CIRCASSIAN NATIONALISM IN THE WRITINGS OF HAYRİYE MELEK HUNÇ

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CIRCASSIAN NATIONALISM IN THE WRITINGS OF HAYRİYE MELEK HUNÇ

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims at exploring the elements of Circassian nationalism in the works of an important yet an under-researched woman activist of Circassian descent, Hayriye Melek Hunç. The study explores the notions of "homeland", the importance of history-memory of Russo-Circassian Wars and the protection of a distinct Circassian identity in her writings. Doing that, it does not ignore the place of "women's issue" in her works. Her approach towards the women's issue and her opinions about Islamic women, in general, and Ottoman women in particular, will be conveyed. In these aspects, the study aims to contribute to a growing literature which emphasized women's activism of the late Ottoman era, challenging the nationalist historiography which shows Ottoman women as passive and ignorant subjects of a static political entity. Regarding the socio-political changes which took place in the late Ottoman Empire, the study also aims at exploring the impacts of modernization by concentrating on the rise of nationalism and activism of one of the ethnic groups of the empire, the Circassian community. Increasing activism and agency, surely, were the consequences of this process.

ÖZET

CIRCASSIAN NATIONALISM IN THE WRITINGS OF HAYRİYE MELEK HUNÇ

CEMİLE ATLI

TARİH YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, EKİM 2019

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerkesler, Kadınlar, Aktivizm, Milliyetçilik, Hayriye Melek Hunç

Bu tez önemli fakat yeterince çalışılmamış Çerkes bir kadın aktivisti olan Hayriye Melek Hunç'un yazılarındaki Çerkes milliyetçiliği öğelerini tetkik etmeyi amaçlar. Bu çalışma onun yazılarındaki anavatan kavramını, Rus-Çerkes Savaşları'nın anısı ve tarihinin önemini ve belirgin bir Çerkes kimliğinin korunmasını inceler. Bunu yaparken, onun yazılarında kadın meselesine verilen yeri göz ardı etmez. Bu çalışmada, Hunç'un kadın konusuna yaklaşımı ve hem Müslüman kadınlar hem de Osmanlı kadınları hakkındaki fikirleri de aktarılacaktır. Bu açılardan, bu çalışma son dönem Osmanlı tarihinde kadın aktivizmi hakkında, milliyetçi tarihyazımının Osmanlı kadınlarını, değişim göstermeyen bir siyasi yapının, pasif ve cahil tebaası olduğu yönündeki iddialara eleştirel bir biçimde yaklaşan yeni literatüre bir katkı yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Osmanlı'nın son döneminde ortaya çıkan sosyo-politik değişimler hakkında ise, bu çalışma modernleşmenin etkilerini, imparatorluğun etnik gruplarından birinde, Çerkeslerde, yükselişe geçen milliyetçiliğe ve aktivizme odaklanarak inceler. Artan aktivizm ve tarihsel roller, şüphesiz, bu sürecin sonuçlarındandır.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 1

2. HISTORY OF THE CIRCASSIAN COMMUNITY 10

2.1. The Immigration into the Ottoman Lands 10

2.2. Circassians in the Era of Abdülhamid II 13

2.3. Second Constitutional Era 15

2.4. Circassian Community during the Turkish War of Independence 19

3.WOMEN'S MOVEMENT OF THE LATE OTTOMAN AND EARLY 24

REPUBLICAN ERA 24

3.1. Women Activism of the Late Ottoman Era 24

3.2. Between 1918 and 1923 28

3.3. Under the Republican Regime 31

4. HAYRIYE MELEK HUNÇ 35

4.1. The Life of Hayriye Melek Hunç 35

4.2. Circassian Nationalism in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç 40

4.2.1.The Importance of the History/Memory of Russo-Circassian Wars (1763-1864) 40

4.2.2.The Importance of Homeland 44

4.2.3.The Importance of Language and Education 47

4.3. Slavery in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç 48

4.4. Women in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç 49

4.5. Women and the Nation 54

CONCLUSION 56

BIBLIOGRAPHY 59

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ottoman rulers experienced difficulties in defending the territorial integrity of their empire in late Ottoman era. The empire's sovereignty was challenged on the one hand by the Great powers such as Russia, on the other hand nationalist movements of its people (Serbian, Greek). Ottomans realized that their empire politically and militarily was weak in the face of European powers (Zürcher 2010, 59). It was necessary to make reforms. So, various sultans and statesmen began to initiate reform programs observing the European models. First, the military and then the bureaucracy and education remodeled according to European standards. The spread of the ideas of French Revolution "liberté, égalité, fraternité" (freedom, equality, fraternity), and the new modern schools led to the emergence of a new kind of intelligentsia among the Muslim and non-Muslim communities of the empire who was eager to follow nascent European ideas.

One of these ideas was nationalism (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The ideology spread among diverse ethnic and religious groups of the empire. Serbians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Macedonians, Albanians, Kurds, Arabs, all were influenced alongside the ruling Turco-Muslim population of the empire through the contacts with Europe and the efforts of their elites (Kushner 1977, 3-5). With the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, a generation of young military officers, officials and intellectuals came to power. Most of them were educated in the modern schools of the empire, having been influenced by the European ideas and political movements.

By this time, the identity of *Turk* became politicized. Attention was paid to Turkish history, Turkish-speaking Muslims outside of the Ottoman Empire were acknowledged racial brothers, and the importance of Anatolia as the homeland of Turks began to be established. This new educated intelligentsia strived to reach to the common people. For instance, in 1908, Turkish Society (*Türk Derneği*) was established "to study history and culture of all Turkish

peoples" with the initiatives of Yusuf Akçura. Later, its place was taken by another social club called Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*). It was created in 1912 aiming "to advance national education and raise the scientific, social, economic level of the Turks, who are the foremost of the peoples of the Islam, and to strive for the betterment of the Turkish race and language (quoted in Kushner 1977, 99)." The Turkist organs such as Turkish Homeland (*Türk Yurdu*), New Review (*Yeni Mecmua)* and Young Pens (*Genç Kalemler*) played a significant role in disseminating nationalist ideas (Kushner 1977, 99).

As one of the non-Turkish Muslim groups of the empire, the Circassian population, too, was affected by the spread of new ideas and notions. North Caucasian diaspora of Anatolia, more commonly known as the Circassians[1] consists of various tribal and linguistic groups of North Caucasian lands which came to the Ottoman lands during the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1860s and 1914, the Russian forces expelled hundreds of thousands of Circassians from their homes. After they arrived on the Ottoman lands, the refugees were distributed to areas of settlement in Balkans, Anatolia and Syria. Most of the Circassian elites were successfully integrated into the Ottoman state structure especially during the Hamidian era. However, they were not unaffected by the ideologies of the modern age, that is nationalism. They established the Society of the Circassian Unity (*Cemiyyet-i İttihadiyye-i Çerakise*) in 1899 to disseminate the constitutionalist ideas of Young Turk movement and the nationalist consciousness among Circassian diaspora (Chochiev 2014, 231). Especially after the 1908 Revolution, in the time of a brief relative freedom, the Circassian elites mobilized around various ethnically oriented organizations such as, the Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid in 1908 (*Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti*) and North Caucasian Political Committee in 1916 (*Şimali Kafkas Cemiyet-i Siyasiyesi*) and Circassian Women's Mutual Aid Society in 1919 (*Çerkes Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti*) (Besleney 2016, 82-86).

There were only a few academic studies on the Circassian community of Turkey as late as

[1] The term Circassian, or 'Cherkess' (Çerkes) in Turkish, refers to the indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus. It is disputed which nations are referred to by this term. Scholars suggest three groups. In the first case, the most comprehensive one, the term is used to mean all the native peoples of the North Caucasus. In the second case, the term refers to only the Northwestern Caucasians (the Adigas, Abkhaz-Abazas, and the now extinct Ubyks), excluding Eastern Caucasians (the Chechens and the Dagestanis). In the third and most restrictive case, the term is used to refer to only the Adigas, who are constituted by several tribes (including the Kabardian, Shapsug, Hatukey, Beslenei, Bzedoug, Abzakh and so on) who can speak mutually intelligible dialects that made up Adigabze, the Circassian language (Jaimoukha 2001, 11). In this study, I will use the term Circassian to refer to the North Caucasian peoples who immigrated to Ottoman lands beginning from second half of the 19th century since these people have historical commonalities (Doğan 2009).

the beginnings of the 2000s. One of the reasons for the rarity of studies in this field is that between 1923-1946, all of the Circassians' organizations and educational activities were closed down and forbidden by the regime. In addition to it, the nascent intelligentsia which came into existence during the late Ottoman era, was liquidated during the same years. Moreover, it was difficult in the public universities of Turkey to study and do research in the fields of ethnicity, identity politics, nationalism and diaspora politics about non-Turkish groups (especially Kurds) of Turkey (Besleney 2016, 90).

Furthermore, although there are not many studies on how Circassian nationalism is studied by Turkish nationalist scholarship, one can see that the Circassians were defined by the scholars of the mainstream history as 'Caucasian Turks' (*Kafkas Türkleri*) for a long time (Besleney 2016, 103). All these led to the long-lasting denial of a distinct Circassian identity, history and culture in the mainstream scholarship which only used the epithet of "Circassian", with the adjective of "traitor", to discuss the opposition of Ethem Bey.[2] This situation began to change only in the 1990s and from 2000s onwards, there emerged an increase in the number of studies which concentrates on the Circassian community. Nevertheless, the literature on the Circassian community is still weak and disorganized (Besleney 2016, 30).

As Besleney (2016) pointed out, the information about pre-1864 Circassian community can be obtained from the writings of Western travelers. The works of David Urquhart (1836), Edmund Spencer (1836), James S. Bell (1840), and John Longworth (1840) are especially noteworthy. They travelled the region extensively, had communication with the native people and gathered and conveyed comprehensive information regarding the North Caucasus and its people in their works. Historians Ali and Hasan Kasumov (1995) and Nihat Berzeg (1996) wrote about Russo-Circassian Wars and forced immigration of 1864

[2] Ethem Bey (1886-1948): Ethem Bey was born in Balıkesir around the district of Bandırma. He served in the military during Balkan Wars and he joined *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (the Special Organization) during WWI. After the war, he returned to his village and began banditry around the region of Balıkesir. In 24 May 1919, Rauf Orbay came to Bandırma and visited Ethem's family. Rauf Orbay convinced Ethem and Reşit Beys to create an organization for resistance. In time, with the attendance of Circassians of Bursa and Balıkesir regions, he became a powerful leader of *Kuva-yı Milliye* (Turkish National Forces). He played an influential role in the suppression of the revolt of Ahmet Anzavur. He, later, suppressed the revolts in Düzce, Yozgat and Alaca fiercely. Upon the occupation of Balıkesir by Greek forces on 30 June 1920, he was summoned to the region and fought against Greeks. Ethem Bey and his brothers disobeyed the order of 9 November 1920 which dictated that all the militias must turn into regular forces. When the regular forces of the government attacked Ethem's forces, he understood that he was going to fail. That is why, he dismantled his men. When the conditions became harder, he surrendered to the Greek forces in February 1921. In 1924, he was included in the list of 150 personae non gratae of Turkey. He refused to return Turkey even though he was included in the scope of the general amnesty of 1938 (Kozok 2010, 326-328). Because of his disobedience, he was declared as "traitor". This led to the association of the name with a whole ethnic group and with treason for years (Doğan 2009, 105).

in their works. The roles of Circassians between 1919 and 1921 became the subject of the works of historians such as Sina Akşin (1992), Şerafettin Turan (1992) and Ergün Aybars (1984) who referred to some of the Circassians' activities as "treasonous". On the other hand, the books of Cemal Şener (1990) and Emrah Cilasun (2004) attempt to clear Ethem's name and declare him as a hero (Besleney 2016, 30). In the book entitled *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Çerkeslerin Rolü* (The Role of Circassians at the Turkish War of Independence), Muhittin Ünal (2000) aims at clearing the name of Circassians. He admits that Ethem Bey and Ahmet Anzavur Bey were Circassians who were engaged in treacherous acts but there were many other Circassians who did enormous contributions to the resistance. He also underlines that there were two women who made speeches against the occupations in Sultanahmet square, while one was Halide Edip, other one was Hayriye Melek (Ünal 2000, 19).

The works of Ryan Gingeras such as, "The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey and The North Caucasian Diaspora, 1914-1923" (2011) and *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923* (2009) go beyond "hero" or "traitor" discussions and demonstrate the migration and settlements of Circassians in the Ottoman lands, formation of Ottoman-Circassian elites and their rises in the ranks of the state, the emergence of different factions among Circassians and both conflicting and compromising relationships between the Ottoman-Turkish state and the Circassian elites. Arsen Avagyan touches upon the same subjects in his book called *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet-İktidar Sisteminde Çerkesler* (2004). Both writers underline that contrary to other nationalisms that emerged during the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire, Circassian nationalism was not suppressed, and was even supported in some occasions by the Ottoman central state (Avagyan 2004, 229). This is mainly because Circassian nationalists did not demand land from Anatolia at least until the declaration of "The General Statement for the Circassian Nation to the Great Powers" by The Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights in 1921 which had claims on southern Marmara region, mainly on the district of Balıkesir; their homeland was still North Caucasus. These scholars add that the suppression for the Circassians began only during the Kemalist rule (Gingeras 2011; Avagyan 2004).

Another scholar, Elmas Zeynep Aksoy-Arslan wrote an MA thesis named "Circassian Organizations in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1923" (2008) which is mainly about two

well-known organizations of Ottoman Circassians, one is *Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti* (the Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid), the other is Çerkes *Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti* (Circassian Women's Mutual Aid Association). Aksoy-Arslan gives also detailed information about various Circassian intellectuals of the era, Circassian lifestyle and forced migration of 1864. While the work of Gingeras and Avagyan primarily focus on the relationship between the Circassians notables and the Ottoman state, Aksoy-Arslan evaluates the history of Circassian community independently.

Scholars such as Sufian Zhemukhov (2012), Alexander Toumarkine (2001), Erol Taymaz (2001), Ayhan Kaya (2005), Zeynel Abidin Besleney (2016) and Setenay Nil Doğan (2009) explore the political ideologies, movements and developments in the Circassian diaspora during this last century. Doğan disagrees with most of the scholars in the field of Turkish nationalism, "who underline the centrality of Islam for the definition of the Turkish nationhood, and who think while non-Muslims were excluded as 'the others', Muslim groups were regarded as a part of the alliance and they were well accepted despite their non-Turkish origins by the Turkish nationalism" (Doğan 2009, 100). She states that although one can see total exclusion of non-Muslims, "the way non-Turkish Muslims groups are defined has been far from total inclusion", adding, "the inclusion of non-Turkish Muslim groups in the nation building is highly conditional and ambiguous."

These works contain detailed information regarding the Circassian intelligentsia of the 19th century, the conditions that gave rise to Circassian activism and the environment in which Hayriye Melek Hunç, the primary focus of my study, was born, raised and produced her works.

The subject of my book, Hayriye Melek Hunç was one of the Circassian intellectuals who aimed at disseminating the nationalist ideas in the public, writing about patriotism, the Circassian community and identity, the Russo-Circassian wars. Women's conditions in the society also occupy a considerable place in her writings. Hayriye was born in 1890, in Balıkesir. She belonged to a well-known noble clan, the Hunç, of North Caucasian *Oubykh* tribe. As a member of a noble class, her family was able to educate her, and she was sent to the Catholic Girls' School of Notre Dame de Sion in İstanbul and had a French-style education. She was one of the few Muslims who studied there. While she knew several languages and dialects of the North Caucasus, she had the opportunity to be

educated in French, via her attendance in this school. She wrote in various periodicals, such as the *Mehasin* (1908-1909), the *Musavver Kadın* (1911) and the *Türk Yurdu* (1911-1918). She also wrote in Circassian periodicals like the *Guaze* (1911-1914) and she was the head author in the *Diyane* (1920). She also wrote two novels entitled *Zühre-i Elem* (1910) and *Zeynep* (1926). She was active in various Circassian organizations after the 1908 Revolution; she worked for the establishment of a Circassian school, the development of a Circassian alphabet and the publication of books on Circassians and their culture. She died in 1963 in İstanbul (Toumarkine 2013, 317-335).

