

**EMERGENCE OF ARMENIAN NATIONALISM  
DURING THE LAST YEARS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1878-1918**



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**MAY 2019**

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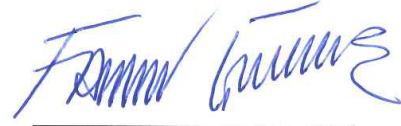
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Approval of the Institute of Social Sciences



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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## ABSTRACT

Having emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, the French Revolution's influence on the Ottoman Empire revealed with the disengagement of the traditional *Millet* system, which is often defined as the coexistence of various religious groups within the society. Following the disengagement of the system, many nations living in the Empire declared their independence as a result of ethnic-nationalistic rebellions. More specifically, Armenians – who had been a part of the Ottoman Empire for a long time – explored their identity as independent from the Ottoman identity with the impact of surpassing nationalism. With the involvement of missionary activities as well as great powers of the world, Armenians transformed the Armenian nationalism into a distinctive trait in comparison to the other nationalities living under the Ottoman Empire. It may be observed in the literature that most academicians and historians have approached the topic of Armenian nationalism in a biased manner rather than reviewing the transformation of the conceptualization of this nationalism. In this regard, certain literary review is focused on the so-called genocide allegations. In fact, the number of analyses and historical narratives dwelling on the comprehensive transformation process has been limited, so as the number of objective researches pertaining to Ottoman Armenians. On the other hand, it is further observed that researches who are inclined to refute the Armenian genocide – from the Turkish point of view – have defined Ottoman Armenians through certain clichés. From this perspective, this study importantly elaborates on the concept of Armenian nationalism on the basis of a critical review rather than sticking with stereotyped discourses with the purpose of shedding light on the Armenian national awakening emerging in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Ottoman Empire as an act that was in tune

with the necessities of the age. In addition, it will be suggested that Ottoman Armenians had a different understanding of nationalism than other minorities in Caucasus and Europe. Indeed, Armenian nationalism was transformed and, in a way, radicalized by certain Armenian Committees formed after the Treaty of Berlin was signed. This research is formulated carefully and objectively, avoiding any stigmatization of the entire Armenian society in the referred territory as betrayers to the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, it will be demonstrated that Ottoman Armenians initiated their national awakening after the French Revolution as did the other nations of the Ottoman Empire with the effect of missionary activities. However, the desire to establish an independent Armenian state by the help of great powers pushed Armenian nationalism to a rather different, radical form. Ottoman Armenians, in turn, happened to endure damage due to this diverged transformation of Armenian nationalism. Under these assumptions, this dissertation discusses both Armenian and Turkish perspectives with regard to the issue despite the challenge of finding objective sources for analysis. Various libraries, databases and articles by academicians as well as historians are benefitted for elaboration of various assumptions within the framework of political practices.

***Key Words:*** *Armenian Nationalism, Ottoman Armenians, Armenian Nationalists, Missionary Activities, Armenian Committees*

## ÖZET

Avrupa’da 18. yüzyıl sonunda ortaya çıkan Fransız Devrimi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki etkisini, toplumda farklı din gruplarının beraber yaşaması olarak tanımlanan geleneksel millet sistemindeki çözümler ile 19. yüzyılda göstermiştir. Bu sistemin çözülmesini takiben, imparatorluk içerisinde bulunan farklı uluslar, etnik-milliyetçi kökenli ayaklanmalar sonrasında bağımsızlıklarını ilan etmişlerdir. Özellikle Osmanlı Devleti’nin kadim milleti Ermeniler milliyetçilik akımının etkisiyle, Ermeni kimliğini keşfetmiş, misyonerlik faaliyetleri ve büyük güçlerin müdahaleleri ile Ermeni milliyetçiliğini farklı bir karaktere dönüştürmüşlerdir. Ermeni milliyetçiliği konusunda yapılan çalışmalar incelendiğinde, Ermeni milliyetçiliğinin dönüşümü ele alınmamış, çoğu akademisyen ve tarihçi konuya taraflı olarak yaklaşmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Ermeni yanlı literatür taramasında, konuya yaklaşım sözde soykırım iddiaları üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Öte yandan, Osmanlı Ermenileri hakkında yapılan objektif araştırmalar sınırlı sayıda kalmış, gerçek bir analiz ve tarih anlatımı çok fazla bulunamamıştır. Türk taraflı yayınlarda ise Osmanlı Ermenilerinin belirli kalıplar içerisinde ele alındığı görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada Ermeni milliyetçiliği oluşumu eleştirel bakış açısı ile yazılmıştır. Tezin önemi Ermeni milliyetçiliği konusunda ezberlenmiş anlatımlardan ziyade, Ermeni milli uyanışının 19.yüzyıl içerisinde Osmanlı Ermenileri arasında ortaya çıkışının çağa uygun bir oluşum olduğu, Osmanlı Ermenilerinin, Kafkasya ve Avrupa da oluşan milliyetçiler ile aynı anlayışa sahip olmadıkları, Ermeni milliyetçiliğinin Berlin anlaşması sonrası meydana çıkan Ermeni Komiteler ile radikalleşerek dönüştüğünün anlatılmasıdır. Tüm Ermeniler Osmanlı Devleti’ne ihanet eden millet olarak yaftalanmamış, tezin objektif bir çalışma ile tamamlanmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Sonuç

olarak, Osmanlı Ermenileri İmparatorluğu oluşturan tüm diğer milletler gibi, milli uyanışlarını Fransız Devrimi sonrasında yaşamış, misyoner faaliyetleri ile bir ulusa dönüşmüşlerdir. Sonrasında büyük güçlerin verdiği destek ile bağımsız Ermenistan kurma isteği Ermeni milliyetçiliğini tamamen farklı, radikal bir yapıya sokmuştur. Dönüşen Ermeni milliyetçiliği ise Osmanlı Ermenilere büyük zarar vermiştir. Bu varsayımlar bağlamında, araştırmamda Ermeni ve Türk yanlı kaynaklar analiz edilmeye çalışılmış ancak literatür taramasında tarafsız yazılan az sayıda yayına rastlanılmıştır. Tarihçi ve akademisyenlerin makalelerinden faydalanılmış, çeşitli kütüphane ve veri tabanlarından yararlanılmıştır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Ermeni Milliyetçiliği, Osmanlı Ermenileri, Ermeni Milliyetçiler, Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri, Ermeni Komiteleri*

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## CHAPTER I

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is marked as a significant period in understanding the Ottoman society in terms of reluctance or willingness toward national formations. Muslims and non-Muslims were influenced deeply from the impacts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century-developments, while they were following their peculiar national pathways. From this perspective, the radical changes in all systems of the state shaped the future of the Ottoman Empire. For the first time, the Ottoman State confronted new movements including nationalism, modernism, equality, liberty, Westernization, and political opposition among many others. For an empire ruled by a Monarch for centuries, such new movements were unique in nature. In this sense, defiance against these new thoughts did not take shape as waging war against a foreign country or a struggle against economic crisis. Especially in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, nearly all constituents had to define their new order by referring to their rising national conscious. As a matter of fact, definitive factors did pave the way for provoking certain structural changes in the Ottoman society and nationalism was considered as an essential external influence. Nonetheless, it is significant to better understand the underlying reasons to find out the spread of the nationalism around the Empire. Indeed, the effects of massive changes, upheavals by communities and nationalism among the Ottoman nations cannot be explain only through the intervention of the Great Powers in the Ottoman's domestic affairs.

Nationalist waves spreading across the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century first emerged in France since the French Revolution in 1789 resulted in unexpected impacts all over the world with accompanying new and radical ideas. The revolution made an outstanding impression in the eyes of various populations in the world. From this

perspective, bourgeois and the peasants overall were encountering poor economic conditions since they were overwhelmed by heavy taxes, famine and spectacular price increases particularly in food category. The French High Court and the aristocratic leaders gained the hatred of the bourgeoisie due to their unfair tax policies. Therefore, economic issues precipitated the French Revolution which was marked by a struggle by the bourgeois and peasants against the King and the Clergy. The oppressed class rebelled against the King and the Clergy who had excessive privileges in the French society. Consequently, the Human Rights Declaration emanated and adopted on August 26, 1789. The revolution demolished the administrative system in France and exposed new universal values including constitutionalism, republicanism, social equality and laicism (Karaman, 2018, p. 76). On the other hand, the French Revolution led to severe political turmoil across the world by impacting nations under the reign of other major empires of the world. Many historians argue that the revolution was the turning point in the European history by the effect of impressive ideas and slogans such as liberty, equality and fraternity. In this context, the rise of the middle class and nationalism as well as the fall of monarchy appeared with the French Revolution and affected the rest of the world. The American Revolution particularly affecting North The US in addition to Europe rested on these ideas (Revolution, 2019). Literature analysis demonstrates that the above slogans easily penetrated in the Ottoman Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such ideas were placed in practically all fields of social and administrative structures by means of the need for developments and reforms.

In addition to the French Revolution, the February Revolution in 1848, which was facilitated on the basis of social and economic issues, paved the way for major alterations in Europe as well and this movement spread in waves in European cities

(Düzcü, 2016, pp. 52-53). This manifestly proved the large scale of the revolution although it had been perceived as an internal matter of France in the beginning. The Republic was proclaimed in France on February 24, 1848. However, consecutive insurrections quickly broke out in southwest of Germany on March 2, in Bavaria on March 6, in Berlin on March 11, Vienne on March 13 and later in Hungary as well as in Milan on March 18, as Hobsbawm cited in his comprehensive study (Karaman, 2018, p. 66).

Universal values emerging out of this process in the European continent started to prevail in the Ottoman Empire by the nature of its internal and external dynamics as well. Indeed, the Ottoman was a rather large empire consisting of various differing elements. As denoted in the beginning of the study, Muslims and Non-Muslims had been living together under the millet system until the revolutions in Europe without awareness of universal values. However, missionary activities – the power of which was attributed to the great powers of the world – paved the way for alteration in the Ottoman social system by means of educating Ottoman citizens abroad in addition to other reasons and entailed arrival of new thought to the Empire. In this regard, a large body of research points out to the education of non-Muslims in Europe and the importance of Paris on New Ottomans. Suavi Aydın, for instance, gives important information about the significance of France with regard to reforms in the Ottoman system. Napoleon Bonaparte blazed a trail between Europe and the Middle East via the Battle of Egypt in 1798. A dozen of scientists accompanied Napoleon during his battle in Egypt and researchers assigned in this battle became the base of the modern orientalist literature which had been dominated in cultural terms by the Great Britain and France from 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In addition to transferring manuscripts to their countries, Franz Bopp Geim, Ernest Renan and other scientists

made great philological inventions. Said argues that orientalism shaped many areas including anthropology, archeology, sociology, economy, history and literature (Aydın & (Firm), 1993, pp. 81-82). Works on orientalism provided Eastern nationalities the opportunity to recognize their nations. The aforementioned researches helped nations explore their identities. Indeed, it was the city where nationalism was born and spread throughout the world. New Ottomans or other different groups with various identities met orientalist works when they visited Paris and this was a particularly unique experience for them to access such deep and innovative knowledge. Consequently, Eastern nations obtained the opportunity to reach sources about their own nationhood.

Founded after the year 1821, the Chamber of Translation was another impact that shaped the ideas of bureaucrats in the Ottoman Empire. Bureaucrats learnt foreign languages and particularly French and with translational work, they had the opportunity to read French journals referring to new terms such as citizenship, nationality, equality etc. Therefore, they fell under the huge impact of the French Revolution ideas (Somel, 2011, p. 93).

Since the Ottoman Empire reached the limits of its natural borders with high number of different nationalities within its territories and was struggling against economic difficulties by the time when such revolutionary ideas broke out, the necessary circumstances were formed for the emergence of nationalistic movements. In fact, the Ottoman Empire had to undertake an overwhelming burden of debts after the War of Crimea in 1856. Despite winning the war, the Ottoman rulers had to endure increased debts (Ahmad, 2006, p. 37). This economic situation was well a determining factor with regard to the rise of nationalism and oppositional movement within the Ottoman lands. The poor economic conditions damaged the harmony in

social life for the Ottoman communities. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire began to lose its political power as well. The lack of state protection over religious groups cultivated in the involvement of the external factors in the domestic politics of Ottomans. Thus, nationalism started to be regarded by non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire as a way to ease their conditions since such a nationalistic movement was pledging their own territory and freedom. Moreover, there existed not so many connected factors to unite the communities to the Empire. Under these circumstances, the struggle of suppressing nationalism obviously became inevitable for the Ottoman rulers.

The last years of the Ottoman Empire passed turbulently with the upheavals among religious communities. Noticing the economic weakness of the Ottoman Empire, the great powers started to intervene in domestic politics of the Ottomans in order to reach new lands to satisfy their colonization politics. In light of this information, it was observed that all non-Muslim communities under the Ottoman rule gradually became protected by several great powers of the world. Sects in religious groups were the determinants of their relations with Russia, the British Empire, France and America. Within this framework, Catholic Armenians were recognized as a different community by Sultan Mahmud II in 1831 as a consequence to the interference of missionaries who had evidently fostered Gregorian Armenians to convert into Catholicism since 1781 under the effect of Rome and France (Adibelli, 2009, p. 316). The Sublime Porte prevented neither the diplomatic pressure from the outside nor the rebellions inside the territory. Insurrections and secessionist movements took place in the Balkans including Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, while the New Ottomans' Movement started to prevail before the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1877. The Edict of Reforms and the Imperial Edict of

Reorganization aiming at political reforms in the Ottoman state in 1839 could not maintain the stability and territorial integrity.

The desire for social change by religious communities as well as the dynamics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century pushed the Ottoman politics to a new period which was called the *Tanzimat* era, marked by the above-referred Imperial Edict of Reorganization aiming at reorganization of the Empire. The Tanzimat era was the core point as it was a definitive step in Westernization of the administrative system, education and law. Before the Tanzimat period in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and earlier in 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, Sultan Selim III and later Sultan Mahmud II attempted to fulfill the needs for progression in the Ottoman Empire. The Russian-Ottoman War and the loss of Crimea further necessitated changes in order to benefit from European information and technique. In the same period, the decision by Ottoman rulers to establish embassies in European capitals resulted in bringing young ambassadors together with European ideas. On the other hand, students of military schools which had been established by Sultan Selim III were not inclined to Western ideas since they were against obscurantism (Demirtaş, 2007, p. 390).

The period of Sultan Mahmud II was also crucial in terms of destruction of the Janissary system and copying the European tax and political system (Liu & Shu, 2017, p. 17). The independence declaration by Greece under the influence of French Revolution following the Russian–Ottoman battle on August 16, 1828 accelerated the decline of the Ottoman Empire. One of the important developments before the Tanzimat reforms was signing the Treaty of Balta Limanı – a treaty on trade relations – in 1838 between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain, providing prominent privileges to Britain and British merchants. This development further increased foreign debts incurred on the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, the Treaty of Balta

Limani was signed to prevent the threat of constraint by Mehmet Ali Pasha, the term governor of Egypt, as a measure against 10 years of such constraint on the Ottomans. As a result, the Ottoman Empire was subjected to a large-scale political, military and economic crisis. (Demirtaş, 2007, p. 391). Political scholar Mardin refers to the fact that Namık Kemal, another political scientist specializing in this field, described Tanzimat as a concession given to the West in the face of the threat coming from Ali Pasha (Demirtaş, 2007, p. 392). The concessions in face of political and economic weakness brought about the failure of the Ottomans. The commercial agreements signed with the Great Powers resulted in many privileges which ensued the emergence of new bourgeoisie of non-Muslims. Due to the political and economic turbulence in the Ottoman Empire during this period, non-Muslims who were protected by the Great Powers benefited from the opportunities of such trade agreements and economic relations were strengthened between non-Muslims and the Great Powers.

Under these circumstances, the Ottoman Empire commenced to follow precise Western-style politics in its imperial systems to compete against the secessionist factors. In light of adaptation to Western systems of administration, the Imperial Edict of Gülhane (Edict of Reorganization) was declared in 1839 and this marked the beginning of the Tanzimat era in the Ottoman Empire (Ahmad, 2006, p. 35). With this edict, the authority of Ulema – Muslim theologians and scholars – was limited definitely for the first time. In this regard, political and social conflicts started to be resolved not by referring to Shariah. In addition, the juridical system started to perform without consulting with religious leaders thanks to the application of reforms. Later, criminal, commercial and civil courts were established to replace the so-called spiritual courts (Okumuş, 2006, p. 291). According to Okumuş, the formation of

institutions and commencement of secularization provided a basis for the laic system in the future although this was not exactly laicism at the time.

