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A PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TOOL AGAINST THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: THE PRO ARMENIA NEWSPAPER (1900-1908)

(OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU KARŞITI BİR PSİKOLOJİK HARP ARACI:
PRO ARMENİA GAZETESİ (1900-1908))

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Abstract: *This article examines the black propaganda activities carried out by the Pro Armenia newspaper, published in French in Paris during the final years of Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign, against the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire had been the scene of internal turmoil for many years, particularly due to separatist uprisings in regions inhabited by Armenians. The Pro Armenia newspaper added false reports to these internal conflicts, deliberately exaggerating events and aiming to attract the attention of the European public. The article examines the news published in the Pro Armenia newspaper by comparing it with Ottoman archive documents. This reveals how the newspaper used psychological warfare techniques. The fact that the newspaper's authors included influential actors in European politics demonstrates the international significance of its propaganda activities. It was determined that the events covered in the newspaper were presented one-sidedly and that there was no mention of the massacres committed by Armenians against Muslims. Furthermore, the newspaper made serious*

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accusations against Sultan Abdülhamid's personality and policies, aiming to undermine the Ottoman Sultan's influence in European public opinion.

Keywords: *Armenians, Muslims, Sultan Abdülhamid, Black Propaganda, Massacres, Europe.*

Öz: *Bu makalede, Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in tahttaki son yıllarını kapsayan dönemde, Paris'te Fransızca yayımlanan Pro Armenia gazetesinin Osmanlı Devleti aleyhine yürüttüğü kara propaganda faaliyetleri ele alınmıştır. Osmanlı Devleti, özellikle Ermenilerin yaşadığı bölgelerde çıkan ayrılıkçı ayaklanmalar sebebiyle uzun yıllar iç karışıklıklara sahne olmuştur. Pro Armenia gazetesi, bu iç karışıklıklara yalan haberler ekleyerek, olayları kasten abartmış ve bu yolla Avrupa kamuoyunun dikkatini çekmeyi amaçlamıştır. Makalede, Pro Armenia gazetesinde yayımlanan haberler, Osmanlı arşiv belgeleriyle karşılaştırılmak suretiyle ele alınmıştır. Böylece, gazetenin psikolojik harp tekniklerini nasıl kullandığı gözler önüne serilmiştir. Gazetenin yazarları arasında Avrupa siyasetinde etkili aktörlerin bulunması, propaganda faaliyetlerinin uluslararası düzeydeki önemini göstermektedir. Gazetede yer verilen hadiselerin tek taraflı ele alındığı ve Ermenilerin Müslümanlara yönelik katliamlarına hiç yer verilmediği tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca Sultan Abdülhamid'in kişiliği ve politikaları ile ilgili ağır ithamlarda bulunan gazete, bu şekilde Osmanlı Sultanı'nın Avrupa kamuoyundaki ağırlığını sarsmayı hedeflemiştir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermeniler, Müslümanlar, Sultan Abdülhamid, Kara Propaganda, Katliamlar, Avrupa.*

INTRODUCTION

From the late 19th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire faced increasing ethnic, political, and ideological tensions due to its multi-ethnic structure and the interventions carried out by Western states through various nations. During this period, developments were disseminated to a wide audience through the press. It was particularly common during this period for events occurring within the Ottoman Empire to be conveyed to the international public through newspapers. In this context, the *Pro Armenia* newspaper, one of the leading publications of the Armenian diaspora in Europe, became an important part of both the propaganda activities against the Ottoman administration and the discursive construction process of the Armenian nationalist movement.

This article examines the anti-Ottoman propaganda activities of the Pro Armenia newspaper, published in Paris between 1900 and 1908, within the political and social conditions of the period. The research question of the article is how the Pro Armenia newspaper functioned as an instrument of psychological warfare and propaganda in the Armenian issue. The article's hypothesis is that the newspaper systematically used "black propaganda" techniques, mostly aimed at swaying Western public opinion against the Ottoman Empire in line with the goals of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaksutyun*) in the international political atmosphere of the time.

The article adopts a qualitative methodology based on discourse and content analysis of the newspaper. Within this scope, news articles and opinion pieces published in various issues of Pro Armenia newspaper were comprehensively examined, and the language used, the political figures targeted, how events were evaluated, and the propaganda methods employed were analyzed. In addition, the Pro Armenia newspaper frequently compiled information about the situation of Armenians in Anatolia. Claims made in the newspaper regarding this issue were examined by comparing them with documents from the Presidential Ottoman Archives, revealing the extent to which the events corresponded with official documents. Thus, the differences between the reports in the Ottoman archive documents and the events claimed by the newspaper were identified, and basic comparative data was produced. The data set used in the article consists mainly of the issues of the Pro Armenia newspaper from 1900 to 1908 and the Presidential Ottoman Archive documents. Secondary sources related to this period were also included. Thanks to this diverse data, the newspaper's approach to evaluating events, its target audience, its rhetorical purpose, and its role in influencing international public opinion were comprehensively analyzed.

This article not only reveals how the Armenian issue was addressed through the press during that period, but also clearly evaluates the relationship between propaganda and international diplomacy.

Conceptual Framework: Psychological Warfare and Propaganda

Psychological warfare and propaganda are two important concepts as old as human history. The Chinese, Greeks, and Romans effectively used deception, intimidation, and propaganda methods to gain superiority over their adversaries. In his important work titled *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu emphasized that deception is an important defense tool in military conflicts and stated that states can develop psychological manipulation as a strategy before direct conflict occurs. Sun Tzu emphasizes that the essence of all warfare is actually based on deception. Throughout history, the weak have always strived to appear stronger than they actually are. Psychological warfare emerges more frequently when war or conflict processes are on the agenda, but it is also actively addressed in periods without conflict. In addition, the concepts of psychological warfare and psychological operations are often used interchangeably in security studies literature. British military historian J. F. C. Fuller first used the term “psychological warfare” in 1920 when analyzing World War I in the context of military elements. In a study he wrote on tanks, J. F. C. Fuller stated that in the future, weapons would not be used, and a psychological warfare process would take place in which the moral and spiritual life of a nation would be destroyed by targeting the human mind.¹ Psychological warfare was used by states as an effective strategy, especially at the beginning of the Cold War, with the aim of assisting military operations.²

Psychological warfare is conducted before, during, and after war. Furthermore, psychological warfare cannot be governed by the rules established by war. Preparations for psychological warfare against a target country begin long before a declaration of war. Enemy elements conceal their true identities while conducting psychological warfare and usually express their ideas through the press.³ The most important goal of psychological warfare is to demoralize the

1 Sunil Narula, “Psychological operations (PSYOPs): A conceptual overview,” *Strategic Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2004): 178, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160408450124>; Hina Saeed, “Minds at War: The Evolution of Psychological Tactics in Conflict Scenarios,” *Journal of Future Building* 1, no. 3 (2025): 32, <https://researchcorridor.org/index.php/jfb/article/view/304>; Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (2004), 31.

2 Huw Bennett, “‘Words are cheaper than bullets’: Britain’s psychological warfare in the Middle East, 1945-60,” *Intelligence and National Security* 34, no. 7 (2019): 925, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2019.1628454>.

