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# THE PERCEPTION OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION IN THE SPANISH DIPLOMATIC REPORTS (1914-1922)\*

İSPANYOL DİPLOMATİK RAPORLARINDA  
ERMENİ SORUNU ALGISI (1914-1922)

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**Abstract:** The Armenian Question has been the focus of many national and foreign academic studies in the field of history. The primary sources used in such studies generally belong to the archives of the states like Russia, Ottoman, Britain, and France that had been the parties of the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin and where the Armenian Question had become an international issue. Thus, the scope of the documents and the studies based on them differs according to those states' policies toward the Ottoman territories and to their relationship with the Ottoman Empire in the World War I either as an enemy or as an ally. On the other hand, the studies based on the archives of the states out of this circle are low in number. This paper studies the Armenian Question in the light of the diplomatic reports of 1914-1922 of Spain, which was a neutral state during World War I and thereby preserved its diplomatic corps in the Ottoman territory. Moreover, Spain neither had any role in the emergence of the Armenian Question, nor had the issue created a direct effect on bilateral relations with the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, with this study, it is aimed to present the perception of a neutral and impartial state about the events and developments of the mentioned years, which have led to the genocide

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allegations today. It is also aimed to demonstrate the change in the Spanish perception about the roles of the Turkish authorities, the Armenians, and the Great Powers in a period from the First World War to the era of the War of Liberation (also known as the National Struggle in Turkish), as well as about the responsible party of the events of 1915. In this study based on the diplomatic reports obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, it is expected to determine the turning points of the Armenian Question, which transformed from a historical phenomenon into a political issue.

**Keywords:** Spain, Armenian Question, Diplomacy, Perception, Ottoman Empire, National Independence War, First World War

**Öz:** Ermeni Sorunu, tarih yazıcılığı içinde yerli ve yabancı birçok akademik çalışmaya konu olagelmıştır. Bu tür çalışmalarda kullanılan birincil kaynaklar, çoğunlukla, Ermeni Sorununun uluslararası bir mesele haline geldiği Ayastefanos ve Berlin Antlaşmalarının tarafları olan başta Rusya ve Osmanlı olmak üzere İngiltere, Fransa vb. devletlerin arşivlerine aittir. Dolayısıyla belgelerin ve çalışmaların bakış açısı; söz konusu devletlerin Osmanlı toprakları üzerindeki politikalarına ve Birinci Dünya Savaşında Osmanlı Devleti ile muhasımlık-müttefiklik bağıntısına göre farklılık göstermektedir. Öte yandan, bu bağıntı dışında kalan devletlerin arşivlerine dayanan konuyla ilgili çalışmaların sayısı ise oldukça azdır. Çalışmamız konuyu; Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında tarafsız bir devlet olan, bu sayede Osmanlı Devleti topraklarında diplomatik teşkilatını koruyan İspanya'nın 1914-1922 yıllarına ait diplomatik raporları ışığında ele almaktadır. Zira İspanya, Ermeni Sorununun ortaya çıkışında herhangi bir rol oynamadığı gibi; mesele, Osmanlı Devleti'yle ikili ilişkilerinde de doğrudan bir etken oluşturmamıştır. Bu şekilde; günümüzde soykırım iddialarına sebebiyet veren bu yıllarda yaşanan gelişmelerin, konuyla doğrudan doğruya ilgisi ya da çıkarı bulunmayan bir devletin diplomatik temsilcileri tarafından nasıl algılandığının ortaya konması hedeflenmektedir. Birinci Dünya Savaşından Millî Mücadele yıllarına uzanan süreçte, Ermeni Sorunundaki Türk devlet idarecilerinin, Ermeni tebaanın ve Büyük Devletlerin rolüne dair İspanyol algısının geçirdiği değişime dikkat çekilmesi hedeflenmektedir. İspanyol diplomasisi nazarında Ermeni Sorununun ortaya çıkışında ve özellikle 1915 yılı Tehcir Kanununun uygulanışı sırasında yaşanan olayların sorumluluğunun; Osmanlı Devleti'nden Büyük Devletlere; Büyük Devletlerden Osmanlı Ermeni tebaasına kayışındaki sebepler ortaya koyulmaya çalışılmaktadır. İspanya Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivinden edinilen diplomatik raporların kaynaklık ettiği çalışmada; Ermeni Sorununun tarihsel bir olgudan, siyasi bir olguya dönüşmesinde etken olan tarihsel kırılma noktalarının ortaya konması hedeflenmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İspanya, Ermeni Sorunu, Diplomasi, Algı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Millî Mücadele, Birinci Dünya Savaşı

## Introduction

The Armenian component of the multinational and multiethnic Ottoman Empire had lived in peace and prosperity; and had been named as the “the loyal nation” (*millet-i sâdıka*) by the rulers due to their services in the echelons of the Ottoman government. The conflict between the Armenian and Muslim-Turkish components was rooted in the European states’ policies to influence the Ottoman non-Muslim subjects since the second half of the 19th century. Especially during the Ottoman-Russian War between 1877-1878, Russia, in line with its interests over Caucasia, had conducted propaganda and initiatives that had cultivated the Armenians’ desire to establish a nation-state of their own. The signing of the Treaty of San Stefano after the war that had ended with the Ottoman defeat and the Berlin Treaty that had been signed in its place had led to the birth of the Armenian Question, even causing it to gain an international dimension. As per these treaties, the Ottoman Empire had agreed “to conduct reforms in provinces where the people were Armenian and to guarantee the peace and safety of the Armenians against the Circassians and Kurds and the governance of all European states on the conduct of the reforms”.<sup>1</sup>

The Ottoman Armenians, upon the reforms promised to them not being materialized and the Berlin Treaty not providing benefits for them as it did for the Greeks and Bulgarians after their rebellions; had initiated armed uprisings from the 1880’s onward. Apart from a few committees formed in Ottoman lands, the Hunchak Revolutionary Party that was formed in Switzerland in 1887 aimed for the union of Armenians in the lands of Turkey, Russia, and Iran under an independent Armenia. From 1896, the Dashnaksutyun organization was in the forefront of Armenian activities. Many Armenian uprisings that were carried out between 1890-1896 and the precautions that the Ottoman Empire took against these were used abroad for Armenian propaganda by those organizations. Russia had cultivated the Armenian organizations in accordance with its policies towards the Ottoman lands.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu 1774-1923 Uluslararası İlişkiler Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001), p. 217-228; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey* (Utah: The University of Utah Press, 2005), p. 7, 8.

2 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 3-30. For detailed information on this subject, please see: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Ermeni Komiteleri (1891-1895)* (Ankara: 2001); Erdal İter, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermeniler’in Silâhlanma Faaliyetleri ve Milli Mücadele’de Ermeniler (1890-1923)* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2005) ; *Ermeni Komitelerin Amaçları ve İhtilal Hareketleri, Meşrutiyet’in İlanından Önce ve Sonra* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2003); Orhan Koloğlu ve Mehmet Okur, “Taşnak Komitesi’nin Anadolu’da Örgütlenişine Dair Bir Rapor”, *Karadeniz*, Sayı 10, 2011, p. 127-134; *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918, Cilt I-II* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2005).

Even though the Ottoman Empire had put the Eastern Anatolia reforms back on the agenda following the Balkan Wars, the reforms could not be implemented due to the outbreak of the First World War and Ottoman Empire's participation in this war. The developments during the beginning of the war even led to the Armenian issue gaining a new dimension. Together with the military recruitments in the framework of the Ottoman Empire declaring mobilization on the 3rd of August 1914, Armenian uprisings were observed in settlements with dense Armenian populations, and Armenian soldiers and officers that were serving in the Ottoman army began joining the separatist uprisings by fleeing from the army with their weapons.<sup>3</sup> Together with the Ottoman Empire de facto joining the First World War, voluntary Armenian regiments crossed the border and joined the Russian army. The Ottoman Armenians, while spying and providing logistic support for the enemy states, at the same time, attacked the local Muslim people.<sup>4</sup> The Armenian committees and armed gangs formed by them were covertly receiving arms and equipment aid from Britain and France, similarly as from Russia, attacked the Ottoman army's reinforcements and independent troops and participated in events such as the disruption of telegraph lines and the raiding of police stations.<sup>5</sup> During a time when the Ottoman Empire was fighting in the Gallipoli, Caucasia and Syria fronts, such Armenian gang activities forced the Ottoman government to dispatch its forces more to the uprisings than the fronts. However, the Sublime Porte's (*Babiâli*) precautions for public order were insufficient. Upon those events in Eastern Anatolia obtaining the status of a general uprising, by the beginning of May, the removal of the insurrectionist Armenians from the war zones and sending them to other regions was put into effect,<sup>6</sup> and this

3 Esat Arslan, "1915 Zorunlu Göç Geçici Yasasının Gerekliliği ve Uygulamalarının Değişik Açılardan Değerlendirilmesi", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 7, Sonbahar 2002, p. 23.

4 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 92. Also see: Mehmet Perinçek, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye Ermenilerinin Rus Ordularına Katılımına Dair Yeni Belgeler", *Karadeniz*, Sayı 10, 2011, p. 9-50 ; Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi I, 1906-1918* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1995).