From this perspective, the last years of the Ottoman Empire were obviously marked by seeking ways of survival. As a matter of fact, the old methods fell short to unite all Ottoman communities, Muslim and non-Muslims. Religious communities, particularly the Ottoman Armenians were particularly associated with the changes in the Empire during this last period of the Ottoman rule. Due to instability, loss of territories in wars, economic failure and secessionist movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, his supporters, Tanzimat politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals and New Ottomans – the first opposition movement – were striving to ensure the future of the Empire through various strategies. A notable political scholar, Feroz Ahmad points out to the fact that the rulers based in Istanbul primarily aimed to create a new patriotic identity against nationalism which was to include all Ottomans without exception. In this context, the Nationality Law of 1869 was enacted to shape a common Ottoman citizenship. According to this law, if an individual's parents or father was from Ottoman nationality, that individual was also accepted as an Ottoman citizen. Yet, this initiative did not yield successful results as Göğler referred to in his study (Ahmad, 2017, p. 7), despite the fact that this was an attempt to reunite Ottomans as a chosen method instead of demolishing the entire system. As a consequence, orientalist works in Paris, the French Revolution and the establishment of the Chamber of Translation in the Ottoman Empire led to the birth of the first opposition against the Sublime Port: the New Ottomans.

On the other hand, it is often argued that the New Ottomans lacked clearly defined political goals at the time of their emergence. Moreover, they were not endowed with organizational solidarity. Koçak describes them as young elite

candidates who only had their own resolutions and were far away from being a homogeneous political group. Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi and Ziya Pasha – members of the New Ottomans group – were all different from each other in their inclinations. Namık Kemal, for instance, deemed that guidance of the religion was adequate to follow the way of civilization, while Şinasi advocated that rationality was the only way of civilization (Söğütlü, 2014, p. 8). The only point that they agreed on was the development of the Westernization project by hampering imitation and exaggeration. According to New Ottomans, truthful modernity was the only way for the society to adopt Westernization in the right sense. Thus, New Ottomans refused the modernization period commenced before them (Koçak, 2011, pp. 72-73), however they were not against the Tanzimat reforms. Nonetheless, this movement rejected the method of implementing Tanzimat reforms. Namık Kemal criticized the Ottoman society for ignorance and idealizing Western values via imitation practically in all spheres of life. Accordingly, he profoundly argued that the Tanzimat reforms lacked both juridical and social dimension. Indeed, Lewis argued that the reforms served only to deception of the West (Söğütlü, 2014, p. 6).

It can be observed that the Tanzimat reforms did not ease the influence of the French Revolution and the nationalist awakening of religious groups – both Muslims and non-Muslims – within the Ottoman Empire. From this perspective, Western idea ensued gradual disintegration of Ottoman citizens from the Empire.

A Turkish political scientist, Şerif Mardin scrutinized the New Ottomans movement which emerged in the year 1865. In this line, it is manifested that New Ottomans were the first ones to criticize the Sublime Port and pioneered in many

differences in their period. Among these figures, İbrahim Şinasi brought a new perspective to social and political life in the Ottoman Newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* (Illustration of Opinion) with his extraordinary, critical and arrogant discourse. While other figures in the New Ottomans offered various solutions for the development of the Empire, Şinasi was unique in his propositions with an attempt to systematic transfer of Western information which is known as encyclopedism. *Tasvir-i Efkar* was the first modern newspaper in the Empire and Şinasi serially provided data to this newspaper via outstanding articles affecting the society (Mardin, 2011, p. 44). Under these circumstances, it may well be suggested that the printed media was the essential instrument for New Ottomans to disseminate their ideas. The young generation who received their education at military and civil schools during Abdul Hamid II's period had access to the writings of Namık Kemal, Şinasi and Ziya Pasha. Under these circumstances, "opposition schools" were formed where constitutionalism and patriotism were perused and secretly expanded across the territory of the Empire. These efforts first resulted in *İttihad-i Osmani* (Ottoman Unity movement) and later the Committee of Union and Progress, as referred to by Petrosyan (Aydın & (Firm), 1993, p. 131).

The movement of New Ottomans was initiated with an elaborated analysis of the real problems the Ottoman Empire had been encountering. In this context, Young Turks declared the issues that the Empire should have struggled against as well as proposing certain solutions to those issues. In light of this fact, the New Ottomans shed light on the economic troubles of the Ottoman state and society marked by deep recession. Moreover, they pointed out to the intervention of the great powers in the domestic issues of the Ottoman state, which had led to tension between Muslims and non-Muslims in the society. Therefore, they advocated the idea of establishing

constitutional order with social participation and subjecting the Sultanate to laws as solutions against the collapse of the Empire (Ahmad, 2006, p. 40).

In addition to the proposition of a constitutional order accompanied by laws, the New Ottomans further offered solutions for the economic stagnation. From this perspective, Namık Kemal was propounding ideas that constituted antithesis of Tanzimat, while he heavily criticized the trade agreements entered with other countries during the Tanzimat era. Instead of such agreements, he was prone to more of a controlled liberalism, referring to the disadvantages of the Western style liberalism posed for the Ottoman society. In this line, Mardin argues that Namık Kemal advocated for a liberalist development under state supervision, while emphasizing the importance of fostering a productive Ottoman society (Aydın & Firm), 1993, pp. 128-129). Thus, Namık Kemal suggested that a tax reform must be made to boost agriculture, regulate military service to include non-Muslims, offer a loan system to citizens and remove taxes for production industry as solutions to the economic recession (Söğütlü, 2014, p. 8). The reasons for the economic trouble and decline in the Ottoman Empire during that period were expressed as high rate of foreign debts, extensive privileges granted to non-Muslims, heavy tax burdens imposed on citizens, decreased agricultural production due to military service and lack of urbanization as well as educational opportunities (Söğütlü, 2014, p. 8).

Nonetheless, the Sublime Porte and the first oppositional movement, the New Ottomans, may well be argued to have shared similar desires to develop the Empire and prevent its collapse. In this regard, both aimed to prevent deterioration of the Ottoman Empire in every field with a strong struggle against the nationalist waves by efforts to unify all the fractions of the society. Nonetheless, their methods and choices were rather different from each other. From this perspective, there were ideological

differences between the opposition and the Sultanate which led to a deep political depression. Under these circumstances, it is critical to note that modernization was an initiative to adapt new systems to develop the country, while the main source of this process was politics within the Empire. Although various movements including Ottomanism and Islamism prevailed in the Empire long before the 19th century, such fractions did not turn into nationalist upheavals until the said period when nationalism surpassed all such movements. Henceforth, modernization efforts came into being as a method to produce new politics against the challenge of nationalism. In this context, modernization first commenced in the military due to the concerns over the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Gradually, such initiatives expanded towards other spheres of political system as well as social life. However, the opposition and Sultan Abdul Hamid II had differing understandings pertaining to modernization, while religious groups were also impacted by modernization in several ways. While the Armenian community living in the Ottoman Empire started to adopt national civilization acts through applying a new education system with the effect of missionaries, Muslims were focusing on Ottomanism and Islamism although they did not yet have national conscious of being Turks. Having said that, it can be observed in works of many scholars that there were certain common points for the opposition and Muslim population such as the approach towards constitutionalism and secularism. The New Ottomans as well as certain followers in the society were in search of ideas to modernize the Ottoman institutions and political system and the New Ottomans particularly endeavored to conduct constitutional modernization by means of a parliament against the sultanate regime. Although Abdul Hamid II promoted monarchical modernization (Alkan, 2011, pp. 380-381), the Ottoman modernization process had a forcible and tough character under the effect of external factors.

Further elaborating on the modernization process in the Ottoman Empire, it can fairly be argued that this process was not triggered by internal dynamics of the Ottoman society. Rather, it was based on a set of reforms by a limited circle of elites within the bureaucratic system to ensure a balance of power against the West. In this regard, the aim was not to convert the Ottoman society into one that was abiding by Western standards. Instead, the goal of modernization in the Ottoman Empire was to revise the traditional order by means of military and administrative techniques. In this line, Tanzimat statesmen believed that the West had superior scientific and technological advancement compared to the Ottomans. They endeavored to impose conservative reforms via transferring technology, institutional models and expertise from the West (Söğütlü, 2014, pp. 3-4).

Despite such efforts for ‘conservative’ reforms, the New Ottomans paved the way for significant developments in administration, education and judicial system of the Ottoman Empire in addition to spreading distinctive ideologies in the society. As a matter of fact, the second generation of Young Turks was deeply affected by the ideas spread during the term of the first New Ottomans. Being the sequent of New Ottomans, the second generation Young Turks was educated in the schools of Tanzimat established to raise modernist bureaucrats. Similar to the New Ottomans, they stayed in Europe for education or due to exile by Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Members of this second generation of Young Turks, indeed, later formed the Committee of Union and Progress. Herewith, the New Ottomans inspired many forerunning oppositional movements after their period.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. THE *MILLET* SYSTEM

The Ottoman Empire, as previously demonstrated in the introduction, was composed of diverse communities with various religious characteristics and all these groups were ruled by the *millet* system, which is defined as a special administrative modus operandi dividing communities into compartments according to their religions rather than ethnicities. This system had been applied for centuries within the Empire and had not left any room for ethnicity in the administrative system. Muslims and non-Muslims were substantially unconscious of sharing the same territories as different religious groups. Thus, the millet system worked without any conflict among these religious communities from the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed the Conqueror until the decline of the Ottoman State, since the term ethnicity emerged later after the arrival of nationalism to the Ottoman territories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this respect, the Orthodox patriarch was assigned by Mehmed the Conqueror as the religious head of the Orthodox community. Eryılmaz assumes that the beginning of the millet system was marked by granting freedom of worship and autonomy to these communities in their internal affairs (Adıyeke, 2014, p. 4). In addition, Jews gained the right to have their own synagogue at the same period as cited in the study conducted by Küçük (Adıyeke, 2014, p. 3). Indeed, the religious Armenian leader Hovakim was invited to Istanbul by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461 after the conquest of Constantinople. Lastly, the Istanbul Armenian Patriarch was founded with the decree of Mehmet the Conqueror (Öke, 2012, p. 90). The Patriarch was the head of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and regulated political, national and social issues of the community. From Mehmet the Conqueror to Mahmud II, there was no interference to Christian religious or social issues (Uras, 1976, p. 179). As a

consequence, Adıyeke argues that religious communities lived in harmony under the millet system which was established with the organisation of Churches by the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of Constantinople (Akça, 2007, p. 58).

The millet system absolutely provided certain clues with regard to the political, social, cultural and economic situation of non-Muslims in the Ottoman state. It is significant to explain the millet system in details to analyze the structure of the aforementioned religious communities. The millet system basically refers to Islamic order which is based on the understanding of Ummet and respecting non-Muslims in reference to the Holy Qur'an. The Sunni Muslims were the core elements of this system, while ethnicities of the religious communities were not considered to form a community by the Sublime Porte. Eryılmaz states that the principles of the Ottoman Empire were to administrate justly and tolerantly towards the non-Muslim communities (Akça, 2007, p. 58). In this context, the rights of non-Muslims were regulated as per the Islamic Law and the non-Muslims living in Islamic territories were named after dhimmis. The legal status of dhimmis required that they were protected by the state. The security of their lives, properties and churches were ensured as long as they paid taxes called the *jizya* (Argit, 2005, p. 80). Non-Muslims were responsible to pay this special tax on condition that they were exempt from military service and *jizya* was collected only from non-Muslims men. In case a non-Muslim man lacked financial resources to pay the tax, the state would not forcibly collect the tax. In addition, another type of tax, which was called *harac*, was collected from non-Muslims due by agricultural activities. This tax was paid in cash or in exchange for yields once every year (Bilgiç, 2013, pp. 342-345).

In addition to the above explanations, the concept of millet was used to define Muslims as *millet-i Islamiye*, who were the sovereign and preponderant in the society.

Hence, non-Muslims were referred to as *cemaat* (congregation), *taife* (group), and *dhimmis* (non-Muslim groups) who had cultural, religious and economic autonomy, but lacked political rights in the sense that they could not join the administration. Religious Heads of the communities were accountable to the Sultan. They were engaged in collection of taxes, marriage, divorce and the judicial processes (Öke, 2012, pp. 54-55). All congregations were represented by their religious president. And Patriarchs were chosen by prominent religious figures and then approved or rejected by the Sultan. Their duty was to serve for their communities. Bozkurt utters that patriarchs also led their communities in social and cultural terms such as providing education services (Yetişgin, 2008, p. 64). Thus, they were autonomous in the fields of education, language, religion, private and special law as long as they recognized the domination of the Empire and fulfilled their responsibilities to pay taxes. The Sublime Porte did contact its Ummah through the religious leaders of the communities who were assigned by Sultan. And similarly, the Ummah could not personally contact the Sultan. Another trait of the millet system is that individualism was not an element integrated in the system. By this means, the Ottoman Empire could manage and guard its Ummah without letting room to injustice. As a matter of fact, religious leaders were inspected and they bore heavy responsibilities to the Ottoman Empire, since they encountered severe sanctions in case of any inequity in the relevant communities (Akça, 2007, p. 66). Thus, Şahin advocates that non-Muslims experienced neither religious, social and cultural deprivation nor suppression under the enforcement of the millet system (Üner, 2008, p. 26). Surely, they were not Islamized and Turkified as cited by Özkaya (Üner, 2008, p. 27). The Ottoman Empire applied just and balanced policies for everyone (Üner, 2008, p. 27).

## 2.1. The Religious Communities

As pointed out before, diverse religious communities composed the Ottoman Empire and lived in its territories for centuries. More specifically, the Ottoman millet system mainly consisted of the Armenian, Greek and Jew communities. Chaldeans, Assyrians, Nestorians and unorthodox Christians were attached to the Armenian community (Adibelli, 2009, p. 35). The religious communities and the Ottoman administration had a unique contract between them which provided a special type of harmony within the Empire. Religious communities expected the state to ensure justice, security of life and property and freedom of worship. In return, the millet system required obedience to the Empire and payment of taxes (Adıyeke, 2014, p. 10). From this perspective, the Ottoman system had its own unique structure, however it is critical to analyze the millet system in accordance with the requirements and conditions of the time frame when it was implemented. Since the contemporary understandings and approaches are not always compatible with the Ottoman system, it would be outstandingly useful to evaluate the order of communities by taking into consideration the term conditions. Although the millet system provided wide religious and congregational freedoms in comparison to other countries during the same centuries, some scholars stress the secessionist and hierarchical character of the system, criticizing the unequal positions of non-Muslims.

Fatma Müge Göçek, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies points out to the segmentation and inequalities within the Ottoman social structure. She explains that the Ottoman social system took its legitimacy from the Islamic laws. The religious and ethnic differentiation mentioned above between Muslims and non-Muslims caused an ethnic segmentation. Furthermore, it is argued that non-Muslims had endured certain challenges within the social structure although accompanied by

their acceptance and participation in the economic sphere. In this regard, the scholar predominantly criticizes the social form of the Ottoman State and the Islamic principles (Göçek, 2006). Another scholar, Yılmaz Öztuna says that the Ottomans did not interfere in the religious faiths, churches, culture or professions of non-Muslims who were granted religious freedoms. He adds that they were mostly occupied with the domestic and foreign trade, banking, jewelry production etc. Their socio-economic wealth did not cause any jealousy and did not increase the negative feelings among the Muslim population as there is no such evidence to displeasure by Muslims living under the Ottoman Empire (Öztuna, 2001, pp. 46-47). On the contrary, Göçek analyses precisely that the wealth of Armenians created hostile feelings among others. She points out to the fact the sociologic and economic structure of the Ottoman Empire led to certain disfavours. Armenian peasants were, in this regard, oppressed, exploited and enforced, since the millet system functioned on the basis of accepting the hierarchical status given to minorities. As a result, the Tanzimat reforms were declared due to the effects of nationalism, pressure from inside by the pro-Tanzimat statesmen and the diplomatic attempts by the great powers to prevent the Christian secessionism. Within this framework, the reforms culminated the negative feelings of Muslims towards Christians in the society. By the effect of this negative impact, Armenians suffered at the hands of Kurds and the *muhajir* or immigrants (since they had been oppressed by Christian regimes at Balkans and Russia). On the other hand, Muslims did not favor this equality between themselves and non-Muslims (Bloxham & Göçek, 2008, pp. 364-365). Göçek further refers to the limitation of dress codes as per regulations, forbiddance of inheritance from Muslims and vice versa or the prohibition of marriage of a woman with a non-Muslim man, while a Muslim man was allowed to marry a non-Muslim woman. These facts are all argued to constitute

the signs of separatism and unequal position of non-Muslims in the society (Göçek, 1993, p. 515). However, İlber Ortaylı approaches and explains the millet system differently. Unlike Göçek, he indicates the clothing restriction and living in certain quarters as permission for sustainability of their culture, religion and traditions. This absolutely would prevent assimilation of non-Muslims and Ortaylı defined this system as a specific, sui generis system of rule (Ortaylı, 2001, s. 216-220). The religious communities who were recognized by the Ottoman Empire were protected by the administration to develop their own economic, cultural, religious, juridical rights and preserve their identities as cited by Turan (Akça, 2007, p. 58). Although non-Muslims were living in a peaceful system endowed with justice, it is often argued by some scholars that the main principal of the Ottoman millet system bore certain inequalities from an objective perspective. Indeed, non-Muslims were subject to certain restrictions in their social life as well. One of the examples for such inequality is the restriction for their residence in holy places. Ercan puts forward that they were not allowed to live around mosques, holy spaces in certain sacred cities as Mecca or Medina (Demirağ, 2002, p. 26). The decree declared in 1581 stated the prohibition of non-Muslims residing around Eyüp Sultan Mosque. Similarly, Refik utters that another decree required the move of Jews from Ortaköy (Demirağ, 2002, p. 27). Except these districts, non-Muslims could live anywhere they wanted. In light of these arguments, another approach is presented by Bernard Lewis, who noted that Jews and Christians did not experience any maltreatment during the governance of the Ottoman Empire. He argues that non-Muslims were not subject to expulsion or death. They were not forced to live at the same places as ghettos. Except a few sacred places in the Arabian continent, they could live where they would like to. In addition, he compared and contrasted the status of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire with those in other

countries in the same years. Accordingly, the expulsion of Jews from Spain due to their religion was a substantial proof of the negative experience in Europe as cited in the comprehensive study by Braude and Lewis (Üner, 2008, p. 26). Indeed, there did not exist any regulation for Muslims in the Christian world in Europe during that period. Despite the ignorance of Muslims towards Christianity in this system, Emecen argues, the situation of Muslims was not protected by any legal regulation (Üner, 2008, p. 26). Nalbandian notes the restricted situation of Armenians under the Ottoman rule saying that they had been victims of arbitrary taxes, forced conversions and personal violence for centuries. They could not have any political rights or opportunities like those given to Muslims. With the awakening of national consciousness, however, they terminated these conditions (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 180).