Although she was an important figure during the late Ottoman era, she and her works are under-researched. There are only a few studies which concentrate on the writer. There are works on life of the writer which contain encyclopaedic knowledge (her birth date and place, her education, marriage, names of her work, etc.) in various websites of various organizations and journals such as Çerkesya (ÇerkesyaOrg Circassian Diaspora, 2018), Biyografya (Biyografya Beta n.d.) and İstanbul Kadın Müzesi (Akkent 2012). *Guşıps* (2014) also published some of her stories in its websites. Moreover, Fatih Altuğ, wrote an article on Hayriye Melek for the 5harfliler website for which he says, "a brief initial step for those who do not know about Hayriye Melek" (Altuğ 2016). In addition to these writings, Meral Çare wrote a series of articles for the newspaper *Jineps* which gives more detailed information regarding the writer and her activism (Çare 2018). Furthermore, there is also a book by Betül Mutlu (2012), in the name of *Asi ve Duygulu Bir Ses: Hayriye Melek Hunç* which also contains translated versions of her two novels and some of her stories. Last but not least, Alexander Toumarkine wrote an article entitled "Hayriye Melek (Hunç) A Circassian Ottoman Writer Between Feminism and Nationalism" (2013). Only Toumarkine's work, makes a critical analysis of her writings. Yet, her activism and works remain to be studied within the scope of growing ethnic and women's activism in the late Ottoman era which was influenced by the discussions revolving around feminism and nationalism. Hayriye Melek was not an exception, during this era, many Ottoman women began to be influential in the public space, a place which was Although Ottoman feminists accepted that women first and foremost belonged to the house, they began to take roles outside of their homes especially after Second Constitutional Period in 1908. They were organized, asking for freedom and equality. The press, and its growing impact was especially important in this issue. The publications which were prepared especially for women were on the rise, in addition to the women's supplements of journals. In fact, some

of these publications were quite successful such as *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Ladies' Own Gazette) or *Kadın* (Woman). Women discussed and declared their opinions on a variety of subjects such as nationalism, the necessity of education and feminism in these magazines and newspapers of the empire. In addition to women's traditional role, such as raising healthy, responsible and honorable children, they were now expected to meet the demands of a modernizing state and society, like continuing their education or learning new skills to be economically productive members of society (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 11).

Modern Turkish historiography, under the influence of Turkish nationalism, has long presented Ottoman women as if they were "the captives of harem", "being oppressed, obscure, hidden and lacking agency" (Yıldız 2018, 179). "They were given equal rights by their benevolent leader Ataturk, without even having to ask or fight for them" (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 11). This kind of history-writing was adopted to depict Ottoman Empire as a static rule which deprived women of basic rights and also to legitimize the young secular republic vis-à-vis its population and the European world. This also generated the erasures and silences in the mainstream historiography on the activism of Ottoman women who actually had been vigorously fighting for their rights well before the establishment of Turkish Republic.

The impact of feminist movement on the scholarship of the history of Turkey in 1990s resulted in the emergence of a scholarly interest in the works and activities of women of the era. These feminist researchers such as Kandiyoti (1991), Tekeli (1995), Berktay (1998), Zihnioğlu (2003) and others were also revisionists in the sense that they argued that "the secular reforms of Turkish Republic were nothing but a series of nationalist policies, and women were seen and treated as components of this modernization project in line with this political purpose." In time, a biographic genre came about which focuses on the lives of leading female figures of the era such as, the book on Nezihe Muhittin titled *Nezihe Muhittin ve Türk Kadını* 1931 by Baykan and Ötüş and *Kadınsız İnkılap* by Yaprak Zihnioğlu which focus on the life and the feminist struggle of Muhittin. The work of Hülya Adak entitled *Halide Edip ve Siyasal Şiddet: Ermeni Kırımı, Diktatörlük ve Şiddetsizlik*. In this book, Hülya Adak focuses entirely on the life and works of one of the most prominent Turkish nationalists, feminists and female writers of the Turkish literature, Halide Edip Adıvar. Adak focuses on her political discourse and activism. Adak notes that while Halide Edip was protesting the genocidal policies of the Young Turks and

apologizing to Ottoman Armenians for the massacres in the years of 1909-1916; during the years of Turkish War of Independence, she adopted a defensive discourse and she rewrote the issue as 'reciprocal atrocities', trying to shed the image of 'Barbar Turk' in Western eyes. Adak examines this change and its reasons in detail (Adak 2016, 21-79). All these works pointed out that that contrary to the claims of Turkish nationalist scholars, there was a continuing effort for women's rights and women's political inclusion in the late Ottoman and early Republican eras, especially from 1908 onwards.

Furthermore, the recent studies in the field revealed that there were inequalities between men and women in Ottoman law. Certain changes occurred with modernity from the 19th century onwards and with the rise of Kemalist regime but there were also continuities. Islamic patriarchy was replaced by a Western type of nationalist patriarchy. The nation state is itself a masculine project. The idealization of this project came to the Ottoman lands during the late Ottoman era and it was realized with the establishment of the Republican regime. As Carole Pateman put, although women are formally declared as "civil citizens" by nationalism, they can never be an "individual" as men are. In the nationalist discourse, "the homeland is usually associated with a female body and a nation is a brotherhood which is relied on the unity of these brothers" (Berktay, 348-359). Within the nationalist logic women are considered secondary class (or maybe indirect) citizens and they cannot be the agents in this hierarchy for they are only the "subjects" of the state. They are defined usually according to their relationships with men (nation's sisters, nation's wives etc.) by the state. There are always limitations for women; they must be honorable sisters, obedient wives and self-sacrificing mothers who can send their sons to death for the sake of beloved homeland (Altınay 2011, 27).

In this thesis, I focus on the nationalist ideas of a woman writer, Hayriye Melek Hunç. I aim to explore the standpoint of a woman regarding an ideology which puts women at such a disadvantaged point. How did she internalize such an ideology? How did she convey her nationalist ideas to her readers? What did she think about women's place in nationalist thinking? How far was she radical or how far was she conventional? I examine a woman's perspectives on nationalism and my goal is to analyze her works in the light of these questions. I chose a Circassian woman to work on, since there are fewer works in literature compared to the works on Kurdish or Arab nationalism. Moreover, it is more challenging to analyze since most of its followers were also patriotic Ottomans, Islamists or even Turkists.

These identities often became intermingled and their importance was changing. Overall, my aim is to examine a female perspective nationalism while exploring women's activism in the late Ottoman era. Dividing the subject as women activism of the late Ottoman era, women activism between 1918-1923 and women under the Republican regime, I will analyze the issue according to changing conditions of the time. Moreover, I will be emphasizing the agency of women as much as it is possible.

The thesis is composed of three chapters. In the first chapter, I will lay out the history of Ottoman Circassians, their migration to the Ottoman lands, their adaptation into the Ottoman world and struggles to survive in this world. I will also trace the emergence of a Circassian elite class occupying the military and executive offices of the empire, their positions during the War of Independence and the Kemalist leadership's way of dealing with the Circassian reality. In the next chapter, I will explore the history of women's activism in the late Ottoman era. The circumstances which gave rise to women activism, the ways in which women were able to express their ideas, and the impact of regime changes on their activism will be investigated in this chapter. In the third chapter, I will focus on Hayriye Melek Hunç, her life, thoughts and writing. I will evaluate Circassian nationalism and women's conditions in her writings. What did she think regarding women's issue and about what should be done to improve women's conditions? What were the components of the Circassian identity according to her? What did she think about the history of Circassian community? How did she view other nationalisms? Finally, the last chapter will be my conclusion.

2. HISTORY OF THE CIRCASSIAN COMMUNITY

2.1. The Immigration into the Ottoman Lands

North Caucasian diaspora of Anatolia, more frequently known as the Circassians, consists of various tribes and clans, who have distinct dialects, languages, folklore and traditions of their own. Although they call themselves as Adyghe, they are named as Circassians in Turkey and in other countries to which they emigrated (Gingeras, 2011, 2). Although there is an ongoing discussion of names among the Circassian intelligentsia, when I use the epithet of "Circassian" I will refer to both Adyghe tribes (including the Kabardian, Shapsug, Hatukey, Beslenei, Bzedoug, Abzakh and so on) and other tribes (Chechens and Abkhaz groups), who are not usually named as Circassians, since these people are "historically and spatially inseparable from Adyghe people of the Circassian diaspora" (Doğan 2009, 29-30). In this chapter, I will explore the history of Circassian community from their immigration to the Ottoman lands in the second half of nineteenth century to the end of Turkish Independence War.

The North Caucasian peoples ended up in the Ottoman lands because of the bloody conflicts between Caucasians and Tsarist Russia which began in 1567 and continued up until to 1878 at intervals. Under the impact of a policy of establishing a "Caucasia free from Circassians" Russia devastated Caucasian villages and perpetrated massacres. The hostile relationships between the Ottoman Empire and Russia at the time also had an impact on the Muslim peoples of Caucasia and caused them to be perceived as a threat by Russia (Aksoy-Arslan 2008, 4-6).

The Caucasian peoples fought back for their homelands. Although they were the triumphant party at the beginning, they began to lose against Russians' economic and military power in time. Having a fragmented political structure, Circassians didn't have

a regular army. Each tribe had its own irregular troops. They were insufficient small troops, and Circassians began to suffer defeats one after another against the regular army of Russia. The disagreements among Circassian princes and beys also weakened the Caucasian societies against Russia and its policies. Circassians began to retreat because of increasing attacks and other circumstances at the beginning of nineteenth century. They took refuge "in the country of their Caliph" (Aksoy-Arslan 2008, 4-5).[3]

The exodus from the Caucasus began in 1820s on a small scale but it accelerated as more Circassians began to run away from the expansionist policies of the Russian state. They began to immigrate into Ottoman lands, mainly into Anatolia, Syria and the Balkans. Immigration reached its peak in the mid-1860s after a decree of the Russian state, commanding Circassians to leave their homelands. The final pacification of the Northern Caucasus which resulted in the death of many and the first exodus happened on May 21st, 1864, which is commemorated as "Circassian Genocide" by the Circassians in every year since 1990s (Doğan 2009, 31).

Although the Ottoman Government encouraged and supported the settlement of the Circassians in the empire, the settlement process was not painless. The Ottomans experienced tremendous logistical and material challenges. During the process of the settlement of the refugees, tens of thousands of Circassians died because of malnutrition, exposure and diseases (Gingeras 2011, 3). The Ottoman rule formed the Commission of General Administration of Immigrants *(İdare-i Umumiye-i Muhacirin Komisyonu)*[4] in 1860 to deal with the settlement of the immigrants. The initial settlements were random; and up to 1863, most of the refugees were placed in Anatolia. When the number of immigrants

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[3] Although the scope of this chapter is Circassian community and their migration, one must accept that the fact of "migration" had a very significant place in Ottoman history. The Ottoman state experienced the in-migration of masses in the later era. When Crimea became independent in 1774 with Treaty of *Küçük Kaynarca* and it was annexed by Russia in 1783, the Crimean Muslims migrated to the Ottoman lands en masse. 1820s onwards, the North Caucasians began to take refuge in the Ottoman lands. Also, the 93 Harbi (1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War) and Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the losses of the empire in these wars, resulted in the movement of Muslim population into the Ottoman lands from the lost regions (Barut 2018, 163-164). Also see Kasaba, 2009.

[4] The Ottoman state which was exposed to mass migrations from the end of 18th century onwards did not establish a separate institution to deal with the issue for a long time. However, the need for such an institution increased in time, as the variety of problems came about with the influx of refugees and the settlement process. With the intensification of the migration, the Commission of General Administration of Immigrants (İdare-i Umumiye-i Muhacirin Komisyonu) was established in 1860. However, after a short period of time, it was dissolved, and its duties were passed to Immigrants Administration (*Muhacirun İdaresi*). This institution was supported by the Charity Organization (İane Komisyonu). After 1887, the High Immigration Commission (*Muhacirin Komisyon-u Alisi)* was revived and renamed as the Islamic Immigration Commission (*Muhacirin-i İslamiye Komisyonu*) (Doğan 2009, 32-33).

increased in 1863, the Ottoman policy of settlement changed, and the rule began to carry out "planned and strategic settlements". The Ottomans were going to use the refugees for their political interests. They were going to settle them in the areas where the Muslims were in a minority such as Adrianople, Danube, or in the depopulated regions such as the vilayets of Diyarbakır and Aleppo. The Ottomans were going to use the Circassians as a military force in the elimination of separatist nationalist movements, and to fortify the Ottoman army especially *vis-à-vis* the Russian army (Doğan 2009, 31-33). These were the motives behind the Ottoman state's reception of Circassians.

Furthermore, the mass exodus and settling into the Ottoman lands resulted in tremendous changes in the North Caucasian society of the Ottoman lands. Firstly, it gave way to creation of a collective identity among the diverse number of North Caucasian peoples. Although there were regional, cultural, linguistic and familial differences amidst these people, their experiences of wars, flight and resettlement were now common. Besides, they were all designated as "Circassians" (Çerkes) by their new neighbors. All of these helped to forge a collective identity (Gingeras 2011, 5).

In addition, it led to the changes in the centuries-old feudal system of these societies. Having a feudal structure, the Circassian society was composed of *Pşi* (princess), *Verk* (feudal aristocrats), *Tfekotl* (free villagers), and *Pşitl* (slaves) (Aksoy-Arslan 2008, 12). As Toledano (1983) During the immigration of the North-Caucasian community into the Ottoman lands, it was estimated that 150.000 of the coming refugees were slaves. These slaves were depended on their beys and in the peace times, they worked in the lands of their beys, in the war times, they joined in the battles alongside their masters. In addition to these high number of slaves working in the fields, there was also an ongoing slave trade to buy women slaves for the harems of İstanbul and other cities. However, the painful immigration process of the Caucasians had an impact on the slavery practices. Being affected by the war and immigration conditions, many free people began to sell their children, and sometimes even themselves, as slaves. As some of the poor refugees began to fall into slavery some of the slaves asked for their freedom seeing that Ottoman system was prone to manumission. Because of a series of bloody conflicts between the Circassian Beys ad their slaves, the state intervened in the situation and asked the Circassian upper classes to free their slaves. Because of fiscal deficits at the Ottoman treasury, Ottomans offered pieces of lands to Circassian upper classes in return for the freedom of slaves. Accepting these lands to settle

to do agriculture, Circassian beys realized the state's orders (Toledano 1994, 128-159; Erdem 1996; Erdem 2014).

2.2. Circassians in the Era of Abdülhamid II

The integration of Circassian community into the Ottoman society began at the end of 1870s. It was harder for the first coming refugees because they were uneducated, and they did not know Turkish. They had no chance but to join in the military and work as guards for richer landowners around southern Marmara and Aegean region. However, the children of these refugees learned Turkish and graduated from the military schools of the empire. Especially with the help of the Sultan Abdülhamid's[5] policies which favored North Caucasian notables (Gingeras 2011, 4), the Circassian elites began to be part of Ottoman political apparatus during his reign. At this time, the influx of Circassian women into the harem resulted in the dominance of this ethnic group in this institution. The Circassian community began to be considered as "the relatives of the Ottoman House". Dominance over harem also paralleled in the inclusion of Circassians in other institutions of the state (Aksoy 2018, 31). They were employed in the government and military, they were settled in Armenian and Arab villages and worked for the suppression of these people when necessary, and moreover, Circassians' relationship with their homeland was also used as a tool to promote Pan Islamism in Russia (Doğan 2009, 37). According to Arsen Avagyan, at the beginning of 1910s, while the North Caucasian people constituted only five percent of the Ottoman population, twenty-five percent of the Ottoman military officers were Circassian (cited in Besleney 2016, 78).

