

e-ISSN: 2757-5845

REVIEW OF
ARMENIAN STUDIES
A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

Issue
44
2021

Facts and Comments

Alev KILIÇ

The Election Propaganda in Armenia under the
Rule of the Communist Party of Armenia

Metin IŞIK - Mustafa KARACA - Caner ÇAKI

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Erdi ÖZTÜRK

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A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations
2021, Issue 44

Altı Aylık, Tarih, Politika ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi
Sayı 44, 2021

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Review of Armenian Studies is published biannually and legally classified as a Turkey-wide periodical publication.

Review of Armenian Studies is a refereed journal. Review of Armenian Studies is indexed in the EBSCO and TUBITAK-ULAKBIM databases. Articles submitted for publication are subject to peer review. The editorial/advisory board takes into consideration whether the submitted article follows the rules of scientific writing and grammar. The articles are sent to two referees known for their academic reputation in their respective areas. Upon their decision, the article will be published in the journal or rejected. The reports of the referees are kept confidential and stored in the journal's archives for five years.

This academic journal is edited by the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) on behalf of Avrasya Bir Vakfı (1993), and published by Terazi Yayıncılık.

Publication Office

Terazi Yayıncılık Bas. Dağ. Dan. Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.
Abidin Daver Sok. No. 12/B Daire 4 06550 Çankaya/ANKARA
Tel: 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Faks:** 0 (312) 438 50 26
www.avim.org.tr

e-ISSN: 2757-5845

Subscription Office

Hülya ÖNALP
Terazi Yayıncılık Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.
Süleyman Nazif Sok. No.12/B Daire 4 06550
Çankaya/ANKARA
Tel: 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 - **Fax:** 0 (312) 438 50 26
E-mail: teraziyayincilik@gmail.com

Design

Ruhi ALAGÖZ

Printing

Karmatsan Basım Yayın Matbaacılık
Kazım Karabekir Cad. Kültür Çarşısı 7/12 Altındağ / ANKARA

Printing Date: 6 December 2021

Annual Subscription Fee - Turkey: 90 TRY
Annual Subscription Fee - International: 30 USD

Please send your payment to the following bank account:

For TRY - Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/6296007
Postal Check Account Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221

For USD - Garanti Bankası- Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/9086957
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

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Review of Armenian Studies yılda iki kez yayımlanır. Yaygın Süreli Yayın.

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Karmatsan Basım Yayın Matbaacılık
Kazım Karabekir Cad. Kültür Çarşısı 7/12 Altındağ / ANKARA

Baskı Tarihi: 6 Aralık 2021

Yurtiçi Yıllık Abone Ücreti: 90 TL

Yurtdışı Yıllık Abone Ücreti: 30 USD

Aşağıdaki banka/posta çeki hesap numaralarına ödeme yapabilirsiniz:

Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Şubesi 181/6296007
Posta Çeki Hesabı: Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

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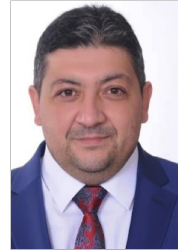
ALEV KILIÇ graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University in 1968. The next year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Kılıç served as Ambassador to F.R. of Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1998 and Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 1998 and 2001. In 2001-2004, he served as the Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry. He served as Ambassador to Switzerland (2004-2009) and Ambassador to Mexican United States (2009-2011). He retired from the Ministry in 2011. Ambassador (R) Kılıç has been the Director of Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2013.



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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa KARACA was born in Kayseri, and completed his primary, secondary and high school education there. He graduated from the Department of Business Administration of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Erciyes University (Kayseri/Turkey). He completed his master's degree in Business Administration and his doctorate degree in Management and Organization in the same university, respectively, by defending his thesis titled "Personality Traits Determining Entrepreneurship". He continued his academic life in Erciyes, Ahi Evran, İnönü and Sakarya Universities, respectively. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karaca currently serves as a faculty member at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Anadolu University. During his career, he served as head of the department, member of the faculty board, Director of the Institute of Social Sciences, member of the Senate and member of the University Board of Directors. He has published around 40 national/international articles, around 50 national/international papers, and around 10 national/international books in the fields of communication, management, propaganda, and entrepreneurship. He received support from Tübitak with his article published in the *Review of Managerial Science* (SSCI) in 2019. In 2020, he was awarded the publication incentive of Anadolu University with his book titled *Handbook of Leadership* published by Cambridge Publishing House. He wrote and directed many projects funded by European Union Framework Programs, IPARD, Bilateral Cooperation Programs, Central Finance Contracting Unit, Development Agencies and Turkish National Agency. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karaca attaches importance to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies and studies in this direction. He is the founder and editor of *Anadolu Academy Journal of Social Sciences* and *International Journal of Social Sciences*.



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Prof. Dr. Salih TUNÇ was born in the village of Akçay, in the Elmalı district of Antalya. After completing his high school education in Antalya High School, he graduated from the Department of History, Faculty of Letters of Istanbul University in 1989. He received his master's degree in 1992 with his thesis titled "Internal Revolts During The [Turkish] National Struggle" at the Institute of Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History at Istanbul University. Thereafter, in 1999, under the supervision of the late Prof. Dr. Ali İhsan GENÇER, he completed his doctorate degree with the thesis titled "The Istanbul Press During The Occupation Period (1918-1922)". Subsequently, he served as a teacher for some time and then started to work as a lecturer at Akdeniz University in March 1993, serving in various academic staff positions. Between 2003-2005, at the Strasbourg University Departement d'Etudes Turques, and under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Paul Dumont, he carried out post-doctoral studies on the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress (1908-1918). He became an Associate Professor in the field of New and Contemporary History in 2013 and Professor in Contemporary History Department in 2019. Subsequently, he worked as a guest researcher at Strasbourg University Departement d'Etudes Turques in France within the framework of the Tübitak 2219 project in 2016. He conducted archival studies at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs units in Paris / La Courneuve and in Nantes, as well as at the military archive Château Vincennes. His academic studies here were mainly focused on the Constitutional Monarchy, the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress, as well as the Armistice and Occupation Period. Prof. Dr. Tunç continues to serve as a faculty member in the Department of History of the Faculty of Letters at Antalya Akdeniz University.



Erdi ÖZTÜRK He was born in 1991 in Bursa. He graduated from the Department of History of Hacettepe University in 2014 with the degree of "honor student". In 2018, he received his master's degree from the History Program of the Institute of Social Sciences at Hacettepe University with the thesis titled "Anatolia in the Age of Ethnic and Religious Transformation: Peoples, Beliefs and Cultural Interaction (XII-XIII Centuries)" (thesis advisor: Assoc. Prof. Resul Ay). In the same year, he commenced his doctorate level education in the History Program of the Institute of Social Sciences at Hacettepe University. In 2019, to assist his doctoral studies, Öztürk started his second undergraduate level education at the Program for Armenian Language and Culture of the Department of Caucasian Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Languages and History-Geography at Ankara University. Öztürk continues his doctoral thesis study titled "Armenians in Eastern Anatolia: Politics, Socio-Economic Life, and Cultural Interaction (XI-XV Centuries)".



As always, the first article in the 44th issue of our journal is “**Facts and Comments**”. This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as domestic and international developments of Armenia in the period of July-December 2021. Despite Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan’s landslide victory in the 20 June elections, a relatively small but vociferous opposition in the Parliament, together with their militant supporters, has given Pashinyan reason to be more circumspect. Despite the aforementioned adversity in domestic politics and complexity in foreign politics that requires juggling multiple prominent actors, Pashinyan has achieved relative success and has proven to be a seasoned and populist politician. However, a daunting task remains before him; leading his people to understand that the way to prosperity and stability does not entail trying furtively to turn the clock back, but rather accepting the reality in Karabagh despite the incitement and encouragement he receives otherwise. The difficulty of this is clearly seen in Armenia’s policy of procrastination that allows the continuation of occupying Azerbaijani territory that is temporarily guarded by the Russian peacekeeping forces in the aftermath of the 2020 Karabagh war that resulted in Azerbaijani victory. The changed conditions in the region bode unprecedented opportunities for regional cooperation and stability. Unfortunately, despite Armenia’s statements to the contrary, its policy towards Turkey appears to be following the traditional pattern of submitting allegiance to certain powers and expecting rewards for availing itself to the service of those in adversity to Turkey.

In their article titled “**The Election Propaganda in Armenia under the Rule of the Communist Party of Armenia**”, Metin Işık, Mustafa Karaca, and Caner Çakı analyze several posters from the Soviet Armenia era using the semiotic concepts of the semiotician Charles William Morris, and reveal the symbols and messages contained in the posters. To form a background for such a study, the authors offer comparisons between the purpose of holding elections in democratic and authoritarian regimes, provide a literature review of studies that touched upon issues pertaining to propaganda and authoritarian regimes, and try to succinctly explain the key points of the semiotic approach. The authors reveal that elections in the Soviet Union in general and Soviet Armenia in specific were meant to serve the Soviet Union’s need to prevent its people from forming alternative or opposing political ideas, legitimize itself by convincing the people to vote in elections whose candidates were picked by the regime based on loyalty to the regime’s ideals, and to demonstrate to its

Cold War rivals that the Union was a strong political formation that enjoyed popular support.

In his article titled “**Armenians in the 1908 Trabzon Elections**”, Salih Tunç uses archive research and study on the relevant reports of French consulate in Trabzon to evaluate the impacts of the 1908 elections on the population of Trabzon and on the Ottoman Empire. Tunç’s evaluation reveals that the 1908 elections led to considerable disputes among Muslim and non-Muslim community based on the candidates who were chosen as deputies in the elections. Various accusations and objections were circulated against the candidates through the efforts of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, the Armenian Archbishopric of Trabzon, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun. However, the accusations and objections turned out to be unfounded, and the election disputes revealed power competition between the Armenian Church and Dashnaktsutyun, non-Muslim communities’ dissatisfaction in failing to achieve their election goals, and differences in the perspectives of various actors within the Ottoman Empire.

In his article titled “**The Law Code of Mkhitar Gosh and Analysis on the “Others” in the Medieval Armenian Community**”, Erdi Öztürk sheds light on the life of the Armenian community in Anatolia during the Middle Ages and Armenian-Turkish relations based on the highly popular Law Code of Mkhitar Gosh. Gosh, a prominent Armenian scholar, priest, a statesman of the time, wrote his law code to provide both a religious and secular guide to the Armenian people. Gosh used several sources from both his own people, but also from other Christian peoples to serve as inspiration for his law code. Gosh was concerned that his people’s interactions and relations with foreigners, especially with the Muslim Turks who had established dominance in Anatolia, would lead to the erosion of Christian Armenian identity. As such, through his law code, Gosh wanted to limit his people’s interactions and relations with those who were perceived as “the others”. Despite Gosh’s efforts, it seems that Armenians nevertheless continued to interact with and be affected by “the others” throughout the Middle Ages.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor

EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

To cite this article: Alev Kılıç, “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 44 (2021): 9-51.

Received: 26.11.2021

Accepted: 29.11.2021

FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ*

Abstract: *This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as domestic and international developments of Armenia in the period of July-December 2021. The tumultuous days in the aftermath of the 44-day Karabagh war and the bitter defeat acknowledged with the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 9 November in Moscow left its place initially to relative calm and stability following the snap elections held on 20 June, resulting with the landslide victory of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to the chagrin and against the forecast of several circles. On the other hand, a relatively small but vociferous opposition in the Armenian Parliament composed of prominent and radical elements of the past administrations together with their militant supporters has given Pashinyan reason to be more circumspect. A determining factor in Pashinyan's success has been his deft handling of relations with Russia, the EU, the US and maintaining a fragile balance. Having named his new cabinet and proclaimed his government's ambitious program, the daunting fact before him is to put into practice his promises and vision.*

Pashinyan has proven to be a seasoned and populist politician. What is now required is to be a statesman. That prompts leading his people to understand that the way to prosperity and stability does not entail trying furtively to turn the clock back but rather accepting the reality in Karabagh despite the incitement and encouragement he receives otherwise. However, instead of accepting the realities and working for a lasting peace, it seems that

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Armenia has been opting for a policy of procrastination with the pipe dream of receiving assistance to continue occupying Azerbaijani territory that is temporarily guarded by the Russian peacekeeping forces. In fact, the President of Armenia is on record declaring for the permanent stay of Russian troops there. Such a policy puts both Russia and the West at odds. Armenia's posturing to be the victim and depicting itself as the sacrificial lamb in the hands of "barbaric neighbors" does not resonate, as it is seen more of a fox in sheep's skin.

The changed conditions in the region bodes unprecedented opportunities for regional cooperation and stability for far sighted statesperson to grasp. Approaches to normalizing relations with Turkey would be a concrete indicator on part of Armenia to that end. Unfortunately, the initial indications in the period under review of Armenia's policy towards Turkey appears to be following centuries long practiced traditional pattern of submitting allegiance to rising powers and expecting moral and material rewards for availing itself to the service of those in adversity to Turkey.

Keywords: Pashinyan, Mirzoyan, Sarkissian, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Georgia, USA, France, EU, Trilateral Moscow Agreements, Zangezur Corridor, 3+3 cooperation

Öz: *Bu incelemede Ermenistan'ın iç ve dış dinamiklerinde ve Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinde Temmuz-Aralık 2021 ayları arasındaki gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır. Karabağ'da 44 gün savaşının ve 9 Kasım Moskova Ateşkes Anlaşması ile tescil edilen ağır yenilginin ardından çalkantılı bir dönem geçiren Ermenistan, 20 Haziran erken seçimleri ve bu seçimlerden, birçok çevrenin tahminlerini ve beklentilerini hüsrana uğratan bir sonuçla, Başbakan Nikol Paşinyan'ın zaferle çıkması sonrası göreceli bir istikrara kavuşmuştur. Ancak, Ermenistan Parlamentosunda temsil olanağı bulan, eski yönetimlerin ileri gelen ve radikal unsurlarından oluşan küçük fakat sesini duyuran muhalefet ve militan yandaşları Paşinyan'ın hareket serbestisini kısıtlayan bir güç olmuştur. Paşinyan'ın seçim başarısında, bir yandan Rusya, diğer yandan AB ve ABD ile kıvrak ve hassas bir denge kurabilmesi belirleyici etki yapmıştır. Yeni kabinesini kuran ve Parlamentosunda iddialı hükümet programını açıklayan Paşinyan'ı bekleyen zor görev, vadettiklerini yerine getirmesi ve vizyonunu uygulamaya geçirebilmesidir.*

Paşinyan usta ve popülist bir politikacı olduğunu kanıtlamıştır. Şimdi gereken devlet adamlığıdır. Bunun yolu da, refah ve istikrarı gerçekleştirebilmek için, sinsice saati geriye döndürme çabasından vazgeçip, aldığı teşvik ve cesaretlendirmeleri bir kenara bırakıp, Karabağ gerçeğinin kabulünü halkına anlatabilmesinden geçmektedir. Ancak, değişen koşulları ve gerçekleri kabul etmek ve kalıcı bir barışı gerçekleştirmeye çalışmak yerine, Ermenistan'ın bir

oyalama ve erteleme politikasına yöneldiği, halen Rus barış gücü askerlerinin koruması altında olan Karabağ'ın henüz Azerbaycan'a iade edilmemiş kesiminde işgalini sürdürebilme ham hayalinden vazgeçemediği görülmektedir. Ermenistan yönetiminin en üst mevkiinde bulunan Cumhurbaşkanı'nın, Rus askerlerinin kalışının devamlı olması beyanı resmi kayıtlara geçmiştir. Böyle bir talep ve politika Batı'yı olduğu kadar Rusya'yı da zora sokmaktadır. Ermenistan'ın kendisini "barbar komşuları" karşısında kurbanlık kuzu göstererek mazlumu oynama taktiği etkisini yitirmekte, gerçekte kuzu postunda tilki olduğu görülmeye başlanmaktadır.

Bölgenin değişen koşulları bölgesel işbirliği ve istikrarın gerçekleşmesi yolunda, uzak görülü devlet adamları için, bugüne kadar görülmemiş olanaklar yaratmıştır. Türkiye ile ilişkilerin normalleşmesi yönündeki yaklaşımları Ermenistan bakımından bu yöndeki en somut göstergeyi oluşturacaktır. Ne yazık ki, incelenen dönemdeki ilk göstergeler, Ermenilerin yüzyıllar boyunca uygulaya geldikleri yükselen güçlere biat etme geleneğini, önemsenmek ve ödüllendirilmek üzere, Türkler ile ihtilafta bulunan taraflara hizmet sunma çizgisini izlemekte olduğu izlenimini vermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Paşinyan, Mirzoyan, Sarkissian, Rusya, Azerbaycan, Türkiye, İran, Gürcistan, ABD, Fransa, AB, Üçlü Moskova Anlaşmaları, Zangezur Koridoru, 3+3 bölgesel işbirliği

1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

The inaugural session of the new Armenian parliament was held on 2 August. The distribution in the 107-seat parliament is 71 for Nikol Pashinyan's party of The Civil Contract, 29 for Armenia Alliance of former President Robert Kocharyan and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF-Dashnaktsutyun) faction, 7 for I Have the Honor Alliance, co-headed by former President Serzh Sargsyan and former National Security Service Director Artur Vanetsyan. Tensions ran high at the first session, leading to brawls and intervention of security forces. Pashinyan was confirmed as the Prime Minister of Armenia. Alen Simonyan was elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly. The opposition parties did not participate in the voting. Armen Sarkissian, the President of Armenia, and Catholicos Karekin II, the head of the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, also addressed the Parliament. Karekin II called and appealed for unity. President A. Sarkissian underlined the importance of the Armenian Diaspora. He said that the Diaspora is not a wallet for Armenia but a key part of its national state identity. He added, "Our compatriots have the right to influence the fate of their homeland. Armenia and the Diaspora are two different sides of the same coin. This fact cannot be ignored. The time has come to show political will and fix the necessary legal mechanisms."

Pashinyan formed his new cabinet, not in one dispatch as was customary, but with intervals. The cabinet with 12 ministerial posts is filled as follows¹:

- Deputy Prime Minister: Mher Grigoryan
- Deputy Prime Minister: Suren Papikyan
- Minister of Foreign Affairs: Ararat Mirzoyan
- Minister of Health: Anahit Avenesyan
- Minister of Justice: Karen Andreasyan
- Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport: Vahram Dumanyan
- Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure: Gnel Sanosyan
- Minister of Environment: Romanos Petrosyan
- Minister of Labor and Social Affairs: Narek Mkrтчyan
- Minister of Economy: Vahan Kerobyan
- Minister of Emergency Situations: Andranik Piloyan
- Minister of Finance: Tigran Khachatryan
- Minister of High-Tech Industry: Vahagn Khachaturyan
- Minister of Defense: Arshak Karapetyan

1 "Structure," *The Government of the Republic of Armenia Official Website*, <https://www.gov.am/en/structure/>.

The post of Minister of Foreign Affairs was the most contested one. It remained vacant for almost three months after the resignation of Ara Ayvazyan on 27 May². Then Secretary of the Security Council Armen Grigoryan was appointed as deputy minister to carry out the duties of the post. Finally, on 19 August, the former Speaker of the Parliament, and a very close collaborator of Pashinyan from the days of the “Velvet Revolution” onwards, Ararat Mirzoyan was officially appointed as Grigoryan was reappointed to his former post³. The first change in the cabinet came about on 15 November with the dismissal of the Minister of Defense. He was replaced, on the same day, by the Deputy Prime Minister Suren Papikyan, a 35 years-old civilian, one of the co-founders of the party in 2015⁴.

On 18 August, Pashinyan outlined his 5-year Action Plan covering the years 2021-2026, based on the document “Armenia Transformation Strategy by 2050” which he had made public last year. He presented it as his government’s new five-year program in the Parliament sitting on 24 and 25 August. Much of the program focuses on the new government’s vision of Armenia’s future in new geopolitical realities in the region created after the Karabagh war. Speaking for two days in a row, his main points are here below⁵:

- Armenia is ready for constructive negotiations on Nagorno-Karabagh and considers it important to resume the negotiation process within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship,
- It is necessary to start the process of demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border as soon as possible. He apologized that the planned accomplishment could not be achieved in the Spring due to political turmoil but that the Armenian side was now ready to start the process of demarcation, a remarkable change from his statement in May when he said that the process was conditional on an Azerbaijani withdrawal from Armenia’s sovereign territory and the release of dozens of Armenian prisoners held in Azerbaijan,
- Unblocking communications in the region, planned according to the trilateral statement signed with the Heads of State of Russia and Azerbaijan is a serious opportunity to break the 30-year blockade of

2 “Armenian Foreign Minister Explains Resignation,” *Azatutyun*, May 31, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31282523.html>.

3 “Armenia at Last Appoints New Foreign Minister,” *Eurasianet*, August 19, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-at-last-appoints-new-foreign-minister>.

4 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Suren Papikyan will replace Arshak Karapetyan as Defense Minister of Armenia,” *Public Radio of Armenia*, November 15, 2021, <https://en.armradio.am/2021/11/15/suren-papikyan-will-replace-arshak-karapetyan-as-defense-minister-of-armenia/>.

5 “Armenian Government Unveils Five-Year Action Plan,” *Mirror Spectator*, August 20, 2021, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2021/08/20/armenian-government-unveils-five-year-action-plan/>.

Armenia. The document does not contain any wording on the creation of a corridor through the territory of Armenia. Just as Armenia must get a road through Azerbaijan for transport links with Russia and Iran, so Azerbaijan must get a road through Armenia for its western regions for transport links with Nakhichevan,

- Adopting a new constitution or constitutional amendments needs to be seriously considered. After the Karabagh war, many have come to the conclusion that the parliamentary system of government is not the best solution for the country. In such a security environment, perhaps Armenia needs to return to a presidential or semi-presidential system,
- It is planned to reform the armed forces, revise the terms of compulsory military service and move towards creating a professional army. As the women make up the majority of the population, greater involvement of women in the structure is also planned. As an important security factor, Pashinyan singled out Armenia's strategic alliance with Russia and the country's membership in the Russian led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO),
- It is estimated that the average annual growth rate of the five years will be at the level of 7 percent. It could be up to 9 percent a year in case of favorable external conditions. The level of poverty will drop below 10 percent by 2026 while extreme poverty will be stamped out. The minimum monthly salary will be raised from the current 68.000 drams (138 US dollars) to 85.000 drams (172 US dollars),
- Developing infrastructure, including roads will be a priority. The 2.6 billion euros granted by the EU will be used for that purpose. 300 schools and 500 kindergartens will be built or renovated. Every third and subsequent child in all families will receive 50.000 drams (about 100 US dollars) a month until the age of six. Decrease of population has long been a concern in Armenia. The population has shrunk by about 15% since the independence due to a combination of low birth rates and high level of emigration. According to official data, in the three quarters of 2021, 103,000 more Armenians, roughly about 3% of the population, left the country than entered it.

The two opposition factions harshly criticized Pashinyan and his action plan. Brawls, scuffles, fist fighting, throwing of bottles, intervention of security forces, expulsion of a female MP and the removal of journalists were the accompanying unpleasant scenes to the sessions on the presentation of the program. After three days of acrimonious debate, the program of the new

government presented by the Prime Minister was approved by 70 votes in favor. The opposition did not take part in the voting⁶.

Armenia marked on 21 September 30th anniversary of its declaration of independence with official ceremonies and an open-air concert boycotted by opposition leaders and condemned by some relatives of soldiers killed in the Karabagh war⁷. The ceremonies began with the President, the Prime Minister and other senior officials laying wreaths at a Karabagh war memorial. The traditional military parade was replaced by a march of soldiers with no display of heavy weaponry. The concert in the evening featured classical, folk, and modern music. Addressing the crowd before the live performances, Pashinyan paid tribute to the fallen soldiers. Overall, it was a somber day.

On this occasion Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia (in Antelias/Lebanon) also issued a statement with political provocation, hatred, and vengeance, saying;

“In fact, countries that are our friends, following their regional interests, sometimes silently and sometimes openly share Azerbaijan and Turkey’s so called ‘peaceful’ approaches. In these adverse circumstances the genocide perpetrator has become a claimant and Armenia is left alone and unfortunately, always in the role to give in.”

He went on to warn that “Do we realize that a new pan-Turanian and pan-Turkic alliance is shaping up in the Caucasus, based on strategic and political interests and pursuing an expansionist vision?⁸”.

On 24 September, the vice-speaker for the opposition faction of the Parliament, representative of the radical, militant ARF-Dashnaktsutyun allied with Kocharyan, announced that they were re-launching the “street struggle”. He told reporters; “We cannot eliminate the challenges and threats facing our country only with parliamentary activities. We have called a march for 26 September and afterwards you will see numerous rallies and actions⁹”.

The former minister of Defense David Tonoyan of the previous Pashinyan government, serving from 2018 to 2020, was arrested on 30 September together with the former Deputy Chief of Army’s General Staff, Lieutenant General

6 “Pashinyan’s five-year plan, now approved, outlines Karabakh priorities,” *Civilnet*, August 29, 2021, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/630970/pashinyans-five-year-plan-now-approved-outlines-karabakh-priorities/?lang=en>

7 Ani Mejlumyan, “On Independence Day, Armenia not in a mood to celebrate,” *Eurasianet*, September 22, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/on-independence-day-armenia-not-in-a-mood-to-celebrate>.

8 News from the Holy See of Cilicia, “Catholicos Aram I: Artsakh Must Be Recognized,” *St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston*, September 10, 2021, <https://soorpstepanos.org/2021/09/10/news-from-the-holy-see-of-cilicia/>.

9 Gohar Abrahamyan, “The Nikol Pashinyan Administration: 2018-Present,” *EVN Report*, September 24, 2021, <https://www.evnreport.com/magazine-issues/the-nikol-pashinyan-administration-2018-present>.

Galstian, the commander of the Air Force, and some other serving and retired military officials as part of “large scale operational-investigative measures” on criminal charges of fraud and embezzlement for supplying faulty ammunition to armed forces.¹⁰

Financial irregularities of President A. Sarkissian have also been leaked to the press in late October. He is reported to have held the position of director of the French “VH Estate” company (apparently named after the initials of his sons) for nine years, including when he was president, which he did not declare. The family company is reported to have bought two units of real estate in one of the most expensive districts of Paris for 7,510,000 euros with murky explanation of its financing. The Constitution of Armenia stipulates that the President may not hold any other position, engage in entrepreneurial activity, perform any other paid work. The criminal code imposes a penalty in the case when the person responsible for submitting a declaration submits false information or hides the data subject to declaration¹¹.

This is not the only legal issue around the President. There is a criminal case under investigation on the issue of the president’s citizenship. A criminal complaint has been filed alleging that before being elected president, he concealed his dual citizenship, that of his British citizenship, which makes him ineligible to being elected president.