Nevertheless, it can be uttered that emphasis on religion in the Ottoman way of administration was outstandingly distinct. The social status of Muslims and non-Muslims was clearly defined by regulations and the hegemony of Muslims was explicitly underlined. In this context, Karal suggests that Sultan Selim III attempted to change the color of the non-Muslims' houses into black and demanded a different color for Muslims (Demirağ, 2002, p. 27). Although non-Muslims had the chance to preserve their culture and social life, it seems antidemocratic when the millet system is analyzed in current terms. On the other hand, the contemporary understandings should not be compared to the past millet system for a better comprehension of the structure.

Even though the millet system prevented assimilation of non-Muslims and provided stability in the Ottoman Empire, the problems within the Empire could stimulate disturbance among the religious communities. As a matter of fact, economic troubles encouraged certain religious communities to ponder on the reasons behind

such an economic crisis they endured. And it is well possible to remark such feelings at the level of all communities that had resided in the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, involvement of foreign merchants and their interaction with non-Muslims had a positive impact on the success of non-Muslims in international trade. One of the important issues to note is the exemption of Non-Muslim communities from military service. Thus, they had the chance to gain dominance in trade and benefited from the privileges granted after the capitulations, since non-Muslims were protected by foreigners in the economic field. Under these conditions, Muslims were forced to involvement in fierce competition for commercial activities. Therefore, Muslims ultimately had to pull out of trade and production activities and started seek positions in the administrative apparatus and the military. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire did not have enough space in its bureaucratic system in 1860 to hire new employees. Hence, Muslims faced difficulty in find jobs (Ahmad, 2006, p. 38). According to another view, the social tension between the religious communities started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when nationalist movements were still out of question. Rather, economic reasons including decreased welfare and income levels triggered social upheavals in the Ottomans lands. Moreover, it is argued that oppression on non-Muslims incremented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well. The relations between the Ottoman communities already began to deteriorate before the arrival of nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Belge, 2002, pp. 180-181). Furthermore, non-Muslims in provinces were subjected to maltreatment by the local administrators. In fact, arbitrary regimes of local administrators were quite widespread. During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, persecutions against non-Muslims were legitimately prevented by weakening the power of landed proprietors in local regions. The reason for the insurrection of Serbs

in 1804 was associated with the oppression of local military elements as Şanizade stated (Somel, 2011, p. 88).

The influence of nationalism on the Ottoman communities emanated in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The national conscious certainly became apparent with the Tanzimat and Edict of Reforms, which formed the breaking point in terms of social and political alterations. The equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, the guarantee of property and life and the rule of law were declared with the Imperial Edict of Gülhane by the Sublime Porte in 1839. This Edict was the confirmation of fair treatment to non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and provided the principle of equal citizenship. Laicism was another fundamental movement emerging in the Tanzimat period. By the effect of these developments, the millet system evidently lost power (Ahmad, 2006, p. 35). Additionally, the Tanzimat reforms did not satisfy the religious heads in terms of their political status. Non-Muslim clergymen showed reaction against the edict of Reform in terms of the restriction of their social and political privileges, since their authority was limited due to regulation of sharing power, establishment of councils and involvement of the bourgeoisie in economic relations. Another disappointment was imposed on the Orthodox community. While the Orthodox patriarch had priority in the protocol among the other non-Muslim communities before the reforms were accepted, this changed after the reforms were passed and equality became the essential principle. Nonetheless, they did not want to be equal with the other non-Muslim religious communities (Demirağ, 2002, p. 31).

The religious character of communities changed with the application of Tanzimat reforms and attempts of laicism by non-Muslims in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secularism cultivated the changes inside the religious communities. The non-secular model of their congregation precipitated the rejuvenation in compliance with the

French Revolution and Tanzimat Era. In order to define the legal status of the religious communities, the constitutions were declared by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The constitution of Greek Patriarchate was released in 1862, and Armenian communities prepared their first constitution in 1863. Lastly, Jews announced their regulations in 1865 (Adıyeke, 2014, pp. 11-12).

## **2.2. The Ottoman Armenians**

Armenians were one of the oldest and most valuable communities who had lived for centuries under the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire. Karpat shares that they were the largest non-Muslim community in the Ottoman Empire after the Orthodox community (Ueno, 2016). Before the conquest of Constantinople, Armenians were living as a small principedom around the Ottoman territories, in Caucasia, Eastern Anatolia, Cilician Plain and Iran. Armenians were far away from being independent and having political integrity (Hülagü, 2008, p. 109). Ottoman Armenians lived under the millet system for centuries, as stated before, like the other religious communities and were successful in protecting their cultures, social and economic status in the Ottoman territories. Their religious integrity was sustained until the effects of missionaries prevailed. The Armenian community basically had autonomy to prevent assimilation of their culture. By the nature of the non-secular administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, though, Ottoman Armenians were subject to the Church where the Patriarch was the head and accountable to the Sultan. Ottoman Armenians had remained under the millet system until when the new world values were discovered.

Ottoman Armenians were distributed across different geographies of the Empire, while the majority was living in eastern Ottoman provinces and the rest were scattered around the western and central Anatolia in small groups in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

(Ueno, 2016, p. 607). The languages Ottoman Armenians spoke differed according to the region where they lived. A report by Protestant missionaries in 1842 and other Armenian sources reveal that Armenians who lived in central and western Anatolia, from Bursa to Kayseri spoke the Turkish language which was common. And the Armenian language was spoken in eastern Ottoman provinces, while Turkish was the second or third language in many provinces (Ueno, 2016, p. 607). In addition, it can be observed that Ottoman Armenians lived different life styles and the overall community was divided into different classes with varying social status. Further, Armenians living in Constantinople had a say in administrative matters and civil services. Those living in this province, in fact, represented the rich class of Ottoman Armenians since they were engaged in commercial activities with substantial financial gains. On the other hand, Armenian clergymen had extensive privileges as well and were endowed with economic power which made this group an influential class. Finally, there was the group of peasants in the Armenian community and these populations predominantly lived on the high mountains of Sason and Zeytun (Yılmaz, 2015, p. 193). In terms of professions, most of these Armenian groups were artisans, tax collectors, craftsmen or jewelry dealers. Indeed, Ottoman Armenians were quite successful in international trade since Muslims occupied most of domestic trade. In this context, educated Armenians had the opportunity to speak foreign languages and used the advantage of communicating with foreign merchants. This interaction between foreign merchants and Armenian traders later turned into exchange of cultural values (Yılmaz, 2015, p. 195).

Despite the presence of different social classes in the Armenian community, they shared a common sect until the arrival of missionaries to the Ottoman territories. Nevertheless, the emergence of Catholic missionary activities in the Ottoman Empire

damaged the religious integrity of the Armenian community, while Protestant missionaries ended up with secession within the Ottoman Armenians. In other words, the unity of Armenians previously was guaranteed by the millet system eroded by the missionary activities penetrating into the Empire. Yet, it can be argued that Armenians were among the oldest Christian communities in the Ottoman lands and religion never did lose its importance for them. Religion continued to be the key factor defining the Armenian nation even after secularization attempts followed by the Tanzimat reforms. From this perspective, religion and faith generated motivation for the Armenian identity. Unfortunately, though, missionary activities caused demolition of the religious integrity of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. In fact, missionary activities progressed in line with Armenian nationalism with a rather noticeable effect on the Armenian community. From this perspective, it is clear that Armenian nationalist ideas resulted from Western thoughts imposed by Protestant and Catholic missionaries who served for the interests of great powers. Consequently, the Armenian Church played a significant role in the formation of the Armenian identity with a political repercussion. Under these circumstances, the Armenian identity and their religion had long been intertwined. From past to the present, the Armenian Church served as the head of the Community.

It is also critical to elaborate on the Armenian culture to better comprehend their history as part of the Ottoman Empire. From this perspective, the traditional culture of Armenians started to change as of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Armenian bourgeoisie and liberal intelligentsia aspired to be involved in the administration of the Armenian community besides the Church. This fact was the most evident proof for the transformation of the religious administration leading towards secularization of the Armenian community. In this line, enlightenment of Armenians came along in

variable ways including the influence of the French Revolution, education of young Armenians abroad, interaction of Armenians with foreign merchants, the impact of the Armenian cultural center in Vienna, changing education system in the Ottoman Empire and last but not least, the missionary activities that transformed the Armenian communities differently from other religious communities. Etmekjian underlines that a significant number of bourgeoisie educated in Europe triggered the enlightenment when they came back to the Ottoman Empire as they were full of modern ideas of nationhood (Bloxam, 2007, p. 304). Among the intelligentsia educated in Europe were Dadyan, Düzyan, Balyan, Dr. Nahabet Rusiyan and Krikor Odyan, whose main goal was to ensure progress for Armenians living in the Ottoman territory in addition to Westernization and enlightenment of their congregations. In this regard, the 1860 constitution resulted from their extensive efforts to accomplish these goals (Yumul & Ballı, 2001, p. 364). Drafted in 1860 and promulgated in 1863 with the approval of Sultan Abdulaziz, this Armenian constitution is identified as a turning point in the Armenian national formation. In this sense, it was the first modern style constitution in the Ottoman Empire (Özdemir, 2012, p. 122) and a strong modernizing element was included in the already running social and administrative affairs with the acceptance of the constitution (Bloxam, 2007, p. 304). The Armenian national council was established as a body similar to a parliament with 140 members. The formation of the constitution increased the conscious of being nation. Küçük underlines that the administrative, economic, juridical and educational affairs were maintained by the parliament (Demir & Turan, 2014, p. 210).

Furthermore, Ottoman Armenians had prominent contributions in the development of the Ottoman Empire's cultural life. The first Western style theatre was played in Ortaköy, Hasköy, Kuzguncuk at Armenian schools and the first theater

presenting Turkish actors and actresses was established by Agop Vartovyan. The first orchestra was founded by Kirkor Sinanyan. And the first opera was composed by Çuhacıyan (Akyol, 2014, pp. 23-24).

Education of Ottoman Armenians was similar to Muslims until the last period of the Ottoman Empire. Under the Ottoman rule, Armenians had rights to proceed their educational liberty as much as the other religious communities. Therefore, the Ottoman education system had common points for Armenians and Muslims. In this regard, it is important to note that the education system for Armenians particularly featured certain religious elements. Schools were located right next to churches where priests were instructors. Nafi suggests that such schools were financially supported by the community in addition to charities offered (Taşdemirci, 2001, p. 18). From this perspective, the Tanzimat era became a turning point also for Ottoman Armenians. While educational institutions had provided only religious teaching from the conquest of Constantinople up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there had not been any real Armenian school in the Ottoman Empire until when the first Armenian school was established in 1790 with an official permission from the Ottoman ruler. Afterwards, the number of these schools gradually increased (Taşdemirci, 2001, p. 21). More specifically, the number of Armenian schools multiplies after the year 1860, while the Armenian community had only seminaries as educational institutions until 1790 (Nalbandian, 1967, pp. 48-50).

### **2.3. Missionary Activities and Emergence of Armenian Nationalism**

It is a known fact that societies react differently to political issues depending on the variables and dynamics of their countries. In addition, every era has its peculiar dynamics impacting social behaviors. In this regard, the dynamics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

had diverse impacts on the religious communities of the Ottoman Empire resulting in diverse outputs. Particularly the Armenian community responded in a distinct manner towards the developments in the last century of the Empire: On the one hand, they endeavored to regulate their internal affairs, and on the other, Armenians struggled to seek their national pathway. It is assumed that Ottoman Armenians were subject to a tough period in order to complete their national enlightenment and establish an Armenian nation-state.

Elaborating on the reasons behind the inevitable national awakening of Armenians, it is observed that external and internal factors affecting the Ottoman Empire did have a part in the emergence of Armenian nationalism. In addition to the existence of internal and external factors, it is also important that Muslims and non-Muslims discovered their own ethnicity and ethnicity became a core element for all groups. However, Armenians were particularly exposed to foreign involvement rather than other religious groups since missionary activities strictly targeted converting Ottoman Armenians to other sects, being Protestantism and Catholicism. Another external impact on Armenians was that missionaries succeeded to impose their ideals on Armenians and foster Armenian nationalism to a great extent.

Missionary activities in this sense date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With the effect of the Ottoman Empire's weakness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such activities were spread around Anatolia under the protection of great powers, non-Muslims and especially Gregorian Armenians in an attempt to sustain their projects to prevail in vast lands. Under these circumstances, great powers supported missionary activities to increase their political penetration in the Ottoman territories. While the Orthodox was under the protectorate of Russia, France was the base of Catholics and the British Empire and The US were the protectors of Protestants. The goal of the West was not only to

reach the territories where Muslims were living, but also achieve imperialistic goals to split non-Muslim communities by converting their sects. While the Ottoman millet system was strong enough to keep the unity of Armenians with regard to their Gregorian sects, Gregorian Armenians lost their communities due to the weakness of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of the Catholic and Protestant missionary activities in Mardin, a city situated in southeastern Anatolia, where all of Armenians were Gregorian until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the whole Gregorian Armenians were dissolved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Coşar, 2008, p. 428). Neither the Armenian Church's uneasiness about the sect conversion of its community nor the attempts of the Sublime Port could prevent the missionary activities. Of course, the aforesaid missionaries encountered hostility from Christian churches (Fildis, 2012, p. 737). Armenian Patriarch Matteos excommunicated Armenians who preferred to be Protestants in 1846 (Adıbelli, 2009, p. 317). The Patriarch asked help from the Sublime Porte due to the concerns of the Armenian Church, yet the Empire did not have enough power to interfere and stop the activities. In fact, the Ottoman Empire was aware of politically harmful practices of the missionaries. During 1834, the Ottoman Empire promulgated a decree which prohibited the conversion of sects. The Foreign Ministry of the British Empire appealed the Ottoman Empire to establish a Protestant Church in Jerusalem in 1840. Nonetheless, the Ottoman Empire refused the appeal of the British Empire by reason of the decree forbidding conversion. After the abrogation of the decree, the Protestant Church was established in Jerusalem in 1844 as Eryılmaz revealed (Coşar, 2008, p. 432). Dwight argues that as a result of foreign attempts and diplomatic pressure on Sultan Abdülmecid by the British Empire's ambassadors, Lord Cowley and Stratford Canning, the Protestant community gained the status of a community on November 15, 1847 (Adıbelli, 2009, p. 317). The British Empire obviously aspired to ensure

granting an official status to the Protestant community. The first Protestant missionaries arriving at Anatolia were members of the British and Foreign Bible Society which was founded in İzmir in 1804. Gürün says that these missionaries were deliberately sent to Anatolia and lots of books were published and delivered freely to the Anatolians (Adıbelli, 2009, p. 316). On the other hand, The US was more active than the British Empire in spreading Protestantism (Coşar, 2008, p. 432). The most important American institution was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign missions who aimed to integrate Christianity throughout the world. Their ideals were to internationalize the morals, principles and culture of Protestant. The US and their primary target was to establish a Protestant Anatolia. In order to realize their objective, they targeted the local population, Muslims, Armenians, Jews, Nestorians, Greeks, Syrians and other Christian sects (Fildis, 2012, pp. 735-737). ABCFM was the representative missionary organized by the Congregational Church which was responsible for the outside region. This body conducted its program from 1812 to 1931 around the world. They first aimed to reach Palestinian Jews and Muslims, yet they could not realize their missionary plans (Kiskira, 1999, p. 65). ABCFM was unsuccessful in converting Muslims and Jews, therefore they headed towards Armenians and initiated their national awakening. Armenian students were encouraged to realize the ideal of establishing an independent Armenian nation state and those students who graduated from schools later became instructors in missionary or religious schools. This clearly manifests that the missionaries had a powerful impression on the Armenian community living under the Ottoman Empire (Özdemir, 2012, p. 120).

