

REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY,
POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 5 2003

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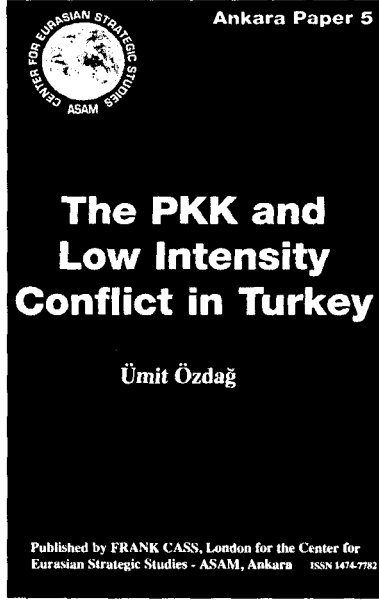
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“The Review of International Affairs” is a new journal that aims to cover current international and strategic issues from a critical and academic point of view. “Ankara Papers” is a series of bi-monthly monographs, aiming to publish quality in-depth analysis of contemporary world issues, with a concentration on Eurasia. Both are co-published by Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies (ASAM), Ankara, Turkey and Frank Cass Publishers, London, U.K.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Institute for Armenian Research introduces the first issue of the second volume of **Review of Armenian Studies**. The articles, reviews, documents and notes referring to all kinds of gatherings the members of the **Institute for Armenian Research** attended are presented in the *Index* section of this issue. It aims to document a year's work and serve as a source of bibliography in the field of Armenian Studies.

Facts and Comments by the Ambassador (Rtd.) **Ömer E. LÜTEM** opens this first issue of Volume II as usual. Opening of the border between Armenia, and the claims of both parties on this debate are analysed by Lütem; and the possible outcomes are reviewed. He also interpretes the recent decision in the Swiss parliament recognizing the so-called Armenian Genocide.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Sıtkı BİLGİN focuses on the Soviet-Armenian collaboration against Turkey during the Cold War. He reviews the conditions of the Cold War, and comments on the motivations behind Soviet Union to provoke the Armenians.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet EYİCİL's article also refers to the historical aspects of the Armenian Problem. Eyicil looks at the events of the First World War, and mentions the activities of Bozo Band in Maraş.

The other two articles of this issue are about the Armenians living in Turkey. The first one is by **Dr. M. Vedat GÜRBÜZ**. He discusses the status and problems of the Turkish Armenians. **Res. Assist. Umut KOLDAŞ** also focuses on the Turkish Armenians, but more specifically on the 1965 Events.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Yücel ACER reviews the book called 'Prosecuting War Crimes and Genocide, the Twentieth-Century Experience' written by Howard BALL, and criticizes the stance of the writer.

The books recently published about Armenians and Armenia, and a book review on the memories of Sadettin Paşa, who is the

director of the famous Inspection Committee investigating the mistreatment of Armenian community, by Hasret DİKİÇİ. This issue also includes the *Index* of the works of all four volumes.

The Editor

FACTS AND COMMENTS

Ömer E. LÜTEM*

In this issue, the main developments in the relations of Turkey with Armenia between September and December 2003 are handled and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide allegations in the Swiss parliament is interpreted.

DEBATES IN ARMENIA ON THE OPENING OF THE LAND BORDER

In Armenia, the debates on the normalization of relations with Turkey and opening of the land border, which we have discussed in our previous article,¹ are continuing.

The groups with ultra-right tendencies, first and foremost Tashnaks, claim that national security implications of opening the border with Turkey are not analyzed, that it is not appropriate to develop relations with Turkey without conditions; and that this surprising tolerance of the Armenian authorities leads to Turkey's imposing increasingly stricter pre-conditions upon the Armenian side.² One of the sources counts among the above-mentioned preconditions the evacuation of Karabagh by Armenia, renouncement of genocide claims and territorial demands. These are in fact the conditions of Turkey to establishing normal relations with Armenia. On the other hand, Tashnaks demand reparation, land, and recognition of the genocide allegations by Turkey in return for the development of normal relations with Armenia. The Armenian government, aware of the impossibility of agreement with Turkey in case these demands are put forward, defends establishing relations without conditions. Nevertheless, Armenia has not renounced those claims yet officially. Minister of Foreign Affairs Oskanian, stated that recognition of the so-called genocide

* Ambassador (Rtd.)

¹ *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol.1, No.4, p. 16-18.

² Armenian Policies must be based on principles of Armenian-centrism, *Yerkir*, September 5, 2003.

is to be dealt with after establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey.³

One of the arguments of the opponents of the opening of the border is that this would be politically in favour of Turkey instead of Armenia. The pro-Huntchak media argued that Turkey has always entertained pan-Turanian aspirations to join its Central Asian cousins to build an pan-Turkic empire, and Armenia will contribute to the realization of this objective by opening the border.⁴

The claim that Armenia would prevent Turkey from uniting with Central Asian Turks was an idea proposed to assist the establishment of Great Armenia, which was envisaged during and after the First World War. It is surprising to face this view today, an idea which was not valid even in those years, and this points to the fact that Huntchaks, who failed in parliamentary elections, are so weakened that they look for help in such old fashioned demagogic ideas.

Another view is that Armenia will be a transit country not only for Turkey but also for Azerbaijan and Central Asia in case of the opening up the border. This view is theoretically correct, though it is hollow regarding contemporary realities. The eastern parts of Armenia are covered by Azerbaijan's territory and for transit passages from the Azerbaijan territory Armenia should resolve its conflicts with this country. For the railways, the conditions are different. Turkey does not have direct railway connections to Georgia or Azerbaijan. The railway goes through Kars to Armenia, and then turns north to Georgia, and south to Azerbaijan. It is connected to the Central Asian countries through Georgia by the Russian railway network. Nevertheless, Turkey has not demanded to use the Armenian railway, on the contrary, the Kars-Tbilisi railway project, which bypasses Armenia, is on the agenda.

The opening of the border became so important in Armenia that the Union of Industrialists and Businessmen of Armenia has arranged a seminar on this issue on September 17, 1987.⁵ Some of the views put forward at this seminar are summarized below:

The president of the Union, Arsen Gazarian, mentioned the closing of the border between two countries ten years ago, and

³ *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol.1, No.4, p. 15.

⁴ Turkish Embargo of Armenia, *Armenian Mirror Spectator*, September 3, 2003.

⁵ Takings and Losses of Open Border, Economists present their outlooks, *Azg*, September 19, 2003.

argued that the businessmen in the eastern regions of Turkey demanded opening of the Armenian border from the public authorities. Moreover, Gazarian repeated the idea that Armenia was a path for Turkey to access the markets of Azerbaijan and Central Asia, and that Turkey was a path for Armenia to access the European markets. This, in turn, will reduce Armenia's dependence on Georgia.

The journalist, Tatul Manaseryan also repeated the view that Turkey had much bigger interest in the opening of the border and related this argument to the issue of development in the eastern regions of Turkey. This view is not realistic as the Turkish exports to such a small country like Armenia would be very limited and its contribution the economy of the eastern region of Turkey restricted.⁶

Harutyun Hachatrian, the vice director of the most prominent news agency of Armenia, Noyan Tapan, had pointed a fact by explaining that the opening of the border will be beneficial to Armenia since it will be a moral blow to Azerbaijan.

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Armenia, Samvel Avetisyan, indirectly distanced himself from those who argued that opening of border would be much more beneficial to Turkey by saying that Turkey does not really need Armenia, for the latter is a considerably small market for Turkey's large economy. *I n d e e d*, according to Armenian sources, Turkish exports to Armenia are around 20-25 million dollars.⁷ Even this export increases ten times in coming years (witch is not very likely) thanks to the opening of border; its place in the total export volume of Turkey will be less than 1%. Therefore, the contribution of the opening of border to Turkey's material profits would be negligible. In conclusion for Turkey opening of the Armenian border is not important in terms of economy, rather it is important as a step of normalization of the two countries relations.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TURKEY

While debates continue in Armenia, some statements of the Turkish officials affirmed the stance of the government.

⁶ See Sedat Laçiner, 'Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkilerinde Sınır Kapsı Sorunu ve Ekonomik Boyutu', *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 6, pp.35-65.

⁷ *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 10, p. 18, footnote 32.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during a press conference with İlham Aliyev, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, on September 8, 2003 said that Turkey is on the side of Azerbaijan whose lands are occupied by Armenia and she is to continue supporting all initiatives to resolve the Karabagh problem.⁸

The prime minister stated, as an answer to a question on the opening of the railway between Turkey and Armenia, that the unique credible project was the Kars-Tblisi railway connection project though it has been not realized yet, and that this project aims at accessing the Turkish republics in Central Asia.⁹ Thus, the prime minister has excluded Armenia from the plan of connecting Turkey by railway to the Caucasus and then to the Turkish republics.

On the other hand, according to Armenian sources, the prime minister has explained to the Turkish Armenian Patriarch Mesrop Mutafyan at their meeting on September 25, 2003, that although Turkey is resolving the existing problems and establishing good relations with her neighbors, the borders with Armenia will not be opened and good relations cannot be established as Armenia does not recognize the Turkish borders. He also mentioned that the painful events of the history should be left for the historians.¹⁰

The Armenian authorities preferred to give a soft response to the statement of Turkish prime minister. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oskanian, answering a question, stated that talk of an imminent reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border has been extremely exaggerated. 'I have never cherished great hopes in that regard' he said, adding that his upcoming meeting with Turkish Minister Gül will clarify the situation.¹¹ The official spokesman of President Kocharian, Ashot Kocharian, explained that the president supports the long awaited reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border but doubts that Ankara will agree to expatiate that soon.¹²

The Tashnaks, afraid of being left out of the agenda and rapprochement between the two countries, utilized the statements of the Prime Minister Erdoğan to criticize Turkey and the Armenians who are in favor of opening the border.

⁸ *Hürriyetim*, September 8, 2003.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Yerkır* quoting *Marmara*, September 29, 2003.

¹¹ *Asbarez*, September 16, 2003.

¹² *RFE/RL*, September 23, 2003.

Gegam Manukian, member of the Higher Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, stated that Turkey's intolerant policy towards Armenia was well-known, and that the majority of Armenians has always been aware that the ongoing isolation of Armenia will, in fact, continue and that Ankara will maintain its biased position, that the Turkish government was not ready to listen to the demands of the international community, and that it was not ready to work in the spirit of cooperation and tolerance. He added that Turkey would continue to violate human rights and international norms by constantly denying Armenian Genocide and blockading Armenia.¹³ Manukian also stated that the statement of Erdoğan should be a wake-up call for those Armenian officials who call for the immediate opening of the border, urging railway to be repaired and become ready for operation, and the border which was closed by Ankara to be reopened. It is clear that he referred to the Minister of Transportation, Andranik Manukian, who said that all preparations for the railway are completed and that Armenia was ready to start transportation with Turkey.¹⁴

As it is clear that the Tashnaks are in conflict with other members of the government also on the question of opening of the border. Their uncompromising attitude might result in their leaving the government in case the border is opened. The fact that Makarian Government has the majority even without the Tashnaks can make this development easier.

In contrast to the radical stance of Tashnaks, the statements of the Defense Minister Serj Sarkisian who is known to be close to Kocharian, that Armenia and Turkey would open the border in a few months, and there are prerequisites to think so show that Kocharian and his supporters really desire opening of the border.¹⁵

THE NEW YORK MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the two countries made their traditional speeches in September at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. They also took the advantage to be in New York to arrange bilateral talks.

¹³ *Asbarez*, September 9, 2003.

¹⁴ *Panarmenian*, September 7, 2003.

¹⁵ *Golos Armenii* and *Hürriyet*.

Oskanian in his speech to the General Assembly on September 25 answered mainly to İlham Aliyev's speech criticizing Armenia on the same forum; and he skipped the relations with Turkey. However, he spoke about the so-called Armenian Genocide as: 'On another matter, important for us and for all humanity, Armenia continues to engage countries and governments around the world to recognize and condemn the first Genocide of the 20th century. The survivors of the Genocide and their descendants are helping build a democratic Armenia, committed to a future, without forgetting the past.' Judging by his entire speech, this issue was out of the topic. This gives the impression that the Armenian minister since he has always mentioned this issue in his UN General Assembly speech every year, felt obliged to do so in order to avoid criticisms especially from the Tashnaks.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül referred to the Karabagh issue in his speech, and said: 'Turkey expects Armenia to fully comply with the relevant U.N. resolutions in order to find a prompt and just solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The peaceful settlement of this conflict will positively contribute to the normalization of the Turkish-Armenian relations and also to regional cooperation.'¹⁶

While the Turkish side preferred not to speak about the meeting of the two ministers, Oskanian made numerous statements about it; saying mainly that Armenia and Turkey have taken a further step towards normalizing their strained relations, there is no practical positive results to report at this point; and that they are on the right track in terms of registering progress in the bilateral relations.¹⁷ He also continued commenting on this issue after he returned to his country; and he said that there are signals from Turkey that it is willing for a positive shift in its relations with Armenia, and his impression is that Karabagh issue is no longer occupies much space in Turks' mind and is not strictly tied for normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations as it was in the past.¹⁸ Oskanian argued that the country economic programmes were not linked to the problem and the Armenian economy has already adapted to the blockade.¹⁹ According to the Tashnak media Oskanian has also

¹⁶ *Anatolian Agency*, September 26, 2003.

¹⁷ *RFE/RL*, September 26, 2003.

¹⁸ *Azg Daily*, October 7, 2003.

¹⁹ *Medimax News Agency*, October 6, 2003.

said that Turkey did not demand that Turkish territorial integrity be recognized anymore.²⁰

The attempts to belittle the border issue by arguing that it will not effect economy much, although the Armenia's desire to open the border is so clear, saying that Turkey is not interested in the Karabagh problem thus neglecting the very close Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, claiming illogically that Turkey does not demand Armenian recognition of its territorial integrity makes us think that Oskanian speaks to satisfy Armenian public opinion.

While the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs pretends not to credit the border issue with Turkey, the crisis that resulted President Shewardnadze resignation in Georgia, brought the border issue back on the agenda.

As the Turkish border stays closed the only land connection of Armenia to Russia and then to Europe is through Georgia. The first issue in the minds of the Armenian authorities when the events in Georgia broke out was the transit transportation through this country. President Kocharian mentioned that stability in Georgia might be helpful to avoid the possible negative consequences, particularly, the possible problems with the transit cargo transportation through Georgia,²¹ The Minister of Foreign Affairs Oskanian said also that he was very pleased since no problem has occurred in goods turnover.²² Minister of Transportation, Andranik Manukian at a speech in the parliament, expressed that the transportation though Georgia and the route to Georgia was not effected from the recent developments, but he was not sure about the future. Manukian added that 90% of Armenian trade is conducted through Batum and Poti ports of Georgia.²³ Galust Saakian from the Republican Party drew attentions to the risk created by the situation in Georgia by saying that the Armenian leadership should think about this issue and try to find alternative routes for the country's economic development. Saakian thinks that the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border has become pressing in these circumstances.²⁴ Thus, the developments in Georgia once

²⁰ *Asbarez*, October 6, 2003.

²¹ *Medimax News Agency*, November 24, 2003.

²² *Azg Daily*, November 25, 2003

²³ *Armenpress*, December 4, 2003; *RFE/RL* December 3, 2003

²⁴ *Noyan Tapan*, December 1, 2003

more revealed that opening of the border with Turkey is a priority for Armenia.

STATEMENTS ABOUT TURKEY'S POLICY TOWARDS ARMENIA

During the last three months, two statements has been made explaining the policy of turkey towards Armenia.

The first statement belongs to the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer who in his speech concerning the internal and external problems of Turkey on the occasion of the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, said about the relations with Armenia: 'In accordance with its willingness to develop good relations with all its neighbours, Turkey wants to normalize her relations with Armenia. However, the realization of this goal requires that Armenia pursues a foreign policy that is consistent with the principles of good neighbourliness and international law, exerts serious effort to resolve problems with its neighbours and opts for a final choice of making peace with its past and leaving the judgment of history to historians. Should Armenia display political will in this direction, Turkey would not remain unresponsive. Such a positive development would also contribute in a concrete manner to the stability and welfare of the Southern Caucasus.'²⁵

The second statement has taken place on November 3, 2003 in the presentation of 2004 Draft Budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Grand National Assembly Planning and Budget Commission. The related part of the speech delivered by Mr. Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs, is as follows: 'Turkey wants to normalize her relations with Armenia and increase cooperation in the framework of good neighbourly relations. The achievement of this aim depends on Armenia's respect for international law, her choice to make peace with its past by leaving the judgment of history to historians and her real willingness to resolve the problems with all its neighbours. In case Armenia adopts such an attitude Turkey will respond favorably and this development would also considerably contribute to the stability and welfare of the Southern Caucasus.'²⁶

The speeches of the president and the minister of foreign affairs contain the same principles of a policy towards Armenia, which could be summarized as follows:

²⁵ www.cankaya.gov.tr/tr_html/KONUSMALAR/01.10.2003-349.html

²⁶ Booklet.

The first principle is that Armenia should comply with the rules of international law. When we apply this principle to the Turkish-Armenian relations, since international treaties demarcate the borders of Turkey, it is against to the international law that Eastern Anatolia is defined as Western Armenia in Armenia's Constitutional Declaration; and in this context, it is clear that Armenia cannot demand land or reparation from Turkey. Similarly, Armenia's occupation of Karabagh, which is legally Azerbaijani territory, is also against to international law. On the other hand, that Azerbaijan accepts any possible change in the status of Karabagh is also a requirement of international law.

The second principle is that Armenia should show a real willingness or will to resolve her its conflicts with her neighbours in accordance with the principles of international law. If Armenia's policies towards Azerbaijan and Turkey are analyzed, it is understood that the main purpose of Armenia is not to resolve the problems, but to take advantage of them. For example, Armenia tries to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey, at least to open the border, without renouncing her claims for territory and reparation and without resolving the Karabagh conflict. On the other side, she tries to normalize relations with Azerbaijan and lift the embargo without withdrawing its forces from Karabagh and other Azerbaijani territory.

The third principle is that Armenia should leave the history to the historians. She has to make a final choice to be reconciled with her past, and stop considering the historical events as contemporary issues. In contrast to this principle, Armenia tries to impose to the international community that 1915 Armenian relocation, (which is wrongly known as deportation) as genocide. This policy aims to provide pressure on Turkey by accusing her with the crime of genocide and trying to create proper conditions for territorial and reparation demands. There has been almost a century after the events of 1915. After the First World War, a new international order has been established and the Turkish Republic has taken its place in this order its borders being recognized by international treaties. According to international law no border conflict related to those days can be valid today. If such a revisionist idea is accepted problems and demands of the past would be resuscitated in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus; in other words, the existing international order might be questioned. The events of those years belong to history; and it's to the historians to judge and analyze them.

According to the texts mentioned above, if Armenia complies with the above mentioned principles, it is clear that Turkey will normalize the relations with Armenia in accordance with Armenia's willingness to develop good relations with all its neighbours', open its land border and establish diplomatic relations

MEETING OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN BRUSSELS

The ministers of foreign affairs of the two countries met in Brussels on December 5, 2003 in the framework of Euro Atlantic Association Council. According to Anatolia Agency's report on this issue²⁷ the two ministers discussed the recent situation in Georgia, stability issues in the Caucasus, development of relations of Caucasian countries with Europe and NATO and bringing more context to the activities of the Partnership for Peace

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül, stated that Ankara supported the efforts to resolve the problems that existed between Azerbaijan and Armenia and that the time was ripe for taking the necessary steps towards confidence building measures. He added that Turkey was ready to contribute to these efforts and to undertake the role of a catalyst. Gül spoke of the same issues to the Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Guliev.

The Turkish Minister did not mention Turkish-Armenian relations. This is most probably due to the deliberative nature of the talks and the lack of tangible results. On the other hand the Armenian Minister Mr. Oskanian, during his statement to the press, focused on bilateral relations and pointed out that Brussels meeting was qualitatively different from the two previous meetings and that the parties were closer to taking the first steps. He added that although it was too soon to make clear statements, the first positive result, though small in nature, regarding the Turkish-Armenian border would be achieved in a few months time.²⁸

According to the Armenian minister, there is a possibility of opening up the Turkish-Armenian border in the coming months. The reasons of why the border is not right away opened are not explained. This is probably due to some expected developments in the near future. These developments might be related to the Karabagh issue, considering the fact that the Azerbaijani and

²⁷ *Anadolu Agency*, December 5, 2003.

²⁸ *Medimax News Agency*, December 6, 2003.

Armenian presidents accepted to start negotiation after a break of one and a half years. In this context, if the parties make progress in resolving of the Karabagh conflict Turkey might open its border in order to encourage Armenia. Such a development may create a positive atmosphere for the other problems between the two countries.

RECOGNITION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE CLAIMS BY THE SWISS PARLIAMENT

The Swiss parliament recognized the Armenian Genocide claims on December 16, 2003 by a decision with 107 votes for, 67 votes against and 11 votes abstaining.²⁹

The Armenian Community of Switzerland which has a political influence not proportional to its size, with the help of some Kurdish separatist group and some Swiss politicians have tried hard in the past that the Swiss Parliament adopts a decision which recognize the so-called Armenian Genocide. The Swiss governments had not been in favor of such a decision taking into account the bilateral relations with Turkey. The attempts for a decision on that subject in 1995 and 2000 and 2001 were fruitless; the vote on December 13, 2001 was refused only with 3 votes. A motion on the same subject on March 20, 2002, signed by 115 of 201 parliamentarians, was not voted due to the government's opposition.³⁰ However, it became clear that such a decision would be adopted sooner or later since almost half of the parliament was in favor of it.

Meanwhile, the Geneva Canton had recognized Armenian Genocide allegations on December 10, 2001. The Vaux Canton adopted a similar decision on September 23, 2003. This decision is commented in some Armenian media as having symbolic value since the treaty 'dismembering Armenia' had been signed in the main city³¹ of this Canton, i.e. the city of Lausanne.

The Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs, Micheline Calmy-Rey was to make an official visit to Turkey on October 6, and according to Swiss media other than Istanbul and Ankara she was expected to

²⁹ *Hürriyet and Vatan*, December 17, 2003.

³⁰ See, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 3, pp.13-17; No. 4, p. 19; No. 5, pp. 17-19.

³¹ *Yerkir*, September 24, 2003.

visit also 'The Kurdish Regions.³² However, Ankara cancelled the visit making out the decision of Vaux Canton.³³

While the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried not to exaggerate the cancellation of the visit,³⁴ the media argued that Turkey has disregarded and even insulted Switzerland;³⁵ thus, an anti-Turkish atmosphere was created in the public opinion.

News that Turkish Intelligence Service informed Swiss intelligence about Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey's meeting with a high level PKK member, and that President Couchepin demanded explanation from her³⁶ resulted in the claims that Turkey spied in Switzerland.³⁷ An official investigation was initiated.³⁸ As a result, the Federal Prosecutor V. Roschacher declared that there is no evidence that a member of the federal government and a Swiss citizen of Kurdish origin are exposed to spy activity.³⁹ However, this did not change the anti-Turkish atmosphere in the media.

In these conditions, a decision recognizing the so-called Armenian Genocide by the Swiss Parliament, where half of the members supported the Armenian view, was not surprising.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a declaration about the decision of the Swiss parliament which is stated that this decision is strongly condemned and rejected and that it is unacceptable that events which took place under the special conditions of World War I and which caused great pain to both Turks and Armenians be distorted and presented as a genocide at the hands of one party. Switzerland will bear the responsibility for the negative consequences triggered by this decision which was taken without consideration for bilateral ties.⁴⁰

³² *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, September 30, 2003.

³³ *Sabah*, October 2, 2003.

³⁴ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 1, 2001 (*Swiss play down Turkish Rebuff*), *SwissInfo*, October 1, 2003. (*La Diplomatie suisse adopte un profil bas*)

³⁵ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, September 30, 2003 (*Turkey snubs Calmy-Rey*), *Swissinfo*, October 1, 2003 (*Turkey snubs Swiss, Swiss protest about Turkey snub after Armenian genocide decision*), *Agence France Presse*, October 1, 2003 (*Turkish Cancellation of swiss trip an "affont"*)

³⁶ *Hürriyet*, October 25, 2003.

³⁷ *Swissinfo*, October 26, 2003 (*Swiss investigate alleged case of Turkish espionage, Micheline Calmy-Rey et les espions turcs, Micheline Calmy-Rey espionnée par les services turcs*), *Agence France Presse*, October 26, 2003 (*Turks spied on Swiss foreign minister over Kurd link*)

³⁸ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 27, 2003 (*Swiss investigate alleged case of Turkish espionage*)

³⁹ *Agence France Presse*, October 31, 2003.

⁴⁰ www.mfa.gov.tr (*Press Releases*, No. 214, December 16, 2003)

On the other hand the Turkish Grand National Assembly by a declaration on December 22, 2003 condemned the decision of Swiss Parliament, which distorted historical facts, and evaluated that this decision as unacceptable. According this declaration Swiss Parliament decision would not contribute to searches for peace and stability in a sensitive region of the world as well as relations between Turkish and Armenian people. Parliaments should exert efforts to improve friendship and cooperation among countries and to hand over a more peaceful world to the next generations. It is among the essential duties of all the parliaments to try to create an atmosphere where mutual respect, tolerance and solidarity would prevail in a world where people of different nations live together, instead of inciting feeling of hatred between peoples in the world. Parliaments should refrain from falling into a position serving to goals of the circles that call for clashes among civilizations. Today, terrorism is the biggest threat toward the civilization. The Turkish Grand National Assembly considers that the decision of the Swiss Parliament is awarding the racist Armenian terrorism that caused lives of many innocent people and had also targeted interests of many countries including Switzerland.