3 Paul M. A. Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, (Infantry Journal Press, 1948), 1.

target element, weaken its faith, and initiate a process of indoctrination within the framework of the views of the actor applying this method. These elements represent the three stages of psychological warfare.⁴

When examined etymologically, propaganda is known to be derived from the Latin verb *propagare*, meaning to expand or spread over time. Edward Louis Bernays, considered to be the founder of modern propaganda, claimed in his 1928 book titled *Propaganda* that he developed a concept of propaganda that did not involve social responsibility. However, E. L. Bernays' views inspired people like Goebbels, who used propaganda for political agitation.⁵ From this perspective, the word propaganda has negative connotations in people's minds.⁶ Ultimately, propaganda has a bad reputation because it is generally used in conjunction with the concepts of distortion and manipulation. However, it is known that there are also examples of propaganda carried out by the state to protect society from disease risks.⁷

Propaganda is a planned communication element designed to influence the minds, emotions, and activities of a target group for a specific purpose. When states engage in propaganda, they carry out activities in military, economic, or political fields for a specific public purpose. Propaganda must have a specific purpose. In psychological warfare, it is essential to use not only propaganda elements directed at enemy forces, but also other necessary military, economic, or political operational elements.⁸ There is a view in the literature that the modern state is inevitably propagandistic. The nation-state argues that total mobilization is a prerequisite for total war and applies methods of mass persuasion on society.⁹ Propaganda can also be active in religious or commercial areas. The reason for the spread of propaganda into political areas is the visible increase in public opinion power. Since states resort to war as a last resort, propaganda wars between states are a very common phenomenon.¹⁰

4 R. H. S. Crossman, "Psychological Warfare," *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 97, no. 587 (1952): 320, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071845209434087>.

5 Haavard Koppang, "Social Influence by Manipulation: A Definition and Case of Propaganda," *Middle East Critique* 18, no. 2 (2009): 117-118, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436140902989472>.

6 Douglas Walton, "What Is Propaganda, and What Exactly Is Wrong with It?," *Public Affairs Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1997): 384, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40435999>.

7 Garth S. Jowetta and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 6th ed. (Sage Publications, 2015), 3.

8 Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, 38-40.

9 Nicholas Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*, (Manchester University Press, 2004), 38.

10 Raymond Dodge, "The Psychology of Propaganda," *Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association* 15, no. 5 (1920): 241, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408200150502>.

Another important feature of propaganda is that it conceals its activities in terms of purpose, source, and method. According to Crane, propaganda always acts to hide its true nature. The person or group targeted by propaganda is unable to see the big picture.¹¹ By its very nature, it can be said that all propaganda content is manipulative. Furthermore, the propaganda created is always designed to benefit the propagandist and aims to deliberately influence human behavior. In order to maintain the power structures that have been built, the propagandist attaches importance to the element of ideology. In this way, the propagandist can more easily manage the attitudes and behaviors of the target audience.¹² There are three different types of propaganda in the literature. One of these, white propaganda, emerges as a result of the use of information that has been correctly identified and conveyed. Black propaganda, on the other hand, is a type of propaganda that contains false, fabricated, and deceptive information obtained by referring to a false source. Finally, gray propaganda emerges in situations where it is not possible to clearly define whether the source of information is true or false.¹³

Historical and Political Background of the Armenian Issue

Following the conquest of Istanbul by Fatih Sultan Mehmet in 1453, the Millet System was established in the context of the institutional organization of non-Muslims. Thanks to this system, non-Muslim elements living within the Ottoman Empire were able to act autonomously in matters such as religion, language, and education. In addition, when Hovakim, the Metropolitan of Bursa, was proclaimed the first Armenian Patriarch in 1461, the Armenian Millet within the Millet System began to be established. Armenians lived peacefully within the Ottoman Empire for many years. However, by the 19th century, Armenians had gained power in their internal and external relations, parallel to economic and social changes. As a result, with the support of Western states, Armenians embraced the idea of rebelling against the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴

11 Edgar H. Henderson, "Toward a Definition of Propaganda," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 18, no. 1 (1943): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1943.9921701>.

12 Douglas S. Wilbur, "Propaganda or Not: Examining the Claims of Extensive Russian Information Operations within the United States," *Journal of Information Warfare* 20, no. 3 (2021): 147-148, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27125004>.

13 David W. Guth, "Black, White, and Shades of Gray: The Sixty-Year Debate Over Propaganda versus Public Diplomacy," *Journal of Promotion Management* 14, no. 3-4 (2009): 311, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10496490802624083>.

14 Özcan Mert, "Osmanlı Türkleri İdaresinde Ermeniler," *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları*, no. 3 (2003): 144-150. <https://www.acarindex.com/pdfs/973581>.

Before World War I (1914-1918), powerful states such as England, France, Russia, and Germany were competing with each other to establish permanent power in the Near and Middle East. The main target in the region during this period was the Ottoman Empire. These states were engaged in a colonial race to exploit the resources in the geography where the Ottoman Empire was spread. For this purpose, from the 18th and 19th centuries onward, many intelligence agents disguised as travelers, missionaries, and diplomats established relations with Armenians, Syrians, and other communities in order to operate actively within the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵ Following the Crimean War of 1856, European states claimed the right to “collective protection” over Christians within the Ottoman Empire under the Paris Treaty.¹⁶

From the second half of the 19th century onwards, Western states began to address developments within the Ottoman Empire as the “Eastern Question”. They also took action to incite the Armenians, who lived scattered across the eastern regions of Anatolia. During this period, numerous propaganda-filled publications with political aims were produced by Armenians, claiming that eastern Anatolia belonged to them. The Treaty of San Stefano and the Treaty of Berlin, signed after the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War, emphasized that reforms would be made for the Armenians. Following these new developments, with the support of Western states, efforts to Armenianize Eastern Anatolia continued to increase.¹⁷ After this date, Armenians, relying on the guarantees of Western states, pressured the Ottoman Empire to implement reforms.¹⁸ In addition, Armenians began to establish committees and societies with the aim of creating an independent Armenian state. The society called Kara Haç was founded in Marseille in 1882, and the party called Armenekan was founded in Van in 1885. Furthermore, the Hunchak committee was established in 1887 and the Tashnak committee in 1890. The aim of these societies and committees was to engage in terrorist activities within the borders of the Ottoman Empire

15 Salâhi R. Sonyel, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Son Dönemi ve Türkiye’yi Bölme Çabaları (1908-1918),” *BELLETEREN* 61, no: 231 (1997): 387-388, <https://doi.org/10.37879/belleyen.1997.387>.

16 Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896*, (Frank Cass, 1993), 44.

17 Bayram Kodaman, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Devri Doğu Anadolu Politikası*, (Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1987), 5-6; Cengiz Çakaloğlu, “Erzincan ve Çevresinde Ermeni Olayları (1890-1896),” *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* no. 13 (1999): 299, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ataunited/issue/2847/39032>.