The activities of ABCFM were crucial in terms of the rise of nationalism. The critical point about Armenian nationalism was the education of the Ottoman

Armenians in the missionary schools. Indeed, many scholars point out to various reasons behind the emergence of Armenian nationalism, however none of these reasons were as powerful as the missionary activities. With the arrival of missionaries to the Ottoman territories, Armenians surely transformed into a new nation who were full of nationalistic ideas predominantly with the impact of education which was supported by missionaries from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on. Western ideas were imposed and spread around the Ottoman Empire by means of the press. Armenian young generations were essentially impacted by the wave of Western ideas followed by the foundation of free non-Muslim schools along with the reforms as well as the Edict of Reforms. The *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* (Imperial Edict of Gülhane) declared in 1839 guaranteed social rights for Armenians including the right to life, property and honor and its content was broadened with the Edict of Reforms (Demirağ, 2002, p. 30). The liberal atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire after the declaration of Tanzimat reforms facilitated the educational works of missionaries (Kiskira, 1999, p. 71) The Edict of Reforms regulated the freedom of faith. And the British Empire and France alleged the Edict of Reforms in 1856 to facilitate missionary activities (Yılmaz, 2015, p. 205).

As previously denoted, Protestant missionaries were directed by America, the British Empire and Prussia. Şıvgın emphasizes that An American institution established in 1810, ABCFM targeted Ottoman Armenians in their projects in 1819 (Günay, 2008, p. 109). After its unsuccessful attempts to convert Jews and Muslims, they preferred to direct the Eastern Church's communities. The Protestant cult believed in their hegemony in face of Eastern religions and this belief was in parallel to the acceptance of the dominance of the American culture rather than eastern civilizations. The protector of the American missionaries, Protestant English consul in

Sublime Porte, Sir Stratford Canning de Redcliffe succeeded in persuading Sultan Abdülmecid to issue an edict which recognized the Evangelists in 1850 (Kiskira, 1999, p. 66). In turn, Akgün states that the recognition of the Protestant community by the Ottoman Empire in 1850 accelerated the missionaries' activities in Anatolia. American missionaries started their activities first in the field of education and served to develop cordial relations with Armenians (Günay, 2008, p. 110). The missionary organization, ABCFM defined Istanbul as the center of their activities in 1831 since the authorities of this organization were aware of the importance of the city with its geographical location. In addition, Istanbul was valuable to the Eastern Church (Kiskira, 1999, p. 67). In this regard, Protestant missionaries analyzed Ottoman Armenians in terms of their language and in 1842, they conducted a meeting on Armenian local population where they categorized the Armenian population in the Ottoman territory in three groups. The first group was composed of the Armenians who were speaking only Turkish, while the second group was formed by Armenians who spoke only Armenian and the third group was composed of bilingual individuals speaking both of the languages. Protestant missionaries focused on linguistic works to teach Armenians their own language (Ueno, 2016, p. 607) Indeed, Sapancalı says that the Armenian language was taught to Christian children via missionary teachers who came from abroad (Adibelli, 2009, p. 327).

Furthermore, education was clearly the most important compound in formation of the Armenian civilization. In addition to the missionary schools, foreign schools were also established to reinforce this formation process, which marked another revolution for Armenians in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As it is previously underlined, Armenians were only allowed to attain the religious education system until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After the relevant reforms, Armenians had access to a

modern education system as much as the other fractions of the Ottoman society. After the establishment of the first Armenian school by the so-called Amira class, Armenian patriarchs, as well, started to work for the development of Armenian population. As a result of the efforts of the Amira class, who were administratively effective and financially rich, the Church used its impact to increase the number of such schools. Ergin cites that in 1824, Patriarch Karabet sent a letter to his community in Anatolia. He was advising the formation of Armenian schools in every province (Öntuğ, 2008, p. 135). Referring to the reforms of the Tanzimat era, the Ottoman Empire promulgated a decree which was called the Education Act of 1869 or *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*. This decree was enacted to reorganize the educational system in the Empire. Paragraph 129 was particularly associated with permitting foreigners to establish schools. In other words, foreigners officially obtained the legal right to open their own schools (Adibelli, 2009, p. 325). In addition, the purpose of the decree was to ensure inspection of schools by the Ottoman state, although foreign schools were not subject to surveillance of the Ottoman Empire (Taşdemirci, 2001, p. 25). Moreover, the Education Act required the inspection of classes in foreign schools by the Ministry of National Education. In this regard, teachers of such schools were recruited from among those who graduated from a Teachers' Training School founded by the Empire. These provisions in the Act were heavily criticized by non-Muslims since they believed such provisions were regulated to ensure involvement of the Ottoman rulers in their internal affairs (Güler, 1998, p. 165). Further, another requirement for private schools opened by foreigners was to ensure that their curricula and syllabuses were in compliance with state politics and public morals, while all expenses pertaining to schools belonged to their founders (Güler, 1998, p. 166). Similar to the missionary schools explained before, foreign schools in the Ottoman

Empire were extensively protected by the great powers of the world during that time. As a matter of fact, foundation of foreign schools was among the primary politics of great powers to affect non-Muslims and ensure awakening their national conscious. From this perspective, the capitulations were the impetus for foreign schools and provided liberties in the field of travel, commerce, politics, law, education and consul affairs. They were established as a result of the concessions which were given by the Ottoman Empire to the Great Powers. The trade agreement between the US and the Ottoman Empire certainly served the activities of ABCFM. Turgay argues that ABCFM's members obtained the chance to enter the Ottoman territories under the guise of merchants although the trade between the US and the Ottoman Empire provided capitulations for American merchants (Kiskira, 1999, p. 67). Indeed, only Catholic schools were available with the support of Papa and France before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Capitulations were first granted to France in 1536<sup>1</sup> and later to other states, which rapidly incremented the number of schools (Taşdemirci, 2001, pp. 24-25). From this perspective, France evidently put pressure on the Ottoman Empire with regard to operation of missionary schools and institutions such as churches, hospitals and orphanages. Among these reforms, a French banker could not collect his debts from the Ottoman Empire and France withdrew the French Consul from Istanbul and

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<sup>1</sup> Capitulations were signed by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and the French King François I in 1536. They included mutual commercial, judicial, legal and diplomatic concessions. This was a contract in favor of France although it granted both parties the freedom of travel, trading, religion and conscience. The Ottomans did not have any legal or diplomatic demand through the capitulations. And these capitulations were renewed during the reign of each sultan. During the term of Selim II, they were renewed by the demand of France in 1569. Commercial and legal concessions were extended (Bozkurt, 2010, pp. 126-127). Since the concessions given to France were rather comprehensive and formed the infrastructure of the future trade agreements with the European states, they are of great significance. These concessions had financial and political characteristics. The latest capitulations given in 1740 and after the term of Mahmud I granted France an unrivalled position in trade with the East and transportation among Ottoman ports. After the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these capitulations worked against the Ottoman Empire. In that, they prevented Ottoman industrialization and local tradesmen and merchants left their places to foreign and minority tradesmen (Acartürk & Kılıç, 2011, pp. 6-8, 19).

invaded Mytilene. Although the Sublime Porte accepted to pay its debts, France attached new conditions to the trade agreement which entailed activating 260 schools and 354 institutions – of French origin – within the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, French consuls and ambassadors always worked to ensure penetration of France in the Ottoman Empire. (Coşar, 2008, p. 431).

National awakening of the Armenian community began to rise by a deep impact on the younger generation of Armenians who received their education at Vienne in Mekhitar Monastery, which was established by Priest Sivaslı Mekhitar after 1717 as a monastery and cultural center (Somel, 2007, p. 73). Mekhitar Monastery was the first degree cultural center of Armenians. Ergin utters that similar models were later followed in Jerusalem, Amsterdam, Constantinople and London (Taşdemirci, 2001, p. 22). The 18<sup>th</sup> century was clearly substantial for the enlightenment of the young Armenian generation who led the national awakening.

Mekhitar or Monk of Sebaste (1676-1749) founded the Mekhitharist Congregation in Constantinople in 1701. He visited Venice in 1715 and the Venetian Republic gave him the Island of St. Lazarus two years after this visit. This congregational order mainly aimed at providing suitable education to young Armenians and pursuing literary development. In this sense, Mekhitar drew attention to the necessity of European enlightenment and studying the Armenian history, language and literature for national development. From this perspective, the emergence of the Mekhitar School created a hyperlink to teach European ideas to Armenian students abroad. Intellectual awakening of Armenians laid the foundations for the rise of Armenian nationalism in the next century (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 33). Indeed, young Ottoman Armenians who were educated in Paris and Vienne were deeply affected by European secular ideas. They returned their homeland impressed

with democratic and nationalist ideas. The first group of Armenian students completed their education in Italy, and Sarafian refers to the fact that the Mekhitharist Monastery was the center of education (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 46). The second group, on the other hand, received education in Paris and experienced French ideas of liberty followed by revolutions between 1830 and 1848. It is found in Varandian's work that this second group came back to the Ottoman Empire full of revolutionist ideas and thoughts of French intellectuals including Lamartine, De Musset, August Comte, Chateaubriand, Michelet, Victor Hugo, Guizot and Quinet (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 46) . Moreover, Armenians who graduated from American Protestant Missionary schools – opened after the year 1819 – were later assigned as instructors to Armenian schools in the Ottoman Empire. They basically had a critical approach towards the Ottoman administration and the ecumenist Armenian community (Somel, 2007, p. 1). In this regard, the American Protestant Missionary schools particularly led to the rise of critical and independent views against Sultan Abdul Hamid II's politics and the Armenian Church within the Empire. These critics and commentators had secularization tendency. The preparation of the Armenian national constitution in 1860 and its acceptance in 1863 by Sultan Abdul Aziz was the evidence of this secularization. Under these circumstances, the Armenian Council decreased the power of the religious head and entailed the participation of Armenian nation to the administration. In substance, the Armenian national awakening process was opposed to the non-secular formation of the Armenian Church as well as the Ottoman Empire as they were distant from new values prevailing during the century. As a consequence, conflict broke out between Armenians and the Ottoman state. The fear of collapse of the Empire and the Armenian desire for autonomy urged Sultan Abdul Hamid II to be more authoritarian. The repressive regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II

was observed in Armenian educational field as well. Nonetheless, the freedom to establish non-Muslim schools gave the opportunity to impose national ideas to Armenian students. In 1890, Armenian nationalism increased correspondingly to the American missionary schools in Eastern and central Anatolia. On the other hand, two Armenian teachers who were working in the American College of Mersovan were arrested in 1893 due to their cooperation with Armenian nationalists (Günay, 2008, p. 112). Upon this incident, the views of the local population and the Ottoman administration changed negatively to the missionary schools. Consequently, the Armenian schools were inspected rigorously. Class books related with the Armenian history, maps or books from Europe were controlled by the state administration (Somel, 2007, p. 15). It was inevitable for Armenians to be far away from the changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since the power of the Armenian Church was regularly interrogated in addition to its non-secular structure. The Armenian modernization movement, on the other hand, was not only against the Ottoman Empire, but also the lack of the secularist system of their congregation. The process was successful with the acceptance of the Armenian National Constitution and the changes in education of young Armenian generation. Yet, the desire to establish an Armenian state or obtain autonomy carried the Ottoman Armenians to a different way. The desire of seceding from the Ottoman Empire affected the bilateral relations and added another dimension to the nature of these relations. To gain autonomy or found an Armenian nation-state, Armenian committees were established across the Empire and there was a special focus on Ottoman Armenians who were abroad, educated in Europe or never had been in the Ottoman Empire. These people all had different approaches towards politics pertaining to the situation of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, there was a distinction between Ottoman Armenians whose efforts were limited to

modernization movements in the community and those who studied abroad, who actively founded committees. In fact, Ottoman Armenians had positive relations with the other fractions of the society, since they had roots in the Ottoman Empire as one of the ancient nations living in the territory. They had significant and valuable works which contributed the cultural, architectural, economic and artistic development of the Ottoman Empire and their Armenian community. Yet, they could not keep away from the modernization and secessionist affects.



## CHAPTER III

### 3. 1878 BERLIN TREATY

The value of the Berlin Treaty is consequential due to the transition of the Armenian issue from outside the Ottoman territories to the level of international community. In other words, the Armenian issue was recognized internationally after the Berlin Treaty was signed. Although the great powers in the world operated predominantly via missionaries, foreign merchants and consuls in the Ottoman Empire from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, the involvement of the great powers in the Armenian issue after the Berlin Treaty gained legitimacy via international recognition. In this regard, it is argued by certain scholars that Armenian nationalists launched new methods to form a basis for the great powers to occupy the Ottoman Empire after signing the treaty. Later, the theoretical Armenian nationalist thought transformed into Armenian Terrorism.

After the Turkish-Russian War (1877-1878), the convention San Stefano was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Article 16 of this convention was regulated by means of the efforts by Armenians and this article required the application of reforms in Armenian cities within the Ottoman Empire and entailed that Russians remained in Ottoman territories which meant occupation by Russia until a resolution (Bykova, 2015, p. 54). The Treaty of Berlin was accepted instead of the San Stefanos Treaty after the Turkish-Russian War (1877-78). The interests of the British Empire happened coincide with the interests of Russia to have the San Stefano Convention approved. In this sense, leaving Ottoman cities including Kars, Ardahan and Batum to Russia would be a threat against the interests of the British Empire, since being the guardian of the trade route passing from India was vital for the British Empire in its penetration to Asia. For that reason, the British Empire intervened in the

process by revising the Stefano Convention, while Şimşir asserts that the British Empire did not allow Russia to expand in Anatolia (Sarnay, 2015, p. 77). Differently from the San Stefanos, the British Empire and France also joined the Berlin Treaty, Article 61 of which replaced Article 16 of San Stefanos. In fact, this Article 61 entailed reforms for cities where Armenians were living in addition to protection of Armenians against assaults by Kurds and Circassians. Overall, this process led to the great powers' intervention in domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire as well as internationalization of the Armenian issue (Maden, 2013, pp. 268-280).

As a result, a great many Armenian Committees were founded after the Berlin Treaty. The organization of Armenian committees escalated after the Berlin Agreement signed after the 1877-1878 Russian-Ottoman War. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire sustained diplomatic pressure to resolve the Armenian issue by applying reforms followed by the effect of the internationalization of the political issue by means of the Berlin Treaty. Nevertheless, the process ended up with deterioration of the relations between the Armenian community and Ottoman administration. This deterioration caused lack of confidence between the Sublime Porte and Ottoman Armenians.

### **3.1 Establishment of Armenian Organizations outside the Ottoman Empire and Transformation of Armenian Nationalism**

Emergence of Armenian nationalism was a natural output of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the impact of the new thoughts acquired from the French Revolution. As much as the other religious fractions in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians attempted to form their national constitution and followed a secular route. Within this framework, ethnicity increasingly became an essential value for Armenian nationalism, while they explored and learned the Armenian history to revive the Armenian nationhood. As

explained before, the importance of national language was understood and taught at Armenian schools. The liberties of the Tanzimat era and Edict of Reforms led to the emergence of Armenian nationalism and facilitated its spread across the Ottoman territories. This movement, indeed, had a soft character and the enlightenment of Armenians was comprehensive. Comparing to the New Ottomans, the Armenian young generation during that period received education in Europe as well and they predominantly focused on nationalistic ideas, exploring their identity with the help of international movements. As a matter of fact, all nations, Muslims and non-Muslims, across the world were struggling against the hegemony of monarchic administrations. In this regard, Serbs, Greeks, and Bulgarians sought a fight against monarchy during that period. Unlike the other nations residing in the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Armenians sustained the involvement of other units to shape their national conscious. The great powers and their representatives and missionaries challenged the Ottoman Empire by imposing Armenian national values and ignoring their national integrity to the Ottoman administration. They split the Armenian community and dragged Armenians into a deadlock. Another issue was the transformation of Armenian nationalism from a soft to a wilder character. Although it was carrying the particularities of the century, it turned into Armenian terrorism after the Berlin Treaty. In other words, the national awakening of Armenians transformed into a new way and its wild character deeply damaged Ottoman Armenians and Turks.

