

THE REFORMS TOWARDS ARMENIANS IN THE SIX PROVINCES (VILAYAT-I SİTTE)

Dr. Ramazan Yıldız

Researcher
ramazanyildiz@gmx.at

Abstract:

In the region called Vilayat-ı Sitte (Six Provinces), especially after the 1877-78 Turkish-Russian War, the European countries and first and foremost Russia, encouraged the Armenians to be part of adversarial activities against the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Patriarchate and other Armenian organizations that were founded successively, tried on the one hand to increase the Armenian consciousness among the population and on the other hand to ensure the support of the big powers. They demanded reforms and also sent delegations to Europe in order to ensure that European countries exerted pressure on the Ottoman Empire regarding the reform. Russia outlined a special reform plan regarding the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. However, other countries consider this plan was in contradiction with their own interests and made significant changes on it. This article analyzes the activities of Russia and the European countries regarding these reforms examine how the original reform plan proposed by Russia was changed.

Key Words: Vilayat-ı Sitte, Ottoman reforms, Great Powers, Armenian Question, Eastern Anatolia

Introduction

The demands to make reforms on regulations in force to improve life conditions of Armenians on Ottoman territory; attempts, meetings, demonstrations, revolts and internal or external affairs caused by these in order to make “Vilayat-ı Sitte” (the six provinces) firstly autonomous, and finally an independent Armenian country, are all known as “the Armenian Problem”. The powerful states of the era, especially Russia needed pretexts to weight in the internal affairs of Ottoman State. The Armenian problem was developed as one of those pretexts.

Historically, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Mamuretü'l-aziz, Sivas and Van provinces are named as “the six provinces” (Vilayat-ı Sitte). Armenian Patriarchate gives number of the Armenian population in the region of the “six Armenian provinces” as 1,630,000 by the year 1882; and all Armenian population living in Ottoman territory as 2,660,000¹. The Patriarchate gives the populations 1,018,000 and 2,100,000 respectively, by the year 1912². There is a difference of 612,000 people for the population of the Vilayat-ı Sitte and of 560,000 people for the all Ottoman territory. Moreover, if the normal population growth is taken into consideration, naturally these differences increase. Even this shows that the numbers are given in a completely fictitious way and without any criteria. We will be content with a few sentences about this issue which is a subject of another article. Bernstein states, according to Ottoman statistics, that the total number of Armenians living in the Ottoman territory was between 700,000 and 800,000. After noting this statistic, Bernstein adds that “However the Turkish authorities in the region were understating this number to pay fewer taxes to Istanbul, whereas the Armenian population was more than 2,000,000”³. It is not reasonable to grant that Ottoman government had not noticed that Turkish authorities’ announcing a number 1,500,000 people less than the number given by the Armenian patriarchate when it needed money most. Nevertheless, other statistical information of Armenian Patriarchate verifying the Ottoman figures is also present: Armenian patriarchate gives the number of the Armenian students attending to school as 59.513 boys, 21.713 girls and total 81.226 on the entire Ottoman territory. There were schools on almost all Armenian allocation units. It is said by both Armenians and European authors that literacy level was high. In this case, even if it’s granted that only one student attended to school from each household, Armenian population on Ottoman territory had to include from 80,000 to 100,000 households, by the year 1901. If it is accepted that each household consists of five to eight people, it is seen that numbers given by the

1 Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung der Armenischen Frage im 19. Jahrhundert*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Universität Wien, 1948, Appendix II.

2 Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung ...*, Appendix III-IIIa.

3 Eduard Bernstein, *Die Leiden des Armenischen Volkes und die Pflichten Europas*, Berlin, 1902, p. 20.

Ottoman State, which is between 700,000 and 800,000 Armenians, among the numbers above, is the one closest to the correct number.

In fact, all these speculations about the Armenian population arose with the Armenian problem. Actually, until the time 10 years prior to 93 Russian-Turkish war, there was neither in Anatolia nor in Rumelia such a thing like Armenian Problem. Perfect friendship was seen between Armenian and Turkish families until that time. If a Turkish man in Anatolia went to a journey for any reason, he asked his Armenian neighbor to watch his family. Equally if an Armenian man went to a journey, he recommended his family members to Turkish neighbor's care. Armenians were treated as loyal citizens of the state and, important administrative tasks and degrees were given to them.⁴

After the domination of Turkish rule on the places in Armenians live, privileges like carrying out their religious activities freely, establishing private schools and making their own judgments according to their own law to solve their individual conflicts were given to Armenians. Armenian Patriarch had right to speak on Armenians and other minorities in Bâb-ı Âli. Whereas Armenian Patriarchs had been tortured in various ways before Turks came to Anatolia. For instance, Khatolikos Ter Chacik, who remained under Greek rule for six years and dead on 4th April 1066, was taken to a belief examination by passing through fire.⁵ Christian people were equalized to the Muslims completely by administrative reforms known as Tanzimat Fermanı on 1839 and Islahat Fermanı on 1856. On the year 1863 the right to elect an Armenian Council, which consisted of 140 people, was given to the Armenians⁶, who was named as Millet-i Sadıka, by a new regulation, and these rights were enlarged by Kanun-i Esasi (1876). Because of the 1877-1878 Turkish-Russian War these rights were abolished.⁷

4 Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines Türkischen Staatsmannes*, München, 1922, p. 313.

5 Josef Markwart, *Die Entstehung der armenischen Bistümer*, Rome, 1932, p. 7.

6 Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines ...*, p. 317.

7 Artem Ohandjanian, *Armenien*, Wien, 1989, p. 20.

However the Christian people of the Balkans' securing their independence by the support of Russia and Europeans, had increased the Armenian hope and desire of independence. Especially Armenian intellectuals affected by the "Independent Armenia" ideas inspired by Russia, tried to start independence war in contact with the European organizations. These activities executed on two paths. The first one was the activities of the Armenian students attending to school in Europe and affected by the national movements in Europe. These students established several Armenian organizations which are protected by various formations. For instance, they opened a branch office of "Odd Fellows" Masonic lodge of Manchester City in Istanbul with the name of "Hayk and Oriun" in 1862; and a branch office of "Grand Orient de France" Masonic lodge in Istanbul with the name "Ser" in 1866. Armenian students established "Vatanperverler Cemiyeti" in 1881, Moscow; "Marxist Hunchakians" organization in 1887, Geneva; and "Tashnak Party" (Armenian Revolution Federation), which was working with close interactions with a radical Russian organization, named "Narodjana Wolja", in 1890, Tiflis. The second path of the activities comprised by the independence war was the activities of the people who opened schools in Turkey namely of foreign missionaries, spies and Christian students to whom nationality and independence ideas has inoculated in these schools.⁸