18 Seçil Karal Akgün, “Ottoman Armenian Intricate Relations with Western Powers Before and During the Peace Settlements of the First World War,” *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 18 (2008): 43, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ras/issue/47577/600886>.

and to gain the support of European states through the press.¹⁹ Between 1890 and 1894, Armenians attempted to revolt in Erzurum, Kumkapı, Merzifon, Kayseri, Yozgat, and Samsun, but they were unsuccessful.²⁰

Armenian committees increased their disruptive activities in areas with large Armenian populations.²¹ Armenian committees systematically carried out massacres against Muslims in different regions of Anatolia.²² In this context, in 1895, members of the Hunchak Committee rebelled against the Ottoman Empire in the Zeytun district of the Maraş province. One of the most important reasons why Armenians living in Zeytun acted in accordance with the Hunchak Committee's suggestions was the spread of the falsehood in Zeytun that Muslims were persecuting Armenians in other regions. At this point, members of the Hunchak Committee attempted to draw Armenians in Zeytun to their side through black propaganda. During this uprising, one of the leaders of the rebellion, a committee member named Agasi, stated that the necessary weapons and financial support were provided by the Hunchak Committee and that Britain would send military forces to the port of Iskenderun for assistance. Britain considered sending its warships to the port of Iskenderun. During the Armenian uprising, many Muslim villages were raided and Muslims were massacred. Ultimately, due to the involvement of Western powers, the rebelling Armenians were not punished by the Ottoman Empire.²³ During the Armenian uprisings, Armenian Patriarch Matheos İzmirlıyan was exiled to Jerusalem by Sultan Abdülhamid due to his relations with Britain and on the grounds that he directed the terrorist activities of the Armenian rebels.²⁴ The Ottoman Empire made considerable efforts to end the Armenian uprisings. At this point, it is evident that the Armenians were acting in accordance with

19 Selçuk Kılınç and Metin Kopar, "Develi Ermeni Ayaklanmaları ve 1905 Ayaklanması Lideri: 'Madam Serupi,'" *Tarih Okulu Dergisi (TOD)*, no. 73 (2024): 3838, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/joh.76033>; Bülent Cırık, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan Önce Hınçak Partisi'nin İki Kongresi ve Savaş Kararı," *BELLETEN* 86, no. 307 (2022): 1010, <http://dx.doi.org/10.37879/belleten.2022.1007>.

20 Sadi Çaycı, "Terrorism and Asymmetric Threat: Activities Against Turkey, From the Beginning of the 20th Century to the Present (Armenian Terror Activities and PKK Terror Organization Activities since 1915)," *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 18 (2008): 92, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ras/issue/47577/600889>.

21 Nurettin Birol, "1890-1900 Ermeni Ayaklanmalarının Erzincan'a Yansımaları ve İlk Ermeni İsyancıları," *Erzincan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 10, no. 1 (2017): 24, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/erzisosbil/issue/29974/323990>.

22 Ahmet Eyicil, "I. Dünya Savaşı ve Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Sırasında Maraş'ta Ermeni Mezalimi," *BELLETEN* 67, no. 250 (2003): 912, <http://dx.doi.org/10.37879/belleten.2003.911>.

23 Yahya Bağçeci, "1895 Zeytun Ermeni İsyamı," *Turkish Studies* 3, no. 2 (2008): 123-147, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.291>.

24 Salâhi R. Sonyel, "İngiliz Gizli Belgelerine Göre Adana'da Vuku Bulan Türk-Ermeni Olayları (Temmuz 1908-Aralık 1909)," *BELLETEN* 51, no. 201 (1987): 1252. <https://doi.org/10.37879/belleten.1987.1241>.

the instructions of European states. Propaganda, an important component of psychological warfare, was effectively used by Armenian committees.

Sultan Abdülhamid closely monitored the activities of the Armenians and maintained a resolute stance on the Armenian issue. In this context, he never complied with the demands for reforms for the Armenians made at the Berlin Congress during his reign. Because of this stance, Sultan Abdülhamid became a target of Armenian terrorist organizations. However, the Armenians had primarily planned to blow up critical areas such as foreign institutions, banks, stations, and bridges. In this way, they aimed to create chaos within society and make it easier to assassinate Sultan Abdülhamid. While Armenian terrorist organizations were instigating rebellions in various regions of Anatolia, they were also planning assassinations against Sultan Abdülhamid. Armenian committee members, who were trying to follow the Sultan's routine, decided to carry out the assassination when the Sultan came to the Yıldız Mosque for Friday prayers. The assassins attempted to assassinate Sultan Abdülhamid using a timed bomb on 21 July 1905, but failed.²⁵

With the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, many Armenians who had previously been identified as committee members by the Ottoman Empire began to return to the country. The Hunchak and Tashnak committees, considered terrorist organizations, transformed into political parties after the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy. In addition, through the branches they opened in various parts of Anatolia, they were spreading propaganda among the Armenian community. These developments were causing unrest among Muslims. Furthermore, due to the government lifting restrictions on arms exports and imports, Armenians began to arm themselves rapidly. Armenians, incited by Western powers, were convinced that they would establish an Armenian state in Çukurova. At the same time, the Armenian committees saw the uprisings of the Bulgarians and Serbs and the unrest in Crete as an opportunity for themselves. When the Armenians began their uprising in the Cilicia region, they did not expect European states to send their fleets to Mersin. At this time, Armenian committees settled large numbers of Armenians from eastern provinces in Adana to achieve their goals. Through newspapers, the Armenians spread the falsehood that the Ottoman Government was oppressing and using violence against Armenians while

25 İhsan Burak Birecikli and Fahri Maden, "Yıldız Suikastı: Ermenilerin Abdülhamid'e Karşı Son Teşebbüsleri Bombalı Saldırı," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* 23, no. 67-68-69 (2007): 403, <https://atamdergi.gov.tr/tam-metin/136/tur>; Vahdettin Engin, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid'e Düzenlenen Ermeni Suikastı ve Bu Sebepile Belçika ile Yaşanan Diplomatik Kriz," *BELLETEREN* 59, no. 225 (1995): 415-417, <https://doi.org/10.37879/belleten.1995.413>.

collecting taxes. Aware of the events that would unfold in the coming days, the Ottoman administration published texts refuting these newspaper reports and enlightening the public.²⁶

The Ottoman Empire's efforts failed to prevent the Armenian uprising in Adana on 14 April 1909. During the uprising, the city of Adana suffered considerable damage, and the Armenians, emboldened by Western powers, continued their rebellion. The Ottoman Empire sent the armored ships Hamidiye and Mecidiye to the ports of Mersin and Iskenderun to suppress the unrest. Control was established in Adana on 25 April 1909. After these events, the Armenians tried to spread the lie that they had been massacred by the Turks to the world public opinion in order to enable foreign intervention in the region.²⁷ It should not be overlooked that propaganda was an effective weapon in these events. One of the most important reasons for the Armenians' rapid mobilization was the false news they spread through the press.

Pro Armenia Newspaper

The Pro Armenia newspaper began publication in Paris in November 1900, led by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaksutyun*), in French. Pierre Quillard served as the newspaper's editor-in-chief, and other prominent figures in French political and cultural life, such as Georges Clemenceau, Jean Longuet, Victor Berard, Urbain Gohier, and Jean Jaurès, also served as editors. The newspaper continued to be published until October 1908 (the last available issue is dated 20 September 1908).²⁸ Contributors to the newspaper included James Bryce from Britain and Enrico Ferri and Chibriani from Italy.²⁹ The newspaper was published on the 10th and 25th of each month.³⁰

26 Nejla Günay, "Activities of Organizations and Committees Established by Armenians in Maraş and Its Surroundings," *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 32 (2015): 133-135, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ras/issue/47562/600740>.

27 Ümmügülüm Gülekoğlu and Ahmet Eyicil, "Adana'da Ermeni Olayları (1909-1921)," *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 21, no. 1 (2024): 193-195, <https://doi.org/10.33437/ksusb.1326664>.

28 "1er novembre 1900 – Publication du journal 'Pro Armenia.'" Haïastan. April 30, 2024, https://haïastan.org/encyclopedie/1er-novembre-1900-publication-du-journal-pro-armenia/?fbclid=IwY2x-jawMAMv5leHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHjrK6YJqsws9r58JDhJfdnsLMT0zEaiMbtSFXAQCB9G-V-YZmHFHcpxyGirLz_aem_LZexThwmm_TMfz1A89Fymw.