While analyzing the concept of nationalism, it can be observed that the literature consists of different general specifications and approaches and it is difficult to describe a specific frame for nationalism. Every nation, every century or even every issue has its own unique character. Smith describes nationalism in four lineaments including the process of nation-building, the conscious of belonging to a

nation, a targeted movement and an ideology (Haşlak, 2000, p. 50). Anderson, on the other hand, argues that the collapse of kingdoms and decreasing importance of religious systems required the necessity of forming an alternative community. Hence, the concept of nation and nationalism was produced. Nationalism was not the output of concrete realities of the societies. Rather, it was an artificial thought. Conformably to the definition of Anderson, Kedourie added that nationalism was a doctrine invented in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Haşlak, 2000, pp. 51-52). Armenian nationalism had its own distinct structure with multilateral traits. From this perspective, Armenian nationalism emerged and theoretically developed among Ottoman Armenians, while the new Armenian nationalist identity was formed within the Empire. Armenian bourgeoisie contributed with their efforts in the development of their community. In this regard, the circumstances shaping Armenian nationalism matches with Smith's definition which elaborates that nationalism in the East was based on ethnicity. Eastern nationalities transformed into political communities by means of deliberate efforts by intellectuals and the bureaucratic class (Karadağ & Yaman, 2019, p. 92). On the other hand, Armenian nationalism left its ideological approach which originated from the Armenian bourgeoisie and later turned into violent chauvinism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Armenians who had not been in the Ottoman territories before and whose ideas were arising from the abstract concepts reoriented Armenian nationalism to an adventurous way. This chauvinist nationalism rooted in Caucasus. As a matter of fact, the establishment of Armenian organizations outside the Ottoman Empire oriented the new wilder movement which was not similar to Armenian nationalism which emanated among the Ottoman Armenians. It was not typical; however the Armenian nationalist movement was maintained by the Armenians outside the Empire. The only relevance between Ottoman Armenians and

Armenian committees outside the Empire was at social level. Within this framework, Armenian national ideas had already spread among Ottoman Armenians by the effect of missionary works. For this reason, certain Armenians became the nationalistic base for the organizational movement and mediated the aims of the Armenian committees. The Armenian organizations benefited from the Armenians who were raised in missionary schools.

The most important movement by the aforementioned Armenian committees was Dashnaks with persistent and savage traits. Prior to analyzing Armenian nationalism with the emergence of Dashnaks, it is critical to point out to Grigori Artsruni who was the founding father of Dashnaks. He was interiorized by Dashnaks as the founder of the Dashnakism (Karinyan, 2007, p. 25). Grigori Artsruni was the first representative of Armenian liberalism and published the *Mşak* newspaper in 1872 in Tbilisi. The underlying ideas of Dashnakism were published firstly in *Mşak* (Perinçek, 2015, p. 32). The thoughts of Artsruni were so provocative and radical as he called Ottoman Armenians to revolt against the Ottoman State for liberation in the editorial of *Mşak*. However, Ottoman Armenians were not impressed by the liberation call of Artsruni. Since Armenians did not respond to this call, Artsruni severely criticized Armenians in the 24<sup>th</sup> issue of *Mşak* in 1876. Accordingly, Kegamyan argues that Artsruni believed that the Armenian soul could be revived with the help of external power (Perinçek, 2015, p. 38). Indeed, the ideas of Artsruni could be explained within the frame of violent nationalism since it was such a dangerous approach in terms of the future of the societies. Surely, non-peaceful nationalistic ideas and their influence on Armenians led to the impairing consequences for Ottoman Armenians and Turks. Ultimately, the Armenian nationalist Committee Dashnaks was established in 1890 in Tbilisi (Bykova, 2015, p. 54). Their terrorist

attacks during the last period of the Ottoman Empire and their cooperation with the great powers, especially with Russia during the World War I, paved the way for the Resettlement and Deportation Law in 1915.

Dashnaks were also called as “Dashnaktsutyun”, which means a federation that they associated other committees under their organization. Their aim was to assemble the Armenian Organizations Armenagans (Van), Young Armenia (Tbilisi) and Hunchakian. Describing themselves as social democrats, they followed the insurrections and terrorist activities as method to take the cities in eastern Anatolia. Yet, Hunchaks and Dashnaks were separated because of ideological reasons in 1891 (Okur & Koloğlu, 2011, pp. 127-129). Dashnaks were more aggressive than the other Armenian committees. They used violence, armed attacks and terror as an instrument to attract the attention of the great powers and provide the necessary conditions for the occupation of Ottoman territories by the great powers (Bykova, 2015, p. 54).

In this line, Hunchakian was the first Armenian committee founded under the leadership of the Caucasus Armenians Avetis Nazarbekian and his wife, Mariam Vardanian in 1887 (Uzun, 2000, p. 274) The Committee was established in Geneva by the Armenian students of Russian origin who studied in Europe. They adopted socialism as their main objective and the Hunchakian committee aimed to liberate eastern Anatolia to annex the region to Russian and Iranian territories in order to establish the Republic of Armenia (Özşavlı, 2012, pp. 154-158). The founders of the committee had information about the Ottoman Empire from the Armenian newspaper published in Switzerland and they had never seen the Ottoman Empire before (Mazıcı, 2007, p. 47). However, the Armenian Committees did not unite under the same ideological idea despite the fact that they shared similar methods, namely terrorist activities. Furthermore, Dashnaks excluded Hunchakians due the fact that

they adopted the Marxist ideology as they believed that not any working class existed in the Ottoman Empire. In 1892, Dashnaks published their manifesto in the newspaper *Troşak* and declared their terrorist structure. Their manifesto composed of armament of Armenians, guerilla and gang activities as well as riots (Mazıcı, 2007, p. 49). Additionally, the Armenian schools and missionaries were deeply effective in the organization and mobilization of Armenian students, inciting nationalist feelings at missionary schools (Yıldırım, 2008, p. 172). The Armenian revolutionaries fomented in Anatolia 40 years before the alleged massacres due to the desire of the national revolution and union with Russia. According to the diplomatic historian of Harvard University, William Langer, Armenian revolutionaries massacred innocent Muslim villagers to provoke counter-violence which created the pretext of intervention of Europeans to Anatolia (Associations T. A., 1986, p. 14). Another historian, Professor Kemal Çiçek states that Armenians, especially the radicals, determined their policy to fight against the Ottoman Empire during the World War I. They decided to contribute in the Allies against the Ottoman Empire and reinforce the Russian armies. The War was the chance for them to establish an independent Armenian state (Akyol, 2014, p. 68). Similar to this approach, Perinçek defines the two missions of Dashnaks on the eve of the World War I. Firstly, they aimed to enfeeble the Ottoman military by revolting behind the front. Secondly, Dashnaks attempted to damage the Ottoman's lines of defense to facilitate Russian occupation (Perinçek, 2015, p. 45).

As a consequence, Armenian modernization and nationalist movement turned into terrorist methods after the establishment of the Armenian committees. By this means, the Armenian ideological nationalism entirely changed, while Armenian nationalists did not remain to be passive since they aspired for autonomy. In this route, Armenian nationalists organized under committees and their activities started to

show up with an attempt to establish an independent Armenian state including the *Vilayat-i Şarkıyye*<sup>2</sup> or Eastern Provinces (Yüksel, 2012, pp. 165-166).

### 3.2 Armenian Terrorism during the Last Period of the Ottoman Empire

In historical process, the Berlin Treaty was a big turn for Armenian nationalism and its alteration to Armenian terrorism. After the Treaty of Berlin, the internationalization of the Armenian issue encouraged Caucasian Armenians to establish their national country. The Big Armenian idea, thus, included the eastern part of the Ottoman territories. To realize their dream, Caucasian Armenians organized under committees outside the Ottoman Empire. While pursuing their activities, they were referring to Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Montenegrins. These organizations were motivated by insurrections for freedom and rights, as well as proclamation of independent states in the Balkans (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 181). The Armenian committees were provoking Turkish hostility and enforcing terrorist attacks. They modelled the Italian Carbonari, Russian Narodnik and Greek Philiki Eteria, while they organized secretly with a cell structure. The first organized Armenian committee inside the Ottoman Territories was *Armenakan* which was established by Mıgırdıç Portakalyan in Van province in 1885. Portakalyan was active in the orientation of Armenians in Van and Tbilisi. He escaped from the Ottoman Empire and went to Marseille where he published a journal which was called *Armenia*. Previously founded by Mıgırdıç Kırımıyan and Portakalyan, the Armenian Union of Citizens formed the basis for the *Armenakan*. Members of the *Armenakan* aimed to gain the right to nation-building via insurrections. Committees implemented various methods for organizing and mobilizing Armenians, collecting financial

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<sup>2</sup> *Vilayat-ı Şarkıyye*: Meaning Eastern Provinces, this concept has been referred to as *Vilayet-i Sitte* including Sivas, Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Mamuretülzaiz (Elazığ) and Diyarbakir. (Yüksel, 2012, pp. 165-166)

sources, spreading national ideas and attracting great powers (Selvi, 2011, pp. 26-28). According to Nalbandian, Armenakan was the first solid Armenian organization. However, it was deprived of affective and broad appeal due to their local position. Contrary to Hunchakian and Dashnaks, Armenakan was distant from socialist principles. Armenakan did not use terrorism as the others who used terrorist attacks to attract the attention of European powers. Thereby, they used different methods to intervene in the Ottoman Empire (Nalbandian, 1967, p. 182). Furthermore, Europe and Caucasus were available regions to realize the organizational activities in terms of propagandizing and spreading Armenian national ideas. In this regard, Armenian organization and mobilization were fostered by publishing journals and opening bureaus around Europe. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians were already organized under the body of committees and were raising their voice through journals and printed media. Indeed, there was no obstacle to start their terrorist activities. Their road map was actually planned well. Afterwards, some members of the Paris Nationalist Committee who were living in London, published *Haiastan*, where they informed the public and later managed to establish the English-Armenian Committee. Its aim was to press on the British and Ottoman Empire (Sonyel, 2009, p. 144). Another active committee organized in London published the newspaper named *Larmani*. They were related secretly with Hunchaks and there was no branch in the Ottoman country. Finally, the committee referred to the *Agreeing Competent* established in Tiflis and it also targeted leading the revolution in Ottoman areas close to the Russian border *Troşnak* was their newspaper and they had branches in nearly every city of Russia close to the Asia continent, especially in villages (Kartın, 2010, p. 144). Dashnaks and Hunchakians were also using the periodical publications to

propagate their ideas. *Aztag*, *Zartung* and *Ararat* were the newspapers of Dashnaks, Hunchakians and Ramgavars (Uras, 1976, p. 31).

From this perspective, the press absolutely had a fundamental impact on politicizing Armenian ideas. Another step taken by the aforementioned committees was to begin terrorist activities in order to reach national independence. After a short while, terrorists infiltrated in the Ottoman territories under the leadership of Dashnaks and Hunchakians. In chronological order, Hunchakians carried out the *Kumkapı* incident in 1890, the first Sason rebellion in 1894, Zeytun and Bab-ı Ali or Sublime Porte riot in 1895 (Okur & Koloğlu, 2011, p. 129). Dashnaks organized the occupation of the Ottoman Bank, the second Sason rebellion and Yıldız assassination (Selvi, 2011, p. 32). They were the influential Armenian terrorist attacks in the Ottoman territories. Indeed, *Kumkapı* incidents occurred in Istanbul in 1890. For the first time, a non-Muslim group rebelled in Istanbul after the conquest of the city by Mehmed the Conqueror (Şaşmaz, 2015, p. 101). In fact, choosing Istanbul to attack was not a pure coincidence, it was well-planned. Istanbul was deliberately chosen for an organized attack due to its attraction for the great powers. A large scale attack in Istanbul could create a huge impact since consuls, the press, Sultan and all others would give testimony to such a large riot. A member of the Hunchakian committee, Artin Gulguinyan aimed to convey their thoughts to Sultan through the Patriarch. On July 27, Sunday, the Armenian community gathered for a riot at *Kumkapı* cathedral. Gulguinyan walked forward while reading a paper and Patriarch Aşıkıyan called him not to read a paper during the course of the riot. Nonetheless, the crowd took side with Gulguinyan and made a scene. Gulguinyan attempted to shoot the Patriarch. Although Aşıkıyan succeeded to run away, he was later subjected to maltreatment, since he was accused of ignoring the Armenian community. According to the Armenians who were

involved in the Kumkapı incident, Armenians were suffering from massacres and Aşıkıyan was overlooking the interests of Armenians. As a result of the incident, though, the rioters were sentenced to variable punishments. The patriarch resigned to please the Hunchakian and to hamper the threatening of the radical Armenians. The important point reported by the English ambassador White was as follows: “From the conquest of the Istanbul, for the first time, non-Muslims showed courage to rebel against the Ottoman military” (Sonyel, 2009).

The Hunchakian Committee played a significant role in the terrorist attacks throughout the Ottoman Empire against Turks and Armenians who served the Ottoman state. And together with other committees, they expected protection from the major powers. Thus, Armenians residing in Iran, Russia and the Ottoman Empire could be connected to live under the Armenian socialist state. The only way to establish the Armenian socialist state was to incite Armenians to rebel (Selvi, 2011, p. 31).

The Armenian revolutionary committees, especially Dashnaks and Hunchaks, were the terrorist organizations that had used foreign financing. Smuggling was their way of acquiring weaponry and they did not hesitate to use violence. They were well armed, trained and organized. By 1914, the great powers tolerated the activities of these committees. France, the UK and the United States supported the riots against the Ottoman Rule. Russia and Bulgaria especially were crucial for the revolutionary terrorist organizations to operate and realize their smuggling activities into the Ottoman Empire (Erickson, 2011, pp. 292-293).

Indeed, the Armenian committees caused deterioration of the public security inside the Ottoman territories. As mentioned before, Armenians faced difficulty in the

east and turbulence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, terrorism was not the solution to realize Armenian reforms. Terrorist activities attracted the attention of the major powers, while provoking hostility among nations and preparing the background of the 1915 incidents.

### **3.3 Assassination of Abdul Hamid II in 1905**

The Ottoman Empire passed through difficult times during the long sultanate of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The Sublime Porte struggled against the secessionist-nationalist movements, terrorist activities, rebellions and the pressure from the great powers. On the other hand, major powers' interests and related involvement in Ottoman affairs via missionaries and non-Muslim merchants led to political and economic pressure on the Ottoman state. The political turbulence of the time enforced attempts to demolish the administration of Abdul Hamid II. A number of assassination attempts were made to kill the Sultan. The intelligence service bound to Sultan Abdul Hamid II and informers' reports showed in detail how the assassinations were planned. Armenian, Russian and Bulgarian committees were the predominant planners of the assassination attempts. Some tried to enthrone Murad V instead of Abdul Hamid II (Şeber, 2012, p. 33). It is stated that failure to apply the reforms was among the probable reasons for the inciting of the Armenian committees. In fact, Abdul Hamid II was an obstacle in front of realizing their independence dreams to as they were full ideas to form the Great Armenia. As a result, Abdul Hamid II became a target for enemies, while he was aware of the developments around him. Except from the traditional ceremonies, therefore, he preferred to stay in the Yıldız Palace during his sultanate as of 1880. Friday divine service parade was one of the important ceremonies for Abdul Hamid II to be outside the Palace. People were gathering around the mosque and watching the passage of the Sultan. During the parade, the

Armenian committee, knowing the ceremonial rituals, attempted to assassinate Abdul Hamid II on July 21, 1905 (Öztuna, 1965, p. 51).

At the beginning of 1904, Dashnaks took certain decisions in their congress in Sofia. According to their decisions, they aimed to organize terrorist attacks in İzmir and Istanbul and soon they organized a group to detach in Istanbul (Kamil, 2014, pp. 24-25). The members of Dashnak Kristofor Mikaelyan and Nişan Manasyan led the Armenian terrorists who were responsible to organize the assassination. They acquired the necessary equipment from Jorris who was from Belgium. Abdul Hamid II's arrival to his car after he left the mosque was carefully calculated to be 1 minute 42 seconds. A phaeton was ordered from Vienne in pieces not to draw attention. 80 kilograms of explosives were disposed in the car. This was the first terrorist attack organized with a bomb-laden vehicle as cited in the investigation report (Avcı, 2012, p. 94). On July 21, when Abdul Hamid II was in Yıldız Hamidiye Mosque for Friday divine service parade, the bomb was blasted. However, a dialogue between Abdul Hamid II and Shaikh al-Islam Cemâleddin Efendi after he left the mosque saved his life. The terrorists could not kill the Sultan. At last, 26 people died, and 58 people were injured (Öztuna, 1965, p. 51) as a result of the incident.