From the 1880s onwards, Circassians became visible in the literary and artistic circles of the empire. For instance, Ahmet Mithat who is considered to be one of the founding fathers of modern Turkish literature was a Circassian. He wrote on Circassian history working with two prominent Circassian soldiers, *Deli* Fuad Paşa (Fuad the Mad) and

[5] We can observe that there was a special kind of relationship between Sultan Abdulhamid and Circassian community. His mother was a Shapsug and all of his wives and concubines were, too, from the Circassian community. There is a rumor among Circassians which states that the Sultan knew some Circassian language. Moreover, we know that sometimes he was even called "the Circassian Sultan" by the community (Aksoy 2018, 31).

Gazi Muhammed Paşa. Besides, he collaborated with another Circassian Ahmet Cavit Paşa[6] to create a Circassian alphabet based on Arabic letters. The aforementioned work was a milestone in the history of the North-Caucasian diaspora. Distinguished literary critic *Mizancı* Murad Bey and Ottoman painters Hüseyin Avni Lifij, Namık İsmail, and Şevket Dağ were also Circassian. The first woman painter of the empire, Mihri Müşfik, too, was one of the outstanding members of North-Caucasian diaspora. (Besleney 2016, 79).

The relationship between the Circassians and Abdülhamid was not always tranquil. For instance, the first official Circassian organization, Society of the Circassian Unity, *Cemiyyet-i İttihadiye Çerakise* (1899) and its periodical, *İttihad*, were opponents of the sultan's rule. The newspaper considered the sultan's rule despotic and asserted that "it is highly urgent to enlighten the North Caucasians and to restore their 'inherent qualities', such as boldness, nobleness, chivalry, readiness to self-sacrifice, etc., in order to get them more visibly involved in activities aimed at liquidation of the despotic regime which impedes the progress of the peoples of the empire" (Chochiev 2014, 231). The newspaper blamed Ottoman authorities on three grounds; first the Ottoman authorities treated Circassian refugees "inhumanely" during their settlement process. They assigned knowingly unsuitable and unhealthy lands, insufficient supply with means of subsistence, etc. Second, the newspaper stated that the Ottoman officials were accused of encouraging the practice of selling Circassian children and women into servitude for mercenary purposes. Yet, it should be noted the newspaper was criticizing the enslavement of freeborn people, as contradicting the regulations of the Muslim law, not the existence of the institutions of slaveholding and slave trade in the Circassian society. At last, third, it was stated that even after their settlement Circassians were severely exploited by the authorities, (during the payment of taxes or fulfilling other state obligations) who took advantage of their ignorance of the local realities, Turkish language, etc (Chochiev 2014, 230- 231).

[6] Ahmet Cavit Paşa (1840-1916): He was born in Caucasia and migrated to Anatolia in 1864. He was a governor in the districts of Bandırma, Yenipazar, İstanköy, Humus. He was assigned in several tasks in the gendarme organization. He published an Adyghe alphabet with Arabic letters in 1895. He was the founder of Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti. He was a leader for a long time in this organization. He passed away in 1916 in Istanbul (Kozok 2010, 218).

2.3. Second Constitutional Era

Various political factions within the empire were planning to overthrow Sultan Abdülhamid and aiming at re-institution of the constitution and the parliament. These reform-minded dissidents of the Hamidian regime, the Young Turks, pursued neither a consistent ideology nor a comprehensive program of reform. However, they were all constitutionalist Ottomanists and they were united around the idea that the government should begin to pursue Ottomanist policies in order to save the empire from dissolution and both the parliament and the constitution should be re-established. Hence, originally, they constituted various groups from socialists to Turkish nationalists and the North-Caucasian elites partook in all of these groups. Committee of Union and Progress proved to be most influential in time. Unionists started their rebellions in the Balkans, and they made the sultan restore the constitution with the revival of the parliament. In consequence, a short period of relative freedom began, which lasted until 1913 in which the CUP took the monopoly of power in the state (Somel 2009, 107-110; Hanioğlu 2001, 289-311).

The 1908 Revolution led to the emergence of a liberal public sphere for the empire in which various intellectual issues were discussed. Circassian elites, like other elites of the empire, began to mobilize around various organizations and began to be interested in their national belonging during this period. The Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid (*Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti*) was established in 1908. The founders of the society were important Circassian intellectuals of the era such as Ahmet Cavid Therket Paşa, Met Çunatuko İzzet Paşa, İsmail Berkok and Aziz Meker. Ahmet Cavid Therket Paşa was elected as the chairman and remained so until his death in 1916. Apart from the founding members, the other active members of the society included Fuat Paşa (the Mad), Hayriye Melek Hunç and Mehmet Fetgerey Şöenu.[7] The aims of the organization can be defined as a) to inform Circassians culturally, b) to support trade among Circassians, c) to provide land for agriculture, and d) to serve for the protection of the constitutional regime (Doğan 2009, 37).

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[7] Mehmet Fetgerey Şöenu (1890-1931): Şöenu was an Abkhazian who was born in 1890 in Sapanca. He and some of his friends were the founding members of "Beşiktaş Ottoman Sports Club". He was a teacher and a member of Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Organization (especially during WWI). He worked for Caucasian organizations and made researches in the fields of history and sociology. Some of his works are; "Hayat- İçtimaiye ve Yaşamanın Felsefesi", "Osmanlı Alem-i İçtimaisinde Çerkes Kadınları", and "Çerkeslerin Aslı Mabudlar Neslindedir." (Kozok 2010, 303).

According to Besleney, the history of the organization can be investigated in three phases. The first phase was between the years of 1908 and 1913, i.e. until the year in which the Unionists took control of the state. In this phase, the activities of the organization were mostly socio-cultural. For instance, in 1911, they published a newspaper *Guaze* in Turkish and Adyghe. The second phase was the years between 1913 and 1919 in which CUP exerted its control over political life in the empire. During this phase, *Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti* changed its ways of working. The impacts of members who also worked for the CUP and government increased in the organization and the boundaries between CUP and *Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti* became blurred. Moreover, because most of its members joined the WWI, the activities of the organization almost stopped during this phase. The discussions regarding homeland of the Circassians also became a part of military and strategic plans of the Ottomans. With Enver Paşa's political and financial support, another organization called North Caucasian Political Association (*Şimali Kafkasya Cemiyet-i Siyasiyesi*) was established in 1914. Its purpose was to establish an autonomous state in Caucasia and an important step for the realization of Turan ideology for Enver and the Turanists around him. The Circassians were working to free their 'homeland', establish an Islamic government there while the Turkish rulers supported the idea for the belief that an independent Islamic government in North Caucasus would be a buffer zone between the Turkish (or future Turanist state) state and Russia (Besleney 2016, 82-85). Both their aim and their enemy were the same. The association also ordered attendees:

> "Since the protection of the purity of the race and making the Circassian family life more comfortable is crucial, it will be provided that Circassian men are married to Circassian girls and the marriage of Circassian girls with elements that are not Caucasian and whose line is unknown, especially and solely, in the name of wealth will be prevented (Doğan 2009, 40)."

The third phase began with the year 1919 and ended with the year 1923 in which the association was shut down. During this phase, Istanbul was under the occupation of Allied Powers since the Ottomans and other Central Powers lost the war. As the Circassian elites did not want to draw the attention of Occupying Powers, they withdrew from politics and they began to engage in cultural activities. In 1919, Circassian Women's Mutual Aid Association (Çerkes *Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti*) was established and the community began to carry out most of their activities through this organization. One the most important activities of this society was to establish a school called Circassian Girls School, Çerkes *Numune Mektebi* and publish a magazine called *Diyane* (Besleney 2016, 85). After

the Lausanne Treaty was signed and the authority of Ankara government was recognized, these organizations, Circassian Union and Support Organization, its women's branch and these periodicals were shut down in September 1923. The chairman of the school was even arrested for a while (Gingeras 2011, 12; Doğan 2009, 48).

In addition to protecting the distinct Circassian culture and language and connecting with the North Caucasus, the Circassian intellectuals also aimed at abolishing the Circassian slavery and freeing of Circassian concubines of the harem. For this goal, Çerkes İttihad *ve Teavün Cemiyeti* presented a leaflet in the name of "To the Great Assembly on the Refusal of Slavery and Concubinage" (*Kölelik ve Cariyeliğin Ref'i Hakkında Meclis-i Kirama*). For the same aim, the association also sent a petition on 28 January 1910 to the assembly which says that:

> "With the declaration of the Constitution, it was desired to ensure the equality of the whole nation regardless of religion, sect, gender and race. Even the black people were freed from the slavery and saved from slave-trade, even the animals was protected from the violence but the Circassian nation, as slaves, is devoid of individual rights. The situation fits neither Islam nor the soul of the constitution. It is a great shame that the bondage, which was experienced yet abolished in all nations, continues in the Circassian nation. It seems that the Circassian nation cannot benefit from the law which was declared as 'the right of every Ottoman' with the promulgation of *Kanun-i Esasi*. The captivity of any group of people, no matter the shape and way of it, is against the principles of the state, *Kanun-i Esasi* and the thoughts of the government and the parliamentarians (quoted in Gölen 2018) (Translation is mine)."

Thereupon, the government decided to take steps on the issue, and it freed the Circassian concubines of the harem in 1911 and forbade selling of Circassian slaves (but the Circassian slavery was never forbidden). The Circassian intellectual, Mehmet Fetgeri Şoenü who claimed that "the Circassian girls in the Ottoman harems caused 'the Turan nation' (Turks) to be spiritually and physically more beautiful" (*Şoenü*, 18) evaluated the regulation differently. He said that:

> "Hey the reader! Do not assume that this practice (slave-trade) ended. Today, it still con- tinues hiddenly. The girls are being sold with bargains. Before it was common among the upper classes now it gained a new form in salesmanship: the presentation. Alive girls, human beings are being given out as gifts as if they are commodity! These people are of- ten from lower-class families and this is another way of slave-trade. The continuation of the old trade. Circassians did

> not maintain this voluntarily. The reason for this is the rich and powerful men who live as saying 'Oh no! a man cannot live without his concubines!' (*Şoenü*, 28) (Translation is mine).

Apart from minor exceptions, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the relationship between Circassian community and the Ottoman state was peaceful. Circassian identity was embedded in Ottoman identity. Similarly, most of the Circassian bureaucrats and soldiers also emphasized the embeddedness of these two identities (Doğan 2009, 41). Moreover, being a Circassian nationalist was not in conflict with being a patriot of the Ottoman Empire. As, Eşref Kuşçubaşı[8] said that "he could not deny that he was a Circassian who dreamt of Dagestan (North Caucasus). Yet, he was first and foremost, 'a Muslim Ottoman who spoke Turkish (Gingeras 2011, 5).'"

It seems that Circassian nationalists supported Turanists and vice versa. This is because the Circassian nationalists did not demand land from Anatolia (at least until the declaration of 'The General Statement for the Circassian Nation to the Great Powers by Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights (*Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) in 1921 which had claims on southern Marmara region, mainly on the district of Balıkesir, (Gingeras 2009, 100) their homeland was still North Caucasus (Gingeras 2011, 5). The interests of the Turkish nationalists and the Circassians were not conflicting but overlapping. The Circassians were working to free their 'homeland', establish an Islamic government there and the Turkish rulers supported the idea for the belief that an Islamic independent government in North Caucasus would be a buffer zone between the Turkish (or future Turanist state) state and Russia. Their enemy was common, too. It was the Russian state from outside and the Armenians from inside. For instance, Ahmed Rıza, the leader of the Young Turks, called for the Muslims of Russia to work against their enemy, namely, the Russian state and the Armenians in his letter in 1909 (Avagyan 2004,134-

[8] Eşref Kuşçubaşı (1873-1964): Eşref Bey was the son of kuşçubaşı of the palace, Mustafa Nuri Bey. He was born in 1873 in Istanbul. He graduated as an officer in the cavalry from the military school. Yet, because his father had certain issues with the rule of Abdulhamid , he was exiled to Medina with his father and brother. During his exile, he attempted to escape several times. He even kidnapped the son of Şakir Paşa, the guardian (muhafız) of Medina. This alarmed Abdulhamid and he forgave Eşref in the condition that he must stay in Medina. He continued to rise against Ottoman government here for a while. Later, he made contacts with the Young Turks and made a deal with the Ittihadists. He engaged in paramilitary activities in the Aegean Region to meet the conditions of this deal. He went to Tripoli to organize local tribes against Italian powers during the Turco-Italian War. Upon the outbreak of Balkan Wars, they returned to Istanbul. At the second Balkan War, Eşref was among this militia occupying Thrace at the time. They established "Provisional Government of Western Thrace". However, the Ottomans gave up these lands except for Edirne and opposed to the existence of this polity because they were afraid of the possibility that this polity can become a Circassian state in time. He was the leader of Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa during the World War I. In one of his missions, he was captured by the Bedouins and exiled to Malta by the British forces. After the Turkish War of Independence, he, too, was included in the list of 150 personae non gratae of Turkey. He stayed in Girit until the general amnesty of 1938 and returned to Turkey after the declaration of the amnesty. He passed away in 1964 (Kozok 2010, 351-353). See also Fortna 2016.

135).

The cooperation of the Circassian elites and the Turkish nationalists continued even after the World War I. The Ottomans lost the war, and Russia was experiencing the revolution and civil upheaval. The North Caucasian Muslims formed a republic in 1918 and the Ottomans recognized the nascent state immediately. Even the rise of Mustafa Kemal did not change the support of the Turkish nationalist for the Circassian cause, at first. Mustafa Kemal even gave consent to send a delegation under the command of İsmail Hakkı (Berkok) to the North Caucasus (Gingeras 2011, 9-11). One of the delegates, Mustafa Butbay reported the support of the CUP, and especially Enver Pasha to Şimali Kafkas Organization which was established to create an Islamic Caucasian government (Butbay 1990, 2). However, it seems, the situation changed when Turkish rule in Ankara began to connect with the Soviet Union. Later, with the signing of the Treaty of Moscow in 1921 with Soviet Russia, all the issues about the North Caucasus remained off the table (Gingeras 2011, 11). A transformation from the multinational empire to nation-state was taking place and it was going to have an impact on the Circassian community.

2.4. Circassian Community during the Turkish War of Independence

The era which began with the end of WWI was both hopeful and catastrophic for the Circassian diaspora. On the one hand, Russia and Tsar's power could not survive WWI. This was the great opportunity for Circassians to turn back to their homelands, North Caucasia. Moreover, the importance of Wilson's fourteen points and the right of self-determination of the peoples were recognized by the international authorities. Local rebels also took action to create the Mountaineer Republic, a state which included the lands of Adyghe, Chechens, Dagestanis and the Ingushis. It is unequivocal that during this era North Caucasian peoples of Anatolia hoped to reestablish a connection with or return to homeland (Gingeras 2011, 5).

On the other hand, WWI caused many devastations in the Ottoman Empire. Defeat in war resulted in the fall of Ottoman government and radical changes of its borders. The young Circassian officials and soldiers of the empire thought that it was more urgent to save the empire, their new homelands, from dissolution. That is why, their loyalty to the Ottoman

lands came at the expense of accomplishing their dreams of independence (Gingeras 2011, 5).