Armenian Reform Attempts

The background of the demands on reforms were underlaid by the complaints concerning the violation of law those uttered by Mkrtiç Krimian who was elected Armenian Patriarch and for this reason came from Van to Istanbul on August 28, 1869. Krimian had started working to activate the Armenian Council, which was not working according to him, after he came to Istanbul. He established a commission to investigate the violations of law, which he asserted he was well informed about, in Armenian-inhabited provinces. This commission started working on 14th December 1870 and consisted of four spiritual and five non-spiritual members; led by Archbishop Nerses Varjabedian. At the end of a research

⁸ Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Ungarn und Armenien 1914-1918*, Wien, 1986, pp. 4-5.

of ten months, commission prepared two reports consist of complaints and suggestions, and presented these to Armenian council which was expected to offer them to the government. Complaints consisted of four articles and comprise the points below⁹:

1. Unpleasant manner of tax collection and ambiguity of the principles which determine the behavior of officers to Armenians.
2. Officers' utterance of calumnies around about Armenians.
3. Legal invalidity of witnessing of Christians and non-Muslims.
4. Occurrence of many exploitations and plunders in Armenian provinces.

The report of commission including suggestions consisted of seven articles below¹⁰:

1. Armenians should be enlisted in the army instead of paying military tax; by doing this they could prove that they have civic consciousness. It should be known that Armenians could sacrifice their blood without hesitation with their Muslim friends.
2. Taxes should be collected by government directly, not by tax collectors.
3. Mortgage limitations on real-estates should be canceled.
4. Objective researchers should be assigned to see the real conditions by interviewing all public strata in the provinces.
5. Civil law should be translated to the Armenian language.
6. Issues about debt collection, land, commerce and murders should be handled by civil lawyers, not according to Islamic law.
7. Kurdish people and other highlanders (Circassians added to these highlanders in recent years) harmed seriously not only Armenians but also other peoples and especially values of the government. These people were carrying arms, did not give soldiers to the army and did not pay taxes to the government. Moreover, they

⁹ Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung ...*, p. 67.

¹⁰ Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung ...*, pp. 68-69.

were rebellious. However, other peoples could not carry arms, give soldiers to the army and bounded to pay tributes to these rebellious people. Government should disarm Kurds and other peoples armed, or should give the right to be armed to all people. Only after this, the region could be saved from actual bad situation.

8. The reports that were prepared, discussed and accepted on the meeting of Armenian Council on 18th February 1872, and were presented to the grand vizier. Because of the reports, government established a research commission, half of which elected by Patriarch, to wipe out the complaints, and took steps on the detections and suggestions of the commission. However, Armenians had presented a similar report to the government in 1876 because they had the belief that it is not enough what have done.

Krimian, through the activities stated above, directed the ones who will come to the same place and caused the awakening of a revolutionary spirit. Expectedly, Nerses Varjabediyani who became Patriarch after Krimian, carried the Armenian problem to Europe; demanded and prompted European countries' intervention to the Ottomans about this issue. Anyway, European countries and especially Russia had demanded the fulfillment of the former promises from Ottoman State in a strict manner after the affairs in the Balkans. In accordance with this demand, Sultan declared by utterance on 2nd October 1875 and by an imperial edict on 18th December 1875, that pointed in the Tanzimat Fermanı would be realized¹¹. Nerses regarded all these as an opportunity to reach his dreams and tried to exploit the situation of Ottoman State.

When the possibility of Russian victory in 93 War arose, which started by Russian declaration of war, Armenian council prepared a paper including the points below, to be presented to Russian Tsar¹²:

1) Russia should not leave the "Greater Armenia" lands, which lie towards Eu-

11 Anahit Barikyan, *Die Entwicklung ...*, pp. 65-76.

12 Anahit Barikyan, *Die Entwicklung ...*, p. 109.

phrases, to the Ottomans and Tsar, in his Royal Highness, should treat to this land as a part of his country and bond it to the Ararat province.

2) If the annexation of the region could not be possible because of the assurance of the Tsar, in his Royal highness, by saying “We were not making war to occupy land”, then the privileges Bulgarians gained by the help of the Tsar, in his royal highness, must be provided for Armenians in Turkish-Armenia; and Armenia should be under Russian Tsar’s protection.

3) In the case of leaving back this territory to the Ottomans, fiscal reforms should be done and equality should be constituted between the citizens. In this regard, Russian army should not leave the region before making sure that the reforms done and applied. The conditions about the reforms were as stated below:

- a) Most of the police organization should be consisted of Armenians.
- b) Armenians should have regular army training also.
- c) Kurdish and Circassian people should either be exiled from the region completely to other places or the ones in highlands should be carried to the villages and towns; they might not be policemen.
- d) Armenians should be employed for all public institutions without any discrimination, especially governors of provinces and districts should be Armenian. Russian army should leave the region only after securing the practice of the reforms.

There is not any evidence of collaboration with a country which is making war with their country, more obvious than this. This custom of Armenian Patriarchate continued for the later years.

When the Russian army had come near Istanbul and the decision of ceasefire had been taken on 19th January 1878, in Edirne; Nerses, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, assigned Pater Georg, the highest Armenian spiritual in Edirne, to present Armenian problem to Nikolai Nikolajeviç, the commander of Russian Army, and to Ignatief, Russian delegate of Bâb-ı Âli (Delegate was in Edirne at that time). At the same time, he wrote a letter with nine bishops and sent one copy to

Crown Prince Nikolajewiç and one copy to the Tsar Alexander II. The letter was written on 1st February 1878 and included the requests below¹³:

1. A general governor who is member of Gregorian sect should be assigned to Armenia. Governor should be chosen by the Sultan with the agreement of the Tsar and should have equal degree to the other governors.
2. Civil officers of the Armenian provinces and districts should be also Armenian and among the members of Gregorian sect and these should be chosen by the Armenian members of parliament; the names chosen should be presented to Bâb-ı Âli for authentication.
3. Public security and public peace of the region should be provided completely by Armenians, security affairs should be carried out by Armenians in rotation¹⁴.
4. Adjudication should be independent of Islamic Law and should be under the chairmanship of Armenians.
5. The privileges of the Kurdish people must be abolished.
6. Taxes should be split again fairly.
7. The law of Charity foundations (wakf) should be rearranged and the law of Property must be controlled.
8. Turkish People in Armenia should be disarmed.
9. The new arrangement in Armenia should be accepted by Sultan and Armenia should be under The Tsar's protection.
10. As the city of Zeytun which has had self-government for centuries, Armenia should be autonomous.