29 "ArmenianDiaspora: Unprecedented Conference 'Pro-Armenia' in Paris," HyeTert. January 20, 2003, <https://hyetert.org/2003/01/21/armeniandiaspora-unprecedented-conference-pro-armenia-in-paris/>.

30 Jean-Louis Mattei, "Mkrtich Portukalian and the 'Armenia' Journal (From Terrorism to Skeptical Modesty)," *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 24 (2011): 82, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ras/issue/47572/600844>.

The main purpose of the newspaper's publication was to inform the world public about the so-called policy of violence that the Ottoman Empire had been implementing against Armenians since the 1880s and 1890s. Armenian figures such as Christapor Mikaëlian, Archag Tchobanian, and Hovannés Loris-Melikian played an important role in propaganda activities to raise awareness of the Pro Armenia newspaper in the European public sphere. In this context, they made representations to the parliaments of France, Italy, Belgium, Britain, and the Netherlands, demanding that Western states intervene militarily in Anatolia. In addition, demonstrations were organized by Armenians in Paris and other European capitals.³¹

Another feature of the Pro Armenia newspaper was its active role in organizing political congresses and meetings. For example, the International Congress of Friends of Armenia, held in Brussels in 1902, took place as a result of the newspaper's efforts. Furthermore, due to the newspaper's initiatives, Armenians in Denmark, Germany, Austria-Hungary, England, and Russia came together and began to act collectively.³² The writers of the Pro Armenia newspaper wrote their articles based on their limited knowledge of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, looking at the newspaper's articles, Armenians were generally described as "progressive" and Turks as "mass murderers". In addition, the Pro Armenia newspaper was seen as a continuation of the Droshak newspaper, but unlike Droshak, Pro Armenia did not openly support terrorist acts, even though it sympathized with them.³³

Pro Armenia's Anti-Ottoman Empire Propaganda and Discourse Analysis

In the November 25 1900 issue of the newspaper, an article titled "Pro Armenia" by Pierre Quillard stated that Armenians in Sason had been massacred by order of Sultan Abdülhamid. The events that took place in Sason in 1894 had been discussed in detail in the French Parliament. The only point on which everyone in the European public agreed was that not a single drop of blood should be shed anymore. Quillard claimed that, in addition to the mass killings, many Armenians were tortured in Ottoman prisons. Furthermore, the Ottoman Sultan had even prohibited Armenians from moving from one village to another. It

31 "Pro Armenia," Aram. <https://webaram.com/biblio/presse/pro-armenia>.

32 Raymond H. Kévorkian, "Friends in High Places: French defenders of the Armenian Cause," AGBU Magazine, August 2018, <https://agbu.org/peoples-victory/friends-high-places>.

33 Ahmet Can Öktem, "Co-founder of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and one of the Precursors of Armenian Terrorism: Kristapor Mikaelyan," AVİM, April 20, 2021, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/CO-FOUNDER-OF-THE-ARMENIAN-REVOLUTIONARY-FEDERATION-AND-ONE-OF-THE-PRECURSORS-OF-ARMENIAN-TERRORISM-KRISTAPOR-MIKAELYAN>.

was emphasized that Armenians suffered most from Sultan Abdülhamid's despotism and that if the civilized world turned a deaf ear to these calls, the Armenian race would soon be extinct. According to Quillard, 22 villages were destroyed and 6.000 Armenians lost their lives during the Sason events in 1894. Quillard stated that in 1895, Ottoman tax collectors and police officers who came to the Muş plain beat and imprisoned Armenian men. In response to these incidents, it was stated that the objections raised by Armenian Patriarch Ormanyan against arbitrary arrests were in vain, and that, in reaction to these objections, the security forces conducted searches in Kumkapı, the seat of the Patriarchate. It was further noted that the former Patriarch, Matheos İzmirliyan, had been confined to a monastery in Jerusalem for sharing with the international public the hardships endured by the Armenian population. Quillard emphasized that Armenian Patriarch Ormanyan should have taken a more proactive stance. Finally, Sultan Abdülhamid was held responsible for these events, and the famous Turkish proverb, "*The fish stinks from the head,*" was used to describe him. The real culprits responsible for the suffering of the Armenians are those who obeyed the Sultan; they are also the ones who should be punished or neutralized. It was stated that European governments had not the slightest doubt about the events that had taken place and that no diplomatic trickery could cover them up. It is thought-provoking why all statesmen who maintained relations with Sultan Abdülhamid continued to meet with him, even though they knew he was the chief assassin.³⁴ Looking at the language used in the Pro Armenia newspaper's report, it creates the impression that the Armenians did not engage in any kind of rebellion and that the security forces loyal to the Ottoman Empire arbitrarily attempted to massacre the Armenians. Furthermore, a dictating tone is used, directly targeting Sultan Abdülhamid and calling on the international community to sever all communication with the Sultan.

When the Ottoman archive documents mentioned above are examined regarding the aspects presented above, the propaganda activities that the Armenians wanted to implement through Pro Armenia are clearly visible. It has been understood that a letter prepared by an American missionary living in Harput, containing the allegation that Ottoman Empire officials massacred and tortured Armenians in Sason, was sent anonymously to newspapers published in Western countries.³⁵ Thus, it can be seen that Western missionaries attempted to influence public perception through the press by interfering in the internal

34 Pierre Quillard, "Pro Armenia," *Pro Armenia*, No. 1, November 25, 1900, pp. 1-4.

35 *Presidential Ottoman Archive (COA)*, Y. A. HUS., 327-29, H. 12.11.1312. The Presidential Ottoman Archive will be referred to as COA from here on.

affairs of the Ottoman Empire. In response, the Ottoman Empire stated in a letter sent to its embassies that Armenians who had attempted to massacre Muslims in Sason and the surrounding area, encouraged by an Armenian rebel named Hamparsum, had been captured and sent to the court in Muş to be tried.³⁶ Another document states that the Armenians rebelled at the instigation of the British.³⁷ According to this, it is known that the Armenians were the first to use weapons before the events in Sason and that the British promised the Armenians independence.³⁸

In the 25 December 1900 issue of the Pro Armenia newspaper, it was stated that Armenians did not aim to incite a crusader spirit against any religion or race living in Ottoman territories. It was stated that Sultan Abdülhamid lived in fear of death, that he was the murderer of his own brother and Mithat Pasha, that he killed Turks, Druze, Arabs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, and Yazidis, and finally that he carried out the Armenian genocide. It was emphasized that Armenians lost their lives in the events in Diyarbakır in 1895. Furthermore, the events in Adana are mentioned, noting that excessive taxes were collected from the Armenians in the region, but that the authorities took no action regarding the issue of the bad smell in the city. In a letter sent by British Consul General Gerald Henry Fitzmaurice to Sir Ph. Currie on 16 March 1896, regarding the events that took place in Urfa in October and December 1895, it was claimed that Armenian neighborhoods in Urfa had been destroyed and that no Armenian men were to be found in the region. Fitzmaurice stated that the massacres would continue because no Muslims had been punished for the massacres committed against Armenians. However, he emphasized that as a result of the Armenians developing relations with foreign states, Muslims felt threatened. Fitzmaurice stated that secret Armenian organizations from Europe were attempting to smuggle explosives, weapons, and revolutionary publications into the Aleppo region, and that a similar process was taking place in Urfa. He emphasized that violent clashes had taken place between Armenians and Muslims in Urfa and that the Armenian bishop had wanted to report the situation to His Majesty the Sultan, but Turkish authorities had not taken the initiative in this regard. While Muslims were performing Friday prayers, Armenians carried out armed attacks on mosques. Muslims reported that Armenians had opened fire on them, and as the clashes intensified, Governor Hasan Pasha arrived in the region from Suruç. The Ottoman government declared that Armenians must surrender the