An announcement was made in early October that a Russian company, the GeoProMining group bought a majority stake in Armenia’s largest mining enterprise, the Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine and then “granted” a quarter of that stake to the Armenian government. The volume of proven reserves in the mine area are 2 billion 210 million tons of ore. Until 2004, the plant was owned by the government. Then, it was privatized and sold for 162 million US dollars to a German metallurgy group, Cronimet, which officially owned 75 percent of its stock, employing some 4000 workers. Ever since, it has been the major source of undisclosed and unaccounted income of the political elite. In a parliament session, Pashinyan informed the public that for the first time since the 2000’s, Armenia and the people of Armenia are co-owners of the Zangezur Copper and Molybdenum Combine. He expressed hope that their share will increase. He further added that the deal included two very important components: “the first is the construction of a copper smelter which means that copper will be produced in Armenia, second, the construction of a new nuclear power plant is part of this program”¹².

10 “Armenian General Arrested In Corruption Probe,” *Azattyun*, October 4, 2021, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/31492556.html>.

11 Vahe Sarukhanyan, “Armenian President Sarkissian Never Declared He Was Director of Company that Purchased,” *Hetq*, November 8, 2021, <https://hetq.am/en/article/137496>.

12 Naira Nalbandian, “Armenian Mining Giant Changes Hands,” *Azattyun*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/31488318.html>.

The World Bank report on the regional development of Europe and Central Asia said “as a result of faster than expected economic growth recovery in Armenia in the first half of 2021, the projected growth rate for 2021 has been revalued to 6.1% from the earlier estimation of 3.4%.” World Bank experts linked the recovery not to structural changes but to conjectural developments. Unemployment has slightly decreased from about 20% in 2020 to a level of 17-18%. The IMF has also signaled a significant improvement of its economic outlook forecast¹³.

2. Aftermath of Karabagh War and the Process for a Peace Treaty

The Moscow Cease-fire Agreement of 9 November 2020 expressed a clear understanding that Azerbaijan would retain its liberated territories and maintain its territorial integrity within its internationally acknowledged borders. What left the door open for ambiguity was an enclave with an Armenian population of an estimated 25,000 people left intact to be guarded by Russian peace keeping forces. Its return to Azerbaijan would be contingent on establishing the status for the safeguarding of the rights of that population. The Peace Treaty would be the final document to settle all the outstanding and disputed questions.

One of those was the demarcation of state boundaries between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Those boundaries were drawn up during the Soviet era and no on the spot delicate delimitation was made by the two states after gaining their independence.

Having weathered the defeat, Armenia has started looking for ways to turn the clock back and salvage what it can of its previously accomplished facts. In this endeavor, they were also reassured, if not encouraged, by their longtime supporters represented by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-chairs that negotiations could re-start where they were left. A justifiable way to do that would be to show that the cease-fire agreement was not working. Border skirmishes was one obvious and legitimate reason. It would also cut both ways for Armenia. As the boundaries were not precise, the identification of the aggressor would be one's claim against the other. As the “aggression” this time would be against the territory of Armenia, Russian and CSTO intervention could legally be invoked.

The Ministry of Defense of Armenia reported on 28 July that Azerbaijani armed forces made another provocation violating the cease-fire in the North-eastern

13 World Bank, “Europe and Central Asia,” *Global Economic Prospect* (June 2021): 71. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/600223300a3685fe68016a484ce867fb-0350012021/related/Global-Economic-Prospects-June-2021-Analysis-ECA.pdf>.

sector of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said meanwhile that its troops took “adequate measures” after coming under cross-border fire. Later in the day, the two sides agreed, with Russian mediation, to stop the fighting. The Armenian Foreign Ministry accused Baku of deliberately heightening tension on the border. For its part, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry said Yerevan should stop “military provocations” and start talks on demarcating the border between the two states.¹⁴

That same day, French ambassador in Armenia made a public announcement that France was ready to consider embarking on military cooperation with Armenia that would boost the South Caucasus state’s security.

Armenia’s new Foreign Minister Mirzoyan, in his meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on 31 August, during his first visit abroad, accused Azerbaijan of not fully complying with the Cease-fire Agreement, citing refusal of the release of Armenian soldiers and civilians in Azerbaijani captivity, incursions into sovereign territory of Armenia and “Armenophobic rhetoric” in Azerbaijan. Referring to the enclave in Karabagh, he said, the Armenian government maintains that the disputed territory’s status should be determined only through renewed peace talks mediated by the US, Russia, and France.¹⁵

The Russian approach to the role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs was stated by the spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry on 2 September as follows: “In the context of the adequate monitoring of the new regional realities, we believe that the troika (the Co-chairs) can contribute to the strengthening of trust between Yerevan and Baku, as well as to the solution of humanitarian issues”.¹⁶ The Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was quoted by the TASS Agency on 31 August as saying “Now I proceed from the fact that we are not talking about the resumption of the process; we are talking about the realization of what has already been signed”. The spokesperson of the Ministry said at the weekly briefing on 9 September: “We closely follow the ongoing discussions in Armenia and Azerbaijan on the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries and on the clarification of the Nagorno Karabagh status”. She noted that unfortunately fundamental disagreements over political issues still remain. She said: “Therefore, at this stage, Moscow considers it necessary to strictly adhere to all the provisions of the trilateral agreements of November 9, 2020 and January 11, 2021. Russia hopes that

14 “Three Armenian soldiers killed in heavy border clashes,” *Armenian Weekly*, July 28, 2021, <https://armenianweekly.com/2021/07/28/three-armenian-soldiers-killed-in-heavy-border-clashes/>.

15 “Armenian FM Slams Azerbaijan On Moscow Trip,” *Azatutyun*, August 31, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31436929.html>.

16 “Moscow supports the intensification of OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs’ efforts on Karabakh settlement,” *ArmenPress*, September 2, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1062247/>.

these steps will create conditions for the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations¹⁷”.

France made its position known through a message of its Foreign Minister saying France will continue supporting Armenia for overcoming the consequences of Nagorno-Karabagh war, which cost numerous human lives, and as an OSCE Minsk group co-chair country will persistently seek ways to find a lasting solution to the conflict. The French President said in a congratulatory message on the occasion of Armenia’s Independence Day that¹⁸;

“France stands with Armenia to help it overcome the challenges facing it one year after the deadly conflict in Nagorno Karabagh. France will also remain actively involved in international efforts to resolve the Karabagh conflict spearheaded by the USA, Russian and French co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group”.

US Secretary of State’s message in that context said;

“As a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States remains committed to helping the sides negotiate a long-term political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and address the humanitarian impact of the fighting, including the release of all detainees, accounting for those missing, and the full and expeditious exchange of remains.”¹⁹

The United States ambassador to Armenia declared on 11 September that the status of Karabagh is yet to be resolved, drawing the ire of Azerbaijan. The US President said in the congratulatory message on the occasion of Armenia’s Independence Day that the US will continue to strive for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Despite the rhetoric on Karabagh, it was significant and indicative that Armenian government officials declined to attend the official ceremonies on 2 September to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the unrecognized “Nagorno-Karabagh Republic” in the enclave. Pashinyan nevertheless issued a statement congratulating the Karabagh Armenians on the anniversary of the proclamation of their “republic” and reiterated that the Karabagh conflict remains unresolved, and that Yerevan will continue to

17 “At this stage, Moscow considers it necessary to strictly adhere to all provisions of trilateral agreements: Zakharova,” *I News*, September 9, 2021, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2021/09/09/At-this-stage-Moscow-considers-it-necessary-to-strictly-adhere-to-all-provisions-of-trilateral-agre/553216>.

18 “Macron Wants To Deepen France’s ‘Special’ Ties With Armenia,” *Azatutyun*, September 21, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31471209.html>.

19 Antony J. Blinken, “Armenian Independence Day,” *US Department of State*, September 21, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/armenian-independence-day/>.

champion a settlement based on the Karabagh's Armenians' right to self-determination. On the other hand, the ruling party objected and turned down in the Parliament on 10 September an opposition proposal to legally task one of the standing committees with dealing with the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in New York on 23 September for talks hosted by the US, Russian and French diplomats, an ice breaking event since it was the first face to face meeting of the two ministers since the end of the war. It produced, however, no substantial result. Briefing the meeting at the Armenian Parliament on 6 October, Armenian Minister Mirzoyan had the following to say²⁰:

“Of course, the resumption of these format discussions, negotiation process is welcome and is definitely in the interests of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. We state once again that the issue is not solved. Azerbaijan likes to say that the issue doesn't exist anymore, but I think that this is one more assurance by the international community that the issue exists and requires solution, and the search for the solution must take place within the format of the OSCE Minsk group co-chairmanship, the body having the only internationally recognized mandate...I positively assess the fact that there was a perception despite the existence of tension and many unresolved issues, we agreed to meet again and first of all discuss the humanitarian issues”.

In a joint statement on the New York talks, the Co-chairs said they “proposed specific focused measures to de-escalate the situation and possible next steps”. Those proposals were not disclosed.

The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said on 24 September, addressing the UN General Assembly, “The Nagorno Karabagh conflict is a thing of the past. Azerbaijan no longer has an administrative-territorial unit called Nagorno Karabagh”.

It was reported on 1 October that a telephone conversation was held between the foreign ministers of Russia and Armenia where special attention was drawn on the implementation of the trilateral agreements of 9 November and 11 January. The importance of finding solutions to the pressing humanitarian problems such as releasing detainees, sharing mine field maps and preserving cultural heritage sites were also underlined.

On 2 October President of Azerbaijan said he was willing to meet with the Armenian Prime Minister when he was ready for it. He vowed to respond in

20 “Armenian, Azerbaijani FMs agree to meet under auspices of OSCE MG Co-Chairs to discuss humanitarian issues,” *ArmenPress*, October 6, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1064922/eng/>.

kind should Armenia hand over mine field maps. On 3 October, Armenian Prime Minister said he was prepared to meet with the Azerbaijani President. He added that he was ready to take along all the maps of the mine fields and asked him to take along all Armenian prisoners of war. On 9 October, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs expressed readiness to help organize that meeting. The statement said:

“The co-chairs have taken positive note of President Aliyev’s and Prime Minister Pashinyan’s public statements expressing their readiness in principle to meet with each other under the auspices of the co-chairs. The co-chairs look forward to engaging the sides on modalities and details of such a meeting and reiterate their willingness to visit the region in the near future to discuss next steps in the process.”

It is curious how the Co-chairs jumped up on the occasion as there was no call for their intervention and how they took the opportunity to invite themselves to visit the region.

On the meeting of Pashinyan with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin on 12 October, an Armenian government statement said they discussed “ongoing developments” in and around the conflict zone, efforts to shore up stability in the region and the implementation of Russian-brokered agreements to establish transport links between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Pashinyan for his part said, “unfortunately, we still cannot speak of a full stabilization of the situation in our region”. He stressed that Russia continues to play the “key role” in international efforts to solve the Karabagh conflict.

On the initiative of Kirill I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, a trilateral meeting of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II and the Azerbaijan based Chairman of the Caucasian Muslims Office Allahshukur Pashazadeh was held in Moscow at the Danilov Monastery, the headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church on 13 October. Patriarch Kirill I said;

“I hope that you and I will find the right words which are greatly needed for our peoples. I believe that the fact we are meeting today and your dialogue will become an example for every one”. He also expressed the hope that Karekin II and Pashazadeh’s reputations can have favorable impact on people’s thoughts²¹.

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met on 14 October for the second time in less than a month for talks in Minsk mediated by the Russian

21 “Catholicos Karekin II, Russia’s Patriarch Kirill, Azerbaijan-based Chairman of CMO Allahshukur Pashazadeh meet in Moscow,” *ArmenPress*, October 13, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1065481.html>.

Foreign Minister. The occasion was a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ministerial meeting. The Russian Foreign Ministry informed that the ministers “reviewed” the implementation of the agreements following the war in Karabagh. The announcement added that “They concluded that most provisions of the agreements are being successfully implemented. They agreed to intensify work on the remaining issues” without further elaborating.²² Prime Minister Pashinyan addressed the ministerial meeting by video and said that Armenia intended to open transport and economic communications with Azerbaijan. He stated that this was “the only way that, we believe, can lead to the goals” of achieving peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

There was speculation in the press that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan could meet in Moscow at the anniversary of the 9 November Agreement. Armenian Foreign Minister did not explicitly rule out the possibility of such a summit. He said at a Parliamentary session: “Proposals for different meetings in different formats are being discussed. Presumably an agreed text might be released as a result of possible meetings²³”. However, no such meetings took place. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, Russian Foreign Minister phoned on 2 November his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts to discuss the implementation of the two agreements to stop the war and open Armenian-Azerbaijani transport links. It was reported that the Russian Minister “compared notes” with his counterparts with regard easing tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and “unblocking all transport and economic links in the South Caucasus”. The Russian Minister “stressed the importance of continuing efforts aimed at political and diplomatic settlement of the full range of issues in relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia”. The official Armenian readout of the phone call however was that “the ministers agreed on the need to address humanitarian issues resulting from the 44-day war” and that;

“Mirzoyan stressed the need for the unconditional repatriation of Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees as well as the preservation of Armenian religious and historical-cultural heritage in the territories of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh that fell under Azerbaijani control”.

How can this statement be interpreted as anything other than a pipe dream?

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk, who co-heads together with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts the trilateral working group set up by the three respective governments in January 2021, visited Armenia on 5

22 “Azerbaijan says ready to normalize relations with Armenia,” *Anadolu Agency*, October 14, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/azerbaijan-says-ready-to-normalize-relations-with-armenia/2392232>.

23 Naira Nalbandian and Marine Khachatryan, “Yerevan Still Vague On ‘Upcoming’ Armenian-Azeri Summit,” *Azatutyun*, October 27, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31532538.html>.

November to talk with Pashinyan about “how and from what the unblocking of roads should start”. Overchuk stated after the talks “We are getting close to concrete decisions, which are first and foremost based on the notion that the countries will retain sovereignty over roads passing through their territory”²⁴.

Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan reiterated on 5 November their long-standing position that Armenia must recognize Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and its sovereignty over Karabagh through a “Peace Treaty”. He said “Our proposal is very clear: Armenia must respect neighbour’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. This would help it to get out of an economic and transport deadlock and become a thriving regional country”.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia issued a statement on 6 November to mark the first anniversary of the November 9 Agreement which ended the war in Karabagh. The Russian Foreign Ministry cautioned Western powers to tread carefully when it came to their involvement with Armenia and Azerbaijan, urging them to take the “changed realities in the region” into consideration when advancing their policies. It also said efforts to unblock links in the region by creating transport routes must be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries which they pass. The statement also noted that Russia is determined to continue actively working with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs in the 3+2 format.

The Armenian media reported that the Minister of Defense of Armenia visited Khankendi in Karabagh on 9 November, the Azerbaijani territory guarded by Russian peace keeping forces. Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan issued the following statement²⁵:

“The unauthorized visit of the Armenian Defense Minister to Azerbaijani lands, holding meetings with illegal Armenian formations and expressing an opinion about their combat readiness is a military provocation. The military-political leadership of Armenia, grossly violating the provisions of the trilateral agreement, intentionally destabilizes the situation in the region and endangers the activities of the Russian peace keepers”.

The Azerbaijani Ministry pointed that this provocative visit of the Armenian Defense Minister was deliberately carried out on the eve of the anniversary of the signing of the trilateral Agreement by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia and the Prime Minister of Armenia. The Ministry added that the Armenian

24 “Russian Official Reports Progress Towards Armenian-Azeri Transport Links,” *Azatutyun*, November 5, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31548083.html>.

25 “Illegal visit of Armenian Defense Minister to Azerbaijani territories is military-political provocation – MoD,” *AzerNews*, November 9, 2021, <https://www.azernews.az/nation/185432.html>.

military leadership, instead of drawing conclusions from the total defeat in the 44-day war and adapting to the new geopolitical situation in the region, strengthening peace and security, is making cheap military adventures. As a matter of fact, following the start of another military adventure on the border shortly after, the Armenian Minister of Defense was abruptly dismissed by the Prime Minister.

Armenian Foreign Ministry issued an extensive statement on the anniversary of the signing of the trilateral agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Karabagh. It proved to be yet another official document denying the acknowledgement of the changed situation and new realities in the region. It reflects words and attitudes dampening the efforts for the implementation of the two trilateral agreements.

US State Department spokesperson also made a statement on 9 November, on the occasion of the anniversary of the cessation of fighting in Karabagh, saying “We urge Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue and intensify their engagement, including under the auspices of the Minsk group co-chairs, to find comprehensive solutions to all outstanding issues related to or resulting from the Nagorno Karabagh conflict²⁶”.

Russian Presidential Spokesman told reporters on 9 November that “the trilateral agreement signed a year ago is very important. It is difficult to overestimate its value”. He informed that a meeting between the three leaders is not planned on the first anniversary of the signing of the trilateral agreement. On 23 November, in an online press conference, Pashinyan brought clarity to the subject.

He said the Armenian side was ready to meet online with Azerbaijani side on 9 November if that meeting would solve a specific problem, for example the return of the POW’s. If not, it was suggested to change the day of the meeting, taking into account the painful perception of the Armenian side related to that day. He claimed that, through symbolism or other means, Azerbaijan tries to pursue a policy of aggressive coercion and blackmail against Armenia.

Foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met for the third time in less than two months for talks on 11 November, hosted by their French counterpart, as they were in Paris for the General Assembly meeting of UNESCO. The French Minister tweeted afterwards that he brought them together to help reduce tensions one year after the cease-fire agreement. The French Foreign Ministry said that the Minister sought to “keep up the momentum” in Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations.

26 Ned Price, “Recognizing the One-Year Anniversary of the Ceasefire Declaration Between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” *US Department of State*, November 8, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/recognizing-the-one-year-anniversary-of-the-ceasefire-declaration-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan/>.

Addressing the Parliament, Pashinyan said on 17 November that the whole goal of the negotiation process within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs is to reach the point of concluding a peace treaty with Azerbaijan. He noted that it is strange for him when Azerbaijan says that they offer Armenia to sign a peace treaty but there is no response from Armenia. He claimed that, not only is there a response from Armenia, but it has been said a dozen times that it is not an Azerbaijani initiative. He further underlined that delimitation and demarcation of the border is Armenia's agenda.

Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia announced that Azerbaijan's armed forces launched a military operation at the Armenian border at 1 am on 16 November²⁷. He immediately appealed to Russia for military assistance, invoking the 1997 Treaty. Armenia also called on the CSTO for assistance. Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense on its part accused Armenian forces of carrying out a large-scale military provocation in the Kalbajar-Lachin area which ended in the disarmament and capture of Armenian soldiers. Russia's Defense Ministry reported that hostilities on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border had ceased after a cease-fire was reached with Moscow's mediation. Armenian Defense Ministry confirmed that the cease-fire became effective at the eastern border with Azerbaijan at 6.30 pm on 16 November in accordance with the agreement reached through Russian mediation.

Pashinyan called on the Russian President for help on 16 November. A second telephone conversation was held on 21 November where the two leaders again discussed the situation in the South Caucasus. In a terse statement, the Russian President's Press Service said that discussions continued the situation in the region and measures aimed at stabilizing the situation in the context of the agreements on Nagorno-Karabagh on 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021.

The 16 November border skirmishes were the third provocation, after the 12 May and 27 July violations of the implementation of the cease-fire agreement, to put into jeopardy the Russian role and aspiration for third party involvement.

The President of the European Council called both leaders to discuss the developments. The Foreign Ministry of France urged the two sides to respect the cease-fire agreement. Swedish Foreign Minister, the current chairperson in office, expressed her full support for the Minsk Group Co-chairs and referred to their statement of 15 November, as did the US Secretary of State, who said: "the recent increase in tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan

²⁷ "Armenian PM accuses Azeri forces of breaching border, sacks defence minister," *Reuters*, November 15, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/armenian-pm-accuses-azeri-troops-violating-border-sacks-defence-minister-2021-11-15/>.

underscores the need for a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of all remaining issues related to or resulting from the Nagorno Karabagh conflict²⁸”.

The European Union has released a statement calling on the two sides to resume negotiations to work towards a comprehensive settlement of outstanding issues, including border demarcation. The EU stressed that it supports the statement of the Minsk Group Co-chairs of 15 November. The statement concluded that “the EU reiterates its commitment to work with Armenia and Azerbaijan to help overcome tensions and contribute to building a South Caucasus that is secure, stable, prosperous and at peace for the benefit of all people living in this region”.

On 19 November, the EU issued a statement, saying²⁹:

“President Charles Michel of the European Council held phone calls on 19 November with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia in follow up to discussions earlier this week on the situation in the region and in the context of preparations of the Eastern Partnership Summit, to be held in Brussels on 15 December.”

“President Charles Michel proposed to host President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan for a meeting in Brussels in the margins of the EaP Summit.”

“Leaders have agreed to meet in Brussels to discuss the regional situation and ways of overcoming tensions for prosperous and stable South Caucasus, which EU supports.”

“During the phone calls, the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders have also agreed to establish a direct communication line at the level of respective Ministers of Defense, to serve as an incident prevention mechanism”.

Both sides were reported to have confirmed their participation.

Recognizing that the Minsk Group Co-chair no longer had the trust of at least one of the sides for being bi-partisan, hence was to be substituted by the EU, assuming the responsibility, Russia was not late in taking the initiative.

28 Antony J. Blinken, “Fighting Between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” *US Department of State*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/fighting-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan/>.

29 “Press release following the phone calls of President Charles Michel with leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan on 19 November 2021,” *European Council*, November 19, 2021, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/19/press-release-following-the-phone-calls-of-president-charles-michel-with-leaders-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-on-19-november-2021/>.

The announcement of the Brussels meeting was followed by a phone call between the Russian President and Pashinyan on 21 November in which the two sides discussed the situation in the context of the agreements reached on 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021. Then, on 23 November, an announcement came from the Kremlin that a trilateral meeting between Russian President, Azerbaijani President and Armenian Prime Minister would take place in Sochi on 26 November.

The statement said that it was planned to discuss the implementation of the agreements reached on 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021 as well as to outline further steps to strengthen stability and establish a peaceful life in the region, adding that the talks would be held upon the initiative of the Russian President.

The two leaders travelled to Sochi where they first held bilateral talks with the Russian President and then had a trilateral meeting which is reported to have lasted about three hours. In a trilateral statement released after their meeting on 26 November, the three leaders agreed

“to take steps to increase the level of stability and security on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and to work towards the creation of a bilateral commission on the delimitation of the state border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia with its subsequent demarcation with the consultative assistance of the Russian Federation at the request of the parties.”³⁰

The statement added;

“We have emphasized the need to launch specific projects as soon as possible in order to tap the economic potential of the region. The Russian Federation will continue to provide all necessary assistance in the interest of normalizing relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, creating an atmosphere of trust between the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples, as well as building good-neighborly relations in the region.”³¹

The three leaders also made statements to the press after the talks, all describing the meeting as positive. The Russian President said;

“We have worked very constructively today. It was a deep analysis of the of the current situation. We have reached agreements on a number

30 “Statement Issued After Russia-Hosted Armenian-Azerbaijani Talks,” *Azatutyun*, November 26, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31581773.html>.

31 “Russian Proposals On Border Demarcation ‘Acceptable’ To Yerevan,” *Azatutyun*, November 18, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31567464.html>.

of key issues. The first of them is the creation of mechanisms of the delimitation and demarcation of the border between the two states, which we have agreed to do by the end of this year. I hope it will be done as soon as possible. There are no obstacles to the creation of these mechanisms. We discussed in detail issues of developing economic ties and primarily the issue of unblocking transport corridors. It concerns both railways and road links. I think that here we should thank our vice-premiers who have been working over this issue for quite a long time now”.

He also said that “significant progress” was made on issues of humanitarian nature but did not elaborate. He informed that as part of the agreements made during the November 26 talks, deputy prime ministers of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan will gather in Moscow next week “to summarize some results and announce the decisions we have coordinated today”.³²

In his remarks, President of Azerbaijan expressed the hope that the Sochi talks would lead to results that would make the situation in the South Caucasus more secure and predictable. He said;

“Today we had a very detailed and I would say, frank conversation on issues of border delimitation and demarcation and unblocking of transport arteries. We openly discussed our plans, we openly discussed issues that cause concern with both sides. The most important thing is that the decisions that we have made in the issue of settling disputes, differences will contribute to a more secure and predictable situation in the South Caucasus. I have repeatedly said that in Azerbaijan we feel like turning over a page of many years of confrontation with Armenia to begin a stage of normal interaction. I think our meeting will lead to good results that won’t make us wait for too long.”³³

Armenian Prime Minister described the meeting as very positive, saying;

“we have in fact discussed all issues of the agenda”. He said “This wasn’t a meeting to hide problems. This was a meeting during which we openly discussed all issues. I want to point out that it is very positive that on many issues we clarified our positions and it turned out that on some issues we have no misrepresentations as it would seem before this meeting. I want to say that, indeed, we stated that in regards to the issue of opening of all transport and economic links in the region we have a common idea as to how these links will work. On the whole, I too assess

32 “Russian Proposals On Border Demarcation ‘Acceptable’ To Yerevan,” *Azatutyun*.

33 “Russian Proposals On Border Demarcation ‘Acceptable’ To Yerevan,” *Azatutyun*.

today's talks very positively. I think that we can expect concrete results if we manage to build on the dynamics of our talks. I reaffirm the readiness of Armenia and its government that has received a mandate from the people of Armenia to open a peaceful era for our country and our region. This is what we are striving for and today's meeting is beneficial for the realization of this agenda".

He also said that it is necessary to create mechanisms of ensuring security and stability along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan before starting the process of border delimitation and demarcation. He also added that humanitarian issues were also addressed during the talks.³⁴

The President of Russia appeared to be much more optimistic and upbeat, speaking about the prospects of an Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement as he addressed high level diplomats in Moscow on 18 November. He praised the role of Russian diplomacy in continuing efforts on settling disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, restoring economic ties in the South Caucasus and unblocking transport corridors.

On 18 November, two days after skirmishes along the un-demarcated border, Pashinyan made a statement saying that the proposals presented by the Russian Defense Ministry regarding "the preparatory stage for the process of delimitation and demarcation" of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border were acceptable. No details about the proposals were given³⁵. The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said during a news briefing in Moscow that the latest developments demonstrated the importance of that process, including the need for a relevant commission to work on the basis of proposals made by the Russian side.