### **3.4 The Committee of Union and Progress**

The history of the Committee of Union and Progress dates back to the establishment of the Committee of Ottoman Union in 1889. It was founded by a group of students who were educated in Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane or medical school (Dündar, 2015, p. 53). İbrahim Temo, Abdullah Cevdet, İshak Sukuti, Mehmet Reşit and Hüseyinzade Ali were the founders of the Committee of Ottoman Union (Dündar, 2015, p. 19). The military medical school was founded to raise Muslim doctors for the

military. After the declaration of Tanzimat, non-Muslims gained the right to educate in this military medical school and the language of instruction was French. Here, students were influenced by materialist and positivist thoughts. Mac Farlane who visited the school in 1847 noted that the students were impressed by the French Revolution. The books of materialist and positivist philosophers who led the Revolution were read by the students in this military medical school (Okumuş, 2006, p. 313). The language of instruction was a striking feature due to the fact that students had the opportunity to access foreign press and thereby, European ideas. Similar to the military medical school, foreign language training in military schools as well as military middle schools paved the way for the formation of student movements in the future (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 62). Moreover, students of the military medical school were reading banned works of Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, as well as newspapers posted secretly from abroad. Petrosyan utters that the students were sharing these works among each other (Örs, 2013, p. 690). The opposition to Sultan Abdul Hamid II was nurtured with the works of the New Ottomans including the journal *İstikbal* published by Ali Şefkat in Napoli, Paris and Geneva to impress young students studying in the fields of medicine, military and civil service (Aydın S. , 2011, p. 117). As noted above, the Committee of Ottoman Union created the infrastructure for the Committee of Union and Progress. The students of the military medical school aspired to protest the despotism of Abdul Hamid II and bring into force the 1876 constitution, and to realize their purpose, they assembled the Committee on June 3, 1889. It was clearly a students' movement inspiring others until the year 1895. After the year 1889, the popularity of student movements incremented and constituted a challenging period for the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the Sublime Porte encountered a deep diplomatic crisis with the great powers due to the Armenian issue. During this

international crisis, the Young Turks movement further instigated pressure over the Empire (Dündar, 2015, p. 19). The rise and progress of student movements coincided with the emergence of the Armenian Committees and their corresponding activities, a fact which was determinant for the political future of the Ottoman Empire. The rebellions by student movements and Armenian Committees turned into alliance in near future. Sometimes, they gathered against the Sultan's administration. Another point to note in this regard is the concurrence between the Ottoman Union Society and Armenian Hunchakian Committee. The Ottoman Union Society manifested itself with the declaration of "Motherland in Danger" on October 30, 1895 immediately after the Hunchakian terrorist attack in Istanbul. Ahmet Rıza published the journal *Meşveret* in the same year in Paris (Dündar, 2015, pp. 52-53). In addition, the numbers of Armenian revolts were definitely increasing in different regions of the Empire. The rebellion in Sason with the provocation of the Consul General of Van occurred in 1884 and quashed gorily. The Great Powers were involved in the incident and diplomatically pressed for application of reforms. With the rejection of the reforms by Abdul Hamid II, another Armenian protest ensued. Armenian rioters walked towards the Sublime Porte on September 30, 1895 as cited in Shaw's work (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 63).

When the Committee started to enlarge around 1895, the need for a regulation emerged. Therefore, a charter was drafted and the name of the Committee was changed to the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress as Ergut referenced (Örs, 2013, p. 690). The opposition movement, of course, interacted with other various organizations. Members of the Committee were reported to be inspired from the Italian Carbonari in terms of organizational chart. Ramsaur shares that İbrahim Temo visited the Mason lodge in Italy with his friend on his way back to the homeland

before the establishment of the Committee. In this regard, the cell structure of the organization as well as the number of members resembled the CUP (Akşin, 1980), the center of which was based in Paris. The Committee was not ruled under the hegemony of a president. As a matter of fact, the CUP did not have any leader as a principle and responsibilities were shared by all members. The main policy of the CUP was secrecy. This regulation was pursued until the collapse of the Committee (Aydın & Cengiz, 2012, pp. 131-132).

In this line, the Committee of Union and Progress emerged during the last period of the Ottoman Empire. From the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the World War I, this committee had absolute effects on the political system of the Empire. In this regard, the Turkish political history has profound traces with regard to the political culture of the CUP. Yet, it is clear that the CUP did not have precise or clearly defined political ideologies when its political aspirations are scrutinized. During its term in existence, the committee adopted many different ideologies for various purposes, but predominantly to ensure the survival of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, their policies were different according to the period. From the foundation to its collapse, Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism became the policies of the committee.

The new ideologies adopted by the New Ottomans later shaped the ideas of the CUP members. In this regard, it would be useful to analyze the CUP under two different periods: The first period of the Committee refers to the time of its emergence when the members were completely against the monarchic system. They deemed constitutionalism as the only way for the survival of the Ottoman Empire. It was the revolutionist constitutionalist movement under the influence of the French Revolution. (Aydın S. , 2011, p. 117). In this context, the first policy adopted by the

committee was Ottomanism. Equality among all nations and their commitment to the Empire were defined as the basic principles for preventing secessionist movements in the Ottoman lands. Despite the existence of variable units in the Ottoman Empire, the opposition against Abdul Hamid II caused a natural alliance between different nations. The CUP collaborated with non-Muslims, especially Armenians against the Sultan's administration. Practically all nations defined Sultan's government as tyranny (Şimşek, 2015, p. 183). Especially Armenians, Greeks and Bulgarians were opposing to Sultan (Aydın & Cengiz, 2012, p. 133). Drafted in 1895, the regulation expressly shared that the main concerns for the committee were the despotism imposed by the Sultan and failure to implement the constitution (Aydın S. , 2011, p. 118).

The second period of the committee started in September, 1906 in Salonika when officers and members of the masonic lodge founded the Ottoman Freedom Society under the leadership of Mehmed Talat (Young Turks, 2011). Afterwards, they united with the Paris wing and named after as Progress and Union. This formation was the work of the Ottoman military (Dündar, 2015, p. 20). The Ottoman Freedom Society was established independently from the Committee in Paris and they were not engaged in any relation in their early foundation years. The so-called 3<sup>rd</sup> army was composed of the members of this Society. The Ottoman Freedom Society had a secret and cellular type of structure (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 68). *Meşveret* and *Şura-yı Ümmet* were the journals published by the Committee to spread their ideologies (Aydın & Cengiz, 2012, p. 135). Overall, the committee had major differences in its first and second periods. Instead of students who were provoked by the ideologies of the French Revolution, this committee's core was composed of officers. Unions

associated with this committee, one in Salonika and the other in Paris paved the way for the emergence of a new class in the society.

It is significant to take into consideration that the CUP was active also in foreign countries. The committee took active initiatives mainly in Paris, Geneva and Cairo. As stated before, the main instrument for spreading their ideas was publishing journals. Mizancı Murad was ruling the branch in Cairo until when he transferred to the Geneva group. And the *Ottoman* journal was published in Geneva. The Paris branch was ruled by Ahmet Rıza who published *Meşveret* in Paris (Örs, 2013).

Although the CUP emerged as an oppositional movement against Abdul Hamid II, their different approaches caused fragmentation of the Committee due to ideologies. The pursuit of ambiguous policies in the CUP since its foundation turned into formation of different groups inside the committee over time. The first group, supporters of Ahmet Rıza, gathered around *Meşveret*, while the second group allied around the ideas of Mizancı Murad who was publishing the journal *Ottoman*. Indeed, both groups had different approaches with regard to the Armenian issue. Ahmet Rıza was accusing Abdul Hamid II of causing the Armenian rebellions. He referred to Sultan's politics as slaughtering. On the other hand, Mizancı Murad was close to Islamic policies and supported the Armenian politic of Sultan as cited in Petrosyan's well-entrenched work (Aydın S. , 2011, p. 119). Another group emerged after the announcement of decentralist politics of Prince Sabahaddin. Tanin<sup>3</sup> argues that the Prince aimed to implement a Private Initiative and Administrative Decentralization as

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<sup>3</sup> Tanin was established by Hüseyin Cahit, Hüseyin Kazım and Tevfik Fikret on 1 August 1908. It began its publishing life immediately after its establishment. Lead writer of newspaper was Hüseyin Cahit. It was the most significant media organ of CUP and it made effective propaganda for the benefit of CUP (Özdilli, 2019, p. 273). Hüseyin Cahit handles the decentralization which was defended by Ahrar in Tanin. Members of CUP evaluated decentralization as an ideology which may divide the country. Tanin also criticizes decentralization and argues that decentralization which was defended by Ahrar serves the purpose of Greek Patriarchate. Hence, they were on the same side in 1908 elections (Özdilli, 2019, p. 305).

a survival method for the Ottoman Empire (Kayalı, 1997). This time, they were separated as centralists and decentralists. Thus, the main political matters the Ottoman administration tackled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were basically the Armenian issue and the activities of the CUP, which were both perceived as a threat against the Sublime Porte. From another perspective, the CUP was a destructive movement for the future of the monarchic system, while the Armenian issue also damaged the stability of the Ottoman Empire. As a matter of fact, Armenians caused diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman administration with their desire to establish a national Armenian country. As a consequence, the CUP and Armenian Committees followed a Byzantine model of politics until the World War I. Their policies gathered around setting a chamber of deputies. In this context, deposition of Abdul Hamid II would provide the liberal atmosphere, and then they could have the chance to attain their goals. However, political situation did not turn out to be as they hoped. Despite the fact that certain factions in the CUP were quite close to Armenians, the committee was ideologically fragmented. Thus, their alliance against Abdul Hamid II was short-lived. Their excessive ambitions led to massacres of Ottoman Armenians and Turks later on.

Over time, the CUP moved away from its initial politics of Ottomanism since the idea of uniting the different nationalities around Ottomanism was replaced by nationalism. Likewise, Islamist politics aiming at uniting the Ummah fell through. Although the Armenian committees and the CUP cooperated in the face of the Sultan's oppressive regime by means of convening in the consecutive congresses under the CUP in 1902 and 1907, Bayır also argues that this alliance did not last long due to various reasons (Şimşek, 2015, p. 182).

Indeed, the unstable politics of the CUP were conspicuous. Akkaya shared that the first Ottoman Liberals Congress gathered on February 4-9, in 1902 (Gökbayır,

2012, p. 68). Ramsaur points out to the fact that Prince Sabahaddin was elected as president (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 68). 47 delegates who were Greek, Arab, Turk, Armenian, Kurdish, Circassian, Albanian and Jewish participated in the Congress in 1902. The multinational form of the Congress led to the proposal of the various ideas. On this platform, the Armenian delegates favored involvement of European powers in their case. Albanians were complaining about the insufficient propaganda for the declaration of constitutionalism. They believed in the necessity of military intervention. Overall, the congress aimed to abolish the oppressive regime among other aspirations. However, they did not always share common modus operandi proposals for attaining their goals. As a matter of fact, Ahmet Rıza and his friends, Dr. Nazım and Yusuf Akçura were against intervention of European powers, although they were supportive of Prince Sabahaddin. Ramsaur sheds light on the fact that Ahmet Rıza published a notice to define and announce his opposition to the idea of European involvement in their matters (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 68).

Prior to the declaration of the Second Constitution in 1908, there had been tremendous opposition across the territory against the Ottoman rule. All elements of the Empire were in struggle. The second Ottoman Liberal Congress was made in Paris in 1907 under these circumstances. Prince Sabahaddin, Ahmet Rıza, Dashnaktsutyun and their representatives were the participants of the congress. Differently from the first Congress, Ahmet Rıza did not oppose the decisions of the Congress pertaining to the intervention of the great powers as well as the armed resistance (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 71).

Concomitantly, the character of the CUP changed after its unification with the Ottoman Freedom Society. Although it was first initiated by oppositional student movements, in time, the committee began to apply vulgar policies gain and sustain

power. In their congress, they approved armed actions and even attempted at a coup in order to have a say in the administration. However, it is of note that the CUP failed to apply successful politics with regard to Ottoman Armenians. They did criticize the Ottoman Sultan for not applying the necessary reforms and imposing vulgar policies against Armenians, however the CUP also failed to offer welfare to Ottoman Armenians living in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the fact that they collaborated with Armenian Committees to prevent Armenian nationalism from flourishing, their attempt failed. In this regard, the origin of the Armenian issue is observed to date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather being the result of the CUP's policies. The issue was provoked by the excessive nationalist movements by the Committees and unsuccessful politics of the Ottoman Sultan. Yet, the CUP also ended up leading to many problems which caused Ottoman Armenians to deport. This was unfortunately the result of wrong policies accompanied by several tensions with the great powers, the Armenian committees, Ottoman rulers and the CUP. In other words, Ottoman Armenians were damaged by a sort of cooperation among different actors.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD: 1908-1914

The period of 1908-1914 started with the declaration of the Second Constitution after the Young Turk's revolution after which the turbulent and rough century came to an end. All components of the Ottoman Empire celebrated the constitutional period with great excitement. Indeed, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians and Europeans in the Ottoman territories celebrated the declaration of the Second Constitutional period hand to hand. During that era, constitutionalists shared great hopes for collaboration. On his way back from Jerusalem to Istanbul, the former Patriarch Mateos Izmirlian who presided over the Hunchakian Committee in 1894 was welcomed by Turks during the commemoration of Armenians who lost their lives in 1896 (Şimşek, 2015, p. 183). Moreover, it is possible to observe that national aspirations were replaced by an imperial epoch by that time. The downsizing of the Ottoman Empire led to the loss of prestige at international level (Şıvgın & Günaydın, 2015). Looking from the perspective of domestic affairs, though, the optimistic political approach adopted by the opponents of Abdul Hamid II was not seen in the long term when politics of the Empire from this date on are scrutinized. In spite of the unity between variable units of the Empire, the Second Constitutional era witnessed great dissents.

The Second Constitution was declared shortly after the unification of the Ottoman Freedom Society and the Paris wing. In this regard, the members of the Ottoman Freedom Society recruited predominantly by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army substantially pressured the Sublime Porte. After gaining political power in Ottoman policies, the CUP imposed its policies through the cabinet. Despite its activities behind the political scene, the CUP was easily proceeding with its expedients. Firstly, the

unionist repealed the censorship. The political prisoners were released. The constitutional prerogatives of the Sultan were prevented and finally elections came into the agenda. Furthermore, ensuring territorial integrity of the Ottoman territories by means of the constitutional system continued to be a top priority for the CUP (Kayalı, 1997). On the other hand, internal matters of the Ottoman Empire had been carried to the international level which definitely pushed the CUP towards taking certain measures against various international challenges.

Firstly, the CUP encountered the issue of confirming its political legitimacy within the international system. Yet, it was secretly organized in the beginning, and its political secrecy remained after the declaration of the Second Constitution even the unionists, in fact, using their political manipulation tools from behind the cabinet. Although the CUP emerged as an oppositional movement against the Ottoman Sultan and deposed his administration, the committee transformed into a political organ undertaking administrative responsibilities after a long time from its establishment (Kayalı, 1997). During the first years, the CUP preferred to take part in the ruling of the Ottoman Empire via their officers from the backstage. In this sense, members of the CUP did not aim to become power holders at first. It may well be argued that the reason for the administrative hesitation of the CUP was the absence of self-confidence in the political arena (Örs, 2013, p. 714).

On the other hand, the new political system adopted after several reforms had clearly collided with the parliament. In this sense, it is known that the governing rule changed five times during the term of the second constitution, while oppositional movements were accompanied by counterrevolution acts and uprisings (Kayalı, 1997). On the other hand, certain favorable changes were witnessed in the field of press and social organizations where liberty started to be prioritized. In light of these

favorable changes, the years between 1908 and 1914 witnessed developments as per organization of political parties, elections, nationalist clubs, feminist organizations, labor unions as well as emergence of several major newspapers. Indeed, the Young Turk revolution was a breaking point for the history of the Ottoman Empire (Börekci, 2013, p. 214).

On the other hand, it is possible to state that the multinational form of the Ottoman system was maintained during the unionist period as well. To ensure unity of the Empire, it was aimed to promote Ottomanism as the main ideology. On the other hand, the first election of parliament members was carried out with the participation of different nationals. Kansu reports that the government made the announcement to hold the election on July 24, 1908, the day after the revolution (Karacakaya, 2013, p. 128). In this line, Armenians attempted to participate in the 1908 elections and a delegation undertook the role of establishing dialogue between the state and Armenian citizens. Furthermore, this delegation prepared a statement regulating policies towards Armenian participation in elections. From this perspective, Tunaya reported in *Servet-i Fünun* (Wealth of Sciences) daily that the delegation was assigned by the Armenian Patriarch and conducted electoral campaigns (Karacakaya, 2013, pp. 128-129). In this line, Greeks and Armenians decided to collaborate in the 1908 elections (Karacakaya, 2013, p. 141). The Dashnaktsutyun also agreed to support the Constitution, while the Dashnaks stipulated preventing abolishment of their Committee. They agreed on proceeding their activities as a political party. After negotiations, the English *Time* declared that the branch of Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) in Van accepted ceasefire and they were ready to collaborate with the CUP (Ahmad, 2017, pp. 16-17). From this perspective, the CUP and Dashnaks were observed to agree on unity, constitutionalism and progress in September 1908.

However, Bozkurt argues that the Armenian Patriarch condemned the agreement (Olgun, 2004, p. 108). As for the election which was implemented multi-party system in the Turkish history, it was held with the participation of the CUP and the *Ahrar* or Party of Ottoman Liberals which was founded on the basis of the recommendations of Prince Sabahaddin and minority representatives. The *Ahrar* Party defended the idea of decentralization (Gökbayır, 2012, p. 76). And it is important to bear in mind that the CUP won the elections in 1908, while *Ahrar* could not yield any political influence due to its unorganized party structure. In fact, it may well be argued that the Party of Ottoman Liberals or the *Ahrar* could not complete its political party formation process by the time of the first election in 1908. Furthermore, the *Ahrar* failed to derive sufficient support from minorities in the Ottoman Empire (Olgun, 2004, p. 108). The newspaper *Times* pointed out that 50 deputies were elected as a result of the election and the majority of Muslim deputies who represented Anatolian and European provinces were the members of the CUP. Although the Armenian population was scattered in small groups across different regions of the Ottoman lands, they did not achieve sufficient representation in the parliament (Ahmad, 2017, p. 16).