After a few days, these desires of Armenians, was expressed in the 16th article of the Treaty of Ayastefanos in this way: "Disorder and chaos in the European provinces of the Ottoman State is continuing in the same way in then Anatolian provinces. As a measure Sultan assures establishing autonomous governments in the Armenian inhabited provinces (Erzurum, Muş, Van, etc.) which has at the bor-

13 Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung* ..., p. 121.

14 Possibly Gregorian, Protestant and Catholic Armenians are implied.

der of Caucasia and making appropriate modifications in the Law of Provinces. This issue is completely under Sultan's responsibility." All European Countries, especially England and Austro-Hungarian Empire, annoyed by the advantages of Russia gained with this treaty and the six great countries of Europe (England, Russia, France, Germany, Italy and Austria) arranged Berlin Conference to discuss the problem. Conference resulted in Berlin Treaty on 4th June 1878. Abdulhamit the 2nd assigned the treaty on 15th July 1878. In order not to lose the great advantages gained by the Treaty of Ayestefanos and provide the confirmation of them by Berlin Conference, Armenians sent a delegation led by Pater Krimian to Europe to interview about the Armenian problem in England. The delegation is consisted of Krimian Hairik, Mgr. Khoren Narbey von Lusignan, Stepan Papaziyan and Minas Tschraz¹⁵. Pater Krimian, as many Armenians, regarding England as the most important ally of Armenians. However, on this journey he saw how Englishmen playing two-sided. Englishmen kept Armenians on their side by giving hopes and promises on one hand, and they did not want to be opposed to Ottomans on the other hand. Instantly, Englishmen were providing information to the authorities about Armenians about the issues important for Bâb-ı Âli¹⁶. To play this double-sided game, formerly they sent their missionaries to Anatolia; they opened religious schools and colleges like Robert College in Istanbul, Anatolia College in Merzifon, Euphrates College in Harput, and Central College in Antep. The aim of these was to increase the religious conflicts in Turkey, to develop the national consciousness among Armenians and direct them to anarchist activities. Englishmen treated Armenians as a means on all occasions but even when they were in an effective position on Istanbul, they did nothing for Armenians. It is an historical fact that they did not interested in Armenians after they played on Armenians in order to occupy Cyprus and use it as a military base. England treated the Armenian inhabited area as an outsentry to prevent the Russian expansion; Russian and English ascendances struggled on Armenians¹⁷. On June 1878, a liberal member of the parliament said to Foster, who wanted a

15 Yves Ternon, *Tabu Armenien*, Frankfurt, 1981, p. 45.

16 Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung ...*, pp. 109-126.

17 Hans Ludwig Wegener, *Der britische Geheimdienst im Orient*, Berlin, 1924, pp. 132-133.

support from him in Berlin Conference, “Do not offend your neighbor Russia. Here, in England, do leave your affair to neither liberals nor conservatives. It is difficult for England to protect such a far Armenia away from England. There are not enough Armenians inhabited in the south of the Black Sea. England can protect only the ones inhabited near the coast line. I ask you, ‘do they have the power of maintaining their independence in the case that it is given to Armenians? Are there enough Armenians, who have this power, inhabited in the inlands? Do not trust the help of England’¹⁸. Indeed, England was carrying on secret deals with Ottomans while the Berlin Conference was going on. Consequently England assigned a secret defense treaty with Ottomans on 4th June 1878. According to this treaty they assured that England would give military aid to the Ottoman State if Russia exceeded the borders determined by the last contracts. Correspondingly, Sultan promised that he would take measures needed in the Christian inhabited areas to provide their protection and security. Moreover, to apply this treaty, England would occupy Cyprus and govern it directly.¹⁹

Armenian delegation worked hard to describe Armenian problem to the European states but it could not find what it expected. Their aim of talking with Bismarck was refused by the reason of: “Bismarck wants to stay neutral in the conference”.²⁰ At the 15th session of the conference, on 8th June 1878, as the 61st article of the treaty, without discussion²¹ by the offer of England Armenian problem was expressed like this without discussion: “Bāb-ı Āli guarantees making necessary restorations and reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces in accordance with the local needs and without any delay, and ensures the protection of them against Kurds and Circassians. Bāb-ı Āli allows the steps taken for this aim to be controlled regularly.”²² Based on this article of the treaty, England sent a military consul to Anatolia to supervise the application of the reforms.²³ After this assign-

18 Anahit Barikian, *Die Entwicklung ...*, p. 138.

19 Yves Ternon, *Tabu Armenien*, p. 43.

20 Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Ungarn ...*, p. 25.

21 Yves Ternon, *Tabu Armenien*, p. 46.

22 Johannes Lepsius, *Armenien und Europa*, Berlin, 1896, p. 75

23 Artem Ohandjanian, *Armenien*, s. 28.

ment Armenians, with new dreams, established secret organizations stated in the introduction above, started to attack public institutions and military troops and worked up rebellions which sometimes turned to mutual armed conflicts in the Armenian populated areas.²⁴

By a paper with the date of 24th September 1895, Armenian Patriarch Mateos offered to European delegates that the European states must control the application of the reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces. Only five days after that paper, on 30th September 1895, a few thousands of Armenians started to walk towards Bāb-ı Āli in order to present a petition containing certain requests to grand vizier. A conflict occurred between the community and this group. After these conflicts which caused deaths, European Countries increased their repression on Sultan Abdulhamit about the reforms. Unsatisfied by the steps taken, Armenian students occupied Ottoman Bank in Istanbul to call attention of European Countries on 26th August 1896.²⁵ By the intervention of European States students evicted the bank and they were sent to Europe. Afterwards, Pastirmacıyan, who joined to this raid as a student told Westenenk, a general inspector of The Netherlands: "Armenians were killed in front of the delegates of the great powers although a promise given that nobody can even touch them."²⁶ As it is seen, if the Armenians had not fallen into the trap of the European Countries, it would have been better for them because Armenians were committing actions which distort the public security and order, and they were exposed to the intervention of the police. Patriarch of that period confessed how they were deceived by the external powers by a telegraph he sent to the Sultan after the raid of the bank in this way: Foreigners tried to commit murders in the name of our people, in a way confusing our people. We reproach the guilty ones. The Patriarchate is the guarantor of the honesty of the Armenian people. In spite of all these upsetting events, Armenians will prove their loyalty. We are asking for mercy the amnesty

24 Joseph Pomiankowski, *Der Zusammenbruch*, Leipzig, 1928, p. 157.

25 Artem Ohandjanian, *Armenien*, pp. 30-31.

26 Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Ungarn ...*, p. 32.