5 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri* (İstanbul: Babiâli Kültür Yayıncılığı, 2004), p. 48-54. For these states' relationship with Ottoman Armenians, please see: Yusuf Sarıncay, "Fransa'nın Ermenilere Yönelik Politikasının Tarihi Temelleri", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 7, Sonbahar 2002, p. 55-70 ; Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri (1879-1918)*, *Cilt I* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2004) ; Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Rus İlişkileri (1907-1921)*, *Cilt III* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2006) ; Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-İngiliz İlişkileri (1896-1922)*, *Cilt IV* (Ankara, 2004). The most important of these kinds of insurrections and cooperation with the enemy was the insurrection that they started in Van, Çatak, and Bitlis in April 1915 that would expedite the invasion of Van by the Russian army: Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 95-109 ; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermenilerin Suriye'ye Nakli: Sürgün mü, Soykırım mı, Belgeler* (Ankara: Ankara Ticaret Odası, 2005), p. 8. For details on the Van insurrection, please see: Ergünöz Akçora, *Van ve Çevresinde Ermeni İsyancıları (1896-1916)* (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 1994); Faiz Demiroğlu, *Van'da Ermeni Mezâlimi (1895-1920)* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1985).

6 Berna Türkdöğen, "Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri (Tehcirden Günümüze)", Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2006, p. 69-70.

practice was legalized with the 29 May 1915 Relocation Law.<sup>7</sup> In this way, it was decided that the Armenian population in the regions where these committees were operating would be transported to and settled in Syria and Aleppo as demilitarized zones of the First World War. The basis of today's genocide claims mainly derives from the events experienced during the conduct of relocations, such as the attacks on Armenian convoys and the deaths connected to epidemics as well as the negligence of some Ottoman civilian and military officials in the process of relocation.

Spain, which had announced its neutrality in the First World War,<sup>8</sup> had assumed the role of representing the rights and interests of the warring states in enemy lands between 1914-1918. With the number of states joining the war increasing, the Spanish diplomatic organization deployed itself in the center of war diplomacy by appointing its Portugal and Romania embassy for the German interests; its Germany, Iran and Belgium embassy for the French interests; its Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Belgium embassy for the Russian interests; its Italy and Portugal embassy for the Austria-Hungary interests; its Central Powers embassies for British interests, etc.

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With the Ottoman Empire joining the war within the Central Powers bloc from November 1914, the duty of protecting its rights and interests in the Allied Powers' lands was again carried out by Spain. This way, the Spanish embassy in Istanbul got the chance to closely follow the developments in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the Ottoman Empire's policies in the war, and the Sublime Porte's political pulse.

Among the embassy's diplomatic reports that were informing the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Armenian Question was taken into consideration for the first time in the context of the Eastern Anatolia reforms. In the reports of January and February of 1914, it is indicated that the meetings between the Great Powers and the Sublime Porte had been continuing for 35 years and that most recently the ambassadors of Germany and Russia had

7 Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermenilerin Sevke ve İskânı (1878-1920)* (Ankara, 2007), p.155-157. For the text of the law, please see: Salâhaddin Kardeş, "Tehcir" ve *Emval-i Metrûke Mevzuatı* (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2008), p. 17-20.

8 *Gaceta de Madrid*, No: 219, August 7, 1914, p. 308.

prepared a report regarding the necessary arrangements for the reforms to be completed and had presented them to the Ottoman government.<sup>9</sup> The ongoing negotiations for subjects such as determining the nationality of the consultants and inspectors that would serve in the cities of Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Sivas, Diyarbakır, Harput and their periods of service<sup>10</sup> were concluded with accord during the beginning of February.<sup>11</sup> In the news of the Ottoman press, it is assured that a full accord was reached between the Russian and German ambassadors representing the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente and the Sublime Porte. According to the decision, the Ottoman geography would be divided into six regions and a chief inspector would be assigned to each one. The two chief inspectors that were to be assigned to the two regions that comprised the Eastern provinces would be chosen from the subjects of neutral states.<sup>12</sup> Spain's Istanbul Ambassador of that period Germán María de Ory y Morey<sup>13</sup> was of the opinion that those reforms were officialized as they were announced by the Ottoman Agency (*Osmanlı Ajansı*) and therefore the issue had been completely resolved. Moreover, in the mentioned reports, it is indicated that the reason the Ottoman government brought the Eastern Anatolia reforms up the agenda once again after 35 years was to ensure a decision favorable to the Ottoman Empire in the Aegean Islands question that the Balkan Wars had brought about, and also quicken the approval of the credit requested from France. After February, no Istanbul Embassy reports can be found

9 Archivo General del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación, (AMAE), Correspondencia, Legajo: 1782, Despacho No: 182, From the Istanbul Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IEMFA), "Concerning Important Reforms that Are Required to be Made in East Anatolia", Istanbul, July 20, 1914.

10 It is understood that alongside Germany and Russia, the other Great Powers were involved as well in the offer presented to the Sublime Porte about the application method of the East Anatolia reforms. This can be understood from the fact that the offer was prepared by the chief consultants (first dragomen) of Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy who had gather in Istanbul under the chair of Russia's international legal counselor Mandelstam who was present in Istanbul. *Ibid.*

11 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1782, Despacho No: 46, IEMFA, "Concerning the Intense Activity Engaged By the Sublime Porte for the Resolution for the Resolution of All Matters with the Great Powers," Istanbul, February 10, 1914.

12 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1782, Despacho No: 62, IEMFA, "Explains the Application of the Reforms in Anatolia," Istanbul, February 24, 1914.

13 Germán María de Ory y Morey (1853-1932) had worked in Spain's Montevideo Embassy between 1907-1912. Between 1912-1913, he had worked as a department chief in Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between February 1914-June 1914, he served in Spain's Istanbul Embassy as an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. He retired in 1919. The diplomat was also declared Marquis of Montecorto in 1920 and 1924. *Gaceta de Madrid*, No: 12, January 12, 1907, p. 133 ; *Gaceta de Madrid*, No: 52, February 21, 1913, p. 458 ; *Gaceta de Madrid*, No: 4, January 4i 1919, p. 34 ; *La Epoca*, July 16, 1920, p. 1 ; *ABC*, May 6, 1924, p. 19 ; Suna Suner, "The General Index of the Ambassadors to and from the Ottoman Empire", <http://archive.donjuanarchiv.at/go/bot/> (12.06.2015) ; <http://compactgen.com/es/m/mon.htm> (12.06.2015) ; Óscar Javier Sánchez Sanz, "Diplomacia y Política Exterior España, 1890-1914," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Recent Era History, Faculty of Geography and History, Madrid Complutense University, Madrid, 2004, p. 149.

regarding developments on reforms<sup>14</sup> or the Armenian Question throughout 1914.

### The Years of the First World War

It is noteworthy that, in the archives of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are very few reports that were sent to the Ministry by the Istanbul Embassy on March-May of 1915. Furthermore, in these reports, there is no information regarding the developments such as the Armenian uprisings that occurred during those dates, the Armenian gangs' cooperation activities with the enemy, or the enactment of the Relocation Law. The same situation is valid for the reports of the following months of 1915.<sup>15</sup> Even the reports that can be considered related to the subject, the matter is only indirectly referred to on the occasion of other developments and events. However, the terms used in the reports by the Spain's Istanbul representative of the time Ambassador Julián María del Arroyo y Moret<sup>16</sup> and his perspective on the situation are striking as they reflect Spanish diplomacy's approach towards the Armenian Question.

In his 23 November 1915 report in which he mentions the Ottoman State's relations with its allies during the First World War, the ambassador makes some observations on the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) Government towards foreigners and minorities (mainly the Armenians). It must

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14 In fact, the appointment of the foreign chief inspectors to serve in the Eastern provinces beginning in the month of June, Monsieur Vestenenk (who had served as senior official in the Netherlands' colonies) and Major Nikola Hof (who was serving as a law instructor at the Norway Military Academy), had already been made. Münir Süreyya Bey, *Ermeni Meselesinin Siyasî Tarihçesi (1877-1914)* (Ankara: Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Yayını, 2001), p. 117, 118.

15 It is seen that the first document associated with the Armenian Question in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain was sent to the Ministry from Spain's Bern Embassy. This document is a declaration prepared by the Armenian Aid Committee of Switzerland (*Comité de secours aux Arméniens*) in September-October 1915 titled "Appeal/Call". The declaration, drawing the world public opinion's attention to the events experienced during the application of the Relocation Law, calls upon people to protest the Ottoman State. Spain's Bern Embassy had only presented the declaration as an attachment and had not made any comments regarding this subject in the report. AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 3025, Despacho No: 203, From the Bern Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Relays A Circular from the Armenian Aid Committee," Bern, October 16, 1915. It is understood that the Ottoman government had found out about this declaration via the press and had taken precautions to refute these claims. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Hariciye, Siyasi Kısım, (HR. SYS.), Dosya No: 2881, Gömlek No:3, 07.10.1915.