Prime Minister Pashinyan sparked a public outcry when he called for an investigation of the circumstances in which over a dozen Armenian soldiers were taken prisoner during the 16 November border clashes. Answering a question in the Parliament, he said the following;

"I think it is time for us to investigate every case of captivity properly, because every soldier serving in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia has responsibilities. Perhaps we have been wrong in this because of emotional background, but all cases must be clearly examined³⁶".

34 "Russian Proposals On Border Demarcation 'Acceptable' To Yerevan," *Azatutyun*.

35 "Russian Proposals On Border Demarcation 'Acceptable' To Yerevan," *Azatutyun*.

36 "Pashinian Remarks On POWs Spark Controversy In Armenia," *Azatutyun*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31567906.html>.

3. Armenia's Foreign Relations

The foreign policy of Armenia during this period focused on procrastinating the full implementation of the two trilateral agreements of 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021 to gain some respite from the bitter defeat and to garner guidance and assistance from its Western supporters for a better deal while not omitting to maintain fealty and due respect to Russia. Relations with two neighbors, Iran and Georgia were intense. Projection of Christian identity was, as ever, in the foreground. Contacts with countries in political adversity with Turkey were conspicuously promoted.

China's interest in upholding its relations with Armenia continued unabated, officially based on the Memorandum on Promotion of Cooperation in Building the Silk Road Economic Belt within the Framework of the Chinese-Armenian Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation of March 2015. The President of China, in his message on 23 June to the Prime Minister Pashinyan on the occasion of his birthday, described Armenia as one of the traditionally friendly countries, praised their joint struggle against the pandemic which gave impetus to further developing bilateral relations and cooperation in various areas. He added "I attach utmost importance to developing our relations. I am ready to exert effort to raise the level of our bilateral relations for the benefit of our peoples". As Armenia is on its way to unblocking transport roads and expressing an interest in a north-south corridor, the Asian Investment Bank, within the framework of its "Transport Sector Strategy", would be the right body to help finance it.

Chinese statistics indicate that the volume of trade between the two countries totaled 994 million US dollars in 2020. 222 million dollars of export from Armenia exports to China, mostly minerals, while 772 million dollars of import from China, mostly consumer goods. As Armenia does not have much underground riches nor direct access to sea or lies in a transit itinerary, it is possible to surmise that the interest lies more in its geopolitical value and its centuries long tradition of availing its services to rising powers.

On 2 July, Ambassador of China to Armenia denied the Azerbaijani media reports according to which, Chinese Ambassador to Azerbaijan talked about the introduction of the "Zangezur Corridor" in the Belt and Road Project. The Ambassador told reporters in Yerevan that he discussed these reports with his colleague in Baku and found out no such remark had been made. He went on to say;

"China has friendly ties with both Armenia and Azerbaijan. We hope this conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan can be solved through negotiations, which is better than war. We will take all necessary actions

within our capacities for peacefully solving the issue. Thus, we will try to ensure a border security in the region.”

On the occasion of the opening ceremony of Confucius classroom at the Armenian-Russian University on 28 October, the Ambassador of China told the press that he was very much satisfied with the development pace of the Armenian-Chinese relations. Claiming that the relations between China and Armenia have a history of several thousand years, dating back to the time of the ancient Silk Road, the ambassador said that, in the modern times, the relations between the two countries are developing steadily and further added, “I can say at the moment it’s not enough to say that I am satisfied with the level of development of those relations, but I am very satisfied”.

The Secretary General of CSTO paid a visit to Armenia on 9-10 August and made observations on the border with Azerbaijan. He was criticized again at his talks with Armenian officials because of the reservations he expressed for not providing assistance to Armenia during border skirmishes the previous month.³⁷

The Foreign Minister of Uruguay paid an official visit to Armenia on 16 August and promised to open a resident Embassy in Yerevan. He was accorded a privileged welcome for Uruguay to be the first and leading country to have adopted a resolution in its parliament acknowledging the Armenian assertion of genocide.

Armenian Minister of Defense attended on 25 August Army-2021 military industrial exhibition in Moscow and signed army supply contracts with Russian companies. On this occasion, he said that Armenia would stop acquiring old types of weapons and start purchasing new, high-quality weapons. President of Azerbaijan expressed in an interview his expectation that Russia will stop arming Armenia. Responding to his remarks, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson said at a news briefing on 19 August, “It is Russia’s sovereign right and the Russian side always takes into account the need to maintain balance of military power in the region”. She added that Russia has supplied weapons not only to Armenia, its key military and political ally in the South Caucasus, but also to Azerbaijan.³⁸

Armenia’s new Foreign Minister made his first visit abroad to Russia and met with his Russian counterpart on 31 August. On this occasion he said;

37 “The CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan met in Yerevan,” *Collective Security Treaty Organization*, August 10, 2021, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/v-erevane-sostoyalas-vstrecha-generalnogo-sekretarya-odkb-stanislava-zasya-s-premer-ministrom-respub/.

38 Sargis Harutyunyan, “Russian Official Says Armenia Signs Arms Supply Contracts In Moscow,” *Azattyun*, August 25, 2021, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/31428119.html>.

“Russia is a military-political ally and the main economic partner of Armenia. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm Armenian side’s readiness to continue forging relations with Russia on the basis of the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance³⁹”.

He added that closer ties with Russia were even more important for Armenia after the six-week war with Azerbaijan.

Vice President of the European Commission, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy sent a congratulatory message to the new Foreign Minister of Armenia on his assumption of office, saying⁴⁰;

“Armenia is an important partner of the European Union. Our relations have intensified significantly since 2018 and the entry into force of our Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement on 1 March was another important, positive milestone. The implementation of this agreement is a central part of our bilateral relations and we stand ready to continue cooperating in areas of mutual interest, including strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights, jobs and business opportunities, the environment, better education and opportunities for research”

“Your appointment comes at a crucial time for Armenia. Following last year’s hostilities, I would like to reiterate the EU’s readiness to contribute, including through the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, in the shaping of a durable and comprehensive settlement, for instance, where possible through support for post conflict rehabilitation and confidence building measures. We continue to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group in this regard. In addition, we are also prepared to provide assistance related to border delimitation. Given that all our countries are still grappling with COVID-19 pandemic, let me also emphasize that the European Union continues to be committed to supporting Armenia in dealing with this public health crisis and its consequences”.

The new Armenian and Iranian foreign ministers held a phone conversation on 3 September. Armenian Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying the two ministers had a detailed discussion on productive cooperation between their states. Prospects for expanding cooperation in the economic sphere were especially emphasized. Regional security and ongoing Armenian-Azerbaijani

39 “Armenian FM Slams Azerbaijan On Moscow Trip,” *Azatutyun*, August 31, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31436929.html>.

40 “High Representative of the EU Josep Borrell sent a congratulatory message to Ararat Mirzoyan,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, August 28, 2021, https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2021/08/28/congratulatory_letter_Borrell/11044+&cd=4&hl=tr&ct=clnk&gl=tr.

border disputes were also on the agenda. According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Tehran is ready to deepen relations. It was also noted that Iran's new President pledged to strive for closer Iranian-Armenian ties when he met with Prime Minister Pashinyan in Tehran on 5 August who went there to attend the inauguration ceremonies of the new President. Pashinyan sent his Foreign Minister to Tehran on 4 October, amid mounting tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan underscored by large-scale Iranian exercises along Iran's border with Azerbaijan. The two foreign ministers who had met in New York in the margins of the UN General Assembly in less than two weeks ago sounded satisfied with their latest talks. Armenian Foreign Minister again called on his Iranian counterpart on 25 November. According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, the Minister said that "Azerbaijan's latest aggression against Armenia is a serious threat to efforts to establish security and stability in the region". He said he highly appreciated Iran's position on "the territorial integrity of Armenia and the inviolability of its borders". The two also "exchanged views on expanding ties in the areas of trade, economy, infrastructures and energy". "The importance of the implementation of work on the multilateral agreement on the creation of the Persian Gulf-Black Sea international transport corridor was also pointed out" the statement of the Armenian Foreign Ministry said. It is noteworthy that Armenia appears to have no scruples referring to "corridor" here but bemoans when it is used in transport connections with Azerbaijan and Turkey⁴¹.

Armenia took part in the Zapad-21 Russian-Belarusian military exercises. The Armenian Defense Ministry informed, in a weekend statement that its troops would take part in the exercises. The statement did not specify how many Armenian soldiers would participate. It said that they would be heading to the Mulino training ground about 360 kilometers east of Moscow.⁴²

Pashinyan paid a visit to Georgia on 8 September. The Georgian Prime Minister stressed the importance of political stability in Armenia. Pashinyan spoke of new "regional opportunities" that emerged after the Karabagh war. An Armenian government statement said that economic issues were also high on the agenda of talks, including a multilateral deal on a transport corridor that would connect Iran's Persian Gulf ports to the Black Sea via Armenia and Georgia. The Georgian Prime Minister returned the visit on 9 October. The two prime ministers discussed the agenda and prospects of Armenia-Georgia cooperation this time in Yerevan. The parties reaffirmed their readiness to further deepen friendly ties and agreed to continue the active dialogue. On his

41 "New Armenian, Iranian FMs Talk In First Phone Call," *Azatutyun*, September 3, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31442671.html>.

42 Elena Teslova, "Russia, China launch active part of Zapad/Interaction-2021 military exercises," *Anadolu Agency*, August 11, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/russia-china-launch-active-part-of-zapad-interaction-2021-military-exercises/2331358>.

return to Tbilisi, the Georgian Prime Minister tweeted that they discussed “a new peace initiative for the South Caucasus and Georgia’s readiness to pursue active mediation to create more opportunities for sustainable peace and development in the region”⁴³.

Slovakia’s Minister of Foreign and European Affairs paid a visit to Armenia on 14 September. He said that a company in Slovakia is currently in talks to participate in the modernization of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant. The Foreign Minister of Czechia paid a working visit to Armenia on 30 September. He was also received by the President and the Prime Minister.⁴⁴

Prime Minister Pashinyan travelled to Tajikistan on 15 September and took part on 16-17 September in the CSTO meeting in Dushanbe as well as the joint meeting of the CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). On 16 September, the CSTO chairmanship was passed on to Armenia. The next CSTO summit is planned to take place in Yerevan at the end of 2022 as the 30th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the CSTO will be commemorated.

Armenia applied to the International Court of Justice on 17 September and asked to hold Azerbaijan responsible for what it called anti-Armenian racial discrimination, mass killings and other grave human rights abuses committed during the Karabagh war. Although Azerbaijan reportedly had already been preparing a similar application to the same court, the fact that it officially made the application after Armenia caused news outlets to report it as Azerbaijan’s legal retaliation.

Armenian Foreign Minister went to New York to attend the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. Prime Minister addressed the Assembly with a video message.

Pashinyan paid an official visit to Lithuania on 3 October at the invitation of his counterpart to hold high level talks. He met with the Speaker of the Parliament and was also received by the President who is quoted in the presidential press release to have said⁴⁵;

43 “Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan Visits Georgia,” *Georgian Journal*, September 9, 2021, <https://georgianjournal.ge/politics/37343-armenian-pm-nikol-pashinyan-visits-georgia.html>.

44 “Foreign Minister of Slovakia to pay official visit to Armenia,” *ArmenPress*, September 13, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1062951.html>.

45 “The President to the Prime Minister of Armenia: we look forward to more active steps in the implementation of democratic reforms,” *President Of The Republic Of Lithuania*, October 4, 2021, <https://www.lrp.lt/en/the-president-to-the-prime-minister-of-armenia-we-look-forward-to-more-active-steps-in-the-implementation-of-democratic-reforms/36738>.

“The upcoming Eastern Partnership summit that will draw cooperation guidelines between the region and the EU is important to Lithuania. We are ready to share our experience and send experts to assist Armenia in making firm steps along the path of democracy”.

He also noted that, thirty years ago, Lithuania was the first country to recognize Armenia’s independence and that this year was special for Armenia and Lithuania as it marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Armenian Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II met with the Pope Francis in the Vatican on 6 October during an international conference of Christian religious leaders held in Rome. He thanked the Pope for his support to the Armenian people and Armenia during the war. Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, Sahak Mashalyan, was also in the company of the Catholicos. The delegation led by the Catholicos also met with Vatican’s Secretary of State.

President of Armenia paid a state visit to Italy, from 5 to on October, the first in the history of the Republic of Armenia. He met with the President of Italy, President of the Italian Council of Ministers, President of the Senate, and President of the Chamber of Deputies. He also met with the representatives of the Armenian community at the Levonian College in Rome. During his extended stay, he also attended the opening of the Chair of Armenology at the Sapienza University and delivered a lecture at the University of Bologna.

President of Armenia then paid a visit to the Vatican on 11 October. The Press Office of the Vatican issued the following statement⁴⁶:

“This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the President of the Republic of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Armen Sarkissian, who subsequently met with His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Prolin, accompanied by His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States. During the cordial discussions, appreciation was expressed at the development and strengthening of bilateral relations between the Holy See and Armenia, a country of ancient Christian tradition”.

On 15 October, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church announced its decision of establishing the Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, with the location of the Episcopal Chair in Yerevan. The decision to create a chair, with no precedent in Armenia, was agreed to by Catholicos Karekin II.

46 “Holy See Press Office Communiqué: Audience with the President of the Republic of Armenia, 11.10.2021,” *Holy See Press Office*, October 11, 2021, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/10/11/211011d.html>.

On 27 October, the Vatican opened a diplomatic mission in Yerevan. Foreign Minister Mirzoyan inaugurated the Apostolic Nunciature at a ceremony attended by diplomats and senior clergymen. The Catholic and Armenian churches had essentially ended their millennia-long standing theological differences with a joint statement issued in 1996. In 2001, John Paul II became the first Pope to have ever visited Armenia. Pope Francis saluted Armenia for making Christianity an essential part of its identity when he visited Armenia in June 2016. On 28 October Prime Minister Pashinyan received Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State of the Vatican whereby the two sides welcomed the opening of the Vatican Embassy, the Apostolic Nunciature. The substitute for General Affairs was also received by the President A. Sarkissian, to whom he presented, upon the instructions of the Pope, the highest order of Vatican, the Grand Collar of the Papal Order of Pius IX for his contributions to the development of the relations between the Vatican and Armenia as well as for being the first ambassador of Armenia to the Vatican. It was underlined that President A. Sarkissian is the first, both in Armenia and the region, to receive such an order.

On 29 October, Prime Minister Pashinyan received the newly elected Patriarch of Cilicia of Armenian Catholics. On this occasion Pashinyan said⁴⁷;

“We highly appreciate the activity of the Armenian Catholic Church in preserving and developing the identity of our people. The undeniable contribution made by the representatives of the Armenian Catholic Church to the Mekhitarist congregation and the Zmmar Congregation is widely recognized”.

Foreign Minister of India paid an official visit to Armenia on 12-13 October. It was the first ever visit of an Indian foreign minister to Armenia. Armenian Foreign Minister reaffirmed Armenia’s support for India in its long-running dispute with Pakistan. Both ministers who previously met in Tajikistan in September in the margins of the CSTO-SCO joint meeting, stressed the importance of establishing an Armenian-Indian transport link passing through the Chabahar port of Iran.

President A. Sarkissian of Armenia, always fond of visits and contacts abroad and striving to come to the limelight, travelled to Saudi Arabia on 26 October to attend the opening ceremony of the 5th Future Investment Initiative Forum in Riyadh. He was accorded an official treatment and given a photo opportunity with the Crown Prince. The Armenian press described this trip as a historic visit as no diplomatic relations exist between Armenia and Saudi Arabia and it

47 “PM Pashinyan meets with the newly elected leader of the Armenian Catholic Church,” *President of the Republic of Armenia*, October 29, 2021, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2021/10/29/Nikol-Pashinyan-meeting/+&cd=1&hl=tr&ct=clnk&gl=tr>

was the first visit of an Armenian head of state to Saudi Arabia. From there, he went to United Arab Emirates for a brief working visit on 27 October. It was reported that he also made a stop in Bahrain. On 2 November, he went to Scotland-UK to attend the UN Climate Change Conference and to deliver a speech at the World Leaders' Summit. On this occasion, he made use of several photo opportunities with other leaders.⁴⁸

Prime Minister Pashinyan went to Moscow to meet with the Russian President on 13 October. It was their fourth meeting this year. Armenian government statement said they discussed the ongoing developments.

Co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe visited Armenia from 3 to 5 November for the monitoring of obligations and commitments of Armenia.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia visited Armenia on 17 October. He was received by the Minister of Defense, the Prime Minister and the President. He discussed on ways to further political dialogue and sustain NATO-Armenia dialogue in various domains.⁴⁹

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the US for Southern Europe and the Caucasus visited Armenia on 3 November on the first leg of her tour of the three states, accompanied by the US Minsk group co-chair and a senior official from the US Agency for International Development. She also participated in Yerevan in an annual meeting of the US ambassadors to the three South Caucasus states. An Armenian government statement on their meeting with the Prime Minister said, Pashinyan discussed with the US officials the processes taking place in the South Caucasus, prospects for a Karabagh settlement, and the Minsk group's peace efforts.⁵⁰

Foreign Minister Mirzoyan paid a working visit to France on 10-12 November to take part in the UNESCO General Conference.⁵¹

On 18 November, Prime Minister Pashinyan hosted a meeting of the prime ministers of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan forming the Eurasian

48 "President Armen Sarkissian participates in Riyadh investment forum with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman," *ArmenPress*, October 27, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1066567.html>.

49 "New NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia pays his first visit to the South Caucasus," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, October 21, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_188208.htm.

50 "Senior U.S. Official Visits Armenia," *Azattyun*, November 3, 2021, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/31544499.html>.

51 "Armenian FM to visit Paris, France," *ArmenPress*, November 9, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1067712.html>.

Intergovernmental Council of the Eurasian Economic Union. In his opening remarks, Pashinyan stressed that cooperation within the framework of the EEU is one of the priorities of his government.⁵²

On 23 November, President of the French Senate hosted an Armenian delegation led by the Speaker of the Parliament. The sides marked that the meeting was being held one year after almost the unanimous adoption of the resolutions on the necessity of the recognition of the “Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh” by the two chambers of the French Parliament and after 20 years of the adoption of the law recognizing the “Armenian Genocide” by France. The meeting was concluded by signing an Agreement of Cooperation between the two sides.

4. Turkey-Armenia Relations

In its relations with Turkey, Armenia struggled throughout the period on how to tackle the perennial dilemma; on the one hand the necessity and trilateral agreement’s commitment to unblock communications and start cooperation with neighbors for the benefit of all, while on the other hand how to overcome embedded Turcophobia. The interests of third parties in siding with or even inciting Armenia to hold on to its unyielding position also has been a factor in hardening the stand-off. This reflected and had a bearing on Turkey’s relations with those countries as part and parcel of its relations with Armenia.

The US, a major power and also one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, for whatever the reasons may be, acted in a partisan manner on the side of Armenia and blatantly accused Turkey for its legitimate support to Azerbaijan to finally bring to an end the occupation of its internationally recognized territories which the Minsk Group Co-chairs were unable or unwilling to do. The US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs stated on 23 July at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Turkey that during last year’s hostilities in Nagorno-Karabagh, the role of third parties including Turkey exacerbated regional tension. She also informed that Washington had put pressure on Ankara not to get involved in regional conflicts threatening stability. She added that, in addition to differences over regional conflicts, particularly over Nagorno-Karabagh, the approaches of Washington and Ankara are contradictory on several other matters too.

The US based radical, militant organization, ARF-Dashnaksutyun Western US Central Committee issued a statement on 2 August that concluded to

⁵² “Nikol Pashinyan holds meeting with Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan,” *Official Website of the Prime Minister of Armenia*, November 18, 2021, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2021/11/18/Nikol-Pashinyan-Prime-Minister-of-Kyrgyzstan/+&cd=9&hl=tr&ct=clnk&gl=tr>

collectively advance national aspirations and assist in the strengthening of Armenia, “the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh/Artsakh” and their “homeland and call on all Armenians to unite in our common struggle against Azerbaijan and Turkey.”

The Armenian terrorist who assassinated the Turkish Consul General in Los Angeles in 1982 and sentenced to life was pardoned on 28 October and deported from the US. He arrived in Armenia on 29 October and was received with a hero’s welcome. The Armenian press published a message he addressed to the Armenian people, expressing his gratitude for the support and encouragement he received. It was also reported later in the papers that he started lecturing at schools of his views and convictions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey made the following announcement, condemning the pardon⁵³:

“We have learnt that the Armenian terrorist Hampig Sassounian, the murderer of Kemal Arıkan, our Consul General in Los Angeles, for whom a parole decision was previously granted, has been deported to a third country.

We consider this decision regarding the aforementioned terrorist as a grave mistake and a concession to terrorism and we once again condemn it.

It is obvious that such decisions will serve to the agenda of circles seeking to glorify terrorism as a functional tool that can be used for political purposes, not to the fight against terrorism.

On this occasion, we pay our respects to the memory of martyred diplomat Kemal Arıkan and all our martyrs who lost their lives in the attacks of Armenian terrorist organizations”.

The President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made groundbreaking statements to reporters on 25 August. He said the following⁵⁴:

“There is a need for new and constructive approaches in our region. Even if there are differences in views and expectations, it will be a

53 “QA-44, 30 October 2021, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Tanju Bilgiç in Response to a Question Regarding the Release of Terrorist Hampig Sassounian, the Murderer of Kemal Arıkan, Consul General in Los Angeles,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 30, 2021, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-44_-los-angeles-baskonsolosumuz-sehit-kemal-arikan-in-katili-terorist-hampig-sasunyan-in-serbest-birakilmasi-hk-sc.en_mfa.

54 “Turkey urges Armenia to take constructive steps in region,” *Daily Sabah*, August 29, 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-urges-armenia-to-take-constructive-steps-in-region>.

responsible move to show sincere efforts for developing good neighborly relations based on trust, including respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one another. We can work toward gradually normalizing our relations with an Armenian government that states it is ready for such progress”.

He also reiterated his call for a regional cooperation platform of six countries; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia and Turkey, which has come to be dubbed as 3+3.

The six–state regional cooperation proposal was received favorably by Russia and Iran. On October 8, the Georgian Foreign Minister, at an interview with the Public TV Channel said⁵⁵;

“Georgia should at least in some form participate in the 3+3 platform, so as not to lose its position in the region, despite the fact that it will be very difficult to cooperate with Russia. Although, of course the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country is the red line”.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry brought clarification the next day, saying the Minister’s comment was misinterpreted, that in fact, he did not say that Georgia would take part in such a format.

The Armenian Prime Minister said in an interview with Armenian Public Television on 7 November that⁵⁶;

“Armenia is interested in the 3+3 format, like in any other regional Project, if it doesn’t duplicate other existing formats. But it would be pointless to discuss in this format the agenda, which is addressed, say, within the Minsk group or the working group on unblocking communications”.

On 26 November, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister told TASS Agency that Russia hopes that the meeting of 3+3 format will take place in “not too distant future”. He said “While the issue is being elaborated, it is necessary to receive the consent of all participants. When we reach that agreement, we will announce where the meeting will take place”. He added that the chair intended for Georgia will remain vacant if Georgia does not confirm its participation. When Georgia expresses readiness, it can be a full participant.⁵⁷

55 “‘Not with Russia’ - Georgian Foreign Ministry against Turkey’s idea of creating 3+3 regional format,” *Jam News*, October 9, 2021, <https://jam-news.net/not-with-russia-georgian-foreign-ministry-against-turkeys-idea-of-%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8Bcreating-a-33-regional-format/>.

56 “Armenian PM highly assesses activities of Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh,” *TASS*, November 7, 2021, <https://tass.com/world/1358437>.

57 “Russia hopes that the meeting of “3 + 3” format is a matter of not too distant future,” *ArmenPress*, November 26, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1069258/>.

The Armenian Prime Minister was quick in acknowledging the “positive signals” from Turkey. At the start of his cabinet’s meeting on 27 August, he responded saying “There have been certain public positive signals coming from Ankara in terms of regional peace. We will evaluate those gestures and respond to positive signals with positive signals”.

These remarks and openings caused deep controversy in Armenia throughout the period. The oft repeated cliché of “Armenia wants to normalize its relations with Turkey but will not accept any preconditions set by Ankara” was in the forefront. The Chairman of the Armenian Parliament Committee on Foreign Relations said on 31 August that Yerevan continues to believe that Turkish-Armenian relations must not be linked to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict or the 1915 “Armenian Genocide” issue. He further expressed the opinion that the Turkish President’s statement contained points resembling preconditions, which do not help to launch the normalization process at all.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on 2 September that Moscow took note of a recent exchange of positive signals” between Yerevan and Ankara. In that context she also referred to Russia’s support for the 2009 protocols on normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations. She told reporters, “Now too we are ready to assist in a rapprochement between the two neighboring states based on mutual respect and consideration of each other’s interests”.⁵⁸ The Russian Foreign Minister also added his voice on 3 September by recalling some details of the signing of the Zurich Protocols of 2009, citing his personal efforts and contributions. He said the situation is completely different after the Karabagh war and the parties can resume the reconciliation process, that it would be logical if Armenia and Turkey resume efforts to normalize relations. He also stressed that Moscow is ready to assist those efforts in the most active way.

Armenia criticized Azerbaijan and Turkey on 7 September for holding joint military exercises near Armenia. The Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman said⁵⁹,

“We regard the conduct of the Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercises near the borders of Armenia, Karabagh Republic [“Artsakh”] and the Lachin corridor as an action damaging de-escalation steps and undermining efforts to establish a lasting peace, security and stability in the region”.

58 “Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, Moscow, September 2, 2021,” *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, September 2, 2021, https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4851800.

59 Marianna Mkrtchyan, “Armenian Foreign Ministry on holding Azerbaijani-Turkish military exercises in Kashatagh region,” *Arminfo*, September 7, 2021, https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=64907&lang=3.

Prime Minister Pashinyan described as encouraging the Turkish President's recent statements on normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations and speaking at a government meeting on 8 September, said the following⁶⁰:

“I must note that the President of Turkey has publicly commented on relations with Armenia. We see in those statements an opportunity to talk about normalising Armenia-Turkey relations and reopening the Turkish-Armenian railway and roads and we are prepared for such a conversation. I am happy to point out that the Russian Federation has publicly expressed readiness to actively assist in that process. The European Union, France, and the United States are also interested in that process”.

On 13 September, Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a written statement that⁶¹:

“At the moment no negotiations are being held for the purpose of normalising relations between our two countries. Contacts between Armenian and Turkish diplomats are currently limited to participation in multilateral discussions on various issues on the international agenda”.

President of Turkey Erdoğan told reporters at a press meeting on 19 September that the Prime Minister of Georgia, who was in Armenia recently, conveyed him the proposal by the Prime Minister of Armenia for a meeting. He is reported to have said that Turkey was ready for talks with Armenia but for that, Armenia must take positive steps. In this connection, he expressed hope that the difficulties in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations will be overcome by opening the Zangezur Corridor.