In our view besides being unjust and harmful for Switzerland-Turkey relations Swiss Parliament decision may cause in the future two risks:

The first one of the risks, which is also expressed by the Union of Switzerland and Armenia,⁴¹ is that any act claiming that 1915 Relocation of the Armenians is not a genocide might from now on require punishment. A case submitted to the court by the Armenians against the Turkish associations, which stated that the events do not mean genocide, had been refused previously by the court since the Swiss Parliament did not have accepted any a decision then⁴² Such a case is not likely to be refused in courts anymore. Thus, the decision of the Swiss parliament may also restrict the right to free thought and expression in Switzerland.

The second risk is that this decision might be a precedent for other countries. The decisions recognizing Armenian Genocide allegations taken in the recent years by the parliaments of Italy and France did not influenced bilateral relations in spite of sharp Turkish protests. In case Switzerland also does not face any difficulty in her relations with Turkey, it might lead other countries to recognize the Armenian genocide claims.

⁴¹ *Association Switzerland-Armenia*, Bern, Press Release, December 16, 2003.

⁴² *Ermeni Arařtırmaları*, No. 4.

SOVIET-ARMENIAN COLLABORATION AGAINST TURKEY IN THE POST-SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD, (1945-1947)

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Abstract:

The article focuses on the Soviet-Armenian collaboration against Turkey during the critical days, at the beginning of the Cold War. It analyses the reasons for the Soviet efforts to provoke Armenian population both in Soviet Armenia and abroad against the government in Ankara. The study shows that the traditional approach taken by the Tsarist Russia towards the Armenian population against Turkey was to continue with the successor regime in Moscow. This was especially the case when the Soviet regime, in collaboration with the Armenian groups, began to embark a violent campaign against Turkey demanding from her the return of certain territories for the Soviet Armenia. In relation with this, the study also analyses the reasons for the coming of the Armenian Repatriation Project into existence, in which it was organized by Moscow. The last part of the article deals with the failure of the repatriation project and the responses of Turkey against Soviet-Armenian joint attempts

Keywords:

Turco-Russian-Armenian Relations, Armenian Refugees, Lenin, Greece, the Cold War, Soviet-Armenian Collaboration, the Hatay Question, the Armenian Repatriation Project.

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a new era in the world balance of power. This signaled the beginning of a bi-polar system in international political system when the Soviet Union became an imminent threat to Western interests in Europe, in the Middle East and the Far East. The new polarization was shaped by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Turkey was one of the few key countries affected most from the new emerged East-West conflict because of her crucial geographical position between the

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two blocs. This was the start of the so-called 'Cold War' period, which dominated post-war politics.

In this period, with apparent expansionist aims, Moscow, after dominating much of the Balkans and Eastern Europe directed its threat to Turkey by demanding certain territories in the east and bases in the Straits. Moscow, at this time, thought that it had a better chance to obtain its traditional objective of reaching the warm waters of the Mediterranean since Turkey was internationally in a weak position because of her neutral attitude during the war. Turkey felt an imminent Soviet menace from two directions: one was a direct threat which concentrated on her territorial integrity; the other one was an indirect threat which aimed at encirclement of Turkey by provoking its neighbors against her. Besides, the USSR used many other methods such as waging a propaganda war and provoking minor groups against Turkey in order to force her to give way to Moscow's demands.¹

The article deals with the Soviet attempts to incite Armenians against Turkey at the critical juncture of the start of the Cold War era. It started in 1945 because this was the time when the Soviet Union began to put all of its pressures on Turkey. It ends in 1947 as the United States (US) with the enunciation of Truman Doctrine took the responsibility for defending the Near East against the possible USSR's expansion. It also examines how Turkey reacted to these Soviet actions. The article is a documentary study based on published and unpublished materials and as well as the secondary sources available both in Turkish and English.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TURKS, ARMENIANS AND RUSSIANS UP TO 1945

Throughout earlier history Turco-Armenian relations had been well developed up until the outbreak of the Russia-Ottoman War in 1877. Since the 11th century as the Seljuk Turks came to dominate the areas, where Armenians and others had inhabited, the Turks had always well treated the Armenians by giving them their cultural and religious rights and liberties. In the later period,

¹ For detailed information see Mustafa Sitki Bilgin, 'Anglo-Turkish Relations in the Middle East: British Perceptions, 1945-1953' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Univ. of Birmingham, July 2001), Ch.2; *Idem*, 'British Attitude Towards Turkey's Policies in the Middle East, (1945-47)' *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* No. 33, 2002, p.267.

this peaceful coexistence between the Turks and Armenians continued under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. However, as mentioned above, during the second half of the 19th century things began to change.²

In this period, especially after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, the Great Powers of Europe changed fundamentally their attitudes towards the Porte and began to look for an opportunity to destroy the Ottoman Empire with all possible means under the guise of the so called the 'Eastern Question'. The European Powers, instead of looking for a solution to the Eastern Question, fell in a rivalry about who was to take a major share from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. One of the easiest means that these powers had most preferred was the use of minorities against Istanbul in order to annihilate the Empire from within. This was a watershed in Turco-Armenian relations. The foreign powers therefore were successful in destroying all the good and friendly relations that had been developed between the Turks and Armenians since the 11th century.³

Starting from the late 19th century onwards, however, these relations were never recovered again. Conversely, they were worsened especially after the outbreak of the Great War. Afterwards, the new Turkish Republic finally solved this episode with the internationally recognized the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923. But for the Armenians, the chapter was not closed and they were eager to pursue this matter in the following decades when they were provoked by the foreign powers.

As for the Russian-Armenian relations, these date back to the 11th century and their relations were commenced in the commercial field. Their relations initially were of economic and commercial character later, from 18th century onwards, these turned into a political and military nature. At this time, Peter the Great, saw the Armenians as valuable allies against the Ottomans when he commenced his military campaign towards Caucasus, Persia and Central Asia from 1722 onwards. However, this Russian campaign against Turks was unsuccessful and hence Peter the Great who promised help left the Armenians on their own fate. In

² Mustafa Sıtkı Bilgin, 'Türk ve İngiliz Belgelerine Göre Osmanlı Devleti'nin I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilere Karşı Takip Ettiği Siyaset, (1914-1918)', *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol.3, No.10, Summer 2003, pp.58-65.

³ Bilgin, 'Türk ve İngiliz Belgelerine Göre...', pp.58-65.

1768 when the Russians attacked the Ottoman Empire their Empress Catherine II gave long expectations to the Armenians for setting up an Armenian Kingdom under Russian protection but she too broke her promise.⁴

The Treaty of Adrianople on 14 September 1829 was an important juncture for the Russian-Armenian relations. With this treaty Istanbul acknowledged that Erivan, Gouriel, Mingrelia, Imiritia, Naktchivan and Georgia had been ceded to Russia by Persia. Also the Ottoman Empire herself handed over some small territory near the Black Sea to the Russians.⁵ Therefore much of the Armenian inhabited territories came under the rule of the Tsar. This established a good ground for further Armenian-Russian military and political cooperation to the detriment of the Ottomans in the following decades.

From this time onwards, Russia even gained the role of the protectorate of the Christian minorities, including the Armenians within the Ottoman Empire in return its help to the latter when Mohammed Ali, the governor of Egypt, threatened the Ottoman authority from mid-1830 onwards. However, this Russian influence did not last long. It was ruined during the Crimean War when the coalition forces heavily defeated Russia in 1856. Afterwards, though Moscow was degraded from her role of guardianship over the Armenian population in Turkey Tsar Alexander II was to continue on his plan of setting up of an independent Armenia under Russian protection. However, this plan was abandoned by Russia when Alexander II was assassinated in 1881. From this time onwards, Russia, in general, kept itself away from its involvement in the affairs of the Ottoman Armenians until the year, 1907.⁶

From 1907 onwards, however, Russia renewed its interest in the affairs of the Ottoman-Armenians once again. This change occurred on Russian foreign policy towards the Armenians had a close link with the events taking place on international relations. As the world was divided into two blocs at this time, Russia and Britain, leaving their rivalries aside, decided to come together against Germany and its allies. This led Russia turn on the

⁴ Mustafa Sıtkı Bilgin, 'Attitudes of the Great Powers towards the Ottoman Armenians Up to the Outbreak of the First World War', *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol.1, No.4, 2003, p.40.

⁵ Confidential Memorandum by the Foreign Office, 11 June 1874, FO 881/2464.

⁶ Bilgin, 'Attitudes of the Great Powers towards the...', pp.41-49.

The foreign reports indicated that even before the start of the Great War, the Muslim population in those places constituted an overwhelming majority and added that 'with the large preponderance of Mohammedans in these vilayets it is difficult to imagine how the Armenians will maintain themselves against this large population without outside assistance'.

Ottoman Empire and it began to look for an opportunity towards the realization of its ultimate aim of reaching the warm waters of the Mediterranean. One of the means to accomplish this aim was to incite an Armenian rebellion to weaken the internal strength of the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, the Ottoman-Armenians began to increasingly cooperate with Russians and this cooperation was even turned into an alliance during the Great War.⁷

At the end of the war, the Turkish National struggle began and successfully completed its

mission in 1922. A year later, the new state of Republic of Turkey was internationally recognized with the Lausanne Peace Treaty. During this period, though Armenian delegations from the Armenian Republic of Erivan and elsewhere worked hard to annex eastern parts of Anatolia their attempts were doomed to fail. In a letter from Armenian Labor Party to the Ramsay MacDonald, the British Premier, in 1924, it was stated that 'The Armenian People awaited with the feverish impatience the opening of the Lausanne Conference in which they had placed their last hope'. Afterwards, however, the Allied Powers did not include the Armenian Question on the agenda of the Conference and hence the Armenian delegations regarded this as 'the burial of the Armenian cause'.⁸ This was because, as indicated in a British Foreign Office report in 1922, Britain and its allies came to a conclusion that it was impossible to set up an independent Armenian state in the eastern parts of Turkey or to add these territories into the borders of the Armenian Republic. The foreign reports indicated that even before the start of the Great War, the Muslim population in those places constituted an overwhelming majority and added that 'with the large preponderance of Mohammedans in these vilayets it is

⁷ Bilgin, 'Attitudes of the Great Powers towards the...', pp.49-53.

⁸ Secretary of the Armenian Labour Party to Ramsay MacDonald, 3 April 1924, FO 371/10213.

difficult to imagine how the Armenians will maintain themselves against this large population without outside assistance'.⁹ The Treaty hence solved the Armenian Question for Turkey once and for all. For the Armenians, however, as explained before, this chapter had not been not been closed as yet.

After the Treaty of Lausanne the Armenian Question lost its significance for the international politics. This situation was to continue during the inter-war period until the end of the Second World War in 1945. In this period the Great Powers saw no need to resurrect the Armenian Question. They rather spent their energies with the problems involved around the European Continent. There was however some international efforts to resettle the Armenian immigrants in Greece and the Middle East in the Soviet Republic of Armenia through the League of the Nations. One of the League's projects of this kind was to place the Armenian immigrants in Greece and Bulgaria in the plain of Sardarabad near Erivan. The project was initially planned for the settlement of 50 thousand Armenian immigrants in Greece in 1923. This plan, however, was not realized due to the financial difficulties, and by 1932, only 6 thousand immigrants were placed in the projected Sardarabad Plain.¹⁰

THE RESURRECTION OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION BY THE SOVIET UNION IN THE 1945-47 PERIOD

In order to understand Soviet policy towards Turkey in relation with the Armenian Question in the post-Second World War era it is necessary to briefly examine Turco-Soviet relations in the interwar period. Unlike the pre-Great War period, the traditional conflict between Russia and Turkey had given its place to a temporary Turco-Soviet compromise after the end of the First World War.

In this era, as the Bolshevik regime replaced the Tsarist rule in Russia and both the new Soviet Government and the new Turkish Republic had a common cause to oppose the Western powers, this brought the two countries into close collaboration from 1920

⁹ Foreign Office Report on Armenia and the Caucasus, September 1920, FO 371/4957; Report by Horace Rumbold on Armenian National Home, 16 June 1923, FO 371/9110.

¹⁰ Report by Foreign Office on proposed settlement of Armenian refugees in the Plain of Sardarabad, 5 June 1924, FO 371/10214; Report by League of Nations, 6 October 1932, FO 371/17384; Report by Sir Walter Napier on the Armenian Question, 12 December 1932, FO 371/17384.

onwards. However, this 'opportunistic friendship' was not free from constant friction. The Soviet Government was not happy with the Straits Convention, which was signed at Lausanne on 24 June 1923. According to this convention, an international commission would be established to control the Straits navigation and the Straits Zone would be demilitarised.¹¹ Later, the two governments signed a treaty of friendship and neutrality in December 1925. This treaty was extended in 1935 for another ten years until November 1945, with an automatic extension thereafter for periods of two years, subject to six months' prior notice of intent either to renew or to abrogate. It committed each country to abstain from participating in any alliances or coalitions, which were directed against the other.

In 1934, as Anglo-Turkish relations improved, the Soviets unofficially raised their demands to obtain bases in the Straits for the first time under the pretext of the Italian threat in the Mediterranean. Turkey began to realize the possible Soviet threat at this time and attached more importance to aligning herself with the West. With British assistance, she regained control of the Straits at Montreux in July 1936. From this time onwards, the Soviets changed their tactics and tried to achieve their traditional aspirations in the Straits by means of a military alliance. However, Turkey rebuffed the Russian attempts to make one, and her relations with the Soviets began to deteriorate.¹²

In short, Soviet policy towards the Straits can be said to have three facets: first, it aimed at obligating Turkey to consult the Soviet Union before admitting foreign warships in the cases allowed by the Montreux convention; second, it aimed at persuading Turkey to cede bases in the Straits, in virtue of a military alliance; third, it pursued to conduct a propaganda which aimed at the replacement of the present regime on the Straits by one amenable to Moscow.¹³

As Turco-Soviet relations had further worsened during the Second World War because of Turkey's neutral position Moşçow began to look for any opportunity to establish its control over

¹¹ Report on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by Foreign Office Research Dept., 6 January 1947, FO 371/96550; Mehmet Gönübol, Halük Ulman and others, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1990* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1993), pp.123-124.

¹² Report on Turkey by Foreign Office, 24 July 1946, FO 371/59316; Report by W.S. Edmonds on the Straits and Aegean, 14 October 1946, FO 371/59230.

¹³ Report on the Straits of Istanbul by the Foreign Office, 28 November 1944, FO 371/44188.

Turkey. Moreover, Turkey's critical geographical position at the crossroads of the three continents was very important for Moscow in its struggle with the West as the Cold War was about to begin. For the USSR, one of the methods to bring Turkey in line with itself was to use Armenian cards against Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey's relatively isolated position in the Western eyes encouraged Moscow to move against Ankara.¹⁴

Under these circumstances, as the Soviet Union planned use the Armenian card against Turkey, it first turned its eyes to Syria, which had a considerable number of Armenian population in its territory. Also, Syria, for some time, had tense relations with Turkey over the question of Hatay (Alexandretta). As it is known, the province of Hatay, after its long struggle against the French rule decided to join Turkey in 1939 but Syria refused to accept this situation and made a protest in the League of Nations in June 1936.¹⁵ Moscow saw this raw between the two countries as an opportunity to provoke Damascus further against Ankara thorough inciting the feelings of the Armenian population in Syria.

The reports in the British documents showed that the Hatay issue came to the forefront of the regional politics on 30 October 1944 when two Syrian Deputies argued the right to claim Hatay in the Syrian Chamber. The reports indicated that the Hatay campaign was mainly originated from two sources: first, agitations conducted by the immigrants from Hatay; second, activities of some the deputies who had various interests in the region. As for the first source, the reports stated that a large proportion of the immigrants from Hatay were Armenians who were receptive to the Soviet propaganda. Under the Soviet instigations organized by the Soviet Minister in Damascus, the Armenian groups together with the Orthodox Greeks kept the Hatay campaign active in Syria. The reports further stated that the vast majority of the Syrian people had no problems with the Turks at all except some minor groups. Moreover, some of the Syrian politicians tended to use the Hatay question for internal political purposes.¹⁶ Later, the remarks appeared on the Turkish Papers mostly matched with the views which had been reported by the British officials.¹⁷

¹⁴ For more detail, see Bilgin, 'Anglo-Turkish Relations...', Ch. Two.

¹⁵ Bilgin, 'British Attitude Towards Turkey's Policies...' pp.260-261.

¹⁶ British Legation, Beirut to Eden, 19 May 1945, FO 226/292.

¹⁷ See article by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Tanin*, 10 April 1945; Selim Çelenk, *Atayolu*, 15 May 1945.

Moscow also planned to provoke the Armenian population in the Republic of Soviet Armenia and elsewhere against Ankara. The USSR wanted to use all possible means to put pressure on Turkey with the intent of either changing the regime in Ankara or obtaining bases in the Straits.

to provoke the Armenian population in the Republic of Soviet Armenia and elsewhere against Ankara. The USSR wanted to use all possible means to put pressure on Turkey with the intent of either changing the regime in Ankara or obtaining bases in the Straits.

The Soviet plans well matched with the aspirations of the Armenian leaders in Erivan who had long wished for the cession of Turkey's eastern territories to the Republic of Armenia since it was set up in 1918. These activities, even, were to continue after Bolshevik takeover in 1920. The Armenian leaders asked for foreign help to realize their aims. But as the documents asserted the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire especially the Armenians had never comprised the majority against the Muslim population in the claimed eastern provinces. It was for this reason that the Allied Powers had failed to realize such plans as creating a home for the Armenians in the east of Turkey during the years between 1919 and 1923. The documents well showed that the Armenian population did not exceed 30 per cent at most out of the total population in these Turkish provinces even the years preceding the outbreak of the Great War. This was because, as the reports indicated, they were scattered around all parts of Turkey and around the Caucasus. The British report concluded that it was for these reasons therefore 'the attempt to obtain a national home for the Armenians failed as in the circumstances prevailing it was bound to fail'.¹⁸

Though the government in Erivan initially was zealous to expand its territory at the expense of Turkey it, later, renounced all of its territorial claims with the treaty of Alexandropol signed between Erivan and Ankara on 2 December 1920. This agreement was confirmed with treaties of Moscow on 16 March and of Kars on 13 October 1921. The latter treaty was signed with the new Republic of Soviet Armenia after it was incorporated into the Soviet Union in late 1920. Though these treaties definitely fixed Turco-Armenian borders the Armenian delegations in different parts of the world continued in their attempts to claim for Turkey's eastern territories for the Soviet Armenia until the late 1923.

Despite the fact that the Armenian delegations from different parts of the world made their final attempt to put their case on the agenda of the Lausanne Conference these attempts brought no success. The Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 did not even mention anything related to Armenia. As the Armenians, about this time, realized that there was no possibility of the creation of a home for themselves in the eastern parts of Turkey they began to flee in large numbers into three main areas: a) the Soviet Armenia; b) the French mandated territory of Syria; c) Greece and Bulgaria. Afterwards, the Armenian delegations asked for British and French assistance to resettle the Armenian refugees in those places.¹⁹

With the initiatives taken by these two powers the League of Nations in its session in September 1923 approved a scheme for the settlement of refugees from Greece in Echmiadzin and Sardaraabad regions in the borders of the Republic of Soviet Armenia. It was estimated that a million pounds were needed to fund the scheme. Though the Soviet Government was also in favor with the project it indicated that it was not in a position to assist the plan of repatriation.²⁰ As mentioned before the League of Nations was not fully able to realize this project due to the financial difficulties, and until 1932, only 6 thousand immigrants were re-settled in the Sardarabad Plain. Afterwards it was planned further 20 thousand Armenians in Greece to be repatriated in

¹⁸ Foreign Office Minute on Armenian National Home by Mr. Edwards and Mr. Forbes, 16 June 1923, FO 371/9110; Foreign Office Report on Armenian and Georgian Claims to Turkish Territory, 4 April 1946, FO 371/59247.

¹⁹ The Armenian Question by Sir Walter Napier, 12 December 1932, FO 371/17384; National Armenian Delegation, Paris to the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and Italy, 2 August 1923, FO 371/9110.

²⁰ League of Nations, Twenty Six Session of the Council, Geneva, 25 September 1923; British Mission, Moscow, to Ramsay MacDonald, 16 May 1924, FO 371/10214.

Sardarabad Plain. The League of Nations, however, was unable to carry out this plan as the League began to direct its attention to the political events in Europe and elsewhere.

As the repatriation plan for the Armenians was not fully accomplished in the interwar period the Soviet Union took the opportunity to raise the question once again in early 1945 for different purposes. Its main aim was to force the leaders in Ankara to put Turkey under the Soviet influence. The leaders in Erivan welcomed to this decision coming from Moscow since it suited well with their objectives. They found this an opportunity to look for resurrection of the abortive Treaty of Sevres with which it had created a home for the Armenians in the eastern parts of Turkey. As regards the question of which side first planned to raise this issue at the expense of Turkey, it can be said that both the Armenians and the Soviet leaders jointly made these attempts.

The process started in July 1944 when Tashnag party, which had strongly been anti-Soviet, changed its stance towards Moscow and began to look for a possible compromise with the USSR. About this time, other parties especially among the Armenian diaspora in the US, in which they had so far opposed Moscow, came to reconcile their views with the Soviet Union as becoming to believe that this was the only practical framework for the realization of the 'Greater Armenia' project. One of these parties, the Armenian National Council, founded in 1944 and strongly pro-Soviet, presented a memorandum to the San Francisco Conference. In the memorandum it asked for the cession of Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Armenia and facilities for the repatriation of the one and half million Armenians who might wish to return to the Soviet Armenia. Later, similar memorials were presented to President Truman, Mr. Byrnes and the British Embassy in the US.²¹

Simultaneously, Moscow took a radical step towards further encouraging Armenian National sentiment against Turkey. This was the permission granted by the Soviet Government in October 1945 to elect a Supreme Catholicos, an office which had been vacant since 1938. Shortly after this, the government in Moscow denounced the Russian-Turkish Treaty in late March. Then, a few days after the election of the new Catholicos in Echmiadzin the Armenian National Delegation presented its memorandum to the

²¹ Brief by A.H. Pandy, British Embassy, Washington, 24 September 1945, FO 195/2488.

San Francisco Conference with which it included the charges against the Turks for the ill treatment of the Armenians. Thereafter, the Soviet Radio and Press took up the theme and began to carry out a bitter campaign against Turkey accusing of her for conducting the alleged crimes against the Armenians and that of collaborating with Germany.²² They went on further to say that the Armenians greatly contributed to the Allied cause against Turkey's 'hypocritical neutrality'.²³

As the British documents indicated, these were further Soviet attempts to extend their influence through the religious means not only in the Middle East but also in the US. As the election of the new Catholicos aroused great sympathy from the Armenians all over the world the Armenian Church in the US greeted this occasion as 'an event of utmost significance'. The new elected Catholicos in Echmiadzin hence categorically announced that 'the main purpose of the new Armenian Church constitution now approaching completion is to unite more closely the congregations and believers of the Armenian Church throughout the world'.²⁴

A more concrete development on the issue came out on 7 June when Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, told Selim Sarper, the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow, that his government demanded the following from Turkey before a new treaty could be negotiated: first, the reversion of certain eastern territories (Kars, Ardahan and Artvin), which had been ceded to Turkey under the Turkish-Russian Treaty of 1921 by the Soviet Union; second, the cession of bases in the Straits; third, a revision of the Montreux Convention between Russia and Turkey; last, Molotov hinted gloomily that there was a fourth outstanding question, the settlement of which would make the other three points easier.²⁵ The Turkish Ambassador replied tentatively to these demands that his government was not in a position to reopen the question of the 1921 Treaty, which had been freely negotiated at the time. It could not even consider granting Russia bases in the Straits. As regards the Montreux Convention, Sarper said that it was not a matter to discuss between the two governments alone.²⁶

²² Peterson to Foreign Office, 22 March 1945, FO 195/2487/401; Brief by A.H. Pandy, British Embassy, Washington, 24 September 1945, FO 195/2488.

²³ Moscow to Foreign Office 9 October 1945, FO 195/2488.

²⁴ Brief by A.H. Pandy, British Embassy, Washington, 24 September 1945, FO 195/2488.

²⁵ Foreign Office to various HMG's representatives, 14 June 1945, FO 371/48773.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

In fact, these Soviet demands in no way matched with the historical facts. This was because Lenin, at a time after the Treaty of Alexandropol was signed on 2 December 1920 with which Armenia ceded the city of Kars to Turkish Nationalists, made it clear to the Armenian leaders that this city was a Turkish town and for this reason he could do nothing to restore it to Armenia.²⁷ The Commissariat of Nationalities, under Stalin, later confirmed this view, during the signature of the Treaty of Kars in 1921 on the line that Kars and Ardahan must not be a bone of contention with Turkey as their population contained 67 per cent Muslim population.²⁸ Bearing these facts in mind, it can therefore be said that these Soviet demands had two main objectives: One was to incite Armenian nationalistic sentiments against Turkey and, the other was to put pressure, with all means, on Turkey and to force her for making concessions such as granting military bases in the Straits in favor of the Soviet Union.

The first Soviet objective, which aimed at gaining sympathies of the Armenians in different parts of the world and to incite their feelings against Turkey, was to soon show its effect among the Armenian communities. The Armenian groups in Lebanon and Syria in a meeting on 23 September under the leadership of Manuelyan assented that 'time was ripe to incorporate Armenian lands occupied by force by Turkey in Soviet Armenia'. Some days later Armenian organizations in the US arranged meetings and sent messages to London Conference asking for the return of the territories in the east of Turkey.²⁹ The Soviet tactics also made a good impact on the population in the Armenian SSR. There had been a keen interest in getting parts of Turkey's eastern territories. Some influential people in that country came to believe that this would come about before very long. As to the question of how this would happen since there were no more than few Armenians living on the eastern side of Turkey the inhabitants of Armenia thought that these territories could be populated by both providing the return of Armenians from overseas and by supplying the surplus population from Soviet Armenia.³⁰

²⁷ Record of telephone conversation between Alexander Bekzadian, Armenian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Attabeckoff, Armenian representative in Azerbaijan, 26 December 1920, FO 371/6626.