of Armenians arrested for the events.”²⁷ However it was not possible to prevent or control incidents completely. Correspondingly Sultan was exposed to a bomb attack on 21st July 1905. 24 people were dead at that attack, 58 people injured, and many of these were dead afterwards because of their serious injuries. While it is presumed that the attack committed by the Bulgarian or Armenian revolutionists and Young Turks,²⁸ on following day in Berlin, Armenian revolutionists undertook the attack by sending a manifest to the embassy of the countries those assigned the Treaty of Berlin. They claimed in the manifest that 300,000 Armenians killed by Abdulhamit and they said “Against the oppressions which went unpunished, we will continue making retaliatory more. Although this contradicts to our principles, the situation forces us to the use of violence. There is no way other for Armenian revolutionists because of the hopelessness of Armenian people. We have the decision of not to lay down the arms until our requests are satisfied.”²⁹ At the end of the inquiries it is revealed that the attack was planned by Geneva Armenian revolutionary Committee and the members of the revolutionary committees of Caucasia and Istanbul, and particularly committed by the members of Caucasia Revolutionary Committee.³⁰ These Armenian revolutionary committees, especially Tashnaks were trying to organize Armenians, those in Van at first hand, by the gangs which arrange secret operations. Armenians in Van was equipped by enough modern arms and bombs. Whenever their leaders wanted they were ready to take action under their orders. The Gangs were walking around the villages and looking for followers and financial support for their purpose. Their final purpose was however, to obtain the administration of Van.³¹ Armenians asserted that they were activating these gangs to defense themselves and to take their own rights because of the fact that European Countries were not interested in their problems honestly.³²

When the activities of Armenians were going on with the support of Russians,

27 Artem Ohandjanian, *Armenien*, p. 32 .

28 Wien, Haus- Hof-, Staatsarchiv, Politisches Archiv XII 187, Jeniköy, 26 Juli 1905, Nr. 37 B.

29 Wien, HHStA PA XII 187, Beilage zu Bericht, 26 Juli 1905, Nr. 37 B.

30 Wien, HHStA PA XII 188, Jeniköy, 13 September 1905, Nr. 45 E.

31 Wien, HHStA PA XXXVIII 357 Trapezunt, 17. September 1912, Z. 34/P.

32 Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Ungarn ...*, p. 35.

in a memorandum given by Russia to Ottoman State on 26th November 1912, Russia demanded³³ essential arrangements from Ottoman government with the claims of that the promises³⁴ in the circular note of Abdulhamit declared on 20th October 1895 was not fulfilled adequately, there were oppressions against Armenians, murders were occurring, and women were being forced to be Muslims. England, on the other hand, had the opinion that Russia exaggerates the security and public order problems which it had introduced as a reason for reforms. According to English ambassador in Paris or other large cities of Europe, same number of murders was occurring in a shorter period.³⁵

The memorandum given by Russia caused great powers organize a conference in London. Many Armenian spirituals and Armenian local notables joined to the conference, in which the reforms in Turkey about Armenians were discussed, and which was done at ambassadors' level. Many Armenians from different places sent telegrams to European statesmen and requested them to interfere Bâb-ı Âli about the reforms.³⁶ In the opinion of the European countries, the real reason of the Russian interest in Armenians was its desire to spread towards the south. They want Armenians to cause pandemonium in order to generate a ground for this desire. In this respect European Countries never let Russia to apply its own policy³⁷ about the matters connected with Turkey, and they prevented the reforms from being under the framework Russia wanted. Because of this Armenian problem acquired an international character.³⁸

Indeed, the aim of Russia was not the security, autonomy or independence of Armenians. If the final aim of Russia were the reforms, then it would have not blocked the steps taken by Lord Salisbury, the English foreign minister, as a result of public opinion in England started to interest in Armenian problem and began

33 Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines ...*, p. 337.

34 Johannes Lepsius, *Armenien und Europa*, p. 10.

35 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 10. Juni 1913, Nr. 33/D.

36 Artem Ohandjanian, *Armenien*, Wien, 1989, p. 49.

37 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 462 Wien, 21 Jänner 1913, P. d. Nr. 395.

38 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Rom, 6. Juni 1913, Nr. 338.

to press on the English government about the activation of the reforms. When England declared to Ottoman State that it would send its navy on Istanbul if the reforms were not activated, Russia told Ottoman Sultan that it would help Ottoman State if England made such an attempt. As it is seen above, Russia was trying to keep the initiative about Armenian problem, to continue its expansion, and to come towards Istanbul as a final goal.³⁹

At the same time, in order to ease European countries, Russia was saying on all occasions that it sided on the territorial integrity of Ottoman State and did not want the independence of Armenians in Turkey, only wants the activation of reforms for the public order beyond its borders because of the fact that there are 1,500,000 Armenians inhabited in Russian lands.⁴⁰

In fact Anatolian Armenians did not want the problem to be left to only Russia; they want all European Countries to control the region, instead. However, they stated that they would compulsorily have to rely on Russia if the European states did not do this.⁴¹ According to Giers, Russian ambassador in Istanbul, the six provinces had to be gained a statue like Lebanon. Giers assigned the embassy chief interpreter, Mandelstam, who knows Turkey very well, in order to prepare an Armenian reform project in this way.⁴² Mandelstam prepared a project like a constitution consisted of 22 articles, by attributing to the decisions taken in the former conferences and to Constitution of Lebanon.⁴³ Russian Ambassador delivered this project prepared by Mandelstam, bearing the date of 8th June 1913, to the embassies of the other countries on 1st July 1913. According to this project the six provinces that inhabited by Armenians (Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Harput, Sivas and Van) would become privileged provinces and would be governed for five-year periods by a general governor, who is Christian-European or citizen of Ottoman State- and affirmed by the great states of the period and by

39 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 28. Juni 1913, Nr. 35/A.I.

40 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Petersburg, 15 Juni 1913, Nr. 211.

41 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 462 Trapezunt, 30. Jänner 1913, Z. 9.

42 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 23. Juni 1913, Nr. 311.