The response of Pashinyan was voiced on 20 September by the Prime Minister's spokesperson in the *Public Radio of Armenia* in the following manner⁶²:

“In all his international contacts, Prime Minister Pashinyan presents to his colleagues the vision of opening an era of peaceful development for Armenia and the region enshrined in the government's program and expresses the readiness of the Armenian government to make efforts in that direction. The Prime Minister spoke about his vision for the start of talks with Turkey during a recent Q&A session with the National

60 “Pashinian Encouraged By Erdogan's Statements,” *Azattyun*, September 8, 2021, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/31450016.html>.

61 Jeyhun Aliyev, “Azerbaijan warns Russia over illegal entry of foreign vehicles into its territories,” *Anadolu Agency*, September 13, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/azerbaijan-warns-russia-over-illegal-entry-of-foreign-vehicles-into-its-territories/2362966>.

62 “Erdoğan: Georgian Prime Minister told me Pashinyan asked for dialogue,” *OC Media*, September 20, 2021, <https://oc-media.org/erdogan-georgian-prime-minister-told-me-pashinyan-asked-for-dialogue/>.

Assembly, saying that he believes that high level contacts should be preceded by working discussions and shares this vision with international partners. There has been no contact between Armenian and Turkish officials so far, although the Armenian government is ready for such contacts. In case of such effective work, Armenia will be ready for high-level meetings as well”.

On 24 September, Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council said Yerevan is ready to start a Turkish-Armenian dialogue without preconditions and discuss all thorny issues during a gradual normalization process. He did not explicitly deny that Pashinyan offered to meet with the Turkish President, saying, “We believe that a dialogue at a high and the highest levels is one of the ways of normalizing those relations”.

On 26 October, the Armenian press highlighted the words of the Turkish President Erdoğan at a joint press conference with the President of Azerbaijan following the opening ceremony of the Fuzuli International Airport in Karabagh, that there would be no obstacle to the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations if Yerevan demonstrates a sincere will with Azerbaijan. He was quoted saying;

“Today, the conditions for lasting peace and normalization are more favorable than ever. For that, it is necessary to take steps in accordance with the new situation in the region. We are in favor of lasting peace in the region and comprehensive settlement of relations. However, it is necessary to clarify the state borders and their mutual recognition. The foundation of good relations must be built on it. In these issues, Armenia must show sincere will to solve the problems with Azerbaijan. If Armenia shows sincere will to normalize relations with Azerbaijan, there will be no obstacle to normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia”.

The President of Armenia A. Sarkissian, known with his anti-Turkey sentiments, made the following remarks in an interview to a Russian press agency on 28 October⁶³:

“War in the South Caucasus was not the only problem connected with Turkey. It is part of a regional and global policy. Let’s remember why Turkey entered Libya, why it is so active in Iraq, why it is present in Lebanon and Syria, why it clashes with Cyprus and Greece in the Mediterranean, why it keeps hundreds of thousands of refugees on the

63 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Artsakh War was the continuation of Turkey’s policy, Armenian President says,” *Public Radio of Armenia*, October 28, 2021, <https://en.armradio.am/2021/10/28/artsakh-was-was-the-continuation-of-turkeys-policy-armenian-president-says/>.

EU border. In some sense Europe is a hostage of Turkey because if those hundreds of thousands of refugees enter Europe, it will be hard to speak about its stability. Last year's Artsakh [Karabagh] war was the continuation of Turkey's policy, its wish to increase the influence in the region. Whether we want it or not, Turkey have become more influential in the South Caucasus. It is very influential in Georgia in the economic sense. Today, Turkey is largely present in Azerbaijan. The influence of the Turkish armed forces on Azerbaijani armed forces after the war is obvious and it has a huge influence on Azerbaijan's sovereignty, its economy and respectively, logistics, transport routes including the oil pipelines stretching from Baku to Tbilisi and Ceyhan. Turkey has become more influential politically and militarily. On the other hand, the Turkish economy is not one of the best ones in the World. As you know, many investment companies leave Turkey. The economic downturn gets compensated by high activity".

In another interview with the editor in chief of the Russian *Arguments and Facts* periodical, the President of Armenia said the following:

"It would be desirable to resolve the issues with Azerbaijan, although it is difficult. It would not be bad to have good relations with Turkey, which is more difficult. We lived for several hundred years in the Ottoman Empire and then in the Russian Empire. As a result, the Armenian Republic, which existed in the Russian Empire, is today independent Armenia. And where is Western Armenia which was in the Ottoman Empire? Where are the Armenians who lived there? There are as many Armenians in Russia today as in Armenia. And in Turkey they were more".

In an interview with French newspaper *Le Figaro* on 20 November, answering the question if Armenia is ready to normalize relations with Turkey, Foreign Minister of Armenia said⁶⁴;

"We have always stated that we are ready to normalize our relations without preconditions, despite the huge support provided by Turkey to Azerbaijan during the war against 'Artsakh', both politically and through the supply of weapons as well as deployment of thousands of foreign mercenaries. We have received positive signals from Turkey to reopen the dialogue, but it remains complicated. Ankara put forward new conditions. Among them is the 'corridor' connecting Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan. It cannot be subject of discussion at all. Countries should

64 "Turkey's condition for normalizing relations with Armenia cannot be even discussed – FM Mirzoyan," *ArmenPress*, November 20, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1068744.html>.

allow transit while maintaining their sovereignty over their territory. All communication channels in the region should be opened”.

An Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesperson made the following remarks to an international news agency on 22 November⁶⁵:

“A number of international partners, including Russia, have stated that they are ready to start the Turkish-Armenian settlement process. And we have informed Russia that we are ready to start the Armenian-Turkish settlement process without preconditions. When and if such a process starts, naturally we will provide information on that, At the same time, we want to note that there is no negotiation process with Turkey at this moment”.

The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on 25 November that Russia is ready to promote efforts to repair relations between Armenia and Turkey, confirming that Yerevan has made a request for Russia’s mediation in mending ties with Turkey. She said “I can confirm that Armenia has applied to us for supporting the relations between Yerevan and Ankara as a mediator”. When asked whether Russia has discussed with Turkey the normalization of the Armenia-Turkey relations, given that Armenia has notified Russia that it is ready for normalization without preconditions, she said;

“Russia is interested, as you know, and has made efforts for the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations. Our country is ready to further promote this process in every possible way in the future as well. We believe that the start of this process will definitely contribute to rapprochement of societies in the region and the development of an atmosphere of good-neighborliness and trust, which is especially actual now. We will definitely inform you whenever new details will emerge, but naturally only if it wouldn’t harm the negotiations process itself, given its sensitive nature”.

She also added;

“We are taking all steps to establish a peaceful life and strengthen stability in the region. Special attention, of course, is now paid to the restoration and development of trade and economic ties and transport links”.

In an online press conference on 23 November, Pashinyan reiterated Yerevan’s readiness to normalize its relations with Ankara, but warned that such a process

65 “Armenia Asks Russia To Mediate In Normalization With Turkey,” *Azatutyun*, November 22, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31573666.html>.

cannot take place if Turkey presses conditions like Azerbaijan getting an extraterritorial corridor to Nakhichevan. He said “We want to normalize our relations with Turkey. We cannot discuss any corridor issue. But we want to discuss opening of regional transport links”.

On 25 November, the Armenian press reported, under the title, “Turkish aggressor declares that Armenia needs to assess the extended hand for peace as a chance” the statement of the National Security Council of Turkey, the true form of which was quoted as “Armenia needs to assess the extended hand for peace as a chance, fully maintain the ceasefire and be loyal to cooperation”.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

To cite this article: Metin Işık, Mustafa Karaca, and Caner Çakı, “The Election Propaganda in Armenia under the Rule of the Communist Party of Armenia”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 44 (2021): 53-81.

Received: 07.11.2021

Accepted: 01.12.2021

THE ELECTION PROPAGANDA IN ARMENIA UNDER THE RULE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ARMENIA

(ERMENİSTAN KOMÜNİST PARTİSİ'NİN İKTİDARINDA ERMENİSTAN'DA SEÇİM PROPAGANDASI)

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Abstract: *In the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), the citizenship rights of the Armenian people were determined within the framework of the Soviet constitutions. The use of the right to vote by the Armenian people on the basis of the constitution in force in the Soviet Union was also realized in the shadow of the Communist Party. Elections were held in the ASSR under the leadership of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA), a branch of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and the Armenian people were encouraged to participate in the elections through propaganda posters prepared during this period. This study aimed to reveal the messages given in the election propaganda under the power of the CPA by examining the election-themed propaganda posters in the ASSR. For this purpose, within the scope of the study, the posters used in election propaganda under the power of the CPA were analyzed through the semiotic*

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concepts of the US semiotician Charles William Morris. In the findings obtained in the study, it was revealed that the Armenians, who adopted the communist ideology and voted in line with the ideas of Vladimir Lenin, were presented as idealized Armenian citizens in the election posters. On the basis of the posters, it was determined that the Armenian people participated in the elections within the framework of the limited authority given by the Soviet constitutions. On the other hand, it was concluded that the communist ideology and regime were tried to be glorified in the Armenian public opinion through the election-themed propaganda posters. As a result, it was revealed in the study that the election propaganda under the CPA government tried to legitimize the communist regime in the Armenian public opinion by ensuring that the Armenian people supported the candidates approved by the regime.

Keywords: *Armenia, Propaganda, Communist Party, Election, Communism*

Öz: *Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'nde (ESSC) Ermeni halkının vatandaşlık hakları Sovyet anayasaları çerçevesinde belirlenmiştir. Sovyetler Birliği'nde yürürlükte olan anayasa temelinde Ermeni halkının seçim hakkını kullanması da Komünist Parti'nin gölgesinde gerçekleşmiştir. ESSC'de Sovyetler Birliği Komünist Partisi'nin (SBKP) bir kolu olan Ermenistan Komünist Partisi'nin (EKP) öncülüğünde seçimlere gidilmiş ve bu dönemde hazırlanan propaganda posterleri üzerinden Ermeni halkının seçimlere katılması teşvik edilmiştir. Çalışma; ESSC'de seçim konulu propaganda posterlerini inceleyerek, EKP'nin iktidarı altında seçim propagandasında verilen mesajların ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla çalışma kapsamında EKP'nin iktidarı altında seçim propagandasında kullanılan posterler, ABD'li göstergebilimci Charles William Morris'in göstergebilim kavramları üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada elde edilen bulgulara, seçim posterlerinde Komünizm ideolojisini benimseyen ve Vladimir Lenin düşünceleri doğrultusunda oy kullanan Ermenilerin, idealize edilen Ermeni vatandaşları olarak sunulduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Posterler üzerinden Sovyet anayasasının verdiği sınırlı yetki çerçevesinde Ermeni halkının seçimlere katıldığı belirlenmiştir. Diğer yandan seçim konulu propaganda posterleri üzerinden Ermeni kamuoyunda komünist ideolojinin ve rejimin yüceltilmeye çalışıldığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Sonuç olarak çalışmada EKP iktidarındaki seçim propagandasının Ermeni halkının seçimlerde komünist rejim tarafından onaylanan adayları desteklemesi sağlanarak, Ermeni kamuoyunda rejimin meşrulaştırılmasına çalışıldığı ortaya çıkarılmıştır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermenistan, Propaganda, Komünist Parti, Seçim, Komünizm*

Introduction

The 20th century was a period when many parts of the world began to experience democratic rule. Free elections were held in democratic countries with the participation of various political parties holding different views and ideologies. Election campaigns were prepared in which different discourses and promises came to the fore, especially in the elections held in Western democracies. Many academic studies have been conducted on the election campaigns in Western democracies.

On the other hand, the election propaganda in the Soviet Union, which played a leading role in the spread of the communist ideology in the world in the 20th century and also led the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War, has been dealt to a limited extent. Perhaps the underlying reason for this is that the elections in the Soviet Union were held under the one-party rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the election process focused directly on political propaganda, apart from the concept of political advertising or political public relations.

The dominance of only one ideology in the Soviet Union eliminated the possibility of voters turning to different ideologies during the election process. This process prevented different ideologies other than Communism from being effective in the politics of the Soviet Union.

Election propaganda was also carried out in the socialist republics that formed the Soviet Union. One of the Soviet socialist republics where these campaigns realised was the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR). In particular, the communist regime carried out election-oriented propaganda activities to the Armenian people through the posters prepared during the election periods in the ASSR under the rule of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA). In this respect, the examination of the propaganda posters used for the Armenian people on the subject is important in terms of shedding light on the election propaganda of the Soviet Union through the ASSR¹.

In the literature research carried out within the scope of the study, it was revealed that there was an important gap in the field of election propaganda in the Soviet Union. At this stage, it was aimed to reveal both the election propaganda of the ASSR and the election propaganda of the Soviet Union through the ASSR by examining the posters used in the election propaganda of the ASSR. For this purpose, ASSR's election posters were examined in the

1 Tuğba Baytimur, Caner Çakı, and Ferit Arda Arıca, "The Propaganda in Armenia of The Five-Year Development Plans Implemented in The Soviet Union," *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 81-102.

propaganda dimension using the semiotics method. In the light of the findings obtained in the study, the following questions were tried to be answered:

- What messages were given to the Armenian people in the election-themed posters of the ASSR?
- How was the ideology of Communism and the communist regime presented in the election posters of the ASSR?
- For what purpose were the election posters of the ESSC used in Soviet propaganda?

The study is important in terms of giving information about the election periods of the Soviet Union through the ASSR. In this respect, it is aimed that the study will be a resource that researchers in the fields of communication, politics, and history can benefit from studying on the ASSR in specific and the Soviet Union in general.

The propaganda posters examined in the study were prepared during the period when the 1936 or 1978 constitution was in force. 1936 and 1977 constitutions eliminated indirect election of deputies². On the other hand a right not specifically granted to a citizen by law may not be presumed to be inherent in man. In this context, “right” is simply defined as lawful entitlement or entitlement under the laws in force³. In this whole process, it can be stated that the Communist Party was influential in the political scene in the Soviet Union and the concept of the Soviet Union state was prioritized.

1. Literature Review

Various academic studies regarding communist party propaganda have so far been made. The following topics have been discussed in these studies: Mickiewicz examined the modernization of party propaganda in the Soviet Union. In this study, an area of Soviet political communication activity was examined through development theory.⁴ Terrell examined propaganda organ of the Communist Party of China (CPC). This study tried to present a selective description of the first 25 years of the *Beijing Review*.⁵ Chen examined CPC

2 I.I. Kavass & G.I. Christian, “The 1977 Soviet Constitution: Historical Comparison,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 12, no. 3 (1979): 580.

3 Christopher Osakwe, “Soviet Human Rights Law under the USSR Constitution of 1977: Theories, Realities and Trends,” *Tulane Law Review* 56, no. 1 (1981-1982).

4 Ellen Mickiewicz, “The Modernization of Party Propaganda in the USSR,” *Slavic Review* 30, no. 2 (1971): 257-276.

5 Robert L. Terrell, “The First 25 Years of the Beijing Review, An Official: Propaganda Organ of the Communist Party of the People’s Republic of China,” *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)* 37, no. 3 (1986): 191-219.

and propaganda films. This study explored the shifts in the meaning of cinema that occurred under the CPC as post-1949 propaganda emphasized the novelty of film technology and its connection to socialist modernity.⁶ Pretorius et al. discussed printed propaganda of the Communist Party of South Africa during Second World War. This propaganda was examined by briefly describing the impact that the War had on the party and its propaganda production.⁷ Brady examined CPC Central Propaganda Department. This study utilised previously unexplored classified sources, particularly the journal *Neibu tongxun (Internal Report)*, to present a brief overview of the propaganda system in the 1990s and 2000s.⁸ Tsai discussed operations of the CPC's external propaganda system. In this article, the concepts, principles, and practices employed by the CPC to carry out external propaganda were examined⁹.

Various academic studies on the elections in the Soviet Union were also made apart from the studies on communist party propaganda in general. The following topics have been discussed in these studies: Swearer examined functions of Soviet local elections. This study into the role of elections in the Soviet political process subsumed several more specific questions about the nature of Soviet elections¹⁰. Hill discussed continuity and change in the Soviet Union Supreme Soviet elections. This article examined the results of the USSR Supreme Soviet elections held in June 1970. On the other hand, it presented an analysis of the patterns of drop-out and re-election among deputies to the previous Supreme Soviet, elected in June 1966¹¹. Hill also examined the CPSU in the Soviet election campaign¹². Zaslavsky and Brym discussed functions of elections in the Soviet Union. The purpose of this article was to outline Soviet elections¹³. Saratovskikh examined new features in the legislation on elections to the Soviet Union Supreme Soviet¹⁴. White discussed 1984 Soviet Union

6 Tina Mai Chen, "Propagating the Propaganda Film: The Meaning of Film in Chinese Communist Party Writings, 1949-1965," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 15, no. 2 (2003): 154-193.

7 Deirdre Pretorius, Grietjie Verhoef, and Marian Sauthoff, "The Printed Propaganda of the Communist Party of South Africa during World War II," *Image & Text: a Journal for Design* 20, no. 1 (2012): 30-48.

8 Anne-Marie Brady, "Guiding Hand: The Role of the CCP Central Propaganda Department in the Current Era," in *Critical Readings on the Communist Party of China (4 Vols. Set)*, ed. Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard (Holland: Brill, 2017), 752-772.

9 Wen-Hsuan Tsai, "Enabling China's Voice to be Heard by the World: Ideas and Operations of the Chinese Communist Party's External Propaganda System," *Problems of Post-Communism* 64, no. 3-4 (2017): 203-213.

10 Howard R. Swearer, "The Functions of Soviet Local Elections," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 2 (1961): 129-149.

11 Ronald J. Hill, "Continuity and Change in USSR Supreme Soviet Elections," *British Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1972): 47-67.

12 Ronald J. Hill, "The CPSU in a Soviet Election Campaign," *Soviet Studies* 28, no. 4 (1976): 590-598.

13 Victor Zaslavsky & Robert J. Brym, "The Functions of Elections in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* 30, no. 3 (1978): 362-371.

14 L. Saratovskikh, "New Features in Legislation on Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet," *Soviet Law and Government* 18, no. 2 (1979): 20-26.

Supreme Soviet elections. The process by which the elections took place is examined in detail, from the calling of the election on 16 December 1983, through the nomination, approval, and registration of the candidates, to the pre-election meetings with constituents and the election itself¹⁵. White and Wightman examined 1989 Soviet elections¹⁶. The article described the significant electoral changes that occurred under Mikhail Gorbachev's term, including the proper use of ballots, public support for competent candidates, and elections akin to Soviet practices. Getty examined constitution and elections in the Soviet Union in the 1930s¹⁷. Tedin discussed popular support for competitive elections in the Soviet Union. Based on a survey representative of the Moscow oblast and a survey representative of the European USSR conducted in the spring of 1990, it analyzed mass support for the institution of competitive elections¹⁸.

2. Method

The posters used in the election propaganda of the ASSR were accessed from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) library¹⁹. UCLA Library and the National Library of Armenia (NLA) established the International Digital Ephemera Project (IDEP) Armenian Ephemera Collection “to preserve, digitize, and provide online access to valuable historical materials related to Armenia”²⁰. IDEP is “an initiative to digitize, preserve and provide broad public access to print, images, multimedia, and social networking resources produced worldwide”. The website presents “collections with content from Armenia, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and South Africa, ranging from fragile early 20th century newspapers to posters, postcards, cellphone videos, and much more”. IDEP boasts that it has “developed methods to capture and preserve new forms of knowledge, records, and content”²¹.

15 Stephen White, “Non-Competitive Elections and National Politics: The USSR Supreme Soviet Elections of 1984,” *Electoral Studies* 4, no. 3 (1985): 215-229.

16 Stephen White & Gordon Wightman, “Gorbachev's Reforms: the Soviet Elections of 1989,” *Parliamentary Affairs* 42, no. 4 (1989): 560-581.

17 J. Arch Getty, “State and Society under Stalin: Constitutions and Elections in the 1930s,” *Slavic Review* 50, no. 1 (1991): 18-35.

18 Kent L. Tedin, “Popular Support for Competitive Elections in the Soviet Union,” *Comparative Political Studies* 27, no. 2 (1994): 241-271.

19 “Soviet Armenian Posters on Elections.” *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/subject=Elections&collection=Soviet+Armenian+Posters>

20 “About the National Library of Armenia.” *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 26, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/national-library-armenia>

21 “About.” *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 26, 2021. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/about>

A total of 16 propaganda posters on the subject were reached from the library, and 8 propaganda posters were determined as the sample of the study by using the purposeful sampling method among the accessed propaganda posters. While determining the sample of the study, attention was paid to the presence of both visual and written indicators in the propaganda posters.

In the study, ASSR's propaganda posters were examined using the semiotics method, which is a qualitative research method. Various studies were made to examine ideological discourses on posters used in ASSR. These studies used the concepts by Karl Bühler²² and Charles William Morris²³. In the study, the semiotic concepts (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) of the US linguist Charles William Morris were used to reveal the propaganda messages given through the propaganda posters and to explain the change in the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of the Armenian people through the propaganda messages.

Since the subject of the study is not Morris' semiotics understanding, Morris' semiotic concepts are explained only with basic information within the scope of the study. Morris stated that the symbol involves memory of the original stimulus in a non-tactual form²⁴. And he indicated it is doubtful if mind and matter are so opposed as people ordinarily believe²⁵. This explanation leads to questioning the role of the effect of the sign representing the concept in the mind of the people in the process of persuading people on a particular issue. In the study, it was aimed to reveal the representations that were desired to be formed in people's minds through signs through Morris' semiotic concepts. In this way, it was tried to reveal the desired effect on people through the perceptions that signs arouse in the mental world of the people. Thus, it was aimed to shed light on the aims desired to be achieved in the Soviet election propaganda through the indicators on the posters in the ASSR.

Morris was influenced by the linguist Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics understanding and used different concepts in semiotics apart from Peirce's semiotic concepts²⁶. The syntactic dimension describes the process by which signs are brought together to form a particular message or particular messages.

22 Baytimur et al., *The Propaganda in Armenia*, 81-102.

23 Sadık Çalışkan & Mehmet Barış Yılmaz, "Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'nde Basında Yer Alan Propaganda Posterleri Üzerinden Vladimir Lenin'in Kültür Liderlik İnşası," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 65 (2020): 75-100.

24 Charles William Morris, *Symbolism and Reality: A Study in the Nature of Mind (Vol. 15)* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1993), 14.

25 Charles William Morris, "The Nature of Mind," *Rice Institute Pamphlet-Rice University Studies* 16, no. 4 (1929): 153.

26 Osman Bozdemir, "Organ Ticaretinin Önlenmesine Yönelik Kampanyalar: ABD Ulusal İnsan Kaçakçılığı Kaynak Merkezinin Kamu Spotlarının Göstergibilimsel İncelemesi," *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6, no. 2 (2020): 376.

The semantic dimension expresses the meanings of the signs and the message or messages that are intended to be given through the signs. Finally, the pragmatic dimension explains the intended change in people's thoughts, attitudes or behaviors through the message or messages given over the signs²⁷.

In the study, the posters about the election campaigns of the ASSR were analyzed in terms of propaganda through Morris' syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions, respectively.

3. The Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) and the Election under CPA Power

When the Soviet Union was founded on December 30, 1922, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was the only political party to rule the Soviet Union. In the socialist republics of the Soviet Union, the communist parties, which were the branches of the CPSU, were in a dominant position in political terms. In the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), one of the socialist republics that formed the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) was in power by itself. The CPA was established on December 31, 1920, under the first secretary Gevorg Sargisovich Alikhanian and dissolved on September 7, 1991, shortly before the official collapse of the Soviet Union. The CPA was directly under the influence of the Soviet Union administration and played a leading role in the establishment of the communist regime in Armenia.

The Soviet Republics became a fundamental part of the USSR. The United Soviet Republics were founded in 1922 by the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federation. On January 31, 1924, the first constitution of the USSR was accepted and proclaimed. Chapter 10 of the 1924 Constitution of the USSR is devoted to the regulation of the status of the member republics. All matters included in the competence of the Union were regulated by Article 1 of the USSR Constitution. Decisions such as education, employment, land and property status, economy and budget, military, civil, law and order were under the authority of the Union. In essence, the powers of the Soviet Republics were severely limited. This was intensified during the leadership of Joseph Stalin, who led the Union in a very centralized way. Many issues were forced by Communist Party activities at the central level²⁸.

27 Çalışkan & Yılmaz, *Ermenistan*, 75-100.

28 Gülşen Paşayeva, İrada Bağirova, Kamal Makili-Aliyev ve Ferhad Mehdiyev, "SSCB'de Yarı-Özerkliğin Hukuki Durumu: Dağlık Karabağ Özerk Bölgesi Örneği," *Uluslararası Suçlar ve Tarih*, no.14 (2013): 78-79.

During the short period of independence in 1918-20, Armenia did not have a written constitution. Although Armenia was called an “allied republic” in the legal terminology of the period, like other republics during the Soviet Union, it became a country with very limited powers and rights and was dependent on the center. Besides, when communist ideology and party hegemony are mentioned, it becomes clear that the republics did not have any freedom in peripheral relations. Accordingly, like the other Soviet Republics, the constitutions of Armenia that were in force at that time were the same as those of the Russian Federation and later of the Soviet Union²⁹.

Between 1920 and 1991, when the communists were in power, Armenia was governed by a one-party system. At that time, it was not possible to talk about democracy, protection of human rights, free press and broadcasting, or political freedom in general in Armenia, which was the case in the other Soviet Republics as well. The communist regime did not tolerate opposing views and initiatives, and strenuously prevented oppositional movements. Elections for local and central organs were held in an undemocratic environment, and people who were not members of the Communist Party were not allowed to take part in the state administration mechanism. In local and parliamentary elections, in elections for the General Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, only one candidate was nominated and elected. The first opposition movements in Armenia started in the 1960s, but such activities did not appeal to a large audience, only people’s opposition to the regime came to the fore. With the serious measures taken by the central government against the opposition, certain examples of political organizations were not even recorded, and the backbone of the opposition movements as such did not form³⁰.

Even though Armenia was governed as a one-party regime under the CPA’s rule, the citizens of the Soviet Union were given the right to vote in accordance with the Constitution of the Soviet Union. At this stage, the people voted in the Supreme Soviet to determine who would represent them. The people had the right to vote for a single candidate in the elections held every four years. Candidates participating in the elections were able to become candidates as “communist” or “independent”, provided that they received the approval of the Communist Party. In the propaganda of the Soviet Union, it was emphasized that Soviet socialism was politically, economically, and culturally superior to capitalism³¹. Through the elections held, it was possible to form the

29 Ali Asker, “Ermenistan’da Anayasal Dönüşüm Süreci ve Anayasa’nın Temel Özellikleri,” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 36 (2010): 217.