²⁸ Foreign Office Minute by Mr McDermott, 31 January 1946, FO 371/59239.

²⁹ Moscow to Foreign Office, 29 September 1945; Frank K. Roberts, Moscow to D. F. Howard, Foreign Office, 4 October 1945, FO 195/2488.

³⁰ Frank K. Roberts, Moscow to D. F. Howard, Foreign Office, 4 October 1945, FO 195/2488.

The documents consulted implied that Moscow, at this time, came to believe that if it could secure the return of several hundred thousands Armenians from abroad into Armenia it would be much easier to pursue the claim for the return of the eastern parts of Anatolia.

in case several thousands of Armenians were attracted to return, these people, for their survival, would have been in needed for being settled in different places since the Soviet Armenia did not have adequate land to absorb such a huge mass. In their view, this situation hence would have created a better ground for both Moscow and Erivan to ask more strongly for the cession of Turkey's eastern territories.³¹

Under these circumstances therefore Moscow put the Armenian repatriation scheme into effect in March 1946. The government in Moscow to begin with set up a Committee to organize the repatriation scheme. The members of the Committee took a trip to Greece, and other Balkan countries, and the Middle East to encourage the Armenian migration. However, the result was opposite to the expectations of Moscow and Erivan since the repatriation scheme failed to attract the return of Armenians in large numbers from those regions. This project even was less successful than the one, which had been carried out under the supervision of the League of Nations in the interwar period. The number of Armenian immigrants who returned to Armenia under the repatriation project was: three thousand from per countries of Greece and Syria, about a thousand immigrants from Turkey and some small numbers from other countries.³²

³¹ Frank K. Roberts, Moscow to D. F. Howard, Foreign Office, 4 October 1945, FO 195/2488; Foreign Office Report, 5 October 1945, FO 371/48795.

³² Süleyman Seydi, 'The Armenian Question in the Early Cold War: Repatriation Scheme' *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol.1, No.3, 2003, pp.47-49.

Some of the reasons for the failure of the repatriation project can be counted in the following sense. First, the Armenian people were suspicious of the project as it was organized by Moscow. Second, having sympathy to communism was the basic condition for being included in the repatriation project. This condition made people hesitate to apply to the project. Third, there was some criticism raised by the leaders of the Tashnak Party in the Middle East especially in the Levant. They criticized the local Repatriation Committee that the scheme was not organized in a proper way and they claimed that it was done without proper preparation and without adequate funds and facilities.³³

The Turkish reaction to these joint Soviet-Armenian demands was vigorous. The Turkish Prime Minister clearly stated that Turkey would fight rather than give up Kars, Ardahan, and Artvin. Besides this, Turkey immediately asked for British and American support against the USSR. It was Britain first responded to the Turkish pleas. Britain was well recognized that this was 'the Soviet Government's shrewd appreciation of the value of this minor religious development to its designs upon the warm waters not only of the Mediterranean but also- for there are Armenians in Iraq and Iran- of the Persian Gulf'.³⁴ Britain, therefore, was well aware that Turkey was the last barrier in front of the Soviet expansion southwards and if Turkey was to be lost in one way or another the entire British interests in the Middle East and elsewhere would be in great danger.³⁵

However, at this time, Britain also realized that it was unable to face the Russian threat alone and thus it asked for US support to stop the Soviet danger on Turkey's borders. Not long before the two countries came to an agreement in supporting Turkey against the renewed Soviet demands in August 1946 and this joint action forced Moscow to drop its claim at that time. This was subsequently followed by a more concrete support given by the US with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, which declared a keen American interest in the defense of the Near East.³⁶

³³ Seydi, 'The Armenian Question....' pp.50-51.

³⁴ Brief by A.H. Pandy, British Embassy, Washington, 24 September 1945, FO 195/2488.

³⁵ Bilgin, 'Anglo-Turkish Relations', Ch. Two.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

The Armenian population had always been a strategic asset for Moscow to be used against the Turks since the early 19th century. The successor of the Tsarist rule, the Soviet regime, did not abandon this policy. Seeing that Turkey was internationally in a weak position in the post-1945 period Moscow sized the opportunity to force Turkey either for coming under the Soviet control or becoming a Soviet satellite. To realize this objective Moscow adopted different tactics. One of these was to rally the Armenian population in the world against Turkey. The Soviet objective was well matched with the aspirations of many Armenian organizations, which had long looked for the cession of Turkey's eastern territories into the Soviet Armenia.

The Soviet aim of asking for the return of Kars, Ardahan and Batum was strategic. The Kars Plateau had a strategic location in the borders between Turkey and the Soviet Union. It hence would weaken the Soviets' security if a third party would have attacked to the USSR by using the Turkish lands though Turkey was in no position to envision such a thing. For Moscow, it could also be used as a springboard for a Soviet drive to the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf and, as the Turks thought the, the Plateau would be a last ditch where the Soviet forces might be hold up.³⁷ By provoking the Armenian population across the world and demanding the return of Turkey's eastern territories, the ultimate Soviet target was to weaken the Turkish internal regime and hence to force Ankara for becoming of a Soviet satellite.

As the Armenian leaders in Erivan and abroad saw these Soviet attempts as an opportunity for the realization of their historical objectives they did not missed the opportunity and embarked an active campaign across the world claiming for the return of parts of Turkey's eastern territories. For them, the return of these three provinces would be a first step towards the realization of the Greater Armenia scheme. Armenian groups in the Caucasus, the Levant, the Middle East and elsewhere were encouraged by Moscow and hence they began to make excessive demands from Turkey.

Though the Soviet tactics to rally Armenian organizations against Turkey were successful in placing Turkey in a difficult

³⁷ Foreign Office Report, 4 April 1946, FO 371/59247.

position they were not good enough. At the beginning of 1946, in the face of increasing Anglo-American support for Turkey, the Soviet government realized that it could not fully obtain its objectives through political and diplomatic pressures. Moscow, therefore, changed its tactic. The new tactic was to gain sympathies of the world including sympathies of the American and European public opinion by embarking an Armenian repatriation project. In the view of the Soviet leaders, if Moscow could manage to attract the return of many hundred thousands Armenians in abroad to the Soviet Armenia then there would be a possibility of making a stronger case for extending Armenian territories to the eastern parts of Turkey. This case would be that the territories of the Soviet Armenia did not absorb such a huge number of Armenian immigrants and hence Erivan would have needed further lands to settle them. In that case Turkey's eastern territories would be the first target. In Soviet opinion, the Western Powers could not easily reject this case. If this method would be successful not only would it have satisfied the Armenian aspirations but also would have a shocking effect on Turkish State and the public opinion. This thus would have created a better ground for Moscow to easily dominate on Turkey.

The Armenian Repatriation Project was not successful in attracting the return of large number of Armenian immigrants since the Soviet government mishandled the project. Later, the developments, which led to bring an increasing Anglo-American interest in the defense of Turkey weakened Soviet-Armenian attempts. Furthermore, the promulgation of Truman Doctrine, which declared a firm American commitment in the defense of the Near East, destroyed any chances of the Soviet scheme.

ARMENIAN ATROCITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BOZO BANDS IN MARAŞ DURING THE GREAT WAR

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Abstract:

There had been numerous Armenian upheavals took place in Maraş since 1862. These rebels were a group of Armenian nationalists incited by Russian, French, British, and American governments for their political purposes. This case was repeated again during the Great War, when France, Russia and Britain organized the Armenian and some Kurdish groups to create unrest in Turkey for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian groups increased their rebellious activities when the Ottoman armies were in a fierce fight in the Dardanelles. Moreover, the Armenians exempted from military duties and armed by the Allied Powers, committed their outrageous atrocities against the Muslims in this period. This, however, was not enough for the Allied Powers. Besides Armenians, they also provoked and armed a Kurdish group called as Bozo bands in Maraş at this time. Eventually, the Bozo and Armenian bands, under foreign instigations, came to an agreement to act together in Maraş. As a result of their bandit activities the security of Maraş Province was seriously threatened and many civilians and soldiers lost their life. Despite the lack of necessary troops and ammunition the Turkish administration succeeded in stopping all kinds of bands' activities in Maraş in July 1918.

Keywords:

The Province of Maraş, Armenian Rebellious Activities, Atrocities against Muslims, Bozo Bands, the Allied Powers

ARMENIAN ATROCITIES IN MARAŞ

At the turn of the 20th century, Maraş Province contained considerable number of Armenian population. According to 1908 Aleppo Province yearbook of the Ottoman Empire, there were some 11,180 Armenians and 3,567 Catholics out of total 67,974 population, in central Maraş. The number of Muslim population was 46,557. According to the same yearbook, there were 4 Armenian, 3 protestant, 2 catholic and 1 Latin churches and total 15 Christian schools in central Maraş. There were also 6

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churches, 2 monasteries, besides 5 Christian elementary schools and 1 high school in Zeytun (Süleymanlı). Three churches in Elbistan and 1 Armenian Church and 4 protestant schools in Göksun were also in service.

As other minorities did, the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire enjoyed a great deal of religious freedom. The Ottoman minority rule obtained enormous privileges and opportunities especially for their economic wealth. The descent of the Ottoman Empire from power and the rising of nationalist movements in this part of the world under foreign instigations encouraged some unfaithful Armenian nationalists to rebel and work against the Sublime Porte.¹ There were numerous rebellions and mutinies among the Armenian population influenced by the adverse political propaganda carried out by Russia, America and Europe against the Ottoman Empire. 1862-Zeytun, 1863-Van, and 1863-Çarsancak was some of the big Armenian mutinies in the Ottoman Empire.²

The American College and the American missionaries in Maraş played a prominent role in the organization of the rebellion took place in Zeytun. The missionaries provoked the Armenians against the Ottoman rule by spending of millions of dollars. By 1868, the Americans further extended their activities by establishing a consular office in Maraş.

There were some four hundred American educational institutes in Turkey during the reign of Abdulhamit II (1876-1909.) When the Ottoman government required license for American missionary institutions, the American Embassy applied for license for only 10 institutions and the government granted licenses for those institutions, which three of them were in Maraş; American Divinity School, American Girls' School and the Residence for the missionaries. This, in turn, resulted in a rapid increase in the number of American missionaries and their activities in Maraş.³

While the American institutions in Maraş and elsewhere in the country encouraged the Armenians for being aware of their national and political entities apart from the Ottoman Empire, some nationalist Armenian political organizations engaged in militant activities for the establishment of an Armenian state in

1 Abdullah Emircan, Mehmet Emin Gerger, *Ermeni Vahşeti*, (İstanbul, 1992), pp.15-16.

2 A. Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay., 1990), p. 113.

3 Yaşar Akbıyık, *Milli Mücadelede Güney Cephesi: Maraş*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999), p. 312.

A propaganda group sent from Britain armed the people and told them that the British would help the Armenian rebels sending arms and money.

Anatolia. The Huntchak Committee, centered in London, worked for the propagating the Armenian cause in the European capitals. The Committee was under total political and financial control of the British government and it was used for British political interests. In 1895 the leader of the London branch of the Huntchack committee, Nazar Beg, masterminded a rebellion in Zeytun. A propaganda group sent from Britain armed the people and told them that the British would help the Armenian rebels sending arms and money. Moreover, they told that British navy would occupy Mersin and Iskenderun ports to deliver them their assistance.

In September 1895, local nationalist leaders held a meeting with the propaganda group in Karanlıkdere to decide the date and place of the rebellion. On October 19, according to the decisions taken in this meeting, the Zeytun Uprising, with the participation of some 6,000 Armenians armed with modern British weaponry, started. The rebels occupied the governmental buildings and took the soldiers, officers, local and other authorities as hostages. As it was planned, the rebellion spread all over the region in a short period of time. In return, Zeytun was surrounded by governmental troops. The British, French and the Russian Embassies were worried that the governmental troops would harshly crack down the rebellion. Thus, they asked the rebels to end the uprising. As a result of the Embassies' intervention the rebels accepted to surrender. The Ottoman government did not punish the rebels, but allowed the rebel leaders and the Huntchak bandits to leave the country.⁴

The Armenian Church also had long supported the militant Armenian separatist movements. In a meeting in Paris in 1905, the Armenian committees, profoundly influenced by the Patriarch, decided to establish an Armenian state in Cilicia (Adana and Maraş).⁵ The Ottoman Empire's participation in World War I

⁴ Ahmet Eyicil, *Maraşta Ermeni Siyasi Faliyetleri*, (Ankara: Gün Yayıncılık, 1999), pp. 214-226; *Osmanlı Arşivi Yıldız Tasnifi Ermeni Meselesi* (Ottoman Archives, Yıldız Collection for Armenian Question), Tarih Araştırmaları ve Döküasyon Merkezi Kurma ve Geliştirme Vakfı, (İstanbul, 1989), p. 433.

⁵ Erdal İter, *Ermeni Kilisesi ve Terör*, (Ankara, 1996), p. 55.

brought a hope for the Armenians to achieve their ultimate goal, the establishment of an Armenian state. The Armenians were provoked and used by Britain, Russia and France to weaken the Ottoman Empire from inside. Local Huntchak Committee in Zeytun under the leaderships of Çakıroğlu Panos, his brother Solakoğlu Mesrup and Yeni Dünyaoğlu Nisan committed atrocities against the Muslims to help to the realization of the Armenian project in Cilicia.

The Armenian nationalists created great difficulties for the Ottoman government and for its army. They massacred innocent Muslims and engaged in guerilla warfare against the army with the support of the enemy powers to worn the Turkish army behind. According to estimates, during the Armenian massacres in the periods between 1878 and 1915, some 1,5 million Muslims were killed. The Armenian terror and treason caused the government to enact the Relocation Law on May 27, 1915. This Law aimed to deport the Armenians, who had lived in rural areas out of the government's control and who had harmed the lives of people and state's interests, to distant regions far away from war zones.⁶

During the war, the Armenian bands increased their activities in Maraş. On April 23, 1914, a gendarme detachment was sent to Zeytun to arrest eight Armenian criminals hiding in a house. The criminals, who refused to surrender, opened fire against the gendarme troops and killed an innocent civilian. The troops surrounded the house but local Armenians, with the help of the Patriarch, prevented the capture of the criminals. As the incident went out of the control, those troops were forced to go back to Maraş in empty hands.⁷

On August 17, 1914, the Armenian rebels ambushed some 100 Muslim youths and killed them around Zeytun who were from neighboring Andırın and were discharged from the Zeytun Military Command upon completing their military services. Same Armenians also killed many people from Beşen village.

The Armenians who gathered at the house of a Huntchak committee leader, Çakıroğlu Panos, decided to ambush the governor's building, killing the governor and cutting the

⁶ Emircan, *Ermeni Vahşeti*, p.26.

⁷ *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* (Hereafter quoted as ATBD), (*Documents related to Military History*), No. 86, Document No. 2048, (Ankara, April 1987), p.1.

communication lines. Fortunately this heinous plan was not put into action due to fact that they were not able to take the necessary precautions and give the necessary orders on time.⁸

On September 2, 1914, an Armenian bands of forty robbed 21 Muslim passengers nearby Zeytun and seized 12 000 kuruş (Ottoman currency) from them. Due to intensified Armenian oppression, thirty soldiers located in Zeytun escaped from their barracks. To prevent Muslim retaliation against the Armenian atrocities, the government sent a squadron of 200 soldiers to Zeytun. Although more troops were demanded, the battalion of 1160 men providing security of the city was not allowed to leave Maraş.⁹

A telegram sent to the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on October 24, 1914, signed by some fifteen prominent figures in Maraş society, stated that the Armenian bands had burned Andırın governor's building, and they used all forms of oppression methods against the people in Maraş, killing and pillaging people leaving numerous children orphans and women widows. According to the telegram, the Armenians especially terrorized and shed bloods in mountainous areas since 1910. The telegram complained that the Armenians recently attacked 60 soldiers who were going to Zeytun Garrison and they run away with 250 liras, which were seized, from the soldiers. Some prominent people benefited from this insecurity for their economic wellbeing and for other reasons, prevented the punishment of the criminals using their influences. For example, the murderers of Gendarme Ahmet who was killed in the fight were freed before his blood was dried off. According to the same telegram, the Muslims were disturbed with this situation and the situation might create a Muslim reaction against the Armenians.¹⁰

The Armenian assaults and killings in and around Zeytun alienated the Muslims and they requested the government to stop Armenian cruelties. The Maraş Gendarme Division chased the Armenian criminals but they refugee to the rocky Tekke monastery nearby Zeytun. During the chase, Captain Süleyman¹¹ and twenty-

⁸ Veysel Eroğlu, *Ermeni Mezalimi*, (İstanbul, Sebil Yayınevi, 1995), pp.97-98.

⁹ *ATBD*, No: 81, Document No. 1806, (Ankara, Aralık 1982), p.19.

¹⁰ *ATBD*, No: 86, Document No. 2049, p.5.

¹¹ The name of Zeytun has been officially changed Suleymanlı in the memory of Gendarme Major Suleiman Beg killed by the Armenians. See, Yalçın Özalp, *Milleti Sadıka Patirtisi ve Maraş*, (İstanbul: Fatih Gençlik Vakfı Matbaası İşletmesi, No date), p.325.

five soldiers were killed some thirty-four soldiers were also wounded. Although some rebels were captured most of them escaped in the night taking advantage of mountainous terrain.¹²

On March 18, a small gendarme division was ambushed by thirty Armenian bands in somewhere between Marash and Zeytun. Six soldiers were killed during the attack. At the same time, new recruits who were coming to Zeytun accompanied by two gendarmes were captured and locked in a church.¹³

On April 10, 1915, the Armenian bands attacked gendarme division carrying ammunition to Zeytun. There was no peace and comfort in the region due to constant attacks of the Armenian bands. On March 18, 1915, while the Turkish army was fighting in the Dardanelles to defend the homeland, the Armenians started new rebellions and atrocities to create insecurity and lower the morale behind the fronts.¹⁴

Due to increased Armenian assaults, on March 25, 1915, the government sent troops to Saint Mary monastery where the bands had taken a shelter. The clashes continued until midnight. At the end, 37 rebels were killed and 100 of them were wounded. But 8 soldiers were killed 26 were wounded by Armenians. Five rebels were also captured after the chase. A large amount of ammunition besides some Armenian publications and the seal of the Hunchack committee were seized by the security forces.

As a result of insistent chase and deterrent measures 300 bands were surrendered on May 29. The Armenian bands gathered in Ali Kayası and Sultan Mountain. A division equipped with mountain cannon was sent against them in order to prevent a possible Armenian massacre in mountainous regions.¹⁵ The bands who managed to survive from this battle stationed in a strategical location called Fındıcak and rebelled there.¹⁶ Four hundred Armenian bands in Fındıcak village burnt houses in the neighboring villages and killed 10 Muslims. On 20 July, in a battle between the Armenians and the 132. Regiment, 2 soldiers were killed and three soldiers were wounded. As the battle spread over

¹² Eroğlu, *Ermeni Mezalimi*, pp. 99-100.

¹³ *ATBD*, No: 81, Document No. 1820, p.98.

¹⁴ Eyicil, *Maraşta Ermeni...*, p.333.

¹⁵ Eyicil, *Maraşta Ermeni...*, p.340; *ATBD*, No: 86, Document No. 2053, p.23.

¹⁶ Eyicil, *Maraşta Ermeni...*, p.342.

and intensified, the Commander of the Fourth Army, Cemal Pasha, asked for the regiment to be reinforced by additional troops.¹⁷

The rebellion in Findıcak lasted until August 1915, and during the fight some seven thousand Turks, 5,000 thousand civilian and 2,000 soldiers were killed by the Armenians. Moreover, the security forces in the same rebellion killed 2100 Armenian rebels.¹⁸

Cemal Pasha was well aware of the cost of any further Armenian rebellions in southern Turkey and thought that this would pose a serious threat to the security of the southern Turkey. He also knew that in case of any other Armenian rebellion, the government needed to station considerable number of troops in densely Armenian populated areas such as Zeytun, and this hence would cause to weaken the Ottoman military power in the front.¹⁹ The Armenians who lived in Antep, Urfa, Maraş, Dörtıyol and Zeytun, had rebelled several times and they were waiting for the right time for a new rebellions. Their rebellion could help the cession of Syria from the Empire.

The Eastern Mediterranean commanders of the British and French armies exploited the Ottoman's delicate situation with its Armenian citizens and asked Armenians to rebel while the Ottomans were in a fierce battle in the Dardanelles against the British and French armies. The Armenians who fully received the support from the enemies of the Ottoman Empire complied with the French and British call. The head of the American National Armenian Defense Committee Miran Seraslan, sent a letter to the British Foreign Affairs Ministry stating that his organization had been prepared to wage a rebellion with the help of Armenian brigades in Sis (Kozan), Haçin (Saimbeyli), Firnis, Marash and Findıcak. He indicated that with this help the Armenians could control the region from the Taurus Mountains to the Mediterranean, and hence this would help to prevent the Ottoman Army advancing towards Egypt.²⁰

Against the approaching danger, the government decided to deport all Armenians resided in Zeytun.²¹ Cemal Pasha was

¹⁷ ATBD, No: 81, Document No. 1836, p.176.

¹⁸ Eyicil, *Maraşta Ermeni...*, pp.342-47.

¹⁹ Akbıyık, *Milli Mücadelede...*, p.310.

²⁰ Akbıyık, *Milli Mücadelede...*, p.311.

ordered that he should take the necessary precautions to deport the Armenians resided in Zeytun and Maraş to Konya.²² The government erased debts of the Armenians who were deported from Maraş.²³ The Armenians who were engaged in businesses were excluded from deportation.²⁴ The ones mistreating the Armenians during the deportation were punished and the Ministry of Finance compensated the Armenians who were victimized by any form of mistreatment.²⁵

In April 1916, there were still total 8845 Armenian population of whom 3845 men and 5000 women after the deportation. While 500 of them were Gregorian the rest were Catholic. At this time, as the new waves of Armenian unrest began, the Catholic Armenians were also deported except the Gregorian ones which remained to stay in the city because of their peaceful attitudes. At this time, Hırlakyan, the previously convicted influential Armenian leader and ex-deputy of the Ottoman Parliament was also deported to Mesken. He was in the Catholic faith and became very rich by selling merchandise to the state. Hırlakyan had provided 50,000 Martini and Schneider guns and 20,000,000 bullets to the Armenian rebels during the 1895 uprising.²⁶

Some number of Armenian criminals escaped from the deportation and found a haven in non-Muslim villages.²⁷ When they succeeded in escaping from the government's chase they hide themselves in desolate mountains and they managed to communicate with Armenian Taurus railroad workers. The Armenian outlaws attacked Muslim villages and murdered and pillaged the people with Armenian railroad workers and the employee came back to their works denying their involvement into terrorist activities.²⁸

²¹ *Osmanlı Belgelerinde lerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)*, (O.B.E.) (the Armenians in Ottoman documents), Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşiv Dairesi Başkanlığı, (The Administration of Achieves of Prime ministry , the office of Ottoman achieves), (Ankara 1994), p.28.

²² *ATBD*, No: 81, Document No. 1823, p.112.

²³ *O.B.E*, p.37.

²⁴ *O.B.E*, p.39.

²⁵ *O.B.E*, p.188.

²⁶ *O.B.E*, p.147.

²⁷ *ATASE*, folder No. 5168, dossier No. 16, Document No. 20.

²⁸ *ATASE*, folder No. 5168, dossier No. 16, Document No. 20-2.

The deported Armenians as well threatened the security of the places where they passed. The government tried to provide sufficient number of guards to prevent insecurity for the local citizens and the Armenian deportees. For example, 200 Armenian rebel leaders who were deported from Izmir were brought to Zor via Maraş under enormous security precautions.²⁹

On December 5, 1917, it was reported that the Armenian bands around Islahiye committed numerous atrocities against the Muslims with the help of Armenian railroad workers who delivered the guns and the ammunition to the band members. These guns were stolen from the Locomotive Brigade. The security was tightened in order to prevent further Armenian terrorist activities by these gangs and Colonel Fuad Bey was assigned to control the activities of the people working in the construction site.³⁰

Moreover, the terrorist activities in other regions were carried out. A detachment of 30 was sent from Kilis and Antep in order to chase the Armenian bands who were located in Ali Kayası, the north of Maraş. The chase of these bands was only completed on February 14, 1917, after assigning additional troops.³¹

The first battalion of the Tenth Reserve Regiment was deployed in Maraş by November 16, 1917, in order to neutralize the Armenian bands terrorizing the Maraş region. This regiment was not effective in the first two months. The detachments consisted of forty soldiers were sent to Pazarcık and Andırın. The operations started on January 16, 1918. Unfortunately, the commander of the operation did not properly observe his responsibilities and he was not successful in maintaining the discipline among his troops. Thus, this encouraged the Armenians to further their rebellious activities in Maraş.

The authorities demanded for the deployment of better-trained troops in Maraş under the supervision of the regional inspector in order to stop increased Armenian terrorism.³² But the Armenian bands increased their aggression. The officer Nedim Efendi from the first battalion of the Tenth Reserve Regiment was killed in an

²⁹ O.B.E, p.158.

³⁰ From Twelve Army Corps Command to Military Commissioner, Adana, 5.12.1917, No. 4851. ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 1-7, 1-8.