43 Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines ...*, ss. 340-347.

the Sultan. This general governor could supervise the administrative units, would have determination on the police and the gendarmerie, and could order the military forces.⁴⁴ Russia was doing these operations to carry the game, which it played in Macedonia, to the provinces of Northern Anatolia and Russian Ambassador was meeting to the Armenian Patriarch frequently to reach this purpose.⁴⁵

In order to provide the acceptance of the Russian offer, Sasanow, Russian Foreign Minister delivered a memorandum,⁴⁶ which points out the necessity of the reforms, to the Ambassadors of the European Countries. However, other countries did not want negotiations to result quickly. Therefore, they left the problem to the commission of negotiation which they established by assigning one officer from each country. Austrian ambassador Pallavicini assigned Panfilli, the consultant of the embassy, to join this commission and prescribed him to retard the working of the commission as possible without evincing to the Russian side.⁴⁷ The suggestion of establishment of an autonomous Armenian province with a local parliament and assignment of a governor with enlarged competence to this province was refused by the representatives of embassies, on the ground of: "Such an action means violation of the sovereignty rights of the Sultan."⁴⁸

While the Russian project was being discussed, Armenian archbishop Hemayak, and Kelekiyan who was the editor of the newspaper Sabah and the member of the Armenian "Conseil Mixte" had given two memorandum to Austrian embassy, in the name of Patriarch. One of them was about the Armenian migration wave in 1913, occurred on Ottoman lands. The second one was the memorandum written by The Gregorian Armenian Patriarch and it included the requests below⁴⁹:

1. The development of the Armenian inhabited provinces into one large Arme-

44 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 1. Juli 1913, Nr. 36/A.

45 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 10. Juni 1913, Nr. 33/D.

46 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Petersburg., 9. Juli 1913, Nr. 244.

47 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 11. Juli 1913, Nr. 38/C.

48 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Jeniköy, 11. Juli 1913, Nr. 38/B.

49 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 462 Jeniköy, 22. Juli 1913, Nr. 41/E.

nian province in the Eastern Anatolia.

2. Assignment of a general governor to this large province that appointed by the acceptance the Powerful States.
3. Representation of Muslims and Armenians equally in the Province Parliament, administrative delegation and governmental offices.
4. Publication of the law in Armenian language and the use of Armenian language in the courts.
5. Introduction of the reforms in the Law.
6. Return of the extorted lands back to Armenians.
7. The European control over the large province.

There is a close resemblance between this memorandum prepared by Patriarch and the project prepared by Mandelstam. This resemblance is the most obvious evidence of that these two texts prepared together. Armenians' studies which are so close to Russians, naturally plunged Turkish People and Turkish administrators into despair and also into anger. Besides, this caused Turkish People to stop shopping from the Armenian stores and to boycott Armenians. Moreover, an official boycott was offered but not accepted by competent authorities.⁵⁰

The president of the Tashnak Party, Akuni found this anger unfair and accused government by saying "Turkish government has to analyze the reasons for the conversion of the sympathy for Turkish people, which present until the year 1908 among Armenians, to the sympathy for Russians." He claimed that the situation was closely related with the activation of reforms, and the danger of attachment of the Armenian provinces near the Russian Border to Russia would disappear completely, if the reforms activated.⁵¹ As stated above, all of the European countries had the opinion that the suggestion that the six Armenian inhabited provinces to become a state would not be accepted by Turks. Accordingly they changed the Russian suggestions as below:⁵²

50 Wien, HHStA PA XXXVIII, 365, Trapezunt, 29. Jänner 1914 Z 8/P.

51 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 462 Smyrna, 14. August 1913, Nr. 46 Pol.

52 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463, Jeniköy, 22. Juli 1913, Nr. 41/E.

1. The control of European States on the application of reforms (the style of the control can be discussed with Bāb-ı Āli).
2. The conservation of the clauses about representation in the old Law of Provinces.
3. Allowance to the use of Armenian language in the courts, and to the publications of the Laws in Armenian language.
4. Liberation of all nations about opening schools.
5. Abolishment of the Hamidiye horsemen troops.
6. Assignment of consultants to governors, district governors and administrators which elected from religious minorities.

These articles which prepared by the delegates of the European Countries and which palliated the offers of Russia did not satisfied Russia. Moreover, Russia understood that it could not impose its own articles to the commission. Because of this it brought a new offer to the commission by softening some points except the ones important for Russia. The important points according to Russia were:⁵³

1. The acceptance of the great powers has to be taken for the assignment of the general governor (there may be two governors, if necessary).
2. General Governor has to have the power of assigning and unseating the officers.
3. The Great Powers have to supervise the operations of the General Governor.
4. Muslims and Christians have to be represented equally in the Province Administration Committee.

If these points, which taken as important by Russia, had been accepted by other countries, the goal would have been achieved, on the side of Russia. The six provinces would have become one large province, General Governor would have equipped with extra authorization, and Ottoman Government would have been out of action by the great powers' supervision of the administration. Finally, the

⁵³ Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463, Jeniköy, 2. September 1913, Nr. 50/E.

region would have de facto become an independent state.

In order to prevent the Russian pressure on the commission and prevent the decisions that Russia wants, Turkish government proposed to England to send two inspectors to the region to check the application of the reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces. However, England refused this offer of Turkish government because Russians had declared to Englishmen that they would not welcome such a decision.⁵⁴

While these negotiations were being done in Istanbul, information were coming about how Armenians were becoming armed and working up a rebellion. For instance, in Halep, Austrian consul Dardini said “Armenians become armed considerably and they have large amount of explosives. The entrance of arms to the city increased exceptionally on recent days”⁵⁵ and Pomianovski, Austrian military attaché in the same place wrote in the letter, which he sent to Austrian embassy in Istanbul, that there were tales in the city that Armenians would take arms with the support of the Russians on spring, the number of the rioters would exceed 100,000, Armenians had large amount of weapons and ammunition, and this ammunition were increasing on each day by the amounts sent from Caucasia. Then he adds “These tales are not groundless, illusory, false tales. Armenians are not happy about the government and they are constantly introducing weapons, ammunition and explosives to the city illegally. My Russian counterpart also says on all occasions that Russia has to come to Iskenderun and occupy Armenian provinces.”⁵⁶

Moricz, Austrian consul of Trabzon, notes in his message: “Russians promised to give autonomy to Armenians like the autonomy of Finland. By the time reforms become active, Russians will treat Armenians as a means against Turks. They are spending much money for this purpose and they are arming revolutionists se-

54 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463, Paris, 6. Dezember 1913, Nr. 105/G.

55 Wien, HHStA PA XXXVIII, 358, Aleppo, 15. Dezember 1913, Nr. 38 res.

56 Wien, Kriegsarchiv, Präsidial Akten 47-1/33 Aleppo, 18 Jänner 1914.

cretly. They will interfere to the region after an Armenian rebellion. The studies about the Armenian reforms are managed from Eçmiazin and Patriarch working in accordance with Russians.”⁵⁷

What happened was that the negotiations had stopped because Ottoman State refused the reform offerings. After a long break, at the end of September, the idea appeared that Russia and Germany would restart negotiations by discussing with Grand Vizier until they reach an agreement. To set a ground for negotiations Russia and Germany confirmed six articles. According to these articles, Sultan would assign European inspectors to eastern provinces which split to two reform areas, inspectors who would be offered by Strong States and who has the power of supervise, assign and unseat the officers and judges in the region under their control; all officers, judges and also administration committees would be consisted equally in Muslims and Christians; Bāb-ı Āli would entitle the strong States to supervise the application of the reforms. The negotiations which started on this ground remained inconclusive because Bāb-ı Āli did not find some articles unacceptable, especially the one about the” entitlement of the strong states to supervise the application of reforms.