16 Julián María del Arroyo y Moret had worked in Spain's embassy in the city of Lima accredited to Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia in the years 1908-1912, and had worked in Spain's Havana Embassy in the years 1912-1913. After having worked as a department chief in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain in 1914, Arroyo served in Spain's Istanbul Embassy as an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary between the dates June 1914-June 1918. Gaceta de Madrid, No: 107, April 16, 1912, p. 113 ; Gaceta de Madrid, No: 153, June 2, 1914, p. 591 ; Guía Oficial de España 1914, p. 126 ; Guía Oficial de España 1915, Madrid, 1915, p. 140 ; [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anexo:Embajadores\\_de\\_Espa%C3%B1a\\_en\\_Ecuador](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anexo:Embajadores_de_Espa%C3%B1a_en_Ecuador) (23.06.2015).

be expressed that the ambassador does not provide any information on the decision-implementation-result stages of these policies; the language he uses almost gives the impression that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was already informed regarding the situation. According to this, the Young Turks' xenophobia and insolence were on the rise. According to the ambassador, the Young Turks - having attained victory at the Battle of Gallipoli- were even openly mentioning that "Turks will be sufficient to survive" and "of the necessity of getting rid of all foreigners", and that they were referring to the minorities as "weeds".<sup>17</sup> Ambassador Arroyo claims that the Young Turks had done away with the Armenians with this mentality and that they were initiating the same conduct towards Europeans in general and the Greeks in specific. He even makes the comment that the CUP administration, by cleaning out -in their terms- the weeds, they were also taking away the healthy and fertile soil and leaving pebbles and rocks where no plants can sprout. It can be understood that the Spanish diplomat perceived the mentioned words and comments attributed to the CUP as an open hostility toward Christians/non-Muslims beyond xenophobia. It is clear that the ambassador believed that the Ottoman government conducted a "weeding out policy" against the Armenian and Greek subjects, and that he saw these minorities as the beneficial fraction of the Ottoman community and the Muslim-Turkish component as -to put it mildly- unproductive and useless. In addition to this, in light of the words in the report stating that "the neutral state representatives fear the Young Turks' xenophobia," an interpretation can be made that the rising Turkish nationalism in the CUP administration was disturbing the representatives of the states that were not involved in the First World War.

The Armenian Question was directly mentioned in the Istanbul embassy's reports for the first time in February 1916 after the Ottoman government sent a booklet in French titled *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement and the Truth Regarding Government Precautions (Vérité sur le Mouvement Révolutionnaire Arménien et les Mesures Gouvernementales)* to the embassy.<sup>18</sup> In this booklet published in 1916 in Istanbul, the Ottoman government puts forth the origin of the Armenian Question and its development in general terms. The booklet argues that while the Armenians had been a nation that had gained the trust of the Ottoman Empire and had been able to reach the highest positions in state administration and the economy, following the signing of the treaty after the 1878 Berlin Congress, they came under the protection of the

17 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2702, Despacho No: 458, IEMFA, "Confidential", Istanbul, November 23, 1915.

18 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No: 101, IEMFA, "The Brochure Published by the Government Concerning the Armenian Revolutionary Movement," Istanbul, February 29, 1916.



Empire's enemy, Russia. According to the booklet, from that date onwards, the Armenians in the Empire, with the powerful competition and incentive derived from the treaty, had formed the underground organizations called Hunchak and Dashnak in order to draw Europe's attention towards themselves.

The booklet points out the effective role that Russia had played in these committees' activities for "the desire of an independent Armenia". Especially to support this thesis, it quotes the Russian Tsar's following statement; "Armenians, it is time for you to be rid of the despotism and slavery which you have been exposed to for five centuries and which some of you are still a victim of. To benefit from freedom and justice, join your blood brothers under the scepter of the Tsardom." The booklet displays samples of the correspondences showcasing the Russian ambassadors' and consulates' contact with the Armenian committees and the provocative articles in the Armenian press, and summarizes the committees' attacks on the Ottoman army and the Muslim people. Among the locations that are mentioned as the centers of such attacks are Muş, Kozan, Van, Bitlis, Zeytun, Diyarbakır, Sivas, Suşehri, Merzifon, Amasya, Şarki-Karahisar, İzmit, Adapazarı, Bursa, Boğazlıyan, Maraş, and Urfa. The booklet also explains the grounds for the Relocation Law, issued by the Ottoman government. According to this; "the necessity to provide inner peace and external defense [emerged] with requests coming from all over the Empire [regarding similar attacks], has necessitated to removal of the Armenians from locations where their presence is considered threatening and to transfer them to inner regions that are safer and away from foreign influence." Along with accepting that the Armenians "had been victims of deplorable abuse and attacks" during this implementation, it is stated that "because of the deep rage the Muslim people had for the Armenians who were working towards betrayal and uprising to endanger the country of which they are citizens of, these events are inevitable despite being tragic". "Despite the precautions taken against reoccurrence of those kinds of completely unpredictable events," attacks were carried out against the convoys, where the gendarmeries and the police officers who were in charge of protecting the Armenians' lives and property were also killed. In the face of such events, a special law was enacted, whereby a commission was formed for the protection of the property of the relocated Armenians.<sup>19</sup> In the booklet, samples are presented of the report that this commission had prepared as a result of an

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19 Per the bylaw issued on 10 June 1915, the Abandoned Properties Commission (*Emvâl-i Metrûke Komisyonu*) to be established in the cities were tasked with registering and protecting the property of the Armenian subjected to the relocation. Kemal Çiçek, "Türk-Ermeni Anlaşmazlığının Siyasi Kökenleri: Tehcir ve Dönüş Üzerine Yaklaşımlar," *Teori*, Sayı 183, Nisan 2005, p. 78. To examine the text of the "Ahar Mahallere Nakledilen Eşhasın Emval ve Düyün ve Matlûbat-ı Metrûkesi Hakkında Kanun-u Muvakkat," please see: "Tehcir" ve Emval-i ...", p. 23-31.

investigation in Sivas. According to this, 53 Ottoman civil, military, judicial, and tax officers were sent to the Court Martial for misconduct and were about to receive criminal sentences. For the 56 people compromised of civil servants, gendarmeries, and soldiers, the Court Martial had imposed compensation penalties of varying quantities and prison sentences varying between one

*In his report, the Spanish ambassador Arroyo does not make any evaluations regarding the validity or falsity of the Ottoman government's explanations about the events that had occurred since the genesis of the Armenian Question or the accusations made against of the Allied States. Again, in a similar way, he disregards the justifications and information that had been stated regarding the Relocation Law's enactment and implementation.*

month and three years, and the gendarmeries' ranks were demoted. Similarly, 46 officers and soldiers, two gendarmerie commanders, and two privates of the Ottoman army were to be brought to the Court Martial for various crimes. Other than these, 34 people were sentenced to compensation penalties and prison between one month and three years for similar crimes, and four people were sent to the court for crimes of robbery and extortion.

The booklet describes the statements and publications of the Allied Bloc's statesmen and press accusing the Ottoman government of "heading towards a special policy aiming to annihilate the Armenian and other Christian components" as a "web of nonsense". The evaluation of the Sublime Porte towards these types of accusations is as follows:

"With the aim of placing the Ottoman army in a dire situation along with instigating a revolution in the country, the ones who encourage and agitate the Armenians to revolt against the State by presenting the enticing hopes of an independent Armenia are none other than the Allied Powers.

And the unfortunate Armenians have rushed into this colossal struggle only with their dream of reaching their national ideal. The necessary precautions taken against them are only the outcomes of their doing and the doing of those who had encouraged them."<sup>20</sup>

In his report, the Spanish ambassador Arroyo does not make any evaluations regarding the validity or falsity of the Ottoman government's explanations about the events that had occurred since the genesis of the Armenian Question

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20 The above-mentioned booklet was accessed from the attachment of embassy report with the following tag: AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No: 101, IEMFA, "The Brochure Published by the Government Concerning the Armenian Revolutionary Movement," Istanbul, February 29, 1916.

or the accusations made against of the Allied States. Again, in a similar way, he disregards the justifications and information that had been stated regarding the Relocation Law's enactment and implementation. Despite this, he writes that "even though the [Ottoman] Government appears sure of itself before the foreign states' protests regarding its 'indefinable treatment' against the Armenians, it has actually deepened the issue by publishing this book." According to him, it was necessary to really go deep into the issue in order to fully understand where the Young Turks would stop. Because to him, with this booklet, the Young Turks were aiming to prepare the public opinion for their new persecutions. These statements of the ambassador display his deep mistrust towards the CUP Government and thus the booklet's contents. Moreover, he strikingly states that the Ottoman government raged at the survival of the Armenians by aiding the Russians in the Caucasus and also felt jealous of the Armenians' being hardworking and smart compared to lazy and useless Turks. In that case, the Spanish diplomat believes that the relocation was a product of the Young Turks' fanaticism despite the Ottoman government's open rejection of any annihilation policy against the Armenians.

The Spanish diplomat maintains his same mistrustful approach in the report regarding the photograph album titled *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement and Desire (Die Leidenschaft und Bewegung armenische Revolutionäre)* that the Ottoman government had sent to the Spanish embassy.<sup>21</sup> Despite the governments stating that the people photographed in this album were collaborator Armenians who had joined the Russian army, Ambassador Arroyo argues that the album does not prove this and that these people, instead of being Ottoman Armenians, could also have been Russians fighting for their country. On the other hand, he avoids making comments regarding a second booklet that the Ottoman government had sent to the Spanish embassy in November (this booklet was a continuation of the booklet *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement and the Truth Regarding Government Precautions*).<sup>22</sup> Rather, he mentions statements of the Armenian circles in Istanbul that constitute a response to the claims in the booklet. According to those, the Young Turks had been supportive of the prosperity of all non-Muslim people under the Constitution following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era, however now, they were making use of the Armenian nationalist movements as an excuse to strengthen their rule. They also argued that it was very difficult

21 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No: 171, IEMFA, "Relays the Album Concerning the Armenian Revolutionary Movement," Istanbul, April 21, 1916. This album which the ambassador had indicated that he was presenting as an attachment was accessed during archival research.