³¹ From Islahiye to the Detachment Command, 14.2.1917. ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 1-16.

³² ATASE, folder No. 4218, dossier No. 17, Document No. 4.

armed clash in Kösüdere of Göksun and his gun was seized.³³ Law and order in the city were completely destroyed by January 27, 1918. The Muslims had great difficulties in entering and going out the city. The Armenians lived in the neighboring villages also joined terrorist activities in the city.³⁴

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BOZO BANDS DURING THE GREAT WAR

Besides Armenian gangs there were other bandit groups around the province of Maraş in which they broke out the order and carried out massacres around the city during the World War I. This was a militant disloyal group called as Bozo Bands organized by Bozo who was from the Bozo clan in Pazarcık town. Some local clans gave their support to this group and this group collaborated with the Armenian bands as well. They were a group of Kurdish people. The Bozo bands grew fast and during the mid-war they began to murder the people regardless of women, children and elderly. To counter this, the government troops, on January 17, 1918, entered into an armed clash

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with the Bozo in Cimikan Mountains of Pazarcık. Six band members were killed but there were two casualties in the troops. The rest of the terrorists escaped taking for the advantage of the darkness but their chase was continued.³⁵

In order to do the job, second battalion of the Tenth Reserve Regiment, and the troops sent from Antep moved from Köseceli village and reached the operation site. Some volunteers from

³³ From the Emergency Armies to the Command of the 12th Army, 21 .1. 1918. ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-2.

³⁴ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Document No.4-5.

³⁵ From the Inspector of the Emergency Armies sent to the Command of the 12th Army, 22 .1. 1918. ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No 67, Document No 4-4, 4-29.

Karalar and Tiikiler clans also joined the troops. The troops, which completed the logistic preparations moved towards the Gani Mountain.³⁶ They involved into an armed clash with the Bozo bands in Duman Tepe. Lieutenant Avni and three soldiers were seriously wounded and three soldiers were killed during the shootout.³⁷ Six band members were also killed in same clash.³⁸

Two more battles carried out against the Bozos but with no success. The troops under the command of Lieutenant Ali and the supporting groups under the command of lieutenant Hasan had a third battle with the gang on January 22, 1918 near Ufacıklı village of Pazarcık town. The battle continued for four hours. Five soldiers were killed and two of them were also wounded. The bands lost nine men and three animals. The head of the Bozo got wounded in the battle. Meanwhile lieutenant Avni was wounded and, later, he died in Cinife (Yavuzeli) village.³⁹ On January 25, 1918, the head of the battalion was re-instructed to neutralize and arrest the band members. It was also proposed that the soldiers of the Tenth Reserve Regiment be rewarded in order to keep the morale of the soldiers high.⁴⁰

On January 30, 1918, a detachment was sent against the Bozo to crash the bands before the reserve troops arrived. The people from Kötürük clan who knew the whereabouts of the gang supported this detachment. Some thirty people from the same clan were armed and a small civil detachment of fifteen under the control of military was formed against the Bozo.⁴¹

Three detachments, each consisted of 25 soldiers were formed in Pazarcık. Local people volunteered and local government supported this military action. Each soldier was given 150 cartridges and every regiment three boxes of ammunition. The military was extremely attentive to distribute the guns and ammunition to the volunteers.⁴² The volunteers were not allowed

³⁶ From the Inspector of the Emergency Armies to the Command of the 12th Army, 22 .1. 1918. ATASE, Folder No 4218, dossier No 67, Document No 4, 26.

³⁷ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-29.

³⁸ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-26, 4-27, 4-28.

³⁹ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-3, 4-30.

⁴⁰ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-12.

⁴¹ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-9.

⁴² ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-18.

to act alone and, except their sickness, leave the detachment before the mission was completed.⁴³

Due to unsuccessful military actions against the Bozos, the XIIth Army Commanding Office, on January 31, 1918, ordered the military branches to nullify the entire Bozo bands for sure.⁴⁴ The lack of peace and security in Maraş seriously threatened the security of transportation of military provisions and ammunition. Maraş requested 300 professionally trained soldiers from Adana to secure military transportation.⁴⁵ But there were only 245 recruits in Adana, who completed their three-week training.⁴⁶ On February 1, 1918, those soldiers were assigned to the command of the Maraş Gendarme regiment to fight with Pazarçık bands.⁴⁷

By February 7, 1918 many villages in Antep, Maraş, Besni, Rum Kale and Pazarçık which were under the threat of Bozo bands were freed from their terror. Some nine-band members were killed during the chase in Cimikanlı, Mucakanlı, Gani Mountain, Kara Kale, Ufacıklın and Yapalak. A detachment of twenty under the command of lieutenant Şükrü also chased Atir Ali band which were terrorizing the Zeytun region. The people who provided logistic and material assistance to the bands were also investigated.

Lieutenant Naci, the commander of the Detachment II, wounded the brother of Bozo, Abuzer, on February 7.⁴⁸ Two band members were also killed on February 11 1918. Although Abuzer managed to escape he, later, was found dead. 550 cartridges and some gunpowder were found near his body.⁴⁹

On February 12, 1918, the Bozo bands, which managed to survive, attacked Mirtık village in Antep region and pillaged the people and then, they pillaged Karakesik village of Pazarçık town seizing 50 liras and 20 meci diye (Ottoman gold coin) from the villagers. Next day, when those outlaws arrived to Akbıyık village, governmental troops and the commander of Karabıyık Gendarme

⁴³ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-20, 4-22, 4-23, 4-24, 4-25.

⁴⁴ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-13.

⁴⁵ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-7.

⁴⁶ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No 4-8.

⁴⁷ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-15, 4-16.

⁴⁸ From 4th Division to 12th Army Command, Adana, 7.2.1918. ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 9.

⁴⁹ ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 1-21, 1-22.

station, Sergeant Ökkeş, with his ten soldiers were involved in all day long armed clash with the bands in the rocky terrain of the village. During the fights, two sergeants and one soldier were killed and twenty soldiers were wounded but the band lost its five prominent men, and additionally, five of them were wounded. The bands retracted in the darkness carrying their dead and wounded ones with them but their chase was continued.⁵⁰

The operation was extended to a much wider region in order to prevent a possible retaliation of the band. II. Army Pursuit Detachment in Pazarcık and the Division 44 located in Islahiye worked together. Additionally, on February 11, 1918, some 150 soldiers were sent to Maraş from Osmaniye.⁵¹ On February 16, a further battalion was sent to Islahiye.⁵²

While the necessary precautions were taken against the Bozo bands, Göllo bands attacked Yezdan village of Pazarcık on February 12, 1918. On the other hand the Bozo bands moved towards Islahiye and began to disturb the workers and the German technical staff who were working on the railroad construction. The Gendarme troops were moved to Islahiye in order to neutralize these two groups of bands.⁵³

The people in Pazarcık were impatient and made demands from the government to crash the bands.⁵⁴ As a result, the XII. Army Corps Command was ordered to chase the bands until their complete destruction.⁵⁵ The battalion acted immediately and the local military inspectors provided the necessary support for the mobilization of the battalion to Pazarcık.⁵⁶

Some of the bands that survived from the armed clash in Islahiye were found dead on 2 March, with their guns and sixty cartridges.⁵⁷ One of the leaders of the Bozo, Oseb Hoca of Maraş was captured in İntili village. A trunk full of cartridges was seized during the inspection in the mountainous region between Bahçe and Hasanbeyli.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 12, 12-1-2, 13-1-2.

⁵¹ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 11-4,11-9.

⁵² ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 11-9,11-11.

⁵³ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 4-32, 4-33, 4-34, 4-35.

⁵⁴ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 11-12, 11-13.

⁵⁵ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 11-17.

⁵⁶ ATASE, Folder No. 4218, Dossier No. 67, Document No. 11-19-20-21-22-23.

⁵⁷ ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 1-21, 1-22.

⁵⁸ ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 1-23.

The Armenians were disturbed by the military searches and desired to move other places for different reasons. For instance, on May 2, Elyası Abraham born in Mersin, but later banished to Maraş stated that he was ill and wanted to be sent to Istanbul or another big city. The authorities precede his application to the headquarters of 12th Army Corps in Adana.⁵⁹

According to the governmental documents, the number of the Armenian bands who terrorized Bahçe, Haruniye (Düziçi), İslahiye and Maraş was only thirty-seven. Those bands were stationed in the mountainous region surrounding Maraş. In April 1918, they attacked Ördekdere village. They also several times organized attacks on Pazarcık but security forces killed eighteen of them.⁶⁰

On July 2, 1918, Armenian bands of thirty attacked and pillaged several villages located between Bahçe and İslahiye. A detachment unit went against them but failed to capture the criminals who hide in mountainous terrain. The Armenian bands which escaped from the pursuit in Maraş, Antep, and Besni continued to terrorize the people.

The authorities demanded from the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the Armenian railroad workers who worked in mountainous İslahiye and Osmaniye and terrorized the region should be fired and deported.⁶¹ Gendarme detachments were assigned for the security around railroad construction places between İslahiye and Osmaniye. Additionally, the Armenians workers who either involved in band movements or helped the bands were arrested and deported from the region.⁶²

THE ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION OF THE BAND GROUPS

Rumors began to spread around in Southeastern Turkey in October 1918 that the British army would land some 5,000 Armenian volunteers from Cyprus and 2,000 British troops on Mersin and Antalya ports. It was planned that these troops would help the Armenians rebels around Maraş, İslahiye and Osmaniye.

⁵⁹ ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No. 4.

⁶⁰ From Osmaniye Headquarters to the Command of the 12th Army, Adana, 22.03. 1918. ATASE, Folder No. 4223, Dossier No. 84, Document No.4.

⁶¹ ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20.

⁶² ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20-2.

The Armenian rebels were encouraged by those rumors and they planned to destroy the railway tunnels and manufacturing industry in the region to topple transportation and to create commodity crisis.⁶³

The Division 44, which was assigned to destroy the bands terrorizing Maraş, İslahiye, Bahçe and Osmaniye regions, adopted some new strategies. Accordingly, each regiment would select 20 soldiers, experienced in the fights against the bands and each soldier would be given two pair of shoes, and 120 cartridges. The detachments were also provided two animals to carry the ammunition.⁶⁴ The division was assigned to protect the manufacturing mills and the railroads.⁶⁵ Two battalions in Akyar village were moved to Kısık dale. The trenches in Kısık were repaired.⁶⁶ The troops around Mersin and Iskenderun ports were reinforced in order to prevent any attempts by the British troops landing those places.⁶⁷

After completing such preparations, a new operation started against the bands. On July 29, 1928, a military detachment from Osmaniye moved towards Yarpuz. Southern Hasanbeyli and İslahiye including Gavurdağı (Nurdağı) were searched and investigated and the troops were stationed in Germencik, south of İslahiye. Then, the troops in Germencik were divided into different divisions. A division moved towards Alakilise and another one towards Sabundere, and two others towards Kartaldağ and Büyükdağ. The divisions continued to move to northward from the region between Katırkale, Ökkeşbaba and Gavurgölü. After searching these regions the troops moved towards the mountains near Çakmaktepe south of Eoğlu (Türkoğlu). From here, troops marched to Comruk village. After searching the mountainous region between Kömürler (Nurdağ) and Eoğlu they moved towards Bahçe and Küçük İntilli village. All those troops were gathered in İslahiye after their general searches.

During the searches the people were treated well but the criminals and suspects were arrested and taken to the military

⁶³ From 12th Division to 44th Division Command, 19.09.1918. ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 17/A, Document No. 5, 5-1-2.

⁶⁴ From 44th Division Command to the Commands of the 139th and 159th Regiments, 17.7.1918. ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20, 20-52, 20-7.

⁶⁵ ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 5-3.

⁶⁶ ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 5-5, 5-7-8-9.

⁶⁷ ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 5, 5-1-2.

detachments headquarters in Osmaniye. In case the escaped bands from the search would seek shelter in neighboring regions, Maraş, Kilis and Pazarcık, the battalions patrolled their areas.⁶⁸ Additionally, the local authorities in Osmaniye, Islahiye and Bahçe were prepared.

The Armenian bands were dressed Ottoman military uniforms to confuse the troops. To prevent the clash between the troops, suspecting each other as cloaked Armenians, İbrahim Beg, a trustworthy local personality who knew the local people well was assigned to carry out the communications among the detachments using a password.⁶⁹

The detachments stationed in Yarpuz and Islahiye continued to search the Gavurdağı region on the night of 20 July. The detachment deployed in Islahiye region started the operation in the morning of 19th July. Especially, the region where the Armenian bands had long located was thoroughly searched. An Armenian band of 80 wondering in groups of fifteen were chased. Mardoros and some other Armenian bands were arrested and investigated then, they were sent to Osmaniye. Completing this mission, left wing of the detachments returned to Pazarcık.

On July 28, 1918, the soldiers killed some Armenian bands that wanted to buy bread in Haruniye. When this news was spread around, the Armenian bands that hid in the mountains around Haruniye escaped from the region. On the same day, the soldiers rushed into Islahiye to catch some 20 Armenian bands in Paşa Çiftliği. After a neck-to-neck battle with these bands their leaders Manukyan and Kabiryum from Hasanbeyli were killed. During the fight the Armenian bands stabbed a soldier to death. Two German brand guns, a hundred and fifty liras, a pair of earrings, two mecdiye coins and a gold watch-braislet were seized from the dead Armenians. The booty was given to the soldiers who participated in clash.⁷⁰ Eventually, the security of the region was only re-established as a result of hardworking searches and after determined pursuits carried out against the Armenian bands.

⁶⁸ ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20-8-9, 20-10-11-12-13.

⁶⁹ From 44th Division Command to Finance Department, Maraş Municipality and Heads of Pazarcık and Kilis Districts, 29. 07. 1918. ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20-14.

⁷⁰ From 44th Division Command to 12th Division Command, 21.07. 1918. ATASE, Folder No. 5168, Dossier No. 16, Document No. 20-18.

TURKISH ARMENIANS, THEIR STATUS AND PROBLEMS

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Abstract:

Turkish Armenians compose major minority group in Turkey. The status of the minorities was decided according to the Lausanne Treaty. Turks and Armenians have been living together more than a millennium. During their long and common histories, Turks and Armenians developed cultures having many things in common. By the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Turkish-Armenian relations were radically changed. In the republican era, the relations were normalized and the Armenians gained equal citizenry rights with the Turks and they lived in prosperity. However, the Turkish Armenians had/have some problems to overcome. This paper aims to scrutinize the status and the problems of the Turkish Armenians.

Keywords:

Minorities, Lausanne Treaty, Armenian Patriarch, Armenian Diaspora, ASALA, Armenian Theological School, Armenian Endowment

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

In classical Ottoman rule, the Armenians, like other non-Muslim subjects, were administrated according to their 'zimmi' (protected ones) status. In this system all Christians were ruled from one religious authority regardless their religious order. To eliminate the problems of the generalization, Mehmet II inaugurated the 'Millet system' categorizing the non-Muslims according to their beliefs. Therefore, the Gregorian Armenians in the empire formed the 'Armenian Millet.'

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, according to given rights to Russia and European states for intervention on behalf of the Christians of the empire, European powers pressured the Ottoman Empire to reform its rule for the Christians.

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Wealthy Armenian Amiras, who were loyal to the state, were middleman between the Armenian society and the state. In 1847, in lieu of the complaints by Patriarch that Amiras had authority to involve into the church affairs, limiting the power of the clergy, the Sublime Porte enacted a reform program distinguishing spiritual and administrative powers in Armenian community. With this measurement, the church retained immense power in the Armenian community.¹

Especially, when the Ottoman Empire entered into the new reform period with the declaration of Islahat Fermanı, in 1956, the Armenian community, led by the church, prepared a constitution for the Armenian Millet in 1967. Amiras were not represented during the preparation of the constitution. Therefore, the amiras used their influence at the Sublime Porte and they prevented the ratification of the constitution by Sultan.²

In 1860, second Armenian constitution was prepared and it was signed by church, the amiras, Armenian intellectuals and the artisans.³ The Porte appointed a committee which members were mostly Armenians, to examine the constitution. On March 23, 1963, the constitution was ratified and a committee of ten laymen was elected to execute the constitution. On September 20, 1863, Armenian General Assembly, empowered by the constitution, convened for the first time.⁴

In the war between 1977-78, against Russia, the Ottoman Empire was badly defeated. At the end of the war, the Berlin Conference met and the conference granted autonomies for some Balkan nations of the empire. Armenians expected similar treat by European powers, but they were disappointed when they gained few at the end of the conference.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there were some reform movements in the Ottoman Empire for the recognition of extended rights for the Armenians. Reforms movements were stemmed from the European and Russian pressures. Berlin Conference decided reforms for the

¹ Levon Panos Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri Tarihi*, (Istanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003), p. 573.

² Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1863*, (Istanbul), p. 82.

³ Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System ...*, p. 83.

⁴ Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System ...*, p. 91.

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decisions.**

Armenians. Inspectorate of the Eastern Anatolia, which included some European delegates, was formed to direct the reform movements for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. The inspectorate's activities were ceased when the World

War I started.⁵

Military service of the minorities was popularly discussed after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Rule. In 1909, the Ottoman Parliament decided to draft non-Muslim Ottoman citizens into army. At the same time, Istanbul's residents who were exempted before, were also obligated for the military service.⁶

During the World War I, Turkish-Armenian relations were acute. When the Turks fought for independence, destructive Armenian activities, allying with the enemies, against the Turks created turbulence in the relations. Especially, falsification of the historical incidents and propaganda campaigns influenced the Turkish-Armenian relations throughout the decades. Abuses of the history will be discussed below in this paper.

The Turkish Republic was founded base on new and modern standards and the republic modernized its minority rule. Armenians benefited Turkey's opportunities and they were also influenced by general problems of the state.

LAUSANNE AND THE TURKISH ARMENIANS

The status of the Turkish-Armenians was decided according to the Lausanne Treaty decisions. Minority rights were one of the crucial Lausanne negotiations. Minority issue was very important for the Ottoman Empire and it was also constituted the same degree of the importance for the Turkish Republic. European powers intervened into the Ottoman Empire's domestic affairs and finally disintegrated the empire mainly supporting separatist, nationalist movements of the minorities in the empire. Turkish

⁵ For more information about the reforms, see, Musa Şaşmaz, *British Policy and the Application of Reforms for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia, 1877-1897*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2000)

⁶ See Ufuk Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerinin Askerlik Serüveni*, (İstanbul: Simurg, 2000)

delegate at the Lausanne was very sensitive against any European political maneuver to intervene into the Turkish affairs via legislating their plans regarding the minorities. For the Turks, capitulations were over and the minorities should not have superior rights in the state.

Mustafa Kemal envisioned that national interests of all should not be sacrificed for group interests. Therefore, extraordinary rights for the minorities in the Ottoman Empire should be abandoned in the Republic. The minorities and the foreigners used to have some superior economic and political rights, which were dangerous for the rest of the society. Mustafa Kemal was also aware for the protection of minority rights. Earlier, when he led the National Liberation Movement, he stated that, minorities shall not be harmed and they should be protected during the war. He considered that traditions of the Turkish people already required such treat. When Vatican wrote to Mustafa Kemal for the protection of the minorities in Turkey, he answered the message on March 12, 1921, saying the protection and just treatment of the minorities were duty for the Turk because of his humanitarian and religious merits.⁷

On December 12, 1922, the status of the minorities in Turkey was negotiated at the Lausanne Conference. Chair of the meeting, Lord Curzon of Britain, stated that in recent four months, some 600,000 to 900,000 Christians were ousted from Turkey. He was personally convinced that the allies unilaterally believed that minority rights in Turkey were not under protection. He claimed that, Armenia undertook a great burden dealing with some 1,250,000 refugees poured into the country. According to him, some three million Armenians used to live in Kars, Ardahan, Van, Bitlis and Erzurum, but recently only around 130,000 Armenians lived in same regions. Lord Curzon announced that he supported the claims for an Armenian state in Asia Minor, either in North-Eastern Anatolia or in Cilicia, in the south.⁸

At the Lausanne, British led group proposed an Armenian land in Turkey, under Turkish governor general's authority, that Armenians could practice their cultural, religious and ethnic traditions in a concentrated communal environ.⁹

⁷ Mim Kemal Öke, *Yüzyılın Kan Davası, Ermeni Sorunu, 1914-1923*, (Istanbul: Aksoy Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 247.

⁸ Levent Ürer, *Azınlıklar ve Lozan Tartışmaları*, (Istanbul: Derin Yayınları, 2003), p. 235.

⁹ Ürer, *Azınlıklar ve Lozan ...*, p. 268.

Turkish delegate at Lausanne expected that minority rights would be discussed but they were shocked by proposed plans for the establishment of an Armenian state in Turkey. On December 14, 1922, Ismet Pasha answered Curzon saying that there was not any reason why Armenians should not live in Turkey in peace and prosperity as they lived for the centuries. Any attempt to give land from Turkey for the establishment of an Armenian state was a mere political intention, to shatter the Turkish territorial integrity. He stated that Turkey had good neighborhood relations with Armenia and these two countries exchanged some treaties.¹⁰ Ismet Pasha warned the British, Frenchmen and Americans that Turkish Parliament would never ratify any resolution regarding the minority rights against the nation's sovereignty. He assured the conference participants that minority problem would be solved by exchange of the population, mainly Greeks from Turkey and Turks from Greece, and Turkey could establish her civil and citizenry rules giving necessary rights to her citizens, including the rest of the minorities. He emphasized that foreign interference in this matter only could work to topple Turkey's plans to improve minority rights.¹¹

Armenian political organizations were unified and they formed United Armenian Delegate to represent the Armenians at the Lausanne. They mainly aimed to convince the delegates of the conference for the establishment of United Armenian State, including the Soviet Armenia and bulk of the land acquired from Turkey. If this plan did not work, at least, they could pressure for the establishment of an Armenian homeland in Anatolia.¹² Armenians did not secure seat at the negotiation table but their second option was defended by European powers. On December 26, 1922, the Armenian delegation was listened by sub-committee for the minorities at Lausanne. This meeting was informal and Turkish delegation was not at the present.¹³

While the Lausanne Conference met and Armenian representatives arrived to Lausanne, Turkish Armenians established the Turkish-Armenian Friendship Association in

¹⁰ Ürer, *Azınlıklar ve Lozan ...*, p. 240.

¹¹ Ürer, *Azınlıklar ve Lozan ...*, p. 239.

¹² Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1987), p. XXVII

¹³ Ömer Turan, 'The Armenian Question at the Lausanne Peace Talks' *The Armenians in Late Ottoman Period*, (Ankara: Publications of the Grand National Assembly, 2001), p. 222.

Istanbul and they opened branches in some other Turkish cities. The Association publicly announced that they were only representatives for the Armenian community in Turkey. Armenian Karabetian society, which was formed in 1919, had aimed to oust the occupying forces from Turkey. Its founder Karabetian, who was a school director, had watched the occupation of Istanbul in tears. His organization worked with Kemalist Karakol Society during the War of Independence.¹⁴

Turkish-Armenian Friendship Association prepared a memorandum to be presented at the Lasanne Conference. The memorandum argued that decision for the Armenian relocation was made merely security concern of the state that every state had right to take such precautions, when their vital interests were threatened. The memorandum considered British and other colonizer countries' treat for their colonies no better than the Young Turks treated the Armenians. Memorandum's author Mıgırdıç Agop defended that neither Turks nor Armenians were responsible for Armenian miseries during the war. Imperialistic powers were responsible for such consequences. He also blamed the extremist Armenians, who believed in establishment of greater Armenia in Turkish territories, that they foolishly became a pawn for the imperialists. He stated that the massacres could only be explained as 'oppression of Armenians by Armenians.'¹⁵

The memorandum stated that Turkish Armenians would work for goodness of their country and they would not allow subversive Armenian activities in the name of the protection of the Turkish Armenian community. The memorandum decisively pointed out that 'the Armenian Turk sees the Armenian terrorists with the same eyes that of the Turkish nationalist. We condemn any action against the well-being of Turkey with the same Turkish conscious.'¹⁶

When the negotiators at the Lausanne pressured Ismet Pasha about minority issue, he complained that they only forwarded Christian minorities' problems not even mentioning problems of around a million desperate Turkish minorities in the Balkans and elsewhere. When Venizelos complained that the exchange of the

¹⁴ Mirm Kemal Öke, 'The Responses of Turkish Armenians to the 'Armenian Question', 1919-1926', *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, (1912-1926)*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 1984), p. 73.

¹⁵ Öke, 'The Responses of Turkish Armenians ...', p. 75.

¹⁶ Öke, 'The Responses of Turkish Armenians ...', p. 75.

people would create misery for the Greeks and he defended the Armenian rights in Turkey, Ismet Pasha was surprised with Venizelos' statement because the Greek side first defended the idea of people's exchange and he recalled that the Greek invasion of Western Anatolia had dramatically worsened Armenians' situation under the Greek rule.¹⁷

On December 31, 1922, Ismet Pasha answered minority questions saying that not only minorities but also the Turks greatly suffered because of the war. Unarmed Turks led a national movement in worst conditions. He pointed out that Turkish-Jews, who preferred to distance themselves from any foreign influence not allowing the foreigners use them as a tool, had very lucrative and decent life in Turkey. After the war, for sure, the Armenians and other minorities would live in peace in Turkey as they lived for the centuries. The Turks and the Armenians could cure their wounds without foreign interference. But Turkish territories could not be distributed for the establishment of an Armenian homeland.¹⁸ Lord Curzon asked Ismet Pasha that Turkey, such a vast country, could give up a piece of land for Armenian homeland. Ismet Pasha answered him saying the Turks defended their territories at a great expense not to give away any piece of it. He proposed that Britain might find place for Armenian homeland in any of its vas colonies.¹⁹

On January 9, 1923, the Armenian homeland issue was discussed at the conference for the last time. Upon Lord Curzon's repeated efforts to bring the topic back to the table, Ismet Pasha stated that he was nothing to add to his former statements regarding this matter. After this talk, proposed Armenian homeland in Turkey was never discussed again and it was not mentioned in treaty draft.²⁰

Britain and others were not sincere in their policies defending the Armenian rights. American representative to Lausanne peace talks reported Washington that 'the Allied delegates had no intention of giving genuine backing to the Armenian question under existing conditions, but continued to use the Armenians to achieve their own military and political objectives.'²¹

¹⁷ M. Cemil Bilsel, *Lozan, İkinci Cilt*, (Istanbul: Sosyal Yayınlar, 1998), p. 275.