With the end of World War I, the Ottoman rule signed the Mudros Armistice in 1918. The treaty allowed the Allied Powers "to seize any strategic points in case of a threat to Allied Powers". Upon the arrival of invading powers in Anatolia, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, national forces resisted the foreign occupation to prevent the partition of Anatolia. The resistance movement received great support from the Circassians. Around a third of the men who joined the Sivas Congress were of North Caucasian descent. Fifteen members of Mustafa Kemal's central "representative committee," (*Heyet-i Temsiliye*), more than a third were Circassian. Among the Circassians who supported Mustafa Kemal's movement, there were Rauf Orbay, Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), Bekir Sami (Kundukh), İbrahim Süreya (Yiğit) and Emir Marşan Paşa. Ryan Gingeras suggests that the contributions provided by North Caucasians to the creation of Mustafa Kemal's government was the reflection of the reality of a great number of Circassians having ascended the ranks of the bureaucracy and, above all, the military from the late nineteenth century onwards. Besides, Mustafa Kemal and the National Forces were waging war against Christian separatists within the country. It may well be the case in which the Circassians came to the aid of their "Muslim brothers" in a time when the Muslim unanimity in the Anatolia was most needed (Gingeras 2011, 6-7).

Not all the Circassians backed the National Movement, however. Some of the Circassians pledged their loyalty to the sultan and the caliphate against the government in Ankara such as Ahmed Anzavur. Anzavur rebelled against the *Kuva-yı Milliye* three times beginning from the 1919. Although Kemalists accused him of being a traitor he had his reasons for rebellion apparently. Anzavur was not a great imperial commander, he was born in Caucasus before the Great Exodus of 1864, he was functionally illiterate, but he was serving as a captain in the gendarmerie thanks to intercession of his sister who was one of the concubines of the Abdülhamid II. He owed his place to the palace and the sultan. Besides, although him and other Circassians around South Marmara served the CUP during the Great War, they acquired nothing but difficulties, economic hardships and suffered tremendous losses and deaths, during the war. Now, *Kuva-yı Milliye*, which was perceived as another form of the CUP by Anzavur and his men, demanding more sacrifices from the Circassians once again. This was unacceptable to Anzavur. In one of the letters of Anzavur,

which he sent to Kara Hasan, his Pomak rival to explain to him the greater danger posed by Kuva-yı Milliye, Anzavur could articulate the feelings of most Circassians who rebelled against the *Kuva-yı Milliye* (Gingeras 2009, 94-95):

> "It is known by everyone that orderliness is the most important duty of the state and the na- tion, since everywhere that one finds perfect security, [one finds] the Justice of Islam…….. [Koca Süleyman, an unidentified elder]… has explained that the wicked Unionists and Free Masons are the ones who have brought forth the marauding and banditry to this Islamic government for the last ten years. He curses these people. They have violently affected this situation, [even] calling you a bandit. …… In the time when the children and women of martyrs were eating grass and earth and dying of hunger, [the Unionists] took official pos- sessions of their homes. In the time when those traitors in the military offices were having helva and lamb feasts, they were taking houses as bribes from *Musevi* Nesim [Nesim the Jew] and others. …. I wish to try all of those who pray five times a day so that they will be accountable to God. …. Have recourse to the *müftü* and take the correct fatwa. Do not assist one individual from those intractable Muslims. I ask this: who is that denied to us re- ligious sacredness of the exalted peace of the prophet and the Qa'ba to which Muslim pray? Who is that cast Muslim children into the sea at the Straits of Çanakkale? Who is it who destroyed these children in the Caucasus Mountains, in the deserts of the the Arab lands, in Iran, in Janina and in the mountains of Romania? Are they not the Young Free Masons who today gave documents to a hundred thousand Muslim women and girls in İstanbul made them into prostitutes? Currently there can categorically be no other party other than the Party of Mohammed that can save our Muslim brothers. … I shall pursue those vile men who have besmirched the Caliph and the Muslim state. I shall be protector of the government and a slave according to the just decrees of our Shariah." (quoted in Gingeras 2009, 98-99)

Yet, "the real Circassian treason" was that of Ethem Bey for the Kemalists. The issue was about the elimination of irregular forces in favor of a regular army, however it had a wider range of consequences. Ethem defied Mustafa Kemal's orders and he surrendered his command to the Greek commander on the Aegean front when he was defeated. The consequences were destructive for the North Caucasian diaspora. It led to the association of the name "Circassian" with the traitor and the Circassians had been implicitly or explicitly perceived as the relatives of Çerkes Ethem in the official historiography of the Turkish Republic. Many Circassians had to hide their Circassian origins because of this. Those who did not hide were often called grandsons/granddaughters of the traitor Ethem. Çerkes Ethem has not been called "the traitor" in the books since 1960s yet the identification continues (Doğan 2009, 48).

Apart from these, there were other dissenting Circassians who formed the Association for

the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights (*Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) which declared that all North Caucasians in Anatolia should abandon the nationalist struggle and form a joint Greek-Circassian protectorate in northwestern Anatolia (Gingeras 2011, 8). They released a document and sent it to the Great Powers with the name 'The General Statement of the Circassian Nation to the Great Powers and the Civilized World'. They made very striking statements in this document:

> "The authorities signed below are the representatives of Circassian people of western Anatolia, which is today, under the Greek occupational army, [….]
> The population of Circassians today residing in Anatolia is at the very least two million. Circassians defend and maintain their national traditions through language, customs, feel- ings and civilization. […] They are in the contemporary family of civilizations are part of the white race and the distinguished Aryan family. […..]
>
> […..]
> Thirteen years before with the institution of constitutional rule, the Turkish administration became bereft of correct policies. Now filled with feeling (stemming from) Turkism and Turanism, Turkish administrators followed at this unique moment in history [….] Turkification towards the various Ottoman nationalities. With the destruction of the nationalities and the destruction of vital security of non-Turks, the Circassians stirred with the resentment coming from a 'pure desire of self-preservation'. Because of these continuous calamities Circassians have [moved towards] a national goal of self-preservation and commit themselves armed resistance against the mass murder the Circassian nation.
>
> [….] Nevertheless, a very small portion of Circassians joined the Anatolian revolution- aries (filled with false feelings) right after the ceasefire. Mustafa Kemal (says) his movement supports the foundation of the sultanate yet Kemalists are seen and understood as a movement against humanity and with false policies. Regretfully, a very small number of Circassians have entered into the service of this movement.
>
> Circassians in the Sublime Porte, which continues to support the Caliphate, are especially working together with the Kemalists. Despite this self-sacrifice, (the Porte) still neglects Circassians. After not seeing that they will be saved, Circassians decided correctly and naturally to join the Greek army, which promises to preserve them in the occupation zone. [……] (Gingeras 2009, 125-127)"

This document is a very striking and important one. We can clearly see that a group of Circassians tried to impress especially European countries and demanded "national" recognition by underlining the fact that they are actually part of "white race" and "the distinguished Aryan family" but they had to live under the "cruel", "despotic" Turks and now are trying to get rid of them by appealing the help of Greece. These Circassians,

who rebelled with Anzavur before, now were coming with a different agenda. Anzavur rebelled in the name of the Ottoman sultanate to restore its power and "save" the Muslim State from Unionists. His movement never had a nationalist and separatist tone (officially at least). It seems Circassians saw the end of Anzavur and the fact that the sultanate could not protect him against the National Forces, they turned their faces away from the Sultan and began to side with Greece.

However, at the end the National Forces could crush both the Greek army and the Circassians by 1922. The Circassian notables were executed (purportedly), banished or fled across the border. In 1923, approximately 10.000 North-Caucasians from Gönen and Manyas were forcibly deported to eastern Anatolia (Gingeras 2009, 102). Circassians like the other Muslim but non-Turkish elements in Turkey became the target of a deliberate campaign of suppression in the early years of the Republic. Caucasian languages and even the epithet of 'Circassian' were banned. All in all, during the 1920s, Circassians were alienated from power in Turkey and lost chance of returning to their homeland when the Republic of Northern Caucasus was defeated by the Red Army in 1921 (Doğan 2009, 43).

3. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT OF THE LATE OTTOMAN AND EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA

3.1. Women Activism of the Late Ottoman Era

Women's movement began as a call for freedom and equality. Women began to question their traditional roles that were imposed on them by the society, demanding changes in their conditions and the ways in which the society perceived them. Women's movement for freedom and equality is closely related to the changes and transformations that were taking place in the overall society (Çakır 1994, 18). In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire experienced changes in its political, social, educational, intellectual and legal structure (Çakır 1994, 22). With the impacts of these changes, new schools were founded, communication technologies improved, new ideologies began to be influential among the intelligentsia, more Ottoman subjects learnt how to read, numerous periodicals emerged for them to read, and more people gained a say in the Ottoman political structure. All these changes had an impact on Ottoman women who so far were perceived as the wives of their husbands and mother of their children (Frierson 2004, 103-104; Çakır 1994, 22). Women began to make newer demands in a more active and visible way, using new means of the modernizing empire, such as the establishment of women's associations, the organization of congresses, and meetings, and the use of the press.

In the late Ottoman Empire, for the first time, Ottoman women[9] began to voice their opinions through the press. We can see their writings in newspaper supplements which were reserved for female readers or in women's magazines. Some of the newspapers published

[9] By Ottoman women, I mean Turco-Muslim women of the empire. Despite their impressive activism during this era, the non-Muslim women of the empire will not be a part of this chapter.

women's letters which became a tool for women to express their thoughts. For instance, in one of the issues of *Terakki* newspaper, a letter signed in the name of "Üç Hanım" was published which complained about the bad conditions of parts of boats that were reserved for women. In the letter, women stated that although they pay the same amount of money as men, they must make a journey in uncomfortable conditions. They asked the reasons for this situation from the authorities. Or, in another issue, an illiterate woman had an anonymous letter wrote to state her opinions against polygyny (Çakır 1994, 23).

With the women's periodicals, however, women were able to express their point of view in a more systematic and continuous way. The first journal which was published for women in Ottoman Turkish was *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (Progress of Virtuous Women). It was published in the year of 1868 as a supplement of the newspaper *Terakki* (Çakır 1994, 23). Soon after, others were published such as *Vakit* (Time) or *Mürebbi-i Muhadderat* (Educator of Virtuous Women, 1875), *Ayine* (Mirror, 1875), *Aile* (Family, 1880), İnsaniyet (Humanity, 1883), *Hanımlar* (Ladies, 1883), Şükufezar (Blooming Garden, 1886) *Mürüvvet* (Benevolence, 1888) *Parça Bohçası* (Bundle of Pieces, 1889), *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Ladies Own Gazette, 1895), *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (Ladies Own News, 1895), and *Alem-i Nisvan* (World of Women, 1906) (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 79; Çakır 1994, 22-42).

Among them, Şükufezar was the first periodical which was owned and published only by women. *Arife Hanım* was both the owner of the periodical and one of the writers. Alongside her, there were other women writers who introduced themselves not with the names of their husbands or fathers but with their own names such as Münire, Fatma Nevber, Fatma Nigar. It was stated that "the mission of her journal was to disprove the statement that 'women are long-haired and absent-minded' which was often used by men to ridicule women. We will not prefer manhood over womanhood or womanhood over manhood and we will be obstinate (*payendaz-ı sebat*) in the righteous path of working (*şah-rah-i sa'y-ı amel*)" (Çakır 1994, 26; Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 79).

Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (Ladies Own Gazette) (1895-1909) was the most successful of them all. It was able to continue its publishing life from the years of 1895 up until 1909 and it was financially successful to publish its own supplements for girls and children. It circulated throughout the empire, Russia and Europe. It supported education of women and it aimed at enabling women to continue their education after leaving school, to train them

as good Muslims, good wives and capable mothers of loyal Ottoman subjects. There was a new trend towards re-examination and adoption of a women's utmost duty- to raise good, healthy and devout children to the demands of modernizing and patriotic state, raising loyal Ottoman subjects and later patriotic Turks (Frierson, 105-109).

Even though women's press began in the late nineteenth century, it bloomed after the 1908 Revolution. Some of the journals which were published during this era were *Demet* (Bouquet, 1908), *Mehasin* (Virtues, 1908), *Kadın* (Woman, 1908), *Musavver Kadın* (Illustrated Women's Journal, 1911), *Kadın* (Woman, 1911), *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World, 1913), *Kadınlık Hayatı* (Womanhood and Life, 1913), *Seyyale* (Stream, 1914), *Siyaset* (Politics, 1914), *Kadınlık* (Womanhood, 1914), *Osmanlı Kadınlar Alemi* (Ottoman Women's World, 1914), and *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı* (The Light of the Home of Knowledge, 1916) (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 81-82).

Among these periodicals, *Kadınlar Dünyası* is especially important since the periodical adopted a daring and explicit feminist tone, asserting on its first issue, "*Kadınlar Dün*yası will not open its pages to men until our rights are regarded as part of universal rights and women as well as men can participate in all sort of activities". The publishers of the periodical also added that albeit "they were thankful to those men who defended womanhood, they, as Ottoman women, could defend their own rights, using their own methods". The publishers said that "they should leave us alone" and "how can we deign to accept men's benevolence to end the suffering we endure because of them". Clearly, the staff of *Kadınlar Dünyası* comprised entirely of women (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 82).

Compared to women's periodicals of the pre-1908 era, the women's press of Second Constitutional Era "had a more serious and diverse content" (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 88). Owing to a more liberal regime after 1908 and the abolishment of censorship on the press, women of the era were able to express their opinions on various subjects such as feminism, nationalism, women's status in the society and women's clothing. Moreover, unlike the women periodicals of pre-constitutional era, women's journals of the constitutional era were operated mostly by women. Besides, women of the press began to make themselves and other Muslim women "visible" for the first time during the Second Constitutional Era, as different from those of the pre-revolutionary era. For instance, the pictures of Belkıs Şevket

(as a member of *Osmanlı Müdafa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti* and columnist of *Kadınlar Dünyası* magazine), she volunteered to fly with a plane in 1913 and flew over İstanbul with a wooden-bodied plane that was flown by a pilot from a Flight School, becoming the first Turkish-Muslim woman to fly in an aeroplane. (Atamaz 2014, 85-88) Aziz Haydar, who established two girls' schools with her own money, appeared in the press (Atamaz-Hazar, 85-88).

In addition to writing in various magazines, women also began to be organized around various associations in order to realize their demands and make the world they live in a better place. Although there were some charity organizations of women before the Constitutional Era, the numbers of women's organizations increased tremendously during the Second Constitutional Era. Through philanthropic societies such as *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* (The Society for Aid to Soldiers' Families, 1914), and Şehit *Ailelerine Yardım Birliği* (The Society for Aid to Martyred Soldiers' Families, 1914), they helped the people in need especially orphans, widowed women and families of wounded and martyred soldiers. They also organized to help and support women, enable them to increase their education, and to defend their rights in the society. The societies called *Osmanlı ve Türk Hanımları Esirgeme Deneği* (The Society for The Protection of Ottoman and Turkish Ladies), *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Elevation of Women), *Bilgi Yurdu Dersanesi* (The Classroom of the Home of Knowledge), *Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Society for the Defense of Women Rights, 1913). Moreover, to "help defend country by collecting money for the army, attending the needs of the soldiers, and the organizing public meetings to motivate as well as to mobilize women to work for the salvation of the nation", they established patriotic societies such as *Müdafa-i Milliye Hanımlar Cemiyeti* (Woman's Chapter of the Society of National Defense) (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 88-98; Çakır 1994, 43-78).

