Yerevan, September 15-20, 2003) (Yerevan: 2003), 140). See also R. A. Tatoyan, "Statistical Data on Number of Armenian Population in Van Vilayet during 1878-1914 (attempt to compare and analyze sources)," *The Issues of the History and Historiography of the Armenian Genocide*, 7 (2003): 65-79.

16. Even if we consider the rate used by Dündar (20%) to clarify the Ottoman statistical data, the result for Van province Armenians (81.600) is considerable underestimate.