¹⁸ Bilsel, *Lozan ...*, p. 276.

¹⁹ Bilsel, *Lozan ...*, p. 279.

²⁰ Ürer, *Azınlıklar ve Lozan ...*, p. 240.

²¹ Turan, 'The Armenian Question at the Lausanne', p. 226.

At the Lausanne, description of the minorities in Turkey created hot debates. Turkish delegate, mainly Rıza Nur, insisted that united Turkish state could apply the minority rights only for its non-Muslim citizens. He stated that for the centuries, the term for the minorities only described non-Muslims and Muslim subjects of the empire felt that they were one and the same, although there were many racial and linguistic differences between them. The British side adamantly pressured the Turks to accept the term minorities in modern sense distinguishing racial and linguistic heritage of the people. Finally, upon Turkey's persistency, the minorities in Turkey were recognized according to religious criteria, making the non-Muslims only minority groups in Turkey.

Finally, the treaty decided that, minorities in Turkey would have equal rights with Muslims. They would retain, religious, linguistic and press freedoms and their endowments would continue to function.²² At the Lausanne, the Armenians were not separately mentioned in the treaty protocol.

According to Hovannisian the Berlin Treaty recognized an international interest for the Armenian issue in the Ottoman Empire,²³ but, 'the Lausanne treaties marked the international abandonment of the Armenian Question. When their case had first been internationalized in 1878, the Armenians had taken hope, but to no avail. If in 1878 they were deprived of fundamental rights and the security of life and property, in 1923 they no longer even existed in their ancestral lands.'²⁴

Between the years 1922-27, the Armenian Church could not elect its patriarch. In 1927, after five years of recession, Mesrob I of Muş was elected as 80th Patriarch of the Armenian Church. In the republic, the Patriarch was recognized as spiritual supervisor of entire Turkish Armenian community. When Turkish Republic adopted the civil code in 1926, some minority rights, decided at the Lausanne, were automatically replaced by this general code.

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Turkish Armenians gained minority rights and equality with the Turks

²² Bilsef, *Lozan ...*, p. 281.

²³ Richard G. Hovannisian, 'The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878-1923' *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, Edited by Richard G. Hovannisian, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), p. 24.

²⁴ Hovannisian, 'The Historical Dimensions ...', p. 37.

Politicization and distortion of the historical facts seriously damaged the Turkish-Armenian relations.

normalized.

according to the Lausanne Treaty. Under modern minority codes and republic's great reform movements, Armenians' status, which was heavily damaged during the war, was restored and Turkish-Armenian relations were quickly

DESTRUCTIVE IMPACTS OF PROPAGANDA MOVEMENTS IN TURKISH ARMENIAN RELATIONS AND ASALA TERROR

Politicization and distortion of the historical facts seriously damaged the Turkish-Armenian relations. During the World War I, Allies' propaganda and disinformation services were pretty active to lower enemy's morale and create conflict in adverse countries. In the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian relocation movement was a perfect opportunity for abuse for the Allies' propaganda machine. The books *Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, the Blue Book, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* and *sur les Massacres d'Armenie* were written for propaganda purposes. Despite these works were war-time propaganda manuscripts, relying on biased personal accounts, later, they were popularly cited by Armenian and western scholars in their works without questioning their viabilities.

Entente's propaganda campaigns won the hearts at the home and created a public legitimacy in treating the Turks and Turkey in a colonial behavior. Negative campaigns also influenced the Turkish Armenians and Armenians abroad for a lasting hatred and revenge.

Armenian Patriarch Gevond Turyan wrote series about the Armenian Church's political activities, for disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, in an Armenian paper *Dadjar*. In 1917, his writings were published in a book. His critical assessments about the church and the Armenian organizations antagonized the Armenians. Later, Turyan resided in the United States and he was murdered by militant Dashnaks when he attended to lead the Church sermon on December 24, 1933, in New York.²⁵

²⁵ Erdal İter, *Ermeni Kilisesi ve Terör*, (Ankara: Kök Yayınları, 1999), p. 67.

The Armenians abroad started political campaigns against the newly established Turkish Republic. The Armenians were, especially, active in Greece and they were in touch with the Greek officials when they launched anti-Turkish campaigns.²⁶ The Armenians supported the mutinies in early period of the Turkish Republic and they also involved into the attempted assassinations against the founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.²⁷

When Turkey tried to eliminate Armenian violence abroad, the country also wanted to monitor Turkish Armenians and their organizations to prevent them involving into the movements against the state. On May 4, 1924, Mustafa Kemal told to American press that, at the end of the Ottoman Empire, minority religious organizations in Turkey had openly pursued destructive policies against the state obtaining necessary support from the west. Therefore, these organizations, churches and schools, should be monitored by the state.²⁸

According to Levon Panos Dabağyan the Armenians are not one and the same. There are great differences between Caucasus Armenians and Turkish Armenians. According to him, Caucasus Armenians were abused by western powers in provocative acts against the Ottoman Empire. Armenians in Caucasus were also jealous of Turkish Armenians having great opportunities and higher life standards in the empire. For Dabağyan, Armenian Question is not an Armenian concern but it was/is a political tool for ambitious nations to weaken Turkey.²⁹

Dabağyan wrote that European agents and Armenian militias provoked people and they were responsible for the misery of the Armenians in Turkey. Many Armenians loyal to the state were murdered and suppressed by their militant brethren.³⁰ For that reason, Turkish Armenians were never sympathetic to anti-Turkish activities conducted by diaspora and Armenia.

²⁶ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ...*, p. LVI

²⁷ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ...*, p. LVI.

²⁸ İtler, *Ermeni Kilisesi ...*, p. 70.

²⁹ Levon Panos Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamid Han ve Ermeni Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Kum Saati Yayınları, 2001), p. 82.

ASALA TERRORISM

Armenian hate campaigns turned out into the violent activities. Especially, beginning with 1970s, Armenian terror organization ASALA, abroad, committed bloodiest rampages against the Turks. The terrorists and their supporters tried to justify their activities stating that they were revenging the Turks who slaughtered the Armenians. Hate campaigns and terrorist activities highly disturbed the Turkish Armenians. The Armenians in Turkey opposed such activities because they were cruel and the reasoning was merely fraud. Besides, they did not want diaspora Armenians represent the interests of the Turkish Armenians.

In 1975, ASALA was, probably, established in Beirut. According to some press organs, ASALA's headquarters remained in Beirut until 1982 when Israel occupied southern Lebanon. Same year the terrorist organization moved into Damascus.³¹

This terrorist organization mainly targeted Turkish diplomats abroad. In many countries, guns were fired and bombs were exploded by ASALA, leaving terror and dead bodies behind them. The frenzy of the terrorism, unfortunately, widely speculated as right movement among the diaspora and Armenian Armenies. Popularly, diaspora Armenians considered that killed ASALA terrorists were martyrs and they held worship services for the terrorists at their churches.³²

Armenian terrorism did not only threaten the Turks but also threatened who did not support their views. ASALA declared that the countries, which helped Turkey militarily and economically, were their enemies. Therefore, ASALA warned the citizens of the countries friendly to Turkey becoming 'innocent victims' of ASALA's hatred.³³ Some foreign governments, for example, Canada, France, Italy, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland were warned by Armenian terrorists, because they trailed the Armenian terrorists. After seriously wounding Turkish diplomat Kani Güngör in Canada, ASALA issued a declaration warning the Canadian government not taking any action against the ASALA compatriots. ASALA threatened the French government that if they did not grant

³⁰ Dabağyan, *Sultan Abdülhamid Han ...*, p. 86.

³¹ Zafer Özkan, *Terörden Politikaya Ermeni Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Er Ofset, 2001), p. 186.

³² Özkan, *Terörden Politikaya ...*, p. 181.

³³ Özkan, *Terörden Politikaya ...*, p. 189.

political asylum to the Armenians, who seized and occupied the Turkish Consulate in Paris, there would be confrontations between the Armenians and the French government. ASALA warned the Swiss authorities that if they did not release two Armenian terrorists, they would target all Swiss diplomats throughout the world. Germany was threatened because her assistance to the Turkish 'Fascists' and Vatican, specifically the Pope, was warned because they helped the Armenian emigrants to leave Soviet Armenia.³⁴

When the terrorist attacks started, the Turkish government monitored its Armenian citizens to prevent any support for terrorist organizations. Some terrorists were trained in Jerusalem in Armenian Church seminaries. Armenian Priest Manuel Yergatian (Haig Eldemir) was arrested while boarding a plane in Istanbul for Jerusalem with four Armenian pupils. During his trial, the students testified that Yergatian taught his students hatred and militant goals of the Armenians. Yergatian denied any of his ties with terrorist organizations, but, when the Armenian terrorists seized the Turkish Consulate in Paris, exposed his tie with the terrorists when they demanded the release of him.³⁵ Like Yergatian, few other Turkish Armenians were arrested accusing help the terrorists or working to create chaos in the country.

According to the Armenian Patriarch, youngsters and the terrorists were misled by the extremists and 'they have been fed distorted views on what happened in 1915.'³⁶ In 1984, during the his visit to the United States, Armenian Patriarch, Kaloustyan stated that 'our government insures our freedom and safety and gone are some of the restrictions that had existed in the past relative to the day-to-day life of our community organizations' and he continued saying that when Armenian terrorists killed Turkish diplomats abroad, the Turkish government increased security measurements for the protection of the Armenians and their institutions.³⁷

³⁴ Michael M. Gunter, *Pursuing the Just Cause of Their People, A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 3.

³⁵ Gunter, *Pursuing the Just Cause ...*, p. 133.

³⁶ Gunter, *Pursuing the Just Cause ...*, p. 136.

³⁷ Gunter, *Pursuing the Just Cause ...*, p. 137.

During the Armenian terrorist attacks, Armenian professionals, academics, economists, artisans etc. in every occasions declared their well and fair treatment in Turkey. They told western scholars and the press that, Turkish state made all opportunities avail to her Armenian citizens equal to the Turkish ones.

In his testify during the trial for Orly bombers in March 1985, Simon A. Hatchinlian, professor at the Bosphorus University, stated that he freely used his Armenian name without any hesitation because he enjoyed all types of the privileges that any regular Turkish citizen had. He said that he had never been discriminated, including in the military service, and he respected the Turks.³⁸

Violence against the minorities, especially against the Greeks and Armenians, occurred during the Cyprus crisis, and when ASALA terrorists targeted the Turks and Turkish establishments abroad. Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territories, victimizing thousands and creating more than a million destitute refugees, created anger and raised nationalistic feelings in Turkey. The Armenian Church and Armenian businesses were threatened and received hate letters.

Recently, when the terror activities hit Turkey, Turkish authorities and the public did not like to identify terrorist activities as 'Islamic terror.' Some Turkish Armenians attracted attention to term of the 'Armenian terrorism.' The Armenians complained that Turkish state and public used to use this term mistakenly in place of ASALA terrorism.³⁹

CHURCH AND ARMENIAN ASSETS

Armenians had built two churches in Istanbul before the Turkish conquest of the city and they used to live in Samatyakapı, Sulu Manastır and Balat districts.⁴⁰ After the Turkish conquest, Sultan Mehmet II invited variety of different ethnic and religious groups to live in 'world's capital,' Istanbul. Notable numbers of Armenians from Anatolia, Caucasus, Iran etc. moved into the microcosm of the universe. Living in Istanbul, being the sultans'

³⁸ Gunter, *Pursuing the Just Cause ...*, p. 137.

³⁹ Raffi A. Hermonn, 'Peki ya Ermeni Terörü' *Bianet*, Paris, 12/02/2003.

⁴⁰ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri ...*, p. 122.

hometown fellow, granted many economic, especially tax, social and political priorities. In 1461, Mehmet the Conquer transferred the Armenian religious headquarters from Bursa to Istanbul. He granted Patriarchate power to the Armenian religious leader Hovagim Yebisgobos appointing him as Patriarch of Istanbul. He led his followers for seventeen years at the Sulu Manastir.

In the history, Mehmet II's this act shall be peerless or rare. A Muslim Sultan had established a Christian Patriarch that it was never existed before. After Mehmet II's 'millet system,' Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul was recognized as the 'head of the Armenian millet.' In short, Armenian population in Istanbul dramatically increased. After the Turkish conquest, some Greek churches were converted to Armenian churches.⁴¹ Due to their hard work and appreciation of the Ottoman rule, the Armenians were called as 'millet-i sadıka' (loyal community) in the empire that no other minority group had titled so.

The Turks and the Armenians shared many commonalities in their daily lives. Cultural influences between the Turks and the Armenians were immense. The Armenians produced many famed artisans, musicians and other professionals. Many Armenian writers, poets, troubadours, composers produced their works in Turkish. In fact, a sizable numbers of Armenian populace did only spoke Turkish. Derviş Hampar, Meydani, Şirini, Mihri, Aşık Emir were some of Turkish Armenian troubadours who produced their works in Turkish. Some composer-musicians, for example; Bimen Şen, Hamparsum Limoncuyan, Nikoğos Ağa, Tatyos Efendi, Levon Hancıyan, Udi Hrant Emre were renowned 'art music' (Ottoman court music) composers that their music found a large audience. The Armenian architects built palaces, mosques and variety of the buildings in the Empire. Famous Dolmabahçe Palace of Istanbul was built by an Armenian architect, Balyan Karabet.⁴²

Turkish Armenians run 1 Patriarchate, 2 hospitals, 57 churches, 58 endowments, 19 schools, 25 chorus, 17 associations, 2 sport clubs, 3 newspapers, 5 periodicals in Turkey. Some twenty-one Armenian daily and weekly press organs were established and published in Turkish Republic. By 1995, nine of them were still active.⁴³

⁴¹ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri ...*, p. 126.

⁴² Nejat Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler*, (Gültepe Yayınları, 1983), p. 73.

⁴³ See, Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri Tarihi ...*,

According to the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, there are some 57 churches and chapels administrated by 33 Parish councils in service in Turkey. Most of the churches hold services only on certain holidays because of lack of church adherents and clergy. Only twenty-five clergymen are currently available to the Armenian Patriarchate.⁴⁴ The shortage of clergymen is one of the major problems of the church. Because of non-existence of Armenian religious school in Turkey, the Turkish Armenians need to attend seminars abroad. This situation constitutes some problems and the public is not aware regarding the problems of studying abroad. The clergy, who was educated abroad, can be influenced by anti-Turkish sentiments because of diaspora's intense propaganda against Turkey.

Acquiring the Sultan's permission, in 1857, Gregorian Armenians built a church in Kınalıada. Today, this church is in service. In 1966, the Patriarch built summerhouse next to the church and Gülbenkyan Foundation built a summer camp around it for the orphans.⁴⁵

There were several Armenian hospitals in Istanbul but two of them Yedi Kule (Surp Pirgiç) and Taksim (Surp Hagop) are still in service. According to some wealthy Armenians' request, in 1833, the Ottoman government allocated the Leblebici Bostanı, one of the Sultan Beyazid II's endowments, for building Armenian hospital. A Muslim Turk Ali Necib Bey donated his lands surrounding the construction site for the hospital.⁴⁶ In 1832, Catholic Armenians opened microbiology clinic in Taksim. In 1836, the clinic was demolished and Surp Hagop Hospital was built in its place. Some forty-five houses surrounding the hospital were donated for the hospital.⁴⁷

There are 19 Armenian private lay schools active in Istanbul. Lack of students, teachers and disinterest studying in native language are major problems for Armenian schools. In 1849, the School of Gorenyan Varvayan opened in Narlıkapı and this school remained active until 1924. Yenikapı Arakeloz Hayganushyan school was opened in 1850 ran until 1939. Kumkapı Bogosyan

⁴⁴ Tessa Hofmann, *Armenians in Turkey Today*, Report for EU, The EU Office of Armenian Associations of Europe, October 2002, p. 24.

⁴⁵ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri* ..., pp. 232-233

⁴⁶ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri* ..., p. 304.

⁴⁷ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri* ..., p. 312.

Varvryan School was opened in 1832. In 1905, this school was demolished and new school building was built in its place. This school was closed in 1977 due to decreased students in number and its remaining students were transferred to Bezciyan School. Like Kumkapı School, in 1982, Gedikpaşa Surp Mesropyan, in 1980 Beşiktaş Makruyan and Nişanca Hay Avedaranagan schools were also closed, because of declined student numbers. In 1975, Hasköy Nersesyan and Kalfayan schools and orphanage were confiscated by state according to the urban development plans.⁴⁸

Armenian Balat Gorenyan, Galata Getronagan, Beyoğlu Esayan, Kocamustafapaşa Sahagyan, Üsküdar Surp Ğaç, Kumkapı Bezciyan, Bakırköy Dadyan, Feriköy Merametciyan, Kadıköy Aramyan Uncuyan, Topkapı Levonayn Vartuhyan, Yeşilköy Ermeni Mektebi, Şişli Karagözyan, Ortaköy Tarkmançaz Hripsimyanz, Kalfayan, Üsküdar Nersesyan, Üsküdar Semerciyan Cemaran schools are still active in Istanbul. Catholic Armenians also run Pangaltı Mğitaryan, Samatyakapı Anarad Hğutyun, Pangaltı Anarad Hğutyun and Bomonti Mğitaryan schools. There are also 13 Armenian Alumni organizations active in Istanbul.⁴⁹

ARMENIANS TODAY AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Although the Armenians compose the largest minority group in Turkey, however, their slow increase in number threatens the effectiveness of the community. A century ago, the Armenian population in Turkey had numbered more than a million but nowadays their numbers consisted some ten thousands. Armenian population in Turkey slightly increased during the decades. In 1935, the Turkish Armenians numbered 57,000 and their population was increased less than a half almost in seventy years. Primarily the Armenian immigration abroad and conversion to Islam, especially in remote areas, were main reasons for slow increase of Armenian populace.⁵⁰

According to different estimations, some 50-80.000 Armenians live in Turkey. According to the Armenian community statistics, between 60,000-65,000 Armenians live in the country. Gregorian

⁴⁸ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri ...*, p. 313.

⁴⁹ Dabağyan, *Türkiye Ermenileri ...*,

⁵⁰ Hofmann, *Armenians in Turkey...*, p. 18.

Armenians compose overwhelming majority. The number of Catholic Armenians is around 2,000 and Protestant Armenians are only 500.⁵¹

Vakıflı köyü in Hatay is the last Armenian village with 150 habitants in Turkey. It is estimated that several thousands of Armenians in Islamic faith retains their Armenian cultural and linguistic heritages.

Reopening of Armenian Theological Schools

In 1954, Surp Haç Tıbrevank theology school was opened in Üsküdar, Istanbul, to raise Armenian clergy. In 1969, this school was closed, mainly, due to lack of enrolled students. Reopening of Armenian theological school is one of the recent Armenian matter, which is widely debated in Turkish public too. In general, the policies of reopening the Christian religious schools revolved around Turkey's structural adjustments for the EU membership. Minister for National Education, Hüseyin Çelik announced that he was working to eliminate the obstacles to reopen these schools. His positive approach regarding the matter created great expectations among the Greeks and the Armenians.

Armenians and Greeks have different approaches for the solution. While, Greek Patriarch wants to open the school under his control, the Armenian Patriarch, on the other hand, proposes that Armenian school should be opened as a part of divinity school of any Turkish university, under the National Educational Ministry's authority. Even Mesrob II proposed to the Turkish government that such college could be opened in Urfa as a branch to the Harran University. Mesrob met Turkish foreign minister Abdullah Gül and vice-prime minister Mehmet Ali Şahin on November 20, and he explained Armenian views on the school issue. The Armenian request was welcomed by the government.⁵² The Armenian idea seemed moderate in comparison to the Greek one.⁵³

Turkish government planed to reopen the Greek religious school after ensuring the rights of election of Turkish Mufti in

⁵¹ Hofmann, *Armenians in Turkey ...*, p. 9.

⁵² *Akşam*, October 7, 2003.

⁵³ See Hasan Oktay 'Türk Ortodoks Kilisesinin Tavrı', <http://www.haberanaliz.com> for more information on the debates.

Greece by Turkish minority. Turkish Minister for Education, Hüseyin Çelik visited Athens to exchange the ideas. Greek side disappointed Çelik considering that the issue of Greek religious school became an EU problem and it was nothing to do with bilateral good-will steps. Greek authorities announced that they would not let the Turks in Greece to elect their religious leader and state would appoint the Mufti.⁵⁴

Turkey's endeavour for inclusion of the EU brings minority issues to the point. When the EU pressured Turkey to condition its policies towards Armenia according to Armenian interests in the region, on the other hand, it, in many occasions, expressed its dissatisfaction with Turkey's administration of the minorities. Tessa Hoffman, a German scholar, prepared a report for EU regarding Turkish Armenians. In many cases, she awkwardly assessed the status of the Turkish Armenians in Turkey. In her report, she blamed the Turks for genocide and mismanagement of the Armenians and she overemphasized the distinctiveness of the Armenians in Turkish society.⁵⁵ Whereas, Mesrob II stated that his lobbying in the European countries for Turkey's entry into the EU, must represent Armenian community's well integration into the Turkish society. He clearly pointed out that 'Turkish-Armenians are not part of the Armenians in Armenia. We (Armenians) are Turkish citizens and we are on the same boat. If this boat sinks, we sink, too.'⁵⁶ The Patriarch advised the Europeans to listen Turkish Armenians before judging about their status in Turkey.

In 2003 spring, Mesrob II visited Europe and he lobbied for Turkey's acceptance into the EU. He planned his visits with Turkish embassies in Europe. Before him, no Greek and Armenian patriarch did spent similar effort. Former patriarchs never informed the Turkish embassies about their visits, when they traveled the foreign countries.

Minority Endowments

Status of minority endowments consists another problem for the Turkish Armenians. According to the Vakıflar Kanunu of 1935

⁵⁴ *Radikal*, 11/13/2003.

⁵⁵ According to Hasan Oktay, Tessa Hoffman probably works for German Intelligence Service and she tries to promote the idea that the Germans were not first nation who conducted the genocide, 'AB ve Ermeni Patriği Mesrob II Efendi', <http://www.haberaliz.com>

⁵⁶ Hasan Oktay, 'AB ve Ermeni Patriği Mesrob II Efendi', <http://www.haberaliz.com>

(code for endowments), all endowments, including the Turkish and minority endowments, should be controlled by the state. In 1935, the General Directorate of Endowments ordered Muslim and non-Muslim endowments' board of trustees to inform the directorate regarding their endowment assets. In 1964, while the Cyprus problem was escalating, the government warned the endowments that they could only retain the assets, which were listed in 1935. The properties, gained after 1935, should be given back to their owners. If the donator and his heirs did not exist, state would confiscate such endowments. Additionally, In 1974, the court of appeals banned the minority endowments to gain new properties.

According to adjustment laws for EU Copenhagen criteria, Turkish Parliament passed the resolution allowing minority endowments to receive newly donated assets. Same resolution opened the judicial procedure for lawsuits to claim rights on confiscated endowment assets. Lack of judicial implementations impedes such lawsuit practices, yet.

Mesrob II complained that minority endowment policy does not fit in modern Turkey's political values. While the Muslims in Europe, according to the Patriarch, established endowments freely and an European had right to donate his property even for the animals, judicial impediments not allowing a Turkish Armenian to donate his property for Armenian endowments were not just. On the other hand, Mesrob II warned that this issue was abused by some groups. He clearly pointed out that Armenian Church would not allow quasi-EU supporters to use the endowment issue to create new problems in Turkey.⁵⁷

General Problems

In general, hostile attitudes of diaspora Armenians and Armenians of Armenia, ASALA terrorism and Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territories indirectly affected Turkish Armenians. Clearly, Turkish Armenians did never approve hostile Armenian movements against Turkey. They considered that such activities were politic not humanitarian and they damaged Turkish-Armenian relations. While Turkish Armenians opposed Armenia's claims in Turkey, they did not also want to mediate between Turkey and Armenia to end the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

⁵⁷ Hasan Oktay, 'AB ve Ermeni Patriği Mesrob II Efendi', <http://www.haberaliz.com>

Armenian Olympics of 2003 is good example for Turkish Armenians' dilemma.

They did so, because they did not want to be perceived that there were political ties between Turkish Armenians and Armenia. In every occasion, Turkish Armenians declared that they were as sensitive as any regular Turk against the Armenian occupation.

In 1998, when Mesrob II, who studied abroad, was elected as Patriarch, he was portrayed in the press as an Armenian extremist. But in every occasion, he advocated the Turkey's national interests. He moderately complained about the problems of the Armenian minority in Turkey. He paid great attention to diaspora Armenians' and foreign governments' anti-Turkish activities and he condemned such activities.