36 COA, HR. TH., 148-101, M. 04. 11. 1894.

37 COA, Y. EE., 160-23, H. 25. 05. 1312.

38 COA, Y. EE., 159-43, H. 05. 06. 1312.

1.800 weapons they had procured from abroad. In response, Armenians stated that they did not possess weapons and that Muslims should be disarmed first. Armenians refused to hand over their weapons to the Ottoman administration for weeks. Ultimately, Armenians surrendered part of their weapons to Turkish authorities.³⁹ Looking at Fitzmaurice's letter, it is clear that the events in Urfa began when the Armenians obtained large quantities of weapons through Western states. When the Armenians used these weapons to attack Muslims, the Muslims' right to legitimate self-defense arose. The Armenians, who persistently claimed that they did not have weapons, were eventually forced to surrender their weapons to the Ottoman administration.

During this period, primarily in Erzurum, Armenians were carrying out activities in the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, and Mamuretülaziz that were intended to intimidate and provoke the Muslim population. The Ottoman Empire dispatched more security forces to the region in order to prevent potential conflict.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it was common for Armenians to attack Muslims, especially during Friday prayers. In 1895, Muslims in Diyarbakır were attacked by Armenians with weapons during Friday prayers. As a result of these incidents, many Muslims were killed and wounded.⁴¹ Another method used by provocative Armenians was for approximately 200 Armenians to dress up as Circassians and attack Muslim villages.⁴² In addition, Armenians were walking around the streets of Diyarbakır dressed in Laz and Georgian clothing.⁴³ Ultimately, after restoring order in Diyarbakır, the Ottoman administration established a commission to compensate those whose property had been damaged.⁴⁴ As claimed in the Pro Armenia newspaper, the information that Muslims committed massacres against Armenians is false. According to official documents, Muslims were caught defenseless and subjected to systematic attacks.

The interception by Ottoman security forces of a letter sent by the Armenian Bishop of Aleppo to the Armenian Bishop of Urfa revealed that Armenians in Anatolia were in alliance with the aim of revolting and that more weapons and ammunition needed to be sent to the Zeytun region.⁴⁵ Ottoman archival documents show that, contrary to the claims made in the Pro Armenia

39 "La Quinzaine, Lettres de Diarbékir et d'Adana," *Pro Armenia*, No. 3, December 25, 1900, pp. 17-23.

40 COA, A. MKT. MHM., 721-4, H. 02. 05. 1313.

41 COA, Y. PRK. ZB., 16-77, H. 14. 05. 1313.

42 COA, HR. SFR. 3., 438-33, M. 11. 11. 1895.

43 COA, Y. PRK. UM., 33-107, H. 28. 05. 1313.

44 COA, Y. PRK. UM., 33-57, H. 19. 05. 1313.

45 COA, HR. SYS., 2790-43, M. 17. 11. 1895.

newspaper, the internal unrest in the areas where Armenians lived in Anatolia was not orchestrated by Muslims.

The newspaper's 25 January 1901 issue featured an article titled "Abdülhamid and Europe" by Francis de Pressensé, which emphasized that politicians, judges, and members of parliament in Paris paid their respects to Sultan Abdülhamid and that officers raised their glasses to the Sultan at cocktail parties. This was France's stance towards Sultan Abdülhamid, despite its rebukes of the Armenians. According to Pressensé, this despicable attitude was not unique to France; similar attitudes towards the Sultan were adopted throughout Europe. In his article, Pressensé expressed his resentment, stating that they were aware that there was no European power left that did not flatter Sultan Abdülhamid, bow down before him, and shower him with cowardly praise. The article goes on to state that the concept of morality has completely disappeared from international relations today and that humanitarian issues have no say in the field of diplomacy. At the end of the article, referring to Sultan Abdülhamid, it is emphasized that it is unacceptable to celebrate with music the birthday of one of the greatest catastrophes to befall the human race.⁴⁶ The Pro Armenia newspaper attempts to discredit Sultan Abdülhamid in the eyes of European states through slanderous and insulting news reports.

In the same issue, Jean Longuet's article titled "The United States of America (USA) and the Armenians" states that after the events of 1895, many Armenians emigrated to the USA, emphasizing that Armenians held their annual congresses in Boston. The Armenians wrote a letter to US President William McKinley, describing the suffering of the Armenian people. It was stated that if the Armenians in Anatolia were not helped, this people would be completely wiped out. It was unacceptable that a country that Washington and Lincoln had struggled to build would not help the Armenians. It was noted that the USA was more effective in diplomatic activities than European states.⁴⁷ The Pro Armenia newspaper harshly stated that European states had abandoned the Armenians to their fate during and after the uprisings. Furthermore, the Armenians criticized the course of relations between European states and Sultan Abdülhamid, trying to gauge whether they could develop a new policy with the USA.

In its 25 February 1901 issue, under the headline "Russification of Armenians in the Caucasus", the Pro Armenia newspaper stated that the Armenian

46 Francis de Pressensé, "Abd-ul-Hamid et L'Europe," *Pro Armenia*, No. 5, January 25, 1901, pp. 33-34.

47 Jean Longuet, "Les Etats-Unis et Les Arméniens," *Pro Armenia*, No. 5, January 25, 1901, p. 36.

race was seriously threatened by Russian administrative despotism and that approximately 2 million Armenians in the Caucasus were being oppressed. It was emphasized that 50.000 Armenians served in the Russian army and that the best generals in the Turkish-Russian wars were Armenians.⁴⁸ However, Russian officials stated that Armenian schools, printing houses, and libraries had to be kept under control. It was also reported that Armenian charitable associations were more interested in politics than in mutual aid.⁴⁹ Russia sought to restrain the Armenians since they were approaching the idea of establishing an independent Armenian state outside of Russian control.

In the 25 August 1901 issue of the newspaper, an article titled “The Anniversary of the Attack on the Ottoman Bank” provides a detailed account of the bank attack carried out by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaktsutyun*) on 26 August 1896. The article states that this attack was intended to send a message to the “Red Beast” residing in the Yıldız Palace that the Armenian people would resist and survive. Alongside the bank attack, the simultaneous burning of Istanbul and its subsequent transformation into a city reduced to ashes within a short period of time were also aimed. Thus, the Sultan would see with his own bloodshot eyes what his reign had led to. The Ottoman police had obtained intelligence that the Armenians were planning an attack, but they did not have all the details. A clash occurred between the Armenians who entered the Ottoman Bank and the security forces. During the clashes, some police officers lost their lives. An official named Maksimov from the Russian consulate stated that the Armenians’ demands had been taken into consideration but that they must end their attack. He said that if they continued their attack and blew up the bank, they would lose the sympathy of European states. The activists who ended the attack boarded the French Messagerie Maritime ship and set sail for Marseille. The rebels, who were taken to the Saint-Pierre prison in Marseille, responded to the question “What is your profession?” during interrogation by stating that they were revolutionaries and that their action was an act of national revenge.⁵⁰ The Armenians who were injured during the bank attack were visited by the Russian ambassador at the Russian hospital where they were taken. The ambassador promised that everything necessary for their treatment would be done and that they would subsequently be sent to Malta.⁵¹ In the Pro Armenia newspaper, the Armenians who attacked the Ottoman Bank were declared heroes. This article

48 “La russification des Arméniens au Caucase,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 7, February 25, 1901, pp. 54-55.