30 Hatem Cabbarlı, “Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti’nin Siyasal Dönüşüm Süreci,” *Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 1 (2020): 122.

31 George H. Bolsover, “Soviet Ideology and Propaganda,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 24, no. 2 (1948): 178.

image of the propaganda of the Soviet Union that Armenia had a democratic administration. In essence, voting in the Soviet Union can be expressed as a public demonstration of party leadership and affirmation of the Soviet way of life³².

It is possible to talk about 7 constitutions in the history of the Soviet Union, which were the 1918, 1924, 1925, 1936, 1937, 1977, 1978 constitutions³³. With each amendment to the constitutions, the previous constitutions were completely repealed. According to the laws in the Soviet Union, the rules regarding elections were not the same for every administrative unit such as an autonomous republic, oblast, or socialist republic, whereas all Soviet Union citizens had the same rights. When evaluated in the context of choice, the 1936 Constitution removed the obstacles to the right to vote and recognized universal suffrage.

Vladimir Lenin, as the central figure in Soviet ideology, argued that an abstract “pure democracy” does not exist. In other words, Lenin asserted that there is no democracy in general. There are only different democracies defined by their class characteristics. According to such an understanding, there are ancient, bourgeois, socialist, and communist democracies³⁴. Whatever argument was used, in the communist democracy of the Soviet Union, it was a one-party system of government that dominated the politics of the Union.

4. Elections and Election Propaganda in One-Party Regimes

Democratic regimes were established in many parts of the world since the first half of the 20th century. On the other hand, the spread of democracy was accompanied by the spread of single-party autocracies in other parts of the world³⁵. The processes of coming to power of one-party regimes can be different from each other. In China, the Communist Party of China (CPC), led by Mao Zedong, came to power as a result of the civil war against the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) and established the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which continues its existence today. The National Fascist Party (PNF), led by Benito Mussolini, came to power in Italy with a march in 1922 and continued its rule until 1943. The National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), led by Adolf Hitler, came to power through elections and its dominance came to an end in 1945 when Germany lost the Second World War.

32 Swearer, *Soviet Local Elections*, 149.

33 “Конституции”, *Конституции СССР и РСФСР (1918-1978)*, accessed November 30, 2021, <http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/>

34 Joe Pateman, “VI Lenin on Democracy,” *International Critical Thought* 10, no. 4 (2020): 543.

35 Beatriz Magaloni & Ruth Kricheli, “Political Order and One-Party Rule,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, (2010): 124.

Elections are also held in single-party regimes and which aim to reveal the support of the people to the party in the elections. In this process, the single-party regime can effectively benefit from propaganda in the election process to make the masses adopt its own thought and ideology. Giving the message that the one-party regime is supported by the masses and thus legitimizing the regime in public also constitutes the propaganda purpose of the elections. As a matter of fact, legitimacy comes to the forefront as an important issue in the adoption and implementation of the decisions taken by the single-party regime by the people. In elections held in single-party regimes, public support can reach over 90%, and it can thus be demanded that the decisions of the party be fulfilled without questioning due to the “will of the people”. On the other hand, the party that gains legitimacy through elections can accuse any opposition that may arise against it for committing treason and impose various penalties on those who join the opposition.

In a one-party regime, leaders use various strategies to maintain their power³⁶. In this respect, elections can be considered as an important tool in increasing the influence of the party leader in the eyes of the public in one-party regimes. The party leader can be brought to the forefront in the election propaganda carried out in single-party regimes, and the leader can be given place in public opinion. In this process, various propaganda activities are carried out to show that the leader spends a significant part of his/her time to ensure the peace and welfare of his/her people, that s/he will make the right decisions for his/her people and that s/he will ensure unity and order in his/her country.

Another propaganda that can be applied during election periods in one-party regimes is the construction of “the enemy”. In this process, the single-party regime can turn to hostile discourses against a country or a nation to increase its support in the elections, and thus, it can come to the fore as a savior in the election against the constructed enemy.

Today, some countries such as the PRC, North Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam continue to be governed under the one-party regime, although one-party regimes have ended in many countries.

5. The Findings and the Analysis of Election Posters

In this part of the study, eight propaganda posters about election campaigns in ASSR were analyzed semiotically.

³⁶ Nina Hachigian, “The Internet and Power in One Party East Asian States,” *Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2002): 41.

5.1. The First Poster

The first election poster was prepared by Sedrak Tigrani Rashmadzyan and Manuk Vakhtangi Arutyunyan and was published in 1937. When analyzed syntactically, the poster features images of Soviet leaders Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin on a red flag. The poster depicts a group of people carrying red flags and walking while smiling under the red flag. In the middle of the poster, there is a picture of a group of people. In the background of the poster, there are images of structures resembling production facilities. The poster reads “We give our votes to the bright people dedicated to the cause of Lenin and Stalin (Մեր քվեն տալիս ենք Լենինի -Ստալինի գործին նվիրված սոցիալիզմի յերկրի լավագույն մարդկանց)”.



Poster 1: The First Poster³⁷

37 “Մեր քվեն տալիս ենք Լենինի -Ստալինի գործին նվիրված սոցիալիզմի յերկրի լավագույն մարդկանց”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project* accessed November 5, 2021. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:243>

When considered in terms of semantics, it is revealed that the images of Lenin and Stalin on the poster represent the administration of the Soviet Union. The red flags on the poster symbolize the communist ideology. The people walking and smiling in the poster are used as the metonymy of the Armenian people. The images similar to production facilities in the background of the poster represent the production in the Soviet Union. Based on the written indicators on the poster, it is understood that a group of people in the middle of the poster are the candidates in the election.

According to Article 135 of the 1936 Constitution; elections of deputies are general, meaning all citizens of the USSR who have reached the age of 18, regardless of race, nationality, religion, educational background, residence, social origin, property status, and past activity, have the right to participate in the election of deputies³⁸. The right to vote of the people of the Soviet Union is directly highlighted on the poster.

From a pragmatic point of view, cult of personality propaganda of both leaders is carried out through the images of Stalin and Lenin on the poster. During the Soviet Union era, Lenin was also identified with the ideology of Communism, apart from being known as the founder of the Union. In the socialist republics of the Soviet Union, Lenin's cult of personality propaganda came to the fore. Stalin's cult of personality propaganda, on the other hand, came to an end with the destalinization implemented in the period of Nikita Khrushchev, who came to the leadership of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. On the other hand, it is sought to convey the message that Armenia develops economically under the communist regime through images similar to the production facilities in the poster. It is emphasized that the Armenian people have the right to vote in the Soviet Union under the communist regime, highlighted with the images of Lenin and Stalin as well as the red flags in the poster. The poster seeks to convey that the Armenian people are satisfied with the current election order by giving the message that the people, used as metonymy of the Armenian people, smiling and carrying red flags, go to the elections. Through the written indicators on the poster, the message that the Armenian people should directly support the candidates who adopt the ideas of Lenin and Stalin is given. In this way, the people who support the candidates are presented as idealized citizens in the Armenian society and it is thus attempted to prevent the Armenian people from forming or supporting different ideas.

38 "Конституция 1936", *Статья 135*, accessed November 30, 2021, http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1936/red_1936/3958676/chapter/531f31fc05e8518095d555dedbf7915c/

5.2. The Second Poster

The second election poster was prepared by Khachatur Hovhannesi Gyulamiryan and was published in 1958. Taken in the syntactic dimension, the poster depicts a hand holding a white card. On the back of the hand on the poster, the Kremlin is depicted in red. The poster reads “Let’s vote for the communist candidates... (Չայն տանք կոմունիստների և անպարտիականների բոլոր թեկնածուների օգտին)”.



Poster 2: The Second Poster³⁹

From a semantic point of view, it is understood from the written indicator on the poster that the hand on the poster represents the elections in the Soviet Union. The Kremlin in the background of the poster is used as the metonymy of the Soviet Union administration.

³⁹ “Չայն տանք կոմունիստների և անպարտիականների բոլոր թեկնածուների օգտին”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:120>

According to Article 143 of the 1937 Constitution; elections of deputies are held directly. As in; elections for all Soviets of Working People's Deputies, from the village and City Council of Working People's Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, are held by the citizens through direct elections⁴⁰. The poster also forms a perception that the citizens of the Soviet Union determine their own administration.

When considered in the pragmatic dimension, direct guidance is given on which view the Armenian people should vote for through the written indicator on the poster. In the poster, people who adopt the communist ideology are idealized and the Armenian people are encouraged to vote for these idealized people. On the background of the poster, there is propaganda that the Armenian people have the right to vote, thanks to the Soviet Union's administration, through the image of the Kremlin. In this way, in the election propaganda, it is sought to increase the loyalty of the Armenian public to the Soviet Union administration.

5.3. The Third Poster

The third election poster was prepared by Khachatur Hovhannesi Gyulamiryan and was published in 1962. Syntactically, the poster depicts two smiling men in front of the ASSR flag. One of the men in the poster raises one hand. The poster reads “With all my heart - Election Day, March 18th (Ամբողջ սրտով - ընտրություններ օր, Մարտի 18)”.

40 “Конституция 1937”, *Статья 143*, accessed November 30, 2021, http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1937/red_1937/3959896/chapter/45c7159d1431fa030f3a50def1cdf355/



Poster 3: The Third Poster⁴¹

When considered in terms of semantics, the flag on the poster symbolizes ASSR. The two smiling men in the poster are used as the metonymy of the Armenian people.

According to Article 140 of the 1937 Constitution; the elections of deputies are equal: each citizen has one vote and all citizens participate equally in elections⁴². Equality is also emphasized in this poster as well.

When examined from a pragmatic point of view, the message that the Armenian people are satisfied with the electoral system in the Soviet Union is given through the smiles of two men used as the metonymy of the Armenian people on the poster. In this way, the electoral system of the Soviet Union in Armenia is legitimized. The message that the Armenian people are ready for the election

41 “Սարտող սրտով - ընտրություններ օր, Մարտի 18”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:242>

42 “Конституция 1937”, *Статья 140*, accessed November 30, 2021, http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1937/red_1937/3959896/chapter/39508de81c29ab8e2f1ebbd63918d25c/

is given through the written indicator on the poster and the raising of a hand by one of the men on the poster. In this way, the Armenian people are also encouraged to vote.

5.4. The Fourth Poster

The fourth election poster was prepared by Aram Boris Zakarian and was published in 1964-1965. Considered syntactically, the poster depicts a group of people in front of a factory. A man in the poster raises one hand in the air and invites people from the poster with the other hand. A figure resembling a woman wearing white scarf over her cap with a determined facial expression stands on the left corner. The poster reads “Let us all go to the voting booths (Բոլորս դեպի քվեատուփերը)”.



Poster 4: The Fourth Poster⁴³

43 “Բոլորս դեպի քվեատուփերը”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:244>

From a semantic point of view, it is understood from the visual indicators on the poster that the people on the poster represent the working class in Armenia. The factory image in the poster is used as the metonymy of the production facilities in Armenia.

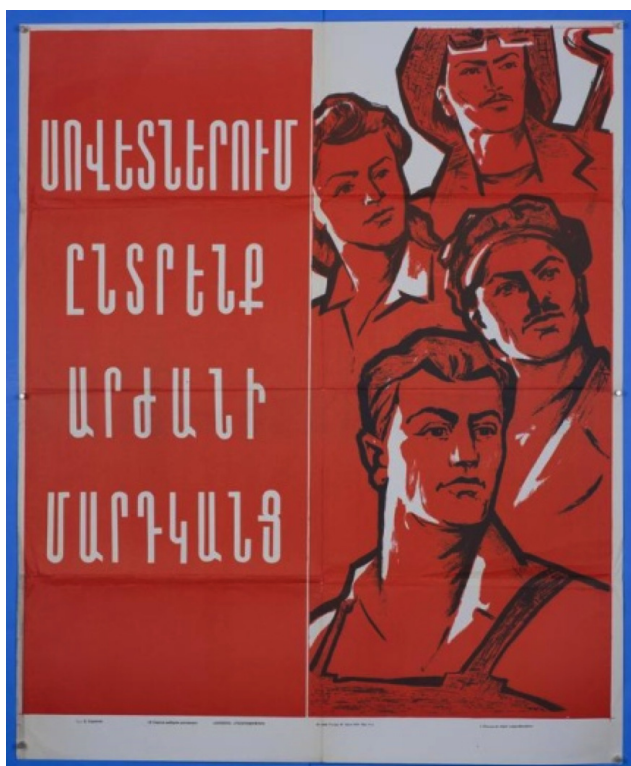
According to Article 141 of the 1937 Constitution; women have the right to vote and to be elected on equal terms with men⁴⁴. The poster also emphasizes the equality of voting between men and women.

Considering the pragmatic dimension, when the visual and written indicators on the poster are evaluated as a whole, it is revealed that the Armenian people are encouraged to participate in the elections whether they are men or women. In the poster, Armenians working in the factory are highlighted, emphasizing the working class in Armenia, and asking the working class to vote in the elections. In this way, it can be argued that the aim is to ensure as much participation as possible in the elections, and to put forward the message that the Armenian people attach importance to the elections in the Soviet Union.

5.5. The Fifth Poster

The fifth election poster was prepared by D. Sargsyan and was published between sometime between 1970 and 1980. When analyzed syntactically, it is seen that three men and a woman are depicted on a red background in the poster. There is a perception that the men in the poster wear workers' clothes. The poster reads, "In the Soviet countries, we choose worthy people (Սովետներում ընտրենք արժանի մարդկանց)".

44 "Конституция 1937", *Статья 141*, accessed November 30, 2021.
http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1937/red_1937/3959896/chapter/4409e3d130a818a2b5323978ad10f4c3/



Poster 5: The Fifth Poster⁴⁵

When considered in terms of semantics, the people in the poster are used as the metonymy of the working Armenian people. From the visual indicators on the poster, it is understood that the working class is emphasized in the poster. The red background in the poster symbolizes the communist ideology.

According to Article 97 of the 1977 Constitution; the elections of deputies are equal; each elector has one vote and all voters participate equally in the elections⁴⁶. The emphasis on equality is also prominent in the poster.

From a pragmatic point of view, the poster gives the message that the Armenian people participated in the elections in the Soviet Union, which was governed under the ideology of Communism. In this process, the poster highlights the working class in Armenia and encourages them to choose the candidates they think are the best for the administration of the Soviet Union.

45 “Սովետներում ընտրենք արժանի մարդկանց”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:229>

46 “Конституция 1977”, *Статья 97*, accessed November 30, 2021, http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1977/red_1977/5478732/

5.6. The Sixth Poster

The sixth election poster was prepared by E. Khachatryan and was published sometime between 1970 and 1980. Considered syntactically, the poster features a woman in a worker's outfit holding a card in one hand and flowers in the other. In the background of the poster, a factory, a shipyard, a construction site or a similar place is depicted. The poster reads “Towards the Elections (Դեպի ընտրությունները)”.



Poster 6: The Sixth Poster⁴⁷

When analyzed from a semantic point of view, the image of the woman on the poster is used as the metonymy of the Armenian people. The paper in one hand of the woman represents the voting of the Armenian people, and the flowers

⁴⁷ “Դեպի ընտրությունները”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:230>

in the other hand represent peace and happiness. The visual representing the factory, shipyard, construction site or similar place in the background of the poster refers to the development of Armenia.

On the poster, women's suffrage comes to the fore within the framework of the Soviet Union's constitution.

In the pragmatic dimension, it is sought to convey the message that the Armenian people happily participated in the elections in the Soviet Union through the visual indicators on the poster. In this way, the perception is formed that the elections took place voluntarily, and not by imposition on the Armenian people. On the poster, Armenians working in factories and willingly participating in the elections are presented as ideal Armenian citizens. On the other hand, women's participation in working life in Armenia is supported through the depiction of the woman in the poster. Through the poster, the message is given that women both take an active role in working life and gain the right to vote in the elections in the Soviet Union administration. Finally, the flowers in the woman's try to convey the message that Armenia is at peace under the rule of the Soviet Union.

5.7. The Seventh Poster

The seventh election poster was prepared by S.S. Mkrtchyan and M.M. Baghdasaryan and was published in 1985. When analyzed syntactically, the poster depicts a group of papers on the map of Armenia. On the poster, there is a hole on the map of Armenia and one of the papers goes inside this hole. On the right side of the poster is a wheat spike, a machine gear, a laboratory tube, and a microscope. The poster reads “24th February 1985 -We are all going to the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet and local Soviet national deputy elections (1985 թվականի փետրվարի 24-ին բոլորս դեպի Հայկական ՍՍՀ Գերագույն սովետի և ժողովրդական դեպուտատների տեղական սովետների ընտրությունները)”.



Poster 7: The Seventh Poster⁴⁸

When considered in terms of semantics, a message that the Armenian people go to the elections is given from the written and visual indicators on the poster. The spike in the poster symbolizes agricultural production in Armenia, the machine gear symbolizes industrial production in Armenia, and the laboratory tube and microscope symbolize scientific endeavors in Armenia.

The right to vote given to the citizens of the Soviet Union by the Soviet constitution comes to the fore.

From a pragmatic point of view, it is revealed that the poster encourages the Armenian people to participate in the elections. Through the visual indicators in the poster, agricultural, industrial, and scientific development is emphasized in Armenia under the communist ideology. When the indicators in the poster are evaluated as a whole, there is a perception that the development in Armenia

48 “1985 թվականի փետրվարի 24-ին բոլորս դեպի Հայկական ՍՍՀ Գերագույն սովետի և ժողովրդական ղեկուսատաների տեղական սովետների ընտրությունները”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:105>

can only be possible if the Armenian people participate in the elections and elect their administrators. At this stage, it can be argued that by forming the perception that the elections play an important role in the development in Armenia, it is sought to increase the motivation of the Armenian people to participate in the elections.

5.8. The Eighth Poster

The eighth and final election poster was prepared by Daniel Davidi Sargsyan. Information about its preparation date is not available. When considered syntactically, a woman and two men are depicted on the poster. One of the men in the poster wears a working overall with a sickle and hammer. A fighter jet taking off, or a missile or a rocket being launched is depicted in the background of the poster. The poster reads “June 19 is the day of local council elections (Հունիսի 19 տեղական սովետների ընտրությունների օրն է)” and “The government - that is us! (Պետությունը այդ մենք ենք)”.



Poster 8: The Eighth Poster⁴⁹

From a semantic point of view, the people in the poster are used as the metonymy of the Armenian people. The sickle and hammer on one of the men in the poster symbolizes the ideology of Communism. The fighter

⁴⁹ “Պետությունը այդ մենք ենք”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:385>

jet/missile/rocket in the background of the poster refers to the technological development in the Soviet Union.

In the poster, the equality of the people of the Soviet Union regarding elections within the framework of the Soviet Union's constitution comes to the fore.

When considered pragmatically, it is revealed that the poster encourages the Armenian people to participate in the elections. At this stage, the Armenian citizen, who has adopted the communist ideology, is presented as an idealized citizen in the Soviet Union through the image of the sickle and hammer on the overalls of the person on the poster. When evaluated in general, the message is sought to be given that the Armenian people live in a democratic and technologically developed country under the ideology of Communism.

Conclusion

When the propaganda posters used in the study were evaluated in general, it was revealed that the propaganda of the Soviet Union benefited from the band wagoning effect of the propaganda in the election posters. In this way, it was sought to convey the message that the people of the Soviet Union were satisfied with the elections and participated in the elections voluntarily. The visual and written indications on the propaganda posters were shaped within the framework of the electoral rights granted to the people of the Soviet Union by the Soviet Union's constitutions. At the same time, the messages on the poster also emphasized the electoral rights themselves.

Despite the one-party rule in the ASSR, holding elections was important in terms of legitimizing the communist regime in domestic and foreign public opinion. It can be stated that high participation in the elections was aimed by encouraging the Armenian people to participate as much as possible through the propaganda posters. In this way, it can be argued that the aim was to prevent the rise of questions over the legitimacy of the communist regime in the foreign public opinion. In propaganda posters, Armenians who adopted the communist ideology and voted in the elections were presented as idealized citizens by the regime. In this respect, it can be stated that the election-themed propaganda posters of the ASSR tried to form a direct guiding effect on the thoughts and behaviors of Armenians in line with the aims of the communist regime.

The posters contained propaganda about how the Armenian people would use the right to vote granted to the Armenian people by the Constitution of the Soviet Union. In this respect, the posters are important in that they reflect the Communist regime's domination of the Armenian people in the electoral process. The findings obtained in the study revealed that the posters in the

election propaganda were used to glorify Communism and the communist regime, something that was revealed as well in Çalışkan and Yılmaz's study on Lenin's cult of leadership propaganda⁵⁰ and Baytimur et al.'s study on the propaganda of the five-year plans of the Soviet Union⁵¹.

When evaluated in general, it was concluded that the election propaganda in the ASSR was used as a tool for the Armenian people to adopt the ideology of Communism and to support the communist regime. In the study, it was revealed that unlike the election campaigns in the democratic regimes of countries in the Western Bloc in which political parties with different views and ideologies struggled to come to power, the election propaganda in the ASSR directly aimed to increase the loyalty of the Armenian people to the administration and to ensure that the current regime received public support. As a result, it can be argued that the election propaganda of the ASSR, especially during the Cold War period, served to form a democratic government image in the competition of the Soviet Union against Western democratic countries. In future studies, it is thought that it will be possible to reveal the election propaganda of the Soviet Union more comprehensively by examining the election propaganda methods utilized in different Soviet socialist republics.

50 Çalışkan & Yılmaz, *Ermenistan*, 75-100.

51 Baytimur et al., *The Propaganda in Armenia*, 81-102.

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TRANSLATION / ÇEVİRİ

To cite this article: Salih Tunç, “Armenians in the 1908 Trabzon Elections”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 44 (2021): 83-106.

Received: 29.11.2021

Accepted: 02.12.2021

ARMENIANS IN THE 1908 TRABZON ELECTIONS*

(1908 TRABZON SEÇİMLERİNDE ERMENİLER)

Salih TUNÇ**

Abstract: *The 1908 elections, which constituted the first parliament of the Second Constitutional Era, was one of the most important phases of Turkish political life and was one of the most debated developments in recent Turkish history. Various disputes have been experienced over the elections that have been held throughout Turkish political life. However, what made the 1908 elections more specific and meaningful than the others were the high expectations of the millets (nations) forming the Empire from the Constitution and the Committee of Union and Progress. The Second Constitutional Era, which was re-declared after a protracted struggle, had led the Muslims as well as the non-Muslim millets to have great hopes and expectations that all the problems in the Empire would come to an end.*

The 1908 elections elicited much public interest in the multi-national, religious, and cultural places of the Empire that also possessed strong social organizations. In this respect, disputes over the application of the elections and allegations of election fraud occurred especially in the cosmopolitan cities of the Empire. Cities that reflected bourgeois cosmopolitanism, especially important cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Trabzon, were the main places where discussions about the elections took

* This is the English translation of the Turkish language article titled “1908 Trabzon Seçimlerinde Ermeniler” that was originally published in the 63rd Issue of the journal *Ermeni Araştırmaları*. See: Salih Tunç, “1908 Trabzon Seçimlerinde Ermeniler”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 63 (2019): 59-82.

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place. The province of Trabzon was an important Turkish city that had to be taken into consideration especially by foreign diplomats due to the fact that, along with its non-Muslim population such as the Armenians and Greeks, etc., it also was accepted as a port of origin for trade. Thus, the Armenian issue, which was one of the leading problems that was attempted to be created in the critical cities of the Empire for quite a while, was attempted to be made into a problem in Trabzon as well under the pretext of the elections. For this reason, the French Consulate in Trabzon showed a special interest in the disputes related to this election and recorded the developments in its reports.

Keywords: *Second Constitutional Era, Black Sea, 1908 Elections, Trabzon, Armenians*

Öz: *II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi'nin ilk parlamentosunu oluşturan 1908 seçimleri, Türk siyasal hayatının en önemli evrelerinden ve yakın dönem tarihinin çok tartışılan gelişmelerinden birisi olmuştur. Türk siyasal hayatında gerçekleştirilen seçimler üzerinden çeşitli münakaşalar ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak 1908 seçimlerini diğerlerinden daha özel ve anlamlı kılan durum, İmparatorluğu oluşturan milletlerin Meşrutiyet ile İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nden beklentilerinin bir hayli yüksek olmasından ileri gelmiştir. Zira uzun erimli bir mücadeleden sonra yeniden ilân edilmiş bulunan II. Meşrutiyet, Müslümanların yanı sıra gayrimüslim milletleri de İmparatorlukta bütün sorunların sona ereceğine dair çok büyük umut ve beklentilere sevk etmişti.*

İmparatorluğun cemaat örgütlenmesinin güçlü olduğu ve çok etnili, mezhepli ve kültürlü yerlerinde 1908 seçimleri oldukça ilgi çekici bulunmuştur. Bu bağlamda, seçimlerin uygulanması ve seçimlerle ilgili iddia edilen bazı usulsüzlükler hakkındaki tartışmalar daha ziyade İmparatorluğun kozmopolit şehirlerinde cereyan etmiştir. İstanbul, İzmir ve Trabzon gibi önemli şehirler başta olmak üzere burjuva kozmopolitizmini yansıtan şehirler, seçimlere ilişkin tartışmaların yapıldığı başlıca yerler olmuştur. Trabzon vilâyeti, barındırdığı Rum, Ermeni vb. gayrimüslim nüfusunun yanı sıra, aynı zamanda bir mahreç kapısı olarak da kabul edilmesi, özellikle yabancı diplomatlar için göz önünde bulundurulmasını gerektirecek derecede önem taşıyan bir Türk beldesiydi. Dolayısıyla bir süreden beri imparatorluğun kritik beldelerinde yaratılmaya çalışılan sorunların başını çeken Ermeni konusu, bu sefer de seçimler bahanesi ile Trabzon'da soruna dönüştürülmek istenmiştir. O nedenle Fransa'nın Trabzon Konsolosluğu vilayette yapılan seçimlere ilişkin tartışmalara özel ilgi göstermiş ve gelişmeleri raporlarına yansıtmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *II. Meşrutiyet, Karadeniz, 1908 Seçimleri, Trabzon, Ermeniler*

The 1908 elections, which constituted the first parliament of the Second Constitutional Period (one of the most important phases of Turkish political life), has been one of the most discussed developments in the recent history owing to the idiosyncrasy of the social structure of the Ottoman Empire. Although it is possible to come across debates and arguments in Turkish election history just like in its political life, the debates regarding the 1908 elections have a special importance compared to the 1912 elections, which brought about much more vigorous and bitter disputes. Such a situation, which makes the 1908 elections more meaningful than the others, is associated with the lofty expectations of the *millets* (nations) forming the Empire from the Constitutional Monarchy and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). This is because the Constitutional Monarchy (or the “10 July Revolution” according to the prevailing jargon of that time) was declared again after a long struggle, which led non-Muslim nations as well as Muslims to foster great hopes and expectations that the main problems in the Empire would be overcome.