22 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No: 466, IEMFA, "Relays the Second File Concerning the Armenians," Istanbul, November ?, 1916. This booklet which the ambassador had indicated that he was presenting as an attachment was accessed during archival research.

to prove that the weapons photographed as captured weapons in the Ottoman government's publications actually belonged to the Armenians. Even if it was proven, they reminded that the Government had distributed weapons to them long before, so that they could protect themselves against the Kurds. Lastly, the Ottoman Armenians stated that; "Apart from their sympathy, they chose to join the Russian army because they are running away from the racist tortures of the Turks and from their sole goal of death." It is striking that while ambassador Arroyo avoids making his own comments and evaluations in his report, he expresses these counter-claims as if they were the common opinion of all the Ottoman Armenians. Taking into account his distrustful approach against the claims in the Sublime Porte's previous publications and his general approach towards the Young Turks' minority policies; it can be said that the Spanish diplomat shared the Armenians' arguments and views.

Another development that had taken place in the First World War I was the annulment of the 1863 Charter of Armenian Nationals (*Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi*) and the enactment of the Armenian Catholicosate and Patriarchate Charter (*Ermeni Katogigosluk ve Patriklik Nizamnamesi*) in its place on 10 August 1916.<sup>23</sup> The biggest change that the new charter had made was the merging of the Sis and Ahtamar Catholicosates (despite them being at the highest level in the spiritual hierarchy) and their articulation to the Istanbul and Jerusalem Patriarchates, and the closing Istanbul Patriarchate and its transfer to the one in Jerusalem. Another change was the removal of the General Assembly (*Meclis-i Umumi*), formed of 140 people and in charge of the election of the patriarch and the patriarchate's clergy and civil council and its replacement with a 12-person Religious Council (*Meclis-i Ruhani*) and a Mixed Council (*Meclis-i Muhtelit*).<sup>24</sup>

The Spanish diplomat Arroyo evaluates these changes as "a blow on the low degree of freedom that a race and people, who have been subjected to discrimination and mistreatment, owned within the Empire," and comments that "the Young Turk Government is eager to pulverize the existing and the traditional".<sup>25</sup> According to him, the Russian armies' entry into the Turkish area

23 Murat Bebiroğlu, *Tanzimat'tan II. Meşrutiyet'e Ermeni Nizamnameleri* (İstanbul: Ohan Matbaacılık, 2003), p. 158,159.

24 Bebiroğlu, *Tanzimat'tan II. Meşrutiyet'e...*, *Ibid.* ; Bengi Kümbül, "Tercüman-I Hakikat Gazetesine Göre Osmanlı Ermenileri (1914-1918)," *Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Eskişehir*, p. 39-42. For the hierarchy of the Armenian Church, please see: Mahmut Niyazi Sezgin, "Ermenistan'da Dini Yapı-Dini Hayat", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 8 (Kış 2003), p. 153-176. Detailed information regarding the Armenian Church hierarchy and the changes in the charter has been provided: Türkkan Tunalı, "İspanyol Diplomatik Kaynaklarına Göre..." p. 181.

25 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No: 347, IEMFA, "The Charter Reform for the Armenian Patriarchate," Istanbul, August 21, 1916.

in the Caucasus had brought the Armenian Question to a critical point. At this point, the importance of the General Assembly that was going to be shut down becomes evident once again. The ambassador states that the Young Turks believed that the Apostolic (Gregorian) Armenians had much more privilege than the the Greek Orthodox community and that, unlike the two assemblies of the Greek Orthodox's, the Armenian General Assembly had been provided with wide legislative prerogatives. According to the Young Turks, the 1863 Charter had created revolutionary Armenian organizations and many Armenian priests had become committee members due to the religious institutions' being influenced by political parties. Ambassador Arroyo accepts the degree of truth in this view of the Ottoman government. According to him, "when thinking of the sermons being used for political and nationalist propaganda and high-ranking priests being spiritually connected to the Etchmiadzin Church, it is natural for the Armenian priests to comply with the provocations of the Russians." Moreover, in line with its political plans over Anatolia, the Moscow government had been guaranteeing broad authority and prerogatives to the Etchmiadzin Church during the recent years. Despite this, the Spanish diplomat attributes the effective influence that the Etchmiadzin Church had obtained over the Ottoman Armenians (through the use of spiritual supremacy), once again, to the persecution and maltreatment by the Ottoman government. According to him, "it is certain that the administration that the Young Turks had implemented on the poor Armenians had served the cause of the Russians and led them to gain the sympathy of the Armenians". The ambassador states that, otherwise, the Armenians themselves would have opposed such a justification.

Meanwhile, the Ottoman press had written that the regulation did not abuse the previous religious rights and prerogatives, on the contrary "it highlights the freedom of the Patriarchate so that it does not become a toy of the committee members." In response to the press's approach, the Spanish diplomat Arroyo writes that "nobody is disregarding that a large majority of the Armenians living in Turkey (excluding the settled ones in Syria, Palestine, and the two metropolises of Istanbul and Izmir) were killed ruthlessly and were subjected to a harsh relocation law that meant for them to be in exile in the Arab-Palestinian deserts where they would starve to death." According to him, for exactly this reason, the Armenians of the capital had been surprised by the Ottoman government's establishment of a Catholicosate-Patriarchate in a more practical and suitable way, rather than shutting down the Patriarchate completely and relocating the patriarchs and priests. Ambassador Arroyo evaluates this act of the government as "as a plan to preserve the remaining few hundred thousand of the pre-war two million Armenians so that it would be a 'respectful novelty'." Lastly, the ambassador believes that following this

reform, the government -wanting to interfere in everything existing in Turkey- would now target the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the other churches imposing onto them new arrangements. In light of this report, it is clear that the Spanish diplomacy was of the belief that the CUP Government was conducting a policy to directly annihilate and discourage the Armenians. Moreover, as it has been highlighted in previous reports, it becomes clear that the Spanish diplomacy was of the view that this policy was not limited to the Catholic Armenians and that it would gravitate towards other nationalities who were members of Christianity's other sects.

In the Istanbul Embassy reports of 1917, the Armenian Question is not discussed directly approached in 1917.<sup>26</sup> By the year 1918, it is mentioned with the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty between the Alliance Bloc and Russia and the Russian army's withdrawal from the areas that it had occupied in Eastern Anatolia. In his report, Ambassador Arroyo states that the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials had personally guaranteed him that the Empire would be respectful towards the Christian populations in the areas that the Russians were withdrawing from.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Minister of Foreign Affairs had stated to him that the Armenians residing in Europe were provoking the foreign nations against the Turks, that the Armenians were initiating activities of murder, arson, and demolition especially in the areas that were invaded by the Russians, and that despite this, the Ottoman government had decided to act respectfully towards everyone in this region regardless of their culture, religion, or ethnicity and to rebuild the settlements that had been destroyed. The Ottoman government, which had sent a press convoy to follow the advances in the region and to provide information, expected foreign governments to acknowledge and appreciate this approach. However, it can be seen that Ambassador Arroyo's evaluation of the government's plan and activities exactly negates this expectation. The ambassador wrote that "the hate between the Turks and Armenians is real and both sides have been attempting to avenge the insults done to them at every opportunity." According to him, Germany, which was capable of ending this situation, was aiding the CUP from the very beginning. The ambassador wrote that the general expectation after the war was that Germany would have control over the Ottoman Government

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26 Between the period of November 1916 and March 1918, the Ottoman Armenians are mentioned in the Spanish diplomatic correspondence only in the framework of humanitarian aid efforts during the First World War. In our research conducted at the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, we have not been able to reach any other report directly dealing with the Armenian Question. This makes us think that such reports may have been lost in the archives or that the Spanish representatives' interest in the subject may have diminished in time.

27 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 3025, Despacho No:119, IEMFA, "Confidential", Istanbul, April 29, 1918.

-like the control previously possessed by the foreign powers- and that rough days were awaiting the Christians, especially the surviving Armenians.

In that case: it can be said that during the developments of the First World War, the Spanish diplomacy's perception towards the Armenian Question was that the CUP Government was directly targeting the Armenian component and that policies based on fanaticism were playing a dominant role; and that every explanation and claim by the Ottoman government -instead of creating any difference in this perception- actually cemented this belief.

### The Periods of the Armistice and the War of Liberation (National Struggle)

During the days following the Ottoman Empire's signing of the Armistice of Mudros on the 30th of October, 1918 the Spanish diplomatic reports referred to the Armenian Question only based on the domestic political developments and in one sentence. For example, the report of 19 November states that during the previous day, during the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) session that had assembled due to Tevfik Pasha establishing a new cabinet, "the killings of the Armenians and the Government's vote of confidence" were discussed.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the 1 December report notifying Istanbul's occupation by the Allied Powers refers to the subject as: "the pro-Allied newspapers in Istanbul are exploitatively campaigning against the Turks regarding the assumed killers of the Armenians."<sup>29</sup> Despite the report not providing any further information; it can be said that, by indicating the Allied press' excess exploitation, foreign state propaganda in the Armenian Question was mentioned for the first time in the Spanish diplomatic correspondence. Lastly, the 9 December report expresses that in one of the sessions of the Ottoman Chamber of Notables/Senate (*Meclis-i Ayan*), some of the ministers that were present in the government during the war were questioned regarding "the killings of the Armenians and the poor management of the budget."<sup>30</sup>

The Spanish diplomatic correspondence of 1919 adverted the Armenian Question parallel with the Allied forces' occupation and the Turks' attempt to prove the Turkishness of these areas as a response. In that effort, the report

28 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No:300, IEMFA, "Concerning Politics," Istanbul, November 19, 1918.