49 “La russification des Arméniens au Caucase,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 8, March 10, 1901, p. 61.

50 “L’anniversaire de l’attaque de la Banque Ottomane,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 19, August 25, 1901, pp. 146-148.

51 COA, Y. PRK. ZB., 18-10, H. 02. 04. 1314.

also contained insulting remarks about Sultan Abdülhamid. It is evident that such language was used deliberately throughout the newspaper.

The Pro Armenia newspaper also monitored the activities of Jews as well as Armenians. In this context, in the 10 January 1902 issue, in an article titled “The Zionist Congress and the Sultan” written by Bernard Lazare, it was emphasized that at the Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897, a clear show of respect was paid to Sultan Abdülhamid and that it was shameful for Jews to salute murderers. The descendants of Moses today see no harm in showing respect to a man like the Sultan. Zionist leaders laid Jews at the feet of Wilhelm II yesterday, and today they make them kneel before the Red Sultan. This attitude is called *realpolitik* in the international system, but it is nothing more than a policy of lies. Moreover, it is no feat to be able to meet with Abdülhamid because anyone who wants to can meet with him by bribing people close to the Sultan at Yıldız Palace. However, Sultan Abdülhamid does not want to give the Jews land in Palestine. The Jewish people must first renew themselves intellectually and morally.⁵² The Armenians viewed the Zionists’ efforts to develop relations with the Ottoman Empire with suspicion. Furthermore, the Armenians believed that Sultan Abdülhamid would not negotiate on the issue of Palestinian land under any circumstances.

The Armenians attempted to expose the activities of any movement or individual opposed to Sultan Abdülhamid through the Pro Armenia newspaper. In this context, in the issue dated 25 February 1902, an article titled “Congress of Ottoman Liberals” written by Pierre Quillard stated that the Young Turks Congress meeting in Paris on 4 February 1902, was significant and that everyone attending the meeting harbored hatred toward the Hashashin (referring to Sultan Abdülhamid) and that he must be removed from the throne as soon as possible. The majority of the Young Turks agreed that the Armenians’ demands were legitimate, but they argued that the constitution must first be enacted in order to reestablish justice in Türkiye. Furthermore, the Young Turks wanted to establish true equality between Muslims and Christians.⁵³

In an article titled “Letters from Erzincan and Ahlat” in the 1 September 1903 issue of the newspaper, it was alleged that an Ottoman Empire official in Erzincan crushed an Armenian woman and her child under his horse’s

52 Bernard Lazare, “Les Congrès Sioniste et Le Sultan,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 4, January 10, 1902, pp. 29-30.

53 Pierre Quillard, “Les Congrès des Libéraux ottomans,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 7, February 25, 1902, pp. 49-50.

hooves. It was also stated that Armenians who surrendered to the security forces were executed within a few days. For this reason, it was emphasized that Armenians should not surrender to Ottoman rule under any circumstances and that they must always fight. It was noted that Armenians were subjected to insults by Turks because of the clothes they wore. Among the information conveyed was that an Armenian youth who wanted to bring firewood from the mountains with an axe in his hand was detained by security forces. The article claimed that Armenians were under pressure from barbaric Kurds and that Kurds attacked Armenians like bloodthirsty wolves. It also stated that Turks attacked Armenian places of worship.⁵⁴ Looking at Ottoman archive documents, it is stated that the claim that Muslims attacked the Armenian Monastery in Erzincan is false and that this was also confirmed by the French and British consulates.⁵⁵ In the villages of Pasinler and Komazor, affiliated with Erzurum, Armenian gangs martyred Muslims by cutting off their ears, noses, lips, arms, and legs.⁵⁶ This document shows that Armenians behaved savagely towards Muslims. Ottoman documents also show that the claim that Armenians' places of worship were destroyed, spread through propaganda, was refuted by Western states. Due to the Armenians' disruptive activities in the region, Ottoman security forces were constantly on alert.

An article titled "The Patriarch and the Sultan" published in the newspaper on 15 April 1904, stated that the declaration prepared by the Patriarch was read in all Armenian churches, and that the declaration stated that Armenians were satisfied with the Sultan's protection and that they should never rebel against the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁷ The respect and gratitude shown by the Armenian Patriarch to the Sultan was a subject of criticism among Armenian separatists. As mentioned earlier, the Armenian Patriarch's stance was harshly criticized by the writers of the Pro Armenia newspaper. Armenian separatists opposed anyone who established relations with Sultan Abdülhamid.

The newspaper's 1 August 1905 issue primarily featured official statements regarding the assassination attempt on Sultan Abdülhamid on 21 July 1905. According to these statements, a bomb detonated after Friday prayers resulted in the loss of many lives. In response to this incident, Sultan Abdülhamid (as reported by eyewitnesses) followed the events with dignity and courage. The Sultan did not warmly welcome the idea of those around him to go to a safe area and, upon their insistence, shouted at them not to worry. Numerous

54 "Lettres d'Erzinghian et d'Akhlat," *Pro Armenia*, No. 68, September 1, 1903, pp. 347-348.

55 COA, HR.SYS., 2795-25, M. 24. 08. 1903.

56 COA, HR. SYS., 2795-53, M. 01.11.1903.

57 "Le Patriarche et le Sultan," *Pro Armenia*, No. 83, April 15, 1904, p. 478.

arrests were made after the attack. Jean Longuet, a writer for the Pro Armenia newspaper, stated that the Red Sultan narrowly escaped the assassination attempt. Due to conflicting information on the subject, J. Longuet discussed this incident with Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, one of the important figures of the Young Turks. Dr. Abdullah Cevdet stated that he did not believe the claims that this attack was carried out by a Macedonian, Armenian, or Italian anarchist, and that such statements could increase violent incidents against the Christian population. J. Longuet asked whether it was true that Sultan Abdülhamid had gained great prestige among his Muslim subjects by eliminating his Christian subjects. Dr. Abdullah Cevdet stated that this information was absolutely false and that Turkish prisons were filled with Muslim youths who were brutally beaten. Dr. Abdullah Cevdet also claimed that the person who attempted to assassinate Sultan Abdülhamid was definitely a Muslim Turk and emphasized that this was not the first attack on the Sultan, noting that eight months earlier, a young man named Arif Hikmet, a former medical school student, had been caught with three bombs in Sultanahmet Square. He added that this young man managed to escape from Istanbul before he was executed. When asked what the Young Turks' main goal was, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet replied that they aimed to implement the Constitution prepared by the great Turkish reformer Mithat Pasha.⁵⁸ Looking at the Ottoman archive document, it is seen that an assassination attempt was organized against Sultan Abdülhamid by Armenians during the Friday Greeting.⁵⁹ Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, on the other hand, argued that Christians would never carry out such an attack, and openly declared his hatred and anger towards Sultan Abdülhamid through the Pro Armenia newspaper. This issue of the newspaper, as well as various other issues, gave extensive coverage to the views of those opposed to Sultan Abdülhamid. In this way, attempts were made to propagate the idea that the Ottoman Empire was weak and inadequate.