Mesrob II complained that some groups in Turkey considered him working for the interests of Armenian republic, while some Armenia's Armenians and diaspora Armenians considered him working for Turkish intelligence service. He explained his dilemma considering him at the cross-fire and, at the same time, a lover in between two lovers.⁵⁸ The Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul considered Armenia's territorial claims in Turkey absurdity of a handful people. He defended that, as an ordinary citizen, there was not any piece of the Turkish land to be given to Armenia.⁵⁹

Armenian Olympics of 2003 is good example for Turkish Armenians' dilemma. When the Turkish-Armenians attended the Armenian Olympics in Yerevan, they were discriminated by their blood brothers, who came from USA, Europe, Russia, Middle Eastern and neighboring countries. When the Turkish sportsmen spoke Turkish, others condemned the Turkish-Armenians speaking the enemy's language. Armenian International Magazine in the United States wrote that many diaspora Armenians and Armenians of Armenia considered that even if the Turkish Armenians did not speak Turkish, they were not trustworthy because they live, or they choose to live, in Turkey.⁶⁰ Ironically, diaspora Armenians who could not speak Armenian language and only spoke their host countries' languages condemned the Turkish Armenians speaking

⁵⁸ Hasan Oktay, 'AB ve Ermeni Patriği Mesrob II Efendi', <http://www.haberaliz.com>

⁵⁹ Hasan Oktay, 'AB ve Ermeni Patriği Mesrob II Efendi', <http://www.haberaliz.com>

⁶⁰ *Hürriyet*, 12/05/2003.

Turkish. A British Armenian protested that he could not tolerate to hear the Turkish language while an American Armenian justified speaking of the English was not same thing speaking of Turkish because Turkish was enemy's language. During Turkish soccer team's games, they were badly treated by their competitors. Hrant Dink commented that to prove their die-hard Armenian consciousness, Armenia's Armenians and diaspora Armenians always tend to ignore and suspect the Turkish Armenians considering them as second class weak Armenians. He also complained that the Turks also ignore the Turkish Armenians for nationalist reasons.⁶¹

Many Armenians in Armenia, especially the elderly ones, speak Turkish in privacy at their homes. To prevent foreign language speak at homes, the Armenian Language Directorate started 'our language at our home' campaigns. The authorities monitored the public places and private enterprises day and night establishing night squads to enforce the ban of speaking foreign languages.

The Armenian Patriarch reacted also against the diaspora's anti-Turkish campaigns. Due to pass of 'Armenian Genocide' resolution from House Sub-Committee in 2000, Mesrob II sent a letter to the American Congress not to pass this resolution. The Patriarch stated that the matter, which was discussed at the Congress should be discussed by historians not by politicians. He concluded that such activities never helped the Armenians, although, they harmed peace, friendship and damaged Turkish-Armenian relations.⁶²

On January 30, 2001, 90 Armenian delegates from different sectors of the Armenian community met under the Patriarch leadership to condemn French National Assembly's ratification of so-called 'Armenian Genocide' resolution. The meeting declared that historians should discuss the 1915 events not the politicians. As ordinary Turkish citizens, the Turkish Armenians can only accept their problems to be discussed at the Turkish Parliament in Ankara. This statement announced that Armenians in Turkey were as free as any Turk and they were disturbed by French attitude to patronage the Turkish Armenians.

⁶¹ *Hürriyet*, 12/05/2003.

⁶² *Armenpress*, December 2, 2003.

In December 2003, Pendik Municipality in Istanbul organized a meeting regarding minority problems. The director of Armenian weekly *Agos*, Hrant Dink assessed that education was primary concern to implant the multi-cultural structure in the society. He stated that the Turkish society should be proud of itself, because in this society, diverse cultures and religions had lived together in peace. But he did not agree that same thing was valid in recent history. According to him, the minorities are well treated in the society but they have some problems in relations with the state.⁶³

In sum, the Turkish Armenians, who flourished the Turkish culture, compose the major minority group in Turkey. Although, their numbers and their influence in the society are not as great as they were in the past, however, the Turkish Armenians are still important part of the Turkish society and state. Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire created great chaos for its people. The Turks and the Armenians were victims of the political consequences of the shattered empire. Today, benefits and problems of the Turkish Republic influence the Turkish Armenians equally as they influence any regular Turk. As Armenian Patriarch described, the Turks and Armenians are on board same boat, if the boat sinks, everybody losses.

⁶³ *Hürriyet*, 12/05/2003.

SPRINGS OF HATRED, SPRINGS OF HOPE: 1965 EVENTS, DIASPORA POLITICS AND TURKISH ARMENIANS*

Umut KOLDAŞ**

Abstract:

Basing on the debates on conceptualization of diaspora and diaspora politics, this article analyzes the significance of 1965 events from two different points of view and political cultures, which were represented by the newly emerging diasporic Armenian community of 1960s and Turkish Armenian community. The strengths and weaknesses of these two points of views in explaining the significance of 1965 diaspora's activities against Turkey are explained through examining these different approaches within the context of Turco-Armenian inter-communal relations through considering their relevance to the national, international and diasporic/transnational contexts.

Keywords:

Diaspora Politics, Turkish Armenians, Armenian Diaspora, 1965 Events, Diasporic Identity Formation, Turco-Armenian Relations

INTRODUCTION

Spring of 1965 witnessed several demonstrations in different parts of the world where Armenian communities were settled. Organized mainly by the political activists and socio-political institutions of the Armenian communities in the metropolises of the countries such as Lebanon, United States, France, and Yerevan these demonstrations were claimed to commemorate the 'fiftieth anniversary of the 'genocide'' and to raise 'the demands for the restoration of 'Turkish Armenian' lands'.¹

* As it will be seen in the debates within this article, choice of the concept of 'Turkish Armenians' aims to reflect the attitude of Armenian people in Turkey in defining themselves, in determining their position within the context of diaspora politics. Thus in general, I do not tend to totally exclude other terms (like 'Armenian Minority', 'Armenians in Turkey', 'Armenians of Turkey' etc.) which conceptualize this population in broader discussions in different other contexts.

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¹ Armen Gakavian, 'Armenian Diasporan Identity Reimagined, 1915-1985' in *Homeland, Diaspora and Nationalism: The Reimagination of American-Armenian Identity Since Gorbachev* unpublished PhD thesis submitted to University of Sydney, 1997 at <http://www.realchange.nareg.com.au/ch3.htm>

The main difference of interpretation remained between diasporic Armenian communities and the Turkish Armenians who interpreted the demonstrations from different politico-cultural perspectives and in different national, regional and international contexts.

Nature, significance and instrumentality of these events have been interpreted differently at discursive, institutional, and individual levels among the Armenian communities around the world. Thus, these demonstrations connoted different implications for the Armenians living in different conditions and socio-political structures in various countries. These differences in interpretations mainly derived from the national, regional and international contexts in which they were evaluated. In this

respect, a Lebanese Armenian attached a different meaning to these demonstrations when compared with a French Armenian; or an Armenian living in Yerevan of Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia interpreted these events differently from an American Armenian living in the United States. In diaspora and the homeland Armenia, these differences among the interpretations were subordinated under a diasporic meta-'discourse around the 'genocide' and hostility towards Turkey.

Nevertheless, the main difference of interpretation has remained between diasporic Armenian communities and the Turkish Armenians who interpreted the demonstrations from different politico-cultural perspectives and in different national, regional and international contexts.

From diasporic Armenian point of view, the developments, which started to take place in international and national arenas of Armenian communities beginning from 1965, were heralding a transformation towards diasporic formation that would unify and organize the dispersed Armenian community on ethno-religious basis all over the world. In that respect, these developments were perceived by Armenian diasporic elite as signs of a new diasporic political culture and revival of political activism for the common interest of diasporic all-inclusive socio-cultural formation. The political culture of newly emerging Armenian diasporic establishment was mainly based on debates on politics of identity formation, ethno-religious consciousness, collective memory,

relations with the homeland, diasporic institutionalization and endorsement of the idea of struggle against a common enemy. At the initial stage of diasporic identity formation, culture of struggle and promotion of co-responsibility among the members of Armenian community was perceived as a mobilizing factor, which would supposedly consolidate the diasporic identity through activating the diaspora politics for common interests. Nevertheless, due to overemphasis on the politicization of hostilities and the idea of common enemy, the idea of struggle against a common enemy and the feeling of co-responsibility in this struggle seemed to become dominant patterns of diaspora politics and diasporic political identity within the context of diasporic political culture. In this respect, the significance of 1965 seemed to change, in a reductionist way, from the initial signs of mobilization of dispersed Armenian communities for unification under a newly emerging diasporic identity to the initial signs of the struggle against the common enemy.

Turkish Armenians on the other hand, interpreted the demonstrations of 1965 within the international context as a part of regional conflicts and discontents between Turkey and its rivals. In this respect, they saw these political acts as provocation and manipulation of Armenian communities by the foreign actors, particularly the USSR, Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia, Greek Cypriots and Greece against Turkey in order to sustain their cases in regional and international politics. The cooperation between the Armenian diasporic formation and the enemies of Turkey on the basis of rallying anti-Turkish sentiments strengthened the suspicions of Turkish Armenians. The resemblance of Armenian diasporic discourse with the discourses of Turkey's rivals on specific issues, which were mainly concerning the political and strategic interests of these rivals further, reinforced this skeptic and critical discourse of Turkish Armenians against the Armenian diaspora. As it will be more evaluated in the other parts of this article, another point of criticism was raised by Turkish Armenians was about the 'hatred speech' and 'hostility towards Turkey' within the Armenian diasporic discourse which were meant to consolidate the diasporic identity on the basis of clear-cut definition of 'the other' and 'us'. Nevertheless, Turkish Armenians believed that such an attitude would result in deepening the hostilities between the two nations and would not help solving the problems. Thus they were offering more peaceful ways of settlement of the problems between the Armenian diaspora and

Turkey through the means of conciliation. In fact, the relevance of these observations seemed to be realized when the discourse of hatred speech and hostility towards Turkey transformed into diasporic militancy and went beyond the borders of diaspora politics and became an international menace in the form of terrorist activism, which could not be controlled by the diasporic socio-political institutions by the means of political mechanisms.

Under the light of abovementioned discussions, this article aims to evaluate the arguments about the significance of 1965 events within the framework of Turco-Armenian relationships basing on the analysis of two different points of view and political cultures, which were represented by the newly emerging diasporic Armenian community of 1960s and Turkish Armenian community. Within this context, the article will begin with conceptualizing diaspora and diaspora politics within the context of attempts towards transforming of patterns of relationships among Armenian communities following 1965 events. In the second part, significance of 1965 events for Armenian diasporic formation will be examined under the light of debates on the Armenian diasporic identity formation, diaspora-homeland relationship. In this part a particular emphasis will be given on emergence, necessity and implications of discourse of struggle and a common enemy in the process of identity formation and maintenance within the context of Armenian diaspora. Third part will focus on the Turkish Armenians' point of view regarding the nature and implications of 1965 events. Putting emphasis on the expressed sensitivities of the Turkish Armenian community, their responses to these events will be evaluated in terms of their significance at symbolic, discursive and institutional levels. In the conclusion part the strengths and weaknesses of these two points of views in explaining the significance of 1965 diaspora's activities will be briefly discussed and a necessity for more in-depth research and analysis of these events within the context of Turco-Armenian inter-communal relations will be mentioned.

CONCEPTUALIZING DIASPORAS AND DIASPORA POLITICS

As emphasized by Gabriel Sheffer diaspora phenomenon was not a subject of academic inquiry until late 1980s.² Nevertheless

² Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics At Home Abroad*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 4-5

from 1990s onwards there has been a proliferated literature on the study of diasporas. As the theoretical debates on the issues of survival, revival, growth and persistence of diasporas and diasporism were heated in 1990s, the efforts towards developing a precise and comprehensive definition of diaspora increased. Within this context, different aspects of diasporic formations have been analyzed in order to reach a common discursive formulation in defining and understanding these formations.

Despite these efforts, it seems still too early to speak of conceptual clarity and scholarly consensus regarding the use and content of the term *diaspora*. While some scholars prefer to develop a more broadened and extensive definition of diaspora, others try to set more specific criteria in defining the nature and origins of the diasporic formations. Exerting an all-inclusive understanding of the term *diaspora*, Tololyan for instance conceptualize the term in its broadest sense, to include immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community, overseas community and even ethnic communities.³ Nevertheless such broad definitions seem to lead more specific questions regarding the nature, origin, structure, and patterns of external and internal interactions of the diasporic formations. These questions lead scholars from different disciplines of social sciences to define diaspora in more specific terms. In this respect, different aspects of diasporic formations have been analyzed more deliberately by referring to a variety of research questions within the contexts of sociological, political, anthropological, cultural inquiries.

Within this framework, Ibrahim G. Aoude for instance, stresses the dilemmas of multiple identities among the members of diasporic communities by basing on the studies of De Vos and Romanucci-Ros on ethnic identity and ethnic pluralism.⁴ Scholars such as Hall, Brah and Soysal also provide with the conceptual openings on the issues of identity and citizenship within the

³ Khachig Tololyan, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, 1991, pp.3-7 and also See Van Hear citation of Tololyan's definition in Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas : The mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998)

⁴ George A. De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, 'Ethnic Identity: A psychohistorical perspective' in George A. De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross (eds.) *Ethnic Identity: Creation, conflict and accommodation*, (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1995), p.356 and George De Vos, 'Ethnic pluralism: conflict and accommodation' in De Vos and Romanucci-Ross (eds.) *Ethnic Identity ...*, pp. 26-28

context of diasporic formations.⁵ Vertovec on the other hand puts emphasis on the issues of consciousness within the context of diaspora. He mainly focuses on the centrality of consciousness as a point of reference in the studies of diaspora.⁶ In another context of inquiry, Andre Levy, describes the diasporas through anthropological lenses as 'a powerful counterpoint to prominent theoretical concepts regarding cultural groups in anthropology'⁷ within the context of a scrambled shift from ethnicity towards diaspora. Such a shift from ethnicity towards diaspora is also evaluated by Anthias within discourse and conceptual frameworks of sociological inquiry.⁸

As mentioned above, while conceptualizing diasporic form of social organization in general terms most of the studies on diaspora put emphasis on common cultural and ethnic references, and references of identity and consciousness. These references seem to provide with necessary theoretical and conceptual points of departure for the growing scholarly efforts towards defining diaspora in more specific terms through exploring other components of diasporic formations.

Consequently, moving mainly from ethno-national character of diasporas while defining the nature of diasporic formations, Sheffer for instance, adds more specified references related to the origin, nature and structure of diaspora. Thus he describes the diaspora as a 'social-political formation created as a result of either voluntary or forced immigration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries by maintaining regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as homelands and with individual groups of the same background residing in other host countries'.⁹

- 5 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural identity and Diaspora' in J. Rutherford (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence, 1990), pp.222-238, Avtar. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities*, (London: Routledge 1996) and Y. N. Soysal 'Citizenship and Identity: living in Diaspora in post-war Europe?' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 23 No.1, 2000, pp. 1-15.
- 6 Steven Vertovec (1997) 'Three Meanings of 'Diaspora', exemplified among South Asian Religions', *Diaspora* Vol. 6 No.3: pp. 277-299.
- 7 Andre Levy, 'Diasporas through Anthropological Lenses: Contexts of Postmodernity', *Diaspora*, Vol. 9 No.1, 2000, p.137.
- 8 Floya Anthias, 'Evaluating Diaspora: Beyond Ethnicity', *Sociology*, No. 32, 1998, pp. 557-580.
- 9 Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics...*, p. 9

Pnina Werbner shares the view of Sheffer regarding the ethnic character of diaspora but expresses this characteristic as ethno-parochial.¹⁰ Inspired by Benedict Anderson she defines diasporas as 'deterritorialized imagined communities which conceive of themselves as sharing a collective past and common destiny, and hence also a simultaneity in time'.¹¹ Chaliand and Rageau, on the other hand, oppose the idea of reducing diaspora to ethno-national or ethno-parochial formations. They argue that diaspora can well be a religious group in its nature.¹²

Apart from the studies about the nature of the diasporas and the ethno-religious characteristics of diasporic communities; a considerable amount of literature on diaspora seem to be centered around the controversial issues such as origins of diasporas, their intra-communal organization and relationships and their connections with the homeland and host countries.

Regarding the origins of diasporic formations Tambiah, for example, asserts two different sources of diasporic communities: 'Voluntary migration of groups of peoples, mostly with useful occupational skills in search of better economic opportunities and standard of life elsewhere and (i)nvuntary displacement of people running away from political turmoil and wars, or refuge from natural disaster in their country'.¹³ Chaliand and Rageau on the other hand diverge from this multiple source understanding and they consider the 'forced dispersion' caused by politically oriented disaster as the essential component of being a diaspora. Within the context of Armenian communities, Beledian, like Chaliand and Rageau, focuses on the forced and tragic character of dispersion while implementing the definition of diaspora to Armenian case. He makes a distinction between the *kaghuts*, which consist of people who left their homeland for economic reasons and the diaspora, which has the dispersion as a point of departure.¹⁴ Tololyan on the other hand, opposes to designating

¹⁰ Pnina Werbner, 'The place which is diaspora: citizenship, religion and gender in the making of chaotic transnationalism' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 28, No.1, January 2002, p. 120

¹¹ Werbner, 'The place which is diaspora...', p. 121.

¹² Gerard Chaliand and Jean -Paul Rageau, *The Penguin atlas of diasporas*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995), p.24.

¹³ S. Tambiah, 'Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernities', *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol.129, No.1, Winter 2000.

¹⁴ Krikor Beledian, 'Fresh Perspectives on Armenia-Diaspora Relations' conversation with Armenian daily Haratch at <http://www.gomidias.org/forum/af3c.htm>

1915 as the origin of the diaspora by arguing that dispersion has not solely taken place within the context of World War I but 'it has been part of the Armenian reality for centuries'.¹⁵

Another controversial issue seems to be the bases of intra-communal unity and organization of the diasporas. Within this context, as mentioned by Marina Oussatcheva main focus of emphasis is centered around the 'subjective' core of diasporic existence (which includes issues of collective memories, religious beliefs, national traditions, historical myths, diasporic consciousness, discourses of diasporan identity)¹⁶ and objective core of diasporic organization (which is more related to the mechanisms of self-management, educational, cultural, political, and economic organizations).¹⁷

Finally the relationship of diasporas with the host countries and the homeland appears as an important component of diasporic formation. While some scholars consider the aspiration to return to homeland as a crucial feature of diasporic experience, some others argue that not all diasporic people wish to return their homelands.¹⁸ In Armenian case, Pattie attracts the attention to the dual relationship of the Armenian diaspora between the feelings of longing a lost homeland and aspirations to integrate into the host country.¹⁹ In this respect, since 'Armenian homeland and the desired Armenian nation-state do not totally overlap',²⁰ Pattie's remarks on the dual relationship becomes more significant in understanding the attitudes of members of Armenian diaspora while positioning themselves in its relationships with the homeland and the host country.

These discussions regarding the common features of diasporic formations seem to reach a broadly precise level in Safran's

¹⁵ Khachig Tololyan 'Fresh Perspectives...'

¹⁶ Marina Oussatcheva , 'Institutions in Diaspora: The Case of Armenian Community in Russia', Working Papers of the Transnational Communities Programme at Oxford University, 2001, WPTC-01-09, at <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/WPTC-01-09%20Marina.doc.pdf>

¹⁷ Oussatcheva , 'Institutions in...'

¹⁸ For detailed discussion see debates raised by William Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Diaspora*, Issue 1, 1991, pp. 83-99; Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, 'Diaspora: Generation and Ground of Jewish Identity', *Critical Inquiry*, Issue 19 1993, pp. 693-725 and Andre Levy, 'Diasporas through...'

¹⁹ See Susan P. Pattie *Faith in history: Armenians rebuilding community*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997) and Susan P. Pattie, 'Longing and Belonging: Issues of Homeland in the Armenian Diaspora', Working Papers of the Transnational Communities Programme (WPTC 99-11), <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/pattie.pdf> 1999 at

²⁰ Levy 'Diasporas through...'

conceptualization of diasporas. Safran puts forward the features of a diaspora as 'dispersion from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral', or foreign, regions'; retaining a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland feeling of partial alienation and insulation from host countries; tendency of return to ancestral homeland and definition of an ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity by the attachment to this ancestral homeland.²¹

Basing partly on the Safran's definition, Robin Cohen presents one of the most comprehensive and precise conceptual frameworks about the common features of the form of socio-political organization, which could be called as diaspora.

For Robin Cohen,

'diasporas exhibit several of following features: 1. dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically 2. alternatively the expansion from homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions 3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland 4. an idealization of the supposed ancestral home 5. a return movement 6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time 7. a troubled relationship with host societies 8. a sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries and the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in tolerant host countries'.²²

Classifying the Armenian Diaspora as a victim diaspora, Cohen argues that Armenian diaspora conforms well to the general features of the diaspora.²³ For Cohen, by definition it is possible to see the components of diasporic formation in the Armenian social organization such as involuntary migration, collective memory and myth about the homeland, its location and its achievements; and the wish and solidarity for maintaining the safety and prosperity of their homelands; a strong ethnic consciousness; a sense of empathy with other co-ethnic members and creative and enriching life in tolerant host countries.²⁴

²¹ William Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Diaspora*, Vol.1 No.1, 1991, pp. 83-99.

²² Robin Cohen, 'Diasporas and the nation-state: from victims to challengers', *International Affairs*, Vol.72, No.3, 1996, p. 515.

²³ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, (London: University College London Press, 1997), pp. 54-55.

²⁴ Cohen, *Global Diasporas...*

I would argue that most of these characteristics were absent in the definition of the Armenian groupings prior to 1965 events and they did not result in immediate consolidation of diasporic identity among the Armenian communities even after this so-called turning point due to particularities of these communities and the differences in the nature of their relationship with the host countries. Nevertheless, 1965 events played a remarkable role in mobilizing the Armenian masses on the basis of hostility towards a common enemy and collective memory on the pains of the past. In fact, from 1965 events onwards, the idea and discourse of struggle against a common enemy has become a unifying factor and thus basis of diasporic identity formation among the dispersed Armenian communities. Within this framework, the 1965 events served to initiate discursive and activist efforts in order to spread the feeling of co-responsibility²⁵ and unity among the members of Armenian communities and institutions to participate in this regenerated antagonistic political activism. In that respect, these events served the promotion of the discursive formation for a struggle against Turkey, which later on would be used in order to legitimize the diasporic militancy and terrorism for achieving diasporan political and ideological goals. Since the identity of diaspora became excessively associated with the hostility towards Turkey, the end of struggle could even bring about important diasporic identity crisis among the Armenian communities, which were connected to each other with the feeling of their co-responsibility in this struggle.

DIASPORA POLITICS

Although diaspora is generally considered as 'a social-political formation'²⁶ and a 'transnational network of dispersed political subjects'²⁷ by its nature and definition; political dimension of diaspora phenomenon has not been a separate field of study 'due to lack of in-depth analyses and comprehensive theoretical and comparative debates on the aspects of politics of diasporic formations'.²⁸ For Sheffer, diaspora politics is mainly about

²⁵ Werbner, 'The place which is diaspora...', p. 121.

²⁶ Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics At Home Abroad*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 9.

²⁷ Werbner, 'The place ...' p. 121.

²⁸ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics* ... p. 5.

'political struggles of dispersed ethnic groups permanently residing in host countries away from their homelands, to maintain their distinctive identities and connections with their homelands and other dispersed groups from the same nations.'²⁹ Although it is not a comprehensive definition of diaspora politics, one may derive different aspects of this term from the research questions raised in both Sheffer's study and in the growing literature on diaspora politics. In this respect it is possible to argue that diaspora politics cover political aspects of diasporan identity; political behaviors of collectives and individuals in formation and persistence of diaspora; political organizational structure of diaspora; political strategies and tactics of diaspora's political institutions in order to achieve diasporan interests;³⁰ functions of diaspora's political organizations and their influence in the political spheres of their homelands and host countries; possibilities of trans-state political systems based on diasporic political formations; and diaspora's political unrest or militancy and its implications for chaotic world order.³¹

Portraying diasporas as constellations of political actions and as projects rather than congealed totalities, Mudimbe and Engel mention the tendencies of diasporas to modify the internal and external hierarchies of countries as well as their historicities.³² For Rachel Anderson Paul, these political actions, which stimulate the members of the diaspora are formed and mobilized through the use of religion and historical group trauma.³³ Jolanta Drzewicka develops the debate further and argues that constitutive rhetoric of diasporic collectivities, which used to reinvent diasporic identities, mainly aims to legitimate certain forms collective power and action,³⁴ which would certainly have political implications. In

²⁹ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics...* p. 7.

³⁰ For power relations and political strategies of diaspora, See Khachig Tölölyan, 'Rethinking diaspora(s): stateless power in the transnational moment'. *Diaspora*, Spring 1996, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 3-36; M. Weiner, *Security, Stability and international Migration*, Cambridge MA: MIT, Center for International Studies, 1990, pp. 4-14.

³¹ For different examples of militancy and political unrest of diasporas See D. S. Tatla, *The Sikh Diaspora: The Search for Statehood*, (London:UCL Press, 1999); Joseph Nye, 'The Self-Determination Trap?' in *The Washington Post*, May, 12, 1993; Oivind Fuglerud 'Time and space in the Sri Lanka-Tamil diaspora', *Nations and Nationalism* Vol. 7 No. 2, 2001, pp. 195-213;

³² V. Mudimbe and S. Engel, *Introduction* in Mudimbe, V., Engel, S. (eds), *Diaspora and Immigration*, The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue winter/Spring, Vol. 98, No. 1-2, 1999 .