29 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No:310, IEMFA, "Concerning the Present Political Situation," Istanbul, December 1, 1918.

30 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1783, Despacho No:321, IEMFA, "Concerning Turkish Politics," Istanbul, December 9, 1918.

issued by the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the High Commissioners of Britain, the US, Italy, and France emphasized that “the region named as ‘Armenian Provinces’ by Europe are the eastern provinces of the Empire” and provided population statistics displaying the Turks as being the majority in the region.<sup>31</sup> Spain’s Istanbul Ambassador of the time, Juan Servert<sup>32</sup> states that this report of the Ottoman government and similar publications<sup>33</sup> were about the Ottoman Armenians’ crimes committed with the argument of ‘rebellion against the Turkish oppression.’ According to him, the only aim of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in using these publications was to prove the Turkishness of these provinces through statistics and to show the “impossibility and unjustness of the goal to grant the Armenians a large region that the Muslim population would evacuate or continue to be in the majority.” The ambassador, taking into consideration the Americans’ rigor and interest for the Armenians, believed that the Turks’ claims would be of no use. Moreover, according to him, the real goal of the US’ charitable aids was to join France and Britain in the splitting of Anatolia. The US was underhandedly conducting its idea of hegemony over wide areas through the humanitarian aid collected in the US for the Ottoman Armenians and distributed in this the area.<sup>34</sup>

The Istanbul Embassy of Spain’s reports show that the Turkish public opinion did not remain unresponsive towards the disputes regarding mandates and

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31 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2702, Despacho No:70, IEMFA, “Relays the Nations Principle Published by the Ottoman Government and the Report Concerning the Claims of the Killing of Armenians,” Istanbul, March 6, 1919. In this way, it becomes clear that the Government is referencing Article 24 of the Armistice of Mudros paving the way for the establishment of an Armenian state in these lands. For detailed information regarding the armistice, please see: Tolga Başak, *İngiltere’nin Ermeni Politikası (1830-1923)* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008), p. 325-345.

32 Juan Servert y Vest (1868-1932) had served as the first counsellor at the Chile Embassy between the years 1911-1912, and as Spain’s ambassador in Venezuela in the years 1913-1916. After having served as a department chief at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1917, Servert was appointed as the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Istanbul Embassy in June 1918. After presenting President Mustafa Kemal Pasha with his letter of credence in August 1925, Servert served as Spain’s first ambassador in the Republic of Turkey. He continued serving in this position until 1932. *Guía Oficial de España 1911*, Madrid, 1911, p. 108 ; *Guía Oficial de España 1912*, Madrid, 1912, p.106 ; *Guía Oficial de España 1913*, Madrid, 1913, p. 140 ; *Guía Oficial de España 1916*, Madrid, 1916, p.144 ; *Gaceta de Madrid*, No: 345, December 11, 1917, p. 564 ; *Luz*, September 24, 1932, p. 16 ; Suna Suner, “The General Index of the Ambassadors to and from the Ottoman Empire”, <http://archive.donjuanarchiv.at/go/bot/> (14.07.2015)

33 Apart from the Government’s report, a brochure titled “A Russian Military Officers Notes Regarding the Atrocity at Erzurum” was added to the diplomatic report. The brochure is based on the memoirs of the Russian lieutenant colonel Tverdohlebof relaying the Armenians’ activities in the Eastern Front. The said memoirs were published by the Turkish General Staff’s Directorate of Military History and Strategic Research (ATASE). Please see: Yarbay Tverdohlebof, *Gördüklerim, Yaşadıklarım - Erzurum 1917-1918* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2007).

34 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2702, Despacho No:148, IEMFA, “Concerning His Visit to the Chief Rabbi and the Interesting Statement Made by Him,” Istanbul, May 14, 1919. Also see: Türkkan Tunalı, “İspanyol Diplomatik Kaynaklarına Göre...,” p. 191, 192.



patronage over the Eastern Provinces. It can be said that this response, as a part of the National Struggle against the invasion of Anatolia, also aimed to avert the invasion of Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Sivas, Elazığ and Diyarbakır. In his report of 26 July 1919, the ambassador Servert states that the Embassy received “very heated” protest telegrams sent by the leading figures and officials of the Ottoman Government “against the support given to the Armenians for the allotment of the Eastern Provinces.”<sup>35</sup> In the protests it was emphasized that these locations had been under Turkish ownership and reign unobstructedly for ages and that “fake accusations were being resorted to in order to deceive Europe.” The signatories of the protest telegram had affirmed -also as an indicator of their courage- that they would sacrifice their blood if necessary rather than accepting any course at the hands of the Armenians. On the other hand, Ambassador Servert summarizes the contents of the other protest telegrams coming from the people regarding the French occupation forces’ replacing the British in Cilicia and the Armenians’ activities within the French army, in a general framework, as “protests against the occupations of various regions of Anatolia.”<sup>36</sup> In these telegrams sent from the Han Pazarı and Adana, Şırnak and Antep, it is explained that the Armenian and Nestorian gangs encouraged by the French and British occupation forces were committing all kinds of atrocities against the local Muslim population’s honor and lives and a call is made to end this massacre.<sup>37</sup> In the ambassador’s reports, apart from expressing the content of the protests, there are no comments on the claims of the violence committed by Armenians. Despite this, it is noteworthy that he prefers to state that “the Armenians are being protected by the French” instead of acknowledging the Armenians joining the French occupation forces. In addition to this, it is seen that he does

*It can be stated that, with this approach, the ambassador as well as the Spanish diplomacy disregarded the Armenians’ acts of destruction and violence during the occupations; despite this, they were very sensitive towards any threat that could be directed at the Armenian component.*

35 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2703, Despacho No:247, IEMFA, “Quotations from the Protests Concerning the Eastern Provinces and Armenians’ Ambitions,” Istanbul, July 26, 1919.

36 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2703, Despacho No: 415, IEMFA, “New Telegraph Protesting Foreign Occupations and the Barbarity of the Troops,” Istanbul, December 13, 1919.

37 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2703, Despacho No: 421, IEMFA, “Provides Information about Certain Confidential Information,” Istanbul, December 20, 1919. For Britain’s policy towards the Nestorians in the region, please see: Yonca Anzerlioğlu, *Nasturiler* (Ankara: Tamga Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 79 et. al. For the activities of the Armenian and Assyrian-Nestorian troops, please see: Deniz Bayburt, “Milli Mücadele Dönemi’nde Süryaniler”, *Akademik Bakış*, Cilt 3, Sayı 6 (Yaz 2010), p. 45-72 ; Salâhi R. Sonyel, “İngiliz Gizli Belgelerine Göre Adana’da Vuku Bulan Türk-Ermeni Olayları”, *Belleten*, Cilt LI, Sayı 201’den ayrı basım), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988.

mention the background of these attacks addressed by the protest telegrams; meaning the establishment of the Armenian Legion with the support of the French during First World War and, following the Armistice of Mudros, the Legion's aims to build an Armenian kingdom in the Cilicia region.<sup>38</sup> Despite this, the Spanish diplomat highlights that the resistance of the Nationalist Forces (*Kuvâ-yi Milliye*), which were struggling against this invasion and the attacks, was threatening the Armenian presence.<sup>39</sup> It can be stated that, with this approach, the ambassador as well as the Spanish diplomacy disregarded the Armenians' acts of destruction and violence during the occupations; despite this, they were very sensitive towards any threat that could be directed at the Armenian component.

It can be observed that as the National Struggle gained momentum in Anatolia, the diplomatic correspondence began to refer to the Armenian Question less and less. In the reports written at this point, it is stated that the Armenians and Greeks, who were fearing the possibility that the National Struggle would succeed, had a change in attitude as they wanted to completely forget the arrogance, offence, and contempt of the past.<sup>40</sup> A change in the Spanish diplomacy's approach towards the Armenian Question is also observed during this period. Despite the Spanish Consul in Adana having written to the Istanbul Ambassador Servert that "the agitation against the Armenians is continuing increasingly and has now turned into a hatred against all Christians" in Adana and its domain, Servert argues that a part of the blame for such "extremism" belonged to the French.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, according to the rumors he had heard, while the French forces were withdrawing from the region, they had prevented the Armenians (by pointing their guns at them) from withdrawing with them. According to the ambassador, whether these rumors were true or not, the occupation forces were still at fault for their imprudence and egoism. The Allied Powers had not provided enough protection to the Armenians who had left their homelands voluntarily or due to the conflicts; yet the Armenians were

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38 The Armenian Legion (East Legion) was formed by the French Colonel Romieu in November 1916 from the Armenians who had deserted and fled to Egypt. It functioned as a support unit for the French army in the Southern Front. M. Serdar Palabıyık, "Fransız Arşiv Belgelerinin Işığında Doğu Lejyonu'nun Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (November 1916-1917) II," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 23-24 (2006), p.206-225. For detailed information, please see: M. Serdar Palabıyık, "Fransız Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Doğu Lejyonu'nun Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (November 1918 – 1921)," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 30 (2008), p. 113-138.

39 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 412, IEMFA, "Political News," Istanbul, December 10, 1919.

40 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2702, Despacho No:341, IEMFA, "Government and Nationalism," Istanbul, October 11, 1919.

41 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 119, IEMFA, "Civil War and the Status of the Christians," Istanbul, April 21, 1920.

to ones to bear the consequences of this. These comments of the ambassador have significant importance as, for the first time, he had accepted the role of the Allied Powers in the Armenian Question. Nonetheless, it should not be overlooked that both Spanish Ambassador at Istanbul and the Istanbul Consul at Adana do refer to the Armenian activities that led to the reaction and resistance of the Muslim-Turkish people and only evaluate the events in the framework of the struggles that the Armenians had faced.