Also, women of late Ottoman era began to be actively involved in various parts of social life as opposed to the claims of Turkish nationalist historiography. For instance, many women were able to establish their own businesses. Thanks to the reforms that were made with 1908 Revolution, they were able to operate their businesses on their own, freely, not needing anyone to act on their behalf. They partook in various strikes to improve their working conditions, to raise their wages, lessen their working hours and to change some unsuitable conditions in the factories which caused illnesses. A number of women were able to partake

in the 1908 Revolution itself. For instance, Emine Semiye, the sister of Fatma Aliye was the most prominent one among these female revolutionaries and she was one of the first people who arrived at the Freedom Square on 24 July. The Ottoman women also began to give lectures during the final years of the empire. The most distinguished of these lecturers was Fatma Nesibe Hanım who had a deep knowledge on various subjects such as history, sociology, and feminism. She gave a series of conferences in İstanbul in the year of 1911 which were known as "white conferences" since everything in the rooms in which these lectures took place were white (Atamaz-Hazar 2010, 98-107).

3.2. Between 1918 and 1923

From 1914 until 1918, the Ottomans were at war against the Allied Powers of Europe. After they lost the war, they signed first, Mudros Armistice (1918) and then Sevres Treaty (1920) with the victorious countries. These treaties made the Ottoman lands vulnerable for occupation. Both the war itself and the subsequent occupations affected Ottoman people tremendously. For the women, they tried to continue their activism in these harsh conditions and began to do works of men who were at battlefronts of the WWI. During this era, leading Ottoman women such as Halide Edib, Nezihe Muhiddin and Şukufe Nihal were especially active (Akagündüz 2012, 324).

WWI have dealt a severe blow to the press as it was the case for other sectors. During the war years, many newspapers and magazines closed because of war conditions. However, towards the end of war, women magazines begin their publishing lives. In this era, the periodicals such as *Türk Kadını* (the Turkish Woman) (1918), *Genç Kadın* (the Young Woman) (1919), *İnci* (the Pearl, which is later named as *Yeni İnci*) (1919-1921), *Süs* (Ornament) (1923), *Diyane* (the Mother of Our Nation) (1920), *Hanım* (Lady) (1921) and *Ev Hocası* (Teacher of the House) (1923) began to publish their issues (Akagündüz 2012, 329-332).

In these periodicals, woman continued to demand improvements in their conditions, taking the conditions of "developed" countries as an example. For instance, one of the writers of the *Genç Kadın* magazine, Hatice Refik stated that people needed to be saved from the sovereignty of the past. In her writing entitled, "İçtimaiyat: Yeni Kadın", she

stated that the past, which resembles the old clocks in the walls which were passed from the grandfathers, should not overtake the developments today. Using these old clocks, instead of the new ones, result in blocking the advantages introduced by innovation. For her, while taking the beautiful aspects of the past with us, we should think how far these aspects can carry us into the future. The women issue exactly resembles the issue with these old clocks. It means that, people should make sense of the women not with the arguments of the past but with progressive arguments of the changing world, their concrete existence should be shaped around the incidents and circumstances which were becoming modernized (Akagündüz 2012, 333):

> "In this issue, the opinions vary. However, we can collect these various ideas and reach a conclusion. The old woman accepted her life as it is, she could not see the narrowness of her circle, and she lived in a surrounding which is convenient of her needs. However, her representative today (*mümessil*) teared down the curtain (*perde*) of condemnation (*mahkumiyet*), she is not narrow-minded, narrow-emotional, and narrow-wishful anymore. Now, everything has changed. We do not need that big clock passed from our grandfathers which occupy a great place. The clocks which have a working voice system and are wound up rarely are perfectly fine with showing the right time. Yes, the life has changed (Translation is mine)."

Seza Poh, one of the Circassian intellectuals of the era, demanded a more superior status for women in her article in the *Diyane.* She said the years in which women could use their natural skills freely were the richest years of the communal life. She compared the Ottoman women's conditions to the conditions of European countries and said that in the developed countries, women were able to compete with men in every aspect of life. For her, it is an obligation to offer these kinds of ambitious women a more superior status in the cultural and social life. Of course, to be able to adopt to changing conditions of a changing world, women should get rid of the troubles of the past by using their minds, acquire knowledge, overcome the heavy responsibilities with honor and courage. She asserted that the nations which do not give the women the place they deserve cannot develop, and modern rights are indispensable for women's rise and freedom. In this context, she argued, the advantages of the concepts which were developed during the Enlightenment Era for men such as the right, the law, freedom and property should be given to women, too (cited in Akagündüz 2012, 333-334).

We can see clearly that women activists supported and encouraged progress and reform. Yet,

one can also observe a hidden patriarchy in these magazines and writings as it was the case for the earlier ones. The main topics of the magazines revolved around the issues of housework, being a good mother and a good wife (Akagündüz 2012, 343). Also, there is an obvious consideration to shape the women of the era. In one of the issues of the *İnci* magazine it was stated that:

> "We can see women primarily in two scenes of the life. One [scene] is family life. The other [scene] is general life. Women need guides and assistants in order to be successful in both of them. A good family woman should know to arrange and ornament her home, to make it a nice home, should not entrust the rooms of her house to foreign hands, if it is needed, she should enter to the kitchen and prepare dinner. Every Turkish woman should be a good mother, it is a greatest need that she should raise her children according to the his own and time's needs (quoted in Çetin and Tüzer 2017, 206) (Translation is mine)."

During this era, women mobilized to defend not only their rights but also the interests of their country. 1918 onwards, the Allied Powers and their collaborators began to occupy the Ottoman lands. Women organized meetings and establish organizations to protest the occupations. *Asri Kadınlar Cemiyeti* (Contemporary Women's Associations) which was established in İstanbul in 1918, (it was initially established to improve women's education yet upon the arrival of the occupying forces, it began its demonstrations), *Manisa Türk Kadınlığı Cemiyeti Umumiyesi* (The General Organization of Manisa Turkish Womanhood which was probably established after the occupation of İzmir by Greek forces, because of the rumors saying that Manisa, too, will be occupied within short period of time, to prevent a potential occupation of Manisa, *Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti* (Red Crescent Association) which helped the soldiers of the battlefront in their health and clothing issues were some of these organizations (Sarıçoban 2017, 1337). However, among them the most influential one was *Anadolu Kadınları Müdafaa-ı Hukuk-ı Vatan Cemiyeti* (Anatolian Women Countrywide Resistance Organization).

This organization was established after the Congress of Sivas (4-12 September 1919) with the directive of the governor of Sivas, Reşit Paşa, by his wife, Melek Hanım. Its center was in Sivas yet, various branches of the organization were established throughout Anatolia to resist the foreign invasion (in Amasya, Kayseri, Niğde, Erzincan, Burdur, Pınarhisar, Kangal, Konya, Denizli, Kastamonu, Yozgat, Aydın, Viranşehir). The organization sent criticizing telegrams both to the Allied Powers and the government of Istanbul. They advocated the idea that the lands in which the majority is the Turkish

population should belong to the Turkish people, relying on the principles of Wilson. They objected the idea of mandate and patronage from the occupying forces. They enabled the active involvement of women in the resistance (Sarıçoban, 1337,1339; Kaplan 1998, 87-137).

Ottoman people began to arrange meetings, too, to protest the occupations. Especially after the occupation of İzmir, the protests increased throughout Anatolia. Women actively participated in these meetings. They even gave important and influential speeches during the meetings which took place İstanbul and condemned the Allied Powers and their imperialistic policies during these meetings. For instance, in the Üsküdar meeting (20 May 1919), Sabahat Hanım who spoke for the Asri Kadınlar Cemiyeti said that:

> "We are wounded by the same sorrow and grief. We are living in the face of a tyranny, in the face of a right that is usurped. Yet, it is us, women, mothers and sisters who are the unhappiest. We did not feel sorrow even when we are losing most valuable members of our family to acquire the right to live in our country in a peaceful and comfortable way. We sacrificed our martyrs to save this country. However, this right is invisible right now (….) See, today, the Greeks already took İzmir which has a Turkish soul and life. Maybe, they will want our Konya, Bursa, even our dear İstanbul with its all beauty, like they are taking away something from our chest, a life from our hearts (quoted in Kaplan 1998,74) (Translation is mine)."

In her famous Sultanahmet speech, Halide Edib had the same tone, she said that "Turks never let anyone touch the everlasting right (right to freedom) of Turkey, tomorrow the tyrants (the Occupying countries) will give an account of what they did in the supreme court (*mahkeme-i kübra*) of God (….) That day, they will acknowledge you (the audience) to be right, today we have two friends. One is the world of Islam whose hearts and temple are with us and the other is the great nations who have the right to chuck these tyrants out (quoted in Kaplan 1998, 76-77) (Translation is mine)."

3.3. Under the Republican Regime

After the establishment of the Republic, the Kemalist regime chose to modernize and westernize Turkey, raising "the traditional society" to the "level it deserved in the civilized world" (Arat 2000, 108). An extensive reform project was carried out, in consequence.

This led to some developments in terms of women's rights such as the adoption of Swiss civil code in 1926 which gave extensive rights to women. In the following years, the Kemalist movement continued to improve women's conditions, and in 1930, the women were given the right to elect and to be elected at the municipal level, in 1934, at the national level. Satı Çırpan, Mebrure Gönenç, Şükran Örs (Baştuğ), Sabiha Gökçül were some of the women who were chosen as members of parliament with the support of Mustafa Kemal (Hanioğlu 2011, 208-209; Kaplan 1998, 205).

The Kemalist regime imagined a "Republican woman", who was considered as nationalist, educated, dressed according to "civilized" fashion, professional, secular and has "*l'esprit républicain*", and imposed this draft on the women of Turkey. To do this, the Kemalists designated certain women as "role models" such as Sabiha Gökçen, one of the adopted daughters of Mustafa Kemal who was also a combat pilot, Keriman Halis (a Circassian)- later given the family name of "Ece" meaning "queen", the winner of The Miss Turkey pageants and who was considered as "an exemplar of the exquisitely preserved beauty of the Turkish race" by Mustafa Kemal himself, and Afet İnan, a history teacher (later professor) who was an ardent defender of Turkish history thesis (Hanioğlu 2011, 210-213).

Nonetheless, alongside all the reforms, the Republican regime was authoritarian; the Kemalists supported the women's movement as far as it espoused the Republican ideology and served the state without criticism. These role models were chosen not among women who were pursuing a feminist agenda but among the women who were serving the interests of the state, fully embracing its ideology, in Mustafa Kemal's words, acting like "mothers of the nation" (Hanioğlu 2011, 210). Besides, the reforms could not reach the majority of the women of Anatolia and had a superficial impact on the affected women. This small minority of Kemalist women who have not yet gone beyond the traditional roles of being a mother and wife began to appear in the city centers with their modern costumes. Yet, even though we can say that the women were given the civil rights in this process, their individuality and individual rights were overlooked. Moreover, she did not have the right to define her own rights, it was the privilege of the Kemalist state. Deniz Kandiyoti defined the women as "emancipated but unliberated" (Kandiyoti,1987), Ayşe Kadıoğlu called these women "costume modern" (*kostüm moderni*) (Kadıoğlu 2013, 74-76).

Although the Kemalists insisted that the women's rights were given by the benevolence of

a small group of Kemalist men, the activism of women, especially Nezihe Muhiddin and *Türk Kadınlar* Birliği, was essential in this process. Nezihe Muhiddin was one of the most important feminist women of the era. She and a group of women began to voice their demands for gender equality more strongly after 1922 because they thought the women approved themselves with their efforts in the wartime period, and the new regime was going to be more egalitarian. That is why, they attempted to establish a new party for women, called *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* in the years of 1922 and 1923. The founders and the administrative committee of the party consisted of influential feminists such as Nezihe Muhiddin (the chair), Nimet Rumeyde, Şukufe Nihal, Latife Bekir, Seniyye İzzeddin, Muhsine Salih, and Matlube Ömer. In this party, women declared that they were not going to be passive and they were aspiring to be involved in the foundation of the new regime, fighting for their social and political rights. After all the efforts, these women's request to form a new party was declined on the basis that women did not have the right to vote (Balcı and Tuzak 2017, 46-48).

For this reason, instead of a political party, this time, the women were organized around *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (1924). It was the first women's association which was established after the foundation of Republic. Nezihe Muhiddin and others around her pressed the regime to recognize women's rights. Between 1924 and 1927, the organization was run by Muhiddin. She was making bold statements and demands regarding the women's issue. Yet, the government responded her with restrictions. This resulted in disagreement in the *Birlik*. Some of the women of the organization thought that Muhiddin was "too" demanding and dreamer, she was not taking the conditions of the day into consideration and her behavior gave rise to hostility between the government and the *Birlik*. That is why, Muhiddin and her team were taken from the leadership and replaced with Sadiye Hanım. After Sadiye Hanım's short period of leadership, Latife Bekir Hanım who was much more moderate that Muhiddin took the control of the organization. She declared her unconditional commitment for the regime and tried not to come into conflict with it. In 1935, *Birlik* annulled itself because of the pressures coming from the government (Balcı and Tuzak, 46-48).

For the women's press, *Asar-ı Nisvan* (Works of Women) (1926), which was named as "*Kadın Yazıları*" (Writings of Women) after its twentieth issue, *Kadın Yolu* (the Path of Woman) (1925) which was named as *Türk Kadın Yolu* (The Path of the Turkish Woman) after

its fourth issue, *Firuze* (Turquoise) (1924), *Çalıkuşu* (Scrubbird) (1926), *Hanımlar Alemi* (The World of Ladies) (1929), *El-İşi* (Handiwork) (1929), *Aile Dostu* (Friend of Family) (1931), *El Yemekleri* (Homemade Food) (1931), *Cumhuriyet Kadını* (The Republican Woman) (1934), *Salon* (the Saloon) (1934), *Kadın Moda Albümü* (Women Fashion Album) (1935), *Ev-İş* (Home-Work) (1937), *Model* (the Model) (1937), *Okul Kızı* (the Schoolgirl) (1937), *Ana* (Mother) (1938), *El İşleri* (Handiworks) (1938) were among the women's magazines which were published during this era (Davaz-Mardin 1998, 12). It seems that women's participation was low in the management of these magazines so that according to the study of Davaz-Mardin (1998), between the years of 1929-1950, 29 women's magazines were published, among them only one was owned and edited by women, and four of them owned by men and edited by women. Moreover, one can say that these magazines were heavily affected by nationalism, anti-imperialism and patriotism. In this atmosphere, they aimed at constructing an ideal Turkish woman. The definition of the motherhood was also made according to nationalist perspectives which do not question motherhood and consider it as an indispensable part of womanhood, prioritizing the needs of the new state in this respect. Women were usually depicted as "other-centered" and "devoted". It can be said that the women's magazines of the early Republican era showed neither a feminist nor an egalitarian approach in terms of relationship between spouses (Duman 2006, 90).

4. HAYRIYE MELEK HUNÇ

4.1. The Life of Hayriye Melek Hunç

Hayriye Melek Hunç was born in 1886[10] in Hacıosman village, a village of Manyas district which is located in Balıkesir province of northwest Anatolia. This village was one of the villages of Anatolia which was inhabited by Circassian refugees who were expelled from Caucasia by Russian authorities (Toumarkine 2013, 317). Circassians refugees settled down in many villages of Anatolia; while some places were reserved only for the Circassians, in other villages Circassians began to live alongside different Muslim communities of Ottoman Empire (Çare 2018, 6). The village of Hacıosman was established by and belonged to the Oubykhs, a tribe which was expelled en masse from Caucasia because of its bellicosity and resistance against Russian expansionism. The Oubykh tribe settled in three regions of Anatolia: Izmit-Sapanca, Samsun, and Manyas. The Oubykhs of Manyas either settled in existing Turkish villages or formed separate neighborhoods; Hacıosman village was one of these neighborhoods (Toumarkine 2013, 317).