³³ Rachel Anderson Paul, 'Grassroots Mobilization and Diaspora Politics: Armenian Interest Groups and the Role of Collective Memory', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol.6, No.1, Spring 2000, p. 24

³⁴ Jolanta A. Drzewicka, 'Reinventing and Contesting Identities in Constitutive Discourses: Between Diaspora and Its Others', *Communication Quarterly*, Vol.50, Issue 1, 2002, pp. 1-23.

such a context discourses of diasporic identity and consciousness become important components of power relationships or struggles between the collective 'we' on the one side ' the host countries' and the 'common enemy' on the other side. Basing on the Clifford's arguments on negative and positive constitution of diaspora consciousness,³⁵ Ibrahim Aoude also marks the link between production of diaspora consciousness and 'a struggle'.³⁶ In this respect, existence of a common enemy is argued to consolidate the diaspora consciousness and help members of dispersed groupings in resolving their conceptualization of 'us' and 'other' within the context of a common struggle.

While defining the diasporic politics, Tololyan seems to neglect the weight of political culture of struggle and the political discourse of hatred against the common enemy in Armenian diasporic politics. He argues, 'Armenian diasporic politics often involves status, persuasion, the courting of constituencies into joining community institutions, and the shaping of the consciousness, commitment and loyalty of both militant cadres and lukewarm supporters'.³⁷ For him, these politics involve rarely repressive diasporic apparatuses while predominantly and always can involve ideological diasporic apparatuses'.³⁸ Such an approach seems to underestimate the substance of the power of militant cadres and their violent attitudes within the context of Armenian diaspora politics. In the following parts of this article, diaspora politics will mainly refer to all political or politically effective activities organized by the political or non-political actors of diaspora to influence the political events in the host countries, which may have an effect on the diaspora. As it will be evaluated below, in the case of Armenian diaspora, from 1965 to the late 1980s these activities seem to be formulated and practiced in order to serve a struggle against a common enemy.

³⁵ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 256.

³⁶ Ibrahim G. Aoude, 'Maintaining Culture, Reclaiming Identity: Palestinian Lives in the Diaspora', *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 25, No.2, 2001, p. 163.

³⁷ Khachig Tololyan, 'Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation' in *Diaspora* Vol. 9, No.1, 200, p.127

³⁸ Tololyan, 'Elites and...'

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1965 EVENTS FOR ARMENIAN DIASPORA POLITICS

By many Armenian scholars, 1965 events are accepted as a turning point in terms of redefining the Armenian diasporan identity and revitalization of Diaspora politics. Regarding the redefinition of Armenian diasporan identity, the 1965 events

1965 events were important for Armenian Diaspora in order to provide necessary discursive, organizational and institutional grounds for maintaining two important components of diasporic identity: collective memory and ethnic consciousness.

aimed at mobilizing disconnected Armenian communities and their institutions to gather around the collective memory of deportation and against the 'common enemy' in order to express an aspiration towards unification under a cohesive and all-inclusive Armenian identity. By means of doing that, in Bakalian's words, it would be possible to accelerate the process 'from being to feeling Armenian'.³⁹ In line

with this, by putting emphasis on 50th anniversary of 'dispersal from an original homeland'⁴⁰ in 1965, the Armenian Diaspora outside Turkey tried to consolidate the diasporic identity all over the world. In this respect, 1965 events were important for Armenian Diaspora in order to provide necessary discursive, organizational and institutional grounds for maintaining two important components of diasporic identity: collective memory and ethnic consciousness.

Consequently, reactivated propaganda which was mainly based on symbols of collective memory and ethnic consciousness and other efforts towards consolidation of group identity seemed to play a significant role in the emergence and activation of Diaspora politics among the Armenian groups all around the world. Within this context, Hovanissian, for instance, stresses the importance of 1965 for the revival of Armenian activism. For him, 'it was not until 1965 that the politically fragmented Armenian diaspora drew

³⁹ See A. Bakalian, *Armenian Americans: From Being to feeling Armenian* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

⁴⁰ Cohen, 'Diasporas and the nation-state...' p. 515

together sufficiently for a united commemoration'.⁴¹ He argues that only after 1965 the Armenians began to externalize their concerns in a politically more organized way.

Tololyan on the other hand focuses on the shifts that affected the transformation of worldwide Armenian community into a diasporic socio-economic and political formation after 1965. Socio-political shifts which took place in Armenian community's concerns and worldwide relationships following 1965 events at different levels, brought about new dynamics leading emergence of an inclusive political sphere for the Armenian communities. These shifts played an important role in the politicization of Armenian people around the world within the context of redefined patterns and discourses of community. Shifts at discursive level created the necessary discursive grounds for emergence, consolidation and politicization of Armenian diasporic identity. In this line, for instance, despite the fact that the word *diaspora* began to be used prior to 1965; the 'discursive turn from exile to diaspora'⁴² began to be politically habituated only after 1965. Two important features of diaspora collective memory and ethnic group consciousness started to be politically regenerated and mobilized within the discursive context of Armenian Diaspora rather than of Armenian exilic nationalism. In fact the discourse of diaspora included some of the discursive components of exilic nationalism but it could not be simply reduced to this discursive formation. As the diaspora's sense of permanency and homeland orientation began to be strengthened at discursive level, diaspora's institutions were given 'a renewed *raison d'être* for mobilization while at the same time facilitating the emergence of alternative discourses and institutions.'⁴³

In this respect an important shift was experienced in the institutional structure of Armenian community. Leading institutions of the Armenian community, the Church, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) or Dashnaktzutiun, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Armenian General Benevolent Union and other institutions were tried to be reorganized within the context of a diasporic institutionalization. Although this institutionalization

⁴¹ Richard G. Hovannisian, 'Etiology and Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide' in George J. Andreopoulos (ed.) *Genocide : conceptual and historical dimensions*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) p.128 or at <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/history/centers/armenian/source104.html>

⁴² Khachig Tolbolyan 'Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation' in *Diaspora* 9:1 2000, p. 120.

⁴³ Armen Gakavian, 'Armenian Diasporan Identity Reimagined..

was necessary in order to produce and disseminate the image of community, diasporan culture and consciousness, in Armenian case it was not easy to achieve it in a short period of time due to the particularities and differences of the dispersed Armenian communities living or being adopted to different socio-political and cultural environments in different countries. In fact, even in a single country, France for example, it was possible to speak of a division among the Armenians who have different cultural, economic and political backgrounds.⁴⁴ Thus the institutions of Armenian community, which used to have conflicting ideological among themselves had to find a common ground that would lead them to overcome the political and ideological rivalries among themselves and to unify the Armenian communities within a diasporic structure. This common ground was provided by fueling the hostility against Turkey and through targeting Turkish state as the sole blameworthy for all disasters that have hit the Armenian community. In this respect political conduct of hatred towards the common enemy was expected to undermine the ideological differences among the leading institutions of Armenian community. The cooperation among the ideologically dissimilar Armenian institutions during the organization of 1965 demonstrations indicated the initial signs of such an expectation.

Political culture of struggle and hostility, which was based on the idea of institutionalizing hatred against Turkey brought together even ideologically antithetical Armenian bourgeoisie of the Western countries and the socialist comrades of homeland Armenia via exerting augmented emphasis on the perception of a common threat. Within this context, diaspora's orientation of homeland went along with the outbreak of nationalism in the homeland Armenia.⁴⁵ For Gakavian, the year 1965 was significant for the re-awakening in the homeland Armenia as well as for the

⁴⁴ As Samim Akgonul quotes from Ter Minassian Anahide, 'There are lots of differences separating Armenian origin Frenchs from each other...: The Armenian bourgeoisie, assimilated in French middle class, who are Lebanon, Iran, and Istanbul originated, speaking Armenian but at the same time cosmopolitans; Turkish and Kurdish speaking Anatolian Armenians from labour class who are conservative Christians and are not related to their past anymore, and get stuck in the social dwellings of of the suburbs like Arnouville, Alfortville, Issy-les-Moulineaux; 'old' Armenians coming from important Armenian cities like Beirut, Damascus and Algeria have devoted their lives to their identity and their language and they are militants of Armenian claim' See, Samim Akgonul, 'The Armenian Community of France and Turkey: Propaganda and Lobbyism', *Review of Armenian Studies*, Volume 1, No. 3, 2003, pp.61-62 and Ter Minassian Anahide, 'Les Armeniens de Paris depuis 1945', *Les Paris des etrangers*, (Paris:Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994), pp. 205-239.

⁴⁵ See Gakavian 'Armenian Diasporan...' and Tololyan K. 'Elites and Institutions...'

reimagination of diasporan identity.⁴⁶ In fact, spring of 1965 witnessed the climax of new ethnic nationalism, which would challenge the 'official nationalism' exerted by the USSR in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. This challenge would be practiced through the 'new opportunity structures' (which were triggered mostly by the 1965 events) 'for more public expressions of ethnic Armenian nationalism in the USSR'.⁴⁷ Hovannisian considers these events noteworthy in terms of national politics in the homeland Armenia as well. For him, demonstrations held in Soviet Armenia, which were fueled by the commemoration activities in the Armenian Diaspora, signified a form of restitution at national level⁴⁸ in domestic politics. In that sense it may well be argued that 1965 events became instrumental for the Armenian political circles in Soviet Armenia as means of domestic politics in mobilizing the masses. As more crystallized in 1966, the main goal of some political actors of Armenian political sphere such as (National Unity Party) and of the masses who were organized through demonstrations appeared to be 'the return of the 'Turkish Armenian' lands'' and a united and independent Armenia which would solve the Armenian question via incorporating all the lost territories in Azerbaijan and Turkey.⁴⁹ Within this context, Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic claimed leadership in uniting, assembling and organizing the diaspora toward a united purpose and activities against the common enemy.

As the vitalization of understanding of 'common enemy' promoted the necessary discursive grounds for the unity, another shift was observed in the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland Armenia that would serve diaspora's transformation. Notwithstanding the clashes and conflicts between the leading political circles of Armenia and the leading diaspora institutions over the governance of structured diasporic life,⁵⁰ after 1965 the diaspora and the homeland Armenia developed mutual relationship on the basis of unity and achieving the common goals. As mentioned above the unifying factor appeared to be the 'common enemy', which would serve political purposes of both institutions of Armenian diaspora and political circles in Armenia

46 Gakavian 'Armenian Diasporan...'

47 Gakavian 'Armenian Diasporan...'

48 Hovannisian, 'Etiology and...'

49 Gakavian 'Armenian Diasporan...'

50 Tololyan 'Elites and Institutions ...' p. 121

without causing an intra-communal conflict. Thus both diaspora politics and domestic politics of Armenia were organized to pursue a struggle against this 'common enemy' at national and international levels. Consequently, from 1965 onwards Turkey became a 'rallying point of diasporic political activity'⁵¹ in the forms of 'both discursive and organizational struggle'⁵² -which would later on lead emergence of Armenian terrorism at its extremes-.

Within the framework of this struggle Turkey and Turkish state began to be defined as 'blameworthy' 'the other' against the idea of 'victimized' 'us', which would include both diasporan and homeland Armenians. In this line, Armenian masses began to be mobilized to define themselves against this 'other'. The idea of a struggle against the 'common enemy' was endorsed in order to consolidate the solidarity among the different Armenian communities all around the world. Development of a mythically enriched diasporic history was promoted in order to support the diasporic identity formation through the intense emphasis on the myths and unrealistic plans for regaining the historically important mythical symbols located in the historical 'original homeland'. This process was sustained by a discourse of survival, which was mainly based on the sense of dispossession, vulnerability and nostalgia developed in parallel to development of strongly conservative and ethnocentric understanding of identity. In fact, such a discourse which, for Oshagan, was rooted in the ideas of preservation of 'Armenianness, the Armenian spirit, the need for resistance to assimilation and fight for survival' turned out to be a 'chronic malaise (that lead spread of) intolerance, xenophobia, authoritarianism, sexism and purism' in Armenian community'.⁵³ More significantly in political terms, this discourse cultivated the 'fear and the hatred of the Turk' and 'turned these feelings to almost obsessive feelings'⁵⁴ among the Armenian communities. In this respect, was not be a surprise that such a discourse of hatred would soon begin to provide necessary legitimizing discursive grounds for terrorist activism which was not prevented (when not

51 Tololyan 'Elites and Institutions...' p. 121

52 Tololyan 'Elites and Institutions...' p. 121

53 Vahe Oshagan, 'Cultural and Literary Awakening of Western Armenians, 1789-1915', *Armenian Review*, Vol.36, No.3-143, Autumn 1983, pp. 57-70.

54 Oshagan, 'Cultural and...'

supported) by the institutions, elites or ordinary members of Armenian diaspora.⁵⁵

TURKISH ARMENIANS AND THE 1965 EVENTS

' Turkish Armenians perceive themselves as integral part of this country. Thus they would never accept any act against the interest of this country'⁵⁶

'Every Armenian in Turkey grows up with three elements in his personality: being a Turkish citizen... then his heritage as an Armenian... and then his faith as a Christian in a country which is overwhelmingly 99% Moslem.'... 'The Armenians of Istanbul are not part of the Diaspora, we are natives of this land...we were here even before the Ottoman Empire,' said Mutafyan, backed by pictures of Jesus and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey' (...)'Our future history should not be blocked by events of the past.'⁵⁷

As explicitly emphasized by two patriarchs of Turkish Armenians with 30 years time difference both Sınork I Kalusdyan and Mesrob Mutafyan, archbishops and patriarchs of Turkey's Armenians in 1965 and late 1990s, it is not adequate to consider the Armenian citizens of Turkey as a part of Armenian diasporic community even in 1990s. Despite the fact that they share common religious and cultural values and heritage with the diasporic community, Turkey's Armenians preferred to keep a

⁵⁵ Various accounts of the relationship between the Armenian diaspora in Britain, France, the US and Australia and terrorist activism have provided by Sedat Laçiner, Şenol Kantarcı, Kamer Kasım and Samim Akgonul. In British Armenian case, Laçiner argues, 'the Armenian radicals politicized the Armenian schools and the cultural, religious and social activities...' [in order not to] 'allow the Armenians to end the communal hatred'. In this respect, although the Armenians in Britain did not participate in terrorist activism before the 1970s, anti-Turkish feelings became an inseparable part of the Armenian identity. Kantarcı on the other hand mentions the years between 1965-1980 by stressing the emphasis between the terrorist activism and the other aspects of activism (such as lobbyism) among the Armenian diaspora in the United States. In Australian case, Kasım puts mentions the support of Australia based political organizations to the terrorist activism. Finally Akgonul puts emphasis on the efforts of the Armenian diasporic associations in France to form public opinion for terrorist activism. For detailed accounts of these discussions see Sedat Laçiner, 'Armenian Diaspora in Britain and the Armenian Question' *Armenian Studies/Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol 1, No. 3, September-October-November, 2001, pp.234-259 Şenol Kantarcı, 'Ermeni Lobisi: ABD'de Ermeni Diasporası'nın Oluşması ve Lobi Faaliyetleri,' *Armenian Studies*, Issue: 1 (March-April-May), (Ankara 2001), pp. 139-169, Akgonul 'The Armenian Community of France...' Kamer Kasım, 'Armenian Community In Australia', *Armenian Studies/Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 3 September-October-November, 2001 pp. 305-320,

⁵⁶ *Hürriyet*, 'Ermeni patrikliği Memleket Menfaatine Aykırı Bir Hareketi Tasvip Etmiyor', 10 April 1965

⁵⁷ Turkey's Armenians caught in crossfire by Reuters, June 7, 1998 at <http://www.atour.com/news/international/20000531i.html>

distance with the Armenian communities settled in the other countries especially in the issues regarding the diaspora politics. In that respect, they did not involve in diaspora politics, which was mainly based on the hate speech and discourse of hostility and struggle against Turkey and its representative institutions. On the contrary, they positioned against any political attempt that could harm Turkey and Turkish state.

For Cohen, a strong attachment to the past or block to assimilation in the present and future must exist in order to permit a diasporic consciousness to emerge or to be retained.⁵⁸ For Turkish Armenians this premise was not valid. They were not attached strongly to past. On the contrary, they were not comfortable about the repetition of old claims and confrontational attitudes in dealing with the problematic questions of the past. They believed that such attitudes would deepen the hostilities between the two nations globally and locally. In that respect, in Turkish Armenian case, the ideas of exclusive citizenship, linguistic conformity, political, obedience, devotion to nation-state, love to the country and reverence to the country's institutions⁵⁹ did not clash with the will and acts of preserving cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of the community.

Common belief among the Turkish Armenians, who presented their views in the forums of public discourse in Turkey seemed to be that the 1965 events were directly connected to international politics and particularly with the Cyprus issue and renewed claims of land by Armenian nationalists. Consequently, Turkish Armenians evaluated the 1965 events within the framework of these two interrelated regional and international issue area, which had significant domestic implications for Turkey.

First issue area was Cyprus, in which Greek Cypriot political elite tried to manipulate Armenian case and community⁶⁰ in their propaganda campaigns against Turkey in order to gain international backing for their policies in the island. In fact, according to the news reports, which appeared in Turkish media, Greek Cypriot administration had supported the ceremonies for

⁵⁸ Robin Cohen, 'Diasporas and the nation-state: from victims to challengers' in *International Affairs* Vol.72, No. 3, pp.507-520, 1996, p. 517.

⁵⁹ Robin Cohen, (1996) 'Diasporas and the nation-state...'

⁶⁰ For views on Armenian Cypriots, see Ahmet An, 'Kıbrıs Ermenileri', *Tarih ve Toplum*, October 2000, Vol.34, No. 202, pp.26-30. (Turkish), Berrin Okan, 'Kıbrıs- Ermeniler- Enosisçiler', *Türk Kültürü*, No. 215-216, September-October, 1980, pp. 37-48.

anniversary of deportation, which was organized in Lefkose, in 24 April 1965 under the patronage of Kleridis, president of Council of Greek Cypriot Representatives.⁶¹ Establishment of Armenian National Committee Greece in 1965, which would maintain offices in various cities of Greece⁶² could also be perceived as a sign of probable strategic alliance between the Greek authorities and newly emerging institutional establishment of Armenian diaspora against a common enemy. In this sense this linkage between Cyprus issue and activation of diaspora politics was widely expressed among the members of Turkish Armenian community. In fact one of the main concerns of the Turkish Armenian community was that the Armenian diaspora was used as a political tool by the external political circles such as Greece and Greek Cypriots which were hostile to Turkey in order to reach their political goals within the context of international politics. Within this context, marking the linkage between the Cyprus issue and the Armenian diaspora's anti-Turkey demonstrations abroad, Berc Turan, a former senator of Turkish republic, of Armenian origin argued in a news article that these demonstrations were manipulated by the sides to the Cyprus issue in order to detach the attention of international public opinion from the inhuman behaviors exerted by the Greek Cypriots in the island and to support their illegitimate claims for annexation of whole Cyprus.⁶³

Regarding the second issue, outbreak of nationalism in Soviet Armenia and elsewhere (especially in Lebanon) led homeland Armenia and other militant political groupings of Armenian community abroad to involve more in newly emerging Armenian diaspora politics and even to claim the leadership within diaspora's growing political sphere. This nationalist political activism was accompanied by claims for the lands from eastern part of Turkey. These claims were sounded especially by the political and intellectual elite of Lebanese Armenians in cooperation with the political circles in Soviet Armenia. In fact,

⁶¹ *Dünya*, 'Ermeniler: <<Rum baskısı altındayız>>', 27 April 1965, p. 1 and p. 7.

⁶² As mentioned in at its website as well, The A.N.C.G. is the official political institution that represents the Armenian Diaspora. Its fundamental goal is the notification of the Armenian Cause in International level. The A.N.C.G. represents the Armenian Community with its presence in various political events and its opinions represent collectively the political claims of Armenians. The actions of the Armenian National Committee and accordingly of the A.N.C.G. are oriented to the direction of the promotion and resolution of the Armenian Cause, and to the direction of enforcing the newly established Republic of Armenia. For more detailed information see, http://www.ancg.org/english/index_en.htm

⁶³ *Haber*, 'Kıbrıs Davası, Ermeni asıllı Türkler ve otesi..'1 April 1965 .

Armenian community in Lebanon was the most militant and politically active Armenian community among the others.⁶⁴ It was because of this fact that the demonstrations, which were held in Beirut took place with participation of more people and religious representatives of Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Armenian communities, notables, and members of parliament than other demonstrations which were held in the U.S. and France. Apart from that, various Lebanese institutions, which were bound to Hinchak, Tashnak, and Ramgavar parties were reported to launch a world-wide campaign regarding the 'Armenian rights'.⁶⁵ Discourse of hostility towards Turkey was obvious in the language of demonstrations expressed in both speeches and brochures delivered in the acts of political struggle.

Thus, the members of Turkish Armenian community did not welcome the 1965 events and they were not attracted to the symbolic and discursive significance of these events in Armenian diaspora politics. On the contrary they perceived these activities as a source of hostilities, which would harm both sides. Interpreting these issues within the national and international contexts, the reactionary responses of the Turkish Armenians against the diaspora's political acts within the context of commemoration took place at symbolic, discursive, and institutional levels. Immediate response of the Turkish Armenian community was to declare detachment of the community from the political activities, which were organized and put into practice by some groups within the Armenian diaspora.

At symbolic level, Turkish Armenians organized demonstrations and put flowers to the Monument of Republic on 24 April 1965 as a sign of protest against the campaign conducted by some groups within Armenian community targeting Turkey. Berc Turan, a former senator of Turkish Republic, of Armenian origin, wrote to the notebook in the monument that Turkish Armenians were sharing a unified faith to future and feeling of solidarity with their

⁶⁴ For detailed analysis of Armenian Diaspora in Lebanon, See, Erdal Ilter, 'Lübnan'da Ermeni Diasporası' *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol.3, September- October-November 2001; Hratch Bedoyan, 'The Social, Political and Religious Structure of the Armenian Community in Lebanon,' *The Armenian Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2/126 (June 1979). Levon H. Melikian,.; Aghop De Karapetian, 'Personality Change over time: Assimilation of Ethnic Minority in Lebanon,' *Journal of Social Psychology*, December 1977, Vol. 103 Issue 2, pp. 185-192 Aghop H. Der-Karabetian, 'Image and Self-Image of Armenians in Lebanon: A Psychosocial Perspective,' *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, (Ed.: Richard G. Hovannisian), (Malibu, California 1981), pp. 241-249

⁶⁵ *Vatan*, 'Türkiye aleyhinde Ermenilerin faaliyeti arttı', 29 March 1965, p. 1 and p. 5.

Muslim brethren in the Republic of Turkey which was established under the leadership of Ataturk and which would eternally survive.⁶⁶ Yervart Bezaz who was interviewed as the representative of the protestor Turkish Armenian group in Istanbul, stated that this symbolic act was a sign of their loyalty to Turkey which indicated Turkish Armenians reaction in response to the destructive propaganda conducted by the Armenian communities abroad against their countries.⁶⁷ Representatives' references to the Turkishness,⁶⁸ being the children of Ataturk, and solidarity with their Muslim brethren⁶⁹ further consolidated symbolic significance of such acts. Additionally, the support of Armenian Patriarch⁷⁰ to such meetings further added a symbolic significance to such counteractions at institutional level among the Turkish Armenian community.

At discursive level, the members of Turkish Armenian community developed a common public discourse based on distancing from the discourse of hostility towards Turkey initiated by Armenian Diasporic formation. Consisting of a strong sentiments of protest against the political acts of diaspora this discourse seemed to put forward that Turkish Armenians were deprived of these activities which also claimed to represent the feelings and thoughts of Turkish Armenian community. At discursive level, the members of Turkish Armenian community who were interviewed by Turkish press in the eve and afterwards of the events, made a clear-cut separation between the Turkish Armenians and the others. While doing this separation they put emphasis either on their distinctiveness on the basis of Turkish citizenship or their Turkishness. Thus since the 1965 events mainly targeted Turkey and since Turkish Armenians were integral part of this country they could not be associated with the ones who attacked Turkey on behalf of a diasporic formation. They argue that the organizers of such events did not have any rights to represent the Turkish Armenian community, whose members had

⁶⁶ *Haber*, 'Ermeni vatandaşlar anıta celenk koydu', 25 April 1965, p. 1 and p. 7.

⁶⁷ *Ulus*, 'Ermeniler Dun Cumhuriyet Anıtına Celenk Koydular', 25 April 1965, *Adalet*, 'Ermeniler dun Ata İn Anıtına celenk koydular', 25 April 1965.

⁶⁸ Many Turkish Armenians who presented their views in the press mentioned the references of Turkishness and Turkish citizenship along with the references to Armenianness. For different examples see *Yeni Istanbul*, 'Bize Bir Mektup Var', 20 April 1965.

⁶⁹ *Ulus*, 'Ermeniler... , *Adalet*, 'Ermeniler...