Wangenheim, with a new initiative, wanted to provide the start of the negotiations between Giers and Grand Vizier. Meanwhile Russia made a study of new project. According to this project the general inspectors would be Ottoman, the assistant secretaries would be Christian. However, all the authorities hold by the assistant secretaries. This offering did not find acceptance under the opinion that it could cause many conflicts and problems in practice and it is decided the inspectors to be foreigners⁵⁸. When the negotiations were running, Wangenheim went for a long furlough because there was an agreement on important articles. Russian ambassador Giers wanted to benefit from the absence of Wangenheim and brought up the issues which were out of agenda and which were discussed

57 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 363, Trapezunt, 30. Jänner 1914 Z 9/P.

58 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463, Konstantinopel, 29. Dezember 1913, Nr. 82/F.

before and made decision about. Russia forced Ottomans to act in a way they want factor about the subject of German Military Mission, by exploiting Armenian problem as a pressure. Thus when Russia had gained its expectations on this issue, it began to act in a more tolerant manner and confirmed the modifications offered by Bâb-ı Âli by abandoning some of its requests. Giers went for a furlough to Paris when there was only one article on which there is no agreement. The Article to be discussed and to be settled was the one according to which %50 of the province administration committees would consisted in Christians. Ottomans expressed in a decided tone that they can agree with this only for Bitlis and Van, because in the other Provinces the Christians were the %30 of the population at most; they could never accept such an application. Meanwhile, negotiations stopped again because of Giers's journey.⁵⁹ By the expression of Pomiankowsky: "the delay of the agreement on Armenian reforms is caused by Russia's intent of keeping this door open for the conflicts in the future. The declarations of Saaonof about the so-called massacres in Armenia also have the same intent. None of these are in accordance with truth."⁶⁰

The Text about Armenian Reforms on which Turkish and Russian Governments Had Agreement on February 1914.

According to the text on which Turkish and Russian governments had an agreement, Eastern Anatolia would be divided to two parts, Erzurum, Trabzon⁶¹ and Sivas would be the one division, Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Harput would be the other. A foreign inspector would be at the head of each region. These would have the right of supervising the administration, police, courts, and gendarmerie. If the public order could not be protected existing security units, then military troops would be given under their command. Inspectors could change the officials those are determined as bad and insufficient at their work, dispatch the ones to the courts if any of them committed a crime, and reassign officials instead of them.

59 Wien, Kriegsarchiv, Präs. 47-1/24 Konstantinopel, 28 Jänner 1914.

60 Wien, Kriegsarchiv, Präs. 47-1/24 Konstantinopel, 28 Jänner 1914.

61 The inclusion of coastal city Trabzon to this reform project should be a concession to Russians because of lightening of Russian project.

They would offer names to Sultan for higher positions. When they unseat the officials they inform the situation by a telegram without any delay, and send the whole written documents in eight days. If it was necessary, they could temporarily unseat the high officials whom they do not have the right to dismiss, however, they would inform the ministry of justice.

If an entitlement conflict occurred between the governor and inspector, the inspector would inform this to the ministry of interior, and the ministry would take the necessary measures within four days. The land problems would be solved under the surveillance of the inspector. The detailed regulations about the rights and tasks would be prepared with the contribution and after the assignment of them. If one of the inspectorships would become vacant in ten years Bâb-ı Âli would assign a new inspector among the names offered by the strong states. The Laws, guidelines and open instructions would be published in local language for both divisions. If the inspector approved people would have the right of speaking in their own language in courts and offices. Court decisions would be written in Turkish, if the inspector approved, again, they could be translated to Armenian language.

An appropriate portion from the budget of education of the province would be assigned for each people in accordance with the tax they paid, central government would not prevent religious communities to open and protect their own schools.

Each Ottoman citizen would perform the military duty in the garrison which is in the place where he resides in the peace time. However, if necessary, government could call soldiers from these regions as from all of the country, and could send them to distant places like Yemen or Neced, or could give them under the command of navy. Hamidiye regiments would be transformed to reserve cavalry. Their arms would put in depots, and would be handed only in training times and military mobilization periods. During the training and military mobilization

periods these troops would be dependent on the regulations of discipline. They would be under the command of related corps commander directly. In the peace time, troop leaders and regiment leaders would be taken as military officers to the standing army. Soldiers would be responsible for a one-year actual military service. The soldiers who could guarantee keeping a ready horse with all its equipment would be exempted of this responsibility.

General population census would be done under the inspection of inspector, not later than one year; the proportions of the peoples and the languages spoken would be determined for each division. Until then, the members of the provincial administration committee of Bitlis and Van would be consisted equally in Muslims and Christians. Unless population census was done in Erzurum in one year, the same system would be applied there, too. In Diyarbakır, Harput and Sivas, the provincial administration committees would be constituted according to existing election lists, proportionally. In the provinces where the provincial administration committees constituted with proportional system, minorities would be represented by all means. Administrative councils would be consisted equally in Muslims and Christians, as it is so far. If no block would come out, in both divisions Muslims and Christians would be taken equally under the control of the police, this measure would be followed when the positions opened. The same principle would be valid for all other public bodies as possible.⁶²

Differences between the Russian Plan Prepared by Mandelstam and the Plan Accepted as the Result of Negotiations

If the project of Armenian reforms prepared by Russian Embassy on 8th June 1913 compared with the accepted plan, it is seen that no points that are important for Russia have been accepted. Instead of unifying the six provinces under a large province, assignment of a general governor with exceptional power as a head of the province, formation of a Provincial Parliament; the related provinces were split into two parts and an inspector was assigned as a control instrument. The

62 Wien, Kriegsarchiv, Präs. 47-1/42 Konstantinopel, 11 März 1914, Appendix.

proportion of Muslims and Christians in the numbers of the officers, gendarmerie or police, who would be assigned, completely left to the Turkish authorities. Turkish language remained the official language for the courts and public offices, it was said that texts could be translated to local languages if it was possible. Hamidiye regiments were not abolished and only demobilized for the peace periods. The right of Strong States to control the application of the reforms had been vetoed by Bāb-ı Āli strictly and that article was completely removed from the text. The Program that was constrained largely, was sent formally to the Strong States for assignment, meanwhile discussions made with Sweden the Netherlands and Belgium about the names proper for the inspectorships.⁶³