The Ottoman Empire entered the election process once again after the 93 Constitutional Monarchy with the Sultan Abdülhamit II’s call to a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies with the imperial decree dated 23 July 1908 and the resumption of the Constitutional period. For the execution of the Chamber of Deputies election, which had not been held since 1877, the election law called as “*İntihâb-ı Mebusan Kanun-ı Muvakkati*” was published with the Sultan’s decree of 2 August, and also the general public and the authorities were informed about how the elections would be conducted.¹

The process of the first elections of the Second Constitutional Era, which started with the distribution of the election law to the sanjaks (districts) across the Empire, lasted about four and a half months until the opening of the Chamber of Deputies on 17 December 1908. During this period, the preparation of the lists was dealt with in August, and the elections to determine the second voters were started by mid-September. These elections were held in October, and parliamentary elections were held from the end of the month until the middle of November and December. In this respect, the period when the election activities intensified was November and December.² This period was a phase when the Ottoman Empire was faced with complex domestic and foreign political developments, and this situation demonstrated its effects in various dimensions in the election process. Although there was no physical war in this period, a state of diplomatic warfare in the context of external developments, and the efforts to increase the nations’ representation power in

1 Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi*, çev. Ayda Erbal (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), 273-274.

2 Fevzi Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti’nde II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-i Mebusan Seçimleri 1908-1914* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2007), 61.

the Chamber of Deputies in parallel with the problems created by this situation prepared an environment in which the election process was conducted in a relatively problematic and controversial manner. The most important complaints that came to the agenda during the election process were electoral abuses by non-Muslims to gain more representation power in some places, pressure and threats made during the elections, violations in some places of the agreements between the CUP and the nations, and desires to send some people who were alleged to be of questionable pasts as deputies to the parliament.

In fact, complaints from the Empire's Armenian subjects continued uninterrupted during the election process. The prominent Armenian delegates or ordinary Armenian citizens sent their complaints about their regions either to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul or to the Armenian newspapers. The essence of these complaints was the dissatisfaction of the people with the current situation, the pressure of the local administrators, and the allegations that they would be subjected to atrocities. However, as the results of the investigations conducted showed that none of the complaints brought up in this process went beyond allegations, the Government took a decision to not to send these correspondences directly to the Patriarchate for a while, and instead instructed the transference of the allegations from the villages to the sub-district directorates, and from there to the districts, thus to follow the sequence of administration from the lower units to the higher ones.³

Disputes about the course of the elections and the alleged irregularities emerged mostly in the cosmopolitan cities of the Empire. In this context, cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Thessaloniki, which reflected bourgeois cosmopolitanism, as well as cosmopolitan Anatolian cities such as Trabzon, were among the electoral constituencies where disputes and conspiracies emerged. Thus, the elections aroused interest in places where the Empire's multi-ethnic, multi-denominational, and multi-cultural organization as well as the community structure was strong. In addition, the elections in the cities that clearly reflected all these features had a special place in the discussions.

Trabzon province, in addition to having a considerable non-Muslim population, was also accepted as a gateway and, owing to this feature, was considered as an important Turkish region by the foreign diplomats. In fact, the Consulate of France in Trabzon paid special attention to the disputes regarding the elections held in the province. The reports prepared at the French Consulate show that serious disputes were on the agenda regarding the elections and election results in the province. The fact that the Armenians residing in the

3 Recep Karacakaya, *Türk Kamuoyu ve Ermeni Meselesi 1908-1923* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 2005), 82-83.

province of Trabzon could not get any deputy elected despite all their efforts, the activities aimed at provoking the Armenians in the province, and the accusations that some persons who allegedly played a role in the events of 1895 were elected to the parliament should be evaluated as the apparent reasons for the disputes that took place in Trabzon regarding the elections.

1. Observations of the French Consul on the Trabzon Elections and the Elected Deputies

As one of the most important trade centers of the Black Sea, Trabzon was one of the provinces that had a great importance in the elections due to its population. As a province that attracted attention with its three important sanjak centers in the 1908 elections, the elections in the central sanjak of Trabzon ended on 15 November. Although large-scale events against the old regime took place in Trabzon before 10 July, it is stated that none of the deputies in the central sanjak were CUP members (*İttihatçı*).⁴

As we mentioned before, the elections and the debates on the elections, due to the importance of the Trabzon province, were closely followed by the French Consulate and diligently reported. In fact, a detailed report written by the French Consulate sent to the Istanbul Embassy contains valuable information, from the personality traits to the political tendencies of the deputies who were elected to the Chamber of Deputies. When the aforementioned report is evaluated, it is seen that the deputies elected to represent Trabzon province had different political tendencies, including professing CUP ideology (*İttihatçılık*).⁵ Although the Trabzon province was far from the center, the results of the election are of significant importance in terms of reflecting the political atmosphere in the countryside of the Empire, since Trabzon had a characteristic that reflected all the features of the region.

The ethnic and religious social fabric of Trabzon requires that all developments in the city be evaluated with great care. In this respect, according to the French Consul, although there were certain complaints about some of the elected deputies, the resulting discontent originated from the fact that the elected ones seemed to be supporters of the new regime. As a result, 8 of the 15 deputies elected in all the sanjaks of the province were of liberal ideology.⁶

4 Kansu, *1908 Devrimi*, 313.

5 Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (AMAE) / Centredes Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN) *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /1.

6 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /2.

Although Christians in Trabzon province had some objections or complaints regarding the voting procedure of Muslims, there was a calmness for a while as of 26 November. However, the fact that the evaluations about the elected people caused such controversy following the results were finalized mainly originated from the lack of agreement among non-Muslim nations in the province, because non-Muslim nations or communities could not come to an agreement in accordance with their objectives in the elections. The fact that the Greek and the Armenian nations participated in the elections with separate slates caused the votes to be split, preventing the attainment of the desired results. The resulting situation was to the advantage of the Muslims, leading to the Turk and Muslim people attaining a considerable advantage in the elections.⁷ It is clear that the problem of reaching an agreement among non-Muslim communities in Trabzon had a significant impact on their inability to achieve significant electoral success. It can be also said in this context that this situation revealed an important problem regarding the power and influence of the sections represented by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul in the Ottoman provinces.

2. Observations and Evaluations of the French Consul on the Elected Deputies in Trabzon Province

2.1. Sanjak of Trabzon

In the 1908 elections, a total of seven deputies were elected from the central sanjak of the Trabzon province. There is a great deal of information in the literature regarding the votes gathered by the elected deputies.⁸ These deputies were the Mufti of Trabzon Mehmet Emin Efendi, (Saraçzade) Ali Efendi, Attorney (*Dava Vekili*) Eyüpzade İzzet Bey, Treasurer (*Hazinedarzade*) Mahmut Mazhar Bey, former Mufti Mahmut İmameddin Efendi, (Nemlizade) Hacı Osman Efendi and Matheos Cofidis from the Greek community. Apart from the central sanjak of Trabzon province, the other three sanjaks consisting of Samsun, Gümüşhane and Lazistan sanjaks had a total of eight deputies. The French Consulate in Trabzon made some evaluations about the fifteen elected deputies in this province. It is possible to note the views and evaluations of the Trabzon Consul regarding the elected deputies as follows:

Mehmet Emin Efendi is a former trade official and was appointed as a mufti following the re-proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy. He

7 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /2.

8 Feroz Ahmad ve Dankward A. Rustow, "İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Meclisler: 1908-1918," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4-5, (1976): 277 ; Kansu, *1908 Devrimi*, 313 ; Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Seçimleri*, 375-376.

is a member of the Young Turk Party and is a popular person equally known for his fanatical characteristics.

Ali Nâki Efendi was a school administrator in Trabzon for thirty years. He was later appointed as the Head of the Ministry of Education Commission. He worked as a teacher in the Khedivate of Egypt for a long time. He is considered a truly knowledgeable and liberal-minded person.⁹

Eyübzade İzzet Bey is a very influential person in Trabzon, his father had served in the Chamber of Deputies in the previous term, and he himself is a person who has held various positions in Trabzon. Following his duties in Trabzon, he was assigned to Giresun - Tirebolu. He continued his duty as the district governor until he was dismissed by the Trabzon Governor last October. He is considered to have extremely conservative views and thoughts.

Hazinedarzade Mahmut Bey is known as a merchant and property-rich personality in Trabzon. He is knowledgeable, upright, and has a straightforward character. He is known as an exceptionally talented person who did not hide his liberal, developmental, and progressive thoughts even before the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy.

Former Mufti *Mahmut Imameddin Efendi* served as a mufti for twenty years and was dismissed from his duty due to intense appeals as soon as the Ottoman Basic Law (*Kanun-i Esasi*) was proclaimed. He is quite intelligent and is one of the personalities who know Ottoman laws the best. Mahmut Imameddin Efendi, who was an ardent supporter of the old regime, also has an effective influence in the Provincial Administrative Council. In this respect, it does not seem likely to dissuade him from his principles and to compel him in the desired direction.

Matheos Cofidis Efendi is a Greek from Trabzon and also an Ottoman who is a literate and proficient in Turkish. He works as an inspector and expert in the Trabzon Branch of the Ottoman Tobacco Regime Administration. Although he is not an exceptionally talented politician, he is known for his liberal views.¹⁰

9 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /3.

10 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /4.

Nemlizade Osman Efendi belongs to the richest and most influential Muslim family in Trabzon. Apart from periodically performing honorary duties such as a judge of the court of appeal and a member of the provincial administrative council, he is a person engaged in trade, and is known for his extreme conservative tendencies rather than having a great wisdom.¹¹

2.2. Sanjak of Samsun

Although *Mustafa Nail Bey* is an exceptionally talented person who serves as the Head of the Education Council in the Ministry of Education, he is a staunch member of the old regime.

Abdullah Bey is the ex-president of the Kosovo Court of Appeal, is known as a very capable and intelligent personality and is a member of the Young Turk Party.

Hacı Ahmet Efendi is a professor (*mudarris*) of Islamic Sciences and is a person with extremely conservative views and thoughts.

Mehmet Ali Bey, the President of the Canik High Criminal Court, is a truly knowledgeable person who is also a member of the Young Turk Party and has very liberal views and thoughts.¹²

2.3. Sanjak of Gümüşhane

Mısırlızade Hayri Efendi is a member of the Bayburt 1st Civil Court of First Instance. Although he has a brave and bold personality, it cannot be said that he is exceptionally talented. It is known that he was a supporter of the Abdülhamit regime.

Kadribeyzade Hafız İbrahim Pasha is the former governor of Ergani and is known for his strong conservatism.¹³

11 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /4-5.

12 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /5.

13 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections," Nr.33 /5.

2.4. Sanjak of Lazistan

Miralay (colonel) *Ahmet Rıza Bey* is a former military attaché in Belgrade. He is a staunch Young Turk and is in favor of the new regime. French is among the foreign languages that he knows and speaks.

İbrahim Ferit Efendi is currently serving as regent in Hudeyda (Yemen) and is a militant member of the Young Turk Party.¹⁴

3. Allegations and Objections against the Elections in Trabzon

Because the 1908 elections were the first parliamentary elections in more than 30 years, certain disputes arose in some places due to the inadequacy of the election legislation, the ignorance of the officials conducting the proceedings, or the possible abuses in several places. It is known that especially the Armenian and Greek sections complained about the general course of the 1908 elections.

It is also known that while the preparations for the elections were made after the re-declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, the Armenian and Greek elements prepared and tried to enter the elections in alliance in some places and started to negotiate to determine the policy they would follow and to act together. A delegation appointed by the Armenian Patriarchate went to the Greek Patriarchate and negotiated about the election of the deputies and to nominate the candidates in unity. It is understood that although the Greek Patriarchate Community Association gathered in an extraordinary session to discuss the proposals made by the Armenian community and took initiatives before the Grand Viziership (*Sedaret*), these attempts did not yield positive results.¹⁵ The fact that both the CUP and each of the basic elements of the society had high expectations from these elections, and the disappointment of those who could not find their hopes in the elections caused objections and became the subject of dispute. In this respect, complaints about fraud, corruption, and abuse in the elections or about the election law and election procedure created tensions not only in Istanbul, but also in Trabzon, which was a critical city of the Black Sea where there were tensions even before the constitutional monarchy.

Although the elections were completed in Trabzon, as in other cities, and the Chamber of Deputies was opened on 17 December with a grand ceremony

14 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 27 November 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections" Nr.33 /5.

15 Karacakaya, *Türk Kamuoyu ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 75.

attended also by Sultan Abdülhamit II, the election disputes in Trabzon did not subside. The Armenian Archbishopric in Trabzon on the one hand, and the Istanbul Patriarchate on the other, tried to keep this issue on the agenda for some time.

The report dated 30 December 1908 that was sent by the French Consul in Trabzon to Ambassador M. Constans in Istanbul explains that the Armenian Archbishopric of Trabzon was quite dissenting about the elections in the province. The Armenian Archbishop of Trabzon brought to the agenda the complaints spread throughout the election process that there were irregularities in the Trabzon elections, that some people who had allegedly played a role in the 1895 Trabzon events were elected as deputies, that Armenians were intimidated and threatened, and through these allegations, endeavored to gain ground.

According to the French Consulate in Trabzon, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, upon intense complaints about the elections, sent an instruction to all the religious chiefs present in all cities on 5 December, and stated that it was necessary to act according to this instruction and to respect the call made by the Patriarchate.¹⁶ It is understood that the intense complaints from Trabzon were effective in the Armenian Patriarchate's decision to take action in this direction. In fact, the Consular report included some objections and concerns of the Armenian Archbishopric of Trabzon regarding the elections that took place in Trabzon and the elected deputies. In addition, the Armenian Archbishop of Trabzon informed his entire congregation about the content of the letter in which he informed the Patriarchate about what was going on in Trabzon. The main complaint of the Archbishopric of Trabzon regarding the developments was about the election of Nemlizade Osman Efendi, a member of one of the richest and most influential Muslim families in the city, as deputy.¹⁷

The Trabzon Consul in his reports on the subject transmits the following information: "I learned that an investigation was carried out targeting Nemlizade Osman Efendi, who was recently elected deputy in this city. Osman Efendi is known among Armenians as one of the main instigators of the events in Trabzon on October 8, 1895." The French Consul indicates that, apart from the information that was relayed to him concerning the developments in Trabzon, he has in command of the topic in the framework of the reports that

16 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections" Nr. 39 /1.

17 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, "The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France's Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections" Nr. 39 /2.

were prepared during the time when the controversial events in Trabzon took place. In fact, M. Cilliére, who was serving as the Consul in Trabzon during the 1895 events, had prepared a report on the incidents involving the Armenians and had frequently mentioned the name of Nemlizade Osman Efendi in this report. The Consul states that there was a large amount of varying information regarding the role of Nemlizade Osman Efendi in these events. The Consul also notes that Osman Efendi, who had a considerable and respected place in Trabzon, showed a calming attitude during the events according to some, and was considered as the main culprit for the events according to others. According to the impressions of the Consul, Nemlizade Osman Efendi disappeared for a while to prevent the events from escalating and to calm down those who could not restrain their excitement. The Consul also claims that his presence and his appearance further provoked his coreligionists and caused the formation of a joint criminal group.¹⁸

Concerning the 1895 events, the French Consul in Trabzon, although he had an opinion on the subject, preferred to give information about the investigations conducted in relation to these events rather than revealing his thoughts on Nemlizade Osman Efendi's involvement in the events. In fact, as a result of the investigation carried out regarding the events that took place 13 years ago, Fuat Bey, one of the Muslim officers who took part in the investigation, was elected to the Presidency of the Heavy Penal Court. Fuat Bey was known as a respected name among Armenians with his courageous stance and calming demeanor in the events of 8 October.¹⁹

M. Cilliére, when completing his duty on 11 November 1895 and paying a farewell visit to the Ambassador in Istanbul, presented a joint evaluation report on not only the 1895 Events, but also the 1889 Events. After the evaluation of these reports, it was decided that the heaviest responsibility in these events was focused on Nemlizade Osman Efendi, and the report concluded with this assessment. However, it is clear that the Armenians had certain prejudices. At the end of his report, the Trabzon Consul, before passing on the declaration of the Armenian Archbishopric, submitted the following opinion to the Ambassador and considered it necessary to issue a warning:

“In fact, all their stories and narratives, whether in their clubs [of the Armenians] or in other places, focus now on the themes related to the developments that will take place in the Chamber of Deputies. It is

18 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /2.

19 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the Istanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /2.

necessary to consider and think of their narratives, their approaches to events, their perspectives and all their evaluations as warnings and disclosures that constitute the reasons for the disputes and problems of acceptance among the deputies which will take place in the Chamber of Deputies from now on. Your Excellency, I believe that you will focus your attention on this report and deal effectively with the matter.”²⁰

4. The Instruction Sent by the Armenian Patriarchate to the Armenian Churches

In his report sent to the Embassy in Istanbul, the Consul of France in Trabzon stated that the instruction sent by the Patriarchate was valid for all Armenian churches and people. For this reason, it was requested that necessary actions be taken in accordance with the issues specified in the instruction, and it was stipulated that churches or archbishoprics in the cities would make the necessary effort to fulfill the instructions. It was stated in the instruction of the Armenian Patriarchate that “If there was corruption or fraud in the election of the deputies, if they treated the people in a way that upset and harmed them, if the elected deputies were involved in atrocities and hence are under the suspicion of being guilty, if they are convicted in this regard, and they continue to threaten Armenians during the elections, they should be protested immediately without losing any time”. To ensure the manifestation of the held elections in accordance with the interests of the state and the people, also in line with the law of the administration and of course with the provisions of the Basic Law, it was suggested that the remonstrations be conveyed to the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies. In this context, it was also recommended that the petition of objection, which would include the signatures to be taken from first and second degree voters regardless of religion and nationality, be submitted to the high court. To conclude, it is stated that this attempt should be made without delay and the Patriarchate should be informed about the actions taken.²¹

The Armenian Archbishop of Trabzon also demanded the fulfillment of the issues in Trabzon specified by the Patriarchate from his congregation and highlighted the view that the fulfillment of these issues was the responsibility of the subjects and the community. According to the French version of the text included in the report of the French Consul, it is suggested that “For protests to be made about the person in question or for some considerations about the

20 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /3-4.

21 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “Attachment To The Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /1-2.

way one of the deputies was elected in Trabzon, there is a need for everyone to hastily come to the Archbishopric within 3 days without losing any time, to explain the facts in a way befitting a free citizen and to tell what s/he knows about the subject without fear.”²²

It would be appropriate to evaluate the following statement made by the Archbishop of Trabzon as an example of bringing the results of the election into question and to undermine the efforts of the CUP to rebuild the unity of the country:

“In an environment where it is expected to act in accordance with the general interests of the country, allowing those who set traps for the freedom of the people to enter the Chamber of Deputies by way of either hiding the truths or refraining from taking responsibility will be the cause for allowing public enmity and jeopardizing freedom of people.”²³

5. The Provocation Efforts of the Dashnaks Concerning the Trabzon Elections and the Reactions to These Efforts

The Committee of Union and Progress has been in close relations with the Dashnak elements of the Armenian community for a long time. It is known that this closeness and these relations were conducted in a manner that can be considered very warm even after the Constitutional Monarchy, lasting until the election process. In fact, it is claimed that this rapprochement originated from the policy of the CUP to keep the supporters of Dashnaktsutyun on their side, and the policy of the Dashnaks to benefit from the political and administrative power of the CUP.²⁴ As it is known, it is accepted that many Dashnak administrators who returned to Istanbul after the re-proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy were originally from Russia and did not know the Young Turks well enough, and they did not even know enough about the conditions in the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, although the Dashnak militants, who could not fully comprehend the distribution and balance of political power in the Ottoman Empire, were convinced that the struggle was over with the re-declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy and that it was necessary to work in line with the interests of the people, the representatives

22 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “Attachment to the Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /2.

23 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “Attachment to the Report Dated 30 December 1908 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.39 /2. Please see Appendix 1 for the Armenian version and Turkish translation of the text.

24 Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, çev. Fatmagül Berktaş (Baltalı) (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1999), 118.

of the Ottoman branches of the party, who had passed through the ranks of the *fedais* (those who were willing to endure dangers and sacrifice themselves for their cause), were not sure that the constitutional order would be long-lasting and thus did not place their hopes in it. They thus thought that it was necessary to maintain a distance in relations with the CUP. The emergence of two different currents within Dashnaktsutyun was as follows: the “central” movement, which advocated full solidarity with the CUP, and the “provincial” movements, which rejected any method other than revolutionary struggle, demanding the revolutionary organization of the Party.²⁵ Thus, the efforts of the CUP to strengthen its position among the Armenian community through the Dashnaktsutyun, which it tried to carry out before the 1908 elections, and to cooperate based on mutual benefits, also indicate a significant break in the election process.

In fact, a report prepared by the French Consulate in Trabzon and presented to the Ambassador M. Constans in Istanbul points to the guiding leadership of the Dashnaks in this city. The Dashnak Committee took action to protest the elections and election results in Trabzon, put forth its complaint and reaction regarding it, and distributed a circular inviting the public for protests. In essence, this call, which invited the people of Trabzon to protest, was aimed at reinforcing the strength of the statement made by the Patriarchate and raising the reactions. The Dashnaks’ call to protest and complaint about the Trabzon elections, just like the Patriarchate’s statement, aimed to provoke not only the Armenian community, but also all the nations living in the city, all Muslim, Armenian and Greek nations, to protest.²⁶

It is understood that the attempt of the Dashnak Committee to interfere in the elections in Trabzon was not supported by the Armenian Archbishopric of Trabzon. According to the observation and opinion of the Archbishopric, although this initiative of the Dashnaks would give the Armenian community an opportunity to integrate around these problems and bring it to their senses, it also raised the concern that the Dashnaks would constantly intervene in future problems. In that respect, this challenge also manifested itself as a problem of influence and power within the unity of the Armenian community itself.²⁷

25 Arsen Avagyan ve Gaidz F. Minassian, *Ermeniler ve İttihat ve Terakki, İşbirliğinden Çatışmaya*, çev. Ludmilla Danisenko- Mutlucan Şahan (İstanbul: Aras Yayınları, 2005), 39-40.

26 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /1.

27 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /2. Also, for the dispute and animosity between the Dashnaks and the Patriarchate that occurred in Trabzon, see: Nejla Günay, *Zoraki ittifaktan Yol Ayrımına İttihat-Terakki ve Ermeniler* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2015), 134.

Due to the repercussion created by the elections held in Trabzon, the CUP, without coming to the fore, formed a committee of Armenians in the city and organized a meeting for the Armenian nation to express their views and opinions about the deputies. This meeting, which is thought to have been held on 1 January 1909, was held in the Ottoman Club and approximately two hundred Greeks and Armenians attended the meeting. Although details about the meeting were not reflected in the reports, reactionary questions were asked to the re-established committee on how to explain the election of persons known to be incompatible with the deputyship to the Parliament, and silence prevailed in the meeting environment. It is understood from the report of the Consul that the reconstituted committee dominated the meeting in Trabzon to a considerable extent, that there was no reactionary quarrel and intense debate, and that the meeting took place with long negotiations on a telegram that would be unanimously accepted and sent to the Grand Vizier and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. In this respect, after the above-mentioned reaction, no action was taken to accuse or denigrate the elected deputies; on the contrary, it was stated that they had great confidence in the deputies and their voters from Trabzon. They expressed these feelings and thoughts in the letter they sent to the Grand Vizier and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies.²⁸

In the report of the French Consul in Trabzon dated 3 January 1909, a copy of the decision, which was taken unanimously with applause at the Trabzon meeting in which Greeks and Armenians participated, and which was sent by telegram to the Grand Vizier and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, is presented as an appendix. In the enclosed document to the report, there is the title of “Attachment of the letter dated 03 January 1909 and the summary of the telegram to be presented to the Grand Vizier and the Speaker of the Parliament”. Although there are twenty-nine signatories on the telegram, no information could be found on who the signatories were.

However, the telegram briefly states the following:

“Although they were elected and sent to the Parliament by us as our elected religious reverences, the views and thoughts published on behalf of the Armenian Dashnaks Committee, and through some intrigues working in line with these thoughts, it was sought to make our deputies insignificant and discredited, and their dignity was sought to be tarnished. Due to this depressing situation, the Armenian community felt the need to declare its deputies as its representatives, without considering the maneuvers inspired by feelings and thoughts ranging from intrigue to revenge, and to declare their loyalty and subordination

28 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /2-3.

to the Presidency of the Parliament and the Grand Vizier, which are the representatives of our country and nation, through a general meeting in a joint agreement.”²⁹

In fact, this situation shows a significant deviation in the countryside from a long-known cooperation policy between the Young Turks and the Dashnaks. Alongside this, it is possible to see from this occasion that the CUP had the ability to act in alliance with local elements in events that had a tendency to get out of control.

The parties who wanted to create turmoil and doubt regarding the Trabzon elections preferred to focus their acts on some of the elected deputies. As explained above, the main target here was Nemlizade Osman Efendi. The French Consul in Trabzon also touched upon the same issue. He pointed out that “As stated in the report dated 30 December, the person targeted by the Armenians was Nemlizade Osman Efendi, but rather than the importance of this, it is necessary to consider that the increasing mentality change among the Armenians has started to become more important than this issue.”³⁰ Essentially, the French Consul put forward the expectation that with the re-declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy and as the new regime established itself, the situation of the Armenians would improve visibly. He also asserted that as long as they would meet in common interest and cooperation, the feelings and thoughts of conflict and revenge would be replaced by an understanding that would serve freedom. But no matter what, the stance of the CUP on this issue was clear. The Consul believed that the attitude of the Young Turks in this investigation, which was conducted, albeit covertly, against a member of an influential Muslim family like Nemlizade, gave sufficient insight into the future developments.³¹

Trabzon Governor Arifi Bey, in the face of developments aimed at sabotaging the elections to a considerable extent through the Trabzon elections, and at the same time discrediting some deputies with dubious election allegations for casting a shadow on the Chamber of Deputies, sent a telegram to the Ministry of Interior on 2 January 1908 and conveyed information on the smear campaign which had been conducted for some time by the Dashnaks in Trabzon. In this

29 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Text of the Telegram to be Presented to the Grand Vizier and Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies, Attached to the Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /1.