Birinci shares in his study that the CUP members and the Freedom and Accord Party as an opposition party competed in the elections held in 1912 (Karacakaya, 2013, p. 131). For these elections, it was observed that the majority of Armenians and Dashnaks under the Ottoman Empire collaborated with CUP. On the other hand, Hunchakians made electoral alliance with the Freedom and Accord Party (Karacakaya, 2013, p. 141), which was established by opponents of the CUP with a different ethnic background and religion. In addition, the party was founded after the occupation of the last North African territory, Tripoli, by an Italian attack towards the end of 1911. The attack on Tripoli initiated the rise of a large-scale opposition against

the CUP embodying under the Freedom and Accord Party, main principles of which were decentralization and liberation. Furthermore, midterm elections were also held in 1911 and resulted in the triumph of the Freedom and Accord Party through outvoting with only one vote. Despite this one vote difference, the existence of the Freedom and Accord Party was perceived as a great threat against the authority of the CUP. Therefore, the election in 1912 were held under the shadow of power struggle. Since the CUP was concerned over losing its political power, it was pushed to apply strict politics against voters and opponents. Candidate deputy for the Edirne province from the Freedom and Accord Party, Dr. Rıza Tevfik lost the competition and opponents called the 1912 elections as “Election Turned into Fight with Stones and Sticks” (Aksöz, 2016, pp. 3-5).

Furthermore, Armenians were not exactly pleased with the election results, since there was hegemony by Muslims in terms of population rate. The Ottoman Empire was predominantly a Muslim-populated land and Armenians were spread throughout the Empire in small groups as minorities. Thus, Muslim votes were significant in election of deputies including those for the minorities. In this regard, Armenians asked the government to publish a non-discrimination memorandum to prevent any such act of discriminating against religion or ethnic origin of voters (Olgun, 2014, p. 4). The Armenian Patriarch conveyed his complaints to the Sublime Porte about the difficulties Armenians had been subject to and stated that Armenians were outraged due to unfairness of the elections. Although nearly two million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire, they did not have the right to nominate sufficient number of candidate deputies in proportion to their population. At the end of the elections, ten Armenians obtained the right to serve as deputies, while the CUP won the elections with overwhelming majority (Olgun, 2014, pp. 6-7).

The relations between the CUP and Ottoman Armenians were quite fragile in between 1908 and 1914. Despite limited political cooperation at times, they did not achieve establishing mutual confidence. In this context, it can fairly be argued that the CUP had pro-Ottoman politics, and this did not ease the Armenian nationalism. Despite the participation of Armenians in political life after the establishment of the parliament, Armenians did not give up on their national claims. Therefore, the Armenian nationalism was not presenting a soft character, since they were full of the desire to have an Armenian national country in the east of the Ottoman Empire notwithstanding their minority position there. In this regard, it is best to explain the approach of the Armenian Committees towards the CUP by means of dethroning Abdul Hamid II to achieve their goals. On the other hand, the CUP was observed to fail in maintaining political stability during its rule. Particularly the developments of 1908 forced the CUP to render unsuccessful politics. The counterrevolutionary act on April 13, 1909<sup>4</sup> and later the incidents in Adana damaged the relations between the Muslims and non-Muslims (Ahmad, 2017, p. 20). In addition, the Balkan War resulted in misery with loss of Ottoman territories in Europe, while the idea of Ottomanism collapsed and was replaced by Turkism as adopted by the CUP (Dündar, 2015, p. 61). Consequently, the opposition movement was eradicated after the Ottoman coup d'état and raid to the Sublime Porte in January 1913 with forcing all opponents to detentions, exile and execution (Dündar, 2015, p. 21).

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<sup>4</sup> The incident on March 31 continued its effect particularly until April 13, 1909. The propaganda in the military caused the emergence of conflict between the self-trained and scholar officers. In the military, some officers were educated during their military service and some graduated from schools. The rumors about elimination of the self-trained officers by the CUP led to aggression between the two sides (Aysal, 2014, s. 20). The tension between civilian officers and army officials resulted in the uprising of conservative forces in Istanbul. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Army under the command of Mahmud Shawkad Pasha quelled the uprising. It was the counterrevolutionary movement against the CUP. However, the Third Army was successful pressing the uprising (Kayalı, 1997).

Prior to the World War I, the 1914 elections were held under these circumstances while Armenians insisted on their representation in the parliament as per their population rate. As a matter of fact, their basic claim was to obtain proportional representation. In other words, Armenians persisted in having a sufficient number of deputies – as they claimed they were deprived of this right – as per the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire. They demanded a regulation to have at least twenty deputies in the parliament. However, Armenians had not been able to unite under the same approach in 1908 and 1912 elections, although this changed in the elections of 1914 since the Dashnaktsutyuns, Hunchakians and Ramgavars gathered around the Armenian Patriarch and offered their support. By this means, a commission was established to foster representation of Ottoman Armenians (Halıcı, 2019). In this regard, Armenians intended not to participate in the elections until their demands were fulfilled, however they did attend the 1914 elections (Karacakaya, 2013, p. 141) and fifteen Armenian deputies were elected to represent Armenians in the parliament (Halıcı, 2019).

Overall, it can be understood that the period between 1908 and 1914 marked a beginning for popular sovereignty with the effect of declaration of constitutionalism. It may be suggested that the foundations of political freedoms were laid during this era. On the other hand, it is fair to utter that the CUP failed to maintain democratic order in the parliament. Indeed, there was deep pressure on the opposition, the government, electoral processes as well as the general society. Uygun argues that the CUP imposed strict inspections over political and social figures (Börekci, 2013, p. 214). Furthermore, the Second Constitutional period in the Ottoman Empire was not successful also in terms of the Armenian issue. The Armenian Patriarch and

Armenian political organs declared their disappointment which brought bilateral relations to the point of rupture on the eve of the World War I.



## CHAPTER V

### 5. THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1914 AND 1918

The outbreak of the World War I is often argued to constitute a turning point for nationalistic aspirations of Ottoman Armenians. In fact, the period between 1914 and 1918 was so definitive in political matters that it determined the destiny of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. In light of this assumption, it can be claimed that the collective conscious of being Armenian – Armenian nationalism – was defined on the basis of the relocation law declared during the World War I, which created a huge impact on the world politics resulting in a disaster for the humanity. Moreover, Ottoman Armenians were particularly devastated by the consequences of extreme Armenian nationalists, wrong policies by the government and impoverishment due to the war. In this regard, the overwhelming impact of the WWI was never disregarded. The war led to the emergence of other conflicts including the relocation of Ottoman Armenians where many lost their lives and suffered from miserable conditions. Thus, the so-called genocide allegations became hot topic for Armenian nationalists. These allegations created a huge impact and the Armenian national politic was shaped around the so-called genocide discussions from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present.

The position of Armenian nationalists during the WWI played an important role for the decision of the relocation Law. Starting in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenian nationalism transformed from a soft character into a more radical form of nationalism during the WWI with strict objection to make any concession from its wild formation. Under these circumstances, nationalists regarded the war as an opportunity to establish the national Armenian country. In this regard, the Armenian committees even cooperated with the CUP in order to actualize their national dream.

As a result, they were accepted as political parties after the declaration of the second constitutional period. However, the political experience of these committees did not last long, since the WWI caused them to start from scratch. Although Armenian nationalists always assumed that great powers would occupy Ottoman territories, the war broke out due to other reasons including international issues among European powers.

From this perspective, the European powers dominated the world economy by means of their colonization policy. The desire for hegemony and search for new markets around the world led to economic rivalry among the European countries. Emerging in the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of Great Britain, the Industrial Revolution altered the existing balance of power in the European continent and brought in a new world order. Back then, Americas were discovered and resulted in the emergence of a new bourgeoisie class. In time, modern states took stage in the international platform. New production technics and advancement in means of transportation boosted trade volumes and Beaud asserts that trade explicitly became the essential pursuit of countries throughout the century (Erdem, 2016, p. 19). Leading the world's economic system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France and Great Britain perceived probable German involvement in the colonization race as a threat. As a matter of fact, appearance of Germany in the scene changed the balance of international politics. German Emperor Wilhelm II applied the international policy of *Weltpolitik* ("world politics") to transform his country into a world power in 1890. The desire for incrementing power pushed Germany to get involved in the economic competition and accelerated naval armament. This was the challenge of Germany against the dominance of industrial powers (Aybar, 2019). Consequently, industrializing Germany aspired to access more and more raw materials. In this

context, the political, economic and military conditions were ready to create a new world order shaped by international sharing (Karabulut, 2015, p. 59).

### **5.1 The 1915 Law on Deportation and Resettlement**

1915 was an important year resulting in devastating effect on practically all countries of the world. In addition, the war and developments in 1915 had significant impact on the Armenian history shaping the future of the Turkish-Armenian relations. With regard to the Ottoman rule, the World War I resulted in the collapse of the Empire. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire had been struggling to maintain the integrity of its territories since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was challenged by imperial issues, nationalism movements as well as Armenian rebellions. More importantly, protectorates of Ottoman Armenians inflicted diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman administration. On the eve of the war, the Ottoman Empire had already begun to collapse in practically all fields. On top of that, the political exclusion of the Ottoman Empire after the Balkan War drove unionists to become members of a European block composed by the so-called Entente States – Great Britain, France and Russia – or the Allied States – Germany, Italy and Austria. The unionists preferred to make agreement with the Entente States, however their proposal was refused. On the other hand, Germany was indecisive whether to ally with the Ottoman Empire or not due to their defeat in the Balkans. Yet, Germany finally reached a decision after the outbreak of the war between Austria and Serbia. Therefore, a secret alliance agreement was made in August 1914. According to German historian Fritz Fischer, this alliance made for the declaration of Jihad which would lead to the pan-Islamist movement. However, this was not foreseen, and Germany believed that alliance with the Ottoman Empire would ensure control of the Bosphorus Bridge which, in turn, would isolate Russia and cut the communication between the Entente States (Ahmad, 2006, pp. 66-67). As for the

Ottoman rulers, they had already been forced to seek an ally against the deteriorating conditions in order to maintain the survival of the Empire in the international level. Therefore, this search for a powerful ally was concluded with alliance with Germany. Their alliance was carried on in the pre and post-war period in the fields of military, politics and economy. As a matter of fact, Germany became the leading country to reinforce the improvement of the Ottoman military (Karabulut, 2015, p. 60).

Academicians and historians still discuss the reasons behind the CUP's going to the war. While some argue that it was to regain the lost territories, prevent diplomatic loneliness others claim that it was due to Germany's expansionist plans. On the other hand, the Armenian communities regarded the war as the pathway for their independence. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation gathered in its 8<sup>th</sup> congress in Erzurum in August 1914. The congress postponed its programs because of the outbreak of the War, however, a committee was formed to carry out the works of the federation. While the committee was fulfilling its duties, the government representatives, the unionist Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and Ömer Naci met the members of this committee in order to obtain information on the position of Dashnaks during the World War I. They were wondering if Dashnaks would support the Ottoman administration. In case of occupation of the Ottoman territories by Russia, Dashnaks announced that they would protect the integrity of the Ottoman territory and the constitutional codes (Ahmad, 2017, pp. 93-94). Under these conditions, the CUP was pursuing an adventurous policy to retake the Ottoman territories. They were far away from being realist, though, while defining their war policies. Another desire of the CUP was to expand the Ottoman frontiers towards the Caucasus. Hence, a revolt against the administration of Russia might have enforced the will of the CUP. Yet, the position of Dashnaks was important. In this regard, while the Caucasian Armenians

were also critical for the unionists during the war. On the other hand, the relations between unionists and Committee members in Russia had already been damaged. Dashnaks evidently lost their confidence in the committees, while being suspicious about the reforms promised to Armenians by the Ottoman rule. The representatives of the Armenian revolutionary Federation (ARF) or the Dashnaktsutyun urged the CUP to be quick to apply the Armenian reforms<sup>5</sup>, which would take Ottoman Armenians to their side. In fact, Şakir and Naci could not understand the exact desires of the ARF. In response, the ARF pointed that they were sure about the intention of Istanbul. According to them, the government very well knew what they targeted. As a response to this reaction, Talat Pasha stated his disappointment against Armen Garo (Karekin Pastırmacıyan). He added that he would make his own deductions as cited in Çiçek (Ahmad, 2017, p. 95).

The relations between the CUP and ARF defined the future of the Ottoman Armenians. In this regard, the relocation law based on the damaged relations between the two sides, significantly affected the negative repercussions for Ottoman Armenians. Therefore, the Armenian committees and the Armenian Patriarch gathered secretly to deliberate on their war policies. Under the leadership of the Patriarch, Dashnaktsutyun, Hunchakian, Ramgavar, Vergazmial-Hunchak and the members of the Armenian National Parliament participated in the meeting in Istanbul, Galata to take their side in the World War I. Rüstem argues that the main decision

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<sup>5</sup> The most distinguishing case for Armenian reforms is Treaty of Yeniköy. Treaty was signed by Sait Halim Pasha and Constantin Goulkevitch who was Russian Charge D'affaires. Hence, Ottoman Empire accepted governance of two foreign overseers of Eastern Provinces. Reforms were discussed by Sublime Porte (Sublime Pote also known as High Porte or Ottoman Porte) but, there was not an agreement. In the end, letter of agreement which was written by Russian and supported by France and United Kingdom accepted (Bardakçı, 2014). Ottoman Empire signed Treaty of Yeniköy pell-mell just after the Balkan Wars with coercion of external powers. Treaty of Yeniköy was done away with World War I (Türkmen, 2019).

was to be faithful to the Ottoman rule, yet the Dashnaksutyuns and Hunchakians sent secret instructions to their branches to collaborate with Russia (Çiçek, 2012, p. 22).

Under these circumstances, two important incidents during the war may be argued to lead to the decision of relocating Ottoman Armenians. The first incident was the bombardment of the Dardanelles by the Entente States. Furthermore, the battle of Gallipoli in February 1915 threatened the destiny of the Ottoman Empire. Despite its strategic importance as an essential route to reach Istanbul, the CUP was full of worries as per the future of the Empire in case of occupation of Istanbul. The second incident was the advance of Russian troops towards the East Front. Russia had already captured Tutak, Malazgirt and Van in May 1915 (Ahmad, 2006, p. 70). The battle in Gallipoli in the western front and the struggle against Russia in the east challenged the Ottomans to a great extent. To prevent the collapse of the Empire, it was necessary to defeat the Entente power. However, the Armenian committees were simultaneously fighting against the Ottoman Empire as supporters of the Entente States. Thus, it can be argued that it was not a mere coincidence that the relocation law was enacted during the Gallipoli battle and the Russian invasion.

The Ottoman Empire fought on several fronts during the World War I, while famine, diseases and civil war had simultaneously affected all Ottoman citizens. It was obviously difficult for an Empire to struggle against both a civil and world war. Attacks by Armenian irregular forces culminated in the Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia. The Ottoman supply lines were cut. Stanford Shaw noted that the Ottoman could no longer determine “which of the Armenians would remain loyal and who would follow the appeals of their leaders” (1986, p. 14). After all, the Ottomans grew more and more suspicious with Armenian attacks on the supporting lines at fronts which were vital for the survival of the Ottoman armies. The Ottoman armies at

Mesopotamia, Palestine and Caucasia were insufficient to supply foods, medical aid and ammunition. With regard to demographic situation, it was crystal clear that the supply lines were heavily populated by the Armenian communities. The invasion of Russia in the eastern part of the Empire as well as the loss of Van province escalated the worries of the Ottoman rulers pertaining to Armenians. According to the Ottoman administration, the loss of Van and the invasion of the eastern part could lead to invasion of other provinces as well. Thus, the Ottoman army was concerned over cutting of supply lines by Armenian insurgents which would have devastating effect on the national security of the Ottoman Empire. The army had already perceived the preceding incidents as a threat against the integrity of Anatolia (Erickson, 2011, p. 295).

In light of these incidents, the unionists sent a circular to the Ottoman troops about the position of the Armenian soldiers in Ottoman army on February 25, 1915. The circular was notifying the transfer of the Armenian soldiers to the unarmed services (Altınkaş, 2012, p. 63). Before the promulgation of the Relocation Law, the CUP leaders Talat and Enver Pasha took certain steps hoping to prevent the rebellions by warning the Committee leaders. In March 1914, Talat Pasha spoke with the deputy of Erzurum Vartkes Efendi and stated that in case of a collaboration with the enemies, they would take severe measures. Besides, he informed the governors in the East with a secret circular that they were thinking on the deportation of the missionaries and leaders of Armenian institutions to other regions during the War (Çiçek, 2012, p. 27). The decision to relocate Armenians was probably not taken all of a sudden. Committee activities and their convergence to the Entente States had a negative impact on the unionist leaders. In addition, the positioning of the Armenian Committees would cause a huge damage for the Ottoman military in terms of the

survival of the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the unionists became sure to deport Armenians after the rebellion in Van. Thus, it might be suggested that the CUP was pushed to take such a decision due to the pressing circumstances during the World War I. A secret circular was sent to cities and lieutenants who were ordered to close the Armenian Committee's centers, seize their documents and arrest their leaders on April 24, 1915 (Altınkaş, 2012, p. 63). The Ottoman government published the Temporal Law on May 27, 1915 which ordered the relocation of Armenians and Greeks to regions far from the war zones (Ahmad, 2006, pp. 70-71). The Armenians in Erzurum, Van and Bitlis were relocated to the southern part of Mosul and Urfa. Others in Adana, Halep and Maraş were deported to eastern Syria and southeast and east of Halep (Altınkaş, 2012, p. 64).