An article titled "Call to President Roosevelt," written by M. Berthelot and published in the newspaper's 1 February 1906 issue, stated that US President Roosevelt, thanks to his high political and moral influence, was constantly striving to preserve and reestablish international peace. The article addressed to Roosevelt stated that there was no doubt he was affected by the tragic fate of the Armenian people; it also stated that the Armenian nation had been subjected to violence by Muslims, who had been described as "barbarians" in recent years, and was facing the threat of extinction. It is emphasized that the reports of US diplomats serving in the region describe these events. It is

58 "L'attentat Contre le Sultan," *Pro Armenia*, No. 115, August 1, 1905, pp. 752-755.

59 COA, Y. PRK. KOM., 14-69, H. 26. 06. 1323.

stated that Armenians' lives and property in Anatolia are no longer safe. It is known that Americans and Europeans have also been affected by the attacks of Kurdish gangs. The letter states that for these reasons, the US should intervene in the region to the extent it deems appropriate.⁶⁰ In a reply letter written by US Secretary of State M. Elihu Root on behalf of President Roosevelt, it was clearly stated that the US had strong sympathy for oppressed peoples in all countries and that attention should be paid to ensuring the safety of Armenian lives and property. However, it was strongly emphasized that the US lacked a legal basis for intervention in the region.⁶¹

In the article titled "The Sultan's Health" published in the 5 June 1906 issue of the newspaper, it was stated that Sultan Abdülhamid's health was not very promising and that it was unknown whether this condition was due to a chronic illness or an unexpected new illness. Considering that Sultan Abdülhamid was born in 1842, it can be said that he was not yet very old. It was emphasized that Reşat Efendi was the heir apparent after Sultan Abdülhamid.⁶² In *Pro Armenia*, in an article titled "The Sultan's Health" republished on 5 September 1906, it was stated that Sultan Abdülhamid had suffered a severe crisis and lost consciousness. It was also reported that the Sultan's plan to receive foreign diplomatic representatives had been canceled due to fatigue.⁶³ An article titled "When the Beast Dies", published in the 20 October 1906, issue of the newspaper, reported that the news of the Sultan's serious illness had been circulating for weeks and that, due to his nervous disposition, he might resist death, but he was extremely weak and exhausted. The article also stated that Turkish newspapers were not allowed to publish anything about the Sultan's health and that German doctors were acting cautiously.⁶⁴ The *Pro Armenia* newspaper was carefully following the news about Sultan Abdülhamid's health. However, as can be understood from the article titled "When the Beast Dies", it continued to use propaganda elements through hate speech. Furthermore, Sultan Abdülhamid was constantly portrayed as helpless and sick.

In an article titled "Can Armenia Survive as a Nation?" written by Edgard W. Upton and published in the newspaper's 1 July 1907 issue, it was stated that despite the enormous obstacles facing the Armenians in establishing a national state, they could be able to build a state due to their strong nationalist

60 M. Berthelot, "Appel au Président Roosevelt," *Pro Armenia*, No. 127, February 1, 1906, p. 845.

61 Elihu Root, "La Réponse du Président Roosevelt," *Pro Armenia*, No. 130, March 15, 1906, p. 869.

62 "La santé du Sultan," *Pro Armenia*, No. 135, June 5, 1906, p. 911.

63 "La santé du Sultan," *Pro Armenia*, No. 141, September 5, 1906, p. 958.

64 "Quand la Bête Sera Morte," *Pro Armenia*, No. 144, October 20, 1906, p. 985.

sentiments. It was stated that due to the difficulties they faced in the region, they emigrated to other countries and that the Armenians who emigrated to the US, for example, caused diplomatic friction between Türkiye and the US. The article emphasizes that allegiance to a country must be mutual and that since citizens pay taxes to the state, the state's police must ensure their security. The article goes on to state that under the rule of a tyrant like Sultan Abdülhamid, the subjects' demands would not be taken into account and the subjects would be seen as slaves. Despite being subjected to intense attacks by Muslims, Armenians still hold high-ranking positions in Türkiye today. Furthermore, Armenians held important positions in Ottoman society, such as bankers, diplomats, and merchants. Considering the problems Armenians have experienced in recent times, it has been stated that the process of building the Armenian nation will be extremely painful.⁶⁵ In this article, the author shares information about the persecution of Armenians under Ottoman rule, while also stating that Armenians were able to work in high-level positions. At this point, a contradiction is clearly evident. If the claims frequently mentioned in every issue of the Pro Armenia newspaper, such as "Armenians were persecuted" or "the Armenian race was targeted for extermination," were true, then Armenian bureaucrats should not have been able to hold any positions under Ottoman rule. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the author considers the possibility of Armenians establishing a state to be low.

The article titled "Muslims Against Hamid", published in the 5 March 1908, issue of the newspaper, states that an investigative commission was established regarding certain Muslims who had established ties with the Young Turks abroad, and that approximately 50 people were arrested. According to the seized correspondence, it appears that an agreement had been reached on changing the form of government and making significant amendments to the constitution.⁶⁶ The article titled "Turkish Rebellion", published in the newspaper's 20 July 1908 issue, stated that the rebellion that began in the Macedonia and Albania regions in early July had spread to the province of Edirne and that the soldiers sent from Anatolia to suppress the rebellion were acting in line with the Young Turks' propaganda. The Yıldız Palace, however, claimed that the uprisings had been orchestrated by Britain. For months, there had been military uprisings in the Turkish army for various reasons. All soldiers in Shkodra, Albania, had requested to be discharged. In addition, officers had only been able to receive one month's pay out of the five

65 Edgard W. Upton, "L'armenie peut-elle subsister comme Nation," *Pro Armenia*, No. 161, July 5, 1907, pp. 1122-1123.

66 "Les Musulmans contre Hamid," *Pro Armenia*, No. 177, March 5, 1908, p. 1245.

months owed to them. Rebellions had also occurred in Manastır for similar reasons. The rebellion in Manastır ended on 30 June after the Ottoman Bank made a payment of 600.000 pounds to the soldiers. The British Consulate in Thessaloniki was also engaged in propaganda activities in favor of the Young Turks. The Young Turks demanded reforms regarding the reestablishment of the constitution, equality before the law, and guarantees for individual freedoms and property rights.⁶⁷

As a result of the uprisings, the Second Constitutional Monarchy was declared in the Ottoman Empire on 24 July 1908. According to an article titled “Statement from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation” published in the newspaper on 20 August 1908, following these developments, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaktsutyun*) submitted a circular to the constitutional government. Accordingly, it demanded the provision of free movement in Armenian regions, the return of Armenian lands “seized” in the recent past, the lifting of measures taken against Armenians between 1895 and 1908, the release of Armenians who were political prisoners, and permission for those who had been exiled to return to the country.⁶⁸ In a statement published on 5 September 1908, through Pro Armenia, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaktsutyun*) stated that they had not forgotten the suffering they had endured for decades, that they had fought for this cause with a love of freedom, that their blood had not been shed in vain today, and that their selfless efforts had been rewarded, emphasizing that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaktsutyun*) was the only force that enabled a new era to begin in Türkiye.⁶⁹

The article titled “The Return of Patriarch İzmirliyan,” published in the 5 September 1908, issue of the newspaper, stated that the former Armenian Patriarch Matheos İzmirliyan, who had been imprisoned in a monastery in Jerusalem, was greeted with enthusiasm by both Armenians and Turks in Izmir and Çanakkale upon his return to Türkiye. In Çanakkale, Mazhar Pasha and Mehmet Efendi from the Young Turks went to see the Patriarch and embraced him. Approximately 100.000 people gathered at the Galata Pier for the ship that docked there; it was stated that such enthusiasm had never been seen before in Istanbul, and that people of all nationalities came to see the Patriarch. In addition, the Committee of the Young Turks in Jerusalem sent

67 Pierre Quillard, “La Révolte Turque,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 186, July 20, 1908, p. 1325.