We can state the differences between the Russian Plan prepared by Mandelsteim and the plan accepted as a result of negotiations, as articles below:⁶⁴

1. The Russian plan anticipated that the Armenian inhabited provinces would become a large autonomous province with a governor offered by the strong states, assigned by Sultan. According to the accepted plan they split into two parts and two inspectors assigned for each.
2. According to the Russian Plan within the provinces mentioned above, the borders of the districts and sanjaks would be redefined in accordance with the ethnographic situation, and all tenants were given under the control of the governor who had extra powers. However, in the accepted plan the division of districts remained untouched.
3. In the Russian plan the general governor was thought as the head of the executive organ. He would have the power of assigning and unseating of all officers, including the judges. He would be the head of the police and the gendarmerie and military troops would be given to his command if he wanted in order to establish the public security and public order. However in the accepted plan two inspectors were decided to be assigned, and only the right to supervising of the

63 Wien, Kriegsarchiv, Präs. 47-1/42 Konstantinopel, 11 März 1914.

64 Wien, HHStA PA XII463, Konstantinopel, 2. März 1914, Nr.15/P-H.

administration, the courts, the police and the gendarmerie were given to them. Governors remained as the head of the executive organ. When they unseat an officer, inspectors had to inform the related ministry which would take the final decision. The right to assign officers limited to the low-position ones, for the high level officers they could only suggest names.

4. The project prepared by Mandelsteim provided a Provincial parliament consisted in Muslim and Christian members in equal numbers, instead of provincial administration committees. On the other hand, according to the plan accepted, the old practices remained and the proportion of population of the peoples taken as basis for the distribution of the members.

5. Russian plan was including the rearrangement of the communities on the ethnographic basis and demanded that the manager of the district must be chosen among the major group, according to the plan accepted the existing application protected.

6. The Russian plan included special points on the term of office, meeting, abolishment and the authority of provincial parliament. Especially, it put the decision that the proposal of laws which presented to Sultan for the confirmation would be treated as confirmed if they would not be confirmed in two months. However, in the plan accepted there was nothing about the meeting and abolishment of the provincial administration committees. It was decided that the power of the committee would be arranged according to the Law of Provinces.

7. Russian plan ordered that the police and the gendarmerie consisted in Muslims and Christians by half, and that they would be commanded by the European army-officers in the employment of Turkey. The plan accepted did not point out this issue.

8. According to Russian plan Armenians would be under military service only in the peace times and only in the Armenian provinces. In the plan accepted there was no phrase such as "Armenian Province". Moreover, for navy and the troops in Yemen and Necef, as it was in the other parts of the country, enlisting of the soldiers to the army from the six provinces was recorded.

9. The Russian plan demanded the abolishment of the Hamidiye regiments. How-

ever, in the plan which was accepted the regiment mentioned transformed to the reserve cavalry who could bear arms in the training and mobilization periods.

10. The plan of Mandelsteim demanded that the half of the judges and half of all of other officers to be Christians; in the accepted plan this subject was not pointed out.

11. Russian plan brought the investigation of the land conflicts by a special commission as a condition; the plan accepted left these to the general inspectors.

12. Russian Plan forbade the habituation of migrants into the six provinces. The creator of the project, Mandelsteim persistently emphasized this point. However this issue was not put in the accepted plan.

13. According to Mandelsteim's plan a commission including the delegates of Ottomans and the other States, would prepare regulations for the Armenian provinces. However in the plan accepted, it was decided that Bâb-ı Âli would prepare regulations for the general inspectors.

General Inspectors

The negotiations between Russians with Turks resulted in the assignment of the treaty of Gulkiewiç-Said Halim on 8th February 1914.⁶⁵ Armenians were very happy about this treaty. The reform program was prepared by a collective work of Armenian Patriarch a Russian Ambassador in Istanbul, General Governor in Caucasia, and Katholikos in Etchmiadzin. Exchange of views continued during the negotiations. Consequently, they were waiting for the start of the reforms as soon as possible.⁶⁶

When it was decided⁶⁷ that the inspectors would be from Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway;⁶⁸ Russia offered the names below, in order two of

65 Ahmed Djemal Pascha, *Erinnerungen eines ...*, p. 349-351.

66 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Petersburg,, 23. März 1914, Nr. 85.

67 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463, Konstantinopel, 9. Februar 1914, Nr. 10/P-E.

68 I did not find the reason for choosing these countries. Probably the reasons were that they were in good relations with Ottoman state, wer not included in contrivances against Ottomans or were small states unable to exert power on Ottoman state.

them to be chosen⁶⁹:

1. Brigadier General Guise from Belgium,
2. Lieutenant Henri from Belgium (He was the substitute of Kongo Governor),
3. Dormann, General Secretary of Ministry of War of the Netherlands,
4. Westenek, Provincial governor in Nether-India.

At the beginning of April, Russia offered one more name for the general inspectorship: Norwegian Major Commander Hoff⁷⁰. The representatives of the Strong States presented the list of the inspectors to Bâb-ı Âli on 7th April.⁷¹ The Grand Vizier announced to the presenters of the list, that Westenek from the Netherlands and Hoff from Norway were chosen,⁷² and demanded the arrival of the chosen ones to Istanbul.⁷³ The inspectors came to Istanbul due to this demand.⁷⁴ The Armenian inhabited provinces were shared as follows: Erzurum, Trabzon and Sivas were given to Westenek; Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Harput and Van were given to Hoff. The rank of “Bala” (it was a rank close to major general) was given to the both.⁷⁵ Austrian Ambassador Pallavicini declared that he learned from the Embassy of the Netherlands, that conflicts occurred between Inspector Westenek and Bâb-ı Âli, about the working conditions of Westenek. He wrote in a letter which he sent to Wien that Bâb-ı Âli did not want to give the authorizations those had to be used by general inspectors, inspector refusing to assign a document in which his authority and activity field were unclear, inspector wanted 5000 liras annually but Ottoman government offered 3000 liras temporarily; and moreover, Government wanted to give him a flat and travel allowance but inspector did not accepted any other one rather than the current regulations about the travel allowance.⁷⁶ After all these conflicts were overcome, then another con-

69 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Berlin, 20. März 1914, Nr. 1216

70 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Berlin, 4. April 1914, Nr. 117.

71 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Pera, 7. April 1914, Nr. 140.

72 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Pera, 15. April 1914, Nr. 149.

73 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Konstantinopel, 22. April 1914, Nr. 28/P-G.