The Oubkyhs had a hierarchical social structure with nobles, freeman and slaves. Hayriye Melek belonged to a well-known and influential noble clan, the Hunç (Toumarkine 2013, 317), who were founding members of the village (for this reason, the village was also known as Hunca Hable, which means the neighborhood/village of Hunç) (Çare 2018, 6). For instance, the first husband of Melek's mother (Ayşe Hanım), Kasbolat Bey was influential and powerful enough to mobilize Circassian horsemen in the Manyas region as a voluntary auxiliary unit against Russia during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878. However, when he passed away in the same war, Melek's mother was married off to Kasbolat Bey's

[10] The date of her year of birth varies in different sources yet according to passport records and the district registry office of Manyas, she was born in 1886 (Çare 2018, 6).

brother Mehmet Bey. Mehmet bey and Ayşe Hanım had Hayriye Melek and her two sisters, Faika and Naciye Hanıms, from this marriage. Ali Sait Paşa (Akbaytugan), Fatma Hanım, Atiye Hanım and Saraylı Hanım, whose real name do not exist in the documents, were her half-siblings from her mother's first marriage (Çare 2018, 6).

As a member of a family with means, Hayriye Melek was able to study at the Catholic girls' school of Notre Dame de Sion in İstanbul. She already knew several languages and dialects of the northwest Caucasus, attending this school gave her education in French (Toumarkine 2013, 318). Musa Ramazan, a Caucasian refugee from the Dagestan region who came to Turkey with Aytek Namitok, Hayriye Melek's husband, stated that Melek knew Arabic and English alongside these languages (Musa Ramazan and Aytek Namitok (husband of Melek Hunç) visited Hayriye Melek and her farm in Manyas. In this way he gained information about her life here and wrote this information in his memoirs called "Bir Kafkas Göçmeninin Anıları". (The parts regarding Hayriye Melek Hunç and her husband will be referred to in the following pages of this chapter.)

She began to work in the Yıldız Palace thanks to her sister, Faika Hanım who became the wife of Şehzade Ömer Hilmi Efendi. In the palace, she worked as a translator for foreign female guests. At one stage, she and her sisters were banished by Abdülhamid II to Bursa and they had to wait up until the declaration of constitution in 1908 to return to İstanbul. When they were in exile in Bursa, she sent letters to İstanbul, stating the injustice they experienced and demanding their right to return to İstanbul again. In one of the letters they sent they called themselves as "Turkish Jeannes d'Arc". In one of the letters she wrote to the sadrazam in February 1908, she stated that:

> "Sir! We wrote the day before yesterday, we wrote this morning, you are quiet again! We are captives, we are victims, we are desperate. We were oppressed and we are being op- pressed; yet we are not incapable, coward and hypocritical. No, we will not accept these (accusations?) We will not lose heart no matter how fancy our prison is, how glittering your means are. The order of this oppression was given by the 'inquisition party' in Beşiktaş. And, you sir, you are one of the executive officers of this party. It should be admitted that, you are doing your job very well (quoted in Çare 2018, 6) (Translation is mine)".

Hayriye Melek Hunç was a woman of strong and rebellious character who had a rich imagination (Toumarkine 2013, 317). At the same time, the painter Naciye Neyyal who witnessed her life in Bursa, stated that she was a knowledgeable and gentle woman with a

romantic soul (Neyyal 2000). Yet, she seems to have had some psychological and emotional problems, as again Neyyal reported, she attempted to commit suicide before their arrival in Bursa, drinking arsenic. She tried to kill herself a second time when they were staying in Bursa but her attempt to kill herself failed once again (Mutlu 2012,7).

After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Hayriye Melek was able to return to İstanbul when women's press began to blossom. Her first works appeared in *Mehasin* (September 1908-November 1909). She published at least[11] five literary works, short stories and poetry.[12] In 1910, she published a novel called *Zühre-i Elem* (The Sorrow of Shepherd's Star]. She continued to publish her other works in other periodicals. She also actively supported the Circassian cause. She joined the Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti (the Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid) which was created in 1908. She contributed to the social and cultural activities of the association; she collected financial contributions for a Circassian school, helped in the development of a Circassian alphabet in non-Arabic letters, and contributed to the publication of books on the Circassians and their culture (Toumarkine 2013, 319). She also contributed to *Guaze* [The Guide], a periodical published in 1911 by the Circassian Association. Her writings in Guaze included "Bir Hikaye-i Harp" (A War Story), "Altun Zincir" (Golden Chain), "Dil ve Eğitim" (Language and Education), "Bir Sefer Gecesi" (A Night of Campaign), "Beylik-Kölelik" (Seigniory- Slavery), and "Baskın" (The Raid) (Guşıps, 2014).

Throughout World War I, Hayriye Melek continued to be involved in Circassian activism. For instance, in 1918, she became the cofounder and president of a Circassian women's mutual aid society, Çerkes Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti. She was also involved in the founding of a pilot Circassian school which was opened in Akaretler, in the Dolmabahçe district.[19] During this time, she was also actively involved in the women's issues and she never left the circle of female writers and journalists. In August 1918, she published a long article entitled "Islam Kadını" [The Muslim Women] in the Turkish nationalist journal *Türk yurdu* [Turkish Home] (Toumarkine 2013, 319-320).

[11] A number of her works may have been published under a pseudonym.

[12] Çırpınışlar" (The Beating of Wings), "Firar" (The Escape), "Inkisar-ı Hayal" (Broken Dream) and "An-ı Zaaf" (A Moment of Weakness), "Şiir-i Girizan" (Girizan's Poem).

During the War of Independence (1919-1922) she both supported the Turkish nationalist cause and continued to be involved in Circassian activism, thinking that these two strands were not in contradiction. On 22 May 1919, Hayriye Melek joined Halide Edip, Münevver Saime, and Zeliha Osman in one of the demonstrations which was held to protest the landing of Greek troops in İzmir (Toumarkine 2013, 320). In this meeting she gave a speech after the harangue of Halide Edip and asserted that: "All civilizations should know that the dampness in these lands has been created by the blood of this race infiltrating since centuries into the deepest layers of the soil. These lands are ours and will remain ours so long as the blood in our veins not dry out, as our hearts continue to beat. Rest assured that today three hundred million people cry out saying that 'O Great Allah! Turk is oppressed'. [They] demand God's manifested glory (shekinah). So long as God does not show up his glory, this voice shall not cease, be quiet, like the blood of the Turk." (Kaplan 1998, 76) (Translation is mine.)"

In September 1919, Melek married Çunatuko Met Yusuf İzzet Paşa (a Shapsug and another Ottoman nationalist). He was the commander of the 19th Army corps and one of the Ottoman commanders which sided with the nationalist movement in Ankara. He was also one of the leading Circassian intellectuals of the era who was known especially for his works on the history of Caucasus (Toumarkine 2013, 320). Yusuf Paşa was forced to leave occupied İstanbul and go to Ankara; he then became the deputy of Bolu and commander of the Balıkesir and Bursa regions. During this time, Hayriye Melek returned to Bursa once again to live with her husband. Yet, while Yusuf Paşa was in Ankara, the Greek

In September 1919, Melek married Çunatuko Met Yusuf İzzet Paşa (a Shapsug and another Ottoman nationalist). He was the commander of the 19th Army corps and one of the Ottoman commanders which sided with the nationalist movement in Ankara. He was also one of the leading Circassian intellectuals of the era who was known especially for his works on the history of Caucasus (Toumarkine 2013, 320). Yusuf Paşa was forced to leave occupied İstanbul and go to Ankara; he then became the deputy of Bolu and commander of the Balıkesir and Bursa regions. During this time, Hayriye Melek returned to Bursa once again to live with her husband. Yet, while Yusuf Paşa was in Ankara, the Greek forces came to Bursa and she escaped to İstanbul secretly (Mutlu 2012, 5). In March 1920, the Circassian Women's Mutual Aid Society published a journal called *Diyane*. Hayriye Melek served as the president of the association and the editor-in-chief of the review (Toumarkine 2013,

320). She defined the purpose of *Diyane* as "a calling for the Circassian youth to study and to publish about our national (Circassian) existence, and to develop and mature this national existence at the maximum level in the fields of history, language, literature, art music and social life". She added that "while we are making this call, we are calling with the voice of a mother's affection and excitement who has suffered a lot yet in the end discovered the secret which will make her child happy. I am sure that every Circassian who has a real national soul will understand the affection and righteousness in this voice and will run to gather as a powerful mass around the cause which is shown by it (Jineps n.d.)."

Melek lost her husband in 1922. Moreover, a year later, all the activities of Circassians were forbidden by the Kemalist regime. Because of this, Melek was no longer involved in Circassian activism and remained silent up until 1926. She broke her literary silence in that year and published her second novel entitled *Zeynep* (Toumarkine 2013, 320). After the death of her husband she lived in both Egypt and Tunisia and in 1931 she married Aytek Namitok (Mutlu 2012, 11). Namitok was a lawyer and member of the government of the Republic of the North Caucasus from 1918 to 1920. After they got married, they moved to Paris and stayed in France until 1942, like most of the other political émigrés fighting for independence from USSR rule. Melek helped her husband in his researches on the history and folklore of the North Caucasus. In 1942, Namitok left Paris and went to Berlin. There, he began to engage in anti-Soviet activities with other political émigrés. Yet, after the end of WWII, he was captured and imprisoned by the US forces. In 1942, she also left Paris and moved to the Dümbe village of Manyas region and she began to work in a farm which she herself established (Çare 2018, 6).

Only in 1949, Aytek Namitok was able to rejoin his wife in Turkey. Yet, his Dagestani travel companion, Musa Ramazan, reported in his memoirs that Hayriye Melek was not so happy to see him again because he had communicated little in the years in which they were apart and he did not seem excited enough to have found her again (Toumarkine 2013, 321). He said that: "The professor (Namitok) was talking with her wife most of the time in French and sometimes in Circassian. It was the professor who talked most. As far as I understand, he was accounting for the past 25 years and apologizing. For the professor, the situation was difficult (Ramazan, 146)." For the life in the farm in general he wrote that: "I was staying in the same room with the professor. Hayriye Melek was really working like a man, she was ruling the whole farm [all by herself]. On the other hand, Aytek Bey

was spending time only by eating and resting. I guess he was not a kind of person who can handle and comply with this way of life. Tough, they did not seem so resentful, but he did not look like someone who is suitable for the working order of his wife (Ramazan, 147)."

We do not know how much time they lived in this farm yet in the last years of their life they moved to Istanbul and lived there. Upon their arrival to İstanbul, Melek began to work for the North Caucasus associations which began to reappear after WWII with the development of the multi-party system and the beginning of the Cold War. She helped Professor Georges Dumézil in his work in linguistics. She passed away at the end of October 1963 three months after the death of her husband Aytek Namitok. She was buried at Karacaahmet Cemetery (Toumarkine 2013, 321).

4.2. Circassian Nationalism in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç

4.2.1. The Importance of the History/Memory of Russo-Circassian Wars (1763-1864)

Circassian resistance against Russian forces and subsequent exile of Circassians from the Caucasus has a significant place in Melek's works. Melek reminds her readers that, although the Circassians fought with a powerful state in dignity and with great courage, they were defeated, massacred and they suffered a cruel injustice. In consequence, they had to leave their homeland and settled in the Ottoman lands. For her, this memory of what happened to the Circassians, is a fundamental part of Circassian identity and thus, it should be commemorated faithfully. The stories of "Bir Hikaye-i Harp" (A War Story), "Bir Sefer Gecesi (A Night of Campaign), and "Baskın" (The Raid) is directly about Circassian resistance and takes place in the context of Russo-Circassian Wars (Guşıps, 2014).

A War Story (Hunç, 1911a) which was dedicated to the "souls of all the Caucasian heroes who were either not valued or not remembered", is about the impacts of Russian attacks on the Circassian community and the willingness of Circassians to fight back this "cruel and commanding" force to save their homeland and freedom. In the story, before the arrival of Russians, the Circassian people live in peace in the endless greens of Caucasus under the blue sky and white clouds. There is nothing but only love, affection and joy in the Circassian community, they play *ney* (reed) and *pşine* (Circassian harmonica) and they

enjoy themselves to repletion. When the Russians come, Circassian men become soldiers who fight with "pride and grandness". When they depart, they leave villages behind them that were burnt and devastated, and resilient and decisive young people who continue to hold their swords solidly and mothers, who just saved their children from being bayonetted, with eyes full of desire for revenge and with a steady smile in their lips.

In the story, Circassians witness the deaths of their beloved ones yet there is joy, honor and smile; they are full of pride even in death. Circassian mothers who embrace her sons for the last time says that "I am happy that my son did not die from an ordinary illness, in his comfortable bed in a low and dishonorable way while the brave men of this land are fighting in blood to protect their chastity, freedom and lives." Recep is one of the young and brave men who were willing to fight in the war of "people who demand their rights to freedom and life between survival and death and a mob who aspires to dishonesty and belligerence". He is the last son of his family and joins in the war like his uncle Muhammed Ace, "who is still clashing with the enemy like an old lion". During the war, Recep fights bravely and heroically killing whomever he finds in the Russian lines. However, at one point, he gets injured and he begins to lose blood. When he understands that he is going to die, he smiles with a pride and yells that: "Uncle, have you ever seen yourself as elevated as this much in your entire life?"

We can see the same themes in the story entitled "A Night of Campaign" (Hunç, 1911b) The story is about a campaign between a small number of brave and talented Circassian warriors and a Russian troop. The campaign is being narrated by an old yet energetic warrior to his friends who are younger than him. He says that when he was young, he and some of his friends came across Russians on the way to their villages. The Circassian warriors attacked the Russian soldiers fearlessly although they were outnumbered. They defeated the Russians and killed many of them. The ones who were not dead ran away from the Circassians leaving the corps of their fellows behind. Out of seven bodies, three of the Circassians became martyrs. Four of them took the corpses of their friends and left the place trampling on the remaining dead bodies of Russian soldiers. After the old man finishes his memory, the crowd sees a man coming towards themselves and they all stand up. He seems to report an attack because all of the Circassians mount and whip their horses to go as fast as possible looking forward to joining in a new battle with the enemy.

"The Raid" (Hunç, 1911c) is about a Russian attack on a Circassian wedding. The story narrates a ruthless massacre by Russian forces. It involves scenes of women and children, innocent people dying in horrific ways. In this story, too, a small number of courageous young men resist a powerful Russian troop to protect their homeland and "chastity" of their wives and sisters. We can see that here the writer associates the protection of homeland with the protection of women's "chastity", a common theme in nationalist literature. According to this way of thinking, in the face of an attack by a foreign force, not only the country's safety but also the "chastity" of its women is in jeopardy. It is the utmost duty of the men of the country to save and to protect both. They should know that in case of their failure, their wives and sisters' (women are defined through their relationships with men) honors will be violated. As for the women whose chastity is threatened, nationalist way of thinking suggests that they should choose an "honorable death" over the "shameful bed" of the enemy. The story asserts this way of thinking. In the end, when Circassian men are defeated and when they are killed, a Russian soldier begins to approach the bride of the wedding with a perverted smile. Then, the bride says that:

> "You are smiling at me! There is a smile in your bloody eyes and in your lips that drank the blood of my sisters and brothers. But, do not you know that I am a Circassian girl? I am the daughter of these lands which were kneaded with the bloods that you shed, these houses which burnt with the fire you opened, these people who were choked by the poison of your breaths. Yes, a Circassian girl! A daughter of a brave and chaste nation who prefers the hot bitterness of the fire over degrading and ignominious comfort in your arms. Look! Look at how she runs into the death with courage and strength by freezing your ambivalent smile with her laughter (Translation is mine). (Hunç, 1911c)."

She kills herself entering a house which is burning at the moment.