The Spanish Vice Consul at Adana's 6 June 1920 report is, however, take a completely different approach.<sup>42</sup> The Vice Consul indicates that approximately 15,000 armed Armenians who had come to Adana from Sis (Kozan) and Saimbeyli (Haçın) had forcefully settled in the houses of the Muslims and were carrying out all manner of abuse against the Muslims, who were unarmed compared to them. The Vice Consul believed that even if a ceasefire were to be signed between the Nationalist Forces and the French forces, it would have been difficult to convince the Armenians, who had amassed in Adana and were nearly 30,000, to give up their weapons. That being the case; the French soldiers did not have the sufficient power to stop the crimes occurring in the region or to restore order. It is seen that when the Istanbul Ambassador Servert informed the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the situation, instead of presenting citations from the Mersin Vice Consul's report, he gave the exact French copy of it. Thus, Ambassador Servert maintained his attitude by avoiding making comments in the face of the reports and telegrams until this date that had expressed the Armenians' separatist and destructive activities. The feature of the report that is different from the previous ones is that it does not include comments that highlight the victimhood of the Armenian people in relation to the Ottoman Government, the Nationalist Forces, or the Muslim-Turkish people, or reveal sympathy towards Armenians. In fact, for the first time with this report, an official within the Spanish diplomacy mentions the armed Armenians' abuse against the Muslim-Turkish people. It is significant to emphasize that the report was written after the 20-day ceasefire declaration<sup>43</sup> from 29/30 May 1920 between the French forces in the South Front and the Nationalist Forces. This development is for sure an indicator that the success of the National Struggle was on the rise.

A greater change in the Spanish diplomacy's approach towards the issue would occur with the verification of the reality that the Ottoman Armenians were

42 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 214, IEMFA, "Situation in the Adana Province," Istanbul, July 15, 1920. The report of the Spanish Vice Consul in Mersin dated 6 June 1920 is supplied as an attachment in the report of the Istanbul Embassy dated 15 July 1920.

43 "Ayıntap Cephesinde Fransızlarla Harbin Durdurulduğuna Dair Telgraf," Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2006, p. 348.

attacking the local population.<sup>44</sup> In his report of 30 July regarding the conflicts between the Armenians in the province of Adana and the Kemalist forces', Ambassador Servert comments that "the roles of the victim and the executioner are changing between the Armenians and the Turks depending on the ups and downs of the war." Moreover, it is written in the report that "the violence committed by the Armenians should be condemned, but the Armenians in Europe are conducting biased campaigns that they are innocent victims of the Turks' cruelty and their need to be defended and supported against the Turks." According to him, if this campaign that the Armenians were conducting did not covertly gain vitality -with the impetus of politics- the crime and the criminal could not be determined and no punishment could be given. In the continuation of the same report, the Ambassador Servert advocates that "the persecution policy" the French occupation forces were conducting through the Armenians would reduce the Turkish population to nothing, but at the same time, would lead the Turks joining the ranks of the Kemalists. On the other hand, his words "the French officials are not considering at all the possibility that the Armenians and Turks could collaborate –as they had done so in the past- against the foreigners, thus aggravating their [foreigners'] life" and his explanation for this is quite striking. According to him, the Armenians who had immigrated to the US before the First World War had attained prosperity there due to their intelligence and industriousness. But a large majority of the Armenians that did not face any significant obstacle from leaving the country before the war, had found exploiting the lethargy of the Turks more favorable to their interests and, by means of this lethargy, they had reached prosperity without taking heed of the danger of death. The ambassador was of the view that "now; as the Turks move away from the regions where they had lived together, the Armenians will not be able to compete against any of the French, Greek, or Italian components who will settle here and will not be able to continue their tireless exploitations." According to him, the Armenians, for exactly this reason, would realize their mistake of overdoing the spite and the evil against the Turks.

As it can be seen, in the summer of 1920, the Spanish diplomacy validated that the Armenians had cooperated with the invading forces, that the Turks were forced to migrate by pressure and oppression, and that this policy belonged to the Allied Powers. Nonetheless, it was also accepted that the Armenians were conducting a biased campaign in Europe against Turks. As the Spanish Ambassador Juan Servert had openly and continuously shared his opinion that it was the Armenians oppressed by the Turks (not the other way around) so far,

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44 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 227, IEMFA, "Explains and Comments the Situation in the Adana Province," Istanbul, July 30, 1920.

this acknowledgement constitutes a breaking point in the Spanish diplomacy's perception of the Armenian Question. Now the ambassador -emphasizing that the opinion was aggravated by a biased campaign- pointed out that if the European politics continued to support the Armenians and succeeded at this, at the end the Turks would be blamed as the responsible ones for the events experienced during the relocation. Moreover, the ambassador attributed the reason that the people, who were subjected to the Armenian Relocation, did not leave the country before to "their preference exploiting the Turks." Thus, he accepted that the Armenians were maintaining a better social status to the detriment of the Muslim-Turkish component. It is quite interesting that he attributed the possibility of mutual forgiving and togetherness between the Turks and Armenians to the Armenians' desire to seek the same interest –the desire to continue exploiting. With this view of his, the Spanish diplomat painted a picture much different than his general approach towards the industriousness and skills of the Armenians that he often admired, in comparison to the "lethargic Turks."

It can be stated that this change occurred during a period when the National Struggle was gaining success against the occupation forces with aid from Anatolia. The embassy

reports of this period were reiterating news of "the Armenians, who were presented in Europe as the innocent victims of the Turks' cruelties, are conducting atrocities against the Turks" and that "the Allied officials are not able to prevent the arbitrary acts of the Armenians."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the reports were indicating two possible solutions of the Allied Powers' invasions in Anatolia through the Armenians and other minorities. The first of these was the Armenian component joining the Muslim-Turkish component against the Allied Powers, the second was the country's eventual unification around the Turkishness-Muslimness common ground due to the impossibility of reconciliation with the non-Muslim components. In any case, it was often highlighted in this period as well that the Turks had no other option but to defend their country, that the National Struggle was a justified and fair war for

*It can be stated that this change occurred during a period when the National Struggle was gaining success against the occupation forces with aid from Anatolia. The embassy reports of this period were reiterating news of "the Armenians, who were presented in Europe as the innocent victims of the Turks' cruelties, are conducting atrocities against the Turks" and that "the Allied officials are not able to prevent the arbitrary acts of the Armenians."*

45 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 251, IEMFA, "The Situation in the Adana Province," Istanbul, August 23, 1920.

survival. Despite this, it was not denied that the Armenians would use the events that had occurred during the relocation against the Turks as the justification for their own cruelty and excess.<sup>46</sup>

The Spanish diplomatic correspondence does not mention the Ottoman Armenians or the Armenian Question from October 1920 to November 1921. During this period exceeding a year, even in reports mentioning the Sevres Peace Treaty that the Ottoman Empire had signed, the articles of the treaty that were to lead to the establishment of an Armenian state in Anatolia are not mentioned.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the reports do not contain any information about or reference to the Republic of Armenia signing the Gyumri Treaty with the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) or thus, its renunciation of ambitions over Anatolian lands which meant the collapse of the Armenian people's desire of "Great Armenia." In 1921, the only information given relating to the Armenian Question is that after the signing of the 1921 French-Turkish Agreement, despite the Ankara Government having explained that respect would be given to the minorities, the Armenians and Greek -who "knew that the Turks' commitments of forgiving or forgetting could not be trusted"- had evacuated Cilicia -where the Ankara Government's army would enter.<sup>48</sup> In the reports of 1922, the Armenian Question is increasingly neglected and the subject is mentioned only in the context of the Greek army's and Ottoman Greeks' atrocities against the Muslim-Turkish people.

The most interesting one amongst these reports is about a brochure that claimed the Turks were persecuting the Pontus Greeks. Ambassador Servert stated that he did not consider these claims believable at all, on the contrary, he pointed out in his report that "after the Armistice of Mudros, the Greeks and Armenians had faith in the current and future absolute power of the Allied armies. They have insulted, tortured, and committed all kinds of intemperance against the Turks under the shelter of this power."<sup>49</sup> The ambassador expressed that every

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46 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 289, IEMFA, "The Turkish-Armenian War," Istanbul, October 16, 1920.

47 For the articles numbered 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, and 93 of the treaty under the title "The 6. Section Armenia," please see: Nihat Erim, *Devletlerarası Hukuku ve Siyasi Tarih Metinleri, Cilt I (Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Andlaşmaları)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi, 1953), p. 451-455. As for the Article 230 of the treaty, it clearly makes a reference to the deaths experienced during the Armenian Relocation. Nihat Erim, *Devletlerarası Hukuku ve ...*, p. 604.

48 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1785, Despacho No: 207, IEMFA, "General Harrington's Statements after Arriving in Istanbul and the Accord on the Articles of the French-Turkish Agreement Concerning Armenian, Greek etc. Residents in Cilicia," Istanbul, November 15, 1921 ; AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1785, Despacho No: 231, IEMFA, "A Plan for Conference in Istanbul for a Peace in the East," Istanbul, December 26, 1921.