74 Wien, HHStA PA XII, 463 Konstantinopel, 16. Mai 1914, Nr. 35/P-C.

75 Wien, HHStA PA XII463, Konstantinopel, 3. Juni 1914, Nr.42/P.E., Bezug auf Bericht Nr.38/P.G. vom 25.v.M.

76 Wien, HHStA PA XII463, Konstantinopel, 16 Mai 1914, Nr.35/P.C.

flict occurred that whether the official inspectors would be responsible directly to the government or to general inspectors. However the certain attitude and the solid manner of general inspectors Westenek and Hoff, brought success and the contract assigned as they wanted.⁷⁷ Inspectors stayed in Istanbul until their rank and work fields announced in the official journal.⁷⁸ Public officers from Armenian community were assigned to help inspectors. The public officers⁷⁹ assigned to help inspector Hoff were the four people stated below:⁸⁰

1. Heygasun Beygyan: (assigned as agricultural consultant) He was a manager in ministry of Agriculture until then.
2. Astik Efendi Gözübügyan: he was civil inspector until then.
3. Krikor Efendi Şahinciyan: he was a translator in general security Bureau in Istanbul
4. Mattheos Efendi Ebligacan: he was the Judge of the court of original jurisdiction in Van.

Armenians were waiting the arrival of the inspectors with great expectations. The bishops committee united in Van and assigned a committee of 14 people to help Hoff who sent as a general inspector to Southern Anatolia. This committee consisted of the representatives of three political parties (Tashnaks, Hinchaks and Rangavars), merchants and local notables.⁸¹ The names of the 14 people in the committee were as stated below:⁸²

1. Iskan Mihaelyan: The president of the Tashnak Part in Van, Migrated from Caucasia to Van, entered to Ottoman Citizenship and had close relations with

77 Wien, HHStA PA XII463, Konstantinopel, 25. Mai 1914, Nr.38/P.G.

78 Wien, HHStA PA XII463 Yeniköy, 20. Juli 1914, Nr.51/P.G., zu Bericht 42/P vom 3. Juni 1.

79 I could not encounter the names of people appointed to Westenek's quarters. However I guess that some Armenian officers were appointed to help Westenek.

80 Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und ...*, p. 18.

81 Lepsius did not place the names of these 14 persons in the book he published German Foreign Ministry Archives. It is very often that Lepsius change the statements or omit the names whenever there is a threat to his thesis.

82 Wolfgang Gust ve Sigrid Gust, *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16 Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des Deutschen Auswärtigen Amtes*, <http://www.armenocide.de>, 1914-08-11-DE-001-V.

the Russian consul

2. Aram Manugyan: one of the other managers of Tashnak Party, he was more patriot and honest than Iskan.

3. Mihran Terlemezyan: one of the effective and decisive members of Tashnak Party, educated, speaks French and German. He was the principle of Armenian official schools.

4. Tabip Aşod: a member of Tashnak Party educated in Germany known as liar and opportunist.

5. Tabip Cingos: Sympathizer of Tashnak party, he was affective, intelligent but trickster.

6. Şavarş Hovivyan: Vice president of Ramgavar (Conservative) Party. He was a less educated but reliable person.

7. Ardaşes Solakyan: A member of Hınchak (social democrat) Party, teacher of Jeremian School, he was a popular, narrow-minded but reliable person.

8. Mirzahan Mirzahanyan: A member of Hınchak Party, Lawyer. His character was not known well because he settled Van recently.

9. Riştumyan: Not member of any party. He worked as a teacher in the school of Tare Golzagan and American college of Van; he was educated in Edinburgh, a reliable person.

10. Avedis Tertzibaşyan: No party had large lands, member of provincial administration committee, opportunist, and president of various school and aid organizations. He was a friend of Russian consul.

11. Set Kapamacyan: No party, a great merchant. He hated Tashnaks because they killed his father (He was the mayor of Van) in the year before. He was not very intelligent but virtuous and had a strong character.

12. Mihael Minassyan: No party, an important pedagogue. He lived in America for 12 years on and had the degree of doctorate on human relations.

13. İknadyos Hüssyan: stockowner, He was a reliable person.

14. Margos Jeramyan: He was narrow-minded but very rich.

These were the people who would protect Hoff. Even though the Ottoman State

assigned inspectors and Armenian public servants, Armenian organizations preferred to employ the people on the high positions in politics, commerce and bureaucracy in order to canalize inspectors to the way which would serve them. However these plans of them did not come true because short after the eruption of World War 1, the contracts of the general inspectors cancelled by the İrade-i Seniyye of the Sultan on 3rd -16th September 1914.⁸³

Conclusion

Teba-yı sadıka (loyal citizens), who served to the country by occupying in arts and commerce with the advantage of the citizenship of a stable State because of the fact that Turks established States which lasted for centuries after they came Anatolia, and also with the advantage of having trusty and honest neighbors and fellows whom they can entrust everything, lost their loyalty and fidelity to their country and neighbors after the independence movements awoken by the Wien defeat of Ottomans in 1683, reinforced by the French Revolution of 1789 and got wild after the weakening⁸⁴ of Ottoman State in a way that it could not defend himself against European States and even could not cope with his own governor (Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa) without external help, and started to move together with the European States and especially Russia. Nevertheless these States which wanted to terminate Ottoman State and to share its territory began to exploit the Armenians on the way of their aim.

The Patriarchs, who were the spiritual leaders of the Armenians with their support to the illegal organizations established after Berlin Conference and with the support and provocation of the external powers, started to work against the State and demanded impossible requests from the government, they performed activities that disturbed the people and the government and distorted the public order. Consequently, public body was agitated in some places and caused impetuosity which victimized Armenians, and government has taken measures

83 Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und ...*, p. 18

84 Ramazan Yıldız, *Die Migration Kaukasischer Muslime und ihre Ansiedlung im Osmanischen Reich im 19. Jahrhundert*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Universität Wien, 2004, p. 94.

and punished the criminals. Then Armenians showed these events as evidence and by asserting that they faced persecution because their being Christians, they called European States for help. Russia, who was looking for an opportunity to interfere Ottomans and who gave this tactic to the Ottoman-Armenians, prepared a project to heal the so-called life conditions of Armenians because of this call of the Armenians for help. Contrary to the Russian requests, it was decided that Armenian inhabited provinces were to be divided into two parts and assignment of Europeans inspectors to each one after the intervention of the European States who treated this reform project as a violation of their interests, and who treated the existence of the Ottomans as a block on the way of Russia preventing its spread down to the south even it was weakened on economy and military. Consequently, Armenian problem attained an international character even if it must remain as an internal affair of Ottoman State.