⁷⁰ *Ulus*, 'Ermeniler... *Adalet*, 'Ermeniler...,

been living in peace with the other segments of Turkish society on these lands.⁷¹

At institutional level, Turkish Armenian Patriarchy released a statement before the events took place at 10 April 1965 which protesting the provocations of Armenians abroad against Turkey. According to the declaration released by the Patriarchy, it was the right and duty of all people to commemorate their departed people. Nevertheless these ceremonies of respect should not cause or facilitate hostilities in the hearts of nations. In this respect, Patriarchy argued that, members of Turkish Armenian community who lived in the Republican Turkey and who were grown up under the guidance of Atatürk's principles had always proven that they were sincere, constructive and loyal citizens (of Turkey). The Patriarchy added that Turkish Armenians were happy to see the permanency of feelings of brotherhood and trust. In this respect, Patriarchy presented its belief that some of the religious brethren of Turkish Armenians who were settled in foreign countries did not have the right to shadow the bounds of love and respect. In this respect, Patriarchy, the highest representative of Turkish Armenians at institutional level was declaring that Turkish Armenians would not accept any act against the interest of Turkey.⁷²

Overall, putting emphasis on the destructive nature of the campaigns, which were launched by the Armenian diaspora against Turkey Turkish Armenians condemned such activities at symbolic, discursive and institutional levels. Evaluating the developments in an international context, they attracted the attention to the connections between these events and the political issues in international arena and thus underlined the role of international actors in provoking the Armenian diaspora in order to reach their strategic and political interests in international arena. Looking at the issue from national point of view, on the other hand, they mainly criticized the hatred speech and hostilities, which were raised by the Armenian diaspora, which they believed would exacerbate the relations between Turkish and Armenian nations rather than creating pressure on Turkey for any

⁷¹ See interviews conducted by Turkish daily Her Gun with Turkish Armenians from different socio-economic segments of Turkish society, namely Togo Acemoglu, Kalust Carcikciyan, Varujan Conkul, Surpik Seferyan, Mihran Saatci, Harutyun Eglence, in Her Gun, 24 April 1965, 'Turk Ermenileri: <<Bu Kotu niyetleri nefretle lanetliyoruz, Onlar bizden degildir>> dedi'

⁷² *Hürriyet*, 'Ermeni patrikligi

From Turkish Armenian point of view these events were nothing more than provocation and manipulation of Armenian communities by the foreign actors, particularly Soviet Russia, Greek Cypriots and the Greeks against Turkey in order to back their cases in regional and international politics.

would exceed the borders of a process of identity formation and would become a dangerous end in itself expressed in militant activism.

kind of concession. In this respect, they were anxious about the danger of feeding the feelings of hatred against Turkey, which could lead devastating implications in the inter-communal relationship. With a future oriented understanding their concern was to improve the relationship with Turkey and putting emphasis on the more positive components of Armenianness while constructing a common identity rather than establishing a political culture of struggle and discourse of hatred which

CONCLUSION

As elaborated in this article, the significance of 1965 events have been evaluated in different contexts from different points of view by stressing on different aspects of their implications within these contexts.

From diasporic Armenian point of view, 1965 events were initial steps of diasporic politics, which would serve emergence and consolidation of Armenian diasporic identity. From Turkish Armenian point of view these events were nothing more than provocation and manipulation of Armenian communities by the foreign actors, particularly Soviet Russia, Greek Cypriots and the Greeks against Turkey in order to back their cases in regional and international politics.

Both point of views seem to have strengths and weaknesses in understanding and reflecting the significance of 1965 events. Looking from the diasporic Armenian point of view, it may be argued that 1965 events were important as initial steps towards incorporating Armenian communities around the world into a form of diaspora politics. In that respect, the commemoration activities are supposed to play a vital role in the process of politicization of

isolated Armenian communities around the idea of unification for common political interests, which would be a crucial stage in formation of diasporic identity. Although it may be easy, from Armenian diasporic point of view, to conclude that the events of 1965 automatically facilitated Armenian diaspora identity formation; a taken for granted connection between 1965 political activities and diaspora identity formation can not simply explain either the evolution of Armenian diasporic identity or diaspora politics. In fact, content of the 1965 events also provides with the hints on the indecisiveness and diversity of Armenian diasporic groups in their strategies vis-à-vis Republican Turkey and its institutions within the context of political culture of struggle at the beginning. In this respect, rather than overemphasizing the importance of these events within the context of diaspora politics for propaganda purposes; their significance in Armenian diasporic transformation should be analyzed through comprehensive studies on the connections of these events to the international, regional and national contexts.

Another point, which has been missed in the arguments of Armenian diasporic perspective, is the lack of in-depth analysis regarding the nature and limits of politicization of diasporic identity and its probable implications on the inter-communal relations. As reducing political culture of diaspora politics simply to political culture of struggle and hatred against a common enemy would not serve to solve inter-communal problems, it may well result in deepening the hostilities, eradication of inter-communal communication channels and thus exacerbation of the relations. In this respect although it may provide necessary political means and discursive grounds for mobilizing the masses at the initial stage of diasporic identity formation process, such a reductionist attitude carries the danger of being transformed into the main and even only determinant of identity at the further stages. In fact, the experience of the newly emerging Armenian diasporic establishment which lost the track of hatred discourse and paved the way for its expressions in terrorist activism in 1970s following the heightening the politicization of hatred and hostilities after the spring of 1965, was a good example of such a transformation. Besides, significance of 1965 for Armenian diaspora politics (which has been repeatedly mentioned especially by scholars of Armenian diaspora) was shadowed due to the fact that the political mobilization, which was supposed to be utilized after these events could not be kept within the track of politics.

Thus the hatred culture and culture of struggle which was initially used as a mean to an end in mobilizing the masses and fueling political activism in diaspora politics soon became an end in itself and transformed into a diaspora militancy that would have destructive and traumatic implications in Turco-Armenian inter-communal relations.

Looking from the Turkish Armenian point of view on the other hand, (be it a pragmatic or a sincere discourse), it may be argued that Armenian communities were manipulated by the foreign actors in achieving their political and strategic interests in international and regional politics. In fact, considering the relations between Armenian diaspora and Greek, Greek Cypriot and Soviet Armenian administrations these arguments are remarkable in understanding and reflecting the nature and probable implications of 1965 events within regional and international contexts. Nevertheless, reducing the significance of 1965 events simply to provocations of hostile administrations may bring about underestimation of the implications of these events in the contexts of Armenian diasporic identity formation and diaspora politics.

A comprehensive analysis of significance of 1965 events can be done only by escaping from the weaknesses of these two clashing views and benefiting from the hints they may have provided about the various aspects of Turco-Armenian inter-communal relations. Avoiding the reductionist approaches it may be possible to utilize these empirical hints in a broader national, international and transnational contexts and thus to provide with a more comprehensive understanding about the nature of Turco-Armenian relations in general and Turkish-Armenian Diaspora relations in particular. In such a way it may well be possible to develop necessary discursive grounds not only to understand the significance of some events in Turco-Armenian relations in a broader context but also to provide a discursive change from the springs of hatred to the springs of hope.

WHO IS JUSTIFIED TO TALK ABOUT THE SO CALLED 'ARMENIAN GENOCIDE'

Assist. Prof. Dr. Yücel ACER*

Distortion of the past events is unavoidable in most cases simply because what happened in the past is widely depended on the writings of some insiders and statesmen, who are themselves directed by feelings and concerns. If historians comment on these writings with further preferences in their minds, the outcome is inevitably one-sided account of these events. Thus, rather than to explain truthfully the past to illuminate the now and future of us, the history is sometimes used in the hands of some as a tool of propaganda to manipulate the present and future world affairs for specific interests and purposes.

This seems to be fully justified by a recent book of Professor Howard Ball on war crimes issue. He is a professor of political science and university scholar at the University of Vermont (the USA). He is the author of twenty previous books, including 'A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America'; 'Hugo Black: Cold Steel Warrior'; and 'Justice Downwind: America's Atomic Testing Program in the 1950s'.

One of his recent works is published in 1999 under the title of 'Prosecuting War Crimes and Genocide, the Twentieth-Century Experience'.¹ The book gives an extensive account of the past and present as well as future status of international humanitarian law to the satisfaction of anyone who is to comprehend the rules and principles of warring since 1864.

Chapter I is titled as 'War Crimes and Genocide: 1899-1939'. It is certainly possible to trace back the origins of the laws and customs of war to the ancient times. He rightly emphasizes, however, that subjecting the war affairs to the constraints of legality is a fairly new phenomenon, which emerged in 1864. In explaining how the laws and customs of war have been developed and

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¹ Howard Ball, *Prosecuting War Crimes and Genocide, the Twentieth-Century Experience*, (Kansas: The University Press Kansas, 1999).

expanded even to cover internal conflicts in our time, he frequently refers to the horrors and miseries of wars as well as the reasons why wars have gradually become more destructive and costly especially on civilians and civil life.

Quite mysteriously, however, one particular emphasis in the review stands out so distinctively that an inevitable question comes to mind whether there is any particular reason for so much emphasis. Especially when he deals with the First World War, he pronounces the words 'Turkey' and 'Armenian Genocide' as many times as the words 'Germany' and 'German war crimes' despite the fact that it was Germans who were no doubt responsible for initiating the war itself and many atrocities committed. In most places, Germany and Turkey are referred to in the same sentences when it comes to reveal the war crimes of the First World War. Let us take his following observation as an example among many:

'The demand for war crimes trials grew out of alleged German and other Central Powers' violations of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907... Consequently, some of the victorious Allies (France, Great Britain, and Belgium), full of hatred toward Germany and its Central Power allies for their cruel behavior during the war (especially Turkey, whose Young Turk leaders ordered the mass deportation and genocide of over a million Turkish-Armenian Christians), included the demand for war crimes tribunals in the postwar diplomatic discussions that would lead to peace treaties formally ending the hostilities.'(p. 19)

In the context of the above observation, there is a bold expression of a professor of political science on what happened between the Turks and the Armenians. It is obviously too bold for a non-historian. Widely known to almost entire Turkish people at the present time that, let alone the issue of genocide, simply the number of the Turkish-Armenians who died during the war is full of controversies among the prominent historians.² It should be very difficult to comprehend why a non-historian could easily speak of a figure 'a million Turkish-Armenian Christians' without indicating even a source, which this figure originates from.

² Salahi R. Sonyel, *Turkey's Struggle for Liberation and the Armenians* (Ankara: SAM Papers, 2001), pp. 44-45; Yavuz Özgüldür, Ali Güler; Suat Akgül and Mesut Koroğlu, *Her Yönüyle Ermeni Sorunu (The Armenian Issue with All Aspects)*, (Ankara: KHO Yayınları, 2001), pp. 48-115; Azmi Süslü, Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, Refet Yinanç, Yusuf Hallaçoğlu, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler (Armenians in the Turkish History)* (Kars: Kars Kafkas Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, Yayın No. 2, 1995).

It is equally difficult to understand why Professor Ball uses with ease the term 'genocide' to describe the deaths of the Ottoman Armenians although he should have known, as a commentator on war crimes, that killings during the war between two sides does not necessarily amount to genocide.³

Professor Ball does not suffice with these already unfounded observations about the events between the Turks and the Turkish-Armenian while he is dealing with development of the international laws of war. He devotes a particular section to 'Armenian Genocide' under the heading 'Genocide'.

Some describes the twentieth century as 'the century of genocide' with which Professor Ball starts by repeating in this section. He gives 'examples' to illustrate this assertion:

'...(T)he attempted destruction of the native Herero in 1904 in South-West Africa (now central Africa), where in over two years, 10,000 German soldiers killed 70,000 of the 80,000 members of that Bantu tribe; the Nazi slaughter of over 6 million European Jews, as well as the Nazi genocide committed against Gypsies, Poles, and Russians in 1939-1945; the Cambodian 'killing fields' genocide, when between 1975 and 1979, almost 2 million of the 8 million people in Cambodia were killed by the Khmer Rouge under the leadership of Pol Pot; events that took place in Bosnia in the early to mid 1990s,...the machete genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, where over 800,000 Tutsi were slaughtered by the Hutu in there months in 1994...' (p. 26)

Skipping the events in which more people died such as Cambodian events, he gets into the details of a single case, the Turkish-Armenian issue. According to him, 'Armenian Genocide' is the first major genocide of the twentieth-century, which is 'forgotten' by many. He says, Turkish forces slaughtered estimated 1 million Turkish Armenians during and after the War. Moreover, '...there had been decades of cruel persecution by the Muslim Turks against Christian Armenian minority. There were massacres of Armenians by Turks in 1894-1896 and 1909 (with more than

³ For the reasons of Armenian deaths such as clashes during the Armenian rebellions, starvation, cold and other similar war-time conditions, see, Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 315-316. The fact that hundreds of thousands of Turks were killed by the Armenian bands during the War is another aspect, which is totally disregarded. For such killings, see, Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1996), pp. 179 ff.

200,000 killed).’ He concludes that ‘between 1915 and 1923, the Armenian population of Anatolia and historic West Armenia was eliminated’.

To be able to make such a hugely, if proven, destructive observations about the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and their treatment before and during the First World War, how many sources, do you think, he should have consulted? The answer is: just one. Even worse, this single consulted source is a book written by an Armenian author whose name is Vahakn N. Dadrian. His work is titled as ‘The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasians’.⁴

Although Professor Ball devotes a particular attention to the alleged ‘Armenian Genocide’ in his study, there is certainly a huge lack of a reasonable and objective analysis of the events between the Turks and the Turkish Armenians as it is widely noted in the studies made by some prominent historians that the Armenians were in a very satisfactory situation in terms of rights and privileges as a minority group within the Ottoman system.⁵ They enjoyed religious, cultural and educational privileges attributed to them. The Armenian Patriarchy itself was established by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II (the Conqueror) in 1461 in Istanbul. The dates which are given as occasion in which 200,000 Turkish Armenians were allegedly killed are in fact the dates the Turkish Armenians rebelled against the Ottoman Turks for independence by the support of the western powers such as the Great Britain, France and Russia.

To the dissatisfaction of almost all the Turkish historians, he argues without a reasonable proof that Turks saw the Armenians as ‘infidels and less than human’.⁶ He gives certain incredibly misleading reasons why the Armenians were hated by the Turks. These include ‘their religious faith, their acceptance of western notion of ‘progress’; their habit of sending their children to schools

⁴ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The history of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasians*, (Providence, R.I.: Berghahn Books, 1995, 1997)

⁵ Salahi R. Sonyel, *Turkey’s Struggle for Liberation and the Armenians*, pp. 9-18; Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, *the Central Lands* (New York: 1982), p. 23; İsmet Binark, *Archive Documents about Atrocities and Genocide Inflicted Upon Turks by Armenians*, (Ankara, TBMM Yayınları, 2002).

⁶ p. 26. He also refers to a letter written by an Ottoman Turkish soldier to his mother during the war which allegedly says “We killed 1,200 Armenians, all of them food for the dogs”. Again, he refers to Dadrian’s study as the source.

run by Armenians and European missionaries and sending them to European for university training...’.

Such observations are at total variance with clear facts that even some of the Ottoman ministries were from the Armenian community and they had, unlike the Jews in the German society, a very high statue in the commercial and administrative life of the Empire. Moreover, rather than being disturbed by their religious faith, the Ottomans attributed a wide range of religious and other freedoms to non-Muslims including the Armenians.

Professor Ball frequently points to the treatment of the Jews by the Germans such as exclusion of them from the economic and administrative life as a milestone to the persecution of the Jews by the Germans. But, he clearly fails to comprehend that nothing similar to this occurred in the Ottoman Empire as the Armenians, as has just noted, were dominant in the commercial life and administration of the Ottoman Empire as a minority group. No effort on be half of the Ottomans is noted to exclude the Armenians from their integration in such activities.

When he deals with the events during the First World War, he engages into even more unrealistic and distorted story-telling approach to the issue. According to him, Turks acted ‘under the guise of national security and military necessity’ to eradicate their Armenian subordinates by deporting them to the ‘Mesopotamian deserts’. He notes that Armenian civilians were used as road laborers, ‘pack animals’ and ‘bayonet target practice for Turkish soldiers’.⁸

Other than starvation and privation, he alleges that deaths were result of killings, which were carried out by special units, which Turks had established for this specific purpose. He argues fairly straightforward that ‘this genocide of over a million Armenians was the national policy of the Young Turks, openly implemented with a bureaucratic organization and centralized planning to ensure that the deportation ad executions went smoothly’. According to him, Minister Talat established ‘with the full knowledge of the parliament

⁷ For the reasons why the alleged Armenian genocide cannot be similar to the Jews Holocaust during the World War I, see, İbrahim Kaya, “Soykırım Kavramı ve Ermeni İddiaları: Karşılaştırmalı Hukuksal ve Siyasi Boyut”, (“The Concept of Genocide and the Armenian Allegations: A Comparative Analysis of Legal and Political Aspects) içinde, Geçmişten Günümüze Ermeni Sorunu Paneli (İstanbul: Haliç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), s. 8, 9;

⁸ p. 28.

and military authorities, a special killing unit called the Special Organization'⁹ When making these observations, he fails again to reflect a related significant fact that many members of the Parliament were from the minorities including the Armenians and thus the Parliament could not led implementation of such a 'policy'.¹⁰

When describing the relocation ('deportation' according to him) of the Armenians, he goes too far and says that 'no provisions were made to feed and house them' during the movement.¹¹ Again a hugely important fact is disregarded that many safeguards were provided by the regulations enacted over the relocation of the Armenians living in the war zones. Even in the trials that were conducted by the Ottoman courts on this issue after the War, these regulations were based on to convict those who had caused some deaths by violating these regulations.

In order to support his above arguments, he refers to the paragraphs from the dairies of the officials and ambassadors of some States. In this context, he refers to the observations of U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and the report of Arnold Toynbee who was requested by the British Government to prepare a report on the issue.

For instance, he argues that Talat said to U.S. Ambassador that

'I request that you would get the American life insurance companies to send us a complete list of their Armenian policy holders. They are practically all dead and have left no heirs to collect the money.'

It does, in any sense, not seem to be reasonable to depend on words of the Ambassador of the United State a government-paid reporter of the Great Britain which were both enemies of the Ottomans during the War and trying to use Armenians to achieve the American and British goals over the Ottoman Empire.¹²

⁹ p. 28.

¹⁰ In the Parliament which was established according to the Second Constitution of the Ottoman Empire in 1908, there were 14 Armenian-origin members of the Parliament out of 259 members. Only 144 members were of Turkish origin. See, Yavuz Özgüldür, Ali Güler; Suat Akgül and Mesut Köroğlu, *Her Yönüyle Ermeni Sorunu (The Armenian Issue with All Aspects)*, p. 38.

¹¹ p. 28

¹² For such activities, see, Sydney Whitman, *Turkish Memories* (London: 1914), see especially p. 13; Aubrey Herbert. *Ben Kendim: A Record of Eastern Travel* (London: 1924), p. 146; Salahi R. Sonyel. *The Ottoman Armenian: Victims of Great Power Policy* (Oxford: 1987); A.P. Vartoogian *Armenian Ordeal* (New York, 1896), p. 37.

Moreover, there is an obvious lack of logic behind such observation as there could be no reason why a minister of the Ottoman Empire should make these 'confessions' to ambassador of an enemy country.

It is, in the final account, no different from using the words of the world's greatest evil, Hitler, to prove that an 'Armenian genocide' occurred during the First World War. Professor Ball argues that during the Second World War, Hitler had said that 'Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians'. Is Hitler a better historian than anybody so that we should trust his words to know that there really accrued an 'Armenian genocide' during the World War I?

Whether the people and statesmen who were allegedly responsible for the 'genocide of Armenians' were ever tried and convicted, he says that 'in March 1919, the new Turkish government 'eager to mollify the Allies had arrested a huge group of prominent wartime Ottoman leaders....They went on trial in April 1919 before a special Turkish court martial. But the Court's first death sentence brought mobs into the streets' and quickly ended any further prosecutions of the indicted Turks'.

Once again, he does not reflect the full picture in order most probably to distort the facts and insult on a nation for reasons, which are not fully known to us. There were trials of many Ottoman officials for their failure to implement the regulation over the relocation and prevent the deaths of many Armenians during their journey.¹³ On the other hand, many Ottoman officials were arrested by the British forces and taken to the island of Malta to stand trial for the alleged crimes of war and genocide. However, the trials could not even be initiated due to the 'lack of sufficient evidences for the alleged crimes'.¹⁴

The observations in the present review article shows that Professor Ball acts with a clear bad faith for whatever reason in an examination of the events between the Ottomans and the Ottoman Armenians. He continuously ignores many valuable studies on the

¹³ For instance, the Governors of some provinces such as Boğazlıyan, Bayburt, (Kemal Bey and Nusret Bey) were sentenced to death by court marshals of the Ottoman Empire for the reason that he failed to observe the regulations enacted to protect those to be relocated. See, Yavuz Özgüldür, Ali Güler; Suat Akgül and Mesut Köroğlu, *Her Yönüyle Ermeni Sorunu (The Armenian Issue with All Aspects)*, p. 245, 246.

¹⁴ Bilal N. Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri (Maltase Exiles)* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi)

events that show completely different account of the issue from that of Professor Ball. If his study does not need to be so detailed to consult many sources on this particular issue, it should have at least indicate that the issue of 'Armenian genocide' is not a settled matter but full of controversies as there are many studies, other than that of a particular Armenian historian Vahank N. Dadrian, pointing to completely different results and facts.

Moreover, if Professor Ball felt a need to exaggerate the events of the past to prove the necessity of an international criminal jurisdiction, it cannot be justification to accuse a nation of once leaders of the Ottoman Empire with a crime of genocide, which is truly a shameful and disgusting crime, or crime of crimes. In fact it would be sufficient to note that there occurred many deaths during the First World War on be half of both the Turks and the Armenians and these do not necessarily mean a genocide committed by either side. It may simply be war crimes of other kind as there is no certain proof that the Ottomans acted with an aim to eradicate the Armenians in the Anatolia, which is an essential element of a crime of genocide.¹⁵ Quite contrarily, there are plenty of proofs that they simply tried to prevent the Armenians by sending them away from the war zones, from assisting the enemy Russians and from killing many unprotected Turkish civilians behind the war fronts, a solution which inevitably caused many deaths due to the conditions of war.

All these should indicate clearly that non-historians should not feel so free to make definite observations on a highly controversial and sensitive historical matter.¹⁶ Otherwise, the aim in this could not possibly be regarded as an objective analysis of the past but a purposeful and propagandized writing.¹⁷

¹⁵ Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide provides as follows: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

¹⁶ Justin McCarthy, professor of history at the Louisville University, suggests that the history of the Ottoman Armenians should be left to the historians to decide. Justin McCarthy, "Let the Historians Decide". *Ermeni Araştırmaları* (Armenian Studies), vol. 2, (2001), pp. 113-130.

¹⁷ How the alleged "Armenian genocide" and other Armenian claims are supported by various means of propaganda, see, Sedat Laçiner and Şenol Kantarcı, *Ermeni Propagandasının Bir Aracı Olarak Sanat, (Art as a Means of Armenian Propaganda)* (Ankara: Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2002).

BOOK REVIEW

**SADETTİN PAŞA'NIN ANILARI, ERMENİ-KÜRT OLAYLARI
(VAN, 1896)
(THE MEMORIES OF SADETTİN PAŞA, THE ARMENIAN-
KURDISH EVENTS (VAN, 1896))**

Author: Sami ÖNAL

(İstanbul: Remzi, 2003), 166 pp. ISBN 9751409379

Hasret DİKİCİ*

The memories of Sadettin Paşa refer to the last period of the Ottoman Empire, when the Empire is in decline; and when there is ethnic unrest and corresponding foreign intervention. The Empire had responded to the Western critiques with two major reform packets (*Tanzimat and Islahat Reforms*), and then Inspection Committee is established in order to investigate the claims of the minorities in Anatolia. The book is composed of the diaries of Sadettin Paşa, who is the director of the Inspection Committee.

The reader is surprised about the writer of the book since it is not unusual to expect the writer to be subjective in such conditions of conflict and tension especially when he is one of the actors. Nevertheless, Sadettin Paşa tries to remain neutral, and criticizes both parties boldly. He gives important clues about the reasons of 1915 Expedition and Relocation; and makes a system critique between the lines.

The Inspection Committee had begun its journey from Trabzon in March 17, 1895; and visited Gümüşhane, Erzurum, Bitlis and Van where Armenians live densely. The Inspection Committee had finished its mission on November 21, 1896; and Sadettin Paşa as the director had written a final report to the related Ottoman

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authorities. However, he also wrote diaries that include what could not be written to the official report.

In the diaries, there are two main arguments. First of all, the Hamidiye regiments were corrupted and the population under the rule of them was really restless. Secondly, the prominent members of the Armenian community had taken advantage of the events in order to get privileges by informing the English, Russian and Persian consuls and American missionaries.

The first situation that the regiments lead to social unrest is explained by the facts that the soldiers mistreated the non-Muslims both because of poverty and the pressures of the clans they are affiliated with. Sadettin Paşa criticizes the situation of the regiments and states that their clothes were untidy, they were poor and they were undisciplined. His observations give clues about the decline of the Ottoman army, which was one of the greatest powers of the world a few centuries ago. He had seen the soldiers selling their bread given by the army itself. He had also witnessed serious and willful misconduct in office; even they had mistreated the Ottoman *kaymakams*. He writes that they committed many crimes, and there was neither a government to punish, nor officers to investigate.

On the other hand, he also mentions about the ill-mannered members of the Armenian community. He thinks that some Armenians victimize themselves in order to guarantee the shelter and mercy of the Western powers. He emphasizes that the Armenians themselves provoked the Kurdish clans. According to him, the leaders of the Armenian community took advantage of disobedience of the Armenians, and they provoked the Kurdish clans to attack on the ordinary Armenian population arguing that the Armenian gangs were disturbing the peace in the region. The rumors were wandering around that the Sublime Port issued a decree for Muslims to acquire the properties of the non-Muslims and their blood was not worthfull for the Empire. This point also shows the ignorance of the regional tribes. In return, when the attacks were realized, Sadettin Paşa argues, the same leaders victimized themselves in their negotiations with the other countries.

Sadettin Paşa thinks that the events were the fruits of the developments in long years, and he gives advises to both parties. He warns the Muslim Kurdish clans attacking the Armenians that

they should not believe the rumors, even such rumors are in contradiction to Islam, and they are provocations of the Armenians themselves. Then he warns the leaders of the Armenian community and reminds them the powerful days of Ottoman when they benefited from the Ottoman services like education, welfare and public occupations. He calls them to loyalty to their Empire.

The Memories of Sadettin Paşa is a very important source to understand the 1915 Events, and ethnic conflicts (not only Armenian, but also the Kurdish one). His practical observations and neutral gaze expressing the faults of both sides make the book worth reading.

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