49 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 65, IEMFA, "Relays the Brochure Concerning the Violence Attributed to the Turks in the Black Sea (Ponto Euxino)," Istanbul, March 17, 1922.

state punishes uprisings and insurgencies during wars and that this is very natural. Furthermore, the ambassador stated; “For this reason, those who revolt should not expect the mercy from the Turks who have made their own uprising in Anatolia against the powerful victorious states.” The ambassador, while accepting that the Greeks and Armenians had sometimes faced really harsh treatment in the Empire, advocated that both of these peoples had reached prosperity by benefitting from the laziness of the Turks. Faced with this fact, it is very striking that he wrote “the Turkish army may have surpassed the boundary it had aimed for, but those boundaries can sometimes be surpassed by even the most civilized nations.” According to him, “the saddest aspect of this and similar events is the presence of a sly campaign that is striving to use the ‘religious oppression against the Christians’ mask as a justification.” Perhaps the most striking part of the Spanish diplomat’s report is that, for the first time since him taking office, he had used an anti-Armenian wording. The development that had caused this change was the Armenian gangs’ (who were either collaborating with the occupation forces or acting independently) torture and torment against the unarmed Muslim-Turkish people becoming undeniable especially following the Armistice of Mudros. Likewise, it is seen that: whereas in 1920 he had preferred to relay without comment the consulate reports that were explaining these kinds of attacks and destruction carried out by Armenians; in 1922, he was rejecting the news that were claiming that Turks were oppressing the minorities, and in fact, during the beginning of the First World War, he was accusing the Armenians for revolting against the Ottoman Empire.

### The Years of 1922-1923

In the Istanbul Embassy reports of the final quarter of 1922, the Armenian Question is approached in the framework of a ‘mass immigration’ issue. The mass migration, unlike the forced migration that was employed during World War I under the Relocation Law, can be evaluated as a way of escape or a search for a homeland that the Armenian circles themselves had organized. Regarding the mass immigration that was being brought to the agenda with the GNAT beginning to hand out passports to Armenians,<sup>50</sup> the Catholic Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul met with the Ambassador Juan Servet and

50 Nejla Günay also writes that, upon the high number of requests for migration submitted from Adana and its environs, the GNAT Executive Deputies Delegation (*TBMM İcra Vekilleri Heyeti*) had allowed on 22 April 1922 the Christian folk to travel to foreign countries. Nejla Günay, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sonrasında Maraş Yöresinde Sosyal Yapı Değişimleri ve Bu Değişimde Ermeni-Fransız Rolü,” Gazi Üniversitesi, *Türk Kültürü Ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi*, Sayı 51 (2009), p. 252. It is understood that the passports mentioned by the ambassador were the ones that had been prepared this way and were visa passports that were valid for at most one year.

requested that the Spanish government initiate the necessary steps so that the Latin American states would accept the mass immigration of 6000 Armenians to their lands.<sup>51</sup> In his report regarding the topic, Ambassador Servert also clearly displayed his view on the Relocation Law. To him, the Armenians and Greeks' deaths and forced migration were not always due to "the Turks' fanatic and capricious hostilities," but due to these components revolting against the Turks with "little or no justification." The Armenian uprisings were based on "the desire and ambition of the Armenians -who were actually superior in wealth, influence, and activity- to bring the dominant Muslims-Turks under their own [Armenians'] yoke." The Allied Powers did not know of this situation and "did not want to research the matter as they were benefitting from the anti-Turkish atmosphere that the Armenian laments were creating." Under the circumstances, "the Turks, who saw the future, had no other choice than to decide on the mass migration of some components." This was so because these components "who had been living in prosperity and who had become wealthier at the expense of the Turks," had "forgotten all the gratitude and loyalty in times of difficulty and had rushed to fill enemy lines and to work on behalf of the enemies' goals and claims." Faced with the success of the Turks' National Struggle, the Greeks had left their properties and disappeared, while the Armenians were thinking without doubt that, after their misdeeds, their slates would be wiped clean. On the other hand, the Turks had not declared the Armenians as enemies, instead, they had "decided on the relocation by moderating their emotions of revenge." According to the ambassador, the Turks' not bearing animosity against the Catholic Armenians alone had proved that fanaticism was not influential in the events related to the deaths and the forced migration. "At the same time, this difference is an indicator that the Turks' hatred -even if the more or less violent precautions were directed at all of them [Armenians] without differentiation- were due to the extremism of the separatist Armenians." According to the ambassador, considering all of this, the Kemalist officials were making "a great favor" by allowing the mass migration of the Armenians.

As the report clearly expresses, Ambassador Servert advocated that the responsibility of the minority problem in general and the Armenian Question in specific belonged to these nations (Greeks, Armenians), and that the passing of the Relocation Law and the events that had occurred during the forced migration were also the results of these components' thoughts and actions. It is very striking that this argument overlaps with the justifications and

51 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 230, IEMFA, "The Request to Attempt for the Mass Migration of Catholic Armenians," Istanbul, September 26, 1922. For detailed information on Spain's attempt to aid the Armenian migration, please see: Yasemin Türkkan Tunali, "İspanyol Diplomatik Kaynaklarına Göre...", p. 206-215.



explanations that the Ottoman government had put forward long before in its booklet published in 1916 titled *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement and the Truth Regarding Government Precautions (Ermeni Devrimci Hareketi ve Hükümet Önlemleri Hakkında Hakikat)*.<sup>52</sup> It is striking because, in his previous reports, the ambassador had evaluated this booklet of the Ottoman government and its other similar publications as precursors to other cruelties and thus, had displayed his mistrust towards the government as well as his sympathy towards the Armenian people. Moreover, throughout the First World War, he had defended his opinion and argument that the sole responsibility for the Armenian Question, especially for the events that occurred during the relocation and Armenian deaths that had occurred throughout the First World War, belonged to the Ottoman government. Yet the prominent view in his last report appears to be similar to the closing statement of the Ottoman Government's booklet that was published six years before.<sup>53</sup> As a matter of fact, the ambassador's evaluation includes not only the atrocities that the Armenians had carried out against the Muslim people in Eastern Anatolia, Caucasia, and lastly Cilicia between 1918-1920, but also the insurrectionary movements during 1915. This change in the Spanish diplomat's view -again based on his own words- can be connected to him researching the depths of the matter unlike the Allied Powers. It can be argued that from that report on, he maintained the same line of thinking, because of his references<sup>54</sup> regarding the Armenians being directly responsible for especially the enacting of the Relocation Law such as: "the Armenians who revolted despite living in Turkey under good conditions at the expense of the Turks and being children of Turkey, contrary to the Greeks, did not have excuses such as patriotism and the growth of the nation that they belonged to."<sup>55</sup>

Amidst military and political developments such as the National Struggle's victory gaining clarity, the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, the establishment of the GNAT's administration in Istanbul and the Thrace, and

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52 Please see footnote 21.

53 "... The precautions that had to be taken against them were solely the product of their own and their encouragers' doing."

54 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 257, IEMFA, "Explains the Telegraph Number 26 Concerning the Armenian Migration," Istanbul, October 19, 1922.

55 In these reports, the following views comes to the fore; "The reason for the death of the Armenians and the Greeks did not always have to do with the Turks' religious hatred," and "these nations had betrayed the state despite being Ottoman subjects." AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 282, IEMFA, "Explains the Telegraph Number 26 Concerning the Armenian Migration," Istanbul, November 6, 1922 ; AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 291, IEMFA, "Repeats the Urgent Requests Concerning the Voyage of the Armenian Migrants," Istanbul, November 16, 1922 ; AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 319, IEMFA, "Explains that the Contents of Telegraph Number 40 Concerning Migration to Bolivia Has Been Relayed to the Armenian Catholic Acting Patriarch, Istanbul, December 16, 1922.

the initiation of the Lausanne Peace Conference; the number of reports that referred to the Armenian Question had dropped significantly. In one of these reports, a news report is shared regarding the hearing of assassination preparations against the prominent leaders of the Ankara government by some members of Armenian committees that came from abroad.<sup>56</sup> In the report, it is stated that the news report had given the impression “to the European foreigners that the Ankara government was aiming to set up the stage to kill and suppress the Armenians,” but there are no comments regarding the validity of this news report or how the Armenian components would be affected by this. Along with this, the diplomatic report includes that the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul had visited the GNAT government’s Istanbul Representative Refet Paşa upon this news report and expressed “his contentment for the victory that the nationalists had won and stated in an exaggerated manner that the Armenians want to stay in the country.” In this manner, it can be said that the report indicates the rapprochement efforts of the Armenian circles towards the Ankara government.<sup>57</sup> Again in the same report, a prediction of the Spanish diplomacy is shared regarding the future situation of the relations between the Armenian component and the Ankara Government. According to this, the Kemalist officials, who had noticed that the mass immigration would be a major loss for the development of the country and the reparation of the war damages, “had ordered for every Christian that left Istanbul without justification to be taxed 100 liras and for those that did not pay this tax to not be allowed to leave the country.” For this reason, according to the diplomatic report, it could be believed that if this good sign displayed by the Ankara Government would be supported during the Lausanne Peace Conference, “the Turks would no doubt give assurances to the Christian minorities in exchange for matters that interested them more.” In fact, it was thought that in the future, the Turks “would accept an apology from the Armenians even if it was forced or insincere.”<sup>58</sup> It can be gathered from this that Spanish diplomacy believed

56 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 307, IEMFA, “An Attempt Is Offered in Favor of the Christian Minorities,” Istanbul, December 1, 1922.