## **5.2 Disputes on Resettlement of Ottoman Armenians**

The Relocation and Resettlement Law was a crucial point with regard to the bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia and it does not seem to lose its importance in the near future. After the deportation of Ottoman Armenians, they were scattered across the world, forming the Armenian diaspora. Nationalism adopted by the Armenian diaspora emerged with a quite different significant reason, since it was marked by severe and sorrowful past. Armenians base their identity on the common history which was constructed on myths. The main goal is to unite Armenians living in different parts of the world and to keep them together to avoid destruction and assimilation of the Armenian national conscious. This also provides a high political and economic penetration (Sarı & Avcıoğlu, 2012, p. 217). Therefore, discussions are ongoing with regard to the deportation law as well as the political and economic status of the Armenian diaspora. The developments in 1915 have since been argued in-depth by historians and scholars trying to decide whether these developments constituted

genocide or not. Academicians are divided into two with regard to this issue and various approaches have been put forward to address the issues of 1915. Certain academicians do not have the desire to be in disputes of genocide, instead they prefer to present exact historical events. A respected historian, Guenter Lewy evaluated the genocide allegations quite objectively by not sparing too much focus on the allegations. He scrutinized historical developments in correlation with real facts rather than accusing Armenians or Ottomans without reference to authentic documents. Lewy provided historical facts pertaining to the Armenian massacres that caused high death toll during the World War I. Hence, he is not denominating the incidents as genocide. He argues that a huge death toll cannot be a sign of a planned annihilation of Armenians by the Young Turks' regime (Lewy, 2005a, pp. 250-257). On the other hand, the massacres and loss of Armenians were explained in the context of the misrule of the deportation. Accordingly, the deportation was ruled at a time of great insecurity under severe conditions (Lewy, 2005a, p. 256). Armenians were subject to terrible conditions of sanitation, inadequate protection and food shortage (Lewy, 2005a, p. 253). The incompetence and inefficiency of the Ottoman bureaucracy caused several damages. The incompetence and inefficiency of the Ottoman bureaucracy caused several damages. Furthermore, Lewy points out in his book that the Ottoman Empire had to struggle against a really difficult situation which all Ottoman citizens – Muslims and non-Muslims – had to deal with. During the wartime, starvation, disease, famine and sanitation problems overwhelmed the Empire. Armenian women, men and children were clearly forced by the Ottoman government to leave their historical communities and lands (Lewy, 2005, p. 47). Most of them died due to the obligation to pass mountains and deserts while suffering from diseases and starvation. In addition, there were murdering incidents. In this regard, the death

toll was estimated to be %40 of the total population, which was about 650.000 considering that the total population of Armenians was 1,750,000. Therefore, the Genocide Convention of 1948 announces that intention is stipulated in order to define an incident as genocide. In other words, there must be a premeditated plan and an intention to destroy a group. At this point, Lewy assumes that the Turkish Regime did not intentionally organize the massacres of its Armenian minority. In this regard, he argues that loss of numerous lives or the death toll cannot be the signs of genocide. Instead, Lewy asserts that loss of Armenian lives was due to the incompetence of the Ottoman rulers. He criticizes the Ottoman rulers for being incompetent and failing to provide adequate protection to their citizens (Lewy, 2005, p. 48). In fact, Lewy might be argued to be distant from the so-called genocide discussions. Instead of mutual accusations, he believes in the historical facts and realities which would bring the incidents into light. Lewy further criticizes lack of authentic documents as well as forgery in documents. In this regard, Lewy analyzed The Memoirs of Naim Bey which have been put forward as an important proof for the Armenian Genocide. Also known as the Andonian Documents, The Memoirs of Naim Bey were studied by other historians and scholars as well. Yet, the telegrams and documents were not verified by Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca who studied the documents in detail. Dutch Historian Erik Zürcher also asserts that the Andonian documents “have been shown to be forgeries” (Lewy, 2005c).

Another historian, Professor Dr. Justin McCarthy does not define the 1915 issues as genocide either. Sharing similar views with Lewy, he stresses the significance of authentic and true historical works in comprehending the incidents in 1915. A critical point McCarthy insists on is the fact that history shall not be subject

to politicians' directions. Indeed, he argues that bureaucrats should not interpret historical issues in line with their political aspirations.

In this regard, he criticizes the biased approaches of states and parliaments approving the Armenian genocide. Opponent ideas shall meet on a common ground to access true and fair historical evaluations without excluding the Turkish side of the issue or academicians who reject the Armenian genocide. McCarthy especially reviewed meetings and conferences of Armenian lobbies to reach this argument (McCarthy, 2003).

Furthermore, McCarthy justifies the tension between Armenians and Turks due to the immigration of Muslims from the Caucasus. In this context, the conflicts between the two nations had started due to the expansionist politics of Russia. Muslim population had been exiled from Balkans, Caucasus and Crimea. During the years between 1790 and 1923, more than 7 million people (Muslims and non-Muslims) were forced to migrate and another 6 million lost their lives. McCarthy argues that these developments caused a human disaster and added the greatest mortality and exile rates of Muslims to archives (McCarthy, 2010). They had been massacred, murdered or deported in horrible conditions. When they arrived at Anatolia, they lacked trust towards Russians and their helpers, namely Armenians. Consequently, McCarthy asserts that it was not a genocide purporting his allegations as follows: Armenians in İzmir, Edirne and Istanbul were not deported or assaulted.

If there was a plan to replace Turkish refugees, who fled from the Balkans, why should Muslim refugees settle particularly in western Anatolia and the European part of the Ottoman lands in addition to eastern Anatolia where they had arrived before World War I? In this article, he also refused the unfair manner of the tribunals

founded after the World War I by Damat Ferit Paşa to fulfill the goals of the Allies, while the accused individuals could not represent themselves at the tribunals (McCarthy, 2001).

From this perspective, it can be observed that scholars have different historical approaches towards the Armenian issue with the Ottoman Empire. However, some are seen to share common ideas referring to the Ottoman, British, American or Russian archives, while others focus on the claim that interpretation of archives is a wrong method in analyzing the issue. Academicians tend to select arguments which seem to be close their opinions. Erman Şahin, an independent researcher and writer, published the book review, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* which was written by Taner Akçam. Erman Şahin criticizes especially the biased manner of Taner Akçam when reviewing his book. According to him, Taner Akçam falsified certain facts and selected sources that fall in line with his views in a misleading way. He further argues that right reference or quotation is a must for such critical reviews. Yet, the book consists of lots of contradictions (Şahin E. , 2009, p. 183). Erman Şahin and Taner Akçam do not agree on the resettlement of Muslim emigrants. While Taner Akçam insists that 850,000 emigrants had settled mostly in the region where Armenians populated between 1878 and 1904, Şahin claims that resettlement occurred generally in the western cities where Armenian population was not intense (Şahin E. , 2009, p. 184). Yet, another controversial aspect is the joining of the CUP to the World War I. Akçam indicates that the CUP had notably aimed to participate in the World War I to take revenge from Christians in the Balkans and retake the lost territories as well as realizing the Pan-Turanist and Pan-Islamist policies. As opposed to this thesis, Feroz Ahmad stresses that the aim of the Ottoman rulers in getting into the war was to sustain its sovereignty and territorial

integrity. Şahin also endorses the idea that if the Ottoman Empire aspired to take revenge from Christians, they would not have negotiated with Greece to form a Balkan Union, reconciled with Bulgaria, or proposed alliance in return for territorial concession (Şahin E. , 2009, p. 185). Nonetheless, Taner Akçam comments that the 1915 Armenian relocation was a genocide. Akçam evaluates the deportation of Armenians – which caused annihilation of Ottoman Armenians, partially or completely – as genocide now that the decision-maker did not attempt to prevent the destruction (Akçam, 2010, p. 11).

Another approach with regard to the issue between Armenians and the Ottoman Empire was presented by Fuat Dündar who evaluated the immigration politics of the Ottoman Empire since its establishment. He asserts that the Ottoman Empire had characteristic, systematic and strict immigration policies. In this context, the conquered territories were populated by the extroversive population movements which hampered the ethnic, religious and politic development of populations. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Empire had severe struggles in balancing population movements with Russia as of the Ottoman-Russian War in 1768-1774. As a consequence of the war, a bilateral population movement or exchange took place between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Dündar, 2015, pp. 41-42). Fuat Dündar further analyzes the approaches and political decisions of the CUP and argues that the CUP had been under deep influence of Turkism since the loss of territories in the Balkans. Their Turkism policies were based on statistics and secrecy, while population census and deportation were their instruments. Indeed, members of the CUP implemented a demographical operation to create a new population configuration. Dündar does not refer to the 1915 issues as genocide, but a mathematical operation (Dündar, 2015, pp. 424-425).

### 5.3 The Treaty of Sevres

The Ottoman Empire was defeated while approaching the end of the World War I. Talat Pasha resigned on October 8 when he realized this situation. The decision to start peace agreements was given after losing hope and noticing the futility of the war (Ahmad, 2006, p. 75) The Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on October 18, 1918 and the Mudros was the sign of the ending of the war. Yet, the terms of the agreement were quite severe and the armistice was regarded to be the precursor of the Treaty of Sevres. According to Article 24 of the Mudros, the Entente States preserved their right to occupation of the relevant villages. The British side of the armistice pointed out that the region that was called as six Armenian villages belonged to Armenians and the Ottoman administration deduced from the article that those villages would be occupied by the Entente States. In addition, it was perceived that the Armenian issue would be used against the Ottoman Empire (Beyoğlu, 2008, p. 125).

After the Armistice of Mudros, the Treaty of Sevres was not signed shortly after the war, however it took time to negotiate the terms with Ottoman Rulers. The reason for this might well be the fact that there was disagreement among the Entente States as to how to share the Ottoman territories. In other words, they encountered challenges in grabbing the largest share from the lands of the Empire (Şahin N. , 2018, p. 64). Besides, the emergence of nationalist struggle in Anatolia after the Armistice of Mudros caused a delay in signing the Treaty of Sevres (Tağmat, 2016, p. 309).

Furthermore, another significant development prior to the Sevres process was the Paris Peace Conference conducted to officialize sharing the Ottoman territories in Paris on January 18, 1919. The Armenian delegation recognized by the Entente States

was represented by Boghos Nubar Pasha. This delegation was responsible to represent the entire Armenian populations around the world. The other delegation participated in the conference on behalf of the Armenian Republic established on May 30, 1918 and represented with the presidency of Avetis Ahoranyan. Here, Armenians carried out considerable lobby activities. Despite the conflicts between the two delegates, they worked together with the orientation of the Etchmiadzin Church (Beyoğlu, 2008, p. 126). The project of Big Armenia which consisted of Eastern cities was presented in Paris Peace Conference by the Armenian delegates. They were disappointed when they did not gain the right to have permanent representatives in the conference. Then, they could not reach a solution in Paris because of the rise of different points as cited in Anderson's study (Ağırtaş, 2007, p. 10).

However, it is interesting that Boghos Nubar Pasha accepted the relations between Armenians and the Entente States to realize their national dream, "Big Armenia". In his speech in *Times* on January 30, 1919 that Armenians fought in every side against the Ottoman Empire during the war. Furthermore, they refused to collaborate with Turks. He gave an example of Armenians waging war with French foreign legions in the Russian army at the Caucasus. 150,000 Armenians fought in the Russian army to prevent the transport of the Turkish and German troops to Mesopotamia. Sonyel argues that this was to help the British soldiers in these regions (Beyoğlu, 2008, p. 126).

Furthermore, Armenians definitely declared their national desire in the Armistice of Mudros and in Paris Peace Conference to establish a national state. As a matter of fact, they only achieved their goals in the Treaty of Sevres which was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1920 and composed 433 articles. The articles related to Armenians necessitated recognition of Armenia as an independent state as well as the

disarmament of the Armenian boarder (Şahin N. , 2018, p. 65). Turks addressed an Armanian problem at Sivas and Erzurum after the Mudros Armistice. In this regard, it was regarded that Anatolia was occupied due to the intention of establishing an Armenian state. However, Turks would not let disintegration of their territories as Atatürk stated (Ağırtaş, 2007, p. 10). Lastly, Gürün argues that the decision of the Congress of Sivas was to counteract against the Entente States in case of an attempt to establish the Armenian (Ağırtaş, 2007, p. 10).

As a result, national struggle did not allow acceptance or recognition of Armenian desires and the Treaty of Sevres was refused. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey issued a Law on June 7, 1920 which regulated that treaties or agreements signed after March 16, 1920 – the date of Istanbul’s occupation – would not be acknowledged including the Treaty of Sevres since it was signed by the government of Istanbul, not the Grand National Assembly. In other words, Altuğ utters that approval of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was a precondition for any agreement to be entered (Beyoğlu, 2008, p. 130).

## CHAPTER VI

### 6. CONCLUSION

The emergence of Armenian nationalism is often identified through the activities of Armenian committees in the Ottoman Empire with their attacks on several regions before and during the World War I. On the other hand, the Armenian identity was formed as a result of various reasons. In this regard, it is possible to purport that the Ottoman Empire encountered severe consequences due to the French Revolution as much as the other empires during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Westernization, modernization and particularly nationalism led to deep impact on both Muslims and non-Muslims. As a matter of fact, these movements pioneered in the transformation of different ethnic groups living in the Ottoman Empire. Regardless of the aim to establish their national countries by the effect of discovering their national identity or abolish an Empire entirely, there was absolutely a need for a change in the overall system of Empires around the world due to these nationalistic aspirations. The Ottoman Empire also encountered this challenge imposed by nationalism and as a result, Ottoman Armenians discovered their Armenian nationhood as the natural output of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Similar to New Ottomans, a number of Ottoman Armenians went to Paris for education in the period when nationalist aspirations started to break out. Indeed, they got acquainted with nationalism in Paris. After signing trade agreements with European countries and giving them capitulations, Ottoman Armenians interacted with foreign merchants and as they could speak foreign languages, they started to exchange cultural traditions as well. Differently from other nations in the Empire, Armenians were obviously the targeted community for missionaries. Particularly the

desire of the American protestant missionaries to hegemonize and form their civilization in the targeted lands had a deep effect on Ottoman Armenians.

On the other hand, the Ottoman administration accepted the attempt of Ottoman Armenians to issue a constitution, while involvement of the Armenian bourgeoisie in the administration of the Armenian community as well as sharing power with the Church clearly became a solid step in the secularization process. In parallel, the millet system started to lose power particularly with regard to the Armenian community with the increasing effect of the Amira class. As a matter of fact, new regulations adopted by Ottoman Armenians were perceived as signs of forming an independent nation. Here, it may well be criticized, though, that the Armenian nationalist transformation was not completed. Although they did attempt to complete the secularization process, the Church had never left its power to Ottoman Armenians. Indeed, the Church had always been the head giving political decisions despite the transformation of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire. The effect of the Armenian Church can clearly be observed in the fact that it was involved in the elections between 1908 and 1914, attempted to direct and manage Armenian groups and decided to get involved in the World War I. The inadequacy of the Armenian nationalist movement, therefore, ultimately led to deepening of the Church. Therefore, Ottoman Armenian nationalism could not find any political base.

Nonetheless, Armenian nationalism later transformed and took root among Armenians in Caucasus and Europe. In this regard, signing the Treaty of Berlin was evidently the milestone for the Armenian nationalist movement since the great powers of the world obtained the opportunity to interfere in domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire after this treaty was signed. By this means, the Armenian issue was internationalized as well. Indeed, the great powers were directing their Armenian

politics via missionaries from behind. Armenian committees organized in Caucasus and Europe after signing the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Thus, the Armenian nationalist movement turned into a rough and sharp action since the new formation was totally different from the emergence of Armenian nationalism. the differences between these two formations can clearly be observed in archives, actions, correspondences, manifestations and declarations by the Armenian committees. In addition, terrorist attacks by the Armenian committees constituted evidence for the aggressive form of the organizations. It can fairly be argued that Armenian nationalism was monopolized by the Armenian committees.

Correspondingly, Ottoman Armenians shall not be equated with Armenian committee members. The equation of Ottoman Armenians resulted in the Relocation Law and even today, an objective evaluation of the relations between Turkey and Armenia requires taking into consideration the rise of Ottoman nationalism as well. The number of unbiased researches is quite high to be used in repairing the bilateral relations and develop mutual understanding.

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