Although indirectly, there are also passages in the *Zühre-i Elem* regarding the memory of the Russo-Circassian Wars and subsequent exile. The novel is about a sensitive and sentimental Circassian young woman called Beria and her hopes and dreams for being loved by her father and finding love with her uncle's son Sabih. Because she loses her mother and stays with her father, the love of her father is important for her. Yet, she thinks that he is a rigid and harsh man who does not show any signs of affection towards his daughter. Sabih, on the other hand, abandons her and marries a rich widow woman with important connections at the imperial palace. She is immensely disappointed and becomes ill. In the meantime, however, she begins to develop an intimacy with one of her distant relatives,

Osman Hamdi, a young and idealist Circassian officer "who has constant and maiden lightsomeness peculiar to Circassian men" (quoted in Mutlu 2012, 60). She finds out that he loves her in the night in which both Osman Hamdi and her father get arrested by her uncle, Sabih's father, because of their support for Young Turk movement. Her uncle is a supporter of the regime of Abdulhamid II (Melek, here underlines, that both positions existed among the Circassian community yet the main and decent characters of the novel, Osman Hamdi and Beria's father are Young Turk) (Mutlu 2012, 70).

Beria thinks that her father is distant from her. Yet, he thinks that she has to be raised as a powerful and insensitive because being a Caucasian woman requires this. One day, while Beria and her father are walking around their garden, they encounter a snake. Beria quivers with fear. Her father wants to kill the snake with his revolver, but Beria stops him since she feels pity for the animal. Her father remains cold and calm and passes the revolver to his daughter and says that:

> "Take this. Keep it and learn to use it as far as it is possible. Compassion and magnanimity as far as avoiding killing of a snake which came under your feet is the right of the sons and daughters of the countries surrounded by poems and bliss. Do not forget it, you are the poor daughter of a Caucasian woman who lived the brightest days of her life on the flood of blood which shed with rebellion against invasion and oppression, who buried her father, mother, brother and even her ability to be sad on the waves of this fiery flood, you are the inheritor of this bloody destiny, and your cradle was rocked with the bloody elegies of this miserable mother who was separated from her motherland. I have to warn you today my daughter, the life, especially our lives, is not a place full of poems in which God's justice is dispensed but a hideous and wretched battlefield. Her, my daughter, the life is clashing with the death and in a place in which these two powers united, there remains no room for mercy and compassion, the only goal in this place is to defeat the death (quoted in Mutlu 2012, 36-37) (Translation is mine)."

It is important to remember what the Circassian people lived through in the Caucasus, but it is also important to remember that it is the Ottoman rule which received Circassian refugees with open arms. The Ottoman Empire helped them to survive and gave them a place to live. That is why, a Circassian must always be grateful and loyal towards the Ottomans. Osman Hamdi, for instance, is an idealist and self-conscious Circassian who yearns for the lost homeland, Caucasus, yet at the same time he is a patriotic Ottoman who is aware of the dangers that the empire faced. He mentions his feelings of gratitude and concerns to Beria:

> "My ancestors who became exhausted because of the constant defeats in the Caucasus and who were dying using their last forces against captivity, were comforted seeing compas- sionate arms which welcomed their children, under the light of the affection of this sacred Crescent (of the Ottoman flag) and closed their eyes feeling gratitude…. Our fathers came (here). They and we loved "it" more than our own existence, our mothers, our fathers and even our own happiness. Now, "it" is dying, do you understand? It is dying for us, for all the world of Islam which echoed the voice of *Takbir* in the white minarets with same shake of love; it is dying for Caucasus which covers the dry bones of our ancestor with its affection- ate soils, which receives the *salaam-ı tavhid* coming from here with its soul of devoutness (ruh-ı diyanet). Oh! I swear on God's name of tenacity (*nam-ı azimet*)! I, who cannot be prepared to its death, will die! (I will die) for it, to kill at least one piece of clouds which strangle it (quoted in Mutlu 2012, 62) (Translation is mine)."

4.2.2. The Importance of Homeland

As it is the case for other examples of the nationalist literature, Melek gives paramount importance to the notion of "homeland", in this case, it is the lost lands of Circassian community, the Caucasus. It represents the freedom and honor of a nation and chastity of its "loyal" but "unfortunate" daughters. For Melek, the Caucasus was a place as beautiful and peaceful as heaven. The Russian expansionist aims ruin this natural beauty and bring death and destruction to the real inhabitants of the Caucasus. The children of this land fight for their lands and freedom but they fail since the Russian forces are much more powerful than the irregular forces of Caucasian mountaineers. Many of them die for their homeland. Yet, for Melek, the Circassians find happiness even in death since dying for one's country is the most sacred and honorable way of dying. That is why, Recep, the hero of the story of *Bir Hikaye-i Harp,* when he understands he is going to die, smiles with a pride and says that: "Uncle, have you ever seen yourself as elevated as this much in your entire life?" And, for this reason, Circassian mothers who hugs their dying sons for the last time, were proud of their dying sons.

As for the beauty of the Caucasus, she uses literary motives and praises to describe these lands. In "A War Story", she describes the Caucasus as "this place is a great, quite a great piece of lands which elevated with a feeling of gratitude (*hiss-i şükran*) under the God's divine look (*enzar-ı takdis-i ilahi*). It was a country which is constantly green and white, and which is encircled by its old and eternal snows, and the affection and the magnanimity of the mountains which dispreads through the white clouds and blue sky." In

the story of "the Raid", the Caucasus is directly named as the "heaven" and "temple" of the Circassian nation. Melek says that:

> "They (the Circassians) surround their homeland like it was a bloody zone of light and love with the unbending iron arms and with the love of hearts which cannot be ended up until the end of its power; because their homeland is their temple and their heaven. It is such a temple, such a temple that the honor, freedom and happiness of a nation is hidden in its sacred existence. It is such a temple that stopping its sacred silence requires stopping sacred existence of entire nation waiting in its doors. This existence, this body does not want to be trampled down, this heart does not want to be stopped. It is struggling to hide and protect all the silence and sacredness of its temple and heaven. They rebelled, they fought, and they learned to laugh at on the ones who usurped their honor, freedom and happiness with a venomous laughter (Translation is mine)."

One of her stories, "*Altun Zincir*" (Golden Chain) (Hunç, 1911d) is about longing of Caucasian concubines of the harem for their homeland, the Caucasus. Melek says that these Circassian concubines live in the luxurious and ornamented palaces of the empire yet one should never forget that they live in captivity "as women whose existence was destroyed with a bright gilded life". This story was published in the process in which *Çerkes Teavün Cemiyeti* was pressing the Ottoman palace to abolish slavery (one of her other writings: *Dertlerimizden: Beylik-Kölelik* (Hunç, 1911e) was written during the same process with the same goal) (Mutlu 2012, 21). In the Golden Chain the longing for the homeland and feelings of a Circassian slave girl is described as such:

> "She groaned flittingly like a poor bird which longs for a matchlessly beautiful sky with a cold shiver and being chilly with fear when the insidious captivity which is traveling around the horizons of the Caucasus like a nightmare throws her away to the magnificent deepness of big saloons with marble pillars, to the feet of foreign man wearing silk dresses: Oh my homeland! Oh! The homeland, a smiling garden from the heaven, which has an endless purity in its sky, immense and endless greens in its woods. How far? Haw far away was it? Now, who knows what kind of a chain in its feet of which edge goes back to the barbarity of which centuries, who knows and a chain which have links that slows down binding to each other making pressure on its feet! (Translation is mine) (Hunç, 1911e)"

Zeynep (Hunç, 1926) a book which Melek wrote in 1926, breaking her literary silence after years, is also about the sacredness of the notion of homeland and one's struggle for saving their country. Yet, this time it is not about the struggle for the Caucasus, but it is about Egypt, Egyptian nationalism and anti-imperialistic activism which Melek seems to admire. Tourmarkine asserts that Melek chooses Egypt as the background of her novel

to avoid mentioning explicitly Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish War of Independence (Toumarkine, 333), but I could not find enough evidence to think in this way. She may have chosen Egypt because of her private connections to this country (because of the fact that she spent some parts of her life there and her sisters lived and were buried in Egypt). Or, she just desired to put forward the idea that any struggle to save one's homeland (no matter where it is) is precious.

In her preface to the novel, she wrote on the history of Egyptian nationalism and feminism. She gives detailed information about the Egyptian struggle against foreign occupation and imperialism, the leaders of the movement such as Mustafa Kamil Paşa (then Mohammad Farid Bey), Saad Zaghlul who is described as "not only the heads of a party (the Wafd) but head of a nation" by Melek and the events which later became the Revolution (*ihtilal*) of 1919 (the massive demonstrations and uprising which later spread to the whole country, leaving 800 dead and British exile of Zaghlul to Malta). The struggle of Egyptian people is praised during the novel and the imperialistic aims of Britain is criticized constantly. The role of powerful women in the struggle for both to save their country and to obtain their rights is also underlined with a special emphasis on Malak Hifni Nasif (1886-1918) who represented women at the Egyptian National Congress of Heliopolis (1911) and her pioneering role in the Egyptian feminism (Toumarkine 2013, 332).

The novel tells the story of Zeynep, an Egyptian aristocrat woman with a strong and influential character and, an activist who is also involved in her nation's struggle for freedom (like Hayriye Melek herself). Melek describes that Zeynep has a divine character, she is a sacred woman. The author says that "this woman (Zeynep) who resembles priestess of a secret religion, is accepted as a mystic leader by and won the approval of not just the intellectuals but the laborers, farmers and countrywoman, it means, of the whole Egypt. All these people gather around the places in which her black veil ripples as they are gathering around a sacred flag which is rippling." For Melek, she has a divine character, Zeynep resembles a "Goddess" (Hunç 1926, 71).

This sacred woman suffers the pangs of love since her fiancé, Ahmet, another Egyptian aristocrat and patriot, left her for another woman Nadia. Nadia is a Russian princess who decides to live with her husband, Ahmet in his country, Egypt. She is sorrowful because she misses her own homeland, yet she loves Egypt and Ahmed and continues to live there. One day, Nadia and Ahmet meet Zeynep by chance and his love for Zeynep comes back.

Ahmet realizes that he cannot love back his wife, Nadia because Zeynep is Egypt to him and a love for one's homeland is above the love of all others. It is important to note that Zeynep, this divine and influential woman, reminds everyone in the book, including Nadia, of the "homeland". It is Egypt for Ahmet and Russia for Nadia. Ahmet thinks that: "(Zeynep) in your eyes, there is the everlasting fire of Egypt which is full of life, faith and love. I wish you know Zeynep! You and Egypt are the one and together in my head and my heart" (Hunç 1926, 71). Soon after Nadia realizes that she cannot overcome this pure and divine love and she fades from the scene by committing suicide. Ahmet never finds out what truly happened to Nadia and he assumes that Nadia left him for Russia. Then, he devotes himself solely to the national struggle and gives his life for the cause. Zeynep is sad and tired, she cries at his grave.

4.2.3. The Importance of Language and Education

Like most nationalist thinking, Hayriye Melek gave an important place to the protection of language and the nation's imagined distinct identity through education. For this, she was actively involved in the social and cultural activities of the associations of the Circassians; she collected money for the establishment of a Circassian school, helped in the development of a Circassian alphabet in non-Arabic letters, and contributed to the publication of books on the Circassians and their culture. In the review that was published by the Circassian Women's association, she said that the aim of this publication was "a call for the Circassian youth to study and to publish our national (Circassian) existence, and to develop and mature this national existence at the maximum level in the fields of history, language, literature, art music and social life (Jineps, n.d.)."

In one of her articles entitled "Language and Education" (Hunç, 1911f) she says that certain geographic features of the regions affect the people who live in these geographies in a certain way. For instance, to truly understand what it means to be an Arab, one must know the conditions of the dessert that they live in. Likewise, to understand the Circassian people, we need to know about the Caucasus which shaped the characteristics of the Circassians. She adds that sometimes some nations are forced to leave their homelands and settle in other places. This situation poses a danger for these nations because in time they forget about their own national identity and adopt the national identity of the host nation. For this

reason, she worries that within a couple of generations, Circassian national existence will be totally destroyed. The reasons for the danger that now Circassian community faced are the ignorance and the unconscious migration which was triggered by this ignorance. She thinks that the Circassians hastened to abandon their land which is more suitable for their nature and moved to another country which cannot be beautiful and fertile as the Caucasus. In consequence, the Circassians began to lose their healthy bodies and social ethics. She says that now the Circassian nation is lagging behind in the subject of education which might raise awareness among Circassian youth and prevent the nation from disappearing. The Circassians do not even have a language with a clear alphabet which interconnect us to each other, she asserts. In order to keep Circassians and Circassian identity alive both of the problems must be solved immediately. She says that "a folk with no education is like a man who closes his eyes forever to the brightness of the Sun, to the truths of existence and life."

4.3. Slavery in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç

The abolishment of slavery was one of the issues which occupied the Circassian intellectuals in the late Ottoman era. Hayriye Melek, though she was an admirer of Circassian culture and a patriotic Ottoman woman, did not abstain from criticizing this settled, centuries old institution. For instance, "*Altun Zincir*" (Golden Chain) tells the story of grieving Caucasian concubines of the harem for their homeland which is the Caucasus. Melek says that these Circassian concubines live in the palaces of the empire but we should keep in mind that they are after all slaves: "As women whose existence was destroyed with bright gildings". As mentioned before, the story was published in the process in which *Çerkes Teavün Cemiyeti* was pressing the Ottoman palace to abolish slavery. Her essay named *"Dertlerimizden: Beylik-Kölelik"* (One of our troubles: Seigniory-Slavery) was also written during the same process with the same goal (Mutlu 2012, 21).

The first thing she did in the essay is to remind her readers that slavery and captivity, the oppression of more powerful ones in the communities are not specific to Circassians. They are old as time and they existed almost in all human societies. She gave the Roman slavery and European feudalism as her examples. She stated that the French Revolution came about because of the inequality which empowered enormously some parts of France

while other parts of the country were living in misery. With this development, humanity began to pay attention to oppressed people whose rights were taken away. Now, because of that, we live in an age which takes cognizance of humanism, justice and equality, she said (yet, she also reminded the hypocrisy of the age in which many people were preaching these values but no one showed up to help the North Caucasian people when they were suffering at that hands of Russia).

She added that although people began to embrace the notion of equality in the modern era, the slavery continue to exist in some cultures of the world. The Circassians are one of them, unfortunately. This is the reason why the Circassian nation is not a developed nation for the writer. This is because the slavery causes not only the misery of the few but also disunity and the failure of the whole nation. Within this system, the masters cannot grasp the meaning of justice, the power of entrepreneurship and the necessity of brotherhood. The slaves, on the other hand, became filled with the hatred and antagonism against the seigneurs, being deprived of the aims of advancement and progress. In this way, the captivity and the slavery drive not only the individuals but also the nations to the hardship and failure. After she expressed her feelings, she said that "These words of mine will probably hurt the elderly of our nation which get stuck in this wrong understanding. I apologize to them with my all candor and wholeheartedness. I want them to be sure that I respect their thoughts and believes as much as I respect themselves. I am bond with the values which make us who we are at heart. However, I exempt some of these values which are detrimental to us and keeping our people away from the progress" (Hunç, 1911e). Considering the standpoints of today's nationalists who keep saying that "There was no such dishonor in our great history", it is noteworthy that Hayriye Melek did not abstain from criticizing the persistence of slavery in the Circassian society despite of her nationalist tendencies. However, her attitude is not totally contradicting the reality of nationalism because one of the reasons for her opposition to slavery is that, for her, this institution was an obstacle in the way of becoming a united nation.

4.4. Women in the Writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç

Women play an influential role in Melek's works. They are patriotic; they remain steady even at the death of their sons who lost their lives for the freedom of the Caucasus (*Bir*

Hikaye-i Harp). They are brave and honorable; they kill themselves in the case of an attack against their chastity (*Baskın*). They are the most sacred thing on Earth; they represent the "homeland" and its freedom (*Zeynep*). They have innocent and gentle spirits which can do no harm to any living being (*Zühre-i Elem*). Or, they are helpless slaves in the fancy prisons who dream of returning to their homeland (*Altun Zincir*).