57 The Armenian Patriarch had already visited Refet Pasha several times before the one that was announced by the Anadolu Agency. After this visit, the patriarch made enthusiastic statements concerning the Armenian community’s loyalty to the Ankara government and their desire to live together with the Turks. After the assassination attempt news, his visit to Refet Pasha together with the other religious leaders in Istanbul was also relayed İsmet Pasha, the Turkish Chief Delegate who was at the Lausanne Conference at the time. Ramazan Erhan Güllü, “Ermeni Sorununun Ortaya Çıkış ve Gelişim Sürecinde İstanbul Ermeni Patrikhanesi’nin Tutumu (1878-1923),” Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2013, p. 536-538 ; Bilâl N. Şimşir, “No. 138, Başbakan H. Rauf Bey’den İsmet Paşa’ya, 19 Aralık 1922”, *Lozan Telgrafları I (1922-1923)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1990), p. 246-247. It is understood that both the Armenian Patriarch and the other religious leaders had been closely following the Ankara government.

58 AMAE, Correspondencia, Legajo: 1784, Despacho No: 291, IEMFA, “Repeats the Urgent Requests Concerning the Voyage of the Armenian Migrants,” Istanbul, November 16, 1922.

the Ankara government was ready to clean the slate regarding the Armenians' crimes and that it was even possible for their minority rights to be guaranteed.

In the Spanish diplomatic correspondence, the last report that mentions the Armenian Question presents the Ankara Government's approach towards the situation in the framework of the Lausanne Peace Conference. According to the statement of the Spain Bern Ambassador who was following the conference, during the meetings of the Subcommittee on 6 January 1923<sup>59</sup>, the Turkish delegate and his entourage had left the hall in the face of reparations being demanded "for the Armenians and the others."<sup>60</sup> The Spanish diplomat linked this event to the Turks being encouraged by the Paris Conference's failure and the disagreements between the Allied Powers. In fact, it is known that this attitude of the Turkish delegation was linked to the Ankara government's instruction on making no concessions on especially the subjects of the establishment of Armenian country and the removal of the capitulations.<sup>61</sup>

Scanning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain Archive, among the files numbering no more than ten that date back to 1928, no files can be found that advert the Lausanne Peace Treaty signed during the meetings in the second half of the Lausanne Peace Conference or afterwards. For this reason, the Spanish diplomacy's information, interpretation and point of view regarding the Armenian Question and how it was shaped at the beginning of the newly built Republican era is left in the dark.

### Conclusion

While generally evaluating the Spanish diplomacy's correspondence between 1914-1923 concerning the Armenian Question, it is seen that certain events and developments that we know to have occurred, have not been reflected onto the reports. It is also seen that the reports mention the subject mostly indirectly while expressing the military and political developments on the agenda or

59 In the telegraph, even though it is indicated that the commission was the Subcommittee for Mines, the said event that taken place in the Subcommittee for Minorities. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım, Cilt III* (İstanbul, 1968), p. 1061-1064 ; Şimşir, "No.197-198, İsmet Paşa'dan Başbakanlığa, 7 Ocak 1922", *Lozan Telgrafları...*, p. 344-348. For the discussions that took place in the 6 January 1923 in the Subcommittee for Minorities, please see: *Lozan Barış Konferansı, Tutanaklar-Belgeler, Birinci Takım, C. I, Kitap II*, çev. Seha L. Meray, 3.b. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001), p. 275-282.

60 AMAE, Política, Legajo: 2702, No: 59, From the Bern Ambassador Reynoso to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Telegraph, Lausanne, January 6-7, 1923.

61 *Türk İstiklâl Harbi, II. Cilt, 6. Kısım, IV. Kitap* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Harp Tarihi Dairesi Resmî Yayınları, 1969), p. 117, 118.

sometimes directly together with events that involve the subject. The fact that these developments did not take place in the reports neither indirectly nor directly, and the inability to access the reports dealing with them suggests the possibility of the documents' being missing in the archive. For example; the Spanish Istanbul Embassy report of 21 August 1916 very thoroughly examines the annulment of the 1863 Charter of Armenian Nationals and the enactment of the Armenian Catholicosate and Patriarchate Charter in its place. However, in the reports of 1918, there is no information regarding the Ottoman Empire reenacting the 1863 Charter following the Armistice of Mudros<sup>62</sup> or the Armenian Patriarch Zevan Efendi -who had been banished to Baghdad due to his harmful activities in 1913- returning to his duty in 1918.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, in the reports of 1918, there is no information on the Ottoman government preparing the 31 December 1918 Return Bylaw for the return and settlement of the Armenians who had been subjected to relocation or the endeavors that continued until 1920<sup>64</sup> according to this bylaw. The document the absence of which is most striking in the Spanish embassy reports is the Ottoman government's diplomatic memorandum sent to Sweden, Holland, and Denmark together with Spain in 13 February 1919, petitioning for the establishment of a neutral commission aiming to investigate the relocation.<sup>65</sup> Having carried out a scan in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, neither this diplomatic memorandum, nor the Istanbul embassy's memorandum to the Sublime Porte stating that it had sent the Ottoman government's memorandum to the Spanish Ministry Foreign Affairs could be found. Similarly, the document indicating the negative response from the neutral states on 6 May 1919 cannot be found either.<sup>66</sup> This author became aware of the presence of these documents from other authors who have made use of the Ottoman State Archives. These kinds of developments involving the Armenian Question not being in the reports makes one think of the possibility that either the Spanish diplomats never wrote about this subject or the reports they had sent have disappeared from the archive in time -as it has been the case for the three mentioned reports.

62 Ramazan Erhan Güllü, "Ermeni Sorununun Ortaya...", p. 483-486 ; Abdurrahman Bozkurt, "Osmanlı Devleti ile Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti Arasındaki İlişkiler (1918-1920)," *Ankara Üniversitesi OTAM Dergisi*, Sayı 34 (2013), p. 44, footnote no: 93.

63 Ramazan Erhan Güllü, "Ermeni Sorununun Ortaya...", p. 481-490.

64 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri*, p. 104-110 ; İbrahim Ethem Atnur, "Osmanlı Hükümetleri ve Tehcir Edilen Rum ve Ermenilerin Yeniden İskânı Meselesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Cilt 4, Sayı 14, p.121-139 ; İsmigül Çetin, "Milli Mücadele Döneminde İngiliz Yüksek Komiserliği'nin Ermenilerin Yeniden İskânı, Ermeni Kadınları ve Çocukları Meselelerindeki Rolü," *Yeni Türkiye*, Sayı 60 (2014), p. 1-11.

65 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri*, p. 94.

66 Please see: Osmanlı Arşivi, Hariciye Nezareti, Mütareke, No: 43/17 - Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri*, Ek XX, XXI, p. 148-153.

It is seen that the Spanish diplomacy's perception on the Armenian Question does not display a consistent approach; the discourses and viewpoints change through time. Throughout the First World War, according to Spain, at the heart of the situation lay the Young Turks' intentional hostility towards the non-Muslim people, especially the Armenians, reaching the point of fanaticism. According to that view, the Relocation Law served the Committee of Union and Progress' aim to eliminate the Armenian component through oppression and forced migration or expulsion from the country; in order to use the Muslim-Turkish component to fill the gap in the economic life left in their absence. It linked the annulment of the Armenian National Charter in 1916 to the CUP's aim to take away the few freedoms that the Armenian people possessed. In addition, the Spanish diplomats displayed a clear mistrust towards the Ottoman government's claims of Russia's role in the formation of the Armenian Question and the Armenian Church's support towards the Armenian gangs in their attacks against the local people and their collusion with the Russian army. The Spanish diplomacy continued its pro-Armenian attitude during the Allied Powers' occupation of Turkey.

However, in the face of the Allied Powers' and the Armenian collaborators' attacks on the local people, the Spanish diplomacy considered the Great Powers responsible of these attacks and the rise of the Armenian Question. Lastly, in the period when the Turkish National Struggle was achieving successive military victories, despite having previously very much criticized the CUP, the Spanish diplomacy advocated that the CUP's policies towards the Armenians had valid grounds. The Spanish diplomacy began to accuse the Armenians, whom it had previously described as oppressed and despised people, for having betrayed the state and having been ungrateful towards the Muslim-Turkish people.

Parallel to the Armenian Question, from the First World War towards the end of the National Struggle, a change can be observed in the Spanish diplomacy's perception of the Turks. According to this, the 'Turk' in the context of the CUP was defined as anti-Christian, jealous of the status and prosperity that the non-Muslims had attained with their industriousness, and a lazy and useless component of the Ottoman community. But the 'Turk' in the context of the

*In short, the Spanish diplomacy's perception during the period in which the CUP was defeated in the First World War was not the same as its perception during the period in which the Ankara government was victorious. From this viewpoint, it is understood that the change in Spain's perception of the Armenian Question was directly related to the Turkish politics' status in world politics.*

Ankara Government denoted a nation merely fighting for its survival and who held no feelings of vengeance despite the Armenian and Greek gangs having attacked them and who had a forgiving character enabling it to once again live together with these people -as it had been the case before the intervention of the Allied Powers.

In short, the Spanish diplomacy's perception during the period in which the CUP was defeated in the First World War was not the same as its perception during the period in which the Ankara government was victorious. From this viewpoint, it is understood that the change in Spain's perception of the Armenian Question was directly related to the Turkish politics' status in world politics. The course of Spain's evaluation of the matter from a time when it was neutral in the war and when the Armenian Question was an on-going issue and Spain's eventual developing of a discourse a discourse incongruent with the 'Armenian thesis' (a thesis formulated through distortions) is also a subject that should be highlighted. This situation proves that the Armenian Question had already been turned into a political issue from its very beginning.

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