68 “Informations: Déclaration de la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 188, August 20, 1908, p. 1341.

69 “Proclamation de la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 189, September 5, 1908, p. 1349.

a magnificent wreath to be placed on the graves of Armenians in Istanbul. Furthermore, the article titled “Appeasement” in the same issue stated that all civil servants working in the Ottoman Empire had been dismissed and that although the Turks viewed the constitution positively, they doubted that it would be implemented as long as Sultan Abdülhamid was alive. Furthermore, it included statements that the Kurds had become closer to the Armenians, that the past was behind them, and that they were brothers. Another report emphasized that all of Erzurum was jubilant and that young girls and children were singing in the streets. Armenians detained in the Yozgat, Kayseri, and Maraş regions were released.⁷⁰

The article titled “The Committee of Union and Progress” in the same issue includes statements made by Dr. Nazım Bey, one of the founding members of the Committee of Union and Progress, to a *Le Temps* correspondent on 20 August 1908. According to these statements, *“the task of the Committee of Union and Progress is not yet complete; on the contrary, it has only just begun. We have succeeded in proclaiming the constitution, but we must establish it on such solid foundations that there will be no reaction. Asia Minor is by far the richest region of the Sublime State, and there are very important tasks awaiting us there that we must complete. The Anatolian villagers are very pleased with the removal of the oppressive regime. However, words such as constitution, elections, and parliament mean nothing to the villagers. Most villagers believe that they will no longer have to pay taxes. Although Anatolian villagers are very intelligent by nature, centuries of oppression, ignorance, and misery have covered their minds with a hard shell. Similarly, the Kurds, who are said to be very savage, possess remarkable intelligence. I admit that the administration in the country is currently very fragmented. The reason for this is that we believe it is necessary to carry out a major purge in order to completely eliminate espionage. Although it is relatively easy to dismiss those who acted as informants during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, it is quite difficult to find competent replacements. Everything in the country needs to be taken up again from scratch, and we must succeed in doing so, otherwise anarchy and civil war will break out in the country. Furthermore, as members of the Committee of Union and Progress, we will not pursue any position, rank, or seat in parliament, and we will definitely not take money from anyone. On the day Resneli Niyazi raised the flag of rebellion, there were only 80 Turkish lira (1.824 francs) in the committee’s coffers. We entered the struggle under these conditions. We are currently preventing the Sultan from causing any harm in any matter. At this stage, it is more appropriate*

70 “L’apaisement,” *Pro Armenia*, No. 189, September 5, 1908, p. 1350.

for us to keep him on the throne, because we do not want to deepen the crisis in the country. We will never allow Europe to intervene in the Sublime State, whatever the cost. Furthermore, since the Caliph still has tremendous moral authority, it is important for us that our decisions bear the imperial seal. On 30 August, Enver Bey made some statements to a Times reporter regarding the role of the army in the Turkish Revolution. According to him, the revolution is a national revolution; despite all the hopelessness, it was carried out with a spirit that united the entire people against the government. The army is not the master of the nation, but its servant and the instrument of its will. Although the revolution was carried out against the tyranny of the Palace, the committee will support the legitimate ruler, Abdülhamid, as long as he respects the constitution. Furthermore, in its instructions to the press, the Committee of Union and Progress emphasized the need to show the Sultan the respect he deserved and to avoid mentioning the Balkans' past."⁷¹

According to another report published in the Pro Armenia newspaper, Dr. Nazım Bey visited the Armenian Patriarch's home in Izmir on 28 August 1908, and was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd. Addressing the crowd, Dr. Nazım said: "First and foremost, we owe even more gratitude to the Armenian people than to the army, because it is this people who instilled in us the idea of freedom and led us to freedom."⁷² The article titled "Kurds" in the 20 September 1908 issue of the newspaper stated that supporters of the Abdülhamid regime had begun to reorganize in the face of the unexpected victory of the Committee of Union and Progress. However, thanks to the vigilance of the Young Turks, the Armenians did not experience a repeat of the massacres they had suffered in 1896. The article goes on to emphasize that there was a large Kurdish population in Istanbul and that most of the port and construction workers, as well as the porters, were Kurds. It was stated that it was the Kurds who took up arms against the Armenians during the reign of Abdülhamid, and that vigilance against the Kurds was necessary. A man named Hasan Hayri Efendi, who was of Kurdish origin but was born and raised in Istanbul, gathered the Kurds in front of the Edirne Gate and gave a speech. In his speech, he stated the following: "O my Kurdish brothers, everything is now over for us. We will all come under the rule of the infidels. The Armenians have been granted autonomy. We Muslims will be forced to live with our heads bowed in the future."⁷³

71 "Le Comité d'Union et Progrès," *Pro Armenia*, No. 189, September 5, 1908, pp. 1354-1355.

72 "La propagande et la Constitution dans les provinces d'Asie," *Pro Armenia*, No. 190, September 20, 1908, p. 1358.

73 "Les Kurdes," *Pro Armenia*, No. 190, September 20, 1908, pp. 1358-1359.

In the Pro Armenia newspaper, articles published after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy show that Armenians adopted a positive attitude towards the Committee of Union and Progress coming to power. In particular, statements by leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress Party were frequently quoted. Articles about Sultan Abdülhamid began to be published much less frequently. Furthermore, it is observed that Armenians had high expectations of the new administration. From the first issue to the last, Armenians attempted to use propaganda methods effectively in the Pro Armenia newspaper. In doing so, they frequently resorted to black propaganda methods. Particularly after the Committee of Union and Progress Party began to hold power, statements indicating that Armenians had achieved their goals can be found in the newspaper.

Conclusion

This article examines the black propaganda activities carried out by the Pro Armenia newspaper, published in French in Paris between 1900 and 1908, one of the most critical periods for the Ottoman Empire in political and social terms, in the context of psychological warfare. While analyzing the content and discourse of the newspaper, Ottoman archive documents related to the subject were also used. The Pro Armenia newspaper resorted intensively to black propaganda methods in order to keep the Armenian issue on the European public agenda and to encourage Western states to intervene in the Ottoman Empire. In this context, Armenians were systematically portrayed as “victims” in the newspaper, while the Ottoman administration, and especially Sultan Abdülhamid II, were constantly targeted with epithets such as “Murderer”, “Red Sultan”, and “Monster”. It is evident that the newspaper only reported events from the Armenian perspective and made no mention whatsoever of the massacres committed by Armenian gangs against the Muslim population. Official Ottoman archival documents reveal that Muslims were systematically massacred by Armenians.

The Pro Armenia newspaper not only presented news related to Armenians, but also played an active role in the participation of Armenians, especially those living in Europe, in international meetings or demonstrations. The newspaper continuously engaged in black propaganda, using both the international press and diplomatic channels simultaneously. Furthermore, with the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, changes occurred in the language of Pro Armenia’s news coverage. However, even under these

conditions, the demands and political goals of the Armenians were persistently emphasized.

In conclusion, the Pro Armenia newspaper is one of the most striking examples of how the press was used as a psychological warfare tool in the conditions of that period. Looking at the newspaper's activities, it is clear how the relationship between propaganda and international diplomacy was intertwined, particularly in the context of minority issues and the strategic interests of the great powers.

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