As far as women's rights are concerned although she remained in touch with the other leading female authors of the era, she was not open and outspoken as her husband Yusuf İzzet Paşa on the issue of women's rights. He embraces the idea of feminism so much that he even claims that it is not something new, it existed and originated in the Caucasus long before the modern era.[13] He even claims that amazon women, famous and brave warriors of mythology, belonged to the Circassian nation (Mutlu 2012, 9). Yet, even if she was not outspoken about the feminism, we can deduct from her writings that she recognized the need to make reforms in women's conditions. Firstly, in the preface of her novel Zeynep in which she wrote about the Egyptian women's movement, she praises the Egyptian activists of the era, Melike Hefni Nasıf and Kasım Emin Bey who stated that "men and women should be equal to each other (Hunç, 1926). Besides, while she is criticizing overly sensitive and naïve Beria of *Zühre-i Elem*, she openly admires and appreciates the strong, outspoken, and active women of *Zeynep*. While the main character of the novel, Zeynep was an influential woman who is actively involved in the national struggle of Egypt, her friend Fayiha is a hardworking and esteemed woman who both supports the national cause and does charity work while at the same time managing schools for the girls. They are both represented as role models for women.

Firar, is a long story of Melek, in which she examines the women's issue. The story is about an impossible love of three young people. Two characters of the story, Rengin and Ulvi get engaged. However, Rengin's old sister, Behin loves Ulvi, as well. She even becomes ill because of young couple's engagement. Learning about Behin's feelings, Rengin gives up marrying Ulvi. Ulvi, then, goes to war to fight for his country (Mutlu, 19-20). The discussion through which Melek voices different strands on the issue happens between

[13] A similar attitude exists in Turkish nationalism and the writings of Ziya Gökalp. Gköalp stated that: "Old Turks were both democratic and feminist…In every business meeting man and woman had to be present together. For any verdict to be obeyed both *hakan* (male leader) and *hatun* (female leader) had to sign a decree…. Women were not forced to cover up…A man could have only one wife…Women could become a ruler, a commander of a fort, a governor, an ambassador. (quoted in Arat 2000, 109)."

three lovers, Behin, Rengin and Ulvi. Behin says that while the civilization of West continues to improve itself, Turco-Islamic civilization, especially its women and their conditions are lagging behind. That is why, the West looks at the Islamic women of Ottoman Empire with eyes full of pithy. She continues that whenever some of us, who have farsightedness, come to the forefront and say that we need to end this and get out of this "darkness", there always appears a group of reactionary people and silence this voice. But, she adds that this must stop and women's rights must be recognized. As far as this story goes on, the only right which is mentioned is the right to education. The story notes that Muslim women are left in ignorance (in darkness). The situation must be corrected through education. However, story requires education for women not to improve their own conditions or help them to earn their financial independence but for the good of family institution. Only this way, they can be good wives to their husbands and mothers to their children. For the story, now the situation is pathetic because ignorant and young girls of sixteen years old were married off in a hurry. They are unaware of what does being someone's wife (*zevcesi*) means, they only think about their dresses. Besides, when they become mothers, they entrust their children to foreign nannies. This resulted in alienation of children from the Turkish culture and superficial imitation of Western culture among the society. For these reasons, the women must be educated. However, the heroine of the story also notes that in the conditions of a war, this cannot be achieved. Rengin, here intervenes and says that, first the homeland must be saved that is why instead of pessimism, people, men and women must work to save the country. After she talked, Ulvi, the main hero of the story, says to Rengin: "I am sure that you will be one of the Jeannes d'Arc (a name which Melek used for herself and her sisters) who will ruin the army of tyranny which attacked Turkey (Mutlu 2012, 20)".

She investigates the issue of women in a more detailed way in the article entitled "*İslam Kadını*" (Muslim Women) (Hunç, 1918) which she published in *Türk Yurdu.* In the article, she says that a lot of writing have been produced since the proclamation of the Constitution which finally recognize the need for making reforms in women's condition. Yet, these attempts are far from improving women's conditions in the country. This is mostly because these writers either overly generalize the issue.

She criticizes comparisons of the situation of Islamic women with that of Western women. Islamic women are very different from the Western women in terms of her perceptions of

family, husband children, and the duties of woman. In consequence, they should be treated differently. Writers also talk about "the Woman", seeing a single form of womanhood, instead of examining the conditions of "our women (in the plural form)". She criticizes the tendency of the literature which assumes that there is only one type of women to talk about. She asserts that Muslim women vary. According to her, Muslim women fall into at least three categories; women of Istanbul, women of Anatolia and women of Syria.

She first mentions the women of Istanbul. She says that the writers who are interested in the women issue mostly fail because they think that the women of Istanbul represent all womanhood of the empire. Yet, they are very different from their fellows in Anatolia and Syria. Even though she admits that they can be differences between women of different backgrounds, yet she asserts that there must be still certain similarities in the women of this city. She trichotomizes the women of this city, too. Women who have the financial and social means to receive education and nurture (*terbiye ve tahsil*) constitute the first group. The second group is composed of women who received only a limited amount of knowledge and who did not make any changes in their domestic lives, nurtures and appearances. The third group is the group of the ignorant women.

The first group, for her, is the class of intellectuals (*sınıf-ı münevver*). This group is peculiar to Istanbul because in other cities there is no such a group of women yet. Melek criticizes these group of women because she thinks that they imitate the lives and thoughts of Western women in order to look modern. They rebelled against the most sacred values of Islamic culture; religion, morals and family. They forgot about the most valuable duty of a woman, that is being a mother and a thoughtful wife who is prudent in spending her husband's money, and what they care about is only to dress and look beautiful.

The second group is also separated into two groups. The first group of them are the women who begin to work not to rebel against Islamic culture but out of necessity. These women come from poor families who have religious and social bigotry. When they first take their first steps out of this environment and go outside a severe reaction shows up in these young spirits. They meet men with various morality in their schools, circles and executive offices. They only care that they women who meet men because their rudimentary education gives them only a narrow and superficial knowledge about the positions of women and men to each other. She concludes this part saying that "we see on a

daily basis the impacts of the spiritual and moral illnesses that was given birth by the meeting of such a mindset and an unlimited freedom" She says she abstains to make any further comments on the issue. The women who only received high school education yet continue to educate herself with her own means constitute the second group of women in this category. No sudden and severe change or revolution which turned their psychology or ideas upside down took place in their lives. Everything in their lives develops in a natural and gradual way. These women are much more devoted and conservative in their ideas. There was no confusion in their minds. Their ideas are simple, and their willpower is strong. They concern themselves more with their children. If their lack of manners and ignorance in pleasures can be ignored or developed, they are the most beneficial and best women of this country, she concludes.

The last group of women who live in Istanbul is named as "the ignorant ones" by Melek. These women are against all kinds of innovations. Most of the commoners belong to this group for Melek. They are occupied in doing many servile things both in home and outside home like Arabic *fellah* and Anatolian peasants. Since they work very hard, they are in a pitiful condition. They cannot concern themselves with their children. Their children grow up in the streets by themselves. They are not bonded with their husbands with love but with fear and need in the days in which they, themselves, cannot work. They are hostile against their husbands to whom they cannot openly insult, the people whom they consider as people of means and comfort and women who have "*alafranga*" (European style) opinions. They have no opinions regarding the community, family, civilization and government.

On the last part of her article, she makes a comparison between Syrian women and Anatolian women. For instance, for Melek, Anatolian women are very conservative contrary to their Syrian counterparts. While Anatolian women resist any kind of novelty introduced to her life, Syrian ones usually welcome any kind of changes. While Syrian women are cleverer, the Anatolian women are the ones who are more sincere. She thinks the Anatolian women are a little bit simple, sincere and slightly volatile in their feelings. Syrians are extremely ambiguous, less sincere and quite mercurial. Anatolian women are not enthusiastic about learning. She asserts that the only thing that matters for Anatolian women is religious knowledge. Yet, she does not desire to have a deep knowledge in this subject, too. She thinks it is enough to just learn a few *sura* to pray. Whereas the Syrian women are serious and ambitious learners. They would like to learn about not just religion but other things

as well. For Melek, while the Anatolian women are cheerless and still the opposite is true for the Syrian women. Anatolian women would like to marry someone whom she is in love with, she continues. She sometimes elopes together with her lover. An Arabic woman cannot understand this type of marriage, however. She decides about whom to marry with her brain not her heart. That is why, most of the time they marry an old and rich man who can afford a good life for them and their children, Melek writes.

4.5. Women and the Nation

Despite the rhetoric of equality for all who participated in the national project, certain groups of people usually remain in a secondary status, pushed into the background or marginalized and excluded from the "imagined nation". Women are one of these groups who are considered secondary citizens for "the nation" which is imagined as a brotherhood (Berktay, 349). However, the women and the constructed womanhood play a central role in the construction of the nation. They are involved in the project through various ways. Firstly, women are "the biological producers" of the nation. They must bear the nation's children. (Yuval-Davis 1997, 26). This necessity is prioritized over the freedom of choice of the women regarding the issue. Secondly, they are "the carriers of the national culture" (Yuval-Davis, 23). Their reproductive roles also include ideological reproduction, reproduction of ethnic or national boundaries and transmission of culture (Mayer 2000, 11-21). They are "the mothers of nation"; they must teach their children the spirit of the nation (often means a specific kind of religion, language and set of local traditions). Moreover, their symbolic status matters, as well. In the nationalist mindset, they are the representatives of purity, they must be pure for that only pure women can give birth to and raise decent children for the nation. Furthermore, "the nation is always feminized and characterized as in need of protection (like women in the patriarchal mindset)". The women's bodies are represented the purity of nation and that is why, their bodies cannot be "defiled". Whereas, men are "the protectors", "the warriors" of the nation, they protect the nation's territory, and doing so, they protect the women's purity and modesty. "Purity", "modesty" and "chastity" are the commonest words of a nationalist, which he/ she uses while speaking about the women. It is always claimed that there is always a great difference not only between "us" and "them" but also between "our women" and "their women". While "our women" are "pure and moral" their women are "deviant and immoral". Even though nation and

homeland are associated with womanhood, this way of thinking guarantees the inferiority of woman in a nation since they are always in need of protection by the loyal sons of the nation (Mayer 2000, 11-21).

We can see a similar mindset in the writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç. In her writings, defense for rights of women are intertwined with the ideas of nationalism. For instance, she not only defends the rights of women to education but also asserts that it has a vital importance. One might assume that she desired to improve the conditions of women. However, it should be clear by now that what she cares most is upbringing of children in the house and sanctity of the family institution. Only through education, the women can be good wives to their husbands and mothers to their children. Otherwise they continue to entrust their children to foreign nannies which resulted in the alienation of children from their native culture and superficial imitation of Western culture among the society. If they can have the means for education, they can be educated and knowledgeable about their culture. Only in this way, they can transfer their knowledge on their values to next generation. Only in this way the difference between "us" and "them" can be maintained.

She conceptualizes the nation and homeland (the Caucasus in *Baskın,* Egypt in *Zeynep*) as a woman which needs protection. The women's bodies represent the purity of nation and that is why their bodies cannot be violated. With the same logic, men are represented as "the protectors", "the warriors" of the nation who protect the nation's territory, and women's purity. In *Zeynep* she clearly and repeatedly associates the main heroine of the novel, *Zeynep* with Egypt. One of the men of the country, Ahmet, her lover and a nationalist activist, dies to protect the country and his lover. Zeynep mourns in his grave. In *Baskın,* although the Circassian men, brave and loyal sons of the country, fights to protect their homeland and chastity of their women, they fail. Their failure puts the "purity" of the Circassian women and thus the nation in danger. Yet, the honor of Circassian nation is saved because a brave and chaste Circassian woman commits suicide.

CONCLUSION

With this thesis, I tried to contribute to a rethinking of nationalist historiography, which ignores the history of women's activism in the late Ottoman era and the history of Circassian community, using the writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç. Although Circassians differ, linguistically, communally and sometimes culturally, from each other, they have a common history of exile, loss of a homeland and settlement in a new world. I tried to evaluate the works of a single Circassian woman intellectual within the context of the rise of nationalism in the early 20th century. At the same time, I explore women's activism in the late Ottoman era. While recent scholarship has recognized that women of the late Ottoman era vigorously fought to voice their opinions through the press, various associations and activities, most of this literature is regarding the activities of Turkish-Muslim women. Scholars have rarely examined the works of a non-Turkish Muslim woman. Having studied a Muslim yet a non-Turkish Ottoman woman, my study aims to contribute to the literature on women's studies. Besides, a considerable body of work on the activism of early Republican women investigate what republican leadership did and/or did not for women. These studies criticize nationalist scholarship with a feminist voice yet most of the subjects of their sentences are about the male leadership. There is a little or no space for [what] "she" [did and/or did not]. This work sought to give agency to the women of the era.

In the first chapter, I tried to investigate the history of Circassian community. Having been exiled from their homeland, they were settled in the Ottoman lands. This affected tremendously both the Circassian community and the Ottoman empire. The Circassians adopted the Ottoman country as their new land and many became the new state officials of the era, pledging their loyalty to the sultan. After 1908, the community began to mobilize around various organization, engaging in cultural and political activities. Hayriye Melek Hunç, the main figure of the study, was one of the intellectuals who participated in these activities. Responses of the Circassians to the Turkish War of Independence varied. While some of them sided with the Anatolian movement, some maintained their loyalty to the

sultan. Some others pursued separatist aims. The Circassian community had no singular and unitary presence.

In the second chapter, I scrutinized the history of women's movement. During the 19th century, a period which pursued a more egalitarian and modern society, women demanded reexaminations and improvements in their rights and roles. Ottoman women were affected by these developments, too. They criticized the current conditions in the Ottoman Empire and struggled to acquire their rights through numerous ways such as sending letters to the newspapers, writing in the magazines, organizing congresses, making speeches, etc. These developments took place in the same context in which the ideology of nationalism also emerged. Many considered reform indispensable for women's condition. In the early Republican era in which the women's civic rights were given, the desire to shape them according to the state's needs and the pressures for this end increased more than ever.

I explored the writings of Hayriye Melek Hunç in the third chapter. She was under the impact of nationalism, more specifically Circassian nationalism. One can see the importance of a nation's memory, the importance of homeland and education to protect the nation's distinct identity in her works. She idealizes one's connection to his homeland and efforts to save it. She often describes "the homeland" as a sacred place like a heaven or a temple. Moreover, she associates this sacred piece of land with a female body which must remain pure and virginal for her. The duty of its protection belongs to the brave and young men of the nation. Circassian identity and struggle to survive has a special place in her writings. However, one can also see that she has a sympathy for Turkish and Egyptian nationalisms which gained strength especially in the face of foreign occupation and have strong anti- imperialist tones. In her writings and works, occupying forces, Russian, Britain or others, are often presented as cruel forces. That is why, it can be said that she was a nationalist of Circassian nation with a sympathy for other nationalisms which were fighting a battle to defeat the same kind of imperialism that the Circassians once faced. Or, it can be equally argued that she was interested in the survival of all Muslim nations fighting for their independence and freedom. Hence, she can be considered as a representative of Muslim nationalism, an ideology that was affecting the leading intellectuals of the era during this time. For the women's issue, she recognized the need for making reform in women's conditions. First and foremost, according to her, women must have the right to education. Besides, she regularly praises women with powerful and independent characters in her

works. For her, the women of nations whose existence are in danger must be especially careful and strong. Neither she nor the women of her works cannot be considered “passive captives of harem” in these respects.

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