WE REMEMBER

Posted on April 17, 2011 by Keghart



Category: Opinions



Angelina Guiragossian, Beirut, 17 April 2011 posted on Facebook

In 1916-1917, Halide Edip acted as Ottoman inspector for schools in Damascus, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon. The students at these schools included hundreds of Armenian, Arab, Kurdish, and Turkish orphans. According to a teacher who worked briefly under her, Halide Edip "was at the head of an orphanage of 1,000 children in the mountains. These were mostly Armenian children.

She said, 'Their names are changed (to Moslem names) but they are children; they don't know what religion means. Now, they must be fed and clothed and kept safe.' She didn't say what would be afterwards."

Angelina Guiragossian, Beirut, 17 April 2011 posted on Facebook

In 1916-1917, Halide Edip acted as Ottoman inspector for schools in Damascus, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon. The students at these schools included hundreds of Armenian, Arab, Kurdish, and Turkish orphans. According to a teacher who worked briefly under her, Halide Edip "was at the head of an orphanage of 1,000 children in the mountains. These were mostly Armenian children.

She said, 'Their names are changed (to Moslem names) but they are children; they don't know what religion means. Now, they must be fed and clothed and kept safe.' She didn't say what would be afterwards."

According to Halide Edip, these children were given Muslim names under orders from Cemal Pasha.

She records a 1916 conversation thus: I said: "... Why do you allow Armenian children to be called by Moslem names? It looks like turning the Armenians into Moslems, and history some day will revenge it on the coming generation of Turks."

"You are an idealist," answered gravely, "... Do you believe that by turning a few hundred Armenian boys and girls Moslem I think I benefit my race? You have seen the Armenian orphanages in Damascus run by Armenians. There is no room in those; there is no money to open another Armenian orphanage. This is a Moslem orphanage, and only Moslem orphans are allowed. ... When I hear of wandering and starving children, I sent them to Aintoura. I have to keep them alive. I do not care how. I cannot bear to see them die in the streets."

"Afterward?" I asked.

"Do you mean after the war?" he asked. "After the war they will go back to their people. I hope none is too small to realize his race."

"I will never have anything to do with such an orphanage."

He shook his head. "You will," he said; "if you see them in misery and suffering, you will go to them and not think for a moment about their names and religion.