30 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /3.

31 AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, “The Report Dated 3 January 1909 Sent by France’s Trabzon Consulate to the İstanbul Embassy Concerning the Elections,” Nr.2 /4.

context, Mithat Bey, who was a member of the delegation that visited the provincial authority on 2 January representing the people of Trabzon, made a statement and drew attention to a declaration published on behalf of the Dashnak Association in Trabzon. Mithat Bey stated that there were complaints and provocations in the Dashnak declaration which alleged that there was corruption in the elections, that objectionable persons were placed among the deputies, and that personalities who did not conform to the prestige of the Constitutional Monarchy and to the dignity of deputyship were sent to the Parliament. He declared that these accusations were groundless and untrue. In his statement, Mithat Bey said that the deputies were chosen with full freedom, that care was taken to ferry them with an unprecedented farewell, and that they were given a warm welcome in *Dersaadet* (a word used for İstanbul that meant “Door of Happiness”). Mithat Bey further highlighted that these groundless accusations against these deputies were seen as an infringement on the honor and dignity of the approximately one and a half million inhabitants of Trabzon province and stated that “these allegations are completely rejected.”³² The Ministry of Internal Affairs informed the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies on 4 January that “the public demanded that the statements made by some rancorousness people that the Trabzon Deputies do not meet the legal requirements should not be taken into account”, and sent the copy of the telegram received from the Trabzon province to the Parliament.³³

On the other hand, the attempts of the Dashnaksutyun to cast a shadow over the Trabzon elections and to discredit some of the deputies caused a reaction not only in Trabzon but also in the nearby cities. In another official letter sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies dated 27 January 1909, as an addition to the letter of 11 January 1909, several testimonies conveyed by the people of Ordu were submitted to the Parliament. In the testimonies, it was stated that the complaints of certain people about the former Mufti of Trabzon, Imameddin and Eyyübzade İzzet and Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi, originated from personal enmity and that the said deputies had honor and dignity.³⁴

Thus, after the meeting held on 1 January and the acceptance of the will to protect the deputies with the initiative of prominent Armenian personalities, the disputes on the Trabzon elections brought to the agenda after the elections were held and the attempts to cause doubts on these elections with the considerable efforts of the Patriarchate of İstanbul and the Archbishopric of Trabzon gradually lost their importance, and the situation in the city returned to normal.

32 Ottoman Archives of the Turkish Presidency (*BOA.*), *DH. MKT.*, 02700.00067.001, 20 Kanun-1 Evvel 1324.

33 *BOA.*, *DH. MKT.*, 02700.00067.002, 22 Kanun-1 Evvel 1324.

34 *BOA.*, *DH. MKT.*, 027380.00019.001, 14 Kanun-1 Sani 1324.

6. Conclusion and Assessment

The 1908 elections, the first parliamentary elections of the Second Constitutional Era, were held in November-December following the completion of the legal preparations for the election process. The 1908 elections, as they were the first parliamentary elections in more than thirty years, brought about certain disputes in some places owing to the inadequacy of the election legislation, the ignorance of the officials who conducted the proceedings, or the occasional abuses that occurred in some cases. Regarding the general course of the 1908 elections, it is known that especially the Armenian and Greek elements complained about the developments in the election process and the election results. The fact that the results of the elections did not meet their expectations had a significant impact on the complaints of the Armenian and Greek communities regarding the election procedures and more broadly about the elections. In fact, after the re-proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy and following the preparations for the elections, the Armenian and Greek elements had some initiatives in some places to participate in the elections by forming an alliance. However, these attempts and efforts did not yield a positive result.

The non-Muslim elements, who could not achieve the results they hoped for in the elections and who came from quite different ethnic, religious, cultural, and even ideological backgrounds, tried to make the elections controversial in a process in which many factors played a role. The fact that both major non-Muslim communities turned the disputes about the elections into the dominant problem of the election process, rather than solving the problem, led to the strengthening of the sense of in-group solidarity in their communities. This situation caused doubts and hesitations about the Ottomanism project which the CUP insistently defended. In this context, concerning the election process and its aftermath, it is necessary to consider both the CUP and the irredentist feelings and effects supported by the economic and social power-based class structures of the two communities that stood out in this issue. The irredentist tendencies in the Armenian and Greek communities seemed to have been somewhat expressed through the elections, although both communities were persuaded to join different movements, and those who protected them preferred not to come forward for the time being. As a matter of fact, although the objections and reactions in Istanbul, Izmir, and Trabzon, where there was a lot of tension before the Constitutional Monarchy, were presented as a natural objection and an innocent legal pursuit, in reality, it is possible to consider this move as a test and a subtle probe against the political understanding that the CUP wanted to develop again. In this context, following the failure to get expected results in an election held in November 1908 and the regret of the communities failing to participate in the elections with an alliance list, it is significant that unfounded accusations against some deputies were brought to

the agenda on the pretext that they took part in the events of 1895. In the event that there were some allegations and doubts about some deputies, the procedures and conditions of the way to object to the candidacy of these people during the election process were clear. However, there is no reasonable and logical answer to the question of why this issue was not objected to at that time.

In this case, even after the opening of the Chamber of Deputies, there may be more than one answer to the question of why the Dashnaks on the one hand and the Patriarchate on the other tried to keep the Trabzon elections on the agenda. There is no doubt that the existence of a power struggle and struggle for leadership between the Patriarchate, which dominated the ruling classes in economically strong cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, and the Dashnaks, who were partially effective on a weaker provincial bourgeoisie, constituted an important aspect of this issue. Considering the friendly relations between the CUP and the Dashnaks in the Ottoman provinces, it is not possible to assert that the 1908 elections created such a deep problem as to cause the two sides to reach a crossroads. Alongside this, while one aspect of the issue shows the struggle between the Patriarchate and the Dashnaks, another aspect shows that the Dashnaks acted with the calculation that they would take advantage of their closeness with the CUP and strengthen their influence in the Armenian community through the problems in the elections. However, the CUP, with a sincere intention dedicated to serving the harmony and development of the unity of the empire, believed that it could rebuild the political order that would ensure the Ottoman union through elections. In this respect, it would be appropriate to evaluate the 1908 elections from the perspective of the CUP's policies regarding nations and different dynamics in the political and social fabric.

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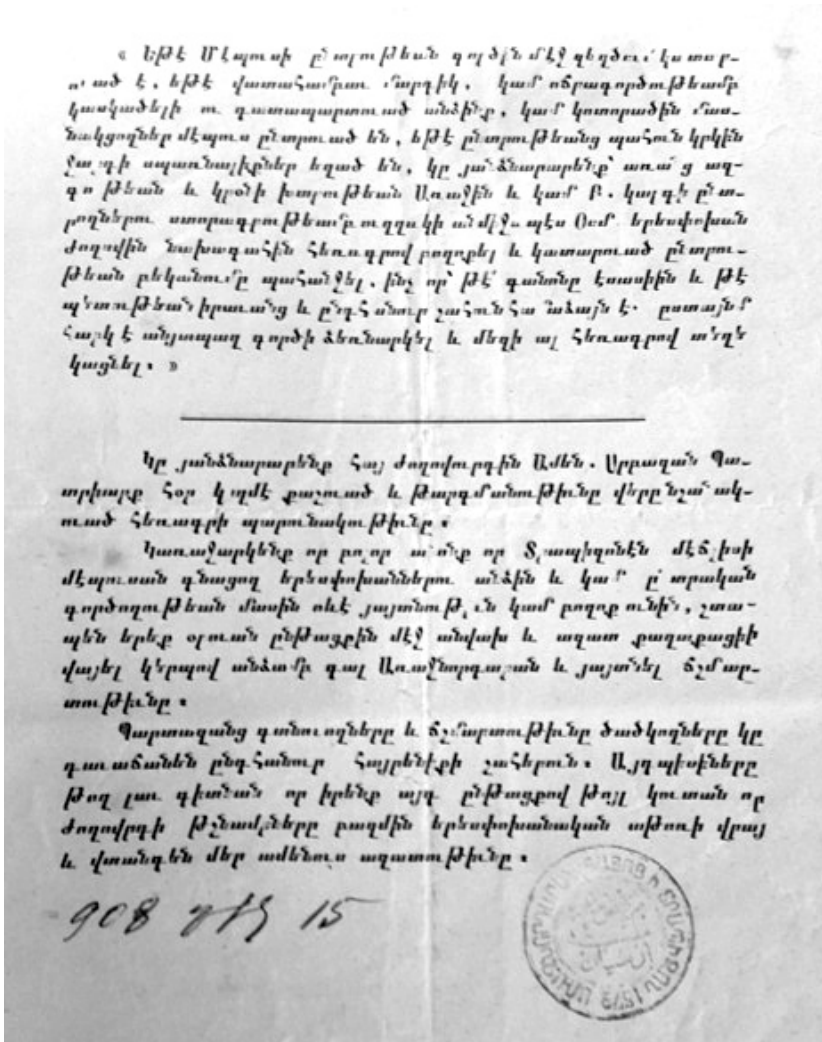
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The text of the appeal made by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul and the Armenian Archbishopric of Trabzon - AMAE / CADN, *Ambassade de France A Constantinople, Carton 74/190*, Report Annex dated 30 December 1908, Nr.39#



The author would like to thank Ms. Dr. Doğanay Eryılmaz (faculty member of Ankara University, Faculty of Languages and History-Geography, Department of Caucasian Languages and Cultures) and Mr. Ercan Cihan Ulupınar (instructor at Social Sciences University of Ankara), who translated the Armenian text shown in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 (cont.)

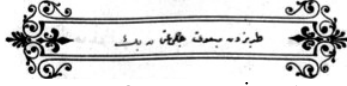
“If there is fraud in the election of the deputies, if people who are notorious or suspected of crimes and those on trial or those who participated in the massacres are elected deputies, if there is a danger of massacres again during the elections; the first and second tier voters, regardless of nationality or religion, with your signatures, immediately transmit your complaints by telegram to the Ottoman Speaker of the Deputies and request that the held election be nullified. We give you the task of taking immediate action and notifying us by telegram so that everything is in accordance with the Basic Law, the laws of the country, and the general interests.”

“We are forwarding to the Armenian people the translation of the above-mentioned telegram sent by the holy Patriarchate.

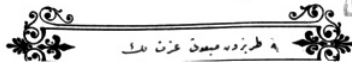
We recommend that anyone who has a complaint about the deputies going to the Chamber of Deputies from Trabzon or anybody who has any explanation concerning the election activity should come to the archbishopric within three days, without fear and as free citizens, and tell the truth.

Those who do not fulfill their responsibility and hide the truth betray the interests of the entire state. Such people should know that in this process, they allow the enemies of the people to take seat in parliament as deputies and, most of all, they endanger freedom.

Archbishopric of Armenians in Trabzon, 1879



Photograph 1: Trabzon Deputy Hacı Osman Bey. İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı Albümler, ALB. 32/185



Photograph 2: Trabzon Deputy İzzet Bey. İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı Albümler, ALB. 32/186

TRANSLATION/ÇEVİRİ

To cite this article: Erdi Öztürk, “The Law Code of Mkhitar Gosh and Analysis on the “Others” in the Medieval Armenian Community”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 44 (2021): 107-127.

Received: 22.11.2021

Accepted: 26.11.2021

THE LAW CODE OF MKHITAR GOSH AND ANALYSIS ON THE “OTHERS” IN THE MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN COMMUNITY*

(MİHİTAR GOŞ’UN KANUNNAMESİ VE ORTA ÇAĞ ERMENİ TOPLUMUNDA ‘ÖTEKİLER’ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME)

Erdi ÖZTÜRK**

Abstract: *Armenians had compiled some church law collections until the 12th century, but they did not have any national law code (codex) regulating social life. The law code written by Mkhitar Gosh in 1184 aimed to fulfill this need and became the first national law code in Armenian history. The law code of Gosh deeply affected the Armenian community and was used by Armenians in various parts of the world for many centuries. This law code has particular importance in terms of Turkish history. Since the law code was written at a time when Turkish rule in Anatolia had been established, it provides important data in terms of understanding the socio-cultural structure of that period. Therefore, this study, on the one hand, focuses on the aim of writing the law code, its sources, implementation, and impact on the Armenian society, and on the other hand, it aims to reveal how the relations with the “others” were*

* This is the English translation of the Turkish language article titled “Mihitar Goş’un Kanunnamesi Ve Orta Çağ Ermeni Toplumunda ‘Ötekiler’ Üzerine Bir İnceleme” that was originally published in the 68th Issue of the journal *Ermeni Araştırmaları*. See: Erdi Öztürk, “Mihitar Goş’un Kanunnamesi ve Orta Çağ Ermeni Toplumunda ‘Ötekiler’ Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 68 (2021): 107-128.

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regulated in the medieval Armenian community through the articles of law code. In this regard, the articles of the law code were examined via two different Armenian editions along with its English translations. The study has also made use of secondary sources concerning the law code and the period. As a result of this study, it was seen that Mkhitar Gosh wrote the law code to prevent interactions between Armenians and the “others”, and to prevent the erosion of Armenian identity. However, by examining the articles of law code, it is revealed that Armenians had in fact interacted with “others”, and consequently, cross-cultural marriages and conversions were experienced in medieval times.

Keywords: *Mkhitar Gosh, Law Code, Datastanagirk, Others, Medieval Armenian Community, Medieval Turkish-Armenian Relations*

Öz: *Ermeniler, 12. yüzyıla kadar birtakım kilise kanun derlemeleri hazırlasalar da sosyal hayatı düzenleyecek millî bir kanunnameye sahip değillerdi. 1184 yılında Mhitar Goş tarafından yazılan kanunname bu ihtiyacı gidermeyi amaçlamış ve Ermeni tarihinin ilk millî kanunnamesi olmuştur. Goş'un kanunnamesi Ermeni toplumunu derinden etkilemiş ve uzun yüzyıllar dünyanın çeşitli yerlerindeki Ermeniler tarafından kullanılmıştır. Eser Türk tarihi açısından ayrı bir öneme sahiptir. Kanunnamenin Anadolu'da Türk hâkimiyetinin sağlandığı zamanlarda yazılmış olması sebebiyle eser, dönemin sosyo-kültürel yapısının anlaşılması açısından önemli veriler sunar. O yüzden bu çalışma bir taraftan kanunnamenin yazılış amacı, kaynakları, uygulanması ve Ermeni toplumuna etkileri üzerinde yoğunlaşırken, diğer taraftan içeriğindeki kanun maddeleri üzerinden Orta Çağ Ermeni toplumunda “ötekilerle” ilişkilerin nasıl düzenlendiğini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu bağlamda kanunnamenin maddeleri iki farklı Ermenice baskısından incelenmiş, yer yer İngilizce tercümesinden faydalanılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra eser ve dönemle ilgili yapılmış ikincil kaynaklardan da yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda, Mhitar Goş'un kanunnameyi Ermenilerin “ötekilerle” kuracakları etkileşimi engellemek ve kendi benliklerini kaybetmemeleri amacıyla yazdığı görülmüştür. Ancak kanun maddeleri üzerinde yapılan incelemeyle Orta Çağ Ermenilerinin “ötekilerle” karşılıklı etkileşime girdikleri ve bunun sonucunda kültürler arası evliliklerin, ihtidaların yaşandığı ortaya konmuştur.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Mhitar Goş, Kanunname, Datastanagirk, Ötekiler, Orta Çağ Ermeni Toplumu, Orta Çağ Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri*

Introduction

Coming under Turkish rule constituted a new experience for the Armenians they had not experienced before. Although they had been under the hegemony in almost every period of great powers such as the Byzantines, Persians, and Caliphate, they generally maintained their autonomy and were at least permitted to be governed by their own leadership. However, the fact that the regions they lived together with the Turks were both directly governed by the new dominant power and that they had to share their lands with new ethnic and religious elements (especially Turks) created a completely different dimension to their social life, cultural development, and relations. The Armenian elites, especially members of the Armenian Apostolic Church, contemplated on how to take measures when the influence of these new neighbors and cultural transformations began circulating among the Armenians who had begun to live together with new ethnic and religious elements. Mkhitar Gosh's¹ law code (codex) was created in accordance with such a necessity. Gosh, who lived during the period of the Turkish rule's establishment in Anatolia (1120-1213), tried to regulate the relations of Armenians with “others” to protect their own identities. With his law code, it was aimed to prevent the establishing of relations with “others” as much as possible and the possibility of being influenced by these “others”. In this study, it is aimed to examine the law code (*ղլսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսսս*) both in line with its stated purpose and in terms of content analysis. In this context, an attempt will be made towards revealing the sources of the law code, the Armenians' tradition of writing codes, the implementation of the code, and how the relations with “others” in the medieval Armenian society were regulated through the laws in its content.

Mkhitar Gosh's law code was first published in 1880 by Vahan Bastamyantsi. In 1975, Hosrov Torosyan critically analyzed the code and published it. In 2001, the work was once again presented to the reader by Maksim Andraniki Voskanyan. Although the code was translated into languages such as Polish, Kipchak Turkish with Armenian letters for use by Armenian communities in various parts of the world, the work was translated into two different languages for academic purposes in the modern period. In 1954, Popovyan translated it into Russian through the publication of Vahan Bastamyantsi, while in 2000, the work was translated into English by Robert W. Thomson. This study uses the Armenian edition of the law code prepared by Voskanyan. In addition, from time to time, the study uses the Armenian edition published by Torosyan in 1975 and Thomson's English translation.

1 Mkhitar Gosh. “*Մխիթար Գոշ*” [mhitār goš] in Armenian, “Mihitar Goş” in Turkish. As voice pronunciations are considered when the name *Մխիթար* is presented in Turkish, an “i” is added between the “m” and “h”, thus making it “Mihitar”.

I. The Purpose of and Sources for the Preparation of Mkhitar Gosh's Law Code (Codex)

Mkhitar Gosh, while explaining why he wrote his work, states that there was no written Armenian law code until his time, which those who believed in other religions and the Christian people around him regarded it as odd.² It is thought that Gosh completed writing his code in 1184.³ These two pieces of information raise the following questions: Who was this Mkhitar Gosh that had the competence to prepare a law code in the Armenian community? Had the Armenians truly not prepared any law codes until 1184? If there had been no serious law codes until then, what did the Armenians do to ensure and protect their social order? What were the reasons that prompted Gosh to write a law code? What sources did Gosh utilize while creating the code?

First, it is necessary to dwell on who the author of the law code, Mkhitar Gosh, was. Understanding what kind of place Gosh had in Armenian society will be useful in understanding how acceptable his code was in the eyes of the people. Gosh started his education in Ganja, the city where he was born. He obtained the title of vardapet⁴ (*վարդապետ*) by taking lessons from Hovhannes Tavushetsu⁵ (*Հովհաննես Տավուշեցու*) and other important people. Gosh did not find this education sufficient and went to Kara Mountain⁶ by hiding his title. There, he received training again and received the title of vardapet for the second time.⁷ After the education he received, he returned to his hometown, but did not stay there for a long time and moved to Haçin (now known as Saimbeyli/Adana). After his residence in Haçin, he started to reside in the Getik monastery, but when this monastery was destroyed by an earthquake, he began to reside in the new monastery nearby, which was built with the financial support of the famous Armenian-Georgian commanders of

2 Մխիթար Գոշ, *Գիրք Դատաստանի, Աշխատասիրությանը Խոսքով Թորոսյանի* (Երեվան: Հայկական Սոց Գիտությունների Ակադեմիայի Հրատարակչություն, 1975), 2; Մխիթար Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք, Աշխատասիրությանը Մարտիմ Անդրանիկի Ոսկանյանի* (Երեվան: 2001), 13; Mxit'ar Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, Trans. Robert W. Thomson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 71.

3 Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 20.

4 A scholarly title given to priests in the Armenian Apostolic Church.

5 There were two vardapets who were known by this name in history and who lived close to each other. There is not much data on the life of Hovhannes Tavushetsu, who was the teacher of Mkhitar Gosh. It is known that he lived in the 12th century. Another Vardapet, Hovhannes Tavushetsu, lived in 1181-1251 and became a student of Gosh. Since they lived close to each other and established a teacher-student relationship with Gosh, this may cause some confusion in history readings. Ն. Եղիազարյան, «Հովհաննես Տավուշեցի-Վանական վարդապետը և Ոլորուտ գյուղը որպես նրա կյանքի ու գործունեության մի կենտրոն», *Էջմիածին. Պաշտօնական ամսագիր Հայրապետական Աթոռոյ Ս. Էջմիածնի*, 17 (5), (1960): 17.

6 Today, it is known as the Nur Mountains in Osmaniye and Hatay. It is also known as the Gavur Mountains.

7 Էմ. Պիվազյան, «Մխիթար Գոշ», *Հայկական Սովետական Հանրագիտարան*, C.7, (Երևան: 1981): 630.

the time, Zakare and his sibling Ivane, and remained there until the end of his life. The fame of Gosh’s wisdom propagated so much that many people, including vardapets, would come to study with him.⁸ When Gosh passed away in 1213, he left a large group of students behind him. After his death, the monastery in which he had stayed was named after him and became known as Goshavank (Գոշավանք).⁹

With the death of Mkhitar Gosh, it is seen that the Armenian community sanctified him. Kiragos of Ganja (Կիրակոս Գանձակեցի) (1200/1202-1271)¹⁰ writes in his work that after his death, ill people visited his grave to be healed.¹¹ He was referred to as “the great sage” and “the great vardapet” by the people. In the Armenian encyclopedia article, he is introduced as a thinker, scholar, law writer, epic writer, teacher, and statesman.¹² It should not be difficult to imagine how Gosh, who was mentioned and respected in this way by Armenians, affected the Armenian society of the period when he wrote his code.

Historian Grigor Arakelyan writes that Armenians had no national law code until the 12th century.¹³ Even though there was no law code until this century primarily containing man-made laws intended for all sections of Armenian society and geared towards providing social order, there were religiously motivated law codes that compiled and systematized church law. In the 8th century, the first law code of such nature was that of Catholicos¹⁴ Hovhan Odznetsi¹⁵ (Հովհան Օձնեցի) (?-728) titled *Armenian Law-Code/Codex* (Կանոնագիրք հայոց-Kanonagirk Hayots). The fact that the Armenian

8 Kirakos Gandzakets’i, *History of the Armenians*, trans. Robert Bedrosian, (New York, 1986), 181.

9 A.E. Redgate, *The Armenians* (Cornwall: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 259.

10 Armenian historian, vardapet. His work titled *Armenian History* (Պատմություն Հայոց), which he started in 1241 and completed in 1265, is an important source for medieval Armenian history. The book consists of two parts. In the first part, the history from Gregory the Illuminator/Lusavorich, the founder of the Armenian Apostolic Church, to the 12th century is given, while the last part is devoted to the events that took place during the Mongolian Invasion. Լ. Խանչարյան, “Կիրակոս Գանձակեցի”, *Հայկական Սովետական Հանրագիտարան*, C. 5, (Երևան: 1979): 450.

11 Gandzakets’i, *History of the Armenians*, 183.

12 Պիվազյան, “Մխիթար Գոշ”, 630.

13 Գրիգոր Առաքելյան, “Մխիթար Գոշի «Դատաստանագրքի» ստեղծման իրավական նախադրյալները”, *Կանթեղ. Գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու*, (3), (2011): 236.

14 A title used in Oriental Orthodoxy meaning the head of the church.

15 Hovhan Odznetsi, who was declared a saint by the Armenian Apostolic Church, served as the Catholicos of All Armenians between the years 717-728. Having become renowned prior to his appointment as the catholicos for his theoretical-theological knowledge, rhetorical skills, and analytical thinking, Odznetsi played an active role both in political and religious affairs. With the church codex he prepared, he determined the church’s structure and rituals. Throughout his term, he waged a struggle against the Paulicians, Chalcedonians, and pagans who rejected Armenian religious belief. Մելրյան Զարարյան, “Իմաստասիրականը Հովհան Օձնեցու Հոգևոր Ժարանգության Մեջ”, *Բանբեր Երևանի համալսարանի. Հայագիտություն*, 27 (3), (2018): 44-45.

Church continues to use this law code shows just how important it is.¹⁶ Another important church law code before Gosh was written by Davit of Ganja (Դավիթ Գանձակեցի) (1070/1080-1140). It is thought that the work was completed at the beginning of the 12th century.¹⁷ Simon Payaslian considers Davit of Ganja to be among the pioneers of Armenian law writing.¹⁸

When Armenian history is examined, it can be seen that they lived under Byzantine and Iranian rule for many centuries. To establish their rule in the regions where Armenians lived, these powers either appointed an Armenian *nakharar*¹⁹ (*նախարար*) from that region as an administrator or sent a governor from the said powers' capitals.²⁰ These officials' duty was to maintain public order as much as possible and send the region's collected tax to the capitals. The Arabs who would later conquer the regions where Armenians lived utilized a similar administrative model.²¹ This administrative model that was not too centralized allowed the Armenians to have partial independence with regards to their internal affairs. Along with this, Armenian scholars did law translations from Greek to Armenian. Accordingly, Byzantine church laws called *Nomocanon* were translated to Armenian in the 9th century.²² During the time of the Bagratunis (885-1045), certain sections of the Byzantine law compilations *Ekloga* and *Syrio-Roman Code* were also translated into Armenian.²³ Based on this information, it can be seen that during the said periods, the Armenians used their own traditions and customs and also the translation they made from Byzantine to maintain order in their social life and worldly affairs.

In a system that is thought to have worked in the said manner, why did Mkhitar Gosh feel the need to write a law code? The changing social structure of his period needs to be examined to answer this question. In the period that

16 Առաքելյան, «Մխիթար Գոշի «Դատաստանագրքի» ստեղծման իրավական նախադրյալները», 236; *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*, Volume II, ed. Agop J. Hacikyan (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2002), 134.

17 Ազատ Բոգոյան, «Հայ միջնադարյան իրավունքի պատմության հուշարձանները», *Էջմիածին. Պաշտոնական ամսագիր Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսության Մայր Աթոռոյ Սրբոյ Էջմիածնի*, 62 (7-8) (2006): 98.

18 Simon Payaslian, *The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 54.

19 A word that means “minister” in today’s Armenian. It was used to refer to Armenian nobles in the Middle Ages.

20 Cyril Mango, *Bizans Yeni Roma İmparatorluğu*, çev. Gül Çağalı Güven (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), 24; Nicholas Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian The Political Conditions Based on the Naxarar System*, trans. Nina G. Garsoian (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970), 173.

21 Rene Grousset, *Başlangıcından 1071’e Ermenilerin Tarihi*, trans. Sosi Dolanoğlu (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2005), 295.

22 Ferdinand Feldbrugge, *Law in Medieval Russia* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), 298-299.

23 Feldbrugge, *Law in Medieval Russia*, 299.

Gosh lived (1120-1213), the regions where Armenians lived were largely under Turkish rule. The only place where there was Armenian rule was in Cilicia. The Turkish rule in Armenian regions was different than that of the previous Byzantine, Iranian, and Arabic rules. Unlike the others, following the 1071 Battle of Manzikert, Turks quickly reached all the way to the western edges Anatolia, and this did not remain as only a military campaign; it brought intense Turkish migration along with it. For this reason, unlike the Iranian, Byzantine, and Arabic rules, Turks did not settle for only establishing overall dominance, they directly established rule over the places where Armenians lived through their own population and institutions. As a result of this, Armenians were compelled to interact with both Turks and their institutions.

Alongside this, Mkhitar Gosh also had a career in the state governance. He served as the chief advisor of Zakare Zakaryan, the Chief Commander of that period's Kingdom of Georgia.²⁴ Zakare and his sibling Ivane Zakaryan had important duties in the Kingdom of Georgia. The Kingdom, under the leadership of Queen Tamar (1184-1213), was experiencing its golden age and the Zakaryan siblings were commanding the Georgian armies.²⁵ Even though the Zakaryans were subjects of the Georgian Kingdom, they were of Armenian heritage. In fact, while Ivane accepted Georgian religious beliefs, Zakare continued to adhere to Armenian religious beliefs.²⁶

The Zakaryan siblings captured Ani in the year 1199 and Queen Tamar granted these lands to them.²⁷ With this, an Armenian political entity bound to the Kingdom of Georgia was established, lasting until it was captured by the Ilkhanate. The Zakaryan siblings spent the entirety of their lives engaging in activities against Turkish rule. The close relationship Mkhitar Gosh established with the Zakaryan siblings leads to the assessment that, by receiving their support, he too wanted to save the Armenians from the Turkish rule that adhered to a different religion. Gosh wrote his law code under such political conditions.

It should be immediately mentioned here that the idea of a nation with today's understanding had not developed in those centuries. In the Middle Ages, societies generally categorized themselves according to the religious belief they were a member of.²⁸ For this reason, especially the Armenian high class (religious functionaries, nobles, and scholars) looked with worry at these

24 Gevorg Poghosyan, "History of Evolution of the Armenian Sociological Thought", *Social Sciences*, 4 (5), (2015): 120.

25 Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1953), 102.

26 Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, 102-103.

27 Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, 103.

28 Mango, *Bizans Yeni Roma İmparatorluğu*, 37.

relations being established with societies holding religious beliefs different from that of Armenians and tried to minimize these relations, especially to prevent Armenians from losing their own beliefs. Gosh's law code was penned exactly with such a thinking. Gosh states that Armenians were applying to the courts of people believing different religions and that he wrote his work to prevent this.²⁹ In the text of the work, Gosh uses the word *aylahavatner* (*այլահավատներ*), which meant those who believed in other religions. Even though this covered all religions other than the Armenian belief, it can be understood from the general composition of Gosh's work that he meant Muslims, and that he especially pointed towards Muslim courts. It can be clearly seen throughout the work that Gosh strived to protect the identity of the Armenians.

Another example showing Mkhitar Gosh's felt need to write the law code due to the changing political situation of the Armenians can be encountered in the first section concerning the role of judges. In this section, Gosh indicates that since there was no king or prince at the leadership of Armenians due to them coming under foreign rule, it should be the patriarchate as the head of the church who should fulfill the duties of the king or prince, and argues that that religious authorities should assume society's leadership.³⁰ Basing ourselves on this idea by Gosh, it is revealed that the church had the important function of preserving the social order of Armenians by keeping them together in times when they lacked a political rule of their own.

Another important topic is the sources Mkhitar Gosh used while writing his law code. Gosh explains that he primarily used natural laws in his work, but that he benefited from the laws of Christian nations surrounding him.³¹ While the author does not give the names of his sources, the afore-mentioned Byzantine law compilations *Nomocanon*, *Ekloga* and *Syro-Roman Code* that had been translated from Greek to Armenian are thought to be among these sources. Hosrov Torosyan indicates that Gosh made law translations from foreign law codes.³²

Peter Cowe writes that Mkhitar Gosh, even though he did not indicate this, used the law book written by Davit of Ganja as a source.³³ Since Gosh and

29 Գոշ, *Գիրք Դատաստանի*, 3; Մխիթար Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 14; Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 72.

30 Գոշ, *Գիրք Դատաստանի*, 26; Մխիթար Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 34; Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 109.

31 Mxit'ar Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 102.

32 Խ.Ա. Թորոսյան, «Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում», *Պատմաբանասիրական հանդես*, (3), (1971): 40.

33 Peter Cowe, «Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends (Twelfth-Seventeenth Centuries)», *Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 299.

Davit of Ganja lived in similar times and in the same city, it is indeed possible that Gosh, who sought to prepare a law book, used Davit of Ganja's work as a source.

Mkhitar Gosh later writes that he utilized religious sources, which includes: the second book of the Torah *Exodus*, the fifth book of the Torah *Deuteronomy*, and the Old and New Testament.³⁴ Due to these sources used by Gosh, Avigdor (Victor) Aptowitzer, who specializes in Jewish law, indicates that Gosh also benefited from Jewish laws in his law code.³⁵ In Gosh's work, there is a section titled "the things that we have seen and heard from our kin".³⁶ Cowe sees this as the most valuable source in Gosh's work,³⁷ since through it, it is possible to see in the work the traces of Armenian culture and customs of that period.

II. The Application of the Law Code Among the Armenians

Even though Mkhitar Gosh wrote his law code by himself, he was supported by prominent people through the writing process. Gosh was first supported greatly by Catholicos of Aghvank Stepan. He then wrote a letter to Grigor IV (1173-1193), Catholicos of all Armenians, requesting support, which was replied positively.³⁸ Also, Gosh befriended Vahtang, who was a strong Nakharar of Upper Haçin region, and enjoyed Vahtang's help throughout the writing process as well.³⁹ It did not take long for Armenians to accept Gosh's law code that was written in this way under the patronage of people with important religious and political positions.

At the same time as Mkhitar Gosh, the Archbishop of Tarsus Nerses Lambronatsi also carried out a law code study, but Lambronatsi's code remained in writing only and its influence did not go beyond the confines of the monastery. Torosyan, discussing the reasons for this, says that Gosh's work does not just have a religious value, but also serves as an instructive guide.⁴⁰ The laws of Gosh provided guidance for regulating social life and answered the needs of Armenian society.⁴¹

34 Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 103.

35 V. Aptowitzer, "The Controversy over the Syro-Roman Code", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 2 (1), (1911): 69.

36 Գոշ, *Գիրք Դատաստանի*, 23; Goš, *The Law Code [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, 103.

37 Cowe, "Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends (Twelfth-Seventeenth Centuries)", 299.

38 Թորոսյան, "Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում", 44.

39 Թորոսյան, "Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում", 45.

40 Թորոսյան, "Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում", 40.

41 *The Heritage of Armenian Literature Volume II*, 433.

The fact that so many articles have been written on a law code for many centuries indicates that it has been actively used. According to Torosyan, there are approximately 40 writings in *Matenadaran*⁴² related to Mkhitar Gosh's law code.⁴³ Furthermore, the fact that the law code of Gosh served as the main pillar for Smbat Sparapet, who compiled a law code for Cilicia Armenians, is another evidence indicating that this code was actively used.⁴⁴

Fernanda Pirie indicates that Armenians under Muslim rule gained autonomy to a certain degree with this law code.⁴⁵ It is also an important issue what kind of response Mkhitar Gosh's law code study elicited amongst Muslim rulers. Cowe's studies on this issue serves to give us an opinion on this. It is understood that Muslim rulers did not in any way look kindly on the implementation of the said law code and conveyed their complaints to Catholicos Grigor IV through the local Armenians. The Muslim rulers, who did not accept the code, insisted that Armenians should continue to come to their own courts.⁴⁶

It cannot be understood from this that Armenians completely gave up applying to Muslim courts with this law code. Even though Armenians were able to apply to their own courts to solve disputes among themselves, they had to go the Muslim courts when they got into legal disputes with Muslims. Additionally, Muslim courts came into play in when a grave crime concerning the state and disturbing public order was committed.

Beyond the Armenians, it is obvious that non-Muslims in Anatolia applied to Muslim qadis. This was narrated in the qadi record of Kutbüddîn-i Şîrâzî, who was appointed to Sivas as qadi in the year 1277;

“Judicial authority is amongst the most important affairs of religion, since the need for it by all people and things is quite clear. Eliminating hostilities and disputes between people in such a way that the winner and the loser are both satisfied is only possible through decisive religious judgements. The validity of this is so obvious that Jews and Christians, who are opponents of religion, and even those who are in error, rely on the pen and word of Islamic qadis and protect their goods

42 The manuscript repository of Armenia.

43 Թորոսյան, “Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում”, 41.

44 Թորոսյան, “Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում”, 42.

45 Fernanda Pirie, “Law Before Government: Ideology and Aspiration”, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 30 (2), (2010): 218.

46 Cowe, “Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends (Twelfth-Seventeenth Centuries)”, 299.

and properties [through having them recorded in qadis'] books and records and thus making them official."⁴⁷

An example of what was explained in the text appears in a record of 1281. A group of non-Muslims had come to the qadi of Sivas, Kutbüddin-i Şirazi, to secure their goods and properties and recorded their wealth in the official record of the qadi.⁴⁸ It can be suggested from this example that Armenians could have applied to the Muslim courts even after the completion of Mkhitar Gosh's law code.

In the Ottoman Empire era, there had always been courts belonging to non-Muslims. These courts could decide on simple cases as well as on marriages, divorces, inheritance, and decisions related with religion such as the appointment and dismissal of religious functionaries. If there was a case between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, non-Muslim courts could not handle the case;⁴⁹ but non-Muslims could go to the qadis in case they wanted to. There is much information in Ottoman archives related to this.⁵⁰ The information given above about non-Muslims are valid for Armenians in a narrower scope.

The law code of Mkhitar Gosh was accepted not only by Armenians in Anatolia, but also by Armenian communities in different parts of the world. In particular, it was used extensively in Armenian trade colonies in Poland. In 1519, with the demand of Armenians and order of King Sigismund I, it was translated into Latin by Armenians.⁵¹ In 1528, it was translated into Polish and Kipchak Turkish with Armenian letters.⁵² Its translation into Kipchak Turkish with Armenian letters is known as *Töre Bitiği*.⁵³ It has been traced that, in that geography, the code law of Mkhitar Gosh was implemented in Zamość⁵⁴ until 1780, in Lviv until 1784, and in Kamianets-Podilskyi⁵⁵ until 1787.⁵⁶

47 Mahmut Recep Keleş, *Kutbüddin-i Şirazi Selçuklu Dönemi Anadolu'da Bilimin Güneşi* (İstanbul: Rağbet Yayınları, 2018), 84.

48 Osman Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında Resmi Vesikalar - Metin, Tercüme ve Araştırmalar* (Ankara: TTK, 1958), 42-43.

49 Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukuki Durumları* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2001), 247.

50 Ercan, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukuki Durumları*, 247-249.

51 Susanna Davtyan, Mikayel Khachatryan, Ara Johrian and Karen Ghazaryan, "Mkhitar Gosh's Medieval Law Code and its Implications for Armenian Communities Abroad", *Medicine and Law*, 33 (2), (2014): 43.

52 Davtyan et al., "Mkhitar Gosh's Medieval Law Code and its Implications for Armenian Communities Abroad", 43.

53 Kutluay Erk, "Ecclesiastical Terminology in Töre Bitigi: ARİ", *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia*, 13 (1), (2016): 11.

54 A city situated today in Poland.

55 A city situated today in Ukraine.

56 Davtyan et al., "Mkhitar Gosh's Medieval Law Code and its Implications for Armenian Communities Abroad", 43.

The law code of Mkhitar Gosh was applied in Georgia as well. Georgian King Vakhtang VI (1716-1724), wanting to create a law compilation, asked the Armenians in Etchmiadzin for some examples from their own laws. In response, the Armenians sent the law code of Gosh to the King. King Vakhtang utilized this law code and included it in the content of his own law compilation.⁵⁷ In addition to this, Torosyan states that the Armenian community in India's Calcutta city used this law code in the 1930s.⁵⁸

Another striking point of the law code is Sudan. With the efforts of Sarkis İzmirliyan (1917-1949), the Sudanese government officially recognized Mkhitar Gosh's law code, which they desired to see as the laws of the Armenian minority in Sudan. Thereby, the law code of Gosh was officially recognized by a state for the first time.⁵⁹

III. Articles in the Law Code Regulating Christian-“Others” Relations

There are a total of 251 laws written for the regulation of social life in Mkhitar Gosh's law code.⁶⁰ These laws are related to almost every area of social life. The by law code contains laws on various issues from the positions and duties of kings and princes to the positions and duties of the clergy; from the purchase and sale of animals, sharing of inheritance, marriages, divorces, and troubles in marriage to the violence that can be experienced between individuals.⁶¹

Before starting to examine the laws, it is necessary to explain the people who are referred to as the “others”. As mentioned before, medieval societies defined their nationality mostly through religion.⁶² While Armenian Christians

57 *The Heritage of Armenian Literature Volume II*, 434.

58 Թորոսյան, “Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում”, 47.

59 Թորոսյան, “Մխիթար Գոշի Դատաստանագրքի գործադրության մասին միջնադարյան Հայաստանում”, 47.

60 There are three different editions of the law code at the present time. The first edition consists of 251 articles. It was copied from the preliminary works of Mkhitar Gosh and the original law code. The ancient manuscript of Zimmar, a copy sent to the Catholicos, and the Venetian manuscripts numbered 1237-1238 copied from it are examples of this edition. In the second edition, which is dated 1295 and located in Matenadaran, the code is divided into secular laws and church laws. The first part consists of 124 articles, while and the second part consists of 130 articles. Although it is similar to the first edition in terms of language and style, it is seen that it is written with simpler expressions. The third edition of the work is the most common one and has many copies. Although it is defined with the first edition, it differs in its style and concise expressions. Its registered copies in Matenadaran numbered 485, 657, 2593, 2776, 3291 and other copies are among its main examples. The oldest manuscript is the one numbered 2593 and dated 1303. (Գոշ, Գիրք Դատաստանի, ԾԶ – ԾԷ). The third edition was used in this study.

61 Erdi Öztürk, *Etnik ve Dinsel Dönüşüm Çağında Anadolu: Halklar, İnanışlar ve Kültürel Etkileşim (XII-XIII. Yüzyıllar)*, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2018, 82.

62 Mango, *Bizans Yeni Roma İmparatorluğu*, 37.

saw those of their own religion as a part of their society; they excluded nations with a different faith from that society. Muslims, Zoroastrians, Greeks, Latins, or even Armenians with different Christian understandings such as the Paulicians were seen as the other. In accordance with this, Mkhitar Gosh called himself and the society he belonged to “Christian”, and he did not use the name “Armenian” anywhere in the code. He used different words when he was going to talk about the others. These words are: aylahavat (*այլահավատ*)⁶³, anhavat (*անհավատ*)⁶⁴, mahmedakan (*մահմեդական*)⁶⁵, aylazgi (*այլազգի*)⁶⁶ and otarazgi (*օտարազգի*)⁶⁷. Aylahavat (*այլահավատ*) literally means “of different faith”. Anhavat (*անհավատ*) gives the meanings of “irreligious, infidel” in the dictionary.⁶⁸ Mahmedakan (*մահմեդական*) means “followers of Muhammad, Muslims”. Aylazgi, (*այլազգի*) means “foreign or external nation” in today’s Armenian,⁶⁹ but is also a word used for Muslims in classical Armenian.⁷⁰ This word is often used in the law articles; however, since the author refers to Muslims as mahmedakan (*մահմեդական*) in various places in the text, we will evaluate these articles in a way that includes all groups seen as others by the Armenian society of the period, including Muslims. Lastly, the word otarazgi (*օտարազգի*) means “foreigner, foreign national”.

It is important to include Mkhitar Gosh’s views on Muslims for a better understanding of the situation. In the ninth part of the introduction of the code prepared by Gosh, he compares the two sides according to his own opinion to explain why a Christian should not go to the courts of other religions. Referring to the Bible’s passage that: “For what partnership can righteousness have with wickedness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?”⁷¹, Gosh says that believers and unbelievers are as far apart from each other as light and darkness.⁷²

Mkhitar Gosh then states that even though Muslims accepted God as the Father, they denied the Son and the Holy Spirit, and therefore they were in great denial.⁷³ To prove that Muslims contradicted their own beliefs, Gosh

63 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 13.

64 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 31.

65 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 32.

66 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 38.

67 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 84.

68 Դերմենջյան Մայրանուշ Փարավոնի, “անհավատ”, *Հայերեն-Թուրքերեն Բառարան* (Երևան: Հեղինակային Հրատարակություն, 2013), 33.

69 Դերմենջյան Մայրանուշ Փարավոնի, “այլազգի”, *Հայերեն-Թուրքերեն Բառարան*, 20.

70 Ե. Բ. Աղայան, “այլազգի”, *Արդի Հայերենի Բացատրական Բառարան* (Երևան: Հայաստան Հրատարակություն, 1976), 40.

71 2. Corinthians 6/14.

72 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 31.

73 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 32.

claims that that there was not a single Muslim who was not drunk despite wine being considered haram by Muslims.⁷⁴ Finally, he denigrates the justice system of the Muslims. He tries to prevent Christians from going to Muslim courts by writing that Muslims used perjury in their courts, that they were deceitful, and that they had slanderous plaintiffs.⁷⁵ It is seen that Gosh, who had such a negative perception towards Muslims, continued this view in the laws he wrote.

Before starting to examine the laws in which judgments about others are made, it is necessary to draw attention to the word *այլազգի* (*aylazgi*), meaning foreign, used by Mkhitar Gosh to describe the “others” in the articles of the code. As mentioned above, this word was formerly used for Muslims in Armenian. For this reason, it would not be wrong to think that the items mentioned below refer specifically to the Muslims living in Anatolia of the period, even though they cover all others in general.

When we look at the laws regarding the others mentioned in the law code, we first come across Article 2 that deals with the matters related to the kings and their subjects.⁷⁶ This article describes what the punishment should be if someone from another nationality kills a Christian. Accordingly, the person who killed somebody must be killed immediately; however, if s/he caused the death unintentionally, his/her hands should be cut off and s/he should pay the blood price,⁷⁷ which is stated to be 365 dahecans (*դսհեկան*)⁷⁸. The continuation of the article states what the punishment should be in the reverse situation; as in if a Christian kills someone from another nationality. In such a case, the murderer must pay the blood price; however, if s/he accidentally caused the death, s/he will only pay half of it. This money will be paid to the court, and only one-third of it will be given to the family of the deceased.⁷⁹ In this article, it is also stated that kings cannot collect head/poll tax from Christians, they can only collect this tax from non-Christian people, but if a person later accepts Christianity, then that person should also be exempted from the head tax.⁸⁰

Marriage is considered an important transitional stage in human life. In intercultural marriages, this transition process is more arduous. In such

74 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 33.

75 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 33.

76 I would like to thank Instructor Dr. Ercan Cihan Ulupinar for his assistance in checking the translations of the relevant law code articles in this section.

77 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 38.

78 Gold (sometimes silver) coin, dinar.

79 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 39.

80 Գոշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 41.

marriages, couples inevitably find themselves in a process of cultural transition. Some conflicts occur in the first stages as they are strangers to each other's traditions and customs. Over time, as couples understand and adapt to each other, their understanding and tolerance towards each other develops; and they even experience common acculturation.⁸¹ In the process of acculturation, different cultures come together and change by influencing each other, creating new syntheses and formations.⁸² Mkhitar Gosh, to protect the identity of his own people, looked down upon such marriages and included the issue of marriage with others in his laws. Gosh, disagreeing with such marriages, states that people who marry their own children to foreigners (non-Christians) will be barred from communion and hence from the church.⁸³ He states that in order for a Christian to marry a foreigner, the foreigner must be baptized and all his/her old lifestyle and habits must be erased.⁸⁴ For Gosh, the conversion of any partner of married Christian couples is grounds for divorce. He writes that when such a situation occurs, the couple can no longer live together.⁸⁵

Another area where there are laws regarding others is the issues related to servitude. Mkhitar Gosh says that for those who buy servants from a foreign people, if the servants are baptized, a ransom amount should be determined, and the servants should set free when they have worked until the corresponding amount. But if the servants are not baptized, those who had bought the servants can sell them as they wish.⁸⁶ When the articles regulating the relations between the master and servant are examined, it is seen that the punishment the master will receive for his/her crimes varies according to whether the offended servants are Christian or not. If the master beats his/her servant to such an extent that they injure them, the beaten servants are freed if they are Christian, while non-Christians are sold for less than their actual value.⁸⁷ If the master kills his/her servants, then it is written that a blood price must be paid regardless of the religion of the murdered servant.⁸⁸

Apart from concepts such as marriages and divorces and the relations between the master and the servant, there are three laws in the law code that contain provisions about others. One of them is Article 58, which is about what must

81 Celia Jaes Falicov, "Cross-Cultural Marriages", *Clinical Handbook of Couples Therapy*, ed. Neil S. Jacobson and Alan S. Gurman (New York: Guilford Publications, 1995), 234.

82 Bozkurt Güvenç, "Süreçler: Kültürleme, Kültürlenme ve Kültürleşme", *Kültürün ABC'si* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2019), 87.

83 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 120.

84 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 97-98.

85 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 54.

86 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 71.

87 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 74.

88 ԳՆԶ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 72-73.

be done if a Christian kidnaps and sells another Christian child to foreigners. Accordingly, if a Christian kidnaps another Christian child and sells him/her to someone of another nationality, that person shall not be killed but imprisoned. Along with giving donations, a person must be sent to take back the child. If this is unsuccessful, the offender's eyes are cauterized and then s/he is released.⁸⁹ Another law, which has a provision regarding others, describes what punishment will be applied if a person blasphemes God. Blasphemy, which was considered a great crime in medieval societies, is punished according to this article as well; the perpetrator must be executed regardless of whether s/he is Christian or a foreigner.⁹⁰

The last article of the law code on the others is Article 170, which seeks to answer the question of what the punishment will be if a priest kills someone to protect himself while traveling. Mkhitar Gosh says that, in defense of one's comrade, it is legitimate to kill the attackers if they are of another nationality. Since the purity of religious functionaries is important in Christianity, Gosh cannot make a definite judgment about what will happen to them and writes that the event should be examined by the vardapets and decided accordingly.⁹¹

It is seen that Mkhitar Gosh, with the motive of protecting the identity of his own people, tries to prevent the establishment of relations with others in almost any field. However, if Armenian-“other” bilateral relations had not existed in Anatolia at that time, Gosh would not have felt the need to add such articles to his law code. Based on these articles, it can easily be said that Armenians married people of other nationalities in 12-13th century Anatolia. Likewise, it can be understood from the articles on divorce that there were religious conversions among Armenians. From other articles, we can also deduce that Armenians, like other non-Muslims, sought justice in the courts of Muslims, relying on Islamic law in those centuries. Probably because of this, Gosh, wanting to prevent this, recommended in his code not to go to Muslim courts.

This law code written by Mkhitar Gosh describes his ideal Armenian society. Although it is known that the code was used in Armenian communities in various parts of the world, there is no evidence on whether its provisions regarding the others were implemented. It is not possible to imagine that the harsh judgments especially against others such as death, the cutting off of hands, and the cauterization of the eyes were applied in regions under Muslim rule, since these people could always apply to the qadis. At the same time, although Muslim political authorities allowed the establishment of courts for

89 Չնշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 72.

90 Չնշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 84.

91 Չնշ, *Դատաստանագիրք*, 123.

the settlement of religious issues between Christians living in their lands, these courts were not allowed to adjudicate on non-Christian citizens of the state, as it would create a dichotomy and undermine the political authority of Muslim rule. In addition, during the Ottoman Empire, there were various examples in which Christians applied to the qadis to resolve the problems among themselves.⁹² There is no reason not to think that this situation was also experienced in the 12-13th century in Anatolia.

Conclusion

Although Armenians had to live under Byzantine, Iranian and Arabic rule throughout history, they did not feel the need to have a written national law code (codex) until the Turkish rule in Anatolia. The reason for this was that the Byzantine, Iranian and Arabic administrations in the regions where Armenians lived generally ruled these places by appointing a noble person from that region or by sending a governor from the capitals, and they did not expect anything from them other than to ensure public order and regular tax collection. For this reason, Armenians were able to be independent in their own domestic laws and with their own traditions and customs under such different administrations, and they benefited from the translations of the religious laws of Byzantine, which was also a Christian state. However, unlike the others, the Turks came to the regions where the Armenians lived with their own population and institutions and established a strong central administration there. The Armenians thus became acquainted with the administration of a foreign nation and inevitably had to establish relations with the members and institutions of that nation. As a result of these relations, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the Armenians went to Muslim courts and sought justice there.

This close relationship with foreigners must have prompted Armenian scholars and religious functionaries, who were afraid that Armenians would lose their identity, into action and Mkhitar Gosh felt the need to write a law code to prevent this situation. Indeed, Gosh received support from both political and religious leaders of the period while writing the code. While preparing his code, Gosh used the laws of other peoples around him and especially some translations made from Byzantine laws. As sources for this code, he also used his own religious books and Armenian traditions and customs, which he described as "the things that we have seen and heard from our kin". For this reason, the code also includes important data on Armenian culture.

⁹² For various examples, see: Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukuki Durumları*, 247-249.

The law code was widely accepted by the Armenian community not only in Anatolia, but also by the Armenian colonies in various parts of the world such as Poland, Ukraine, India, and Sudan. In this way, the code was translated firstly into Latin in the 16th century, and then into the Kipchak language with Armenian letters and Polish. It remained in use in Armenian colonies around the world until the beginning of the 20th century.

Mkhitar Gosh's work is also a source for Turkish historical research. Although the law code has a negative point of view towards Muslims, it gives valuable information about the condition of Armenian-“other” relations in 12-13th century Anatolia. From the articles about the others in the law code, it can be easily seen that close relations were established between Muslims and Armenians in 12-13th century Anatolia, that there were intermarriages, and that there were Armenians who converted to Islam.

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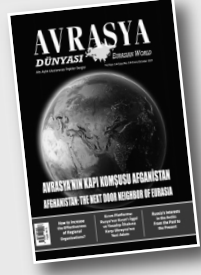
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